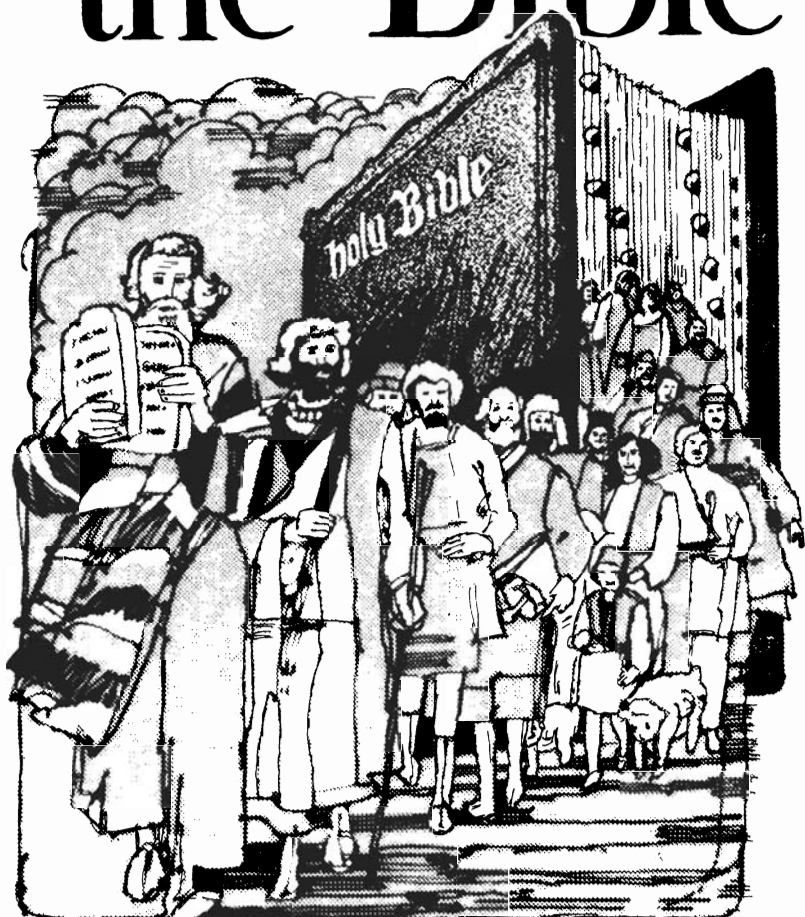


The Story of the Bible

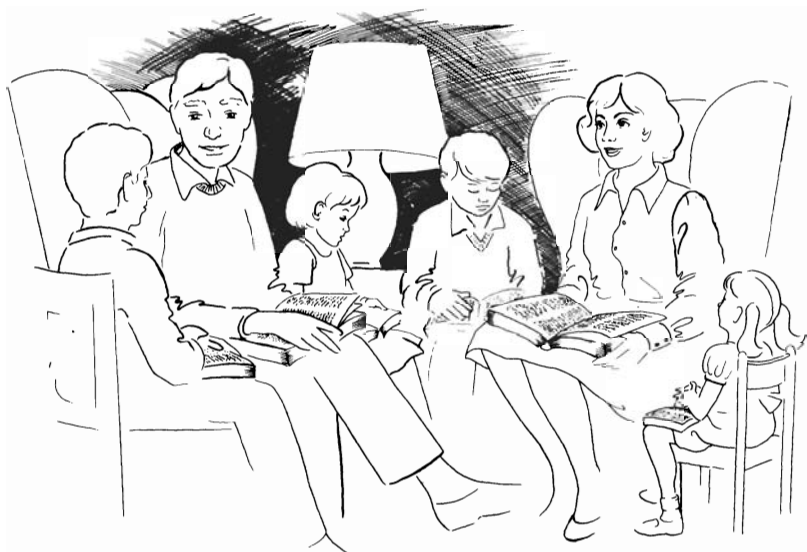
We wish to express our deep appreciation to J. and S. Catchlove for their great help in proof reading the manuscript in preparation for printing.

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The Story of the Bible



A detailed exposition of the Bible
discussed within the family circle.



Mr. and Mrs. Phillips settle down with their children for daily reading
of the Bible.



Our Most Valuable Companion

I am writing this foreword in a room lined with books. Over two thousand volumes, covering almost every subject, are to be found upon the shelves that cover the walls. But among all these books, with their bright bindings, and their high-sounding titles, there is one that is outstanding and unique.

It is the Bible.

It is outstanding for many reasons, but mainly because its contents, when read properly never become dull or uninteresting. I have read the entire Bible many, many times, without tiring of it. But I cannot say that of other books. Usually one or two readings are sufficient to exhaust my interest in them.

Why do I find the Bible so absorbing? Because I have sought out the key to its understanding which enables me to correctly interpret the message that it proclaims. That approach has transformed the Bible for me. Moreover, I try to make a mental picture of all that I read. Consequently, I find it full of interest. It captivates me with its stories of adventure, mystery, romance,

and travel; it introduces me to men and women who manifested faith and courage in the most difficult circumstances, and whom I would like to meet personally; its doctrines reveal a golden thread of salvation stretching throughout the whole book that gives me hope; its prophecies outline the shape of things to come, excite my interest.

There is not a dull page in the whole book when the purpose of each chapter is sought out. Even the lists of names contained in such chapters as 1 Chronicles reveal thrilling messages of survival for God's covenant people, transforming them from mere, dull genealogy, to amazing records of Divine providence.

But it must be stated, that to extract any interest from such passages of the Bible, we must possess the key that will open their meaning to us.

It is my purpose, in this *Story of the Bible*, to attempt to do that.

My studies of the Bible, extending over many years, and helped by such expositions as *Elpis Israel*, *Eureka*, *Nazareth Revisited*, and so forth, have turned it into more than a book to me: they have made it an intimate friend. More so, because I have attempted to "mark His word" (Jeremiah 23:18). Therefore, of all editions of the Bible, I favour the Wide-margin Bible because it affords space in the margin for the inclusion of notes. Accordingly, when I read from my copy, it seems to speak to me in a manner different from other Bibles. That is because the margin is well marked throughout with comments and supporting quotations that send me to other parts of Scripture, and the text itself is underlined so that key words and phrases stand out from their context.

My Bible is not a handsome volume. Already the covers have been repaired, whilst the pages

are thumb-marked and show signs of much use. Like me, it looks much older than it actually is!

It has had at least seven predecessors; but this Bible I have loved best of all. It has been my faithful friend in many a discussion and debate; it has helped me personally in times when I have been lonely and isolated; it has strengthened me when I have been forced with frustrating problems, it has travelled with me at least fifteen times around the world, assisting me as I have attempted to publicly expound its message; it has been my companion on many adventures!

I have found it to be more than a book: it has proved an intimate, helpful, frank and fearless friend; for Yahweh speaks through its pages, and His words are always valuable and helpful. They instruct, exhort, comfort, strengthen, rebuke and guide; they tell of things to avoid and things to seek; they lead from the way of death into the path of life; they deliver from doubt and despair, and induce confidence and hope.

On the spine of a Bible there appear two small words: *Holy Bible*. The word "Holy" means *separate*, and the word "Bible" means *book*. "Holy Bible," therefore, signifies a book separate and distinct from all others. The Bible is unique because we can hear the Voice of Yahweh whenever we read its pages.

It presents life from God's standpoint. It takes us back to the beginning of creation, and explains how sin brought death to man; and then it carries us forward to the future, and reveals how both sin and death ultimately will be removed from the earth (Rev. 21:4). It reveals that God has developed a plan of redemption for mankind, and that the working out of that plan has been channelled through one nation: Israel. Therefore, if Gentiles desire the salvation that is offered, they must identify themselves with "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20). It also shows that

Yahweh has worked through men and women from the earliest times, and teaches how His power can help us today by transforming us in character for an inheritance in the Kingdom He will one day establish upon the earth. Its readers are encouraged to emulate those men and women of faith who courageously stood for that which is right and true in opposition to evil and false influences which threatened to overwhelm them; and though many died in the encounter, they died in hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life.

Above all else, the Bible presents for inspection the greatest hero of all time: the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the central figure in this wonderful Story of the Bible.

I invite you to come with me as I commence this most exciting and wonderful story. It is a story that is not yet finished. Its glorious consummation is yet to be manifested in the earth when the Lord Jesus returns to raise his friends from the dead, and give unto them eternal life. He will finally establish his Kingdom on earth so that therein Yahweh may be elevated and glorified.

May the great Author of the Bible bless these efforts to make His beautiful Book more widely understood and appreciated, so that in the coming day of triumph when Christ will be in the earth, they will be found to have provided some slight contribution to the development of a people prepared for the Lord.

— H. P. Mansfield



The Bible: The Word of God

The Bible claims to be the Word of God, challenging us with its Divine origin. Five hundred times in the first five books, it prefaces or concludes its declarations with the assertion, "The Lord said," or "The Lord spake." Three hundred times again in the following books it does the same. Similar expressions occur not less than twelve hundred times in the prophetic books. The Bible thus claims to be the inspired Word of God (Hebrew 1:1), and it must be judged accordingly. Some allow inspiration for some portions of the Bible, and deny it for others; but obviously, it must either be all true, or all false, for its sixty-six books are indissolubly linked together. We must either accept all, or reject all; and, sooner or later, every person is forced to decide where he or she stands in this matter.

THE LIBRARY WE CALL THE BIBLE

Question: What is the Bible?

Answer: It is a book written by the power of inspiration working in prophets and apostles who lived in Israel a long time ago. They lived at different times, and each wrote his part independently of the others; but one Spirit moved them all, and enabled them to make known to men the mind of God in history, precept and prophecy, so that the Bible though composed of many books and parts, is the one Word of God (from *The Christadelphian Instructor*).

Proof: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. 1:1). "Which things we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13). "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). "Thou testifiedst against them by Thy spirit in the prophets" (Neh. 9:30). "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:37).

The word *Bible* means "Book", but actually the Bible is a library of sixty-six books, thirty-nine of which are in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New. The division of the Bible into Old and New Testaments is artificial and man-made. Both the Old and the New Testaments are to be equally accepted as God's revelation to man. There is no conflict between them, nor is one of greater importance than the other. The writers of the New Testament repeatedly quoted from the Old in support and proof of their teaching. Christ quoted extensively from the Old Testament to make manifest the things "concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

The Object of the Bible.

"Whatsoever things were written beforehand, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

The Value of the Bible.

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" (Christ — John 5:39).

"Preach the Gospel, he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

The Power of the Bible.

"My word shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth (John 17:17).

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word (Psalm 119:9).

"God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

An Epitome of the Books of the Bible.

Old Testament Books.

HISTORY

- | | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| Genesis | — | Recording Creation, and the beginnings of history from God's standpoint. |
| Exodus | — | How God saved Israel from Egypt. |
| Leviticus | — | The ideal that God set before Israel; to what the people were called. |
| Numbers | — | How Israel failed: the wanderings through the wilderness. |
| Deuteronomy | — | The unfailing mercy and love of God: Israel's further opportunity. |
| Joshua | — | How God made it possible for Israel to occupy the Land of Promise. |
| Judges | — | How the nation again failed God. |
| Ruth | — | How individuals remained faithful in the midst of a faithless generation. |
| 1 & 2 Samuel | — | The monarchy established and a righteous king (David) elevated by God. |
| 1 & 2 Kings | — | How the nation failed politically. |
| 1 & 2 Chronicles | — | How the nation failed theocratically, and was taken into captivity. |
| Ezra | — | Restoration of Israel from Babylon. |
| Nehemiah | — | Reconstruction of Israel from anarchy. |
| Esther | — | Preservation of Israel from annihilation. |

POETRY

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Job | — | A dramatic epic — blessing through suffering. |
| Psalms | — | Rejoicing in hope. |
| Proverbs | — | Practical wisdom for life as it is now. |
| Ecclesiastes | — | Set not affection on anything under the sun, but seek the treasure from on high. |
| Song of Solomon | — | Typical communion with Christ the bridegroom. |

PROPHECY

Eighteen books of prophecy: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

New Testament Books

HISTORY

Matthew	— Jesus from the standpoint of his royalty.
Mark	— Jesus from the standpoint of his ministry.
Luke	— Jesus from the standpoint of his humanity.
John	— Jesus from the standpoint of his divinity.
Acts	— The preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles.

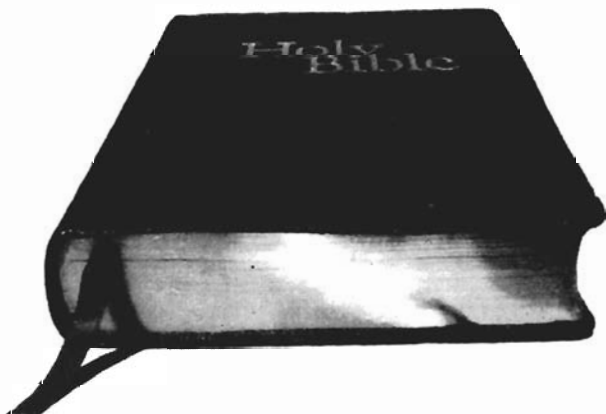
PRECEPT

Paul's Epistles for the guidance of communities of believers —	Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians.
Paul's Epistles of Instruction for individuals —	1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.
Paul's exposition of the Law of Moses —	Hebrews.
James' Epistles	— Faith in action.
Peter's Epistles	— Courage in persecution.
John's Epistles	— Love in manifestation.
Jude's Epistle	— Contention against apostasy.

PROPHECY

Revelation	— Christ's outline of future events recorded by John.
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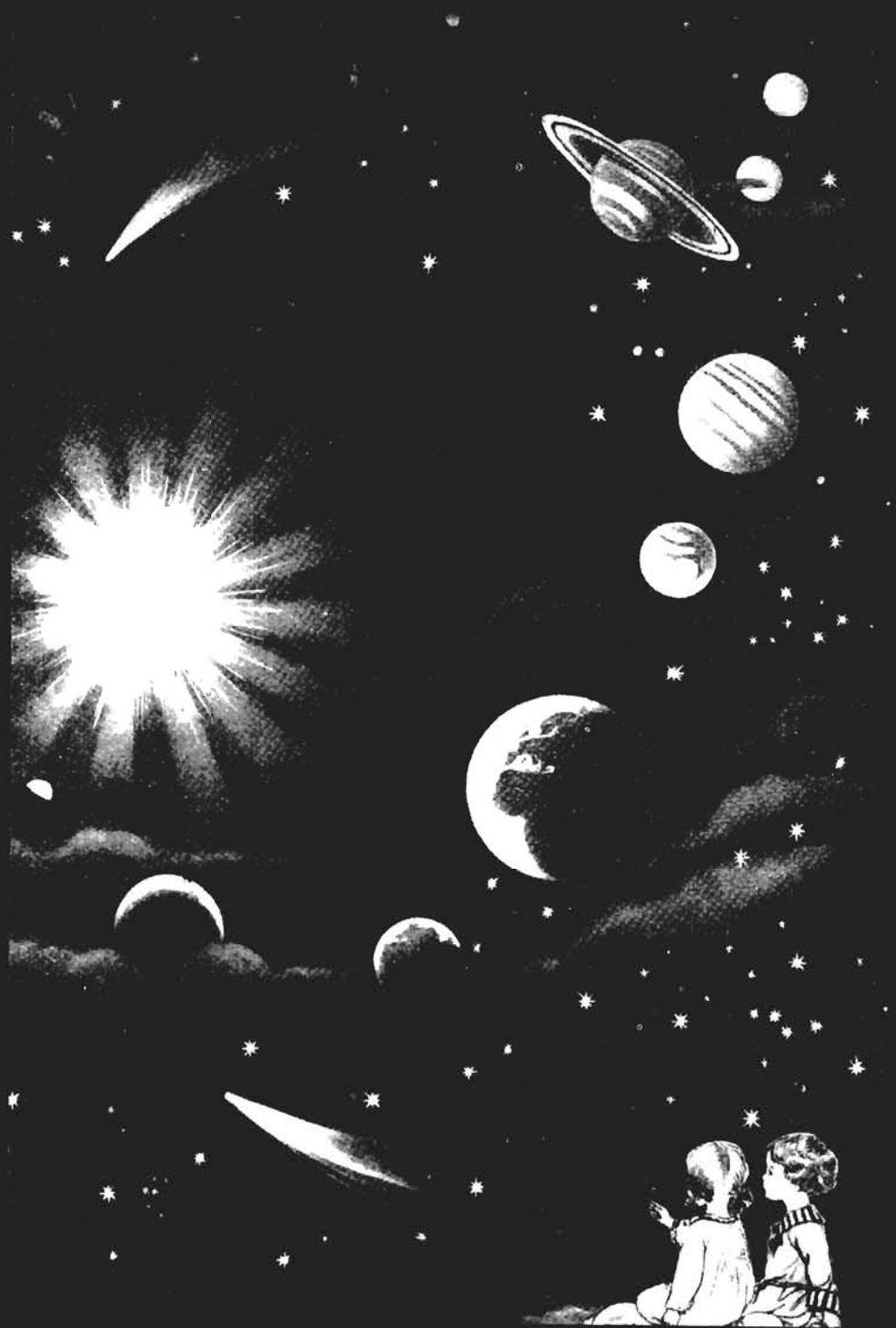
"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16,17).



HOW READEST THOU

*It is one thing to read the Bible through,
Another thing to read and learn and do.
Some read it with desire to learn, and read
But to their subject pay but little heed;
Some read it as their duty every week,
But no instruction from the Bible seek;
While others read it with but little care,
With no regard to how they read or where;
Some read it as a History, to know
How people lived two thousand years ago.
Some read it to bring themselves into repute,
By showing others how they can dispute;
Whilst others read because their neighbours do,
To see how long it takes to read it through.
Some read it for the wonders that are there,
How David killed a lion and a bear;
While others read it with uncommon care,
Hoping to find some contradictions there.
Some read as though it did not speak to them
But to the people of Jerusalem.
One reads it as a book of mysteries,
And won't believe the very thing he sees;
One reads with father's specs upon his head,
And sees the thing just as his father said;
Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed,
Hence understanding but little as they read,
For every passage in the book they bend
To make it suit that all-important end.
Some people read, as I have often thought,
To teach the Book, instead of being taught;
And some there are who read it out of spite,
I fear there are but few who read it right.
One thing I find, and you may find it, too,
The more you read, the more you find it true;
But this to find, an open eye is needful,
With often prayer, and humble heart all heedful;
The man who reads with pride or inattention,
Will only find full cause of dissension;
The man who reads with modest penetration,
Will find the joy of comfort and salvation.*

*The
First
Two Thousand
Years of History*



HOW GOD'S CREATION WAS SPOILED BY MAN

Chapter One

AN ARGUMENT AND ITS SEQUEL

"Well, I don't believe it, anyhow!" declared Ann crossly.

She was addressing a little group of friends as they wandered slowly and thoughtfully home from school, discussing among themselves the science lesson for the day.

It had not been a very satisfactory day. Miss Smith, the science teacher, had given a talk upon Elementary Biology, and had gone to some lengths to explain the theory of Evolution, very vividly describing how, according to the theory, man had evolved from a piece of jellyfish over the course of millions of years. After her talk, she had called for questions from the class of thirteen year-old girls before her, when suddenly Ann had asked:

"Don't you believe in the Bible, Miss Smith?"

The question posed a difficulty for the teacher. Religious Instruction followed the Science Lesson, and if she were to answer "No," then the girls would go out twittering that the Bible is not true, and would ask awkward questions in the forthcoming lesson, citing her as an authority. If she said "Yes," then her science lesson would be discredited, for it had been indirectly devoted to challenging belief in God as the Creator.

Wisely she avoided the question.

"I am only prepared to answer questions bearing upon the subject we have discussed," she replied primly.

But Ann was not to be beaten.

"Don't you believe that God created man, Miss Smith?" she enquired.

"My beliefs, Ann, do not come into the category of this lesson," replied the teacher with disapproval written all over her face.

She closed the question session, and went on to some other feature of the lesson.

But after school, the girls continued to discuss the subject, and when some began to defend the theory of evolution introduced by Miss Smith, it called forth the very emphatic exclamation of Ann, uttered in an extremely cross voice.

"Well, I don't believe it, anyhow! I believe that the Bible is true, and that as it says, God created man . . ."

Later that evening, after the completion of the evening meal, Ann raised the question with her father. In accordance with their custom, the family had assembled to read from the Bible. A little book entitled, *The Bible Companion* gave the sections for the day (two from the Old Testament, and one from the New), and all members joined in the reading of these chapters, each completing five verses in turn.

After they had finished, Mr. Phillips, Ann's father, called for questions, and Ann took the opportunity of outlining what had happened during the day.

"What does 'evilution' mean, Daddy?" asked Joan, Ann's younger sister.

"The word is not 'evil-ution,' Joan, but 'evolution,'" replied Mr. Phillips, "though it is undoubtedly an 'evil' doctrine. It is man's explanation of how mankind came into existence, but it ignores the fact that God created all things."

"Miss Smith said that science had proved it true," said Ann, the encounter with the teacher rankling in her mind.

"It has not been proved true, Ann," declared her father. "Evidence shows that it is false. Moreover, the very claims of scientists have subsequently been shown to be wrong. Evolution is only a 'theory,' an idea which is far from being proved true. Take the Piltdown skull, for example. Did Miss Smith mention that?"

"No, she did not."

"I should say not. What scientists call the 'Piltdown man' constitutes a few old bones which somebody found at Piltdown, Sussex, in England. They were handed to some very learned scientists who, after examining them for days, finally concluded they were 'proof' that man had been in existence on the earth for millions of years. They even made plaster casts of what he was supposed to look like, and these were placed in many museums throughout the world, so that people looking at them, imagined that the whole man had been found, and not merely a few pieces of bone. They gave him a very learned name, calling him *Eoanthropus* or 'Dawn Man.' Learned articles were written concerning him, and books like the



THE PILTDOWN FORGERY. In 1912 some of the foremost scientists of England presented to the world their theory of the Dawn Man of Piltdown. It was claimed that here, at last, was tangible, well-nigh incontrovertible proof of Man's ape-like ancestry: a creature which could be regarded as a veritable confirmation of the evolutionary theory. Actually, all that was found were a few bones, but from those bones they reconstructed the head depicted above taken from *The London Illustrated News* for 1912. For many years *Eoanthropus dawsoni*, as this "head" was called, was accepted as demonstrating beyond doubt the antiquity of man. But in 1953, a re-investigation revealed not merely that the hypothesis of the scientists was wrong, but, in fact, the bones had been artificially treated by one of the most prominent scientists in Great Britain in order to sustain his claim what he had found proved the antiquity of the race, and its evolutionary progress from an original ape-like form! And what is even more amazing is that other prominent scientists, after examining the "evidence", endorsed the "finds" as being of great antiquity. In 1953, it was revealed, that the exhibits had been deliberately treated with iron and chromium so as to establish a coloration that seemed to endorse their long antiquity. These facts show how far a scientist was prepared to go to sustain his theory, and how gullible others were in establishing a theory to which they were committed. Whilst the Bible doctrine of Creation is contrary to the theory of evolution; there is no real conflict between the Bible and true science. The facts epitomised above are revealed at length in the book: *The Piltdown Forgery* published by Oxford University Press in 1955.

WHAT
THEY
FOUND



Encyclopaedia Britannica on the shelf over there, published some of them. One gentleman, Sir. Arthur Keith, a very learned scientist who dogmatically asserted that the Bible is false, wrote extensively upon the subject. But a few years ago, it was discovered that the whole thing was a gigantic fraud! The bones which had been found had been 'doctored' to look old, and had been left where some learned scientists might find them."

"I suppose whoever left the bones there thought it was a great joke," commented Graeham, Ann's oldest brother.

"Perhaps they did," answered Mr. Phillips, "but one thing is sure; scientists no longer advance the Piltdown Man as evidence of the antiquity of the race, and many of the textbooks that Miss Smith previously used have had to be revised. Moreover, that is not the only occasion when scientists have been proved absolutely wrong and, indeed, have been similarly, and as completely, hookwinked."

"Scientists seem silly to me," exclaimed Ann trying to extract every ounce of comfort from the disappointment she had experienced in her encounter with Miss Smith.

"Not all of them," remarked Mr. Phillips. "Many scientists have performed valuable services and made important discoveries that have benefited humanity, and in many directions their research has produced great good. It is only when they are found opposing the Bible that they have led others from the truth. The Bible declares: 'The fool hath said, There is no God' (Psalm 14:1), and evidence shows this to be so. It does not matter to me how many letters a man may have after his name, or how learned he may claim to be; if he disputes the existence of the Creator in the face of the wonderful evidence of creation about him, that man is foolish."

"Why do men want to get away from the Bible?" asked Peter, Ann's second brother.

"Because the Bible imposes restrictions upon man's way of life," answered his father. "If we accept the Bible as true, we are bound to obey God; but many want to evade this. They want to go their own way without regard for what the Bible teaches them to do. Some give lip service to the Bible, accepting portions of it that agree with their ideas, but rejecting that which they do not like. Men think that they are very clever, and can get away with this, but gradually the world is becoming more and more evil. Violence is widespread among the nations today, whilst crime and wrong-doing is on the increase. The reason for this is as taught in the Bible: 'As a man soweth so shall he reap' (Gal. 6:7). The world ridicules God and His

word, and is becoming more and more evil. That is why we, as a family group, must stand aside from its ways, and show respect for the Bible, reading it together every night. In such a way, I hope that we may get closer to God, and closer to each other. We are happier doing this, and God is well pleased with us. Will you please turn to Malachi 3:16, and read the verse for us, Graeham?"

Graeham found the place, and read:

"They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that fear the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord."

"I don't think that many of the girls at school read the Bible," remarked Ann. "In fact, very few of them go to Sunday School. They think that they are too big for that!"

"Every child going to school, college, or university, is influenced by others, some of whom are far from good," remarked Mr. Phillips. "As Ann has shown, even some of the lessons are wrong, and designed to discredit God's Word. You must all learn to accept the good and reject the evil. The Bible warns us of that. It tells us to be on our guard against evil company. It is like a chart guiding one safely through unknown territory. Later on in life you become more experienced, though you can never do without the chart. When your knowledge increases, you realise what a wonderful guide God has given you in His Word, and how much better off and happier you are in following its instructions. Turn with me to 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Note what Paul told Timothy: 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'

"Now listen to Solomon, the wisest man of his generation. He wrote: 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it' (Proverbs 22:6)."

"I believe that the best thing that parents can do for their children is to provide them a heritage of spiritual knowledge. That is why I try to instil into your minds a reverence for the Bible, and to give you some understanding of what it teaches. The Bible declares: 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . .' (Ecclesiastes 12:1). It is most important for you to do that, for when you are young you can remember much better the things you learn. Later you will find that you become forgetful. I can still remember things that I learned when I was a

child, but I have forgotten much of what I studied since. That is one reason why I am insistent that you learn the Sunday School lessons from *The Instructor*.^{*} Though it is many years since my father made me learn them. I can still recite them, whereas many things I have sought to retain since, I unfortunately forget."

"Like the letter that Mummy asked you to post the other day, Daddy?" enquired Joan innocently.

"Don't be silly, Joan!" interjected Ann indignantly.

"Why can't men see God?" asked Peter ignoring the interjections of his sisters.

"Because of His great glory, which is so overwhelming that no man could possibly look upon it and live. We cannot bear to look directly at the sun without being harmed, and yet the sun is created glory; how could we possibly look upon uncreated glory which is far more powerful. The Bible teaches that no man hath seen nor can see God, for 'He dwells in light which no man can approach unto' (1 Timothy 6:16)."

"Can the angels see Him?"

"Yes. Angels are of the same nature as God (Heb. 1:7; Luke 20:36; 2 Peter 1:4), and therefore, as Jesus taught, can 'behold the face of the Father in heaven' (Matthew 18:10)."

"Does the Bible reveal what God looks like?" enquired Peter as his father paused.

"We are told that He has form and substance (Hebrews 1:3; Psalm 94:9; John 5:37), and that man is made in His image (James 3:9)," replied Mr. Phillips. "We learn that He is not merely a Power or influence in the heavens as some suggest, but is a personal, loving heavenly Father Who has the welfare of His family in mind, and to Whom His sons and daughters can turn in time of need. He is One Whom we can love, confide in, and worship. There are some glorious words that describe His attributes contained in Psalm 103:13-14. Perhaps Joan will read them for us."

After a little scurrying around the books of the Old Testament, Joan found the place, and read the verses: 'Like as a father pitieth His children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust . . .'

"God, as a Father, looks down in mercy upon His children, recognising their weaknesses, and making provision for them" commented Mr. Phillips.

"He must have tremendous power!" exclaimed Ann.

^{*} "The Christadelphian Instructor" — Questions and answers expounding Bible truth by R. Roberts, obtainable from Logos Publications.

“Indeed, yes!” remarked her father. “God has absolute power over everything. He holds the stars and planets in place by His power; He controls the earth and all that is in it. Everything that is created was made by His power, which, in the Bible, is termed His spirit, so that all things came from God. He is everywhere present by His spirit which extends to all parts. Therefore, though He is in heaven, He can see everything that is going on everywhere.”

“Something like a television set?” enquired Peter.

“A television set is a very crude way of expressing it, but sufficient for the purpose,” answered his father. “God can see everywhere, so that nothing is hid from His eyes. Remember that when the first astronauts stepped out on the moon, they were viewed by millions of people on the earth. If man can make a wireless set that permits him to speak in Adelaide and yet be heard in Birmingham, or build a television set that enables him to sit in a room on earth and view what takes place on the moon, how much more can God do! The wonders of modern science teach us that He Who created science and the laws of nature, and who is perfect in all His ways, is far above the limitations of man with his comparatively clumsy contrivances on earth!”

“Well,” said Ann, remembering her science teacher, “I must remember some of this for tomorrow.”

Chapter Two

AN INVITATION FOR DISCUSSION

Next day, fortified by the talk with her father, Ann went to the defence of the Bible with a vengeance. She had thought that the other girls would have been as interested as she in the subject they had discussed so earnestly the day before. Such however, was not the case. Most of them had forgotten it. Some just laughed at what “old Smithy” (as the teacher was irreverently called) had said. Others laughed at Ann, making her even more furious. She knew that it would be impossible to raise the subject during the Science lesson, but thought that during Religious Instruction she would be able to do so.

But in this she was disappointed. When she advanced the question as to whether evolution was true or false, she found the religious teacher as evasive as Miss Smith. Neither were prepared to make a definite statement that the Bible is true, and Ann, together with the other girls, were all dissatisfied with what they heard. Ann, indeed, asked the religious instruction teacher about the story of creation — only to find that she did not believe in it!

“The book of Genesis says that God created the earth six thousand years ago, Ann,” she said, “but that is manifestly wrong. The earth has been in existence much longer than that. And whilst I believe in Jesus, I do not necessarily believe all that the Bible contains!”

Ann had no reply to that. Whilst she had realised that the teacher probably had different ideas concerning the teaching of the Bible from those she had heard expressed in her home, she thought she would have received more support than she did regarding the truth of the Bible itself. She felt frustrated; particularly when some of the other girls questioned her about it during recess. There were more arguments, until, at length, Ann said:

“Well, what about you coming home and asking my father these questions? He will give you a satisfactory answer!”

The girls laughed more at that, which only made her more insistent that they should discuss the matter with her father. Finally, two of her closest friends, Sheila and Marjorie, agreed

to do so. They looked forward to enjoying bathing in the ocean close to the home, and in the evening, discussing the Bible with Mr. Phillips.

A few nights later, therefore, saw the three friends in the library of Mr. Phillips' home, with the Bible open before them.

In a shy manner, Sheila had asked Ann's father why he could be so sure that the Bible is true, and he had replied, "Because it is the Word of God."

"But how do we know that?" questioned Sheila, gaining a little confidence as she began to express herself.

"Because it tells us so!" exclaimed Mr. Phillips. "Do you know Sheila, that the Bible declares itself to be the Word of God no less than five hundred times in the first five books, and in the whole Bible we read the words, *The Lord said* or *The Lord spake*, or similar terms no less than twelve hundred times? Now if the Bible were not true, it would be the most evil book on earth, proclaiming no less than twelve hundred lies! We must either accept it as the Word of God, or reject it altogether."

"Yes, Mr. Phillips," replied Sheila, her dark eyes pondering. "I suppose you are right. We must accept it as true or false. I see that. But why are you so sure it is true? Could not the men who wrote the Bible have been mistaken?"

"The men were not mistaken, Sheila. Many of them gave their lives for the things they believed and proclaimed; and men do not do that for a lie! A man would know whether the things he spake were his own words, or the words of God. Furthermore, if we were to accept what you are suggesting, we would have to reject even Jesus Christ! He endorsed all the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24:27). Do you think it would be right to reject his teaching?"

"No," replied Sheila slowly. "And yet, Mr. Phillips, and please forgive me saying this, there are many, many people in the world who know all you have said, and yet do not believe in the Bible."

"I do not mind you saying that, Sheila, for I know, unfortunately, that it is only too true. But those people do not know the true meaning of the Bible. They have not studied it properly. The more a person reads and understands the message, the more he will be convinced that God is its real Author. Take, as an example the wonderful testimony of prophecy. Man cannot foretell anything ahead with certainty, not even the weather, but the Bible has clearly outlined the future of nations and peoples, and history reveals that what it says is true. Let me give you one or two examples. You know that in recent years

the Jews have been returning to their ancient homeland, and Israel has again been established as a nation, but do you know that the Bible predicted this thousands of years ago?"

"No, I did not."

"Well, it is a fact. Over two thousand five hundred years ago, God, through the prophets of Israel, proclaimed His purpose to punish the Jews because of their disobedience by driving them from their land, with the ultimate intention of regathering them back again. Perhaps Ann will read Jeremiah 31:10 for us."

Ann found the place and read:

"Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock."

"Thank you, Ann," said her father. "Jeremiah not only says that God would scatter Israel, but that He would regather them again. Have those words been proved true by events, Sheila?"

"Of course they have, Mr. Phillips, because the Jews are returning to the land today, and Israel has come into existence as a nation."

"How could Jeremiah predict all this with such certainty, Sheila?"

"I do not suppose he could unless God were with him," remarked Sheila a little thoughtfully.

"That is what Jeremiah also said," declared Mr. Phillips. "Notice that he says, '*Hear the word of the Lord.*' He desired everyone to understand that which he foretold came from God, and was not merely his own guess. There are hundreds of predictions speaking of God's purpose to restore the Jews to their own land in the Bible. What we see happening in the Middle East today is in fulfilment of those prophecies. I will give you further references thereby proving the veracity of the Bible on the same subject. I suggest that you write them down on paper, and consider them later: Isaiah 11:12; Jeremiah 31:28; 32:37; 33:26; Ezekiel 36:22-24; 37:21; Zechariah 8:7,13. I could, of course, give you many more, for the subject is extensively referred to throughout the Bible. What is happening to the Jews today, however, is but the beginning of God's purpose with them. The complete fulfilment of these prophecies is yet to come. But we see sufficient fulfilled even now to know that the Bible is true and therefore reliable. Would you please read Luke 21:24 for us Ann?"

Ann read:

"They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led

away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24)."

"That is a prophecy of the Lord Jesus relating to the Jews and their city," said Mr. Phillips. "Jesus declared that the Jewish people would be scattered among all nations, and their city would be trodden down of Gentiles, 'until' a certain time which would usher in his return to the earth. You have told us that the Jews have returned to their land, Sheila; do you know anything about the city of Jerusalem?"

"Yes, of course," answered Sheila, "I know that back in 1967 the Jews won the Six Day War against the Arabs, and occupied the city of Jerusalem."

"True," responded Mr. Phillips, "And that was in fulfilment of Bible prophecy. Read Joel 3:1 for us Ann?"

Ann found this book a little more difficult to locate, but at last discovered it hidden away between Hosea and Amos. She read:

"For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem . . ."

"Do you want me to go on?" she asked.

"No," replied her father. "In that verse, God says that He will bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. He commenced to do the first when the Jews were invited by the British to return home in 1917, and fifty years later he began to do the second, when they occupied the city of Jerusalem. But, notice that in the next verse, it speaks of all nations being gathered to Jerusalem for war, and consider that at the present time, the great Powers are arguing over the future of the Middle East. All this is in fulfilment of Bible prophecy, showing conclusively that God caused this book to be written, and that it is, in fact, His revelation to man."

"I did not realise that the Bible predicted these things so clearly," said Sheila thoughtfully.

"No, indeed!" murmured Marjorie.

"The Bible is mainly prophecy," continued Mr. Phillips. "Please read Deuteronomy 30:3 for me Ann."

Ann turned to the beginning of the Bible, and read these words:

"Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee."

"Who wrote the book of Deuteronomy?" asked Mr. Phillips of Ann as she paused.

"Moses."

“For whom did he write it?”

“For the people of Israel.”

“Where were they when he wrote it?”

“They were in the wilderness approaching the Promised Land.”

“Thank you, Ann. That is true. And it means that long before the Jews were established as a nation in Palestine, nearly 3,500 years ago, Moses predicted that through disobedience they would be scattered into all parts of the earth, and later, ‘in the latter days’ (Deut. 4:30 — see Revised Version) they would be regathered again to their land. What other book speaks so clearly about events in the future as the Bible does? I know of no other. Will you read Deuteronomy 28:64 for me please, Marjorie?”

Marjorie read:

“And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and . . .”

“That will do, thank you, Marjorie,” interrupted Mr. Phillips. “Now, were the Jews scattered among the nations, as it says they would be?”

“Yes, Mr. Phillips.”

“That being the case, Marjorie, can you tell me how Moses would know that the Jews were going to be scattered into all the earth, if God had not revealed it to him?”

“But the Jews were scattered many, many years ago, Mr. Phillips. Perhaps Moses did not predict it. How can we be sure that these words were written before the events took place?”

“Is Moses living today, Marjorie?”

“Of course not!”

“But the Jews are returning to their land as he said they would in the reference that Ann read,” Mr. Phillips said to Marjorie.

“That is true! I had forgotten that!”

“Well, then, Marjorie, how could Moses predict these things if God were not with him?”

“I don’t suppose he could at all, Mr. Phillips.”

The Wonder Of Bible Prophecy

“Moses was not the only prophet of the Bible to speak of the future of the Jewish people,” continued Mr. Phillips. “They all did so, and in equally wonderful language. For example, Jeremiah declared that despite the persecution that they would endure, they would never be destroyed. In Chapter 30:11, he proclaimed the words of Yahweh, the God of Israel: ‘For I am with thee, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations



*THE WESTERN WALL JERUSALEM ON THE DAY OF DELIVER-
ANCE. During the Six Days War in 1967, Israeli forces occupied the ancient city
of Jerusalem, and, at long last, Jews had access to the Western Wall of the Temple
area, also named The Wailing Wall. Christ's words were vindicated: "Jerusalem
shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until . . ." (Luke 21:24), and prophecy
fulfilled (see Joel 3:1).*

whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished’.

“Now consider the full import of those words. Throughout the ages, evil men have arisen, and proclaimed their intention to destroy the name of Jesus from off the earth, but they have never succeeded, and God’s word has proved true. Hitler, of Germany, was one such. He destroyed six million Jews in a brutal way, but out of all that persecution, and the terrible war that Hitler brought upon the world, there came the Jewish State of Israel. God’s promise was thus vindicated, and the Jews shown to be His witnesses (Isa. 43:10). Their condition reveals that every confidence can be placed in the words of Scripture. Let me show you another example. Would you please read Isaiah 13:19-20, Ann?

Ann turned to the place, and read:

“Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there . . .”

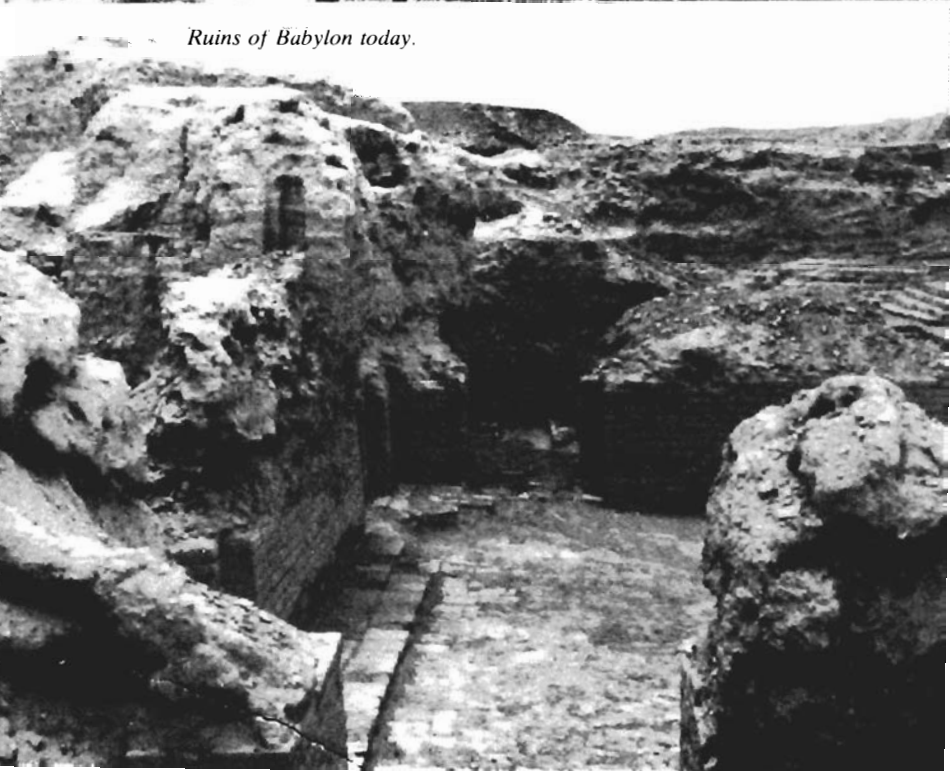
“Now Sheila and Marjorie, would you like to tell me what you know of Babylon?” asked Mr. Phillips.

Silence followed the question. The two girls looked at each other with a little laugh, and both admitted that they knew nothing about Babylon.

“If you lived in the days of Isaiah the prophet, you would know plenty about this mighty city,” remarked Mr. Phillips. “It was one of the oldest cities known to man, and was the capital of a mighty empire which spread over the then known world. Its greatest monarch was a man called Nebuchadnezzar who took Daniel the prophet captive to Babylon (Dan. 1:1-6). Under this king, the city rose to its greatest power. He caused much of it to be rebuilt, so that it became known as ‘the glory of kingdoms, and beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency’. Herodotus, an historian who lived many years before Christ, says that it measured a square 24 kilometres each way, enclosed by walls 26 metres thick, and 107 metres high. Those walls were intended to keep all enemies out, and were so strong, that it was thought that Babylon would last for ever. It was a beautiful city of stately palaces and homes, and it included a wonderful park of hanging gardens which the King caused to be built for his queen so that she did not become homesick for the shrubs, trees and flowers of her native land. The mighty river Euphrates flowed through the



Cyrus conquers Babylon.



Ruins of Babylon today.

centre of the city, adding to its beauty, and providing necessary water. No city before or since has equalled it for strength and beauty. Yet God declared that this mighty city would be completely overthrown, to become like Sodom and Gomorrah. I have seen the ruins of this city not far from Baghdad in Iraq. They are exactly as described by Isaiah the prophet. Yet smaller, weaker cities, like Jerusalem or Damascus, have withstood the ravages of time and attack, and have continued down the ages, as God declared they would. Isaiah's words have proved true, to this present time. How could he speak so definitely of the destiny of such a mighty city?"

"God must have revealed it to him," agreed the girls.

"That is the only possible explanation," commented Mr. Phillips. "So completely was the city destroyed (though this actually took place many centuries after Isaiah wrote) that for years men did not know the site of ancient Babylon for sure. And then, a little over one hundred and fifty years ago, its ruins were uncovered by archaeologists. Before then it was but a mound of dirt, but when this was dug through it revealed the foundations and walls of palaces, houses, and shops of Nebuchadnezzar's day. Many of the things discovered are now in the museums of the world. During the excavations, an incident occurred which proved how true are the words of Isaiah. The prophet declared that 'the Arabian shall not pitch his tent there,' which was a strange thing to say of such a mighty and populous city. But because of superstitious dread, the Arab workmen employed by the archaeologists would not camp overnight on the site of Babylon. They had some strange ideas about the place, that made them frightened to do so, so that they had to be taken each night to some other place to camp. Thus the words of the prophet were fulfilled to the very letter."

"Isaiah also says that shepherds would not make their folds there," remarked Ann.

"Yes," replied her father, "and those words are also true. In the days of Isaiah, Babylon was a very fertile place, watered by irrigation drawn from the river Euphrates. Today, it is but a sandy waste. It would be no use shepherds taking their flocks there, because there would be little for them to graze upon. Pass me that book on the bottom shelf called *Wonders Of The Past*, and I will show you a drawing of Babylon as it was in the days of the prophet, and photos of how it looks today."

Ann passed the book to her father, and the three girls spent some time looking at the interesting drawings of the ancient city with its stately entrance called the Ishtar Gate, and the magnificent road known as the Processional Way along

which rode the King as he returned from his many triumphs. But how different was all that pomp and glory in comparison to the graveyard of ruins that the photos revealed. After a while, Mr. Phillips interrupted them.

"Let me ask you another question, Sheila. You know a little about the history of our times, I suppose?"

"Yes, Mr. Phillips. History is one of my favourite subjects at school."

"Well, Sheila," continued Mr. Phillips with a smile, "would you say that Egypt is a great nation today?"

"No, I would not. As a matter of fact, we had a lesson on Egypt yesterday in our studies on General Knowledge, and the teacher remarked on how backward the Egyptians are. Most of the people are poor and ignorant; they have very little schooling, and suffer some terrible diseases. She did tell us that conditions have been a little better in recent years but even so, the Egyptians have suffered many defeats at the hands of the Jews."

"Was Egypt always like that, Sheila?"

"No, the teacher explained to us how that Egypt was once a very great power, as is shown by the pyramids and other ancient buildings."

"That is true," agreed Mr. Phillips. "In fact, in old times, Egypt was perhaps the greatest of the nations, and was feared by the others. Today, evidence of that greatness is to be seen in many museums of the world, and particularly in the Cairo Museum, which it has been my privilege to visit on several occasions. But today, Egypt is a backward nation, and has suffered three defeats by Israel, even though the Jewish people were largely unprepared for war. In the light of all this, read Ezekiel 29:15 for me Ann."

Ann read:

"It (i.e. Egypt) shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations; for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations."

"When the prophet spake those words," said Mr. Phillips, "Egypt was known as a nation of great power which for hundreds of years had ruled over other nations. Yet the prophet was able to predict that this would be the case no longer, and that it would become a base, or humbled, kingdom. Since he spake those words, Egypt has never ruled over other nations, and instead was humbled before them. Even though today, it has gained its independence, it is still in a backward condition. Many of its people live in abject poverty, and once you leave the main cities you find that they exist in very primitive

conditions. It has been the very weakness of Egypt, its constant defeats in battle that caused Mr. Sadat to seek peace with Israel."

"I can see why you believe the Bible is true," said Sheila frankly.

"It is undoubtedly true," remarked Mr. Phillips enthusiastically. "We have considered three nations, and have found that what the Bible has said concerning them has come to pass. The Bible declared that the Jews would be scattered into all nations, but would not be destroyed, and that in the latter years they would be brought again to their own land. On the other hand, it declared that mighty Babylon which took the Jews into captivity, would be so utterly destroyed, that the city would become a complete waste. It foretold that Egypt would continue as a nation, but in a humbled condition, no longer ruling over the other powers. Do you think that men could foretell these things without the help of God?"

The girls admitted that the evidence showed that God was with the prophets of Israel.

"Very well," continued Mr. Phillips. "If those predictions are true, what of the one found in Acts 1:11. Let me read it for you: 'This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven.'

"Those words were spoken to the disciples of Jesus, after they had seen him ascend into heaven. They teach that Jesus must return to this earth to fulfil therein the purpose of God. As God's words proved true regarding Israel, Babylon and Egypt, so they will do so in regard to Jesus Christ. One day he shall return to the earth, as this verse predicts. Now I want you to read Daniel 2:44, Ann, to show for what purpose he will return."

Ann turned up the place, and read:

"The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . ."

"That will do, Ann," interrupted Mr. Phillips. "Now read Jeremiah 3:17."

"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord . . ."

"Now Zechariah 14:9."

"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth . . ."

"Now Psalm 102:16."

"When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory."

"Thank you, Ann. Those four statements show that Jesus

is to return, that he is to set up a kingdom on earth that shall never be destroyed (and which shall bring universal peace to this troubled world — Isaiah 2:2-4), that he will reign as king over all the earth from his capital, Jerusalem, and that all this will be preceded by the restoration of the people of Israel. The history of nations shows that God's word is true, and that it truly foretells what is to come to pass. Moreover, the return of the Jews in our day, shows that every confidence can be placed in the Bible; in fact, it is the Word of God and to be trusted. What do you think of that, Sheila?"

"I think it has been a most interesting evening, Mr. Phillips, and I have learned a lot."

"Very well, girls; we will leave it there for the time being. And now, if you like, we will enjoy some music on the radiogram."

Chapter Three

CREATION

When The Earth Was Refilled

A few days later, Ann again invited her friends home, to discuss the Bible with Mr. Phillips. She wanted her father to tell them about creation, particularly in view of their encounter with Miss Smith. The girls agreed to come, but found it difficult to form the questions they desired to ask. It was left to Mr. Phillips to commence. He did so by telling the girls to relax, and inviting them to ask any questions, as he outlined for them the story of Creation.



"The first book of the Bible," he commenced, "is called *Genesis*, and it means 'beginning.' It is the book of beginnings. It tells how God created the heaven and the earth many, many years ago, and later filled it with its inhabitants. It explains how sin first made its appearance, and death followed; how God first introduced a way of salvation, and made it possible for man to attain unto it. It reveals the beginning of the nations of mankind, the beginning of the proclamation of the Gospel, the beginning of the people of Israel. It even commences with the statement: 'In the beginning God made heaven and earth.'"

"Daddy," interrupted Ann suddenly as she recalled her encounter with Miss Smith. "Was that six thousand years ago?"

"We do not know how long ago it was, for we are not told," replied her father. "Notice that *Genesis* 1:1 states that 'in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' and then states, 'and the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.' It seems that verse 1 records a period of time long before verse 2. It took place long before the creation of Adam and Eve, so long before, that the record merely says, 'In the beginning' — whenever that was!"

"It could have been many thousands of years ago," suggested Sheila.

"It could have been millions of years ago, for all we know," answered Mr. Phillips.

"Would that explain the existence of ancient fossils that Miss Smith told us about?" enquired Marjorie.

"The actual date of fossils has never been established with certainty," replied Mr. Phillips. "Authorities differ as to their antiquity. If they are as old as some scientists claim, then they date back to what we would call a pre-Adamic civilisation on the earth."

"Was there life upon the earth before Adam?" asked Ann.

"It could be possible," suggested Mr. Phillips, "though the Bible does not say so specifically. Nevertheless, the antiquity of the earth is strongly implied in the Bible."

"Where does it do that?" asked Ann.

"We read in *Genesis* 1:2 that the 'earth was without form and void' before the acts of creation referred to in the following verses, but Hebrew scholars maintain that the verb *hayah*, where it is expressed as in this sentence, should be rendered 'to

"In the beginning God created . . . and the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" — Genesis 1:1-2.

become,' 'to take place,' or some similar expression. The same verb in the same construction, is found in Genesis 2:7: 'man *became* a living soul.' If we so read Genesis 1:2, it would suggest that originally, the earth was not 'without form and void' as indicated there, but that it became so. This agrees with Isaiah 45:18 which should read, according to the Hebrew: 'He created it not a void' but 'to be inhabited.'"

"Does that mean the earth was peopled before the creation of Genesis 1?" asked Sheila.

"It does not specifically say that it was," commented Mr. Phillips. "But it could well have been so. If the fossils of which you have been speaking, are as old as scientists say, they would apply to that pre-Adamic creation. It might well be that the angels peopled the earth as mortals before this creation, and by a life of probation ultimately attained unto their present state. I say this because when Adam sinned, the angels said that he had become as they, to 'know good and evil' (Gen. 3:22)."

"What does 'without form and void' mean?" enquired Ann.

"The words mean waste and empty," replied her father. "If there was a pre-Adamic creation, it must have been overwhelmed by some terrible catastrophe when God's purpose with the earth had been completed. Those mortals who found approval in His sight would have been given divine nature, and as angels, become God's ministers to re-order creation (Gen. 1:26). It is the hope of those who obey God now that they might become 'equal unto the angels' at Christ's coming (Luke 20:36)."

"I find this rather a difficult subject, Mr. Phillips," commented Marjorie who had been puzzling over the discussion.

"It is rather difficult," agreed Mr. Phillips, "and I only mention it because of the discussion Ann had with Miss Smith. I can assure you that there is no real conflict between the Bible and real science; but let us remember that much that passes current for science is not confirmed. The theories of scientists often challenge facts whereas the Bible does not. The theory of evolution has never been proved, so that today many scientists are turning from it. What scientists claimed a few years back they deny today, but the Bible is constant and true, as we have seen from our consideration of its prophecies. In studying its pages, we need to ignore much that man declares, and concentrate upon the words of God, that we might understand His message."

"If the world had been overwhelmed by some terrible calamity, God must have brought order back from chaos,"

said Ann thoughtfully.

"Yes, indeed!" answered her father. "And that really foreshadows what God will do with the present chaotic conditions on earth as far as man's rule is concerned. Consider what happened in the beginning as recorded in the chapter before us. Before man was created, the earth was just a black mass floating in space 'without form and void'. If you think of the blackest night, the earth was surrounded in blackness more intense than that! Not a chink of light was to be seen, and the whole earth was but a moving mass covered by mighty oceans in which no land or life appeared. God determined to fill this empty, black, and useless abode with light, and life, and beauty in order that it might reflect to His glory. He set His angels to work to that end. First, He caused light to shine through the darkness, thus creating the first day. Then, on the second day, He formed the atmosphere above to bring into being that which we call 'heaven.' Thus the heavy, dark fog which previously rested upon the earth, and shut out light from its surface, was caused to float majestically across the blue sky in the form of clouds. On the third day, God gathered the waters together into seas, and the dry land which appeared, He called *earth*. He then clothed the earth with grass, and fruit, and forest trees. On the fourth day, He adjusted the Sun and Moon in relation to the earth, so that it might experience the change of seasons essential to life upon it, and might be governed by other influences that are to our great benefit. On the fifth day . . ."

"Wait a moment, Mr. Phillips," said Sheila, who had been listening rather intently to all this with a little frown on her face. "Didn't you just say that God caused light to come on the first day?"

"Yes, that is right."

"Well, if the sun was put in its place on the fourth day, where did the light come from?"

"Well Sheila," replied Mr. Phillips, "We do not see the shining of the sun at the moment do we?"

"Of course not; it is night time!"

"But we have light in this room."

"Did God use electric light?"

"Oh, I don't mean that. All I am suggesting is that if we can create light independent of the sun, how much more easily would the great Creator be able to do so with His infinite power. That would not be difficult for Him at all!"

"Oh, I see."

"On the fifth day . . ."

But now Marjorie had a question.

“Was the earth made before the sun, Mr. Phillips?”

“No, I don’t think so.”

“Well, doesn’t the Bible say that the sun was made on the fourth day?” (Gen. 1:16).

“It does, but the word in the Hebrew language from which our Bible has been translated, and which has been rendered ‘made’ in Genesis 1:16 really means ‘appointed.’ It is so rendered in Psalm 104:10: ‘He *appointed* the moon for seasons . . .’ I believe that God caused the light of the sun to penetrate the fog that surrounded the earth on the first day, and on the fourth day He completed this work by bringing the sun and moon into position where they could more directly govern and influence the earth. You know that the tides of the sea are regulated by the ‘draw’ of the sun and moon, and that the seasons are formed by the position of the earth in relation to the sun. Your science teacher would have told you that! Well, here is how it came about in the first instance. In this we see the wonderful provision of God. How terrible it would be if we had winter all the time. God so arranged the earth that we have a variation of seasons, and each, in its order, helps make life pleasant upon earth.”

“Oh, I see.”

“Well, to get back to our account of creation. On the fifth day, the oceans were found swarming with life, whilst through the heavens there soared myriads of birds. On the sixth day the cattle, reptiles and beasts of the earth made their appearance. But among all creation, there was found no creature to reflect the glory of the Creator, and therefore, the final act of creation was to be accomplished. The angels of God formed man in their image and set him over all the work of creation. He became the lord of creation, and he was given the task of governing first himself and then all forms of life. But I can see that you are bursting with another question Marjorie, what is it?”

“You said that the angels formed man, but in the Bible it says that God did it. Don’t you think God did it?”

“Yes, He did it, but through His angels or messengers. We read that they are His ministers that perform His pleasure, that do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word (Psa. 103:20-22). He is likened to a great King over them, a King who issues commands which are performed by His messengers. All they say, or do, is performed on His behalf, so that He is really the author of it. To give a very imperfect illustration, I might say that they act for God as the agent of a business acts for his firm (and the word ‘angel’ really means *messenger* or *agent*). When Mr. Brown who acts as representative, or agent,

for Messrs. Jones & Co. rings a customer on the telephone, he will say, 'Jones & Co. speaking.' Actually, it is Mr. Brown speaking, but because he is acting as a fully accredited agent, he uses the title of *Jones & Co.* In a similar manner, the angels of God used the title of God when they acted as His agents, for they performed the work of God. The Bible says, 'No one hath seen God at any time' (John 1:18), yet in other places we read that God visited the earth, and spake to men of old. It is much the same as if you interviewed Mr. Brown of Messrs Jones & Co., and in reporting your interview, you said, 'I saw Jones & Co. today.' Actually you never saw the principal, Mr. Jones himself, but only his agent, who represented Mr. Jones. And nobody has seen God who 'dwells in unapproachable light,' but only His agents. Even mortal men have been appointed His agents in the past, so we read of Moses who had to approach Pharaoh in the name of God: 'I have made thee a God unto Pharaoh' (Exod. 7:1).

The girls opened their Bibles at Exodus 7:1 and read the passage to which Mr. Phillips had directed them. But they found the subject difficult, and told Mr. Phillips so.

"Turn to 1 Corinthians 8:5-6," he told the girls, "and note carefully the words of Paul. He wrote: 'Though there be that are called gods, whether *in heaven* or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' Notice that Paul says that there are "gods many" and also consider that he is referring to some 'in heaven'. Those in heaven are God's messengers and are therefore given the name of God because they represent Him whenever necessary. Read Exod. 23:20-21 for me Ann."

Ann turned up the place, and read:

"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions for My name is in him."

"Notice what the statement says?" questioned Mr. Phillips. "God declared to Moses, 'My name is in him.' That means that the angel could act in the name of God, for God would endorse all that he did. God gave him that authority."

"Does that mean that whenever we read the word 'God' in the Bible, it refers to the angels?" enquired Ann.

"By no means," replied her father. "It means that every passage of Scripture relating to God should be considered in the light of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 8:5-6, that God the

Father is supreme over all others, including those 'called God' whether in heaven or on earth."

"What does Paul mean when he says that there are 'Gods many' on earth? Does he refer to pagan gods only?"

"I do not think so," answered Mr. Phillips. "You will notice that the Lord Jesus told the Jews of his day that the Old Testament Scriptures gave the name of 'God' to mortal men 'unto whom the word of God came' (John 10:34-35). He was quoting from Psalm 82:6-7, a passage of Scripture that refers to the rulers of Israel as 'gods' because they were given the authority to administer the word of God as the Law in Israel. Some of those rulers misused their authority, and therefore were threatened with punishment. The use of the term in this place shows that mortal men can be given God's high title, and represent Him on earth. The call of the Gospel is said to be designed to separating those who accept it as 'a people *for His name*' (Acts 15:14). Such people are told that they can receive the 'glory of God' (Romans 5:1-2), attain unto His nature (2 Peter 1:4), and ultimately have bestowed upon them His name (Revelation 3:12). That will take place at Christ's return which will be followed by the resurrection of the dead, and the bestowal of eternal life on the faithful. They will then constitute the members of God's family on earth, and as such will bear the name of their Father, as Ann does my name today. However, this is a difficult subject, and one you must think upon. I notice that Ann has been taking notes, and I suggest that she give a copy to each of you other girls, and that you think upon what I have said. You can then ask further questions about this subject. In the meantime, is there anything else that you would like to know?"

"Yes, Mr. Phillips," responded Sheila. "How was man formed at the beginning?"

"The Bible says, 'out of the dust of the ground.' When Adam was first created, he lay there a body without life. He was shaped like the angels, but without life. But then God caused him to breathe. His heart commenced to beat, his eyes opened, he stood up and began to walk, and talk, and think."

"Did he talk to himself, Mr. Phillips?" enquired Sheila with a twinkle in her eyes.

"No, Sheila. He spoke to the angels."

"Was he the same as them?"

"No. Though man had a mind higher than the other creatures, and was in shape like the angels, his nature was lower than theirs (Psa. 8:5). He was made of the dust, whereas they were of 'God's nature' (2 Pet. 1:4), and immortal (Luke 20:36).

He had to be tested. He had not proved himself, and until he did so, he could not be given eternal life. It is the wonderful promise of the Bible that though we are made lower than the angels we can attain unto equality with them. Jesus taught that those who please God, and follow His ways will be raised from the dead and 'made equal unto the angels' so that they shall 'never die' (Luke 20:36).

"Was Eve made at the same time as Adam?"

"No, the Bible shows that Eve was made later. In a wonderful way, God caused a deep sleep to come on Adam, something like a surgeon will do when he has to operate on a person. While he was asleep, God, the Master-Surgeon, performed an operation. He took out a portion of Adam from his side, and with this, still quivering with life, with all its nerves and sinews, he built up the woman."

"That was awfully inconvenient for Adam, wasn't it?" asked Sheila.

"There is no doubt about that; but it was the best way."

"Why is that? I should think it would be better for God to have created Eve out of the dust the same as Adam; it would have saved much pain."

"Well, God had a purpose in view. He wanted Adam and Eve to have everything in common: to think and feel alike, to have the same joys and hopes, to be full of love and sympathy for each other, to really be 'one', for they were to be husband and wife. And this was best done by creating the woman of the man. That is why Adam said of Eve: 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.' The word 'woman' means *out of man*. So although it caused a little inconvenience for the moment, it was the best way after all. Besides, it teaches a wonderful lesson."

"What is that?"

"In the Bible, Jesus Christ is called 'the second Adam' (1 Cor. 15:45), whilst the faithful are likened to 'his bride' (Rev. 19:7-8) or the 'second Eve' (2 Cor. 11:2-3). As the first Adam had to suffer in order that Eve might be formed, so the second Adam had to suffer in order that His spiritual bride might be formed; and as the first Adam had a sympathy, love and affection for the wife whom he could style 'bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh,' so there is sympathy, love and affection between Christ and his Ecclesia that makes them completely 'one.' But these are deep matters that we will not pursue now."

The Seventh Day

“I suppose the creation of Adam and Eve completed the work, Mr. Phillips?” enquired Marjorie.

“Yes, we read that ‘God looked upon all that He had made, and it was very good’ (Gen. 1:31), and that ‘on the seventh day He rested’ (Gen. 2:2).

“It seems strange to me that God should require rest if He is All-powerful,” remarked the enquiring Sheila.

“The word really means that He *ceased* His work, not that He required rest because He was tired. He had done all that He purposed, and so He rested, or ceased from His labours. Later, the seventh day was put aside as ‘a day of rest’ for Israel. The people, by law, had to ‘cease from their work’ as God did from His, and devote the day to doing His will and thinking His thoughts. The Jews were not allowed to light any fires on the Sabbath, they were not allowed to employ any labour, they were not allowed to go on any long journey; they had to keep the day as God designed it.”

“If that occurred on the seventh day, why do we observe it on the first day, Daddy?” asked Ann.

“We do not observe the Sabbath law, Ann. We merely make use of a custom that has developed over the centuries to have our regular meeting on Sunday. The change came first after the resurrection of Jesus. The Apostles were busy trying to convert the Jews to Christ on the Sabbath when they were all assembled in the Synagogues (Acts 17:2). Their own meeting together had to await a more convenient time, and for this purpose they selected the first day of the week to remember Christ in the way appointed (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Heb. 10:25). This was quite appropriate, for it was on the first day that He had risen from the dead (John 20:1).”

“But if God had commanded that we observe the Sabbath, Mr. Phillips, what right have we to alter it to the first day?” said Sheila.

“The first day is not the Sabbath, Sheila, nor a substitute for it. It is a day that we gather to remember Christ. Any day would do, though this is the most appropriate, and any number of times, for he instructed his disciples: ‘ . . . As often as ye do this . . . ’ (1 Cor. 11:26). He did not set down a special day, or a specific time.”

“Well, then, we should observe the Sabbath as well, Mr. Phillips,” persisted Sheila, who was very keen to discover a weak chink in the armour of Ann’s father.

“That is correct, Sheila, but not as commanded under the law of Moses. That gave man a set time to cease from his own

work and praise God. But Jesus taught that the true man of God will do this every day. He will be found always striving to rest from the works of sin and observe the will of God. He will not limit it to one day, but do it from day to day. Thus, for him, every day is a Sabbath, or a day given up to God. And so the Apostles taught the early believers not to think of one day above another (Gal. 4:10-11), not to separate the seventh day as a Sabbath (Col. 2:16), but to observe the spirit of its teaching every day. To them one day in seven could not be more holy than the others, for their lives were given completely to Christ. They were like the priests in the Temple, who did not set aside a special day for worship, for their lives were completely devoted to God. True Christians are in the same position. Do you think you can grasp this?"

"Not quite, Mr. Phillips, I will have to think it over."

At that stage, Ann interrupted the talk. For some time she had been wriggling impatiently in her chair, a sure sign that she wanted to say something. And now she burst out with it:

"Daddy, you said the Sabbath law was given by Moses, but it is mentioned in the book of Genesis: 'God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made' (Ch. 2:3). Doesn't that mean the law of the Sabbath was given to Adam?"

"That is a good question, Ann, and I am pleased you asked it. To answer it I will ask you a series of questions. You should be able to answer them all right. To begin with, who wrote the book of Genesis for God?"

"Moses, I suppose."

"That is right. Now for whom did he write it?"

"For the Jewish people over whom he was leader."

"Correct. 'Genesis' forms part of the first five books of the Bible which the Jews call the 'law.'"

"Now what does the word 'Genesis' mean, Ann?"

"It means 'beginning,' the book shows the beginnings of things."

"That is excellent, Ann, and really explains why reference to the Sabbath law finds its place in Genesis 2:3. It was not that God was commanding Adam to observe it, but Moses, the writer of the book, was explaining to his Jewish readers the beginning of the law of the Sabbath: why it was ordained and given to them. I want you to read Exodus 31:16-17 for me."

Ann found the place and read these words: "Wherefore the children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me

and the children of Israel for ever: for in the six days the Lord made heaven and earth and on the seventh day He rested.”

“Other places in Scripture show that Moses knew nothing about the Sabbath before certain instructions were given to him by God (see Exod. 16:23), and we find nothing in the Bible recording any such law until we come to the book of Exodus. It is obvious, therefore, that when Moses records ‘And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it’ in Genesis 2:3 he was really intent upon teaching the Jews the meaning of the Sabbath law as commanded them by God. On that day the Jews were expected to rest from their works (the works of sin) as God had rested from His. True Christians, however, will try to do this every day. Do you think you comprehend that?”

“I think so, Daddy.”

“Very well! I think we will leave it there. You have all had enough to think about for one night, and I can see Marjorie yawning — so I think you had better get off to bed.”

Chapter Four

IN THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT

The lengthy conversation between Mr. Phillips and the three girls had excluded Joan. She had felt a little out of place among Ann's older friends, and a little jealous that her father should give so much time to them.

The next day, therefore, she sought him out. As was his custom, he was strolling along the length of gleaming white sand in front of their home. Upon that beautiful beach, the waves of the ocean were gently splashing. It was a glorious day. The sun shone brightly out of a blue, cloudless sky and was reflected in the waves of the sea, so that all nature seemed to smile.

Together Joan and her father walked along the beach for some distance, examining the pretty little shells that were found in profusion upon it, and watching the white yachts that sailed gaily along the blue ocean, dancing up and down upon the waves. At last they stopped for a rest, and Joan said, "Isn't it a lovely day, Daddy?"

"Indeed it is, dear, It is so quiet and peaceful here."

"You always like to come here to walk, don't you?"

"Yes, it is good to get away from people sometimes — especially with all the worry, and trouble and evil in the world."

"Why are people like that, Daddy? Didn't God make the earth 'good' like you said last night?"

"Yes, He did; but then man sinned, and with sin came evil and death."

"Would you tell me about it, Daddy?" asked Joan, remembering how she had been excluded from the conversation the night before.

"Very well, I will tell you a story, a story contained in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Genesis, and which we can call: '*In the Garden of Delight*'."

"It was a glorious garden, planted by God and filled with all manner of flowers and trees. No ugly weeds or prickly thistles spoiled it, and noble rivers helped to water it. It was called the Garden in Eden, and as Eden means *delight*, it can be called, The Garden of Delight.

"In this garden, God placed Adam and Eve. They were given permission to enjoy its pleasures to the full, to eat of the fruit of

the trees, to tend its few needs, to joy in the pleasant walks and lovely sights of glorious flowers that it presented. And this they proceeded to do.

“But in the centre of the garden were two strange trees. One was called the *Tree of Life*, and the other was called the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. Concerning this tree God declared: ‘Thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.’

“You see, God was testing Adam and Eve. He had given them everything that was beautiful, and even the hope of eternal life if they proved obedient. Now He was trying them to see if they loved Him sufficiently to obey Him.

“And, for a while, all went well. Adam and Eve were not much interested in these strange trees. Moreover, they had been told that to eat of the fruit of *The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil* would bring death; and they did not want to die. So they left them well alone.

“But in this Garden of Delight there was a very cunning animal to whom God had given the power of speech. This was the serpent. The Hebrew name of this animal (*nachash*) sounds like the hiss of a serpent, but it also signifies *to perceive, to observe**. The serpent had listened intently to all that had gone on, and began to reason the matter in his mind.

“One day he met Eve on her own, and began to discuss the law of God with her.

“‘Is it really true that God has said that You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’ asked the serpent.

“Eve replied: ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, except the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden. God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die’.

“The serpent then made a statement that must have shocked Eve for a moment. It declared: ‘You shall not surely die!’

“That was a contradiction of what God had said. It was a lie, and Eve knew it was a lie. But instead of rejecting it as false, she continued to think upon it.

“And that was where she made a mistake; for the more anybody thinks on things that are evil, the more inclined they

* A related word was used by Laban as recorded in Genesis 30:27, when he told Jacob: “I have learned by *experience* that Yahweh hath blessed me for thy sake”. He had discovered this by careful *observation* of the circumstances. The serpent was an animal that observed and reasoned from a fleshly viewpoint, but failed to take into consideration the will or words of God.

are to try them! Eve was no exception. As she pondered what she had been told, the smooth, seductive voice of the serpent came to her again: 'You will not die, Eve. God knows that if you eat, your eyes will be opened, and you will be filled with Godly wisdom!'

"There was a measure of truth in what the serpent said. And as Eve thought on it, she became possessed with a desire to eat the fruit. If it gave her such wisdom, would she not be able to escape death?

"She looked at the tree.

"The fruit was ripe and luscious, and altogether desirable. To her it looked 'good for food'. Slowly, the lust of the flesh, stimulated in her mind by the teaching of the serpent, but not by God (see 1 John 2:16), took possession of her.

"She looked again, and her mouth watered, for it was 'pleasant to the eyes'. The 'lust of the eyes' developed within her.

"She looked a third time, and was tempted. 'Surely,' she thought, 'such wonderful fruit will make me as wise as the serpent has said it would!' The 'pride of life' was stimulated within her (see 1 John 2:16 again).

"As desire took possession of her, thoughts of love and loyalty to God were forgotten. No longer did she recall His warning that death would be the result of disobedience. Out went her hand, and, in a moment, the fruit was off the tree and in her mouth. And Adam, who came along that instant, was offered the forbidden fruit by Eve and he accepted it. Together they ate it.

A Cloud Comes Over The Garden Of Delight

"And then they remembered the warning of God. They realised that they had sinned, and their conscience started to worry them. What would they say when they met the Angel of God! They were like young people who having been headstrong and gone their own way, then begin to worry about the consequences. They found that eating the forbidden fruit had not brought the delightful results they thought it would. A cloud seemed to have come over the Garden of Delight so as to spoil some of its beauty. They looked at each other and saw for the first time, they were naked. This had not concerned them before, but now they felt ashamed. They plucked some fig leaves and sewing them together, made themselves aprons.

"And then they heard the angel of God in the Garden of Delight. But it was no longer a Garden of Delight to Adam and



In the Garden of Delight "they heard the voice of God . . ."

Eve, for now their hearts were filled with a terrible fear. What was going to happen to them? Previously they had met the angel of God with joy, and had enjoyed talking with him, but now they did not want to meet him at all. They decided to hide. But what is the good of hiding from one with the power of God. The voice of the angel was heard: ‘Adam where art thou?’

“And Adam confessed: ‘I am afraid, because I was naked, and hid myself.’

“Who told thee that thou art naked?” asked the angel.

“Then Adam confessed his sin.”

“But he was not altogether honest. He tried to get out of it. He blamed the sin on to God and on to his wife: ‘The woman whom *Thou gavest* me, she gave me of the fruit and I did eat.’

“In the presence of the mighty Power of God, the greatest heroes become cowards if they have not obeyed His will.

“The angel enquired of Eve why she had done this thing, and she blamed the serpent.

“The serpent had no one to blame.”

“And so God passed judgment. Now that sin had entered the Garden of Delight, nothing could be the same until it had been destroyed. God had to punish, otherwise people would sin without care.

“The serpent was condemned to wriggle around on the ground and swallow the dust.

“The woman was to be in subjection to her husband.

“The man was to labour by the sweat of his brow to obtain food until death claimed him.

“Even the ground was cursed, so that now it would bring forth thorns and thistles. And Adam and Eve were driven from the beautiful Garden of Delight, and an angel was stationed at the east of it to guard the way to the Tree of Life, in case, as God said, ‘Adam put forth his hand and eat and live forever.’

“However, the tree remained, a token to Adam and Eve of the hope of eternal life. But how were they to attain unto that hope seeing that sin had brought them to a state of mortality (Romans 5:12)? Moreover, they were conscious of their weakness, and felt the stirring of sin within them. They felt spiritually naked, and recognised the need for a proper covering.

“And God proceeded to show what was required. He took from them the fig-leaf-aprons they had provided for themselves, and slaying an animal, He covered them with its skin. So their nakedness (which in the Bible is used figuratively of sin — see Revelation 16:15) was hidden away, to teach that sin can be forgiven. The animal (a lamb — Revelation 13:8) used for this purpose comprised the first sacrifice. It pointed forward to

Jesus Christ who is called 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29), and who is the antitype of 'the lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Revelation 13:8). When one comes to understand the purpose of God, and is baptised into Christ, he is said to 'put on Christ' as Adam put on the covering that God provided him (Galatians 3:26), and his sins are 'covered' or forgiven by God (Acts 2:38; Rom. 4:6-8).

"Meanwhile, the 'very good' condition of creation had been spoiled by sin. It had aroused in Adam and Eve desires that were contrary to the will of God, and had brought them under the power of death. Their destiny was now the grave, and only through the mercy of God, and by a resurrection to eternal life could they escape from the penalty of mortality that already began to work in them."

**God's Promise
To Man —
Genesis 3:15**

"That is a story with a sad ending, Daddy," remarked Joan, as her father stopped.

"That is true, Joan, but it is not the end of the story. God gave a promise that He would provide a Son to save man from sin and death, and open the way to life eternal. He told the serpent: 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. Thou shalt bruise his heel but he shall bruise thy head'" (Gen. 3:15).

"I don't understand what that means, Daddy!"

"Well, let me try to explain. The serpent had said, 'Thou shalt not die.' Was that true or false?"

"It was false."

"Very well, let us say that the serpent stands for that which is false. On the other hand, Eve said, 'If we touch the tree we shall die.' Was that true?"

"Yes."

"Well, let us say that she stands for that which she proclaimed, which was the Truth."

"The Angel said: 'I will put enmity between thee (i.e. the Serpent who stood for that which was false) and the Woman (who proclaimed that which was truth). Between the false and the true there is no friendship. That was shown last night when Ann told us how she and the teacher had been in conflict over the teachings of the Bible. There are always those who would try to lead us into error or to bad habits, and then, if one is going to make a stand for truth, or for what is right, arguments and enmity result. Do you think you understand that?"

"Yes, I think so, Daddy."

"Very well! Now what happened when Adam and Eve

listened to the voice of the serpent?"

"They disobeyed God."

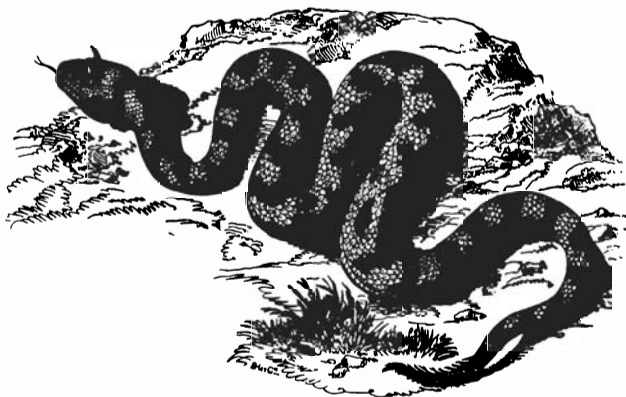
"And what did God do?"

"He punished them, as He had said He would, with death."

"That is true. The serpent which reasoned matters on his own account without hearkening to God, represented fleshly people who ignore the Word of God. Therefore, from the serpent, originated the false teaching that Adam and Eve would not die, which led to disobedience, and finally to death. Those who give themselves to these things can therefore be justly called *the seed of the serpent*, and he has numerous progeny in the earth. Is this too difficult for you to understand, Joan?"

"I don't think so, Daddy."

"Now, we agreed that the woman had told the serpent the



Truth. What would have happened if she had never listened to the serpent?"

"She would have obeyed God, and not sinned, I suppose."

"Has there ever been anyone who has obeyed God in every way?"

"Only Jesus Christ!"

"Correct, and he can well be called the 'seed of the woman.' Did Jesus die?"

"Yes."

"Correct again. He died that others might live. In this He was 'bruised' by the serpent power (Isa. 53:5). But did He remain in the grave!"

"No, Daddy. God raised Him from the dead."

"True, and by that means he was 'healed' from the mortal nature he had inherited from his mother, the nature that is the heritage of all the descendants of Adam and Eve. He was the

'seed of the woman' promised by God in the first covenant of promise contained in the Bible; for 'God sent forth His son made of a woman, made under the Law to redeem them that were under the law' (Galatians 4:4). God also warned that the serpent would 'bruise' the seed of the woman 'on the heel.' A bruise on the heel is not very serious. It may cause one to limp for a time, but one soon recovers from it. But a bruise on the head can be fatal, and God promised that the Seed of the Woman would bruise the Seed of the Serpent on the head. When we consider the Lord Jesus Christ, we can understand what God meant. Jesus came in our nature, a nature that is prone to sin and subject to death. But Jesus never sinned. He never gave way to temptation, but conquered it all, rendering perfect obedience unto God. Therefore, though he died, God raised him from the dead, and gave him life eternal. In that way, he destroyed the serpent power of sin and death" (Hebrews 2:14; Romans 7:23; 8:2).

"You said that a bruise on the head will bring death, but I had a bruise the other day, and it did not worry me at all," commented Joan.

"The word *bruise* should be rendered *crush*," answered her father. "The word in the Hebrew signifies that. A slight bruise on the head might not be fatal, but if it were crushed it certainly would be! On the other hand, you can have your foot cut right off, and still not die!"

"But people still sin and die, even though they believe in God," said Joan who was enjoying the walk and talk with her father.

"That is true; but God will forgive their sins, and raise them up to life eternal if they approach Him through Jesus Christ. And this is what God promised Eve. Thus, in the midst of the failure in the Garden of Delight, God gave hope to mankind. There after, men who were faithful, looked forward to the coming of one who would make it possible for them to rise again to life eternal after death (Dan. 12:2). They realised that they sinned and were worthy of death, but hoped and prayed for the mercy and forgiveness of God. Do you think you understand all this?"

"It is very difficult, Daddy, I will try."

"That's right, Joan, we can but try. And here comes Ann, Sheila and Marjorie."

"Oh bother!" exclaimed Joan who was enjoying the company of her father.

The girls had come to bid Mr. Phillips goodbye before leaving for their homes.

“We have had a lovely time, Mr. Phillips!” said Marjorie, “and we want to thank you.”

“I am glad you came,” replied Mr. Phillips, “and I hope you’ve enjoyed our talk on the Bible.”

“We did very much,” replied Sheila, “but there is one thing you haven’t explained.”

“What is that, Sheila?”

“How are we sure that the Bible is true, Mr. Phillips? All you have said is in the Bible, but it may be wrong!”

“Well,” replied Mr. Phillips, “you must come again one week-end, and we will consider that subject also.”

“Very well,” replied the girls. “That is a promise. And now we must hurry to catch our train. Goodbye.”

“Goodbye,” replied Mr. Phillips.

Chapter Five

A TERRIBLE CRIME TEACHING AN IMPORTANT LESSON

The Phillips' family had just completed reading Genesis 4, and Mr. Phillips, as was his custom, proceeded to recapitulate the chapter briefly, giving opportunity for his children to ask questions if they so desired.

"This is a most important chapter, teaching an important lesson," he declared. "Both Cain and Abel were sons of Adam and Eve. Both were religious, for both sought to worship God. Moreover, both were prepared to sacrifice, for even Cain brought of the fruit of the ground as an offering for God. But Abel, in addition, brought an animal, a firstling of his flock, as a sacrifice . . ."

"Just a moment," interrupted Peter who delighted in challenging his father. "Where are we told that Abel brought of the fruits of the ground?"

"In verse four," replied his father.

"I don't see it there!" exclaimed Peter.

"It is contained in the word *also*. That signifies *in addition*, and the verse can be rendered in that way. Cain brought the results of his own labour, but Abel, remembering the instruction of God to his parents, and the manner in which God had provided them with a covering, brought an animal as well. He recognised the need of blood-shedding in true worship, such as Paul states in Hebrews 9:22. Perhaps you will read it for us, Peter."

Peter read: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission."

"Abel understood that fact," commented Mr. Phillips, "and so God was pleased with his worship. Accordingly, he 'offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain' and this pleased God (Hebrews 11:4)."

"What is the significance of blood shedding in a sacrifice?" asked Graeham.

"The shedding of blood brings the life of the flesh to an end," explained Mr. Phillips. "But then, in sacrifice, that blood is offered to God, and was placed on or by the altar. Therefore, as blood represented life, when the offerer slew the animal and

gave its blood to God on the altar, he figuratively declared that he would put to death the demands of the flesh that are contrary to God, and give his life in dedication to the will of God. He commenced a new life before God. Turn to Leviticus 17:11, and read it for us."

Graeham read: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."

"That verse teaches that blood is a symbol of life. Normally it provides the means of sustaining the life of the flesh, but when an animal was slain it no longer did so. Instead the blood was given to God on the altar. In doing this, the worshipper proclaimed that he would 'mortify' or 'put to death' the desires of the flesh that are contrary to God, and, instead, would give his life to God in performing His will (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5). The words of Paul that you read from Hebrews 9:22, therefore, mean that unless a believer is prepared to give his life to God there would be for him no remission of sins. In other words, a believer must see in the sacrifice given on his behalf, a representative of himself, and so try to render obedience to God in all his ways, so that he becomes, in fact, a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1-2). Though Cain was prepared to give God of the fruits of his increase, he was not prepared to sacrifice his life. Hence God was not pleased with his offering."

"Is there any significance in the meaning of the names, Cain and Abel?" asked Ann.

"Yes, Cain means *Gain*. That was the one thing in life he desired. He grew up a selfish, sullen man, who placed supreme value in gaining material things. Eve had thought that he was the promised seed, who would crush the serpent's head. How wrong she was in that! Instead, he represented the seed of the serpent, and in the drama of this chapter he enacted that part of the promise."

"What does Abel signify?" asked Joan.

"Abel's name means *Vanity* or *Empty*. He was the opposite to Cain. He saw nothing of lasting value in the things of this life, and recognised the folly of 'the way of Cain' (Jude 11). The things that delighted Cain were vain and empty to Abel, who put his trust in God (See Ecclesiastes 1:2-3; 12:8)."

"Cain was a farmer, and Abel was a shepherd," observed Graeham.

"Yes, Cain was a tiller of the soil, and therefore had his eyes turned constantly to the earth. He was of 'the earth earthy' (1 Corinthians 15:47). Abel was a shepherd, with his

eyes centred upon the distant horizon, seeking pasture for his flocks. He was a type of Christ who likened himself to the good shepherd that cares for his sheep (John 10). Notice that both men worshipped God, but in a different way. Whereas Abel was careful to find out exactly what God required of him, Cain thought God ought to be well pleased with what he should offer. The story of Cain and Abel teaches us that God does not only desire us to worship Him, but to do so 'in truth' (John 4:24). Any other form of worship is useless to Him.

"When Cain saw his offering was rejected whilst his brother's was accepted, his true character asserted itself. The 'enmity' which God warned would be manifested between those who stand for truth and those who stand for error became evident. Cain became sullen and vengeful. He looked at his brother with hostility, and began to hate him without cause. Hence he became a murderer by intent (1 John 3:15), for no other reason than his works were evil whilst those of his brother were righteous. Even so, God tried to help him. An angel was sent to reason with him. 'Why are you wroth? Why is your countenance fallen?' he was asked. 'If you do well, shall you not be accepted?' But Cain was beyond such reasoning. . ."

"Before you go on, have you noticed that in the margin of the Bible, the word 'accepted' is rendered as 'have the excellency'?" asked Graeham.

"Yes," replied his father. "It was an exhortation to Cain to correct his ways, that he might retain the position of eminence that he had over Abel."

"What was that?"

"As firstborn he had the right to act as priest, to represent the family to God (Numbers 8:14-18); but to do so he had to worship acceptably, which he was not doing."

"What does verse 7 mean?" asked Peter. "It says that 'sin lieth at the door'."

"The word there rendered 'sin' is elsewhere translated 'sin-offering'. There was a sin-offering in the form of a lamb, crouching at the door. All Cain had to do was to offer that to God, and his offering would be accepted. But he was not prepared to do it. He preferred to slay his brother rather than one of the animals! God told him that if he obeyed Him, he would retain the rule over Abel. But Cain was not prepared to listen. Instead, when he was talking to Abel, he slew him. Probably Abel had tried to warn him of the consequence of his action, but in vain. Argument followed, and tragedy ensued. Unable to restrain himself Cain resorted to murder."

"The Angel again talked to Cain. 'Where is Abel your



Tragedy in Creation: The first death!

brother?' he asked. Cain claimed he did not know: 'Am I my brother's keeper?' he gruffly enquired. And then the Angel revealed that he knew all about the crime: 'Your brother's blood cries unto me from the ground,' he told Cain.

Banished To The Land Of Nod

"Cain was punished. He was told that the very ground upon which he as a farmer relied, and which he had used to cover his sin, would prove more difficult to till. Moreover, he would be rejected from the worship of God, and would become a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth."

"What does 'vagabond' mean?" asked Joan.

"It means a wanderer. It means that Cain would wander from place to place as the earth would not yield sufficient increase to him. Cain was appalled at the punishment. 'You have driven me from the place of worship, and made me a fugitive in the earth, so that every one that findeth me shall slay me,'" he lamented.

"That's strange," interrupted Peter. "If Abel was dead, only Cain would remain. Who then would kill him?"

"Adam and Eve had other children besides those two," declared Mr. Phillips. "This is shown in the statement of Genesis 5:4. Being driven from God, Cain was worried lest others of Adam's family would avenge the murder of Abel. But God gave him protection. He warned that any trying to kill Cain would themselves be treated as criminals."

"The Bible says that God 'set a mark upon Cain'. What does that mean?" asked Ann.

"We are not told what the mark was," replied her father. "But it was something that distinguished Cain so that people, recognising him, and recalling the words of God would not slay him. He was then driven from the presence of God into the land of Nod."

"How could he be driven from the 'presence of God,' if God is everywhere present as the Sunday School book says?" asked Joan.

"The term 'the presence of God' is used for the centre where God was worshipped," explained her father (see Jonah 1:3). "Cain was expelled from such a place until he was prepared to seek forgiveness in the way God devised; but he would not do that."

"Where is the land of Nod," asked Peter. "Mum makes mention of the Land of Nod when she wants us to go to bed!"

"That is a different expression," said Mr. Phillips. "The word 'Nod' signifies *Exile*. Cain was driven into exile."

"That is like Israel when they rejected the Lord Jesus," observed Graham.

"True," commented Mr. Phillips. "And in Cain's attitude towards Abel, we have a type of the attitude of the Jews of Christ's day to the Lord Jesus. In Matthew 23:35 the Lord set forth Cain as an illustration of the punishment Israel would suffer if the people continued to disobey God. See how closely Cain's punishment foreshadowed that of Israel. He was sent from the place of worship; driven into exile; made a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; under threat of those who disliked him; and yet, like Israel, with a distinguishing mark, and protected by the warning of God against any who might harm him."

"What happened to Cain when he was driven from God?" asked Joan.

"He was driven from the 'presence of God', that is, from the centre where the altar had been erected, and the family of Adam and Eve worshipped. Therefore he left the precincts of the Garden of Eden, and built a city, which he called *Enoch*. We do not know exactly where that was."

"That is a strange name for a city," commented Peter.

"Enoch means *Dedicated*. Hence the city was a city of worship, but not according to the Truth. It was a place of worship in apostasy to God, and evidently Cain made his son, priest of that city of false worship! That, too, has its antitype in the Bible, for in Revelation 18, reference is made to a great city associated with a false kind of worship styled 'Babylon the Great'. Therefore, in the chapter we read this evening we have a remarkable foreshadowing of events that took place after the crucifixion of Christ."

"Does Lamech find his place in that foreshadowing?" asked Graeham.

"Indeed, yes. Lamech was the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain, and hence foreshadowed the attitude of men and women in these days which are almost seven millenia from creation. Lamech was permissive, for he had two wives. His children became prominent in commerce, pleasure and power. Jabal was 'the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle'. He was the 'father' of such. He employed others to do the work. He thus stood for profit in great multiple commercial undertakings he developed. Jubal, his second son, organised the pleasure of the times, particularly in regard to the growth of popular music (v. 21). Tubal-Cain his third son became noted for the manufacture of metal goods, and especially munitions of war. He stood for power. And mention is made of Lamech's daughter, Naamah which is quite unusual in Scripture. Ob-

viously she asserted herself so as to become dominant. She evidently stood for women's liberation! So you have a picture of things, developing out of Cain, that is remarkably like those of today. There was a false form of religion, and mighty undertakings in the fields of profit, pleasure, power and permissiveness. And Lamech led the way in this. He claimed he did not need the protection of God as did Cain. Let anybody wound him, and he would kill him. Thus did he boast to his wives. 'If Cain be avenged sevenfold,' he boasted, 'truly Lamech shall be seventy and sevenfold' (v. 24). This is a significant number, for when Peter asked the Lord how often he should forgive his brother, Christ said, 'seventy times seven'. He used the very figure used by Cain, but in reverse."

"The story of Cain and Abel provides a warning. It reveals that we can be like Cain whose name means *Gain*; a man who saw in worldly possessions the main object of life; or we can be like his brother Abel, whose name means *Vanity*, and who saw that the 'way of Cain' provides but empty triumphs after all, that their pleasures are fleeting and soon give way to pain. Abel, therefore, sought out the way of God knowing that this has 'promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come' (1 Timothy 4:8). Cain's history is finished, and has over it the caption of *Failure*; Abel's history is related to eternity, and bears the caption of *Success*. Though he was murdered, he will yet rise from the grave to receive eternal life, and an abiding inheritance upon the earth (Psalm 37:34-38). This was foreshadowed in that another son was granted to Adam and Eve, to take the place of Abel. His name was Seth, which means *Appointed*. He was appointed to the position of privilege associated with Abel. Hence, in him, Adam and Eve saw in figure the resurrection of their murdered son. So he completed the drama of Cain and Abel. Though Abel died, he did not die in vain (see v. 10), whereas Cain died eternally. Though bruised in the heel, Abel will rise to eternal life; whereas Cain will never attain unto eternal life. Eternal death will be his lot: the fate of all the seed of the serpent. We need to avoid that fate, and therefore I try to encourage you to read the Bible every day. The Lord Jesus declared that the days that preceded the Flood, prefigured the conditions that may be expected in the earth at his return (Luke 17). We see about us conditions similar to those days, and we are wise to stand aside from it all, and seek the way of God in truth. Hence the importance of us reading the Bible every day."

Chapter Six

HOW GOD PUNISHED THE UNGODLY BY A MIGHTY FLOOD

The World Before The Flood

The period from Creation to the Flood is some 1656 years, and yet all this long time is recorded in six chapters of the Bible.

Another son was born to Adam and Eve, after the murder of Abel, and his name they called Seth, which means "Appointed." He was appointed to take the place of Abel, and this he did by worshipping God in truth as his brother had done.

These six chapters of Genesis, unfortunately, show how that the influence of the wicked descendants of Cain caused the descendants of Seth to gradually drift away from the worship of God.

Evil will always overcome good, unless it is attacked and destroyed. We must destroy evil habits, and separate ourselves from evil company, if we do not want to be affected by these things.

Evil habits are like bad fruit. Just as one rotten apple will affect the good fruit surrounding it, until the whole case is ruined, so a few evil thoughts, and bad company, if encouraged, will slowly alter our characters. First we begin to excuse things we know are wrong, then we profess to see no harm in them, and finally we are found doing them.

It was so in those early times before the Flood.

The descendants of Cain were men of power who cared nothing for the worship of God. He had not been named *Gain* for nothing. Though driven away from the centre where God was worshipped, into the Land of Exile, he commenced to build up his possessions. He built a city, and as time went by and children were added to his family, he extended his power. His children followed in his footsteps. They became numerous and prosperous. They were skilled in music and the arts, and in the manufacture of brass and iron (Gen. 4:21-22). With this they forged weapons of war, for true to the character of their father, they were not against shedding the blood of others in order to gain their wants (Gen. 4:23-24). They rejected the way of God, and became known as Sons of Man (Gen. 6:2), because they followed the way of man.

The children of Seth were different. They became known

as "Sons of God" (Gen. 6:2) because they followed the way of God (1 John 3:1-2). For many years these two groups were as nations apart, neither mixing with the other, for their ways were completely different. Among both sections there were outstanding men. The Sons of Men applauded those who were skilful in business or in war. The Sons of God admired those who were outstanding in righteousness. Among these there were fine leaders who educated their brethren in the ways of God, and set an example for others to follow. There was Enoch, whom God especially mentions as a man of great virtue (Gen. 5:24). There was Methuselah, who lived longer than any other man before or since, for he lived to be the great age of 969 years (v. 25).

But gradually the separateness between these two groups disappeared. The Sons of God looked with envy at the pleasures and possessions of the Sons of Men. Perhaps they were allured by the music, arts and treasures in which the latter excelled. They probably found worldly life an exciting change. Perhaps they thought that the attitude of their fathers, old men like Methusaleh, was a little old-fashioned, and not up with the times. In any case, they were tested, and failed. They were initially attracted by the things in which the Sons of Men excelled, then they came to admire them, and finally they became close friends with the Cainites, who were in exile from God.

Matters went from bad to worse. It had been God who had decreed the separation between the two classes in the first place, and who had driven Cain into the Land of Exile because of his wickedness, but now the Sons of God were leaving the way of righteousness to go, themselves, into the Land of Exile. They were attracted by the fashionable appearance of some of the daughters of the Men of Cain, and some of them took them for wives. And then, instead of bringing their wives over to the right way of worshipping God, their wives dragged them into the "way of Cain" (Jude 17).

The "enmity" that God had decreed would exist between the True and False then manifested itself. Some among the Sons of God stood up to warn and rebuke their fellows, but they would not listen to them. When people are enjoying themselves they don't like to be reminded that they are doing wrong. They try to excuse themselves, and turn with anger upon those who continue to point out the evil of their ways. This was the case in those early days. Though a few continued to worship God in truth, the majority were drawn into evil.

The Witness Of Enoch

Among the faithful sons of God, Enoch was outstanding. As the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth (Jude 14), he was contemporary with the ruthless and violent Lamech. But he matched Lamech's contempt for God and His laws, with his righteousness, and forthright preaching. He warned the world that the time of retribution was coming. As a prophet, he predicted the judgment that God would send upon that world of wickedness. "Behold," he proclaimed. "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14-15).

With forthright vigour, Enoch the Dedicated proclaimed his warning message, calling upon his contemporaries to step out of the way that leads to an abiding place in the grave, for the way of righteousness that promises life. He became a familiar figure to those about him, until one day he was missing. People looked for him but "he could not be found" (Hebrews 11:5), for God had translated him. Thus one day his voice was raised, and people were either attracted or repelled by his message; the next day he was silent and missing. People asked what had become of him, and a search was instituted, but in vain.

What is remarkable is the fact that he is styled "the seventh from Adam" (Jude 14), which suggests that he types those who shall be living at the epoch of Christ's return. They, like Enoch, will be taken from out of the impending judgment, so that their voices, too, will be silenced. Ecclesial halls will remain closed, and members will not attend their places of business. They will be taken to the presence of the Lord, and therefore out of the "time of trouble" that shall disturb the rest of mankind (Daniel 12:1-2). As in the days of Enoch, a search will be made for them, but, again, in vain, for they will "not be found".

To impress his contemporaries with the significance of the times, Enoch had called his son Methusaleh. Methusaleh is the oldest man who ever lived. His name signifies: *When he dieth it shall come.* It is significant that he died in the very year of the Flood, so that to those who heeded the message of Enoch, the death of his son would be a matter of great importance.

The fifth chapter emphasises the mortality of man by reiterating after every one of those mentioned therein (except Enoch), *And he died* (vv. 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31). With monotonous regularity this statement is made, emphasising the helplessness of the human race in spite of the long lives then

lived. Inevitably the end awaits even a Methusaleh who lived 969 years. This phrase became the theme-song of mortal man's existence, witnessing to the need of a redeemer.

Meanwhile the time came when God's way was hopelessly corrupted in the earth (Genesis 6:12), when the glorious truths He had put before mankind were altered, and but few remained to worship Him as He desired. Those few still warned the people that they were heading for disaster, but now hardly anybody cared about such talk. Those who remained faithful looked for a leader to arise who might help them in their struggle against evil. At last one arose, whose name was Noah, which means *Rest* or *Comfort*. But by then the Truth was almost without any true followers, for the Sons of God had been overcome by the evil influence of the Cainites as completely as Abel had been murdered by his brother. And now, at last, God decided to interfere for the honour of His name.

Many years later, the Lord Jesus referred to this time when he told His disciples: "As the days of Noah were so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37). For that reason, though evil abounds today, and few listen to the voice of Truth, true followers of Christ do not lose heart. They know that God is about to intervene again, this time to send His Son to set up His Kingdom upon the earth, that all the righteous, from Abel onwards, might receive their reward, and true peace and joy replace the wickedness and evil so prevalent today.

**How God Saved
The Righteous And
Punished The
Wicked**

The Phillips' family had just completed reading Genesis 6 and 7 and, as usual, were ready for a brief talk on the chapters. "I have a picture of Noah's Ark, Daddy," remarked Joan.

"That would be nothing like Noah's Ark, Joan," declared Peter, always ready to pounce on his younger sisters.

"It must have been a big boat to hold all the animals," said Ann.

"True," declared Mr. Phillips. "Noah's Ark was a very large vessel about 152 metres long and 15 metres high. It was built in three storeys, with a door in the side, and a window in the top. Within, were rooms for men and animals, and storage for food" (Genesis 6:14-16).

"It must have taken a long time to build, Daddy," commented Ann.

"Yes, it took considerable time; and during all that long time, it was there as a warning to the people of the coming calamity" (v. 3).

“Why didn’t the people take any notice?” asked Peter.

“Perhaps at first some did, but as time went on they grew used to the warning of God, and did not really believe it. They grew self-satisfied with their possessions. They had learnt many things, and had come to use God’s wonderful creation without thought for Him who giveth all. They took it all for granted. They saw in their beautiful homes, their lovely parks and gardens, and their splendid cities a greater delight than in God’s worship. As day followed day, and their lives were more and more devoted to pleasure without a thought for God, they drifted from Him.”

“Doesn’t God like people to enjoy themselves, Daddy?” asked Joan.

“Yes, He does. He has given us His creation to enjoy, but we must not grasp at these things selfishly without thought of God. True thanksgiving to Him is the basis of true pleasure, and true enjoyment comes from obeying His laws, for He knows what is best for us. But men do not like to obey Him. They prefer to go their own way, and their pleasures take on forms that bring evil to themselves and those about them. Their enjoyment is not innocent, but wicked. They are filled with selfish wants, and if they cannot get them, they will oppress others to do so. If any resist, then they will get what they want by force. That is what happened in the days of Noah. The people no longer kept God in mind. They no longer obeyed His laws. Mighty leaders, called giants, arose, to lead the people astray, and by force they ruled over them. Henceforth the earth was filled with violence, and God’s way was corrupted. (vv. 11-12).”

“I was speaking to a man about this chapter,” said Graeham, “and he declared that these giants (v. 4) were the children of angels, the angels being the ‘sons of God’ of v.2.”

“That is nonsense,” said Mr. Phillips, “Angels neither marry nor are given in marriage, as Jesus taught (Luke 20:35-36). The term *sons of God* is used frequently in the Bible for mortal believers of God (Deut. 14:1; Hos. 1:10; Isa. 43:6-7; John 1:12). The Apostle John, writing to mortal believers of his day, said: ‘Now we are the sons of God’ (1 John 3:2). Genesis 6 merely shows how believers in the days of Noah had drifted from the worship of God. It is interesting to learn that the word in Hebrew that is translated ‘men’ in v.2 is translated ‘other men’ in Jeremiah 32:20 and Psalms 73:5. So that actually Genesis 6 contrasts the ‘sons of God’ (i.e. mortal believers) with the ‘daughters of other men’ (i.e. unbelievers). That is a point worth noting in the margin of your Bible.”

"If both the believers and unbelievers were astray from God, only Noah would remain righteous," said Ann.

"It doesn't say that all the believers were astray at that time, and perhaps at first there were others with Noah," remarked Graeham.

"That is true," agreed his father. "Noah would find, however, that as year followed year, fewer and fewer of his brethren took heed, until he, alone, remained with his family to testify for God. We can understand how grieved he would be in his heart, as he saw those he loved, led away by the wickedness of the times, and how urgently he would strive to bring them back to the ways of God."

"Did he know that God was going to destroy the earth with a flood?" asked Peter.

"If he had been told of the warning prophecies of Enoch concerning coming judgment (see Jude 14-15) he would have done so," replied his father. "In any case, God revealed to him His intention to destroy that wicked generation (see vv. 12-13). Therefore, we can imagine how with even greater urgency he would appeal to his friends when he learned of God's intentions and as he set about building the Ark according to God's instructions. He knew that the people were doomed unless they followed him into the Ark. But as year followed year, and nothing happened, and the prosperity of the people increased, they doubtless laughed him to scorn. They perhaps became bored with Noah, hearing nothing from him but his message of impending doom. They mocked him, treating him as a laughing stock. But at last the appointed time came, and God instructed Noah to enter the Ark with the animals He had appointed — clean beasts by sevens, and unclean beasts by twos (Ch. 7:2)."

"Why were the clean beasts to be by sevens?" asked Ann.

"They were to be used for food and so more of them would be required," answered her father.

"Did Noah have to go and catch all the animals and birds, Daddy?" asked Joan.

"No, Joan, the angels helped him in this, and caused the animals to come to the Ark prior to the flood. Then Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, also entered. And then occurred a remarkable thing. Peter can read it for us in Genesis 7:16."

Peter read: "And they that went in went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in."

"Yes, God closed the door of the Ark, and shut Noah in. And shutting him in He shut the others out. This was the Divine

judgment on that wicked generation."

"It reminds you of the parable of the ten virgins, spoken by Jesus (Matthew 25)," remarked Graeham "The five foolish ones found the door was shut (v. 10), and they could not get into the marriage."

"Yes," agreed his father. "The story of Noah can teach us lessons of Christ's second coming. We can well imagine that the people of Noah's day, would feel a little alarmed seeing all this activity, with the animals and birds entering the Ark, and Noah and his family safely shut away. But the next day nothing happened, and, indeed, for several days nothing happened (Ch. 7:10). The sun shone brightly whilst Noah and all his animals were shut up in the huge vessel. No doubt the people got a great laugh out of it all.

"But towards the end of the week a great change occurred. The sky became overcast. It looked dark and lowering. Great, black clouds rolled over the heavens blotting out the sight of the sun, and as the week came to an end, the people heard the rumble of thunder, and saw angry lightning streak across the sky. The wind rose until it was shrieking through the trees, and roaring around the homes of the people. And as they closed their doors, and shivered inside, they doubtless remarked that they were in for quite a storm.

"But none would realise the full extent of the storm. The eighth day dawned, but the sun gave little light, for heavy clouds now obscured it. The roar of thunder rolled across the darkened heavens with an ear-splitting crash, forked lightning darted across the sky to illuminate for a moment the gloom that enshrouded the earth, the wind had become a howling gale, bending the trees before it, and threatening to unroof houses.

"And then came the rain.

"Never has there been rain like that.

"It thundered down on the dwellings in which the people trembled. It beat down on the forests, and fields, flattening the people's gardens, pouring down without ceasing. Hour after hour it continued, all day and then all night, and then day after day. Now, perhaps, the people remembered what Noah had told them. Perhaps some rushed to the Ark, but God had shut the door, and not even Noah could open it. Then the people began to panic, and as the water rose higher and higher, they fled from their homes to try and find refuge in the hills and mountains. What was the use of their beautiful possessions now!

"And still it rained.

"And then the fountains of the deep (the ocean) were



broken (Ch. 7:11).

“Huge tidal waves probably induced by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions swept in from the sea to engulf the land.

“For forty days and nights this terror continued, until the whole land was covered by water, and that wicked and godless generation of people was destroyed (Ch. 7:22).

“Meanwhile, those in the Ark were safe. Despite the wind, and the huge tidal waves, the strong angels of God cared for the

Ark, so that it safely rode the rising waters.

“For five months it moved to and fro, and then we read: ‘God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the Ark.’ He sent a strong wind to dry up the waters. As the waves receded, the Ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat, no longer being born hither and thither by the wind.

“After forty days, Noah opened the window of the Ark, and sent forth a raven and a dove, ‘to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground.’ The raven did not return, but the dove found no place to rest, and at last, very weary, she came back to the Ark, and Noah ‘put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the Ark.’

“Seven days later Noah sent out the dove again, and at evening she returned with an olive leaf in her mouth. Then Noah knew that the waters were receding.

“After another 7 days, the dove was sent forth again, and this time she did not return. The waters had dried up sufficiently for Noah to go forth from the Ark. The angel opened the door, and Noah and his family came out, the only persons living on the face of the earth.

“Thus a new start was made with the human race. The first thing that faithful Noah did when he stepped from the Ark was to build an altar unto God, to thank Him for His salvation, and upon which to offer sacrifices.

“This pleased God, who declared: ‘I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living as I have done’ (Gen. 8:21).”

“Daddy,” enquired Ann at this stage. “I cannot quite understand that. Did God remove the curse that He placed on the ground when Adam sinned?”

“No, Ann. The ground still brings forth thorns and thistles as our garden outside only too well shows!”

“Well it says that God will ‘not again curse the ground any more.’ Surely that must mean the curse was removed.”

“The words really mean that God will never again curse the ground to the same extent as He did in the days of Noah. The Hebrew words rendered ‘not again’ can be rendered ‘*not add to curse the earth.*’ The statement then means that God will not add to the curse imposed at the beginning (see Gen. 3:19), to destroy all the living as He did in the days of Noah. God’s purpose is to fill the earth with His glory (Num. 14:21) and not destroy it, although the wickedness of man causes Him to punish them. How will He fill the earth with His glory, Can you

tell me?"

"Yes," replied Peter. "By sending Jesus Christ to the earth to set up His kingdom."

"That's right," answered Mr. Phillips. "That is God's great covenant with mankind, and the reason why the earth will never be subjected to a greater punishment than the flood (Gen. 9:11). And so God instructed Noah. He made a new start with him. Noah took the place of Adam. His children were to fill the earth. But God warned him against allowing them to fill the earth with violence (Ch. 9:5), and told him that if any of his descendants dared to shed blood as those before the Flood had done, their blood likewise would be shed. God then gave Noah a token by which he could remember the great Covenant that He had established between Himself and His creation (Ch. 9:16). You know, of course, what it was."

"It was the rainbow, wasn't it?" asked Joan.

"Yes, that is right."

"Why should God use a rainbow for that purpose?" asked Peter.

"God could hardly have given a better sign," remarked Mr. Phillips. "A rainbow is formed by the sun shining on falling rain. There are seven colours in a rainbow, which is the perfect number. When these seven colours are combined together, they make the pure light of the sun, which is used in the Bible as a symbol of purity. The Bible likens Jesus Christ to the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:1), and it terms the faithful a 'cloud of witnesses' (Heb. 12:1). When these faithful ones are all gathered together, as they will be at Christ's return, there will be seen in them the reflection of their leader. Similarly there is seen in the rainbow in the sky, the reflection of the sun. Thus the rainbow shining in the sky is the sign God set before Noah and which taught him, and teaches us, that one day Jesus Christ will rule in the political heavens with his brethren, and peace will be enjoyed by all people."

"The flood also represents baptism, doesn't it?" asked Graeham.

"Yes, in 1 Pet. 3:20-21, the Apostle shows that the flood was a figure of baptism, so in this we have another important lesson. Noah was saved from the terrible storm by the Ark that God provided. Likewise we can be saved from the terrible trouble that is today growing in the nations, by baptism into Jesus Christ. He is the Ark of refuge which alone is able to ride the storm that is coming. In fact, Noah's time is typical of our days. Perhaps Joan will read Matthew 24:37 for us."

Joan found the place and read: "As the days of Noah were,



The dove discovers the olive leaf at the subsiding of the Flood.

so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

"You see," continued Mr. Phillips. "As the people were selfish and indifferent to God in Noah's day, so it is today. As violence filled the earth then, so it does now as men prepare their terrible weapons for war. As they laughed at Noah because of his message, so many people today laugh at the teaching concerning the coming Jesus Christ. But, as the people of Noah's time were punished, so it will be with many today. Though God will not destroy all the world as He did then, He will punish mankind to teach the people righteousness, for as Isaiah foretold, 'When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness' (Isa. 26:9). Thus the lesson of Noah reaches to our times. But it is getting late, and I think the girls, at least, should be off to bed."

"Just a moment, Dad," said Graeham. "Is there any significance in the raven and the dove?"

"Yes, I believe there is," replied his father. "The raven is an unclean bird, and thus a type of the Gentiles. It wandered over the troubled waters and was never seen again, for it never returned to the Ark. The dove, on the other hand, was a 'clean' bird, and became a symbol of Israel (Psa. 74:19; Hos. 7:11). It, too, wandered over the troubled waters, without a place to rest, until it returned to the refuge of the Ark. And I believe that in recording this, God was revealing in type the future of Israel, even though there were no Jews living then. During the long centuries, Israel, like the dove, has wandered up and down the troubled sea of nations without rest, and it will find none until it returns to the Ark of refuge, as Jesus told the people 1900 years ago (Matt. 23:39). When this happens, it will be the sign that true peace has come to the earth."

"Now let me sum up what we have read tonight. We have seen how God punished a disobedient world; how many people who believed on Him were so influenced by wickedness that they drifted from Him, and how after the cleansing waters of the flood had destroyed the wicked, peace came to those that remained."

"If Sheila were here, Daddy, she would want to know if the story is true," remarked Ann.

"Well we could put her mind at rest there," declared her father. "For in that same book we showed her the other night, there is an article showing how a notable scientist* found evidences of the flood. He photographed these, and they also are to be seen in that book."

* See *Ur of the Chaldees* by Prof. Woolley.

**How Mankind
Again Drifted
From God**

Once again the Phillips' family was gathered around the Bible, discussing the Bible readings for the day. This had taken them into the time following the flood, and Peter had asked in what way it represented baptism.

"Well, what is baptism?" asked Mr. Phillips in reply.

"Complete immersion in water", said Ann.

"That's true, and that is one feature of the subject. The world was completely immersed in water. Now what is baptism for?"

"It is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)."

"True! And in the same way, the old sinful world before the flood was destroyed, and so the new world that arose had all its sins washed away."

"Baptism represents death, burial and resurrection," remarked Graeham (Rom. 6:4-5).

"Yes. When a person is baptised, he 'dies' to his previous way of life. He is buried beneath the water, and when he again rises from it, he does so to a 'newness of life'. And this is what happened at the flood. The previous generation was destroyed, and when Noah stepped from the Ark, the world had made a new start. But it didn't exist like that for long. As we have read tonight, after the flood, people drifted from God once again. They were like those who are baptised and commence well, but afterwards return to their old habits of sin. From Shem, Ham and Japheth, the three sons of Noah, came all the peoples of the earth. From Shem came the peoples of the Middle East, principally the Israelites, from Ham came the dark races, and from Japheth came the white people of Europe."

"Does science support that?" asked Graeham.

"I am not very interested in what science supports. It is a very weak reed to rest upon. So often the conclusions of scientists have proved faulty by time, when the Bible has been shown to be true."

"It is always handy to have some supporting evidence," declared Graeham.

"Well I feel that we must accept the Bible in faith, and not always be running to mortal flesh to support that which the great Creator has caused to be written. The Bible is the Word of God, and as far as I am concerned, what it says is absolutely true."

"That might be all right for you, Dad, but it won't suit everybody, and it is helpful to be able to show that these things are supported by other evidence," said Graeham.

"That is a matter of opinion, and I have yet to see any man

convinced that the Bible is true by what you call 'supporting evidence.' At the same time, it is a fact, that science does say that the races of mankind can today be placed into three main groups. Professor Marston in his book, *The Bible Comes Alive*, gives the evidence if you want to look it up."

"Never mind about that," interjected Ann impatiently. "Tell us what happened after the flood, Daddy."

"At first the people were all at one, believing in God and obeying His laws. But as year followed year, the instructions and teaching of God which Noah passed on to his children, gradually faded from the minds of his descendants. At last a man arose who had great will-power, and who began to dominate those about him. The people came to admire him. He was what they call a 'successful' man because he gained great power, and forced others to obey him. His name was Nimrod which means *We will rebel*. He rebelled against God (Gen. 10:9). He set himself up as king, and by his great personality, and violence, he forced people to obey him. He enjoyed this power; he liked to see people bowing before him, and it was not long before he was encouraging them to worship him as a god. He was the first king after the flood.

"Meanwhile all men were of one language, and they kept together as one people. They decided to build a mighty city with an extremely high tower in the centre, at which man could worship. So they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and commenced their task. They wanted to be gathered into one place and not scattered one from another.

"But God defeated their purpose. He knew their wickedness. He sent an angel and confounded their language. That stopped them building, for they could not understand each other, and arguments arose as to how the city should be built, and this, probably, led to violence. Those who could understand each other's speech split up to form separate nations. So the building of the city was hindered, and it was called 'Babel,' which means *confusion*."

"What was wrong with the people trying to build a city instead of being scattered abroad?" asked Peter.

"God had commanded otherwise. He told Adam to 'replenish the earth and subdue it' (Gen. 1:28), and had repeated this instruction to Noah (Gen. 9:1). But the descendants of Noah refused to do it, and defied God by building their strong city. God could see this was but the beginning of their wickedness. He declared: 'This they *begin* to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them.' (Gen. 11:6). He thus punished them for their good."



THE PARABLE OF THE PATRIARCHS

In addition to the literal significance of Abram's journey of faith, there is a remarkable parable hidden behind the names of the men associated therewith, and the places visited by the patriarch.

Four men representing four different types of people drawn to the Truth

TERAH — His name means *to tarry, delay*. This is what he did and died without making the necessary move.

NAHOR — His name means *to snore*. He suffered from spiritual sleepiness, and refused to leave Haran.

ABRAM — His name means *Lofty Father*. He revered God as his Father, and acted accordingly.

LOT — His name means *Veiled*. He lacked true spiritual vision. He followed Abram, but drifted to Sodom.

Let us follow the lead of Abram, and exalt God as our heavenly Father in action.

Consider the significance of the places visited.

UR means *Light*. The Chaldees were a religious sect. The four men left the light, or teaching, of those people; and came to

HARAN It signifies *Enlightenment*: the next stage to which a person must aspire after turning from the world. Abram and Lot then passed over

EUPHRATES It signifies *Sweetness*. In their case it answered to the waters of baptism. Their status was then changed. They became known as Hebrews or those who had *Crossed Over* (Gen. 14:13). They then came to

DAMASCUS It signifies *Sac of Blood*. Through baptism believers are brought nigh through the blood of Christ. Moving on to

SHECHEM Which means *Burden Bearer*: a type of Christ. Next to

BETHEL the *House of God*. To

HEBRON signifying *Fellowship or Union*. Finally to

BEERSHEBA: Or *The Well of the Oath* where the promises to Abraham were finally confirmed by an oath (Gen. 22:16) after Abraham had demonstrated his faith in the supreme action of offering up Isaac.

A little thought on the above meanings of the places visited by Abraham will reveal a progression leading to the final confirmation of God.

Chapter One

THE MOST IMPORTANT JOURNEY IN HISTORY

History records many notable journeys that brave men have undertaken in order to explore the unknown and add to the sum of human knowledge, but there is none that exceeds in significance the journey of faith described in this section of our STORY OF THE BIBLE. The outcome of this journey has helped to mould the lives of men and women, and the history of nations, ever since. Finally, it is because of this journey that the Jews are returning to the land of their forefathers today. The nation of Israel has been revived, and world conditions reveal that Christ's coming is near at hand.

Abram Leaves Ur "The story we have read tonight," commented Mr. Phillips, after the family had completed the day's readings from Genesis 11 and 12, "is among the most important in the Bible. I am anxious that you should understand all about it, for it teaches us important lessons as to what God would have us do, and helps us a little better to know God's great plan with the earth. As you have noticed, it concerns Abram, which was Abraham's name before God changed it."

"Do we read of Abraham very much in the other books of the Bible?" asked Peter.

"Yes," replied his father. "The promises God made to Abraham are referred to time and again in the Bible. He is called 'the friend of God' (James 2:23), the 'called of God' (Heb. 11:8; Isa. 51:2), the 'chosen of God' (Neh. 9:7), the 'father of the faithful' (Rom. 4:12), and in the New Testament alone, there are over seventy references made to this great man. He is so important to the purpose of God that he is referred to in the opening verse of the New Testament. Would you read it for us, please Joan?"

Joan read: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1).

"To Abraham and David, God made great promises," said Mr. Phillips, "and those promises will be fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Therefore, we cannot really understand the Bible without knowing something of these great men, and that shows

the importance of these chapters we have been reading in Genesis. They take us back some four thousand years. At that early age, there stood on the banks of the River Euphrates, a very important city, called Ur of the Chaldees. Beautiful homes and buildings graced it, whilst in the centre there was a very high temple at which the people used to worship. But though the people were very religious, they did not worship the true God. Instead they bowed down to idols, and in Ur they worshipped the Moon. In fact, Ur was one of the headquarters of this strange worship, and was considered a most important city in the Empire of Babylonia."

"How do you know all that, Dad?" interjected Peter.

"In recent years scientists have dug up the ruins of Ur," replied his father, "so that they now know the type of city it was, the kind of houses Abram probably lived in, and many other details. In such a city as this, Abram was brought up. His father was Terah and he had two brothers, Nahor and Haran. Unfortunately, Haran died, but he left behind him a son called Lot. Of this family, Abram was the most important. He was not satisfied with the foolish worship of the Moon, and he began to seek to know the true God. He felt that some great Power in the heavens must have created the moon, and that He Who did so would be God."

"Did the family of Abram worship idols, too, Daddy?" asked Ann.

"Yes," replied her father. "We learn that before the call came 'they served other gods' (Josh. 24:2). But then, one day, Abram received a message. How it came we do not know. Perhaps God sent an angel to Abram; or He may have spoken to him in some other way. The message called upon him to leave the wicked surroundings of Ur, with its false worship, and go into a land that God would show him (Acts 7:3). Thus Abram was taught the truth concerning the one great God of the heavens. He did not keep such a message to himself. He told his wife, Sarai, all about it, and also his father and brothers. They discussed the matter, and Abram declared that he was determined to follow the Voice of God and leave Ur. His father, and brother, and his nephew Lot decided to go with him. We can imagine what a stir this caused among their relatives and friends. They would have asked Abram where he was going, to which he would have replied that he did not know, but that God would guide him. And I feel that these friends and relatives would probably have laughed and jeered at him just as some years earlier, the friends and relatives of Noah had mocked him for obeying God's instructions.

"It seems as though people always laugh at those who try to follow God's way," commented Ann.

"Yes, that is true," agreed her father. "But there is much truth in the saying, 'he who laughs last laughs loudest.' When the terrible rain commenced in Noah's day, the people regretted mocking his warning message. And the time is coming when those people who today laugh at the Truth will find that they, too, have scorned that which could have given them life. When Jesus Christ returns, all the heroes of the past, like Noah and Abram at whom people once laughed, will enter into their reward. They will be raised from the dead and given life eternal. There were some who mocked Jesus in his day, and in Luke 13:28 we have his reply. Will you read it for us Ann?"

Ann read: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out."

"With this hope before us," said her father, "we can well afford to take no notice of those who laugh at the Truth. It did not stop the family of Terah. They sold up their possessions, and left the city of Ur, travelling in a north-westerly direction, and following the course of the River Euphrates, until they came to another important town called Haran. This town was situated almost on the borders of the Empire of Babylonia, so that to go any further would have taken them into foreign parts. The word "Haran" means *Roads* or *Enlightenment*, and illustrates the state of Terah and his family at that point. It was so named because it stood at the parting of the ways. From Haran the road branched off into three directions, north, south and east towards Ur. It was well named, for Haran was destined to be the parting of the ways for Abram and his family; but for a time they stopped at this place."

"Why didn't Abram continue his journey, Daddy?" asked Ann.

"We are not told why they stopped, but we can put ourselves in their position, and realise that they would hesitate before leaving the border of Babylonia. Beyond lay the unknown for them, where the ways of life would be strange, and where they would have to live in tents as strangers, surrounded by enemies, whereas they were used to city life. Perhaps they stopped at Haran to discuss whether they should really move into Canaan or not. Perhaps they thought Abram might have made some mistake concerning the Message of God. In any case, they remained in Haran some time, and there Terah died. And then Abram again heard the Voice of God. Again it urged him to leave Babylonia, to cross the River Euphrates into the

land God would show him. And now there were promises added. God told Abram (Gen. 12:1-3), that if he obeyed Him, He would:

- (1) — Make of him a great nation;
- (2) — Make his name great in the earth;
- (3) — Bless those who bless him;
- (4) — Bring blessings unto all nations through Abram.

“Now it is important that you children understand these promises, and know what they teach. They have not been fulfilled yet. Abram’s descendants, the Jews, are not yet a great nation; Abram’s name is not yet great in the earth; the true blessing that God promises those who bless Abram has not yet been fully granted, and all nations are not yet blessed through Abram.”

“When will the promises be fulfilled?” asked Ann.

“They will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns to set up his glorious kingdom on earth (Dan. 2:44). At that time, the Jews will be completely restored to the land, and will be taught the truth concerning Jesus (Ezek. 37:21-23); Abram, and all like him, will be raised from the dead to life eternal (Rom. 2:7); and the kingdom Christ will establish will cover all the world, so that ‘all nations will be blessed in him’ as King David, whose name is linked with Abraham’s in Matthew 1:1, declared (Psalm 72:17).

“You can see, therefore, how complete was the promise made of God to Abram. It embraced:

1. A national promise;
2. A personal promise;
3. A family promise;
4. An international promise.

“As such it provided for the needs of all mankind, and actually epitomises the teaching of the whole Bible. All its doctrines, all its prophecies, all its hope are condensed into what God promised Abram.”

They Enter The Land Of Canaan

“Meanwhile, Abram in Haran doubtless discussed this second Call of God with Nahor his brother, and Lot his nephew. He urged them to come with him, and obey the Voice of God. But Nahor refused to leave. We are not told why, but he would not venture into the unknown. Lot, however, left with Abram, and together they crossed over the River Euphrates, to travel south towards the land of Canaan.”

“He became known as ‘Abram the Hebrew’ then, didn’t he?” asked Peter.

“That is true, and it is a very interesting, and important, detail in this wonderful journey. When Abram crossed the Euphrates, he commenced, as it were, a new life. He had left Babylon for good, and his standing with God, and the people about him, had changed. He had obeyed God’s Voice, and was now trying to live as God would have him live. To the people of the land he became known as Abram *the Hebrew* (Gen. 14:13). We often hear this word today, for the Jews have inherited this title from Abram. But the word ‘Hebrew’ really means *a crosser over*. Abram was called ‘the Hebrew’ by the people of Canaan because he had *passed over* the river into the land.”

“That is interesting, Daddy, but why is it so important?” asked Ann.

“Because, my dear, Abram became the first of many, many people who have *crossed over* from the ways of idolatry to the ways of God. In *passing over* the river, he was like those who today pass through the waters of baptism, and commence a life of probation in Christ. They can also be called true Hebrews (see Romans 9:8; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-13), for they have ‘passed over’ from the world to Christ, and commenced a life of probation.”

“What do you mean by ‘probation?’ ” asked Peter.

“It means a life of testing, or trial, to fit us for something. God was testing Abram, to see if he was worthy of the great position He has for him in the future. This is true also of all who would ‘pass over’ from a life devoted to pleasing themselves, to one that is given to pleasing God. In the four men who left Ur, we have types of all those who hear the Gospel message today. Terah died in Haran. His name means *to turn, tarry or delay*. He did that, hesitating to move on into the land of promise and finally death claimed him. He was like those people who hear the truth of God, but put off making a proper decision in regard to it. He left it too late before doing anything about the invitation of God. Nahor refused to leave Haran. His name means *snorer!* In the Hebrew it is pronounced like a snore! He was too lazy to act. Again he is like a lot of people today who do not want to act for God. Though he heard the Message, and knew the will of God, the attractions of Babylonia were too strong for him. Abram and Lot passed over the river in obedience to God, but Lot was drawn away by Sodom. His name means *veiled*. He did not have a clear vision of faith to sustain him. He was like many who hear, accept and obey the Truth, but drift from it. Abram’s name means *Exalted Father*, and it was an index of his character. He exalted God as his heavenly Father throughout his life. The journey of Abram is the most important in

history. It can teach us wonderful lessons, and it also has altered the course of history, for if Abram had not obeyed the Voice of God there would be no Jews. Do you think you understand this?"

"Yes."

"Well let's continue the story. To get the best out of the Bible, we must try and imagine that we are actually seeing what took place. We can imagine Abram and those with him entering the land, riding upon the animals they used for this purpose, eager to see the new sights of the strange country. Abram is at the head with Sarai and Lot, his nephew, whilst behind him are the servants they had obtained in Haran (Gen. 12:5), carrying their possessions into the new country, and looking after the sheep and cattle they brought with them.

"They travelled south through the land, past Damascus, down into what is known today as Palestine. They found themselves in a glorious land, 'flowing with milk and honey,' as the Israelites later described it, a land well watered by the rains of heaven, and in which were found glorious plains, and majestic mountains and hills. Stately forests, smiling fields of grass and flowers, green and fertile valleys with springs of water gushing forth, revealed that indeed, this was a land in which to rejoice. At last Abram came to the place called Shechem, where hundreds of years later, Jesus Christ talked with the Samaritan woman (John 4); and there, again, Abram heard the Voice of God. This time God said: 'Unto thy seed will I give this land' (Gen. 12:7). In gratitude to and love for his God, who had cared for him, and had called him out of idolatrous Ur, and had made wonderful promises to him, Abram built an altar at Shechem, and there he worshipped the one true God."

How God Cared For Abram

"Abram stayed at Shechem for a while," continued Mr. Phillips, "and then continued south to a place close to Bethel and Hai (Gen. 12:8). This is a mountainous part, and from there he had a glorious view of the country stretching down to the plains of the Jordan. It was a very impressive sight in those days when the land flourished so much more than it does today; and again, in gratitude to the goodness of God, Abram built an altar and worshipped. Thus Abram wandered 'as a stranger and pilgrim in the land' (Heb. 11:8,9,13), surrounded by enemies."

"Why do you say he was surrounded by enemies?" asked Peter.

"Because the Bible tells us. It says, 'the Canaanite was



“ . . . at Shechem Abram builded an altar”

then in the land' (Gen. 12:6). The Canaanites were a wicked people (Gen. 9:25; Lev. 18: 25-28), who had no respect for God or His ways, so that, among these people, Abram lived as a man apart. We shall see, later, how he rejected their favours and refused all intermarriage between his race and theirs. In this, Abram's life is a type, or pattern, of the lives we should try to live. The world about us is wicked, and has no respect for God or His ways, and we need to stand aside from it. If we do not do this, we shall be drawn away from God, as later, Lot was from Abram. We must therefore, be on our guard. The reading of God's Word, the Bible, can help us greatly. When we do this, we hearken to the Voice of God, as Abram did in his day. King David asked, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' And he answered, 'By taking heed thereto according to Thy word' (Psa. 119:9). This is true wisdom, and will stand us in good stead in the day when Jesus Christ returns, and all who have obeyed God's will are rewarded. In that same day, 'the Canaanite shall be destroyed from out of the land' as the prophet Zechariah declares (Zech. 14:21)."

"But there are no Canaanites today, Daddy!" declared Ann.

"Oh yes there are!" replied her father. "Unfortunately they exist on every side and in every land. They are those who refuse to hearken to God, and insist upon doing their own will, even though this may lead to great wickedness. But the time is coming when all people will have to submit to God. Psalm 10:16 speaks of that time, saying, 'The Lord is King for ever and ever; and heathen are perished out of his land'."

"The Canaanites must have been a religious people," commented Peter, "for they worshipped gods."

"They were very religious," replied his father. "But their religion was most evil and immoral. Accordingly Abram had to keep completely separate from both it and them. The word 'Canaanite' comes from a Hebrew word signifying a *trader*. They traded in religion, their priests making a lucrative business of it as, unfortunately, many priests of the Apostasy do today. Those priests are modern 'Canaanites' who gain material profit from false religion. It is to them that the statement of Zechariah 14:21 refers.

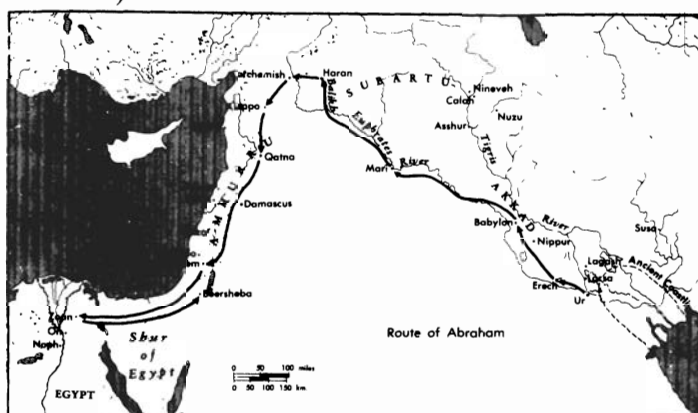
"Mention of them is made in Revelation 18:11-12 where reference is made to certain 'merchants of the earth' who trade in many things including 'the bodies and souls of men' (see the margin at v. 13). The Church of Rome is foremost in that regard, and is described in Revelation 17 as 'Babylon the Great.' But other religions do so as well."

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

Age	Incident	Biblical Record
70	Arrival at Haran from Ur of the Chaldees.	Gen. 11:31
75	The call from God.	12:1-4
	Four-fold promises offered on conditions.	
	Arrival in Canaan.	12:5
	God's promise of Canaan to Abraham's seed.	12:7
	Abraham builds Altar at Bethel.	12:8
	The sojourn in Egypt.	12:10-20
	The return to Bethel, and the separation from Lot.	13:1-12
	God's reiteration of His promise to Abraham, and the Patriarch's settlement in Hebron.	13:14-18
	Abraham routs invading coalition.	14:1-16
80	Abraham receives the blessing of Melchizedek: Priest of Most High God.	14:17-24
	The Covenant between God and Abraham.	15
85	Flight of Hagar and the birth of Ishmael.	16
99	The Covenant of Circumcision.	17
	Abraham's intercession at Sodom and Gomorrah	18
	Destruction of the Cities of the Plain.	19
	The sojourn at Gerar and confrontation with Abimelech.	20
100	The birth of Isaac.	21:1-5
	The casting out of Ishmael.	21:8-16
	Abraham's covenant with Abimelech.	21:22-34
125	The Offering of Isaac.	22:1-14
	Confirmation and extension of promises through works of faith.	22:15-18
137	The death of Sarah and purchase of the Cave of Machpelah.	23

Age	Incident	Biblical Record
140	Abraham finds a wife for Isaac, and the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.	24
	Abraham's marriage to Keturah.	25:1-4
175	Death and burial of Abraham.	25:7-9

The promises made to Abraham comprise the basis of the Gospel (Gal. 3:8), confirmed by the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 15:8). They ensure the resurrection to life eternal of Abraham and all who follow his example of faith (see Galatians 3:26-28; Acts 26:7-8). They also provide for vast national and international changes in the earth at the coming of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1:68-75).



“How can you be sure that Babylon the Great refers to Rome?” asked Peter.

“Because we are told so,” replied his father. “Revelation 17:18 describes it as ‘the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth’. That city, in the days of John, was Rome. But the Church of Rome is not alone in teaching error, and whose priests get rich trading in the ‘bodies and souls of men’. Other churches do likewise. Hence Babylon the Great is described as a Mother Church (Rev. 17:5).”

“In being called Babylon, it is linked with Babel of Nimrod’s day” suggested Ann as she pondered what her father said.

"Indeed, yes," replied Mr. Phillips, "Nimrod set up both an empire and a religion, and later on, perhaps, you could read what he established in that book over there entitled *The Two Babylons*. However, you are too young as yet for such a difficult book. So let us return to Abraham and his wandering in the land."

"Did Abram remain at Bethel?" asked Ann.

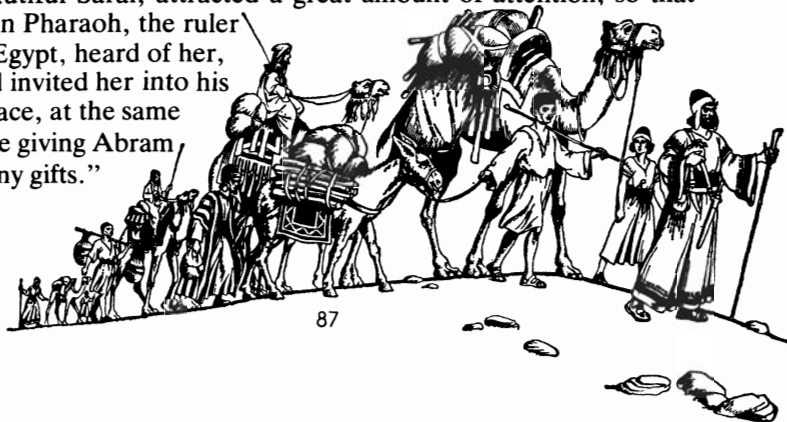
"No, as we have read (Gen. 12:9), he continued to travel south towards Beersheba. And then God sent a famine in the land, which drove Abram still further south to the land of Egypt, where lack of rain did not much matter."

"Why doesn't Egypt need rain?" enquired Peter.

"Because each year the river Nile that flows through Egypt, floods its banks, causing the water to spread on either side, covering the land sufficiently to grow all the crops required. This flooding is caused by the melting of snow many hundreds of miles from Egypt where the Nile starts, so that it does not worry the people of Egypt whether they receive rain or not. Thus when famine occurred in Palestine, Abram made his way to Egypt. But he went full of fear. The Egyptians were enemies of Babylonia, and Abram was worried as to what might happen to him. Sarah, his wife, was a very beautiful woman, and he feared that they might kill him in order to marry her. He therefore told her to say she was his sister."

"That was not very true, was it!" remarked Ann.

"Well, Sarai was a half sister to Abram (Gen. 20:12), so that it was not entirely a lie. At the same time, it seems to me, that Abram at this stage, like all of us, I am afraid, showed a little lack of faith. In any case, God soon showed him that he should not have been afraid, for He would care for him as He had promised. But before we consider that, let us imagine Abram entering Egypt. The people would stare at this strange company of foreigners, with their quaint dress, their unusual animals, their foreign speech. Abram's supposed 'sister,' the beautiful Sarai, attracted a great amount of attention, so that even Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, heard of her, and invited her into his palace, at the same time giving Abram many gifts."



“That must have worried Abram,” commented Ann.

“I am sure it did,” replied her father. “And I am certain, also, that Abram would have turned to God for help, whilst, at the same time, recognising his own blame in the matter. And God helped Abram, as He will us all if we turn to Him in faith. A strange sickness affected Pharaoh and his house. He enquired as to its cause, and in some way not revealed, he learned the truth about Sarai and Abram.”

“That must have made him angry,” said Peter as his father paused.

“It did that!” agreed his father. “Pharaoh called for Abram and rebuked him. ‘What have you done to me?’ he angrily enquired. ‘Why didn’t you tell me that she is your wife? I might have married her! Now, therefore, take your wife, and be gone!’ He dismissed Abram, whilst, at the same time, commanding his men that Abram must not be harmed in any way.”

“That is a very sad part of Abraham’s life,” said Ann slowly as she thought out the matter.

“Yes,” agreed her father, “but it is a very important part.”

“Why do you say that?” asked Peter, always ready to challenge his father.

“For two reasons,” explained his father with a smile at Peter’s challenge. “Firstly, it illustrated to Abram that God meant what He said, when He promised that He would care for him (see Gen. 12:3); and, secondly, it reveals to us that the heroes of the Bible were men of like weaknesses as ourselves. If they were all perfect men and women, ever doing what God required of them, we might feel somewhat discouraged because of our weaknesses. But when we see great men like Abraham and David sometimes lapse into error, and yet be forgiven by God, we can take courage in times of personal failure, and turn with greater confidence to God. And there is one other little matter in the reading we have just completed. You will find it in verse 15. Read it for me, will you?”

Joan read: “The princes also of Pharaoh saw her and commended her. . .”

“That is enough, Joan,” interrupted her father. “Now can any of you see what I am getting at?”

The four children pondered the verse, but could not see why their father had drawn attention to it.

“The Egyptians admired Sarai’s beauty, and commended her to Pharaoh,” explained Mr. Phillips. “This brought problems to both Abram and Sarai, and it also warns us to beware of the commendation of the world. Jesus warned of difficulties that arise when ‘men speak well of you’ (Luke 6:26). It is not

the commendation of men that we should seek, but that which comes from God. So Abram returned into the Land of Promise, having thus travelled around the world.”

“What do you mean by saying he travelled round the world?”

“In those days the world was a much smaller place than today. Countries like Greece, Italy and England were unknown, let alone places like America, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. The world in Abram’s time was limited to Babylonia and Egypt with Palestine in between. He had thus really travelled around the world, and he became ‘heir of the world’ (Rom. 4:13), because God promised that he should one day receive all this land forever (Gen. 15:18; 13:17).”

How A Quarrel Drove Lot And Abram Apart

“Abram returned to the land of Promise” said Mr. Phillips as he continued, “and made his headquarters at a place between Bethel and Hai (Gen. 13:3). There he and Lot remained for some time, and prospered greatly. Their flocks and herds grew, until the herdsmen of Abram and the herdsmen of Lot began to quarrel over the land where they were grazing their sheep and cattle.

“This was a very foolish thing to do, for they were surrounded by enemies, who if they were to see these two men quarrelling over land that God had promised them, would come to despise Him Whom they worshipped. Right was on the side of Abram in this quarrel. He was the elder of the two, and God had promised all the land to him. Lot should have given way. In fact, Lot should have told his herdsmen that they must not quarrel, and he should have remained with Abram under all circumstances.

“But the quarrelling went on, and Abram could see there was only one solution — they must part. And then he showed what a really great man he was. Instead of saying, ‘God has promised *me* this land, and I will take the best,’ he left the choice to Lot. Abram knew that one day God would give it all to him, and he was content to wait for that time, without grasping for it in the meantime.

“So he invited Lot to select what land he desired, whilst he would take whatever remained.

“They were standing on a mountain when Abram offered this choice to Lot, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east (Gen. 12:8; 13:3). From this high mountain, Lot could see far into the distance where the River Jordan flowed swiftly down from the north. The plains of Jordan were green and

smiling, whilst further south were the five cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim. Lot was attracted to the view. The cities suggested the proximity of friendly companions and security, a contrast to the lonely isolation of life with Abram. Lot's wife was tired of living in tents and wandering through the land without any settled abode, as strangers and pilgrims, and craved for a little more excitement in life. The view before her as she looked beyond Hai seemed to offer this. On the other hand, where Bethel stood, were the steep hills and rocky mountains of Palestine. They emphasised the loneliness and isolation of Abram's way of life. The eastern view, down the slopes of Hai was attractive to Lot, but the hilly harshness of that behind him where Bethel stood, implied the need of labour and effort. As he pondered his choice, the cities of the plain beneath seemed to offer a far more attractive way of life! We do not know if Lot was influenced in his decision by his wife, but we do know that later she did not want to leave Sodom. It therefore is possible that on this occasion also, he discussed the choice with her, and that she urged him to select the delightful plains of Jordan with their prospect of a pleasant, social, friendly life with the people of Sodom.

"And so Lot made his choice. He selected the plains of Jordan, and left Abram to the loneliness, and the hardship of the hills. Having made up his mind, he left his uncle going downhill towards Hai and Sodom."

"It was a very ruinous choice for Lot, because he lost everything in Sodom," continued Mr. Phillips. "When he made his choice, he was standing between Bethel and Hai. Bethel means *House of God*, and Hai means *Ruin*. Lot, therefore, stood between the house of God and ruin, and made his choice accordingly. He could continue with Abram, even though it meant a little hardship, with the knowledge that he would one day attain unto the glory of the house of God, or he could go downhill towards Hai (ruin) and Sodom. He chose that which led to ruin."

"I suppose Abram would be a little lonely after Lot left,"

"No doubt he was, but then God again appeared unto Him. He was pleased with the unselfishness and faith Abram had revealed, and now he made a wonderful promise to him. He said to Abram: 'Look northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed FOR EVER. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I

WILL GIVE IT UNTO THEE' (Gen. 13:14-17). Notice that God said that Abram was to have the land *forever*. How is that possible?"

"He would have to be given life eternal as you said earlier," remarked Peter.

"That is true. Did he ever receive any of the land during his lifetime?"

"No," replied Peter, "for it says in Acts 7:5, 'God gave Abraham none inheritance in the land, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.'"

"That is a good answer, Peter," replied Mr. Phillips, "and I suggest that in the margin of your Bible you note that point, for it shows that if Abram never received the land in his lifetime, he has yet to receive it. How will this be, seeing that Abram is dead?"

"By a resurrection from the dead, I suppose."

"Yes, that is right. Paul in Acts 26:6-8 showed that God had in mind the resurrection when he made promises unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob the fathers of the Jewish race. God also promised that Abram's seed, whom He said He would increase until they were a numerous people, would inherit it forever. Can you tell me who they are?"

"Would they be those to whom Paul makes reference in Galatians 3:26-29 where he says, 'As many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ . . . And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise?'" enquired Peter.

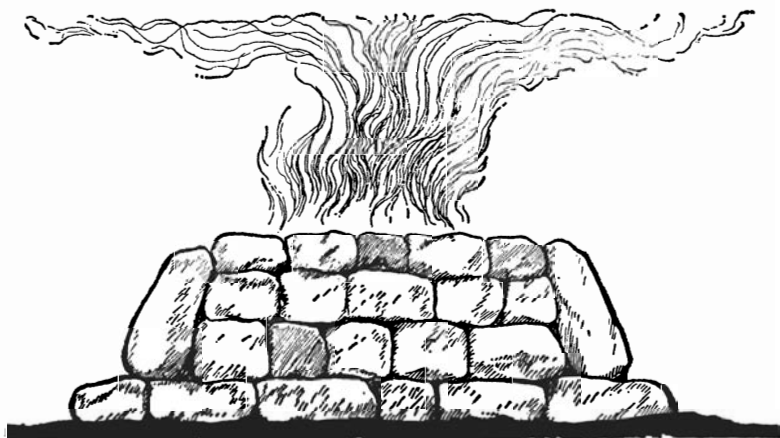
"That is true," replied his father. "All those who are truly Christ's can therefore listen to God's words to Abram and apply them to themselves. They, like him, are offered the promise of life eternal upon the earth. The Psalmist says, 'The meek shall inherit the earth' (Psa. 37:11), and again, 'Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it' (v. 34)."

"Abraham did not lose much by giving way to Lot," commented Ann.

"No," replied Mr. Phillips. "God saw to that. And in thinking over this story of Abram and Lot we can see the foolishness of quarrelling over worldly possessions, or of being jealous of that which others may have, especially when God has offered us so much more than we can get in this life. Much needless pain is caused by quarrels, and as any parent hates to see it in his family, so God who is the Father of all those who

believe and trust Him, hates to see it in His great family. The Bible says, 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,' and that is very good advice to keep. Never go to sleep at night without freely forgiving any wrong done against you, and never make the mistake of continually thinking upon the evil acts that others might do to you. Forget them, even though right is on your side! Remember Abram, and God's pleasure in him, and that he lost nothing by giving way. How much greater was his reward than if he had bitterly quarrelled with Lot, and insisted that he was in the wrong — as he could have done! Remember, too, how much God is prepared to forgive us, even though we have no right to that forgiveness. When the disciples came to Jesus on one occasion, and asked him to teach them to pray, part of his prayer was, 'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.' What a terrible prayer this is if we are not prepared to forgive sins. We are actually praying for our own condemnation. You should try to think of these things, even though you are young, and learn to forgive and forget when others have acted selfishly towards you."

"Shortly after Lot left," continued Mr. Phillips, "Abram also departed from Bethel, and pitched his tent under a great oak tree at a place called Mamre, where later, the important Jewish city of Hebron was built (Gen. 13:18). There, again, he built an altar to God, that he might continue to worship Him."



Chapter Two

ARMAGEDDON FORESHADOWED

Lot In Trouble “Daddy,” said little Joan one evening,
“May I commence the readings tonight?”

“Certainly,” replied her father. “The first section is found in Genesis 14.”

Joan found the place, but was soon stumbling among the hard words found in the early verses. She could not get her tongue around “Chedorlaomer,” whilst the “Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim” and the “Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim” had her completely at a loss.

“Perhaps I had better explain the story,” said Mr. Phillips after a while. “It is a most interesting incident in the life of Abram and Lot.

“These kings, whose names Joan has found so difficult to pronounce, all came from the direction of Babylonia. They joined forces against the five cities of Sodom where Lot had gone to live so that Lot soon found that the land which looked so pleasant and inviting from a distance was actually full of trouble and war. On the other hand, Abram, living his life of separateness in the hilly country of Palestine, was not worried by these things.

“Sodom was defeated in the war, and with her companion cities, was put under tribute. The people endured this for twelve years, and then revolted.

“Poor Lot thus found himself again in the midst of trouble. This time it was more serious. King Chedorlaomer had gathered a stronger force than ever, and invaded the country again. The King of Sodom brought out his army to resist, but was defeated, and the army from the north, taking the people captive, and seizing all the goods they could, commenced its return, feeling they had conquered Sodom for good.

“And among these captives was Lot.

“Thus it was that one day Abram was startled to learn of this bad news. He was not concerned with the fate of Sodom but when he heard that Lot was among the captives, he armed his trained men in his house and raced to the rescue. He met with the invading army in the north of Palestine, and defeated it in battle, chasing it north as far as Damascus, where Chedorlaomer was completely beaten.

“And so Abram returned as a conqueror, restoring Lot to freedom, and returning the possessions of the people of Sodom. As he was returning to Mamre, where he was stopping for the time being, he passed by the city of Salem, as Jerusalem was then called, and there happened a remarkable incident. It is recorded in v. 18. Will you read it, please Ann?”

Ann read: “And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God.”

“Salem means ‘peace.’ So here was a man called Melchizedek who was both King and Priest in Jerusalem, as Jesus Christ will be one day.”

“Does that mean that Melchizedek was a worshipper of the true God?” asked Ann.

“Yes,” replied her father. “Paul says that Jesus Christ was made a high priest ‘after the order of Melchizedek’ showing that he was undoubtedly a worshipper of the true God (Heb. 7:17).”

“Well, that means that Abram was not the only believer in those days!”

“That is true. Melchizedek was a believer, and it is possible there were others. Some think that Job lived in the days of Abraham, although we cannot be sure of this. In any case, true believers were but few in number.”

“What does ‘Melchizedek’ mean?” asked Peter.

“The word is made up of two words, *Melchi* (King) and *Zadok* (Righteousness), and means *King of Righteousness*. Melchizedek was thus King of Righteousness and King of Peace (Heb. 7:2), and these are titles to be one day used by Jesus Christ when he reigns in Jerusalem as King-priest (see Jeremiah 23:6; Isaiah 9:6; Zech. 6:13). So here we have Abram, after the invading host from the north had been defeated, being blessed by a man who foreshadowed Jesus Christ, and accepting from his hands bread and wine, as he praised the God of heaven and earth because of the great victory He had granted to that man of faith.”

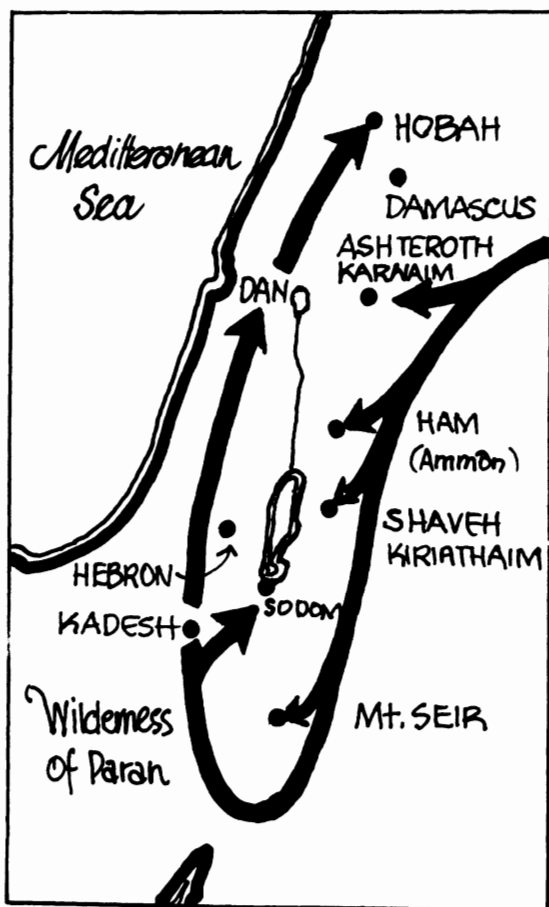
“Would that have anything to do with the bread and wine which is used to remember Christ in the Memorial Meeting each Sunday?” asked Peter.

“I believe it has. When Jesus gave bread and wine to his disciples for this purpose 1900 years ago, he said: ‘I will not any more partake of it, until the kingdom of God shall come’ (Luke 22:18). When that day comes, Abraham will be present with the members of his household: there will have been a great invasion from the north which will be destroyed (Ezekiel 38); and the Lord Jesus, as Melchizedek, will again offer bread and wine as a symbol of the great Victory over sin and death.”

“It says that Abram gave Melchizedek ‘tithes of all’ (Gen.

14:20), what does that mean?"

"A *tithe* is a tenth, and Abram gave this to Melchizedek because he was God's priest. Abram liked to be generous towards God, because God had been generous towards him. We need to remember that always, for if we are generous towards God, He will never forget us. Abram manifested His respect for God in another way also. We read in vv. 21-23 that the King of Sodom wanted to reward Abram for his action in saving the people, but Abram refused his offer, because he had promised God that he would not seek the help of man in that way. He kept himself quite separate from the Canaanites, and refused even their favours. Abram was a man who gave his life completely to God."



Chapter Three

THE COVENANT CONFIRMED

**How The Promise
Was Made Sure To
Abram —
Genesis 15**

“This is a strange chapter,” remarked Ann after the family had read Genesis 15, “I don’t know what it is about!”

“It is one of the most beautiful chapters in Genesis.” remarked her father. “See how God revealed Himself to Abram as a loving, heavenly Father in proclaiming Himself as his Friend, Protector, and Rewarder (v. 1). And notice how He answers both the questions put to Him by the Patriarch. God had promised Abram that he would become the father of numerous children, but many years had passed, and he hadn’t even one son. No wonder he enquired, ‘Who is to be my heir?’ How impressive was the answer of God! The angel took Abram outside into the night, and pointing to the Palestinian sky from where innumerable



stars could be seen twinkling and gleaming in the darkness, he declared: ‘So shall thy seed be.’ Abram must have been impressed with the sight, and we should be also. Whenever we see the stars above, in all their glory and beauty, and in all their great numbers, we should remember this scene in Genesis 15. We should remember, too, that if

we would aspire to be true sons and daughters of Abram, we should be like the stars, shining out from the darkness of our surroundings. Abram was impressed as you will see if you read verse 6 again.”

Ann read: “And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

“Yes, Abram honoured God not merely in believing that He existed, but acknowledging that He was able to do what He

promised. As Paul says, 'He was fully persuaded that, what God had promised, he was able to perform' (Rom. 4:21). God then reminded Abram of His promise. He declared: 'I brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it' (v. 7). But Abram was growing old, and therefore asked, 'Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?'"

"This seems as though Abram doubted God, doesn't it?"

"No, the word 'whereby' means 'by what sign.' Abram was growing old, and knew that he must die, and desired a sign that would teach him how God would fulfil His purpose. God is always pleased when we seek to know more of how and why He will establish His plan on the earth."

"What was His sign?"

"He told Abram to take a calf, a goat, a ram, a dove and a pigeon, and slaying them, to divide the animals into two parts, laying each piece one against another. Abram had to protect this sacrifice until an 'horror of great darkness' fell upon him, and then, in the midst of the darkness, 'a smoking furnace and a burning light' passed between the pieces."

"That was a strange thing, wasn't it?"

"It may seem so to us, but Abram would know what it all meant. That was the way in which a covenant, or agreement, was ratified in ancient times."

"What do you mean by 'ratified'?"

"To 'ratify' anything is to make it sure. We ratify an agreement today when we sign that we will honour it. But in ancient times this was done by way of sacrifice (see Gen. 21:29-32). The bodies of animals were divided into two parts; and the people making the covenant, passed between the two parts. Meeting in the middle, they took an oath to keep to the agreement (Jer. 34:18)."

"Why were the animals divided in two?"

"To represent the two parties to the agreement."

"Why were the animals slain?"

"To show that each of the contracting parties was prepared to give his life to keep the covenant."

"But there was only one party in Genesis 15, only Abram!"

"No, there were two parties: Abram and God. But first, after Abram had slain the animals and laid them out as directed, he had to protect them from the birds, until he could do so no longer, for 'a deep sleep' came upon him (vv. 11-12). This showed that Abram would keep his part of the covenant until he died. Whilst Abram slept, he heard the Voice of God telling him that his descendants would be afflicted for four

hundred years in a foreign land, but should finally be delivered by God and brought into the Promised Land again, and that Abram himself would die and be buried. That showed that God would keep His part of the covenant after the death of Abram."

"But where was God represented in the sacrifice?"

"That is shown in v. 17. When the great darkness which represented death came upon Abram, a 'smoking furnace and a burning lamp' passed between the pieces of the slain animals. That was the symbol of God's presence (see Revelation 4:5). It showed Abram that after he had died, God would 'ratify' or make sure the covenant with him, through the covenant-victim whom He would provide."

"That is very hard to understand; what do you mean by 'the covenant-victim God would provide?'"

"The covenant-victim, as I told you earlier, was the animal that was slain to make sure the covenant. The sacrifice made it sure, because it represented both parties to the agreement as promising to keep it with their lives. The sacrifice that Abram made pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ who was the covenant-victim provided by God. His death and resurrection 'confirmed the promises made unto the fathers' (Rom. 15:8). Just before his death, when he met with his disciples for the last time, he gave them some bread and wine as a token of this. The bread, he told them, represented his body which was to be crucified; and the blood represented his life which he had poured out in dedicated service unto God. Christ rendered perfect obedience unto his Father, and therefore, he was raised from the dead to life eternal. In so doing, he led the way for others to follow. By his resurrection, God 'ratified', or made sure, the covenant He had made earlier with Abram."

"If he had to render perfect obedience in order to obtain a resurrection unto eternal life, how can we receive it seeing we sin?" asked Graeham.

"Abram sinned as well, as we learned when we read of his adventures in Egypt," replied his father. "But through Christ he received the forgiveness of sins. He looked to the coming of Christ (see John 8:56); and Paul teaches that the effectiveness of Christ's offering reaches back as well as forward. Those who embrace the truth in faith receive forgiveness of sins in Christ whether living in Abram's day or in ours (see Heb. 9:15)."

"Why did Abram have to offer three different animals as well as birds?" enquired Ann.

"The animals he offered represent all the different kinds of animals offered under the Law of Moses," explained her father. "And all the sacrifices under the Law pointed forward to the

work accomplished in Christ. They were types foreshadowing the wonderful work of redemption he would accomplish. The heifer was used as purification from death (Num. 19:2), and therefore from mortality; the she-goat was offered for sins of ignorance (Num. 15:27), and therefore is a reminder of the weakness of human nature; the ram was used for consecration (Exod. 29:15). Each in turn play an important part. We must remember that we are mortal; that we are sinful; and that we are expected to give ourselves unto God, and all that was expressed in the sacrifices. The birds were the offering of poverty (Lev. 1:14), and were also offered when a baby was born (Luke 2:24). Accordingly, Abram was told that the most humble can find acceptance with God, particularly when they manifest the qualities of a new life in Him. Now before leaving the chapter, notice that the promises contained therein still await complete fulfilment. As recorded in v. 18, God promised that He would give to the descendants of Abram all the land between the Euphrates and the Nile, around the borders of which Abram had travelled. At no stage has Israel possessed all of that land, but the time is coming when God will give it unto the nation, and the Jewish people shall acknowledge their King, even Jesus Christ (Ezekiel 37:21-22). This, of course, will be at his coming."

Chapter Four

THE SON OF LAUGHTER AND JOY

Though Abram was promised a seed as numerous as the stars of heaven, he only had one son by his wife Sarai. Upon this son he lavished all his love and affection, for he knew that through him would come that One (the Lord Jesus) who would fulfil the great and glorious promises God had made.

The Son Of The Bondwoman

Year after year passed, and though God had promised Abram that he would develop into a numerous people, he remained childless. Sarai, too, was very anxious that Abram should have a son. Finally, in desperation, she told him to take a slave-wife, an Egyptian named Hagar who was her handmaid.

It was quite usual in those days for men to have more than one wife, and so Abram agreed, and to Hagar a baby boy was born whom they named Ishmael, which means, "Whom God hears."

God declared that this boy would grow into a numerous people, and he would 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 his brethren" (Gen. 16:12). From Ishmael came the Arab people, who, have developed as God said they would, into a numerous people, and who are as He described them, a wild, untamed people, very fond of fighting and often found quarrelling among themselves.

The son of Hagar, therefore, did not answer to the requirements of the son God had promised Abram.

Sarah Is Promised A Son

Thirteen long years passed, and still no son was born to Sarai. And then, again, God appeared unto Abram. He told him that he would yet be the father of many nations, that kings would come from him, and that Abram, together with his children after him, would inherit the land of Canaan "for an everlasting possession" (Genesis 17:4-8).

The numerous offspring thus promised Abram is not limited to his descendants of the Jewish people, but also includes those Gentiles who embrace the "hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20). About two thousand years after God made this promise to Abram, Jesus Christ told the leaders of the Jews that they were not the promised seed because they did not act faithfully as did Abram (John 8:39). He declared: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). Therefore, later, when the Gospel was preached to Gentiles, Paul taught that those who were baptised, and lived a life of faith, were "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). Such people, no matter what nation out of which they may be called, are described as the true "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16).

The true "seed of Abraham", therefore, are to be found among both Jews and Gentiles. Their essential quality is an acceptance of the promises made to Abraham, and the manifestation of his faith in regard to them. They are those who worship God in truth, and humble themselves before Him. He delights in such people, and "seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:23). In time to come, God will exalt them, and make them kings with His great Son (Rev. 5:9-10), so that the promise of Abram will then be fulfilled, "kings shall come out of thee" (Gen. 17:6).

This was a very notable occasion in the life of Abram, for God now changed his name. "Thy name shall no more be called Abram, but thy name shall be *Abraham*; for a *father of many nations* have I made thee" (Gen. 17:5). *Abba* is the Jewish word for "father." *Ab-ram* means "lofty father." But *Ab-raham* means "father of a multitude." In thus changing his name God revealed to Abraham that he was to become the leader of a multitude, the father of the faithful, as Paul calls him.

As a token of His covenant, God gave to Abraham the rite of circumcision. Circumcision is the cutting off of flesh. It became a law to the Jews (Leviticus 12:3), but it was only a sign reminding them that they should cut off their sins, or be "circumcised at heart" (Deut. 10:6; Rom. 2:29). Today, anybody who puts on Christ by baptism, and tries to live a godly life, is accounted as being circumcised (Col. 2:11), and therefore joined to the covenant God made with Abraham.

God also changed the name of Sarai. She was now to be called Sarah, meaning *Princess*, and God declared: "I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her." (Gen. 17:16). By this promise, Abraham was shown that the

promised offspring would not come through Ishmael, but through the son of Sarah.

It was almost unbelievable to Abraham, that a couple so old as he and Sarah should have a son. Nevertheless, the prospect filled him with great joy and pleasure. But he did not want Ishmael to be neglected. He had learned to love the boy who was now thirteen years of age, for he, too, was his son; and so he pleaded for a blessing on him also.

And God granted his request. The son of promise was to be Sarah's son, whom they were to name Isaac, which means *laughter* or *joy*. But God also said that He would bless Ishmael, whom he would multiply into a great nation, and that twelve princes would come from him.

So Abram was to have two sons. One was the son of a bond-woman, the other the son of a free-woman. Both were to have a numerous offspring. The son of the bond-woman was to develop into a people who would always find themselves in trouble (Gen. 16:12), but whose prayers "God would hear" (the meaning of *Ishmael*), and who would finally become a "great nation" ruled by twelve princes (Gen. 17:20). The son of the free-woman was also to become a numerous people who would rule over their fellows, and inherit the land with Abraham for ever.

1900 years after God appeared to Abraham, the Apostle Paul wrote concerning Ishmael and Isaac, and said that there is a hidden meaning in these things. Ishmael, he likened to the natural descendants of Abraham, the Jewish people; Isaac he likened to the spiritual seed of Abraham, those (both Jews and Gentiles) who try to worship God in truth, and follow Jesus Christ (Galatians 4:22-26).

Thus, although the prophecies made to Abraham concerning his eldest son Ishmael were fulfilled in the Arab people, they also concern the Jewish nation. By allegory, God was showing Abraham His purpose to be revealed in the future.

Visitors For Abraham

"People who live in the country, away from contact with other people, know how pleasant it is to receive visitors, especially if they have common interests. It gives them the chance to hear the latest news, and discuss those things in which they are interested." So declared Mr. Phillips after the family had read Genesis 18.

"For some time," he continued, "your mother and I lived in a place that was very isolated. Visitors were few and far between, and contact with Ecclesial life almost ceased. It was a

great joy when we were visited by any of the brethren.”

“That was the case with Abraham, as we have just read. With his vast household and great flocks and herds, he had pitched his tent under a great oak tree at Mamre. Suddenly a servant approached Abraham, and announced that three men were approaching his encampment. It was a burning, hot day, and Abraham knew that they would be tired. With typical friendliness and hospitality, he went forth to meet them. Bowing low before them, as was the custom in those days, he invited them to break their journey with him and refresh themselves.

“Abraham did not know that they were angels, sent by God to visit him. He thought that they were ordinary men, mere strangers, travelling through the land. Out of kindness of heart, he asked them to rest awhile. His friendly action was later praised by Paul, and held out as an example for all to follow (Heb. 13:2).

“Abraham led the strangers to the shade of the tree under which he had pitched his tent, in order that they might enjoy their rest. Then, hastening in to Sarah, he told her of the visitors, and, full of kindness, went and fetched a calf from the herd, to prepare a meal for them. Sarah was soon cooking a fine roast dinner for them.

“Meanwhile Abraham enjoyed conversation with them outside the tent. In the course of this, however, the visitors made a statement that startled their hosts. They declared: ‘Sarah will have a son as God has promised.’

“Sarah, still inside the tent, preparing the meal, but possibly trying to listen to the conversation at the same time, heard the message, and laughed. Many years had passed since she first had hoped for a son, many times she and Abraham had discussed the promise that God had made with them, but now she believed it was too late. She was too old to have a son. And so, as she continued her preparations, and listened to the conversation of the men without, she ‘laughed within herself’ (v. 12).

“But then she received a shock. The visitors made a remark that showed that they were not ordinary men for whom she was preparing the meal. She heard them say to her husband, ‘What makes Sarah laugh? Is anything too hard for God?’

“So taken aback was she at this that she left her task for a moment, and going outside denied that she had laughed. ‘Oh yes you did!’ the angels replied.

“Next year the promised son was born as the angels had

declared. He was called Isaac, which means *laughter*. Sarah remembered her strange visitors, and in her great joy declared: 'God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me' (Gen. 21:6)."

"Daddy," interrupted Ann at this stage. "What did Sarah mean by that?"

"The expression used by Sarah can mean to laugh in doubt, or to laugh in the abundance of joy, something like we read in Luke 24:41 where it is written that the disciples were so overcome with good news of the resurrection of Jesus, that it is said: 'They believed not for joy.' Sarah expressed her great joy in the birth of her little boy, and added that all who look for the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham, would joy with her. They do this, because they realise that through Isaac came the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World. Isaac, therefore, was to Sarah, and all that share her hope, the son of laughter and rejoicing as his name signifies. Do you understand now?"

"Yes, Daddy, Go on with the story."

"Meanwhile, the strangers made ready to continue their journey. Before departing, they explained their terrible mission to Abraham. He now knew that they were angels sent from God, and perhaps asked them what their purpose was in visiting the earth. They told him that they were about to visit Sodom to punish the city because of the evil conduct of the people who lived there.

"Abraham was startled and afraid when he heard that. He remembered that Lot was in Sodom, and he feared that he might be destroyed with the city. And so he pleaded to God to show mercy, He asked 'Wilt Thou destroy the righteous with the wicked?' (Gen. 18:23). God will never do that. He is just in all His ways. He willeth not the death of any, but that all should come unto Him and live! He will always care for the righteous. And so the angel promised Abraham that God would not destroy Sodom if there were fifty righteous people found in it. But Abraham knew Sodom, and in view of the appearance of the angels, now wondered if there were fifty righteous people in it. He therefore 'came boldly before the throne of grace' (Heb. 4:16) and pleaded that God would not destroy the city if there were forty five righteous people in it. And when God replied that He would not destroy the city under those conditions, he continued to plead with God until He promised that if ten righteous people were found therein, Sodom would not be destroyed. Having made this agreement with Abraham, the angels continued towards Sodom, to punish the wicked city.

Chapter Five

THE LAST TERRIBLE NIGHT OF SODOM

The Angels Meet Lot In Sodom

“Towards evening on the same day the angels arrived at Sodom where a very terrible work of judgment awaited them.

“Outside the city walls they met a man who met them with joy, and, full of hospitality, invited them to stay with him for the evening. This man was Lot. Like his uncle Abraham, he did not know that the two men who had come to Sodom were angels, but in his loneliness in Sodom, he rejoiced to meet with some who came from another place.”

“Daddy,” asked Ann. “Why do you say that Lot was lonely in Sodom? He would have had plenty of friends and people about him?”

“There were plenty of people in Sodom” replied her father, “but Lot had no friends. In fact he was a very unhappy man in Sodom, and doubtless wished that he was back with his uncle Abraham. He seemed to have been a weak man. Despite the trouble he had experienced when he was taken captive by King Chedorlaomer he had returned to Sodom, even though the evil surroundings distressed him.”

“How do you know that the evil surroundings distressed him?” asked Peter.

“Because the Bible tells us so. It says, ‘Just Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked’ and again, ‘that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds’ (2 Pet. 2:7-8).”

“Why didn’t he leave Sodom and return to Abraham?” asked Ann.

“Unfortunately his family had made friendships with the people of Sodom, and refused to give them up. His two daughters had become engaged to be married to two of the men of Sodom who were thus called the *sons-in-law* of Lot, and his wife had entered fully into the social life of the evil city. These things hindered Lot from doing what he should have done.”

“What was that, Daddy?”

“He should have left Sodom, and returned to Abraham as a ‘stranger and pilgrim in the land’ looking forward to the fulfilment of the promises. He should have kept separate from

those about him, as we should today, lest we be drawn to desire the things of the world more than the things of God.”

“Lot certainly got into a lot of trouble when he left Abraham,” remarked Ann.

“Yes, the choice was a foolish one. He was most unhappy in Sodom. It was a continual worry to him, as the Apostle Peter states in 2 Peter 2:7-8. and it is not good for a man to be always in such a state. On the other hand, Abraham was happy in his isolation, and was able to reflect upon God and His promises without the distractions of Sodom.”

“Did Lot still continue to worship God, even in Sodom?” asked Peter.

“Yes, the record speaks of ‘just Lot’, and refers to him as ‘righteous’. He was the one whom Abraham had in mind when he pleaded with the angel to spare Sodom if ten righteous persons were found therein. Remembering that Lot had several children, and a large household of servants, he was convinced that ten righteous would be found in Sodom.

“At the gate of the city, the angels at first refused the invitation of Lot to enjoy the hospitality of his home that evening. They declared that they would abide in the street all night. Lot was appalled at such a thought, and urgently pressed upon them to accept his offer (v. 3).”

“Why did he do that if they were content to stop in the streets?” asked Peter.

“Lot realised the great danger of doing that,” answered his father. “Sodom had become like many modern cities of today, where it is not safe to remain in the streets all night. The men of Sodom were very immoral men, and under cover of darkness were ready to do the most awful things. They had no shame at all, and rejoiced in the worst forms of wickedness and violence. Lot knew that only too well, and so pleaded with the angels to make their way to his house for the night. And, finally, they agreed to do so. But the men of Sodom heard of the strangers, and full of wickedness they surrounded Lot’s home with evil intent against them. Lot tried to protect the strangers he had brought to his home, but this only roused the anger of the evil men against him. They turned on him with anger and threats, because of his reproaches against them. ‘This fellow came to dwell among us, and now wants to judge over us,’ they declared (Gen. 19:9). From their words and actions it is clear that they disliked Lot as much as they worried him.”

“Why is it that people who are evil dislike those who are good?” enquired Ann.

“Because righteousness is always a reproach to wicked-

ness,” answered her father. “People, whether young or old, who give themselves over to wickedness, always feel a little uncomfortable in the presence of those who do not. They try to justify their actions by ridiculing those who stand aside from such things. They decry them in such terms as ‘goodie-goodies,’ and so ridicule them. When other young people see that you refuse to be involved in their questionable activities they do not like it, because they know within their hearts that what they do is wrong. So, though you have said nothing, your actions condemn them, and they dislike you for it. That is why it is good that young people who seek to serve God should look for companionship among those who are like-minded. Unfortunately, human nature is such that people are more easily influenced by evil things than by good. This is illustrated by what happened to Lot. The men of Sodom knew that Lot was disgusted with their way of life, and when on this occasion, he rebuked them, it roused them to anger. Beside themselves with fury, the men turned on Lot and sought to kill him. But the angels saved his life. They smote the men with blindness, and pulling Lot inside the home they closed the door against the wicked people outside. And now the angels had seen enough. The wicked city of Sodom was past redemption; the people were beyond reforming. They were so given over to wickedness and violence, as to make only one thing appropriate: to destroy both city and people. God determined to pour out His judgment to that end. But what of Lot? He had to be saved, for, as the angels had told Abraham, God will never destroy the righteous with the wicked. So now they proceeded to explain to Lot the extent of the judgment that would be poured out upon the city, and advised him to gather his family together, stressing to all members the need to flee from the city that they might be saved. The Apostle Peter, in commenting upon the incident declared that it illustrates that God ‘knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of trials, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished’ (2 Peter 2:9).”

“With the knowledge that the city was to be destroyed, Lot called all his relations together, urgently pleading with them to flee with him from that place; but as in the days of Noah, they laughed at him (Gen. 19:14). They did not believe in God, and therefore did not think it possible. All night he continued to reason with them, but in vain. At last the time came for the city to be destroyed, and the angels urged Lot to leave immediately with his wife and two daughters. Lot still lingered, however, pleading with the others to come, until the angels, in their mercy, forced him to go (v. 16), and leading him out of the city,

told him to escape into the mountains, lest he be consumed with the fire of Sodom.

“But Lot, weary from pleading with his relatives all night, and full of sorrow at the terrible things he had witnessed, asked permission to shelter in a place called Zoar (or *Little*). The angels allowed him to do this, and as he sorrowfully made his way there, the terrible judgment of God roared out of heaven against the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The earth quaked; volcanic explosions flung immense quantities of lava and rocks into the air; the light of the sun was blotted out by a pall of black smoke; forked lightning flashed forth out of the darkness, striking against the evil cities, and setting alight to the bituminous soil of the area, turning it into a lake of fire. And then an even more terrifying thing happened. The volcanic eruption and earthquake forced so much of the burning bitumin and lava into the air, that the land began to subside. The water of the inland sea rushed in to cover it from view, burying the cities in a watery grave. The minerals brought to the surface by this upheaval turned that once very pleasant land, previously described as being ‘like the garden of Yahweh’ (Genesis 13:10), into the arid, barren, salt-encrusted wilderness that it is today.

“So terrible was the sight that Lot was afraid to remain in Zoar. He fled out of the city with his two daughters and hid in a cave in the mountains. Now he realised how foolish had been his choice in leaving Abram, and moving downhill towards Hai (*Ruin*) and the cities of the plain. Not only had he lost all his worldly possessions, but also part of his family, including his wife; for as they were fleeing out of Sodom, Lot’s wife had looked back. She was saddened at leaving the city. She had not been unduly concerned at the spiritual welfare of her family. She had been pleased to observe how prosperous they had become. She rejoiced that they were making such good marriages, for the men who were courting her daughters were very desirable in her eyes! So, whilst she felt she had to follow Lot, she did so impatiently. She looked back longingly at the city life she loved so much. She regretted giving up the pleasures and luxuries to which she had become accustomed and became ‘a pillar of salt’. Jesus warns us of this. See what he says in Luke 17:32.”

Joan quickly found the place and read, ‘Remember Lot’s wife’.

“That is the advice of the Lord Jesus to us,” commented Mr. Phillips. “We live in days similar to those of Lot (see vv. 28-30). It is an age of great violence and wickedness. At school, as in the world, people are becoming more abandoned, more reckless in their wickedness. Yet it is also a time of great



Lot's wife looked back

affluence. People have more money than ever before. They can enjoy the pleasures of life more than at any time previously. But they do not recognise God as the Giver of 'every good and perfect gift', and are contemptuous of His ways and teaching. Lot's wife had the opportunity to learn of God, and to give herself to Him in the way that would be pleasing to Him, but she became too involved with pleasure and prosperity, and in looking back sorrowfully, was 'turned into a pillar of salt'."

"What does that mean?" asked Peter.

"I do not believe that it means that God turned her into salt, but that looking back, and hence delaying to follow Lot, she was overwhelmed with the sulphuric eruption, encrusted with salt, and so died. The lesson of her life teaches us to recognise the value of the Truth, and whilst enjoying life as God would have us do, never to lose sight of the better things that are revealed in Christ Jesus. You will find that a person who tries to act as God would have him act is happier by so doing, for God will surely reward him.

"And now let us consider Abraham. When the angels left him, he was greatly concerned at the outcome of their visit to Sodom, and the future of Lot. Next morning he arose very early, and made his way to the top of a hill where he could see towards Sodom and Gomorrah. He was anxious concerning the fate of the city. Did it contain ten righteous people? Would it be saved? He had his answer. 'The smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace!'

“The wickedness of the people of Sodom, and the destruction of the city, are used many times in Scripture to warn people of the consequences of ignoring God’s ways. But its greatest message is for today. The prophets of God warned the people of Israel that they would suffer in a similar way if they refused to heed His message. As the men of Sodom knew nothing of the impending destruction until it came, so, Christ warned, the people of the world would be in ignorance of the truth concerning his coming (Luke 17:28-30). We are living in days, such as those. The people about us are wicked and unheeding of God, so that the day of Jesus Christ’s coming will take them unawares. We must be careful that it does not also take us unawares also. If our hearts are in the things of this world, so that we do not heed the words of God, we will be like Lot’s wife — destroyed with the wicked when we are trying to escape. Peter taught that the destruction of Sodom was an example of what God would do to the righteous and the wicked (2 Pet. 2:6). The former will be delivered, but the latter will be punished. Therefore we do not want to be envious of those about us who *seem* to enjoy life, whilst they despise God and His ways. They are not really happy, for it is not long before all their pleasures turn sour, or they tire of them. But in following God’s ways we enjoy life whilst we look forward to the prospect of great joy at Christ’s coming.”

Chapter Six

ISHMAEL BANISHED FROM ABRAHAM'S HOUSEHOLD

Ishmael In Trouble

The days and months sped by in the camp of Abraham, and the time came when Isaac, the joy and pleasure of his mother's heart, should be weaned. So happy were his father and mother in the growth of the little boy, that Abraham made a great feast that all could rejoice together.

However, about that time, Sarah saw Ishmael mocking her son. Ishmael was fifteen or more years of age at the time, and was growing into quite a big boy. He became jealous of his little half-brother. He remembered the time when all Abraham's love was given to him, and there was much talk of him being heir of his father. As well as teasing Isaac, he ill-treated him also, as sometimes brothers do. This made Sarah very angry, and in a rage she told Abraham he must go. "Cast out this bondwoman (i.e., Hagar the slave) and her son; for the son of the bondwoman will not be heir with my son Isaac" (Gen. 21:10).

Her demand seemed unfair to Abraham. He loved Ishmael as well as Isaac, and thought that they should all live together in peace. He did not understand that God was using the jealousy of Ishmael, and the anger of Sarah, to teach them, and us, of His great purpose in the earth.

God therefore told Abraham to do according to Sarah's command because Isaac was the seed of Promise. He told him not to worry about Ishmael knowing He would care for him, because "he is thy seed" (v. 13).



This explanation made a great difference to Abraham. He had complete faith that God would do as He promised and would look after Ishmael. Therefore, next morning, after giving Hagar and Ishmael a supply of food and water, he sent them away.

But Hagar had no plans of her own, and when she left Abraham's settlement she did not know what to do. She wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba until the food and water which Abraham had given her were finished, and Ishmael was almost famished by the need for something to eat and drink. The sun burned down on them as it does in the Land of Promise, and still they wandered around looking for food and water getting weaker and weaker, until it seemed as though they must die. Ishmael suffered even more than his mother, and seemed at the very point of death, until, at last, she laid him under a shrub, out of the sun, and said, "Let me not see the death of the child" (Gen. 21:15-16).

This was a terrible ordeal for Hagar and Ishmael. They were at their wits end, weeping over their sad lot. They did not show great faith in God, for He had promised Abraham that He would look after them, and if they had turned to Him, He would have shown them where to find water.

But God is very merciful and saw their plight. Hagar heard the Voice of God asking her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not fear! God hath heard the voice of the lad. Go, lift him up, for I will make of him a great nation."

God then directed Hagar to a well of water, and through the water of this well Ishmael revived. God continued to be with the lad as he grew up. He became an archer, married an Egyptian, and became father of twelve princes. So Ishmael grew into a great nation.

Family Discussion

The Phillips' family had read the story outlined above from Genesis 21, and had no sooner completed it, when Ann said indignantly "I cannot understand how Sarah could be so cruel as to send Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness to die!"

"Sarah didn't do that, Ann," replied her father. "She merely sent them away from the camp of Abraham. Hagar and Ishmael wandered in the wilderness, it is true, but that was their own choice."

"I still think she was hard to send poor Ishmael away like that!"

"Well, we do not know the circumstances. Ishmael was jealous of Isaac, and perhaps, may have harmed him. I am quite

sure that the ‘mocking’ of Ishmael would be serious enough to justify what Sarah demanded. Otherwise God would not permit it.”

“Why did God permit it?”

“Because He wished to show His purpose to those who would study this story.”

“How does this story show the purpose of God?” asked Ann a little impatiently. “I cannot see much in it except to show that Sarah was cruel.”

“That’s because you haven’t searched to find God’s meaning,” replied her father. “God has a purpose in all that He has placed in the Bible, though sometimes we must think a lot before we can find the true meaning. In fact, the Bible is like a great mystery book. It tells a story, and then leaves you to work out the meaning. To do so we must search for the clues that will solve the problem.”

“Why doesn’t God tell us plainly and clearly His meaning?”

“Because He knows it is better for us if we work for the knowledge. He has ‘magnified His word above all His name’ (Psa. 138:2), and He delights in us ‘thinking upon these things’ (Mal. 3:16), for by so doing we ourselves will learn to think as He would like us. You see, God not only cares for our bodies by giving us food and shelter, but also cares for our minds by giving us the Bible. We need to be careful, not only in what we eat and how we live, but also how we think and what we read, because these things will affect our lives. If we read only trashy books, and silly comics, we will never rise above those things because our thoughts will be always on them. We must select good books to read, and seek to understand the Bible which will help us to think higher thoughts and live better lives.”

“Well, what are the clues in this story?”

“The clues are the two mothers and their sons — Sarah and Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac. Sarah was a freewoman; Hagar a bondwoman or slave. Both Ishmael and Isaac were sons of Abraham, but only Isaac was the son of promise. And in the Bible, two kinds of people look to Abraham as their father. Firstly, there are those who believe and obey God, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, and such are called ‘the seed of Abraham’ (Gal. 3:28), and secondly, there are those Jews who reject the teaching of Jesus Christ but have nonetheless come from Abraham. The former are like Isaac, the ‘seed of promise,’ the latter are like Ishmael, and are called the natural seed. Like Ishmael, they are in bondage to the law. Turn to Romans 9:7-8

and read it for me, will you Peter?"

Peter read: "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

"You see," continued Mr. Phillips, "Paul refers to the chapter we read tonight to show the difference between mere Jews after the flesh, and those who accept Christ. The former are not the 'children of promise.' Ishmael, in the chapter we read, stands for natural Jews, and Isaac for those who accept Christ."

"I thought Ishmael was the father of the Arabs," declared Peter.

"So he was, but in this chapter he represents the natural Jews."

"That is confusing isn't it?"

"No. God often has hidden meanings in the things He reveals."

"Are you sure you are right in this, Dad?"

"Yes, the Bible tells us so. Paul in Galatians 4:22-31 says that the story we have read is 'an allegory,' that is a story with a hidden meaning. He goes on to show that Ishmael represented those Jews who were under bondage (i.e., sons of the bondwoman) to the Law of Moses, and refused to accept Jesus Christ, whilst Isaac represented those who do accept Christ. In verse 29 he says, 'As he (i.e. Ishmael) that was born after the flesh persecuted him (i.e. Isaac), that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.' In the days of Paul the natural Jews opposed and persecuted those who accepted Jesus, as Ishmael did Isaac in the story we read tonight. Now I have given you the clues, let us work out the mystery. What was the first thing we read about tonight?"

"It was the feast Abraham gave when Isaac was weaned," said Ann.

"Yes, When a baby is weaned its food is changed. Isaac, we have found, represented the true followers of God. These were found at one time among Jews only, and their spiritual food was the Law of Moses, but when Jesus Christ came, the Jews were delivered from the curse of the Law. They were 'weaned' and given 'new food' in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Gentiles accepting Jesus Christ became Jews."

"How was that?"

"By accepting the teaching of Abraham, and the hope of Israel as their hope. But when the disciples went preaching to

Gentiles, it made the Jews jealous. They opposed the Truth and mocked the Christians as Ishmael mocked Isaac. Many Jews and Gentiles who accepted Jesus were put in prison and ill-treated. And so the Jews who did not receive Jesus, having rejected God, were themselves cast off from Him as Ishmael was from the household of Abraham. They soon found themselves, like Ishmael, wandering in the wilderness despairing of life."

"What do you mean by that?"

"The Jews having rejected Jesus were driven from Palestine into all parts of the world where they have since existed without hope."

"Why are they without hope?"

"Because they rejected Jesus Christ in whom there is the only way of life."

"Won't the Jews be in the Kingdom of God?"

"Only those who accept Jesus Christ will receive life eternal."

"But God told Abraham He would look after Ishmael, so that if Ishmael in Genesis 21 represented the Jews, God must look after them," declared Peter.

"That is true, and concerning the Jewish nation, we can use the words that God used concern Ishmael, 'Also of the son of the bondwoman will God make a nation, because he is thy (Abraham's) seed.' God is today causing the Jews to return from their wilderness wanderings. They will, however, yet go through a time of great trouble, as did Ishmael, but God will hear their cry (Deut. 4:30), and deliver them. He will send them Jesus Christ, their deliverer (Rom. 11:26), who will save them from their troubles (Jer. 31:15-17). He will bring them back into the land of Israel where He will make them a great nation because they are the 'seed of Abraham,' God's friend. In the Bible, God speaks of this, and tells the Jews, 'I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name's sake; which ye have profaned among the nations whither ye went' (Ezek. 36:22). Do you think you understand this?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Well, now here is the lovely part about the story we have considered tonight. As Ishmael wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba, and almost died through lack of water, so has the Jew wandered among the nations ignorant of the water of life which Jesus can provide. Read John 4:14 for me, will you?"

Ann read: "Jesus said, Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into

everlasting life.”

“The Truth is thus likened by Jesus to a ‘well of water,’ and as the Truth is based upon the Promises of God, it can be likened to the ‘well of Promise.’ Of this Well of living water the Jews know nothing and yet are sadly in need. All this was shown to Abraham, for Ishmael wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. Do you know what *Beersheba* means?”

“No.”

“It means the *Well of the Oath*. Ishmael did not know where the well was, and so nearly died of thirst. But God revealed it unto him before it was too late, and so he recovered (Gen. 21:19). This is an allegory of what God will do for the nation of Israel when the Lord Jesus returns. The Jews will not only be gathered to their land, but also taught the Truth. They will see in Jesus Christ the one ‘whom they pierced,’ and they will mourn before God because of their past blindness (Zech. 12:10). So, like Ishmael, they will be saved by the *Well of the Oath* that Jesus will reveal unto them. Then Israel will be made a great nation in the earth, for God has said, ‘As ye were a curse among the nations, so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing’ (Zechariah 8:13). God will hear their cry in time of trouble as He did that of Ishmael (Ishmael means *He whom God hears*), and they will become a great nation because they are Abraham’s seed. All this was revealed to Abraham in the story of Ishmael long before the Jewish nation existed.

“This remarkable allegory revealing the hidden meaning of the Bible, shows that the closer we search its pages the more wonderful becomes its teaching. As we grow in understanding, its treasure house of knowledge discloses many beautiful truths that are hidden from our eyes by just a casual reading. The Bible becomes like an exciting adventure in understanding. It is like a detective story. We need to prayerfully seek the clues that will reveal the hidden meaning of its message, and gradually, to our delight, its teaching will be revealed.”

“Don’t you think that you are stretching the meaning of this chapter too much?” asked Peter.

“No, I do not!” replied his father. “All that I have told you is explained by the Apostle Paul. He, too, likens the Bible to a detective story!”

“Where does he do that?”

“In Romans 16,” answered his father with a smile. “Read verse 25 for me.”

Peter read: “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept

secret since the world began.”

“There you are, Peter! Paul likens the gospel to the ‘*revelation of the mystery*.’ Isn’t it the work of detectives to unravel mysteries?”

“Yes, I suppose!”

“That’s right. And in the Bible we have a book that will reveal precious secrets to us if we study it correctly.”

“But look,” remonstrated Graeham. “I am inclined to agree with Peter. On what basis have you the right to take a straightforward story such as that of Hagar and Ishmael and turn it into a prophecy?”

“I agree that we must exercise care in such matters” replied his father. “Remember, I told you that we must search for clues in the Bible, and the Bible clearly explains that the incidents that took place in the life of Abraham were not only historically true, but also they are recorded to reveal God’s future purpose.”

“We will get to the point shortly I suppose,” remarked Peter irreverently of his father to the indignation of Ann. “What we want to know, Dad, is where does the Bible state that the history of Genesis can be treated as a parable?”

“That is what I have been wondering also,” remarked Graeham.

“Yes,” added Ann. “It is very interesting to say that Ishmael represented the Jewish people, and so forth, but how do we know that it is true?”

“Because the Bible teaches us to do so,” explained Mr. Phillips. “Please read Galatians 4:22-24 for me.”

Ann quickly found the place, and read: “It is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar . . .”

“Thank you Ann,” remarked her father. “Notice that the Apostle Paul likens the things we have been discussing to an allegory? This means that God has selected historical incidents, and recorded them as allegories to teach important lessons. A recognition of this provides a key to Genesis, and to the interpretation of events recorded there. The incidents that took place happened, but they are recorded for two reasons: (1) They are historically true; (2) They reveal a hidden meaning. God chose to record incidents that had such a two fold meaning. That is why the life of Joseph is given in such detail in

the book of Genesis. It shows that the book is divine. . .”

“Why does it do that?” asked Peter interrupting his father, whose tendency was to become a little warm and loquacious when he discussed a favourite topic.

“In an ordinary book, written by human agency, greater prominence would have been given to the life of Judah because he developed into the most important tribe”, explained Mr. Phillips. “But instead, attention is given to the life of Joseph, and it is set before us in great detail. Why is that, do you think?”

“We were taught the reason in Sunday School,” said Joan. “The teacher told us that the life of Joseph, Jacob’s favorite son, is a parable of the Lord Jesus Christ, the beloved son of God. We had to write it down on paper.”

“Yes,” agreed Mr. Phillips. “And it shows the marvelous foreknowledge of God. He moved Moses to record the life of Joseph in greater detail because it, too, is an allegory pointing to the life of the Lord Jesus. The fact that Christ’s life is so clearly foreshadowed in the life of Joseph is an indication of the inspiration of the Bible, for it reveals the prophetic insight of Almighty God. I hope you can understand this, for you will find it important in the better understanding of the Bible.”

“We will give it some thought!” answered Peter a little cheekily.



Chapter Seven

ABRAHAM'S GREATEST EXAMPLE OF FAITH

How Abraham Responded To His Greatest Trial

One of the greatest attributes that we can acquire is faith. Paul declares that “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6). He also explains how we can develop it, stating that “faith cometh by hearing the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The Apostle John wrote that faith will gain for us the victory in the battle of life (1 John 5:4). It will enable us to look beyond the present to the time when the Lord Jesus will reign on earth, when present trials and problems will give place to the glory and joy of the Kingdom of God. Given enough faith, there is nothing that can defeat us. Faith will motivate us to rise above every test imposed. It is important, however, to match our faith with courage; for one is necessary to help the other.

That is the lesson of Genesis 22. It records the great test that God brought upon Abraham. The manner in which he reacted to that trial earned for him the title of *The Father of the Faithful*, for through faith he triumphed. James declares that Abraham was “justified by works” when he offered up his son, and claimed that “faith without works is dead” (James 2:22).



Though the narrative in Genesis states that "God did tempt Abraham", elsewhere we are told that God does not tempt man (James 1:13). The word in Genesis is better rendered *test* (see R. V.). Though God does not tempt man to sin, He does test those whom He desires to remould so as to fit them for His kingdom.

Accordingly, Abraham was instructed to take Isaac, the Son of Promise, the boy of Laughter and Joy as his name signifies, and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains whither God would direct him, located in the land of Moriah. We can enter into the feelings of Abraham when he received the command of God, for any parent would experience the greatest distress in putting to death a beloved child. In fact, parents generally would prefer to die for their children, rather than see them die! Why then did God demand this of him? By so doing, He taught Abraham, and therefore us, the great price that was paid for the redemption of those who seek His salvation. For God is a Father, and Jesus Christ is His son; and as God is capable of the greatest feelings for those who suffer (see Isaiah 63:9), He would have felt for His son, as Abraham did for Isaac.

We shall see that all the little incidents in this wonderful story are important, and well worth noting. For example, the word Moriah means *Seen of God*, and we can understand how the great Creator would watch with sympathy and understanding the trial of His Friend. Moriah was the place where later, Solomon built the Temple of God (2 Chronicles 3:1), and concerning which, Moses said, God did choose to "put His name there" (Deut. 12:5). We are not told which of the mountains it was, but it was most likely Mount Golgotha where, many hundreds of years later, the Lord Jesus was put to death as a sin offering. It is, therefore, a very important place, and well named Moriah, or *Seen of God*, for "the eyes of the Lord are always upon it" (Deut. 11:11). One day it will become the site of the capital city of the World (Jer. 3:17), for Jerusalem will extend to that area (Jeremiah 31:39-40), and the Lord Jesus shall reign therein, and with him in glory will be Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and other men and women of faith.

What were Abraham's feelings when he received this command from God? What would be the feelings of any father for his dearly beloved son? Every word of the command would be as a dagger in his heart. But Abraham was a man of faith. It had been faith that had caused him to leave Ur of the Chaldees for the promised land. It had been faith that had kept him in the ways of truth during his wanderings. His faith had been

strengthened as he had experienced the goodness of God throughout his life, and although he knew that obedience to the command he had received would bring about the death of Isaac, he recognised that God would have to raise him from the dead in order to fulfil the promises He had made.

Had not God told him that through Isaac would come the promised Seed (Jesus Christ)? Had He not said that through him would come the blessing? Had not God instructed Abraham to send Ishmael away from Isaac because Isaac was to be his heir?

As Abraham thought on these things his conviction was strengthened that though God had called upon him to slay his son, He must restore him again in order that the promises might be fulfilled. He knew that God was "able to raise him up from the dead" (Heb. 11:19). He could see that this was a great test of faith, and he determined within himself to carry it out.

**"Where Is
the Lamb?"**

Therefore, without, delay, "early next morning," this grand old man of faith set forth on his terrible journey. The wood for the burnt offering was prepared, the ass upon which Abraham rode was saddled, and with Isaac and two young men-servants he set out. Three days later they reached the place selected by God. What terrible days these must have been! All the time Abraham would be thinking of the terrible deed he had to do at the end of that time. To him, Isaac was as good as dead. It reminds us of the three terrible days when Jesus was in the grave.

At the foot of the mount, Abraham told the young men to wait while he and Isaac ascended it to worship, "after which," he said, "we will come again to you."*

How could Abraham say this when God had told him he was to offer up his son? Because he recognised that for God to be true to His promises, He would have to raise his son to life again; and his faith was such that he was convinced that God would do so (Hebrews 11:19).

And so Abraham, and the Son of Laughter and Joy commenced to climb the Mount. But there was no joy on that occasion. The heart of Abraham was sad, and being an old man, whilst Isaac was a strapping young man of about seventeen, and probably well-built from his outdoor life, he laid the wood of the burnt-offering upon Isaac, as about 1900 years later, they laid the wood of the cross on Jesus Christ as he wearily

* The statement in the Hebrew is in the plural as we have rendered it above.

ascended the Mount upon which he was to meet his death (John 19:17).

Meanwhile, Isaac was still in ignorance of the purpose of the journey beyond knowing that it was for worship. So, as they went up the Mount, he said to his father: "We have the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

And to this question, the Man of Faith answered: "My son, God will provide himself a Lamb for a burnt offering" (v.7).

From this we know that Abraham saw something more in the sacrifice of Isaac than a mere trial of faith. Centuries later, the Lord Jesus Christ declared that "Abraham saw my day and was glad" (John 8:56). From this it appears that Abraham recognised that in the things he enacted there was foreshadowed the sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is called "the Lamb of God slain for the sin of the world."

**"Touch Not
the Lad"**

And so they came to the dread spot where Isaac was to be the sacrifice, and with heaving, anxious heart, Abraham set about building the altar, and laying the wood thereupon. By now, Isaac, too, would have known of the part that he was to enact in the trial, and being a young man of great faith like his father, and, doubtless, being encouraged by him to submit to the command of God, he offered himself as a willing sacrifice. Like Abraham, he knew that God would richly reward him if he trustingly gave himself in that way. So he steeled himself to do so.

At last the altar was built, the wood was laid in order upon it, Isaac the son of Happiness and Joy was bound and the terrible moment came. Abraham stretched forth his hand, and, strong in faith, he uplifted the knife to slay his son, fully determined to do the bidding of God.

But as he made ready for the fatal blow, the voice of God was heard: "Abraham, Abraham! Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me."

What relief for Abraham and Isaac! How their hearts would turn in thankfulness to God, in gratitude that He had not demanded the life of Isaac. They still desired to worship Him. But what could they offer? Looking around, Abraham saw a ram caught in a thicket by the horns. With trembling hands he released Isaac whom he thus received, as Paul comments, "as from the dead" (Heb. 11:17-19), and offered the ram in place of his son.

As he did so, the revelation came to him, that what he had done was a type of what God would accomplish in the Redeemer that He had promised Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15). He explained this to Isaac. He called the name of the place *Yahweh Yireh*, and declared: "In the Mount of Yahweh it shall be seen." In that same spot would be seen the great provision that Yahweh would provide for the salvation of those who seek Him in faith.

The voice of the angel had directed Abraham to the ram provided of God through which Isaac, the seed of Abraham, was saved out of death. But now, Abraham heard the angel, "the second time" (Genesis 22:15). All that the angel had said on the first occasion had relation to sacrifice, such as the Lord experienced at his first coming. It had saved Isaac from death, and thus pointed forward to the first advent of the Lord, when he came as "the lamb of God for the sin of the world", to be brought from the dead by a resurrection to life eternal.

But the "second" declaration of the angel had relation to events that will be fulfilled at the second coming of the Lord. He declared: "By Myself have I sworn, saith Yahweh, because you have done this and have not held back your son, your only son, I will bless you beyond words; I will greatly multiply your seed so as to compare with the stars of heaven and the sand on the seashore for numbers. Your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies and through your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed My voice."

With this promise ringing in their ears, we can understand with what happiness and joy Abraham and Isaac would descend the mount, to make their way back to Beersheba, where Sarah was anxiously awaiting the outcome of the journey of her husband and her son. The whole family would rejoice that its members had all come through a dreadful trial in a way that vindicated their faith and honoured their God.

"That is one of the greatest chapters of the Bible," remarked Mr. Phillips enthusiastically, after the family had completed the reading of Genesis 22. "It is one that helps us to understand the great love of God!"

"I cannot understand why you say that," commented Ann slowly as she pondered what had been read. "To me it is a terrible chapter. It seems cruel that God should ask Abraham to offer his son as a burnt offering!"

"But God did not allow him to carry it out, did He?" continued Mr. Phillips with a smile.

"No, but what difference does that make? God caused Abraham unnecessary tension and sorrow, it seems to me,"

interjected Graeham.

"That is because you do not understand what God was trying to teach Abraham and also us," answered his father. "We feel for Abraham because we can enter into his feelings, and we know what a terrible thing it would be for a father to have to put to death his son in that way. But, you know, we take for granted that God allowed His son to be put to death as a sacrifice, and as God has feelings, and is capable of anger, love, compassion and so forth, He would have felt for His son, as Abraham did for Isaac."

"But God would know that Jesus would be raised from the dead," said Ann.

"True," commented her father. "But He would feel for His son just the same. Remember, Jesus knew that Lazarus would be granted life again, but we are told that he wept at the graveside (John 11:35). And to show that God feels for His people, even though He punishes them in His love, please read Isaiah 63:9."

There was a scurry of pages being turned, as each of the children tried to outdo the other in finding the place first. Peter won the contest, and read:

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

"Thank you," said Mr. Phillips. "That verse is dealing with the way in which God felt for His people as they wandered through the wilderness. They were disobedient, and He punished them. But, at the same time, He felt for them. Notice the expressions in the verse: *He was afflicted, in His love, in His pity, He carried them*. These words speak of compassion, consideration, concern, and so forth. It teaches us that we can turn to God with every confidence knowing that He is One who can help us, Who desires to help us, and Who feels for us. When Abraham was told to offer his son, he learned what a great sacrifice God offered, when He 'gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John 3:16). Do you understand that?"

"Yes, I think so," answered Ann.

But now Peter had a comment to make:

"I can't see much difference between the promise made to Abram in Genesis 12 and the one we read this evening. They both concern the same things."

"The difference is a very important one," replied his father. "In Genesis 12, God made promises to Abraham, but there were conditions attached. They were promised to him *if*

he obeyed God (see Genesis 12:1-2); but in Genesis 22, Abraham showed how completely he was prepared to obey and therefore there are no conditions attached. God says now to Abraham, '*I will bless thee.*' Paul, in Hebrews 6:15 says, 'After he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise'."

"What did God mean when He said Abraham's seed 'would possess the gate of his enemies?' " asked Ann.

"You know who the Seed is of course?" replied her father.

"Yes, you have told us before. It is Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

"Yes. Now when Jesus Christ returns and sets up his power on earth, will all the nations accept him at first?"

"No, not all of them. Some will."

"Can you give me a Bible quotation showing this?"

"No, I cannot."

"Well, here are some: Revelation 11:18; Isa. 60:12; Psalm 2:8; Daniel 2:44. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:24 says that 'he shall put down all rule, and authority, and power, for he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.' So, you see, Christ will triumph over all his enemies, over all people who oppose his teaching, as Abraham was told."

"But I still do not know what is meant by 'possessing the gate of his enemies!' "

"It means having power over them. In ancient times, towns and fortresses were walled up, and the only way to enter in was by gates let into the walls. For a commander to 'possess the gate' of a walled city, or fortress, would be to have it in his power, for he would then control anybody, or anything, entering or leaving. Hence that fortress would be subject unto him. Also, in ancient times, the gates of such cities were of greatest importance. There its rulers and judges would take their place with great pomp, and would sit to administer the laws of the land (see Genesis 19:1,9; 2 Samuel 15:2). It was a convenient place to hear any complaints from the people, or to decide the rights and wrongs of cases presented to them for consideration. Thus, when God told Abraham that his seed would 'possess the gate of his enemies,' He promised him that Jesus Christ would overcome his enemies and rule over them. Daniel 2:44 illustrates this. It states: 'The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.' Again, we are told in Isaiah 60:12: 'The nations and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.' The promise to Abraham in

this place, states that his promised seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall first overthrow all opposition to his rule, and afterwards bring the blessings of his reign to all mankind. By that means, as Abraham was told, 'in thy seed shall all the nations be blessed.' The way in which they shall be blessed is outlined in such places as Isaiah 2:2-4 and elsewhere."

"Abraham called the name of the place *Jehovah-Jireh* (Gen. 22:14); what does that mean?" asked Peter.

"The name should be *Yahweh Yireh*, replied his father. That is the name of God. And the term means: *Yahweh will provide*."

"What did Abraham expect God to provide?" asked Ann.

"A suitable sacrifice by which would come a resurrection to life eternal. That sacrifice was provided by the Lord Jesus, concerning whom it was said: 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29). By taking away sin, or causing it to be forgiven, the Lord Jesus made it possible for men to look forward in hope to a resurrection to life eternal. Without him, the promises of God to Abraham would have been of no value. So Abraham, seeing in these things lessons pointing forward to the Lord Jesus, called the place: *Yahweh Yireh* — 'The Lord will provide'."

"Do you think Abraham would understand that these things pointed forward to Jesus Christ?" asked Peter.

"I am certain of it, for Jesus himself declared that he did. He said, 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad' (John 8:56). Abraham saw it in promise. And he not only saw the first coming of Jesus 1900 years ago when he was crucified, but also his second coming when he will be a great King in the earth, and all nations will obey him. That is what made him glad."

"In Genesis 22:14, it says, 'In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.' What is meant by that?"

"The *Mount of the Lord* is Mount Zion. It was in the hills close to Zion where Isaac was offered. And it was in the same place where were fulfilled the lessons shown to Abraham in this chapter. There, close to Mount Zion, God's only begotten son, whom He loved, was offered as a sacrifice. When we think of how terrible were the feelings of Abraham as he took up the knife to slay his son, we understand better the great price that was paid that we might have life. But in Mount Zion, in the future, there will also be seen the glory of the Lord Jesus when he comes to reign in Jerusalem, and 'before his ancients (including Abraham) gloriously' (Isa. 24:23). Then it will be seen by men everywhere that 'God has provided' all things

necessary for life eternal. That is the meaning of the words, 'In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.' For in that Mount was, and shall be, seen the fulfilment of all that the Angel declared on the two occasions he addressed Abraham in the land of Moriah."

The supreme act of faith.



Chapter Eight

ABRAHAM PURCHASES THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH

Shortly after his great trial of faith, Abraham moved from Beersheba to Hebron, and there, at the age of 127 years, Sarah died.

Sorrowfully Abraham made preparations to bury the wife who had been such a loving and helpful companion to him over the years. She had shared with him his joys and sorrows, and encouraged him in his life of faith. How different she was to the wife of Lot who hated to leave Sodom with its pleasures! Now Sarah was dead, and though Abraham sorrowed, it was not without hope, for he knew that Sarah will be brought again from the dead when the Lord Jesus returns. In that day she, with Abraham, will enter upon a life that will have no sorrow, and will rejoice in an honoured position in the land where they wandered as strangers nearly four thousand years ago.

Meanwhile Abraham had no place to bury his wife. Though God had promised all the land to him for an everlasting possession, Abraham had not been given “so much as to put his foot on” (Acts 7:5). He therefore had to purchase some land, and for that purpose, he went to the gate of the town of Hebron. It was at such a place that people gathered to buy and sell, or to discuss their problems and make known their disputes.

Abraham was a stranger among the men of Hebron. They knew him as *the Hebrew*, or the man who had *passed over* the river (see Gen. 14:13). Nevertheless, though he was a stranger, or one who kept himself separate and apart from them, they knew of him, and highly respected him.

And so Abraham stood before the men in the gate, and bowing before them in the manner of the east, he told them the sad news concerning Sarah, and reminded them that as a stranger and sojourner among them he had nowhere to bury his wife. Politely they invited him to make a selection of any suitable burying place. Again Abraham arose before them, and again bowing, he politely requested the Cave of Machpelah which belonged to a man of Hebron named Ephron.

Now Ephron was among those who were at the gate, and on hearing the request of Abraham whom they called “a mighty prince,” he stood up, and in the custom of the people of the

east, he offered the Cave to Abraham as a gift.

But as Abraham had refused the gifts of the King of Sodom (Gen. 14:22-23), so he refused the gift of Ephron. The only gift he wanted was the gift of God. He insisted upon paying for the cave, and asked the price. And for 400 shekels of silver, Abraham received the Cave and its surrounding field.

And there Sarah was buried.

Abraham's purchase of this small piece of land is recorded in the Bible to emphasise that he never received in his lifetime the land promised him of God. Stephen made that perfectly clear when he defended his belief before the Jerusalem Sanhedrin as recorded in Acts 7. He declared that Abram came into the land, where the Jews in that day dwelt, "and God gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child" (Acts 7:4-5). All the land that Abraham possessed in his lifetime, was his by purchase. The land God promised him will be *given* him when, at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will be brought again from the dead. Meantime, at the death of Sarah, he purchased the Cave of Machpelah as a family place of burial.

Later, Abraham, too, was laid to rest in the same Cave, and the bodies of Abraham and Sarah together with others of his family, remain there to this day.

When they awake from their sleep of death, they will discover that nearly 4,000 years of history have passed. They will find some of their descendants back in the land, and they will learn how their example of faith and righteousness has helped many men and women, and boys and girls, to know God a little better. Many people have been inspired by the wonderful example set by faithful Abraham, and by his companion Sarah, who gave up the ease of city life, to humbly follow her husband in his lonely wanderings, always selflessly encouraging him in his life of faith.

She shared his trials, and with him will share his rewards in the Age to come (1 Pet. 3:6). Meanwhile, she rests beside him, in the Cave of Machpelah, awaiting the great day of the Resurrection when sorrow shall be turned into joy, because death shall be swallowed up in victory.

Chapter Nine

ABRAHAM SEEKS A WIFE FOR ISAAC

A Wife For Isaac (Genesis 24)

“This chapter shows how anxious Abraham was that Isaac should have a suitable wife,” declared Mr. Phillips after the family had read Genesis 24. “Because he was very old and knew he would soon die, he realised it was important that Isaac



Rebekah and Eliezer.

should marry and have children.”

“Why was that so important?” asked Ann.

“Because the promises that God had made to Abraham depended upon it. God had told him that his seed would develop into a great nation, and after Abraham’s death there would arise one from among that number who by his perfect obedience would be raised from the dead, and so open the way whereby a resurrection to life eternal would be possible for all the faithful. That one is Jesus Christ (see Matt. 1:1; John 11:25; Acts 2:24; Gal. 3:16). All the promises that God had made to Abraham depended upon the coming of this righteous seed; so a suitable bride for Isaac was important.

“But forty years had passed since the Son of Happiness and Joy had been born (Gen. 25:20), and still no wife could be found for him.”

“Weren’t there any girls in Canaan?” asked Peter.

“There were plenty of young ladies in Canaan,” replied his father, “and doubtless many of them were very pretty. But because of the wickedness of the people, and because they would have nothing to do with the true God they were unsuitable for Isaac. It is very important that a man and his wife should be of one belief, otherwise the home will soon become divided, and the worship of God, the most important thing of life, will then be hindered or neglected. Bitter arguments may then arise, and instead of the home being a place of peace and happiness, it can become one full of discord and even hate. Because of that, God has carefully instructed those who would live in obedience to Him, to be careful with regard to whom they select for wife or husband. The Jews were commanded to marry only those of their own race, and Paul, in 2 Corinthians 6:14, wrote: ‘Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.’ Young people need to remember, also, that true beauty means much more than a pretty face, and true wealth cannot be measured by a bank balance. Beauty and wealth often lie unseen in the heart, and are shown by obedience to God, and in thoughtful loving actions to others. A pretty face can hide a selfish and vain character, or a bad temper that can make life unpleasant. The years go by, and good looks may fade, but true beauty increases in loveliness with time, and true love between husband and wife grows with the years, as they help each other towards the Kingdom of God. Marriage was created by God in order that each party might help in the needs of the other (Gen. 2:20), but selfishness or opposition in the home can destroy all that. Better for young people to immediately break off friendships with others if they are not interested in God’s

Truth; otherwise friendship might blossom into love, and end in an attachment that can cause much unhappiness. Love based upon the Truth, however, is a very wonderful thing. But I am getting a little poetical, perhaps thinking of your mother, and what I am saying can only be appreciated by experience. I had better return to the story."

"Yes, I think you had better!" commented Mrs. Phillips.

"Just a moment, Daddy," interrupted Ann. "What if a person lived in isolation away from the Ecclesias?"

"If they are seeking a partner for life, they must try and convert such to a knowledge of the Truth. They need to make it a matter of prayer, remembering the words of Proverbs 18:22: 'Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of Yahweh'."

"I see."

"There being no wife for Isaac in Canaan," continued Mr. Phillips, "Abraham called in his trusted servant Eliezer, to send him on the difficult mission of selecting one for him. This was a strange request, and because Abraham was so particular, it was a task that Eliezer did not like to undertake. 'What if I am not successful?' he enquired. 'Shall I then take Isaac back to Haran so that he can make choice for himself?'"

"This suggestion horrified Abraham. God had told him to 'get out' of Ur and Haran (Gen. 12:1), and under no circumstances would he return. He had left those places forever. He had prayed to God to bless Eliezer in his mission, and was confident that He would guide him in the matter. He therefore told Eliezer not to worry too much, but to go to the city of Haran where, as you remember, Abraham's brother, Nahor, had remained and there seek a wife for Isaac."

"How could Abraham be so sure that God would help Eliezer?" asked Ann.

"Because God had told Abraham that through Isaac would come the one in whom the promises would be fulfilled (Gen. 21:12). He therefore knew that God would see that Isaac had a wife in due time. Men of lesser faith than Abraham may have become over anxious, and, as the years sped away, they may have tried to obtain a wife by their own means, even if she were not altogether suitable. But Abraham had sufficient faith to leave the matter with God."

"It was a hard thing to ask Eliezer to do, wasn't it?" asked Peter.

"Yes, I certainly would not like to go to a strange town and select a wife for another man. But Eliezer, having sworn to Abraham that he would follow his instructions, took ten

camels, and loading them with his luggage, and some valuable presents, he set off on his strange mission. As Eliezer jogged on his way, on the back of one of the leading camels, with all the others strung behind him in the care of servants, he thought about his strange task, planning how to go about it. At last he came to the busy town of Haran, which was the cross roads of the caravan routes in those times, and outside of which was a large well where the people came for their drinking water. This was the town where Nahor had settled, among whose daughters Eliezer had to find a wife for Isaac. And there he prayed that God would bless him. Read the prayer again, will you, Ann?"

Ann read (Gen. 24:12): "And he said, 'O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray Thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water; and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that Thou has appointed for Thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that Thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.'"

"Thank you, Ann," said Mr. Phillips. "Eliezer had not finished his prayer when he saw a young woman approaching the well with a pitcher on her shoulder. He could tell from her face that she was not only a girl of great beauty, but of very fine character. Was this the wife for Isaac? He approached her as she filled her pitcher at the well, and asked: 'Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.'

"And Rebekah replied: 'Drink, my lord; and I will give thy camels drink also.'

"This was the sign that Eliezer had asked of God. But he still wondered whether it had happened by chance. In any case, the girl had been kind to him, and so, taking some of the valuable presents he'd brought, he gave them to her. He then asked who she was, and whether her family could lodge him for the evening.

"Rebekah then told him her name, saying, 'I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge you in.'

"Eliezer now realised that here was the bride for Isaac. The young lady before him who was so well named *Rebekah*, was a niece of Abraham's, and the sign he had asked of God had been fulfilled. He realised that the angel had guided him in his way, and bowing his head, he thanked God for the kindness

He had shown unto Abraham his master."

"Before you go on, Dad," interrupted Graeham, "Why do you say that Rebekah was well named?"

"Because the word 'Rebekah' means, *A rope with a noose*."

"That's a funny name," said Ann. "I cannot see how you can say she was well named!"

"*A rope with a noose* or 'Rebekah' means a young woman whose great beauty ensnares men."

"Oh! I see!"

"Meanwhile, Rebekah had hastened back home to tell her people of her strange encounter with the stranger, and how he wanted to lodge with them that evening. Laban, her brother, therefore, as head of the family, went outside the city to welcome Eliezer to their home."

"Why didn't Rebekah's father go out and welcome the stranger?" asked Peter. "Wouldn't he be the head?"

"Unfortunately, both Nahor, Rebekah's grandfather, and Bethuel, her father, were dead, and Laban, who was her elder brother, had taken their place. He, therefore, went out and brought Eliezer back to their home. The camels were attended to, and a meal prepared. But before Eliezer would eat he was determined to complete his mission. He gave them the news of Abraham: how God had blessed him, and given him much wealth; how that he had an only son of Sarah, called Isaac, who would inherit all he had, but for whom he desired a wife of beauty and character; how he had been sent on this mission, and having made it a matter of prayer, had been led by God to Rebekah. And now he wanted to know if his mission were successful. Were they willing that Rebekah should become Isaac's wife? There was only one answer to this! Rebekah's people believed in God, and could see that the matter went beyond their wishes. Laban and Bethuel answered: 'This matter comes from God; we dare not say yes or no to you. Here is Rebekah; let her be the wife of your master's son, as God has spoken' (vv. 50-51)."

"But I thought you said now that Bethuel was dead!" said Peter with a note of triumph in his voice at catching his father out.

"Bethuel, Rebekah's father, was dead," replied Mr. Phillips, "and that is why the record speaks of 'her mother's house.' The Bethuel of v. 50 was evidently a son of Rebekah's father, and with Laban, his elder brother, interviewed Eliezer on behalf of their sister."

"Oh, I see."

"Eliezer's mission was now complete; nor did he forget that it was due to the loving guidance of God. Bowing to the earth, he thanked Him for His kindness to Abraham. He then brought out many costly presents for Rebekah, her mother and brother, after which they feasted together, and then retired for the night.

"Next morning, Eliezer was up early and ready to depart. But Rebekah's mother and brother did not want her to leave so soon. They asked him to stay for a few days. But Eliezer knew how Abraham would be anxiously awaiting the result of his mission. He was keen to return. God had blessed him, and now his work was over. 'Hinder me not,' he asked.

"Rebekah was called. She was asked, 'Will you go with this man?' And she replied, 'I will go.'

"And so, with her maid-servants, and with Deborah her nurse (Ch. 24:59; Ch. 35:8), they commenced the journey back. Rebekah passed over the river, and came into the land that God had promised Abraham and Isaac. Down through the Land of Promise the little caravan of camels wended its way, and as they went, Eliezer doubtless told Rebekah of the promises of God, and how this land was to be given to Abraham and Isaac for ever by a resurrection from the dead. They passed over the Jordan and moved up the valley towards Shechem, then down the glorious hill country of central Palestine, where the wooded slopes of hills and mountains rise on either side. Finally, after a long and tiring journey, they came into the flat country of the south, and moved on to Beersheba, where Abraham had established his headquarters.

"Meanwhile, Isaac had visited his father, for at that time he was dwelling further south, at a place called *The Well Lahai-roi* (which means, *The Well of Life and Vision* — Gen. 24:62). There, one evening, as he walked in the field, and meditated upon the ways of God, he saw in the far distance, Eliezer's line of camels wending their way back home. As they came closer, Eliezer and Rebekah saw Isaac. 'There is my master's son,' he told Rebekah. For the first time Rebekah saw her future husband, the one for whom she had left home, and travelled so many miles in trust and faith. She took a veil, and covered herself."

"What did she do that for?" asked Ann.

"It was a custom of those times, and indicated modesty and subjection. Rebekah wanted to show Isaac that she would be a dutiful wife to him. The veil was used as a symbol to show that she looked to him as her lord, and that she would care for him as Sarah had done for Abraham. In that way, those women of

old provided a wonderful example. Read 1 Peter 3:6 for me will you, Joan?"

Joan read: "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

"The previous verse shows that those women trusted in God, and were in subjection to their husbands," continued Mr. Phillips. "They shared with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all the difficulties of their lonely life, and supported them in their worship of God, and are thus set forth as an example for other brides to follow."

"What does it mean by the words, 'are not afraid with any amazement?' " asked Graeham.

"The Revised Version renders it better," replied his father. "It reads, 'placing implicit trust in God.' That is what Rebekah did when she left her home for Isaac. We can imagine what joy there must have been in the camp of Abraham that night when the patriarch saw the beautiful bride that God had chosen for his son Isaac. They were married shortly after, and as Sarah had died some years earlier, Rebekah took over the charge of Abraham's household, as the Bride of the Son of Promise."

"I always like that story, Daddy," said Ann. "I once took the part of Eliezer in a play at Sunday School."

"It is one of the most beautiful stories in the Bible," answered her father, "and one, too, that has a meaning for us today."

"How do you mean?"

"In Isaac, Abraham was taught to see a type of the great Son who would come, and through whom he would receive the promises, even the Lord Jesus, and this chapter points forward to one of the most glorious things yet to happen to the Lord and all those who are faithful to him."

"I cannot see how that is so!"

"The marriage of Isaac and Rebekah is like a parable pointing forward to the time when Jesus Christ will be united for ever with those who have lived according to the commandments of God. In this parable Isaac represents Jesus Christ and Rebekah represents the faithful believers in him. Paul called the believers of his day 'the Bride of Christ,' and likened them to a 'chaste virgin' engaged to be married (2 Cor. 11:2). When the Lord Jesus returns to the earth, these faithful will be raised from the dead and given eternal life and united with him. In the Book of Revelation, that union is likened to a wonderful marriage (Rev. 19:7,9). Rebekah was beautiful, and so also will

be Christ's 'Bride,' the Ecclesia (see Ephesians 5:25-31). Rebekah separated herself from her people to marry Isaac, and the faithful come aside from the world to marry Christ (see 2 Corinthians 6:17). Laban and Milcah tried to delay Rebekah but she refused to stop, saying that she would go with the messenger from Abraham, and the faithful, also, will refuse to heed the counsel of those who would hinder them from commencing a journey that will take them to Christ. They, too, become veiled when they are baptised, for this is a symbol of their modesty and subjection to their master and lord. And as 'at evening time', Rebekah saw Isaac, and married him, was placed in charge of Abraham's house, so in the 'last days' of the Gentiles, the faithful will see Jesus Christ, and, as Abraham's seed will 'inherit the promise' (Gal. 3:28).

"One final lesson in the story we have read tonight: like Abraham, Rebekah had 'crossed over' the river and become a true Hebrew. We must do likewise."



18th-century engraving, "The Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah"



BEERSHEBA: the town of Abraham is today the modern capital of the Negev. Abraham made it his headquarters (Genesis 22:19), and there Isaac met Rebekah (Genesis 24:62-64). Beersheba signifies The Well of Oath. It typically foreshadows the water of life which is associated with the Abrahamic Covenant. When Rebekah arrived there to marry Isaac, the Seed of Promise, she had followed in the footsteps of Abraham from Haran (Enlightenment), to Beersheba (Well of Oath), and typified the separation and dedication of all true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The ancient city of Beersheba has been excavated not far distant from the modern city (see above), and a well, dating back to the time of Abraham, has been located there (see below).



THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JACOB

From Chapter 12, the Book of Genesis records the lives of four outstanding patriarchs:

1. Abraham — Representing a Divine call.
2. Isaac — Representing a Divine birth.
3. Jacob — Representing a Divine care
4. Joseph — Representing a Divine elevation.

Jacob is revealed as the man whom God remade. His character was purified by trial, as, invariably, is the case with Godly men. Because he correctly responded to this discipline, Paul wrote that "God is not ashamed to be surnamed his God" (Hebrews 11:16). The title, *The God of Jacob*, therefore, is one of the most significant in Scripture, and forms part of the title of the Temple of the Age to come (Isaiah 2:2-4). Whereas, typically, Isaac represented the Seed of Promise, Jacob represented those who are called to the Promise, and whose lives are necessarily reshaped to conform to Yahweh's requirements. His experiences also foreshadow those of the nation of Israel which, likewise, is to be reshaped. Hosea (Ch. 12:12) referred to Jacob's flight into Syria as typical of the nation in dispersion, and the state of extremity to which it would be reduced. Notice how Jacob's experiences foreshadowed those of the nation that sprung from him:

1. His destiny was proclaimed before his birth (Genesis 25:20-23) — so also was that of Israel.
2. The contrast between him and his brother was clearly defined (Genesis 25:24-34) — so also is that between Israel and the Gentiles.
3. He deceived his father and was driven from the land (Genesis 27) — so also did Israel.
4. Nevertheless God proclaimed His intention to restore him there again (Genesis 28) — so He has in regard to Israel.
5. He attempted to become assimilated among the Gentiles (Genesis 29) — so also has Israel.
6. He prospered among the Gentiles (Genesis 30) — so also did Israel after the flesh.
7. He experienced growing hostility from Gentiles (Genesis 31) — so also has Israel.
8. He returned to the land in fear, after wrestling with the angel (Genesis 32) — Israel is in the process of doing so.
9. He and his brother were reconciled in the land (Genesis 33) — this shall yet take place between Israel and the Gentiles.
10. He worshipped at the altar of Shechem (Genesis 33) — typical of Israel's ultimate conversion to Christ.

The Section in Genesis, devoted specifically to the Life and Times of Jacob (i.e. Chapters 28:1-36:43), can conveniently be divided into three parts:

- (1) Jacob's Family Life in Haran — Ch. 28:1-30:43.
- (2) Jacob's Return To The Land of Promise — Ch. 31:1-33:20.
- (3) Jacob As A Pilgrim In The Land — Ch. 34:1-36:43.

Then follows Jacob in Egypt, but the narrative merges into The Life and Times of Joseph.

Chapter One

JACOB THE SUPPLANTER:

Rival Twins

“The best way to read the Bible,” said Mr. Phillips, one evening after the family had read Genesis 25, “is to read a chapter, and then quietly think about it, trying to picture the incidents in your mind. You will find that this helps you to remember what you have read. God is pleased with people who ‘think upon these things’ (Mal. 3:16; Phil. 4:8; 1 Tim. 4:15). If we just gabble through the daily readings, and push the Bible on to one side to get back to something we were doing before we started it is insulting to the One who caused it to be written. Take the chapter we have read tonight. Let us go over it again. What a remarkable story it is! We have read of the twin boys who were born to Isaac and Rebekah. They were not ordinary boys. Before they were born, God had told their mother that they represented two kinds of people, that they would be rivals from birth, and that though the elder would be stronger, in the end he would serve his younger brother (Gen. 25:23).

“What strange twins they proved to be! They were complete opposites. The elder of the two was the stronger. From birth he was quite hairy, and they called him Esau, which means *Rough*. The other boy was different. He was smaller and weaker, and when he was born he caught hold of Esau’s heel, so they called him Jacob, which means *Heel-catcher*, or one who trips up another. From this we also get the word *Supplanter*, which means one who takes the place of another.

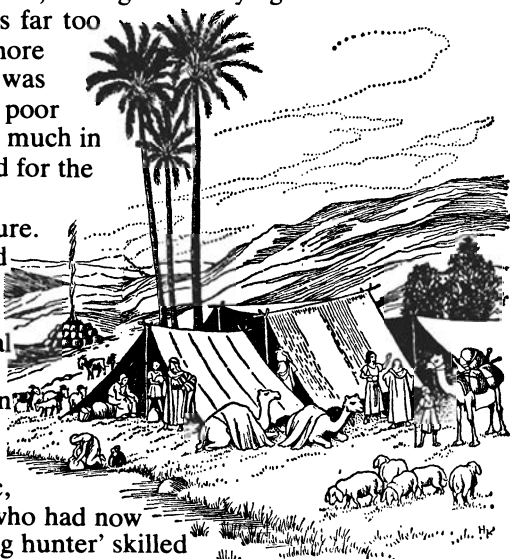
“As they grew, the difference between them became more obvious, and it was soon found that they had been well named. Esau was a noisy, rowdy, rough boy who preferred to be out in the open, camping and hunting all the time.

“Jacob, on the other hand, was more thoughtful and quieter, and always ready to listen to his old father talk about the wonderful promises God had made to him and Abraham. As he pondered on these things, the desire grew in him to inherit the promises. But in those days, the main inheritance of a father was always passed on to the firstborn of the family. Therefore, by nature, the birth-right belonged to his brother Esau. It could of course, be given to a younger son

under exceptional circumstances. For example, Jacob would have known how the birth-right had been passed from Ishmael the elder son of Abraham to Isaac, the younger son, because God had directed that it should be so. As he thought on these things, Jacob wondered how he could obtain the wonderful privileges of the birth-right.

“He was not called Jacob, the tripper-up, for nothing!

“As they came to manhood, Esau became more and more fond of an adventurous, roving life. Staying at home did not appeal to him; it was far too dull! He was never more happy than when he was abroad hunting some poor animal. God was not much in his thoughts. He lived for the present, and was not interested in the future. He was good-natured in his way, and delighted to come home with an animal he had caught, and cook savoury venison for his father. And Isaac grew very fond of his rough, athletic, powerful elder son, who had now grown into a ‘cunning hunter’ skilled in stalking animals, and afraid of nothing.



“In fact, the powerful Esau had become so fearless and confident in his strength and ability to hunt, that he did not even fear God, which was a pity.

“Jacob, on the other hand, was a quiet man. He was more settled in his way of life, and dwelt at home in the tents where he looked after the flocks and herds as a shepherd. His quiet, meditative manner appealed to Rebekah, whose motherly instinct was always ready to protect her weaker son. He became her favorite.

“Time passed by, Isaac was getting old, Esau was still keen on his hunting, and the birthright seemed as far from Jacob as ever. He was probably thinking of this one day, as he prepared some food in the field, when, suddenly, he saw Esau approaching. But as he watched his brother in the distance he could see that something was wrong. Instead of Esau striding along, hale and hearty from his hunting, bearing on his shoulders,

some animal that he had killed, he staggered along faint and weary with want of food. He had been a long time from home, and for once his cunning had deserted him. He had caught nothing. Days had passed without food until he was starving, and now thought that he was on the point of death. In his trouble, he did not think of God and ask for His help. He thought only of his hunger, and had no faith that God could supply it. Food for the body was what he wanted, and he wanted it quickly. And so, as he came up to Jacob, and saw the food he was preparing, he gasped out:

“ ‘Quick! Feed me with that red pottage.’ ”

“Here was the opportunity that Jacob, the *Heel-tripper*, wanted. He had little sympathy for his rougher brother who so completely despised the wonderful promises of God that were so important to him. He felt that Esau was unworthy of them. Therefore, before he would give food to him, he said:

“ ‘Sell me this day thy birthright.’ ”

“Esau answered: ‘I am dying of hunger! What good is the birth-right to me if I don’t get food?’ ”

“But this statement did not satisfy Jacob. He thought that Esau might trip him up if he did not get something more definite than that. He replied: ‘Swear to me that you will sell me the birth-right for this food.’ ”

“So Esau agreed to this, and then Jacob gave him of the food he had prepared. As soon as he had eaten, Esau’s strength came back to him; and off he went, caring nothing about the birthright. It did not mean a thing to him: food for the body was more to him than food for the mind. He preferred to satisfy his immediate desires rather than exercise trust in God, or to wait for something He had promised to give in the distant future. He was a man without faith.

“Thus Jacob obtained the birth-right, and Esau went back to his hunting.”

“It was strange that twins should be so different,” said Ann, when her father had finished speaking.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Phillips.

“But it is necessary to recognise that fact in order to properly understand this chapter. God told Rebekah (see v. 23), that Jacob and Esau represented two kinds of people. Jacob, as a man of God, considered everything apart from the things of God of little importance. His great ambition was to gain that which God had promised. Esau, on the other hand, was interested only in what the world could offer him.”

“Do you think that God was pleased with everything that Jacob did?” asked Graeham.

“By no means. Some things he did were wrong, and as we shall see, he suffered for them. However, in spite of that, his great faith and steadfast purpose, and his determination to give up everything to gain that which God had offered finally overcame all his weaker ways. God was pleased with his attitude, though He was not unmindful of Jacob’s weaknesses (Isa. 43:27; 48:8). On the other hand, Esau, in spite of his great physical strength, was really a weak man. Though he appears sometimes goodnatured and easy-going, Paul calls him ‘a profane person’ (Heb. 12:16).”

“What is meant by *profane*?” asked Peter.

“The word means one who is quite apart from God.”

“The Bible says that Jacob was a *plain man* (v. 27),” said Ann, who was going over the chapter again. “Does that mean he was not good-looking?”

“No,” replied her father. “The same word is translated in other places as *upright* and *sincere*. The expression is applied to Job in Chapter 1:1 which states that Job was ‘perfect and upright, and one that feared God.’ Despite Jacob’s questionable methods of trying to trip up his brother, he was a sincere worshipper of God. We shall see how God punished him for his wrongdoing, and rewarded him for his faith.”

“What is ‘red pottage’ (v. 30)?”

“Some think it was a kind of red lentil. In the margin of your Bible, the Hebrew is given as merely signifying *red*. What Esau said to Jacob was: ‘Feed me with that red, that red’ (the word *pottage* should not be there). The word ‘red’ in the Hebrew is similar to the word ‘Adam,’ which also means *Red*, and red is the colour of sin (see Isa. 1:18). Esau preferred the food of Adam. He wanted that which satisfied the flesh rather than the things of God. He was therefore called ‘Edom’ which means *red*, and in the Bible we find that Edom is often used to represent people who reject God’s way.”

“But I can’t see much wrong in Esau wanting food!” argued Peter, “He might have died without it.”

“There was nothing wrong with him wanting food, but what he did was to reject the things of God (the birth-right) to get it. He was without faith. If he had shown faith, God would have seen that he would have received food.”

“Wasn’t Jacob rather cruel in holding the food back from Esau?”

“It doesn’t say that he did this. We are not told all that went on at the time. Perhaps Esau offered to buy the food. Perhaps he said to Jacob, ‘I will give anything for that food, sell it to me!’ Esau was not interested in the birth-right, and

doubtless thought he got the food cheaply on those terms.”

“If Esau’s name was changed to Edom, does that mean that he was the first of the nation of Edom?” asked Mrs. Phillips of her husband.

“Yes, and the Edomites were like Esau. They were a godless people, always ready to stir up strife against Israel, and, as a nation, they were finally destroyed. From Esau came the Edomites, and from Jacob came the Israelites, and they were always opposed to each other. However, the prophet Amos declares that in the future, when the Lord Jesus returns to build up Israel into a great nation again, that the Israelites ‘will possess the remnant of Edom’ (Amos 9:11-12).

“How can that be, if the nation of Edom was destroyed?” asked Graeham.

“Because the term *Edom* is used to represent people other than the ancient nation of that name. It represents Gentiles who despise the glorious promises of God, and oppose His people. In the Bible, the term Edom (meaning *Red*, and therefore representing the Sin Power) is applied to such nations; but at the return of Jesus Christ they shall be conquered and compelled to leave off their evil ways and turn to God. Any nation that refuses to do that will be destroyed (Isaiah 60:12). That is why the prophet Amos spoke of ‘the *remnant* of Edom’ (i.e. those that remain of the nations after Armageddon) being made subject to Israel, whilst that nation will be raised from its present low position, and made the greatest nation on earth (Micah 4:8). In that way, the promise that God made to Rebekah will be fulfilled, and ‘the elder (Esau or the Gentiles) will serve the younger’ (Israel or the people of God).”

“But the Jews do not worship God correctly!” protested Peter.

“That is true, but it will be changed. The Jewish people will have to submit to Christ also, and accept the truth in him (Ezekiel 36:22-26). The Apostle Paul teaches that he will ‘turn away ungodliness from Jacob’ (Romans 11:26) at his second coming. When that happens, the Jewish people will be changed as Jacob was changed, and the nation will become ‘a blessing to all people’ (Zechariah 8:13).

Jacob Obtains The Blessing

“At the age of forty,” continued Mr. Phillips, “Esau married two Canaanitish women which made Isaac and Rebekah very sad” (Gen. 26:34-35).

“Didn’t they want him to marry?” asked Ann.

“They did not mind him getting married, but they were

sorry that he married Canaanitish women, for they knew that they were not interested in the God of Abraham and the wonderful promises He made, and that they would lead Esau away from the true worship. Don't you remember how Abraham was greatly concerned as to whom Isaac should marry, and sent Eliezer back to Haran to find a wife for him?"

"Oh, yes; I forgot!"

"About sixteen years later, the enmity between Esau and Jacob came to a climax. Isaac was about 116 years of age at the time, and he suffered a terrible illness that left him blind and weak. He believed that he was about to die (although, in fact, he lived for another sixty four years — Gen. 35:28-29), and therefore decided to pass the blessing of God on to his first-born son. He called Esau to him, and told him to hunt deer, and bring him some venison that he may first eat, and afterwards bless his son."

"Why was it necessary for him to eat the meat before blessing Esau?" asked Peter.

"That was the way in which an agreement, or covenant, was made sure in those days. An animal was slain, and the two parties making the agreement ate of the animal, and then, whatever was agreed upon was accepted as binding. When the two parties ate together it showed that they were joined together in agreement (see Gen. 21:30)."

"That seems strange, doesn't it?"

"Only because we are not used to it. It was the way appointed by God, and we will come upon it, often in the Bible, and the wonderful meaning behind it will gradually reveal itself. Meanwhile, remember that before the Lord Jesus was crucified, he celebrated a last supper with his disciples, and giving them bread and wine told them to eat because it represented his body and blood shed to make sure the new covenant (Luke 22:20)."

"I see."

"Rebekah knew of Isaac's intentions. She did not want the blessing to go to Esau. Jacob was her favourite son. But she thought that if she did not do something quickly, it would be given to Esau! Quickly she called Jacob to her, and told him to go to the herds and select two kids of the goats that she might prepare food for Isaac that he might take into his father, and pretending that he was Esau, obtain the blessing."

"That was not right, was it?"

"No, the deception was wrong, and it brought great trouble to Jacob and his mother. She said she would bear the curse (Gen. 27:13), and she did. Jacob, her favourite, had to flee from his home, and she never saw him again (Gen. 49:31)."

"Well, it seems a terrible thing to do when poor Isaac was so ill," said Ann.

"Yes, but we must not overlook that Esau did not really deserve the blessing. He had not only married the Canaanitish women, but he despised his birth-right, and had sold it to Jacob. Further, God had promised Rebekah that Jacob should have the blessing though she should have left it with God to provide it in His own time. Meanwhile, she carefully thought out what to do. She had in the house some of Esau's clothes that Jacob could wear, and she told him to put the goat kids' skins on his hands so that they would seem hairy like Esau's."

"But surely Isaac could tell the difference between a goat's skin and Esau's hand, even though he was blind! They would feel entirely different, I should think!" argued Peter.

"You forget that Isaac was very sick and weak at the time, so much so that he thought he would die. Being so ill, he was not only blind, but seemed to have lost much feeling in his hands. He was therefore easily deceived."

"Poor Isaac!" said Joan, with feeling.

"Yes," continued Mr. Phillips. "We can picture Isaac lying on his bed, awaiting the return of his son, and thinking of the wonderful blessing he had to give him. Suddenly he heard somebody enter. 'Who is it?' he asked. 'I am Esau, thy firstborn,' the voice replied. 'I have done what you asked me, so now sit up and eat of this venison that you may bless me.' Isaac was surprised. Esau had not been gone long enough to obtain the meat, and, besides, his voice seemed strange. 'How is it that you have obtained it so quickly?' he asked. And Jacob, having lied once, had to keep on doing so: 'Because the Lord God brought it to me,' he replied.

"That was awful!" remarked Ann.

"Yes," agreed her father. "And I am sure that Jacob would feel most uncomfortable about it all, and no doubt hated to deceive his poor old father. But lies usually get a person into trouble. The first lie becomes the father of a family of lies, for one lie leads to another. That is why it is better always to tell the truth. There is great wisdom in the words of Scripture, 'Behold your sins will find you out.' Jacob learned the truth of that. Meanwhile, Isaac was puzzled and suspicious. The voice was strange to him, the food had been prepared very quickly, and perhaps it was unusual for Esau to speak of the 'Lord God bringing animals to him' when generally he boasted of his skill in hunting. And so Isaac called Jacob closer to him, and catching hold of the hands of his son, he felt them to see if they were hairy, like Esau's. That must have been a terrible

ordeal for Jacob — to deceive his father when he was lying blind and sick upon the bed. But as the poor, weak hands felt the goatskins upon Jacob, Isaac said, 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are those of Esau. Are you really Esau?' And once more Jacob had to lie. 'I am Esau,' he replied.

"With that, Isaac ate the meat, and drank the wine that had been brought to him, and having finished, he called his son to him, and asked him to kiss him. As he did so, Isaac smelt the coat of Esau that his younger son was wearing, and, at last he was convinced that this was, indeed, his favourite son. 'See,' he said, 'the smell of my son is as the smell of the field which the Lord hath blessed. God give thee of the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee. Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee'."

"So Isaac blessed Jacob, and Jacob went his way.

"Meanwhile Esau returned. He had caught the animal, made the venison, and now came striding into his father with it. Again Isaac heard someone enter, and smelt the food. 'Who is that?' he asked. 'It is Esau,' the voice replied. This troubled Isaac. All his suspicions returned to him. There was no doubting this voice. He trembled violently. 'If you are Esau,' he said, 'who then was it that brought venison to me just now. I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed.'

"Now it was Esau's turn to be upset. He had thought that he would have obtained the blessing. He knew that he did not really deserve it, for he had sold the birth-right to Jacob, but perhaps he thought he could gain the advantage over his brother for once. He was disappointed and angry, and became terribly upset. He wept bitterly, asking that his father might give him at least one blessing. But Isaac could not do that. The blessing having been given could not be recalled, and could not be shared. Jacob had obtained it, and would keep it.

"When Isaac told Esau, he became furious. 'He is rightly named Jacob (or *Supplanter*),' he declared. 'He took the birthright from me, and now he has taken the blessing. But surely you can bless me also, father!'

"But Isaac could not do this. Esau was told 'Away from the fatness of the earth, and away from the dew of heaven on high will you dwell. By your sword shall ye live, and you shall serve your brother. And it shall come to pass when you shall have the dominion that you shall break his yoke from off your neck'."

"Just a moment, Dad," interrupted Graham, at this stage. "It doesn't say that in the Bible; it says, 'Thy dwelling

shall be the fatness of the earth,' and so forth."

"That is a faulty translation," replied his father. "As it stands in the Authorised Version it reads as though Isaac blessed Esau as well as Jacob, but the true rendering, I believe, is as I quoted it. That is how it appears in the Revised Standard Version."

"These different Versions are sometimes hard to follow," said Peter.

"Yes," replied his father, "and care must be shown in what is accepted. But it does not matter which one you take, the simple outline of the Truth remains the same. Perhaps, one evening, we will have a talk about how the Bible came to us."

"That would be good," replied Ann. "Especially if I could have Marjorie and Sheila here too. Peter would like that, I am sure!"

"Certainly, they may come at any time," said Mr. Phillips.

"Never mind about them," interjected Peter. "Let us get back to the story. Was the blessing fulfilled?"

"It was in part," said his father. "The country of Edom became very arid, and the nation of Edom was like Esau, quarrelsome and warlike, living by the sword. Edom threw off the yoke of Israel, also, as Isaac declared. So that what Isaac told Esau came to pass during the times of the Gentiles. But the fulness of the blessing to Jacob will not be seen until Jesus Christ rules as King in Jerusalem over Israel and the whole world (Jer. 3:17; Zech. 14:9). Then the land of Israel will blossom as the rose (Isa. 60:13), and Israel will become 'a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth' (Jer. 33:9). Then Jerusalem shall be called 'a city of truth' (Zech. 8:3), the habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness (Jer. 31:23), and the Gentile powers (of whom Esau was the representative) shall be in subjection to the King of Israel — the Lord Jesus Christ."

"I suppose it was all for the best that Jacob should get the blessing," said Ann.

"Yes, that was God's intention from the very first, though Rebekah should have waited for Him to reveal the means. But much needless sympathy has been shown by many for Esau. He was not fit for such a blessing. He was a faithless, worldly man who grasped at his own desires without caring what God wanted. Read what Paul has to say about him in Hebrews 12:16."

Joan found the place and read: "Lest there be any profane person, as Esau, who, for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have

inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears."

"That verse sums up the position," said Mr. Phillips. "It shows the type of person Esau was."

"But that verse makes God seem hard," said Graeham. "If Esau repented, and sought forgiveness with tears, why did not God forgive him?"

"That is not what the verse means," replied his father. "The word 'repentance' really means *change of mind* (see margin). Esau was not sorry for anything he had done, nor did he cry to God. He did not consider God in the matter. He sought to change his father's mind, and wept before his father. And he wept, not in sorrow, but in anger, and because he had lost the material benefits of the blessing. He was not humble and repentant before God. In fact, his heart was full of anger and bitterness against his brother, and he went around with murderous ideas against him. He said to himself, 'It won't be long before my father dies, and then I will kill Jacob!' (Gen. 27:41).

"But the ever watchful Rebekah could see that Esau would murder Jacob if he got the chance, and therefore told Jacob to flee to her brother Laban, in Haran, until Esau forgot his hatred. Moreover, Jacob was fifty six years of age, and it was time he married. She reminded Isaac of this, and Isaac, who had been grieved at the marriage of his elder son, agreed that Jacob should leave home and go to Haran for that purpose. Forty years were to elapse before Jacob was to see his home again."



The Patriarch Isaac blesses his son Jacob as Rebekah looks on.

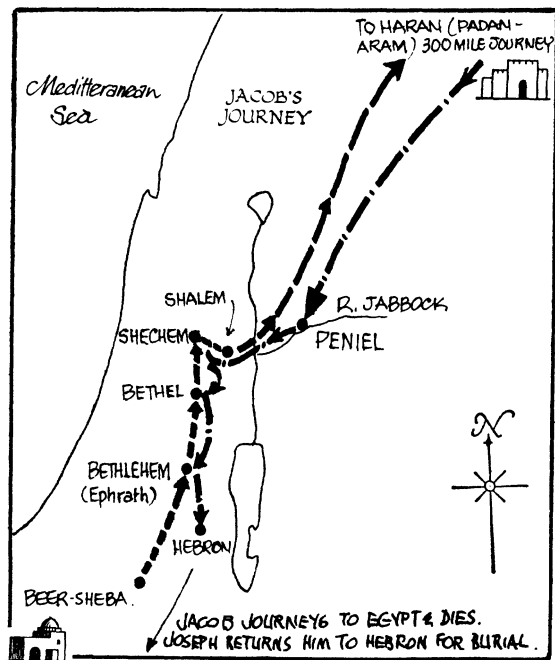
Chapter Two

HOW GOD BLESSED JACOB AT BETHEL

The Flight Of Jacob — Gen. 28

The Forrestville Sunday School was settling down for the afternoon's lessons. A low buzz of conversation came from behind the screens that were set up around the sides of the large hall in which Sunday School was held, and which sheltered each class from the prying eyes of other groups. The heat of the Australian sun made the room comfortably warm, inducing in some of the younger children a slight drowsiness. But this was not in evidence in the Intermediate Class of girls, presided over by Miss Hood. There was a state of expectancy there. The Instructor Lessons having been recited, the group of young teenagers in her class settled down to hear the story of Jacob's flight from his father Isaac's home, and to trace on a map the course he took.

"He left because he feared the anger of his brother Esau, and to obtain a wife," said Miss Hood. "But before he left, his



father Isaac, who was very sick at the time, and not expected to live told him what he was to do. 'Be careful,' he warned, 'that you do not marry any of the daughters of Canaan. Go to Haran, and marry one of the daughters of Laban.' As he thought this would be the last time he would see his son, he again blessed him. Read the blessing for me will you Joan? It is found in Genesis 28:3-4."

Joan read: "God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land, wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham."

"Thank you, Joan," said Miss Hood. "I want you all to take careful notice of that blessing for it concerns the future of the earth. Jacob never received it in his lifetime, for he died in the land of Egypt (Gen. 49:33), but, as we have discussed before, he will receive it at the return of Jesus Christ to the earth (see Luke 13:28)."

"What does it mean by 'Give thee the blessing of Abraham'?" asked Claudia, who had been pondering over v. 4 as the teacher had been speaking.

"The Apostle Paul answers that question for us," replied Miss Hood. "In Galatians 3:14 he speaks of the 'blessing of Abraham' coming on the Gentiles (v. 8) who accept Jesus Christ in faith (vv. 26-28). He shows also that the blessing is twofold. Those receiving it are first 'justified by faith,' and then, at Christ's return, will receive the promises, including life eternal."

"What do you mean by being 'justified'?" asked Claudia.

"To be justified is to be set right, and we can only be like that in God's sight when we stand before Him sinless," explained the teacher.

"How can we do that?" asked Claudia again.

"Only by the forgiveness of God. When we accept Jesus Christ, and are baptised, our 'sins are forgiven' (Acts 2:38). God blots them out, and we stand before Him forgiven, 'set right,' or 'justified.' This comes through faith. Faith is belief in God, without which 'we cannot please Him' (Heb. 11:6)."

"What if we sin after we have been baptised?" asked Sandra, a dark-eyed young girl of thirteen, who had been following the conversation with keen interest.

"Then we must ask God to forgive us again, and He has promised that He will (1 John 1:9)," replied the teacher. "Once we make Jesus Christ our Redeemer through baptism (Galatians 3:26), we can always approach God for help and

forgiveness if we fail. He knows we are weak and erring creatures, and He has provided all things needful for our eternal salvation. Otherwise we would be without hope."

"Is that what Isaac asked for on behalf of Jacob?" asked Ann Phillips, who attended this class.

"Yes," replied Miss Hood. "The 'blessing of Abraham' includes the forgiveness of sins as Paul shows. Perhaps Isaac remembered the deception of Jacob when he made mention of it. In any case, he knew his son would face many trials throughout his life, and that he would often need the care and help of God, as we all do. He therefore prayed for this great blessing to be with him. Do you think you understand its meaning?"

"Yes," replied the girls.

"With this wonderful blessing to encourage him," continued the teacher, "Jacob commenced his journey back towards Haran and exile. He went in fear of his life, dreading the vengeance of his strong, powerful brother. Unlike Eliezer, he did not leave with a retinue of camels and servants, but slipped away quietly, on his own, without much ado, walking on foot, and with staff in hand (Gen. 32:10). The route that Jacob took from Beersheba towards the north is very hilly, and walking would have been difficult. But Jacob pressed on swiftly, for he wanted to get away from the country where Esau hunted; and by night-time he had covered over forty miles. Evening-time found him wearily pressing on towards the town of Luz. But the sun went down before he reached it, and that meant he would have to stop in the open country all night long (v. 11)."

"Why was that, Miss Hood?"

"Because the towns in those days were surrounded by walls, and when the sun set, the gates were closed. Any late traveller, like Jacob, would then have to remain outside for the evening. Thus Jacob, lonely and weary, an exile from his own home, found himself also shut out from Luz. He was paying dearly for deceiving his father. Now, utterly tired out, he took a stone for a pillow, and laying himself down, prepared to sleep.

"Above him was the dark vault of heaven, out of which the stars shone brightly as the darkness of night gathered about him more completely. As he gazed at them, perhaps he remembered the story of his grandfather, Abraham, and how God had taken him out and shown him the stars, and said, 'So shall thy seed be'. And perhaps he wondered how it would be possible that he, the seed of Abraham, but so lonely, weary and weak, could possibly attain unto the promises.

"Gradually his tiredness overcame him. The stars faded

from his sight, his eyes closed, and he slept. But as he slept, he dreamed. He saw a ladder reaching from earth into heaven, and upon it were angels going up and down. Above it stood One who declared to Jacob:

“I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed: And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, east, north and south, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of” (vv. 13-15).

“The vision then faded, and Jacob awakened, and again the stars were gleaming down from heaven. But now a great fear gripped him. ‘Surely the Lord is in this place,’ he said, ‘and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven’ (vv. 16-17).

“Early next morning he arose, and with his mind filled with the wonderful vision of the night, he took the stone on which he had been resting, and setting it up for a pillar of remembrance, he poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of the place Beth-El which means *House of God*, and thanking God for His wonderful promise, he vowed that he would return and worship Him at that place, and thence after he would give a tenth of all he received back to God.

“And now, refreshed from his sleep, and uplifted by the promise of God that he would be cared for, Jacob faced the bright, early morning with hope. All the weariness and fear of the day before was gone. With resolute steps he commenced his journey again, confident of its success, and that he would one day return to the Land of Promise. Read Genesis 29:1 for me, will you, Glennis?”

Glennis read: “Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the Land of the People of the East.”

“I am told that the words in the Hebrew can be rendered, ‘Jacob lifted up his feet’,” remarked Miss Hood. “According to students of the Hebrew language, there is a sense of cheerfulness in this passage, quite different from the depression of the previous chapter. To use a term we all know, we would say that Jacob had been ‘dragging his feet’ on his journey towards Luz. He was weary and tired. But now he ‘lifted up his feet.’ He went forward cheerful and hopeful. That is what the promises of God can do to us all. They help us ‘lift up our feet’ in the journey of life, and assist us to look hopefully into the future, in the

knowledge that all will be well in the end. But I see some of you are simply bursting with questions, so I will start with you, Joan. What do you want to ask?"

"I cannot understand the vision at all, Miss Hood. What was meant by the ladder stretching to heaven? Why were angels going up and down on it?"

"Well, what do you use a ladder for?" asked Miss Hood in return.

"To get on a roof," laughed Joan.

"That is true. A ladder is something that connects distant parts. And the explanation of what this ladder represents is shown by the words of God that Jacob heard. He said, 'I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of' (v. 15). God thus promised Jacob that He would be with him until he and his seed inherited the land, and all families of the earth were blessed in Jacob. This will not be fulfilled until Jesus Christ reigns on earth, and then 'all nations shall call him blessed' (Psa. 72:17)."

"I still cannot see how this explains the meaning of the ladder," said Joan a little hopelessly.

"We are coming to that," replied Miss Hood. "The two distant parts that the ladder connected were the promise of God made to Jacob so many years ago, and its fulfilment which is still in the future. It was a ladder of time, linking the Kingdom of God with the promises made to those men of old, and this is shown by the words of God which I have explained."

"Why were the angels going up and down on it?"

"To show to Jacob that God would be with him and his children throughout the long period of time that was to elapse between the giving of the promise and its fulfilment. The angels are God's messengers. They were shown moving up and down the ladder because they overlook all things for the benefit of God's people. Paul said that they 'minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation' (Heb. 1:14); the Psalmist says that they 'encamp around them that fear God, and delivereth them' (Psa. 34:7). Though we cannot see them, the Bible speaks of them beholding us. The angels were very real to Jacob, for despite the many trials into which he was brought throughout his life, they protected him, as he himself declared when he was about to die. Read what he said in Genesis 48:16, will you please Joan?"

Joan read: "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads . . ."

"In those words, Jacob showed that he knew that God cared for him through His angels," remarked Miss Hood.

"My father once told me that the word 'angel' means messenger," said Ann.

"That is true," replied the teacher. "In Psalm 103:20 they are said to hearken to God's commands, and accomplish the work He desires them to do."

"What did Jacob mean when he said, 'This is the house of God'?" asked Sandra.

"The house, or temple, of God is His dwelling place," explained Miss Hood. "The Bible speaks of the followers of Jesus as the Temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Peter 2:5) because He is represented as dwelling in their hearts by faith. When Jesus Christ returns and brings from the grave all those who have been faithful to him, and gives them life eternal, they will represent a house of living stones in which God will be found."

"Do you think that Jacob would have understood that?" asked Ann.

"Yes, I do," replied the teacher. "Isaac his father had prayed that he might become a 'multitude of people' (Gen. 28:3). In the margin of the Bible this is given as '*an assembly of people*,' and the word he used is the word used to describe a congregation of people called together. It is the Hebrew equivalent of the word *Ecclesia*, such as we use to describe our community. Thus the blessing looked forward to the time when many people, out of all nations, will be gathered unto the Lord as one. In Revelation 5:9-10, the saved, in the age to come, are described as those 'redeemed to God' *'out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation'* now. . . ."

"Just a moment, Miss Hood," interrupted Joan who was puzzling over Genesis 28:3. "How can people of different nations be said to belong to Isaac and Jacob?"

"They can only be described in that way when they accept the same hope as did Isaac and Jacob," explained the teacher. "That hope is called *the hope of Israel*. And you will find that in Acts 28:20 Paul, the great apostle, declared that his hope was 'the hope of Israel.' In Galatians 3:29 he declared they that belong to Christ are accounted 'as Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.' When a person accepts Christ he is accounted as belonging to Abraham, and, therefore, of that great multitude, or assembly, promised to Isaac. In another place Paul styles them 'the Israel of God' (Galatians 6:16). So when a person accepts Christ in baptism he is accounted as being of the true Israel, and, therefore, a seed of Abraham."

"I understand that," remarked Sandra. "But I am not sure that I understand what Jacob meant in the chapter we read, when, he said: 'This stone shall be God's house.' What does

that mean?"

"It is a beautiful figure pointing forward to Jesus Christ, who is called 'the stone of Israel' (Gen. 49:24; Mat. 21:42)" replied the teacher. "Peter calls him 'the chief corner stone, elect, precious' (1 Pet. 2:6), and likens believers to living stones shaped according to the corner stone, even the Lord Jesus. Paul in Ephesians 2:20, says that this house of God, made up of living stones, is 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.' So you see, the corner stone is quite a common name used to describe the Lord. As Jacob rested on the stone at Bethel and was refreshed, so we can lean on the Lord Jesus, and gain strength from him."

"Why did he anoint the stone?" pursued Sandra.

"To answer that question, I will ask you one," said Miss Hood. "What does the word 'Christ' mean?"

"It means the anointed," replied Claudia.

"That is true. Jesus was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit, and went about preaching and doing good. After he was crucified and resurrected from the dead, God gave him a new nature (spirit nature) so that he now lives for ever. Hebrews 1:9 says of Jesus: 'God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' That is why he is called Jesus Christ. Jesus is his name, and Christ is his title. Jesus Christ thus means Jesus the Anointed. The pillar of stone that Jacob anointed with oil, so long ago, pointed forward to Jesus Christ, the anointed of God. But we must finish the lesson there, girls, for here is the superintendent to complain again that we are late in closing the lesson!"



Chapter Three

HOW JACOB WAS TRICKED IN MARRIAGE

Rachel
The Beautiful
(Gen. 29)

Some four thousand years ago, there existed at a spot some distance from the town of Haran, a large well. A huge stone covered the mouth of it, far too large for any one shepherd to remove, so that a number of shepherds used to gather at a certain time each day, in order that they might together shift the stone, and obtain water for their sheep.

On one occasion, three shepherds were gathered there for that purpose, when they saw a lone man approaching in the distance. It was clear from his appearance that he had come a long way, for he looked dusty and tired. As he neared them, he asked them from what place they came. They replied: "From Haran."

"Do you know Laban?" the stranger eagerly enquired.

"Certainly we do," they answered. "He is well known to us, and here comes Rachel, his daughter, with the sheep."

The stranger turned around and saw a charming young lady leading the sheep to be watered. Rachel was a beautiful young girl, in looks, deportment and disposition (Gen. 29:17). Her name means *a ewe-sheep*, and she was probably so named, not merely because she tended the sheep, but because of her gentle, loving disposition.





Laban's Pastures: Jacob serving for Rachel.

Now that all the flocks had been gathered together, the stone could be rolled away. The stranger helped the other shepherds to do this,* and helped water Rachel's sheep. Then, to her amazement, he told her that he was her cousin, and overcome with affection, he kissed his lovely young cousin and wept with joy that his long and difficult journey was over.

When Rachel learned that this stranger was her cousin, she left him in charge of her sheep, and ran home to tell Laban, her father, of his coming.

Laban was delighted to see his sister's son, and took Jacob into his home.

Rachel The Bride

A month of happy days followed in the home of Laban (Gen. 29:14). Jacob helped tend the flocks of his uncle, and gradually, in the company of the lovely Rachel, he indeed grew very fond of her.

But Laban was a very covetous man, and greedy for gain. The Proverbs declare that such a man "troubleth his own house" (Prov. 15:27), and so it was to prove. Meanwhile, he found that his affairs prospered in the hands of Jacob, so much so, that he did not want to lose his services. He therefore asked Jacob to work for him for wages.

Now Jacob's love for the beautiful Rachel was such that he

* It seems from Gen. 29:3,7,8, that the joint efforts of several shepherds were required to move the huge stone from the mouth of the well; otherwise there would be no point in the shepherds waiting one for the other. Rachel's flock was possibly the last of the flocks to appear, and on her behalf Jacob assisted the other shepherds to roll the stone away.

wanted her for a wife. But in those days it was the custom for the bride's father to be paid a sum of money on the marriage of his daughter, and Jacob had nothing to offer Laban as a dowry. He therefore offered to work for Laban seven years for the privilege of marrying Rachel.

Laban eagerly agreed to this, thinking that he had got Jacob to work for him on very cheap terms; whilst Jacob, on his part, thought that he had got the best of the bargain, for in comparison with the love he had for his beautiful young cousin, the seven years seemed only a few days (v. 20).

So these two clever men began to bargain with each other; but it was Laban who lost in the end, as we shall see.

A great wedding feast was prepared, and Jacob was full of joy, but then Laban cheated Jacob, and would not let him have Rachel, but forced the older sister, Leah, upon him as bride!

Jacob, who had deceived his father, now knew how it felt to be deceived. He was in despair, and bitterly angry, but his uncle explained that it was the law of the country that the eldest daughter must be married first. He then said that if Jacob worked for him another seven years he could have Rachel as well as Leah.

Thus Jacob found himself with two wives, each of whom had a maid. Though he loved them both, he naturally loved Rachel much more than Leah.*

From these two wives, and their handmaids, Zilpah, Leah's maid, and Bilhah, Rachel's maid, Jacob had thirteen children, in the following order: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (born of Leah), Dan, Naphtali (born of Bilhah), Gad, Asher (born of Zilpah), Issachar, Zebulun, and a girl, Dinah (born of Leah), Joseph and Benjamin (born of Rachel).

It may appear strange to us, today, that Jacob should have children from his two wives and their handmaidens, but that was the custom of those days, though not one of which God approved. Jacob, himself, wanted only one wife, but as the Bible narrative shows, the others were forced upon him.

All these children, excepting Benjamin, were born in Haran, and from them came the twelve tribes of Israel, so important in the purpose of God.

* This is what is meant when it is said that "Leah was hated." It means that a less degree of affection was shown for Leah than for Rachel, "he loved Rachel more than Leah" (Gen. 29:30). This is what Christ meant also in such passages as Luke 14:26 .



Rachel at the Well

Chapter Four

THE FLIGHT OF JACOB

**How Jacob
Outwitted Laban
— Gen. Chs. 30-31**

For fourteen years Jacob worked for Laban without wages. In the heat of summer, in the cold of winter, he kept the flocks and herds of his uncle. When wild animals attacked them, Jacob was there to defend them; when robbers prowled about at night, he was there to protect the sheep and goats (Gen. 31:38-42). He found Laban a hard master. Anything torn by beasts, or stolen, was charged against Jacob, who had to make good all losses, even though he served his master so well.

Laban, on the other hand, found his riches increasing, for God blessed all that Jacob did. Thus, at the end of the term, Laban found himself a wealthy man (Gen. 30:30). How he must have rubbed his hands with glee as he thought of the way he had deceived Jacob, and how he had prospered as a result. He probably looked upon himself as extremely clever; but he had overlooked God.

At last, the fourteen years came to an end, and Jacob told Laban he wished to return home to his father. Laban was very disappointed to hear that. He wanted Jacob to remain with him in order that his riches might increase. But Jacob had no in-



Household Images or Teraphim — the possession of these conferred the right to the household property.

tention of working for Laban on wages all his life. He had his wives and large family of growing children, and he wanted "to provide for his own house" (Gen. 30:30; 1 Tim. 5:8). He also knew by now that his uncle was a shrewd man, and that he would have to be careful in his dealings with him.

And so the scheming commenced all over again. One day, the shrewd Laban came to Jacob and asked him what wages he would require to continue to work for him. Jacob replied: "I do not want any set wages. I will continue to look after your affairs if you will give me all the speckled and spotted animals in your flocks, and those that are born hereafter. Then you can always look over my possessions, and any goat that is not speckled and spotted, or any sheep that is not black, you can consider I have stolen. In that way, you can test my honesty."

Laban could hardly believe his ears. This was better than he had ever thought possible! Not only were such animals considered to be inferior, but usually only a few were born each time, and Jacob's wages would be very light indeed! He did not realise that God was behind all this (Gen. 31:12).

So all the black sheep, and marked goats were separated from Laban's flock, and given into the charge of Laban's sons, who looked after them for Jacob, whilst the main flocks and herds continued in Jacob's charge (Gen. 30:35-36).

But to Laban's astonishment, the number of black sheep, and marked goats increased, whilst his own flock decreased. Laban found that he had the worst of the bargain, and altered the arrangements. He told Jacob that he could only have the speckled animals; but then he found that the animals born were mainly speckled (Gen. 31:8). Then he again changed the arrangements. "You can only have the ringstraked," he said. But no sooner had those arrangements been made than all the young animals born were ringstraked! Whatever Laban did went wrong. He continued to change the wages of his nephew (Gen. 31:7), but God cared for Jacob, so that he prospered.

Jacob Flees From Laban

Those were not happy days for Laban, because God, having punished Jacob for his deception of his father, now punished Laban for his greed and selfishness against Jacob. The uncle looked with envy at the possessions of his nephew, and the sons of Laban began to speak harshly of their brother-in-law. They almost accused him of robbing their father, and Jacob could see that if he remained much longer in the household trouble would break out (Gen. 31:1-2).

Then, in the midst of all this, God again appeared to him in

a dream, and told him to return home.

He told Rachel and Leah of his dream, and said that he had decided to follow the command of God. "Your father has not been fair to me," he said. "If God had not cared for me, your father would have let me starve."

Rachel and Leah agreed with him. Laban had sold them to Jacob, and had cared nothing for their condition. He had let them live in poverty all the time that Jacob was serving without wages. They knew that Laban had been poor before Jacob appeared, and that all the wealth he had gained had come from the good care that their husband had taken over their father's goods (Gen. 30:30). "God has taken this wealth from our father and given it to us," they said. "So do whatever God tells you" (Gen. 31:14-16).

Thus Laban, by his greed, brought great trouble to his house, and poverty to himself.

Therefore, at a time when Laban was away shearing sheep, Jacob gathered all his family and goods together, and secretly left. Before leaving, Rachel stole some images that her father had, believing that they might help them in their journey. Jacob knew nothing of this, however. He believed only in the one true God, and would have stopped Rachel had he known.

Thus once more Jacob commenced a journey with fear in his heart.

Three days later, Laban heard of the flight of his son-in-law and daughters. It sent him into a great rage. He determined to chase them and bring them back. He hated to think of all the possessions he once had being now in Jacob's hands. With some of his servants, he set off after Jacob, and overtook him in Mount Gilead. But on the night before he met up with his nephew God appeared unto him, and warned him not to touch Jacob. "Take heed," said the angel," that you do not speak to Jacob from good to bad!"*

Next day Laban rode into Jacob's camp, and boldly accused him. "What do you mean by stealing away without telling me, carrying my daughters off as if they were prisoners of war?" he asked roughly. "Why did you flee in secret and deceive me, instead of telling me? I would have sent you off with mirth and music! Why did you not let me kiss my

* See margin of Gen. 31:24. Laban's intentions, apparently, were to greet Jacob as a friend, and then treat him as an enemy, thus turning from good to bad. Warned by God against such a hypocritical action. Laban openly accused Jacob of stealing away secretly, and of robbing him of his goods. If the Authorised Version reading is taken: "Speak neither good or bad," Laban could not have said anything!

grandchildren and daughters? That was a senseless thing to do! I have it in my power to do you harm, but the God of your fathers warned me last night not to harm you. I suppose you will say that you are yearning for your father's house. Then why did you steal my gods?"

Jacob told his uncle why he had fled. It was because he feared Laban and his sons, and thought they might do him harm. He ridiculed the idea that he had stolen anything from Laban, and invited him to search for his gods, promising him that if he found his gods, the thief would be put to death!

Jacob, of course, did not know that Rachel had stolen Laban's gods!

Thus invited, Laban confidently commenced to search for his images, but he was unsuccessful, for Rachel had hidden them.

Now it was Jacob's turn to be angry. "If you are so concerned with merely saying goodbye," he asked, "why have you come riding after us as though to battle. You have accused me of stealing, now I call upon you to bring forth the evidence! I have given you excellent service during the years I have been with you, yet you have been hard and grasping. I have paid wages for everything I have got, including your daughters. Unless God had been with me you would have sent me off empty handed. But God knows what justice is. He saw my plight, and my toil, and last night he checked your anger!"

Laban was thoroughly defeated. He probably thought, as had Esau, that his son-in-law was not called Jacob (i.e. *Supplanter*) for nothing. He had supplanted Laban in his daughters' affections; he had supplanted him in all his wealth. Laban had learned by bitter experience, the reality of the blessing of Isaac on his son: "Cursed be every one that curseth thee" (Gen. 27:29). He saw that in fighting Jacob he was fighting God. He decided that the best thing was to be at peace with his son-in-law whom he could see would develop into a great nation. He called upon Jacob to enter into a covenant of peace with him, and to this Jacob agreed.

As was the custom in those days such a covenant, or agreement, was made sure, or binding, by sacrifice. An animal was slain, and both the parties making the agreement ate of it to show that they were joined together in covenant. For that purpose, Jacob called upon his men to gather a heap of stones to make an altar, in order that he and Laban might make a solemn agreement, and call upon God to witness it. They thus called the place Galeed, which means *The Heap of Witness*, and Mizpah, which means, *A Watchtower*, for, they said: "The Lord

watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." The animal was then slain, and the two men entered into agreement with each other.

Laban then kissed his daughters and grandchildren good-bye, and departed to his own land.

Thus peace was brought to Jacob and Laban through the altar that led them to God.

The story of Jacob in exile teaches some very wonderful lessons. It is like a prophecy, pointing forward to what was to happen in the future to the nation that came from Jacob. As he was forced to flee from his father's house through the enmity of Esau, and endured great hardships in the country of exile, so also has the Jewish nation. It has been driven into all parts of the world because the people refused to heed God, and in all the lands of their exile they suffered as Jacob did under Laban. But as Laban found that it did not pay to ill-treat Jacob because God was with him, so the nations of the world have found that it does not pay to ill-treat the Jews. God says concerning nations that do this: "I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased (with Jewry), and they (nations that oppress the Jews) helped forward the affliction" (Zech. 1:15). He has also said, 'He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of My eye' (Zech. 2:8). That is why no nation that persecutes the Jew ever prospers. Though the people were disobedient to God, men should leave it to God to punish, and not take it into their own hands to do so.

The story of Jacob also teaches another great truth that concerns every one that loves God, and seeks to serve Him. It is the truth found in Isaiah 54:17, and we suggest that every reader should mark this important verse in his Bible so that he can always turn to it. It reads: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. *This is the heritage of the servants of Yahweh*, and their righteousness is of Me saith Yahweh."

The life of Jacob shows the truth of those words. No weapon that Esau, or Laban, or Laban's sons formed against him prospered, because God was with him. The words of Isaiah do not only apply to Jacob, however, but to all the servants of Yahweh; and any can become such (Acts 15:14). They teach that God will look after all those who put their faith and trust in Him. This does not mean that we will never see trouble. Jacob saw plenty of that! He had to labour in the heat of the sun, and in the chill, icy winds of winter. He had to bear with wild animals that tore the flock, and with robbers that lay in wait

against him. He had to bear with trouble and with loss, but out of all this, God led him to a life that was higher and more purposeful; and He will do this also for us, if we seek Him in truth. God can become a very real force in our lives as Jacob and Laban found, but we must seek Him if He would become such. We do that by searching for Him in the only way He can be found: in the Story of the Bible.

One last final lesson in the important story of Jacob and Laban. As peace was established between these two men through the Altar of Witness that led them to God, so peace will be set up in the earth, and between Jew and Gentile through Christ, who is also represented as an altar (Heb. 13:10). Those who seek God can always look forward to that time, when the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray will be fulfilled: "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."



Balm of Gilead: a famous medicinal balm.

Chapter Five

WRESTLING WITH GOD

Friendship With Esau

“I suppose,” said Mr. Phillips, with a note of admiration in his voice, “That the chapters we have read tonight (Genesis 32 and 33) are among the most remarkable in the Bible!”

“How many chapters are there in the Bible?” asked Peter.

“I do not know,” replied his father.

“There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible,” declared Graeham.

“If that is the case,” commented Peter mischievously, ‘I should say that of that number about 1,000 of them are ‘among the most remarkable chapters’ according to Dad. Almost every night we hear that same statement!’

“I suppose you are right,” remarked Mr. Phillips. “The whole Book is remarkable. But when you read such chapters as these two, then you begin to be lost in wonder because of the wisdom and beauty contained in them.”

“What is so remarkable about them?” asked Peter. “They only show how Jacob and Esau became friends.”

“Every story recorded in the Bible is there for some very good reason,” explained his father. “And if you would read the Bible with true understanding you must search for that reason. The miracles of Jesus are not recorded just to show he could do those things, but to teach greater truths. When he opened the eyes of the blind it helped to give meaning to his teaching that he had come to cause men to see God’s truth. When he raised Lazarus, he took the opportunity to teach Mary and Martha the truth concerning the resurrection. The records of the kings of Israel, and men like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are set down by God, not only to show what happened as in ordinary history,



but to reveal a deeper meaning (1 Cor. 10:1). Sometimes these things help us to understand God a little better, sometimes they teach us how we should live; sometimes they act like a prophecy, and point to what God will do in the earth. People should not read the Bible like an ordinary story book. It is much more than that. It is a Book teaching us of God and His ways. And in these two remarkable chapters we have read tonight there is hidden under the story the purpose of God in the earth. We see in the friendship that was brought about between Jacob and Esau, a type of the friendship that will be brought in the earth between Jew and Gentile when Christ, the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6), reigns on the earth."

"Well I can't see that in it," said Peter.

"Let us go over the story again," said his father, "and you might see much more in it than you do now! Jacob had left Laban at Mt. Gilead, and with his wives and children, his numerous servants, his large flocks of sheep and goats, his camels, cattle and asses was slowly descending south on the eastern side of the River Jordan.

"Every day brought him nearer to the country of Edom where his brother Esau dwelt, so that every day his fear increased. But Jacob was not without help. On day, a company of angels met him causing him to say, 'This is God's army,' and he called the place Mahanaim which means '*the two hosts*, or *camps*'."

"It does not say anything about army in my Bible," said Peter. "It says, 'This is God's host'."

"The word 'host' means *army*" said his father. "And when Jacob saw this heavenly army he was strengthened, for they reminded him that he could call upon God for help."

"Why did he call the place 'Two hosts,' if there was only one there?" asked Ann.

"There were two hosts. One was feeble and defenceless; it was Jacob's camp. The other was mighty and glorious. It was God's army of strong, immortal angels, who appeared unto Jacob to show they were there to guard and protect him. Thus comforted and strengthened, Jacob sent a message to Esau to let him know that he was returning to the land; but the messengers returned with the terrible news that Esau was coming with 400 men, to meet Jacob. This made Jacob afraid. He could only think of one reason why Esau should come thus. He divided his company into two parts in order that if one should be attacked the other might escape. He then gave himself to prayer. He reminded God of His great promises, of his (Jacob's) own unworthiness to receive them, of the blessings

he had already obtained, and then asked that God might protect him from the vengeance of Esau (vv. 9-12).

“Jacob then selected a generous present for Esau, and one which shows how wealthy he had become. He took 220 goats, 220 sheep, 60 camels, 50 head of cattle, and 30 asses, and placing each drove in the charge of a servant, and separating one from the other, he told each servant to say to Esau: ‘This is a present sent from thy servant Jacob to my lord Esau, and, behold, he also is behind us’.”

“He was certainly afraid of Esau!” remarked Peter.

“Yes,” agreed his father. “The time had not come when the prophecy should be fulfilled that ‘the elder shall serve the younger.’ Meanwhile, Jacob had come to the River Jabbok, which twists and turns among the hills and mountains of that part as though wrestling with the land, until it finally flows into the Jordan. He sent his wives and children, and all his goods, over this river during the night, so that he was left alone on the other side. And then occurred a strange thing, which gave new meaning to the name ‘Jabbok’ (which means *wrestle*). An angel appeared unto Jacob.

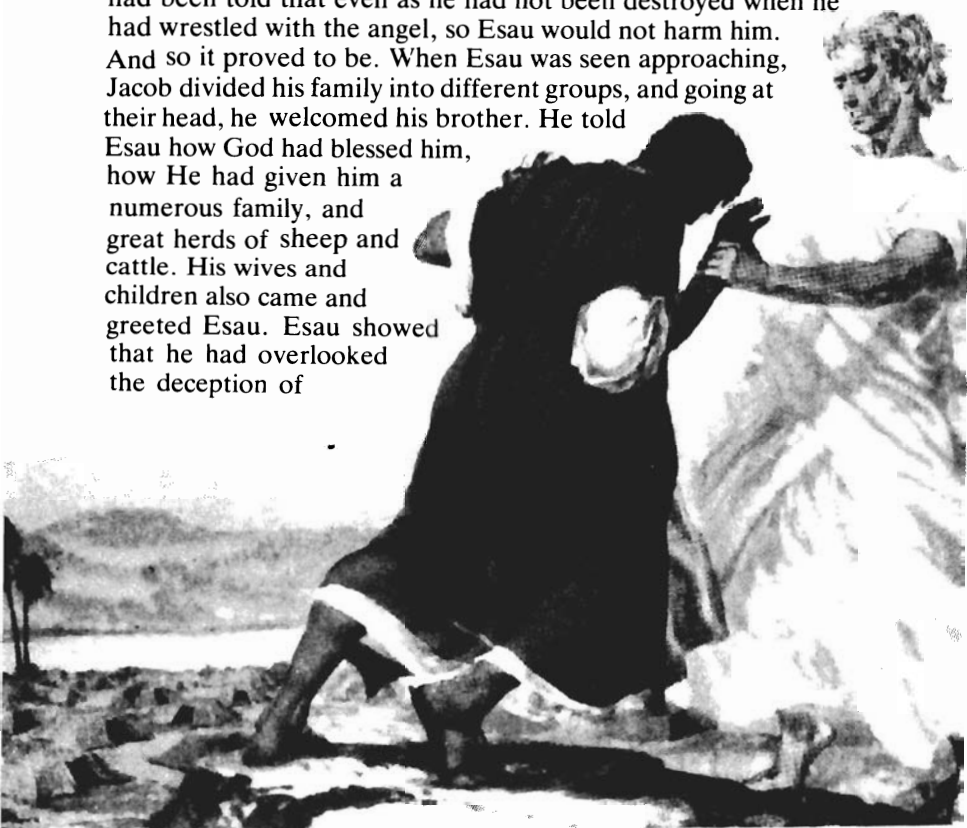


What he said to Jacob we do not know, but Jacob caught hold of him, probably to prevent him leaving. And so they continued all night wrestling, the angel trying to break the hold that Jacob had on him. During the course of the struggle, the angel smote the thigh of Jacob and put it out of joint, causing him to limp. But still Jacob refused to let go his hold. At last the light of morning was seen. ‘Let me go,’ said the angel, ‘for the day breaketh.’ But Jacob replied: ‘I will not let thee go except thou bless me.’

“The angel then gave a wonderful blessing to Jacob by changing his name. He said: ‘Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince thou hast striven with God and prevailed, and thou shalt certainly prevail with men.’ The name Israel means *A prince with God*, and is a far more glorious name than Jacob, which means *Supplanter*. It shows the high position which Jacob shall inherit.

“Jacob now wanted to know more. ‘What is your name?’ he asked the angel. But the angel refused to tell him. The Name of God was not revealed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, though it was to Moses (Exod. 6:3). And so Jacob called the name of the place ‘Peniel,’ which means the *Face of God*. He said, ‘I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.’ As he passed over Peniel, the sun rose upon him.

“Thus a new day had commenced, and one that put new heart into Jacob. He had seen the Face of God in the angel. He had been told that even as he had not been destroyed when he had wrestled with the angel, so Esau would not harm him. And so it proved to be. When Esau was seen approaching, Jacob divided his family into different groups, and going at their head, he welcomed his brother. He told Esau how God had blessed him, how He had given him a numerous family, and great herds of sheep and cattle. His wives and children also came and greeted Esau. Esau showed that he had overlooked the deception of



Jacob by which he obtained the blessing from Isaac. Esau had prospered in worldly goods, and could thus afford to forgive Jacob for the past. And as for the spiritual benefits that were conferred on the firstborn, they meant nothing to Esau. Thus the two brothers made friends.

"In all this, there is a wonderful parable of the future that gives added meaning to the story. First of all, let us consider the wrestling of Jacob with the angel. This continued all night . . ."

"I cannot understand that, Daddy," interrupted Ann. "Haven't the angels more power than men?"

"Yes," replied her father. "And this angel could have broken Jacob's hold as far as personal strength was concerned, but there are reasons that show why he could not do so."

"What are they?"

"Firstly, a lesson Jacob had to learn. He had been fearful of the wrath of Esau. Moreover, he had endured a night of fear and wrestling with God as represented by the angel. In such a state, Jacob foreshadowed the condition of his people during the time of the Gentiles. Those times are called 'night' in the Bible (John 9:4-5). The Jewish people have endured a 'night' of fear, and of wrestling with God Whom they have not obeyed. As a result, like Jacob who limped after his struggle with the angel, they have suffered. Nor are their sufferings yet over. The prophet speaks of a 'time of trouble' yet to come, out of which they will be saved (Jer. 30:7). God says of that day: 'I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth' (Zeph. 3:19)."

"Do you believe that in this incident, God was showing Jacob the future of the nation that would come from him?" asked Peter.

"Yes," replied Mr. Phillips, "I believe that is why it is recorded in the Bible. In it we have a wonderful parable speaking of the future, even to the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth."

"What lesson was taught by Jacob refusing to let the angel go?" asked Graeham.

"The lesson that nothing that Israel might do will prevent God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob being fulfilled," replied his father. "Jeremiah declares: 'Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.' Though Israel might 'wrestle' with God, God will continue to be with the nation until He has established with it His purpose. He has told the Jews: 'I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name's sake which ye have profaned among the

nations' (Ezek. 36:22). Thus Israel has been preserved, or has prevailed, even though the people have sinned against God."

"The Bible says that as Jacob passed over the brook, the sun arose (Gen. 33:31). It was the morning of a new day, and he faced it with confidence. He had the promise that he would prevail, and he had been blessed by having his name changed, so that it was a different Jacob that met Esau. It will be the same when Jesus Christ returns, and gathers all Israel from the countries of their dispersion into the Promised Land again (Ezek. 37:21-22)."

"Is that the 'new day'?" asked Graeham.

"Yes," replied his father. "In the Bible it is called *the Day of Yahweh* (Zech. 14:1). King David likened the coming reign of Christ on earth as 'the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds' (2 Sam. 23:4). In Malachi 4, the second coming of the Lord Jesus is likened to the arising of 'the Sun of Righteousness' . . ."

"I can see it now!" exclaimed Ann, her voice full of excitement at her discovery. "In this chapter, Jacob is acting a parable which will be fulfilled by the Jewish people. As he wrestled with the angel so have they with God; as he limped as a result of the struggle, so have they; as he prevailed with the angel and with Esau, so they will do so as well and enter the Kingdom of God; as his name was changed, so the Jews will also be changed."

"When you say the Jews will find a place in the Kingdom of God, you do not mean they will obtain eternal life, do you?" asked Peter of his father.

"Of course not!" interjected Graeham. "They will only obtain eternal life if they accept God in truth now. The Jewish people will return to their land and continue as a nation of mortals in the Kingdom."

"What difference will there be between the Jews in the Kingdom and any other nation?" asked Ann.

"The only difference will be that of position" replied her brother. "The Jews will be the chief nation (Micah 4:8). The Jewish nation, as a nation, will then be able to say, like Jacob, that its 'life has been preserved' (Gen. 32:39)."

"That is true," remarked Mr. Phillips. "When Jesus Christ returns, God will 'redeem Jacob' (i.e., the nation) as He has promised. Read Jeremiah 31:11 will you please Joan."

Joan read: "For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he."

"But Jacob said he had seen God face to face. Will the Jews be able to say that?" asked Peter.

“Jacob only saw God manifested through the angel,” said Graeham.

“That is true,” said Mr. Phillips. “It is also true that at the second coming of the Lord, the Jewish people will be compelled to say, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord’ (Matt. 23:39). The prophet says that they shall ‘look upon him whom they pierced and mourn for him’ (Zech. 12:10). They will see Jesus Christ as King and will mourn because of their past blindness. They will then be taught the truth in him, and by accepting him as the Christ, or Messiah they will be cleansed from their wickedness (Zech. 13:1; Rom. 11:26).”

“It is interesting that when Jacob next met Esau they became friends,” said Graeham. “I remember you telling us that Esau represented the Gentiles, and, of course, there will be peace between Israel and the Gentiles at Christ’s return (Zech. 8:23).”

“That is so,” agreed his father. “But notice the basis upon which they became friends. Esau first had to acknowledge Jacob’s right to the birthright and blessing.”

“I cannot see that,” declared Graeham.

“It is hidden behind the narrative,” explained his father. “When the two brothers met, and Esau saw the present Jacob had sent him, he enquired: ‘What is the meaning of all this drove which I met?’”

“Jacob answered that it was to find grace in the eyes of Esau. He told his brother (see v. 10) that if he accepted the present Jacob would view it as an act of friendship stemming from God, showing that Esau was at last pleased with his brother. He also told him (see v. 11) that the gift was part of the blessing pronounced by Isaac, but now shown as coming from God. For Esau to accept the gift, in view of Jacob’s explanation would mean his endorsement of Jacob’s right to the blessing! At first he did not want to take it. He told Jacob, that he had enough (see v. 9). But Jacob, or Israel as his name now was, told his brother that whatever he might have, he, Jacob, had received more. On that basis he urged him to take his gift, and so endorse his right to the blessing of Isaac,”

“Just a moment, you are going too fast,” complained Ann. “I cannot quite follow you.”

“Alright,” answered her father. “Tell me, what did Esau tell Jacob as recorded in v. 9?”

“He told him that he had ‘enough’.”

“And what did Jacob tell Esau in v. 11?”

“He told him that he had ‘enough’!”

“But what does the margin represent Jacob as saying?”

questioned her father with a smile.

"That says, that Jacob answered that he had '*all things*'."

"Exactly," replied Mr. Phillips. "That describes the difference in the state of the two men. In the Hebrew, there are two entirely different words used by the two brothers, though both words are translated *enough* in our Bibles. Esau told Jacob he had enough, and the word means *abundance*. But Jacob told Esau that God had been gracious unto him, in consequence of which he had been granted '*all things*', which could only have relation to the blessing he had received from Isaac. On that basis, he 'urged' Esau to accept his present (v. 11). And in doing so, Esau endorsed Jacob's right to the blessing. That is why the chapter declares that Jacob 'came in peace (*shalem*) to Shechem,' as v. 18 is sometimes rendered. In the morning of the new day, Jacob and Esau were not only reconciled, but brought together as one on the basis of a common endorsement of the God-given blessing to Jacob. It will be on a similar basis, that is, the acceptance of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that the Gentiles will be reconciled with Israel in the age to come, and will worship together in peace at Jerusalem (Zech. 14:16)."

"Jacob moved to Shechem which you told us means *Burden-bearer*," remarked Peter. "I suppose that foreshadows the time when the Jewish people shall be converted to Christ?"

"Yes," agreed his father. "Their night of fear and wrestling with God will be over, and their temporary spiritual blindness will be healed, so that they will accept Christ in truth, and recognise in him their Burden-bearer, as Paul taught (Rom. 11:23-27). You noticed, of course, that at Shechem, Jacob or Israel as he was then called, built an altar. You know what an Altar stands for in the Bible."

"Yes," replied Peter. "It represents Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:10)."

"This altar was called *El-elohe-Israel* (v. 20)," said Mr. Phillips. "Do you know what that means?"

"No," replied Graeham.

"'El' means *Strength*, and 'elohe' means *Powerful Ones*. The title thus means, *The Strength of the Powerful Ones of Israel*," replied Mr. Phillips.

"What does that all mean?" asked Graeham.

"You know what Israel represented," replied her father. "True Israelites are those Jews and Gentiles who obey God (Romans 9:8; Galatians 6:16). They will become Powerful Ones when they are raised from the grave and given life eternal, for they will then rule with Jesus Christ (Revelation 2:26). Mean-

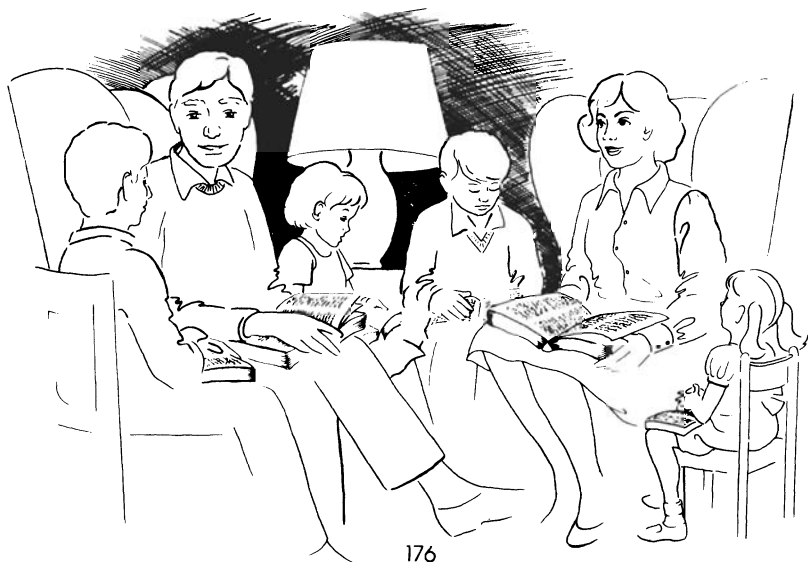
while they can derive spiritual strength to overcome from God and Jesus Christ, whom God sent as the antitype of the altar and as a sacrifice through whom we can offer acceptably unto Him, and attain unto life eternal. As Jacob meditated upon the promises of God, and his own experiences, he came to understand this. Therefore, he called the altar that he built *The Strength of the Powerful Ones of Israel*. He realised that there is strength in sacrifice, and particularly in the one whom God would provide to that end. He recognised that God provides strength, for he could see that He had been with him in all his troubles, delivering him from fear and from the power of those who tried to oppress him. He built the altar to acknowledge that God was his Strength and Help, and he desired to worship Him as such. We, too, must learn the same lesson as did Jacob. We must learn to draw upon God for strength and to see in Him and His Son the true source of spiritual strength. That is why we read the Bible every day, and, as a family, turn to God in prayer. Do you think that you understand what I have tried to explain?"

"It is a little difficult," commented Ann. "But I think so."

"Very well. And now what about a cup of tea before going to bed?"

"Alright, Daddy," said Ann. "I will get it for you. But before doing so, I would like to ask Peter a question. Do you think these chapters are remarkable ones, Peter?"

"I think you had better get the tea," was Peter's reply.



The Parable of Joseph

In the story of Joseph we learn how, sooner or later, God will cause right to triumph over might. Yahweh has declared of His servants: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Yahweh, and their righteousness is of Me, saith Yahweh" (Isaiah 54:17). This promise is illustrated in the experiences of Joseph. We may sorrow with him as we learn how his brothers hated and ill-treated him, and how he was sold by them into slavery; but we can also rejoice as we learn that God never forsook him in need (Heb. 13:5), so that justice was finally meted out, and the envious brothers were forced to bow down before the one they despised and rejected, and who had since become a great Ruler.

Chapter One

JOSEPH THE INCREASER

“To obtain the greatest benefit from the story of Joseph,” remarked Mr. Phillips, “we must see in it a parable of the life of the Lord Jesus.”

“What is a parable, Daddy?” asked Joan.

“A parable is a story with a hidden meaning,” explained her father. “Jesus very often taught the people by parables. He would tell them a story that would help to explain the meaning of God’s purpose with the earth. In like manner, the life of Joseph was a living parable pointing forward to the life of Jesus Christ.”

“Do you think that the Jews of old would see it in that way?” asked Graeham.

“They may not have known all the details of Christ’s death and resurrection,” answered Mr. Phillips, “but I do believe they would see in these stories types pointing forward to the Lord. Paul says that Moses ‘esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt’ (Heb. 11:26), so he must have understood how the things recorded in his day pointed forward to the Lord. I am certain, also, that a man like David, also, had a very clear understanding of the purpose of Yahweh in His son. When Peter preached to the people on the Day of Pentecost, he declared of David that ‘being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up (or resurrect) Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ’ (Acts 2:30-31). David, therefore, realised that the seed promised him would be put to death as a sacrifice, but would also be resurrected to ascend into heaven and return to reign on earth (Luke 1:32-33). We are told that David ‘mediated in the Law of God’ all day long (Psalm 119:97). He prayed that God would ‘open his eyes that he might behold wondrous things in His law’ (Psa. 119:18). I can imagine David thinking over the wonderful promises that God had given to him, and linking them with those made to Abraham, and searching the books of the Law for further information concerning the wonderful future before him.”

“That might be so, but do you think the Jews of old would

see a parable or type in the history of Joseph?" persisted Graeham, who delighted in trying to discover a weakness in his father's reasoning.

"Yes, I do!" replied Mr. Phillips. "The Jews were always questioning as to why God recorded certain incidents and stories in the Bible, and seeing in them parables of the future. Some of what they wrote is foolishness, but a man like David, guided by the Spirit, and in constant prayer with God would seek to know the meaning of these things, and I think he would find it. He may not have understood all the circumstances of the Lord Jesus (see 1 Pet. 1:10; Eph. 3:5-6), but he would gain enough to see that these things pointed forward to his glorious Son. And from the example of David we learn a very important lesson."

"What is that?"

"As David prayed to God to open his eyes that he might understand better the glorious truths of God's Word, so we should never turn to the Bible without a prayer in our heart that He might bless us in our reading of it."

"That's like giving thanks to God before partaking of a meal," remarked Graeham.

"Yes, that is a good thought," answered his father. "Bible truth is likened to meat and drink, and even as we are told to express our thanks for material things, so we should do likewise for the glorious truths revealed in the Bible."

"In what way was the life of Joseph a parable?" asked Peter.

"As Joseph's dreams were prophetic of his lordship over his brethren, so the Bible is prophetic of Christ's coming lordship in all the earth," replied his father. "All the happenings of his life pointed forward to similar happenings in the life of the Lord. To help you understand this, I have listed on paper some of the incidents for you. It will help you to understand Joseph's life, a little better, and you will do well to mark in your Bible those incidents in his life which foreshadowed those of Christ's mission."

Mr. Phillips then gave to each member of the family a copy of the list of incidents which show Joseph's life as a parable. After glancing at this for a while, Ann said:

"I think it would help if you went over the story of Joseph again, Daddy."

"Very well," replied Mr. Phillips, who required very little encouragement to launch into a lengthy talk. "The first portion of the story we will call: *Joseph the Dreamer*."

Joseph —
The Dreamer —
Genesis 37

“Jacob was living in the very fertile valley of Hebron. He was very rich in sheep and cattle, and as his sons grew up, they looked after the stock. But Jacob was lonely. His beloved wife, Rachel, had died just outside of Bethlehem, and he sought for companionship particularly from her firstborn son, Joseph.

“Joseph, in return, greatly loved his father, and gave him that obedience and affection that endeared him to Jacob.

“His attitude was quite different from that of some of the other sons of Jacob. Some of them were disobedient to their father. Reuben, the firstborn, had been particularly evil, and by his unstable character, showed that he was not fit for the position he held as eldest in the family. Jacob had therefore transferred the birthright to Joseph (1 Chronicles 5:1-2).

“Because Joseph was made head of the family, Jacob made him a coat of many colours to indicate his position. In later years, children of the kings of Israel wore similar garments for a similar purpose (2 Samuel 13:18-19).

“But the brothers became jealous of Joseph, and began to hate him. They could not bear him, and spake to him roughly. In turn, Joseph brought to Jacob their evil report (v. 2).”

“Before you go on Daddy,” interrupted Ann. “That was not a very good thing for Joseph to do, was it? It seems very much like telling tales on his brothers. No wonder they did not like him!”

“We are not told all the circumstances,” replied her father. “At the time, he was minding sheep in company with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, and they ill-treated him. He then may have asked Jacob to allow him to care for some of the sheep elsewhere. Indeed, this is most likely what did happen, for we learn that later Joseph remained with his father whilst the other sons went to Shechem with their flocks and herds.”

“Oh, I see.”

“One day Joseph dreamed a dream. He told the family about it. He said: ‘We were binding sheaves in the field and lo, my sheaf arose, and stood upright, and your sheaves stood around and bowed down to my sheaf.’

“This made the brothers very angry indeed! ‘Are you to be king over us? Do you think you will lord it over us?’ they mocked.

“And so they hated him more than ever.”

“He should have kept his dreams to himself, don’t you think?” asked Peter.

“No,” replied Mr. Phillips. “The dreams came from God.

Joseph did well in revealing them to his brothers. If they had heeded his words, it would have saved the whole family a great deal of trouble. You must not think that Joseph ran off to tell his brothers in order to glory over them. He probably told the dream when all the family was assembled together. His father did not comment upon this dream because having appointed Joseph to the position of firstborn, he naturally expected him to be head over his brothers.

“Joseph then had another dream. This time he saw the sun, moon and eleven stars bow down to him. Again he told the family of his dream. This time Jacob also was amazed. ‘What is the meaning of this dream?’ he asked. ‘Shall I and thy mother, and thy brothers bow down to thee?’

“We can quite understand Jacob’s wonder, for Joseph’s mother was dead. How could she bow down to her son? The only way could be by a resurrection from the dead! As Jacob thought upon this dream, pondering its meaning, his mind must have gone to the future. God was showing him that Joseph was a type of that great Seed of Promise (the Lord Jesus) through whom Abraham and his seed would inherit a reward by a resurrection from the dead.

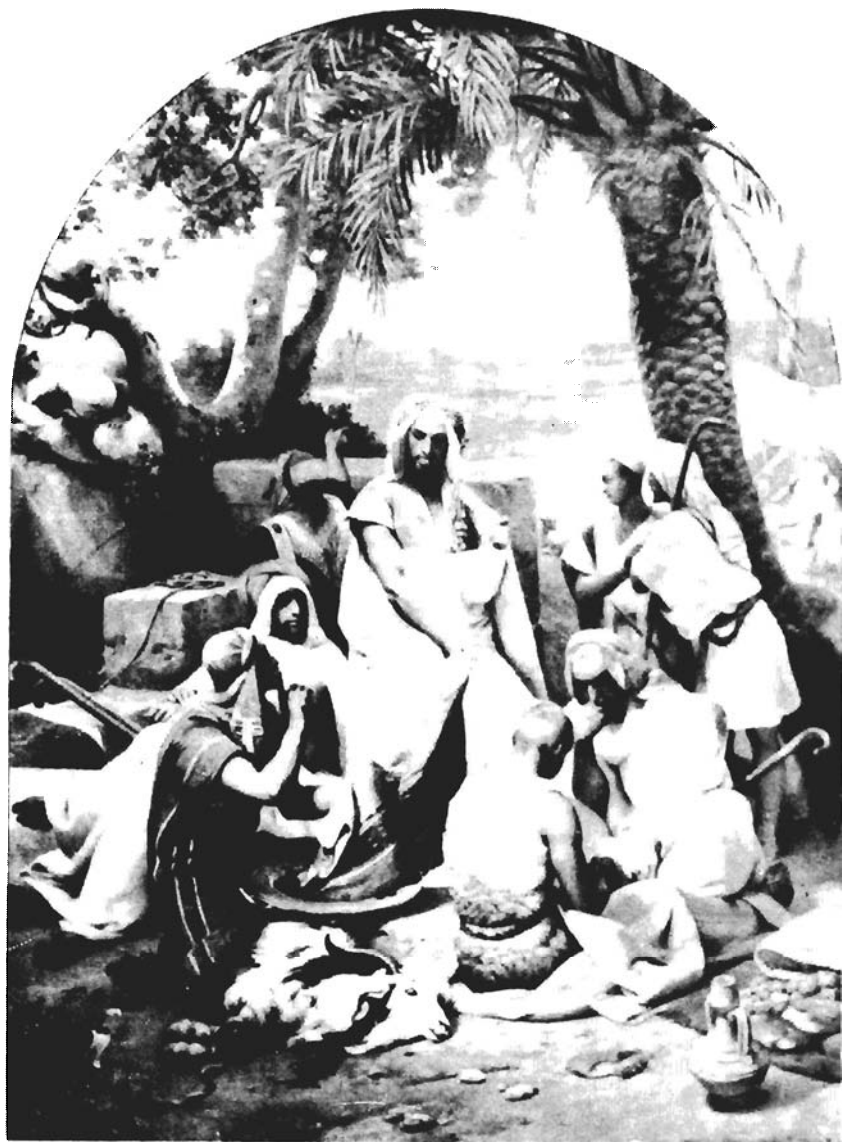
“The dreams only increased the hatred of the brethren for Joseph, and they longed to do him some injury.

“They soon had their opportunity. They had taken their flocks to feed at Shechem, leaving Joseph at Hebron with his father. However, they found little feed at Shechem, and so moved on to Dothan. Meanwhile Jacob became worried, for he had not heard from them, and he knew how the people of the land disliked his sons (Gen. 35:5). He therefore sent Joseph to see how they fared.

“Joseph went to Shechem, and there learned that his brothers had gone on to Dothan. He made his way there also, and his brothers saw him coming in the distance. ‘Here comes the Dreamer,’ they mocked, and so fierce was their hatred of him that they conspired to kill him. ‘Let us slay him, and cast him into a pit’ they said. ‘We can then say that some evil beast devoured him. We will then see what becomes of his dreams.’

“But Reuben was not agreeable to this. He was already in trouble with his father, and perhaps wanted to redeem his evil conduct. He determined to save Joseph. He therefore pretended to agree with the other brothers to prevent them from acting so terribly. ‘Do not let us shed the blood of our brother,’ he said. ‘Let us cast him into this pit, and let him die.’

“They agreed to this, and so, when Joseph came near, instead of listening to the message of their father, and learning



Joseph's brothers stain his garment with the blood of the lamb to deceive his father into believing that he is dead.

how Joseph had gone to great pains to find them, they roughly caught hold of him. Tearing the coat of many colours from off him, they thrust him into a deep pit, and left him there to die.

"Shortly afterwards, Reuben left the other brothers, possibly to tend his flock. While he was absent, they saw a company of Ishmaelites on the way to Egypt, with their camels loaded with spicery, balm and myrrh.

"This was a grand opportunity to get rid of their brother, without having to slay him, or having the terrible thought on their minds that they had left him to starve. 'Let us sell him,' said Judah, 'We will then be rid of him without killing him.'

"And so, for twenty pieces of silver, they sold poor Joseph into slavery.

"Meanwhile, Reuben returned. He found Joseph gone, and as he was the eldest among the brothers, he knew Jacob would blame him most. 'The child is not!' he wailed, 'And I, whither shall I go?'

"So they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood. When they returned they brought it to their father with a lie on their lips: 'We have found this coat,' they said. 'Is it your son's coat?'

"Jacob viewed the coat with horror! He recognised it as belonging to Joseph. As it lay before him, torn and covered in blood, he could only think of one thing: Joseph was dead! An evil beast had slain him whilst on his errand of mercy to his brothers! The son of his old age, the lad upon whom he had lavished his love had been torn to pieces by some animal! Poor Jacob rent his clothes to show his sorrow, and put on harsh, rough sackcloth as part of his mourning for his son. His other sons tried to comfort him, but what words of true comfort could they offer! Their wives, his daughters in law, also tried to help him, but nothing they said or did could bring back Joseph to him. He refused to be comforted. He said, 'I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.'

"But meanwhile, Joseph was on his way to Egypt.

Joseph —

The Slave —

Genesis 39;

Psalms 105:17-22;

Acts 7:9-10

"Joseph was about seventeen years of age when these things happened to him (Gen. 37:2), and thirteen long, weary years of slavery and imprisonment lay before him (Gen. 41:46). But he was a young lad full of faith, and as he was taken towards

Egypt, he doubtless thought long and earnestly about the promises God had made to him in the dreams which he had repeated to the family. He knew that some day, in some way,

his brothers must come and bow before him, and that God must release him from his slavery. He determined to have faith in God whatever his condition might be.

“Meanwhile, the long caravan of camels wended its way towards the country of the Nile. Joseph who was used to the hills and valleys of the Land of Promise, and the isolated, country life of tending flocks, looked with amazement at the mighty temples, pyramids and tombs of the Pharaohs of Egypt. He saw elegant chariots swiftly drawn by horses, great crowds flocking the streets and gaping at the strange company of Ishmaelites, bright paintings on the walls of the buildings, shaven faces of the Egyptians which contrasted with the bearded faces of the Israelites and Ishmaelites, and he heard the strange, foreign language of the land.

“Among all this unusual, bustling scene, the young country boy from Palestine felt very lonely indeed!

“Only his God could comfort and strengthen him at such a time.

“Joseph determined to serve God faithfully, even in this strange country.

“And God helped him as we shall see, and as He will help all those who put their trust in Him.

“Nevertheless Joseph endured many trials before he was finally delivered.

“Later, his trials were celebrated in a great national poem of Israel which taught men that they should ‘observe God’s statutes, and keep His laws’ (Psa. 105:45), part of which is as follows:

*When He (God) brought a famine on the land,
And broke every staff of bread,
He had sent a man ahead of them,
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
His feet were hurt with fetters,
His neck was put in a collar of iron;
Until what he had said came to pass
The word of Yahweh tested him.
The king sent and released him,
The ruler of the peoples set him free;
he made him lord of his house,
And ruler of all his possessions,
to instruct his princes at his pleasure,
And to teach his senators wisdom
(Psalm 105:16-22).*

“In Egypt, the Israelites had no trouble in selling Joseph. He was a good-looking lad, of fine physique (Gen. 39:6), and

he was purchased by Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. 'Potiphar' means *Servant of the Sun*, and 'Pharaoh' means *Child of the Sun*. The Egyptians worshipped the sun, and looked upon Pharaoh as the son of their god, and Potiphar as his servant. One of their main cities was called On, or *Light*, as the word means (Gen. 41:45). It was also known as Heliopolis, *the City of the Sun*, or Beth-shemesh, *the House of the Sun* (Jer. 43:13). So Joseph was not only sold into slavery, but found himself in the midst of idolatry.

"Nevertheless, though surrounded by evil of every kind, Joseph determined he would not give way to it. He turned more and more to God in his thoughts, and in prayer, and instead of sulking under his difficulties, he cheerfully went about his work, so that Potiphar found him diligent, painstaking and honest.

"Joseph was thus an example to all who came in contact with him. They could see that this young Hebrew was serving his God not merely in word, but in deed (see Gen. 39:3). He was doing what God commands us all to do, for Paul later wrote: 'Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, and with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, *as unto Christ*; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free' (Eph. 6:5-8). God's word shows us how we can serve Him, even in the small duties of life. In verse one of this chapter Paul instructs: 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.' Many seek to do mighty things for God, whereas what He wants us to do is often near at hand, and involves those small things, which when faithfully done, are pleasing to God and helpful to our associates. The life of Joseph in Egypt is a wonderful exhortation providing an outstanding example for us to follow.

"And God blessed Joseph. So much so, that Potiphar observed that whatever he did prospered, so he made him head in his household.

Joseph — The Prisoner

"But there came a further test for him. Potiphar's wife took a spite against Joseph, and falsely accused him to his master. In consequence, he was cast into prison. His feet were put in fetters of iron, and he was chained to the wall with a collar of iron.

"The chains did not last long, however, for Joseph's

character soon became known to the gaoler, and he was freed, and put in charge of the prison.

"One day there was quite a stir in the prison as two new prisoners were flung into it. They were the chief butler and baker of Pharaoh, both of whom had offended their master.

"As Joseph went about his duties, he observed how sad and thoughtful they looked.

" 'What is the matter?' he asked them kindly.

" 'We have dreamed a dream,' they replied, 'And there is no one who can tell us the meaning.'

" 'The explanation of dreams belongs to God,' explained Joseph, 'but tell me the dreams.'

"The chief butler told his dream first. He said he had dreamed that he saw a vine, on which were three branches. While he was looking, there came out buds on the branches; then, very soon, the buds changed into bunches of ripe grapes. The butler dreamed that he was holding Pharaoh's wine-cup in his hand, so he took the grapes and pressed the juice out of them into the cup, and gave it to Pharaoh.

"God revealed to Joseph the meaning of this dream. 'The three branches,' he explained, 'mean three days. Within three days shall Pharaoh restore you unto your place, and you will deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand. But when it shall be well with you, please remember me, and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this prison. For, indeed, I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and in Egypt I have done nothing amiss that they should put me into the dungeon.'

"The butler rejoiced at Joseph's interpretation of his dream, and solemnly promised to do as he asked. Thus encouraged, the baker told his dream. He dreamed that he was carrying three baskets on his head, one above the other. In the highest were all kinds of cooked meats for Pharaoh, and the birds flew down and ate the meats out of the baskets.

"Joseph's interpretation of this dream was a sad one. 'The three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh shall hang you on a tree, and the birds shall eat your flesh,' he told the baker sadly.

"And so it happened.

"The third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he made a feast for all his servants. He restored the chief butler to his place, but he commanded that the baker should be hanged.

"The butler went out of the prison house rejoicing, but he forgot all about Joseph. Perhaps he feared to say anything to Pharaoh. In any case, Joseph was left languishing in the dreary prison waiting for the call that never came. Nevertheless he

never lost faith that his God would help him.

Joseph —

**The Governor
(Gen. 41)**

“Two full years passed away,” continued

Mr. Phillips as he told the story of Joseph.

“And then, suddenly, one morning, there was a great stir in the prison. A command

had come from Pharaoh that Joseph must be brought before him. Pharaoh had had some strange dreams that troubled him. He had called all the wise men together but they could not make sense of the dreams. Then his butler had remembered the strange Hebrew prisoner who had so accurately interpreted his dream, and had told Pharaoh of his experience. An officer had been sent post-haste to the prison to fetch Joseph.

“Joseph shaved himself, changed his raiment, and came before Pharaoh.

“What an experience for Joseph: the young country lad who had been sold into slavery, and then cast into prison! In Pharaoh’s court he became the centre of attention; the magicians, the wise men and councillors looked curiously at the young Hebrew, then about thirty years of age (v. 46), wondering if he could supply the answer to the King’s riddle.

“So he was brought before Pharaoh.

“‘I have heard it said,’ explained Pharaoh, ‘that you can interpret dreams.’

“Joseph answered truly: ‘It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.’

“‘In my dream,’ said Pharaoh, ‘I stood upon the bank of the river; and there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed and well-favoured, and they fed in the meadow. Then seven other kine came up after them, poor and ill-favoured and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness. And the lean and ill-favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine. And when they had eaten them up, it made no difference to their condition; they were still ill-favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

“‘And I saw in my dream, and seven ears of corn came up in one stalk, full and good. Then seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them; and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears. I have told these dreams unto the magicians, but they do not know the meaning.’

“But Joseph instantly perceived the meaning, for God was with him. And we can be quite sure that he had made it a matter of prayer, that God would help him at this time. He replied with complete assurance to Pharaoh:

“‘Your two dreams are really one, but it has been doubled because God will surely bring to pass that of which He is

warning you (v. 32). The seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years of plenty. And the seven thin kine that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears, blasted with the east wind, shall be seven years of famine. Behold, there will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, but they will be followed by seven years of famine; when all the plenty shall be forgotten, and the famine shall consume the land, for it will be very grievous.'

"This interpretation made a great impression in the court of Pharaoh. If a terrible and grievous famine were to come, how could they guard against it? In the hush that followed, Joseph again spake:

" 'Let Pharaoh appoint a discreet and wise man over Egypt. Let him arrange for officers throughout the land to take up a fifth part of the harvest in the seven plenteous years, and store it in granaries, so that it may be there for use in the years of famine,' he suggested.

"This was excellent advice, and who better to execute it than the one who had revealed that the spirit of God was in him, and who had shown such sense and discretion! Turning to Joseph, Pharaoh said:

" 'You shall be over my house, and according to your word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than you. See, I have made thee ruler over all the land of Egypt.'

"Thus from out of slavery and prison, Joseph was made governor and ruler.

"Pharaoh then took off his ring, and put it upon Joseph's hand. This meant that anything Joseph decreed would become law, for when any matter was stamped with the signet ring of Pharaoh it became binding. He was also arrayed in royal garments, and had a gold chain put about his neck. A special chariot was also given to him to show his authority, and slaves were ordered to run before him, crying out to the people to do him honour.

"Pharaoh changed Joseph's name to Zaphnath-paaneah, which, in Egyptian language, means *A Revealer of Secrets*, or in the Greek *The Saviour of the Age*,* and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of the Priest of On, as his wife.

"For seven years Joseph worked hard to prepare for the famine that was coming. He became a familiar figure throughout Egypt, travelling from city to city, purchasing the surplus

* See *History of the Jewish Church* (Stanley), vol. 1, p. 86.

corn that was to be had in abundance, ordering granaries to be built, and making sure that the grain was stored carefully. The harvests were bountiful, and tremendous quantities of corn were laid up for the years ahead.

“Meanwhile two boys were born to him. He called the first one Manasseh, which meant that God had made him forget his troubles, and the other he called Ephraim, which meant that God had blessed him in the land in which he had been sent as a slave, and condemned as a criminal.

“But he did not forget the dreams he had in far away Hebron; and in all the excitement, and rush of business, he still thought upon the meaning of them, realising that one day his brothers must come and bow before him. He probably realised by now how this would come to pass.

Famine In Egypt “Egypt is a country with a very low rainfall. In fact, it does not rely upon the rain of heaven to water the crops, for every year the River Nile, which travels for many hundreds of miles, overflows its banks in Egypt, thus irrigating the soil, and causing it to bring forth wonderful harvests.

“When, however, the rains fail in Abyssinia, at the source of the River Nile, its waters fall short of its due level. This happens very seldom, but when it does, the effect is terrible. It happened once in the twelfth century, and an eye-witness has left a terrible account of what then happened. There was no food of any kind. Many people left the country. Some even turned to eating human flesh. Death became common, and bodies were left in the streets unburied. Whole villages were wiped out, and the country groaned under terrible misery.

“We can understand, therefore, how seriously Pharaoh would have heard the news of seven years of famine from Joseph, and how they would have feared the approach of that terrible time.

“At last the seven years of plenty came to an end, and the famine commenced. The people had no bread, and cried unto Pharaoh. He, in turn, told them to go unto Joseph and do what



he directed them. Then Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians.

"The famine was a very terrible one, extending over all countries. There was no Joseph in the other places, to wisely guide the people, and to stay alive. They were forced to turn to Egypt for corn. Thus from all parts, people came to Joseph to buy corn.

The Dream Fulfilled

"In Egypt, Joseph carefully overlooked the selling of corn to those who came from distant parts. He knew that it must not be wasted, and, in addition, Egypt must be guarded against spies who might seek out how they could attack the country. All foreigners were brought personally before him.

"One day there appeared ten men, with bearded faces, and the dress of Hebrew shepherds.

"The famine had extended to the Land of Promise, and Jacob had sent his ten sons to Egypt to buy corn, leaving Benjamin the other son of Rachel, at home, in case any accident should happen to him.

"Joseph knew his brothers immediately, but they did not recognise in the stately prince of Egypt, with his royal clothes, his shaven face, and grand appearance, the young shepherd boy they had thrown in the pit, and then sold into slavery. By his side stood an interpreter (Gen. 42:23) who was skilled in all languages, and able to explain the meaning of strange tongues.

"It must have been a most exciting moment for Joseph when his ten brothers appeared before him, and bowing down with their faces to the ground, asked that they might buy corn. Here was the fulfilment of the dream.

"But Joseph pretended he did not know them, and continued to talk with them through the interpreter. 'Where do you come from?' he asked them.

" 'We come from the land of Canaan, to buy food,' they replied.

" 'You are spies,' replied Joseph roughly. 'You are only here to learn how weak the nation is!'



“ ‘No, my lord,’ answered the Hebrews humbly. ‘We are here to buy corn. We are not spies, but members of one family, the sons of one man, one brother has remained home with our father, and another brother is dead.’

“Joseph still acted the part of a haughty Egyptian governor. Turning to them sternly, he said: ‘I am going to prove you. You will not leave here until your youngest brother comes here. Send one of your number, and let him fetch your brother. Meanwhile, the rest of you can remain in prison.’

“So the brothers were all placed in prison for three days. On the third day, the Governor again came to them. This time he spake more kindly. ‘I fear God,’ he told them, ‘and I am prepared to give you a chance. One of you can stay here as a hostage, and the rest of you can return home taking corn with you. But bring your youngest brother back here, so that I can tell your words are true. Otherwise you will die.’

“Whilst the Governor stood looking on, the brothers spoke among themselves of this new demand. They were terribly worried at the turn of events, and felt that God had deserted them. Speaking in the Hebrew tongue, and not knowing that the Governor could understand all they were saying, they said, ‘We are truly guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw his anguish, when he pledged with us, and would not hear. It is because of our wickedness that this great distress has come upon us.’

“Reuben reminded his brothers, ‘Did I not speak to you saying, Do not sin against the child; but you would not listen to me; that is why such trouble has come on us now.’

“Thus God caused the brothers to see their sin and acknowledge their offence, as He will cause the Jews to do likewise at the second coming of Jesus Christ (Zech. 12:10).

“Joseph, listening to all this, found it more than he could bear. He loved his brothers, in spite of all that they had done to him. Overcome by emotion, he turned quickly away from them so that they could not see how deeply he was affected, and rushed from their presence out of the prison house, weeping as he did so. After a while, he was able to compose himself, and returning to them again, he acted the part of a haughty and overbearing Governor. He selected Simeon as hostage, and in the sight of his brothers, he bound him and placed him in prison. Then he roughly sent the others back home ordering them to return with Benjamin.

“The nine brothers returned home, taking with them the terrible thought of poor Simeon lying bound in the prison house and recalling the fear that they all felt in the presence of

THE PARABLE OF JOSEPH

The life and experiences of Joseph foreshadowed those of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Joseph was hated by his brothers, so also was the Lord at his first advent. As they were forced to bow down to him in Egypt, so the Jews will be forced to honour Christ at his second advent. As the brothers of Joseph did not recognise him when they saw him in all his glory, so the Jews today do not recognise Jesus as the Christ, nor will they do so when he comes again, until he reveals himself unto them. Here is a list of incidents in Joseph's life that point forward to the Lord Jesus. It will be noted that Joseph enacted "death" twice: first when he was put in the pit by his brothers, and later when he was imprisoned by the Egyptians. In like manner, the Lord Jesus was first condemned to death by the Jews, and then by the Gentiles when Pilate gave him up to be crucified.

THE FIRST ADVENT

Joseph

He was a shepherd.

His name means *The Increaser*.

"Joseph brought unto his father their evil report" (Gen. 37:2).

"His father loved him more than all his brethren" (v. 4).

"His brethren said: Shall thou indeed reign over us?" (v. 8).

"They hated him" (v. 8).

"I will send thee unto them" (i.e., thy brethren — v. 13).

Jesus

He is the Good Shepherd.

John said: "He must increase" (John 3:30). From the Lord will come a multitude of faithful ones (Gal. 3:27-29). "He shall see his seed" (Isa. 53:10).

Jesus revealed how the Jews "filled up the measure of iniquity" (Matt. 23:32).

"This is My beloved son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

"We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).

"They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25).

"He sent unto them His son" (Matt. 21:37).

BETRAYAL AND DEATH

"They conspired against him" (v. 18).

"Behold the dreamer" (v. 19).

"Let us slay him" (vv. 23-24).

"They stripped Joseph out of his coat" (v. 22).

"They consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty" (Matt. 26:4).

"They mocked him" (Matt. 27:29).

"Let us kill him" (Matt. 21:38).

"They cast lots for his garment" (John 19:23).

"Cast him into a pit . . . lifted him from the pit" (vv. 24,28).

"No water in the pit" (v. 24).

"Come, let us sell him, said Judah" (vv. 26,27).

"Twenty pieces of silver" (v. 28).

"This coat (dipped in blood) have we found" (v. 32).

"This have we found" (v. 32 — thus deceiving Jacob).

"Imprisoned in Egypt."

"Butler (restored) and Baker (executed)."

"He brought me out of an horrible pit" (Psa. 40:1-3). "He was not left in hell (the pit, or grave) neither did his flesh see corruption" (Acts 2:31).

"The pit in which there is no water" (i.e., the grave — Zech. 9:11).

"Judah (Greek for *Judah*) communed how he might betray him" (Luke 22:4).

"Thirty pieces of silver" (Zech. 11:12).

"He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood" (Rev. 19:13 — a symbol representing the Sacrifice of the Lord).

"Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept" (Matt. 28:13).

"He (Pilate) delivered him to be crucified" (Matt. 27:26).

"Two thieves crucified with him" — one forgiven.

RESURRECTION

"At the end of two full years" (Gen. 41:1).

"Shaved himself" (v. 14).

"Changed his raiment" (Gen. 41:14).

"He rose again the third day" (1 Cor. 15:4).

Symbol of cleansing (Lev. 14:8).

"I will clothe thee with a change of raiment" (i.e., immortality — Zech. 3:4).

ELEVATION

"Thou shalt be over my house" (Gen. 41:38-40).

"Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphath-Paaneah" (i.e., *Saviour of the world*).

"Made him ruler" (Gen. 41:43).

"Joseph's brethren came and bowed down to him" (Gen. 42:6).

"Sit thou on My right hand" (Acts 2:34). "As a son over God's house" (Heb. 3:6 — RSV).

"Thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6).

"All power is given me" (Matt. 28:18).

"Ye shall not see me until ye (Jews) shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39).

SECOND ADVENT

(Jews recognise Jesus as their Messiah)

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| <p>"His brethren knew him not" (v. 8)</p> <p>"We are guilty, therefore is this distress come on us" (v. 21).</p> <p>"Joseph made himself known to his brethren" (Gen. 45:1).</p> <p>"They were troubled at his presence."</p> <p>"Be not grieved" (v. 5).</p> <p>"God did send me before you to preserve life."</p> <p>"To preserve to you a posterity in the earth."</p> <p>"Save your lives by a great deliverance" (v. 7).</p> <p>"It was not you that sent me but God" (v. 8).</p> <p>"Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen" (v. 10).</p> | <p>"One shall say, What are these wounds in thine hands?" (Zech. 13: 6). "Who is this king of glory?" (Psa. 24:8).</p> <p>"Thou shalt call to mind (your sins) among the nations whither the Lord shall drive thee" (Deut. 30:1). "Alas . . . it is the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7).</p> <p>"They shall look upon him whom they pierced" (Zech. 12:10).</p> <p>"And shall mourn for him."</p> <p>"He shall comfort all that mourn" (Isa. 61:3). "He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. 11:6).</p> <p>"He shall appear the second time unto salvation" (both national and individual) Heb. 9:28.</p> <p>"My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel" (Isa. 49:6).</p> <p>"There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer" (Rom. 11:26).</p> <p>"The stone which the builders rejected is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes" (Matt. 21:42).</p> <p>"Their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and thine offspring among the people. All that see them shall acknowledge that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed" (Isa. 61:9).</p> |
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EXTENSION OF CHRIST'S RULE OVER GENTILES

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| <p>"Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh" (Gen. 47:20).</p> <p>"The land of the priests bought he not; they had a portion assigned them to Pharaoh" (v. 22).</p> | <p>"The nation that shall not serve thee shall perish" (Isa. 60:12). "He shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth" (Psa. 72).</p> <p>"We (the priests of the age to come — Rev. 5:9) are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).</p> |
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There are many other incidents in the life of Joseph that foreshadowed the life of the Lord, such as his age, etc. (cf. Gen. 41:46 with Luke 3:23), which you will be able to trace as you study the record.

the harsh Governor of Egypt.

“They travelled all day, and in the evening they paused to rest at a lodging place. Here, as one of them opened his sack to give his ass some food, he was astonished to see therein the money that he had paid the Governor for the corn. He told the others, and equally amazed, each brother opened his sack to find his money therein. Joseph had instructed this to be done, but they imagined it was to accuse them of dishonesty. The discovery filled them with fear. They wondered at the meaning of it all, and returned home to Jacob fearful of the consequences, and hoping that the famine might soon end.

**Back For
More Corn**

“But the famine continued, and the food purchased in Egypt began to run out. Still Jacob refused to let Benjamin go down to Egypt. ‘Ye have bereaved me of children already,’ he told his sons. ‘Joseph is dead, and Simeon is gone, and now you want to take Benjamin away!’

“Reuben tried to pacify him. ‘Slay my two sons, if I bring not Benjamin safely back,’ he said.

“But Jacob refused, hoping the famine would soon end.

“Soon all the corn was eaten up, and again Jacob told his sons to return to Egypt, and buy more.

“But they refused to do so without Benjamin. Judah respectfully explained the matter again to his father, reminding him of how harshly the Governor had spoken to them, and how he had repeated his demand that they should bring their younger brother next time with them. ‘I will personally look after Benjamin,’ promised Judah, ‘and I will see that he returns safely to you. Except we had lingered,’ he urged, ‘we should have returned the second time.’

“What a change in Judah! A few years earlier he had been foremost in selling Joseph into slavery (Gen. 37:26). Adversity had done him good. Now he was showing kindness and unselfishness towards his father.

“Jacob, or Israel as he was now called, sorrowfully agreed to let Benjamin go. He made careful preparations for the journey. He made ready a present of balm, honey, spices, myrrh, nuts and almonds for the Governor in Egypt, and instructed his sons to take double money in order to pay for the last lot of corn as well as that which they hoped to buy this time. And then he fervently prayed to God that He might care for his children, guarding them on their journey, preserving them in the face of danger, and prospering their cause.

“So the brothers left Hebron, and again entered Egypt to

stand before the haughty Governor in the market place.

“Joseph was delighted to see his brothers again, and especially Benjamin. His heart thrilled with joy, and he commanded the ruler of his palace to bring them to his home at noon in order that they might feast together.

“It was to be a day of great surprises for the brothers. They were afraid when they learned that they were to go to the Governor’s palace; they thought it was because of the money they had found in the sacks the last time they had left Egypt. At the door of the Palace (Gen. 43:19) they were met by the steward who was in charge of the Governor’s affairs, and humbling themselves before him, they explained how surprised they had been to find the money in their sacks on their previous visit to Egypt. ‘We do not know who put it there,’ they said.

“The steward answered them kindly: ‘Do not worry,’ he said, ‘everything will turn out alright. Your God and the God of your father hath given you treasure in your sacks. I had your money.’ Thus the steward urged them to put their minds at rest, explaining that they should accept the money as a gift from God. The words he uttered suggest that he knew something concerning the true God. No doubt Joseph had taught him this, and also explained to him his purpose with his brothers.

“The steward then restored Simeon to them, and making them comfortable in the palace of the Governor, told them that they had been taken there in order to dine with him.

“We can imagine the astonishment of the brothers at all this. They made ready the present that they had brought with them to give to the Governor, wondering at the strange turn of events.

“At last Joseph arrived, and the brothers were presented before him. They once again, in fulfilment of the dream, bowed in humility before him.

“Joseph treated them kindly. He asked after their welfare, and the welfare of his father. And to his questions they replied humbly, bowing down to the ground each time they addressed him.

“The dreams were being fulfilled to the very detail!

“And then Joseph saw Benjamin. Many years had passed since he had seen the brother he loved most of all. Though his heart throbbed with affection for his brother, he had to pretend that he was indifferent to him. ‘Is this your young brother?’ he asked. And he added: ‘God be gracious unto thee, my son.’

“The presence of the brother for whom he had such love was too much for the kindly Joseph. Filled with emotion, he could not keep up the pretence any longer. He hastily left the

room so the others could not detect his feelings. And there he wept in sympathy for his brothers, and in delight at the turn of events.

"In due time he returned, and the meal commenced. It was a strange dinner! Joseph sat at one table, the Egyptians at another, and the brothers at a third."

"Why did they do that?" asked Ann, interrupting the flow of words from her voluble father.

"The reason was both religious and political," explained Mr. Phillips. "To the Egyptians, every Hebrew was an abomination because they sacrificed to God the very animals that Egyptians worshipped as gods. Moreover, some years earlier, bands of shepherds from Palestine (called Hyksos, but considered as Hebrews by the Egyptians) had invaded the land and establish themselves as rulers for a time. Because they continued eating the animals worshipped by the Egyptians, the latter detested them and would not sit at the same table with shepherds from Canaan. Therefore Joseph, who had not hidden his religious beliefs from the Egyptians, remained separate from them."

"Then why didn't he eat with his brothers?" asked Peter.

"Because he was not yet ready to reveal his identity to them," replied his father. "At the same time, the brothers had cause to wonder at a sign that Joseph gave them, for in arranging the way they should sit, he did so in order, from the eldest to the youngest. The men marvelled at this. How did the Governor know their ages? They were also astonished at the honour paid to Benjamin, for whilst they were all looked after in a grand way, Joseph arranged for special treatment to be given to Benjamin."

"Now, before we proceed any further," remarked Mr. Phillips at this stage, "Is there any question you would like to ask?"

"Yes," replied Ann. "Why did Joseph place the brothers in order of their age?"

"Well it mystified the brothers and made them take note and think," replied her father. "Joseph was doubtless preparing them for the time when he would reveal himself to them, when they would remember all these signs, and realise that he was, indeed, their brother. In addition, remember that Joseph was a type of Jesus Christ. When the Lord returns, he will set the tribes in order in the land of Promise (Ezek. 48; Matt. 19:28)."

"What was his purpose in showing special honour to Benjamin?"

"He probably wanted to test the other brothers to see if

they were still jealous as they had once been when Jacob had shown special favour to him. Christ, at his return, will give special honour to believers whom he will acknowledge as his true brethren (Mark 3:35)."

More Trouble

"And now," continued Mr. Phillips as he outlined the story of Joseph, "Joseph decided to test his brothers once more. He commanded the steward of his house to fill all their sacks with corn, to return each man his money in his sack, and to place a special silver cup such as was used in religious ceremonies in Benjamin's sack.

"This was all done unbeknown to the brothers, of course, and next morning they commenced their journey homeward little realising the trick that was being played on them. They started off joyfully, believing their mission had been successfully completed, and looking forward to the familiar hills and home-life of Hebron.

"They had not gone far, however, when they were overtaken by the steward who had looked after them so kindly the day before. Now he looked at them sternly and spake roughly: 'Why have you rewarded evil for good?' he demanded. 'What do you mean by stealing my lord's cup in which he divineth?'

"The brothers were horrified at such an accusation. They were confident in their innocence, and denied the charge. 'Search our sacks,' they invited the steward 'He in whose sack you find it can die!'

"They took their sacks down and opened them before the steward. And then, to their horror and amazement, the cup was found in the sack of Benjamin! The brothers tore their clothes in despair, and returned to Joseph's palace, to fall down before him and plead for mercy.

" 'What is this you have done?' demanded Joseph.

"It was Judah who took it upon himself to speak, for he had promised his father he would look after Benjamin.

" 'What can we say unto my lord?' he pleaded. 'How can we clear ourselves? God is punishing us for our sins. Behold we are my lord's slaves, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.'

"But Joseph answered: 'Far be it from me that I should do such a thing as to punish you all when only one is guilty. The only one to be punished is he with whom the cup is found. The rest can go free.'

"Then Judah pleaded for Benjamin. He told the Governor about his father, how Benjamin was the only one left of his mother, how Jacob had at first refused to let him go to Egypt in

case something happened to him, and how it would be the death of his aged father if his youngest son did not return. Judah finished by saying: 'Let me remain in Egypt as a slave to my lord, and let the boy return with his brothers. How can I go to my father without the boy? Never may I witness the woe that would overwhelm my father!'

Joseph Reveals Himself (Gen. 45)

“What a change Joseph observed in Judah! A few years before, Judah had been one who had been foremost in persecuting him: roughly casting him into the pit, and urging the others to sell him to the Ishmaelites! Judah then had not cared what anguish and pain he brought upon his father through his thoughtless persecution of Joseph, nor when he deceived Jacob into believing that Joseph had died through the ravages of wild beasts. But now he saw that time and trial had softened the heart of Judah, had changed him for the better. Now Judah showed concern for his father, and desired to spare him pain. Now he was prepared to suffer in order that his brother, Benjamin, might go free. This is a wonderful type of the change that will come over Jewry (modern Judah) at the second advent of Christ. At his first coming, nineteen hundred years ago, they didn't concern themselves with the feelings of God or His Son, but were foremost in crucifying the Lord. But the time will come when they shall 'look upon Him whom they pierced, and will mourn for him' as he reveals his true identity to them (Zech. 12:10; 13:6; Matt. 23:38-39).

“Meanwhile, Joseph, observing the change in Judah, as well as in the others, was filled with love for them. How wonderfully the dreams had been fulfilled! How good God had been to him through all his troubles and trials! Though the way had been difficult, he could now see that it had all been worth while! He could appreciate the principle that Paul, many years later, was to set before the Ecclesias in Asia when exhorting the brethren that it is 'through much tribulation we shall enter into the Kingdom of God' (Acts 14:22). Looking upon the brothers he loved in spite of all they had done to him, Joseph could no longer control himself. Hastily commanding all the Egyptians to leave the room, he made himself known to them. 'I am Joseph,' he told them eagerly. 'Is it true that my father yet lives?'

“But his brothers were still troubled. They did not believe him and after all the strange events of the preceding day, they probably thought the Governor was a little mad. But then they remembered how the steward spake of God, how the Governor had skilfully seated them in order of age at the table, the

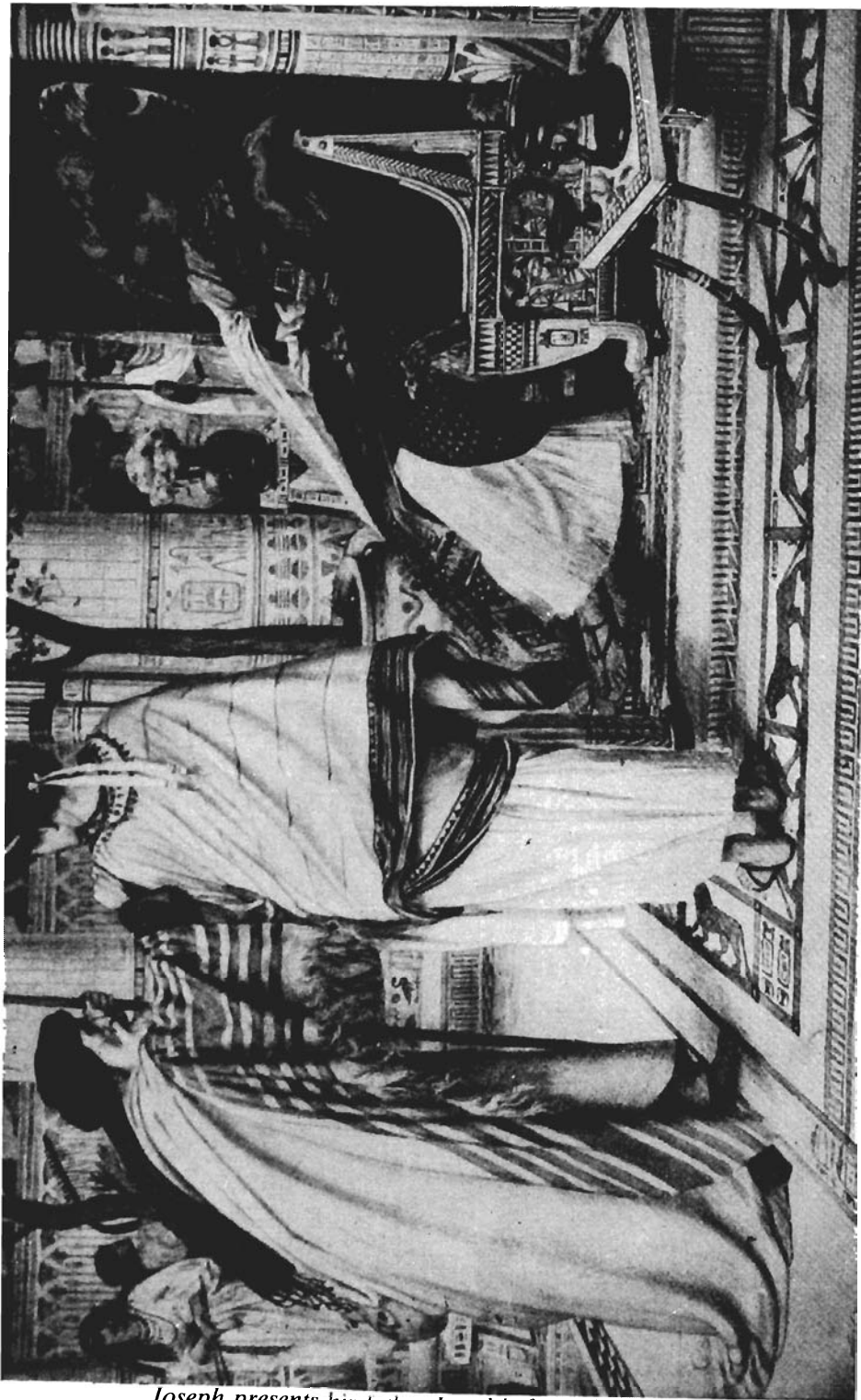
special favours he had shown to Benjamin, and other signs. Gradually they realised that the powerful prince was indeed the boy they had so cruelly ill-treated and sold into slavery. This created a greater fear. What revenge would Joseph take of them?

“But thoughts of revenge were far from the character of Joseph. ‘Do not be angry with yourselves that you sold me here’ he told them. ‘It was all in God’s purpose. He sent me here to preserve life. There will yet be another five years of famine, so that if God had not sent me here to make preparation for them, you would have perished. God sent me here to preserve your children alive on earth, to look after you so that you might survive the famine and so become a great company as He promised our father. So it was not you but God who sent me here, and He has made me Pharaoh’s prime minister, head of his palace, and governor of all Egypt. Now go back home quickly and bring my father here to me that I may care for him during the terrible famine that is to continue yet five years more, for I long to see him. Tell him about my splendid position in Egypt. Make haste and bring him to me, for I can now see that you know, and my brother Benjamin knows, that it is I, Joseph, who speaks to you!’

“Joseph then kissed his brothers, and wept as he embraced them. He talked long with them, explaining all that had happened to him, and listening to their account of his father.

“Pharaoh together with all the leaders of Egypt, heard the glad news and they rejoiced with Joseph. A decree was issued from the court commanding that the very best of Egypt was to be put at the disposal of Jacob to convey him to his son in Egypt. Wagons were prepared for the conveyance of Jacob, and he was told not to worry about his goods for the best of all Egypt was to be his on his arrival. Joseph prepared a grand present for his father and for Benjamin, and then sent his brothers home to fetch his father back to Egypt.

“What a different company of men returned to Hebron. They could hardly wait to tell Jacob the grand news. As soon as they arrived home they burst out with it: ‘Joseph is still alive,’ they exclaimed to their astonished father. ‘He is governor of all the land of Egypt.’ Poor Jacob fainted at the news; he could not believe it. Not until they had told him in detail of all that had happened in Egypt, and not until he had seen the wagons of Egypt waiting to convey him back to his beloved son did he realise the significance of the news. Then the aged Israel rallied. ‘This is wonderful!’ he exclaimed. ‘My son Joseph is still alive; I will go and see him before I die!’



Joseph presents his father Israel before Pharaoh.

A Joyous Reunion

“Preparations were soon completed, and Israel was on his way to meet the son he loved so dearly. But he did not forget the goodness of God. He paused at Beersheba in order to worship God, to thank Him for His kindness, and to sacrifice before Him. And there God spake to him in a dream, saying: ‘I am God, the God of thy father; fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation; I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes’.”

“Before you go on, Daddy,” interrupted Ann, “What did God mean when He said, ‘Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes?’”

“It is a Hebrew form of expression meaning that he would close his eyes in death,” replied Mr. Phillips.

“But didn’t that happen in Egypt?” asked Graeham.

“Yes,” answered his father.

“Well, then, God did not fulfil the promise to ‘surely bring Jacob up again,’ if he died in Egypt,” remarked Graeham.

“Jacob’s sons carried him back to Hebron after he was dead,” said Peter.

“Yes,” argued his brother. “but surely God did not mean that. It would not be much of a promise to tell a man that he would be carried back dead!”

“Well what does it mean?” asked Ann.

“It means,” replied her father, “that God was promising Jacob that he would be raised from the dead. That was the constant promise of God to all these men of old, as we have seen. That is how the Apostles understood it. Read Acts 26:6 and 8 please Joan.”

Joan read: “Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”

“The speaker is Paul,” commented Mr. Phillips, “and he was on trial for his life. He declared that his beliefs were based on the hope of Israel, which demands a resurrection from the dead. That was the hope also of Jacob, for God promised it to him in this verse when He said, ‘I will surely bring you up again.’ Do you think you understand that?”

“Yes,” replied Graeham.

“In due time,” continued Mr. Phillips, “Israel and all his family arrived at the borders of the land of Egypt, and there

Jacob sent Judah to tell Joseph of his father's arrival (Gen. 46:28)."

"It is interesting to notice how Judah gradually became more prominent," commented Graeham. "He became spokesman for the brothers when they appeared before Joseph, he pleaded for Benjamin, and now he is selected by Jacob to announce his arrival."

"Yes," agreed Mr. Phillips. "In the story of Joseph there are many lessons pointing forward to the future. In like manner, we read concerning the second advent of Christ, 'He shall save the tents of Judah first' (Zech. 12:7). The Lord Jesus will save those Jews who are in the land, and who are classed as Judah, before regathering the rest of Israel from all parts of the earth as he afterwards will do (Ezek. 37:21).

"When Joseph heard that his father had arrived he drove off in his chariot to meet him," continued Mr. Phillips. "What a happy, joyous reunion that was! From the depths of misery and fear, Israel had been elevated to the highest pinnacle of joy. He had never expected to see his favorite son again, and here he was, not only well and prosperous, but prime minister of all Egypt. Israel could well appreciate the words that Paul later said concerning God: 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think' (Eph. 3: 20). His heart was so full that he felt life could hold nothing greater for him: 'Let me now die,' he said, 'for I have seen your face and know that thou art alive' (Gen. 46:30).

"Joseph at once told Pharaoh that his people had arrived in the land of Goshen, and he presented five of his brothers before him. He intructed these five men to tell Pharaoh that they were shepherds, and to ask that they might dwell in the land of Goshen, for every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians."

"Wasn't the land of Goshen very good land?" asked Peter.

"Yes, it was the 'best of the land,' and particularly good for purposes of grazing (Gen. 47:11). It is said that its proper name was Geshen, meaning the country of *grass*, or of *shepherds*. It therefore was different to the rest of Egypt which was sown with seed after having been overflowed by the Nile."

"Well if it were the best of the land, why should Pharaoh give it to the Israelites if shepherds were an abomination to Egyptians?"

"As I told you earlier, history shows that some time before Joseph entered Egypt, bands of shepherds from Palestine (known as hyksos or "shepherd kings") had invaded Egypt and conquered the country. Because of this, and their habit of

sacrificing and eating animals which the Egyptians worshipped, the Egyptians detested them. Now it is said that the Pharaoh ruling Egypt in the time of Joseph was one of those Hyksos or shepherd kings. Joseph's advice would commend his brethren to Pharaoh, and keep them separate from the Egyptians."*

"It certainly seems to have fulfilled that purpose," commented Graeham, "because Pharaoh told Joseph: 'In the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle' (Gen. 47:6)."

"That is true," said his father. "It is also interesting to learn that according to ancient Egyptian monuments, the office of 'cattle superintendents' which Pharaoh offered the brethren of Joseph, was one of high dignity in Egypt. The cattle were used for the purpose of worship, so that the appointment would make the brothers rulers in the land. There is also another very important reason why Joseph wanted his brethren to obtain the land of Goshen."

"What was that?"

"The land of Goshen was on the east side of the Nile and hemmed in by hills all around it. It therefore cut Israel off from Egypt, keeping them separate and distinct from the nation. Thus though they were in Egypt, they were not of Egypt, and Joseph was very anxious to preserve that separateness. It is also a warning to us. Though we are 'in the world, we must not be of the world' (John 17:14). The Lord Jesus, like Joseph, is very anxious that his brethren should keep their separateness from the world about them, and to his Father, he prayed: 'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil' (John 17:15). That was also Joseph's idea when he asked his brethren to request the land of Goshen in which to live.

"Joseph also introduced his father to Pharaoh. When the king looked upon the lined countenance of the old man, he asked how old he was. Israel replied: 'The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.' This is a most significant statement. . ."

"Why do you say it is a significant statement?" interrupted Peter.

"The word *pilgrimage* implies one living with a future

* See "The Companion Bible."

objective in view, having little in common with those about him. Jacob was confessing that all his life he had been as a foreigner among those with whom he sojourned. These men of God kept themselves apart from those about them, refusing to mix with them in their ways, and having nothing to do with their politics or religion. As Paul says, 'They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth' looking forward in hope to that which God had promised (Heb. 11:13)."

"Did the famine end soon after?" asked Ann.

"No, the worst had yet to come. As the years continued, the people used up all their money in buying corn. Then they brought their cattle and horses and asses in exchange. When these had gone, they exchanged their land for corn so that Joseph purchased all the land of Egypt and Canaan for Pharaoh (Gen. 47:14-20). But, of course, the people had no money to purchase seed to sow in their land, so Joseph told them: 'I have bought you this day, and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the increase that you will give the fifth part unto Pharaoh and four parts shall be your own.'

"The people agreed to this, and told the Governor: 'Thou hast saved our lives; let us find grace in your sight, and we will be Pharaoh's servants'. The only land that Joseph did not bring under the control of Pharaoh was that belonging to the priests (Gen 47:22).

"Why was that?"

"Because they were looked upon as part of Pharaoh's household. Thus all the land of Egypt and Canaan came under Pharaoh's control, the only part exempt being that which belonged to the priests. This is a type of what the Lord Jesus will accomplish at his second advent. He will make all nations serve him (Isa. 60:12), but those who serve him now, will then be made priests and kings with him (Rev. 5:9-10), to rule with him in that day (Isa. 32:1). They are 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (Rom. 8:17), and if worthy, they will enjoy with him the inheritance in the glorious day to come (Rev. 3:21) as Joseph and the priests of Egypt did with Pharaoh."

"But weren't those priests pagans?"

"Yes, that is true. But the Bible often uses men to type the purpose of God, without endorsing their way of life."

"Meanwhile, notice how remarkably Joseph's life vindicated his name. He had *increased* wonderfully since the time he had been despised by his brothers, and sold as a slave in Egypt. It would be good for you to go quietly over the record of his life again, and take notice of the way it foreshadows that of the

Lord Jesus Christ. Commence with the significance of his dreams. His *increase* in Egypt developed out of his correct interpretation of the dreams of the butler and baker, and see how remarkably they foreshadowed the work of the Lord!"

"What do you mean by that? I have not noticed anything particularly significant about them!" exclaimed Peter.

"Well they paved the way for his elevation before Pharaoh, and his subsequent exercise of power over Egypt," declared his father enthusiastically. "And they foreshadowed those very things in the life of the Lord that commended him to his Father, and ensured his future power on earth."

"Look, Daddy! You are most irritating," burst out Ann. "You hint at things without explaining them, just to make us curious, and to irritate us!"

"That is not so," said her father with a smile. "I might do it to make you curious, and to cause you to think, but I do not do it to irritate you. Let me explain. The butler was restored to life, wasn't he? And the baker was put to death?"

"Yes, that is right."

"The former carried wine to his lord, which is the symbol in Scripture of a life given unto God; whereas the baker carried bread, which, in Scripture, symbolises the flesh which must be put to death. Because of that symbolism, and in obedience to Christ, baptised believers eat bread and drink wine in meetings appointed for that purpose, as a memorial of the life and death of the Lord Jesus. Because of the way he gave his life unto his Father, he was raised to eternal life; but in order to do that, he had to crucify, or put to death, the flesh. That, I believe, is the typical significance of the dreams of the butler and baker, the correct interpretation of which set Joseph on the course of fulfilling his prophetic name in Egypt: that of *The Increaser*. I hope you understand this."

"It is something you have to think over," remarked Graeham thoughtfully.

"True," agreed his father. "I recommend that you read the whole story again for yourselves, and see how clearly it foreshadows the life of the Lord."

Chapter Two

HOW JACOB BLESSED HIS CHILDREN

The Last Days of Jacob "Seventeen years passed away (Gen. 47:28), and the time came that Jacob knew that he must die. He told Joseph that he did not want to be buried in Egypt, and Joseph promised that he would carry his father back to the Land of

THE PARABLE OF THE TRIBES

The sons of Jacob are named frequently in Scripture, but almost invariably in a different sequence. Sometimes it is in order of birth; on other occasions in order of divine appointment, or (see Ezekiel 48) according to the tribal inheritance. Each sequence spells out the message of the names in a different way. For instance, in Genesis 49, the names and their meanings are in the following order:

Reuben	<i>See a son!</i>
Simeon	<i>Hearing.</i>
Levi.....	<i>Joining.</i>
Judah.....	<i>Praise.</i>
Zebulun.....	<i>Dwelling.</i>
Issachar.....	<i>Reward.</i>
Dan.....	<i>Judge.</i>
Gad.....	<i>Company.</i>
Asher	<i>Blessed</i>
Naphtali	<i>Wrestling.</i>
Joseph	<i>Adding</i>
Benjamin.....	<i>Son of my right hand.</i>

The combined message proclaims the invitation of Yahweh: *See a Son! Hear him! Join him! Praise him! Dwell with him! He will reward you at the Judgment with a company of blessed ones who after wrestling will add to the Son of His right hand.*

In Ezekiel 48 the twelve tribes are divided into two groups of seven in the north and five in the south separated by the Holy Oblation. Seven is the number of the covenant; five is the number of grace; and twelve is the number of government. When the covenant is joined to grace there will be perfect government.

The seven northern tribes spell out this message: *"At the Judgment (Dan), there shall be blessing (Asher) for those who by wresting (Naphtali), and forgetting (Manasseh) add double fruit (Ephraim). They shall see the son (Reuben) and receive and give praise (Judah). The five southern tribes provide this message: The Son of the right hand (Benjamin) shall hear (Simeon), reward (Issachar), and dwell (Zebulun) with the assembled company (Gad).*

In every case where the tribes are listed consideration should be given to the order of the names.

Promise to bury him. Then one day Joseph was told that his father was very sick. Taking his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, Joseph made his way to his father's house. Jacob was pleased that Joseph had visited him. He reminded him, for the last time, of the great blessing that God had made unto him. Then he spake to him concerning his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim: 'They are mine,' said Israel, 'as Reuben and Simeon they shall be mine'."

"What did he mean by that?" asked Ann.

"He meant that they were to become tribes with the other brothers, and that they were to occupy the positions held before by Reuben and Simeon."

"What positions did they hold?"

"They were the eldest of Jacob's sons, and therefore the right of the firstborn belonged to Reuben. That meant that he should receive a double portion of his father's inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17). But Jacob had conferred this privilege on Joseph thus elevating his two sons as tribal fathers, so giving him a portion above his brethren (Gen. 48:22)."

"Does that mean there were thirteen tribes of Israel, and not twelve?"

"Yes, there were thirteen tribes, but later on the tribe of Levi was not counted among the others, but was given over to the service of the Tabernacle."

"I understand."

"When Joseph had been blessed by Jacob, he presented his two sons to his father, who then did a remarkable thing. He placed his right hand on the head of Ephraim and his left hand on the head of Manasseh in order to bless them."

"What was remarkable about that?"

"Well, Manasseh was the firstborn, and therefore should have been placed to the right of Jacob. It upset Joseph to see his father make such a mistake, as he considered it. He knew that Jacob was blind (Gen. 48:10), and tactfully tried to change the boys around. But Jacob would not let him do this, for he had purposely guided his hands that way (v. 14). He told Joseph that though Ephraim was the youngest, he would become the greater of the two and one of the chief tribes, and that God would bring Israel back out of Egypt."

"Verse 22 reads strangely," said Ann, who was looking over Genesis 48. "It reads: 'Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and bow'."

"We learn from John 4:5 that the place referred to was Shechem," explained Mr. Phillips. "This was purchased by

Jacob (Gen. 33:19), but he probably had to protect it from the Amorites. Joseph only received Shechem as a burial ground (Josh. 24:32), so that he must yet receive it for an everlasting possession when he is raised to life eternal at Christ's second coming."

"I see."

The Last Days "Having blessed Joseph," continued Mr. Phillips, "Jacob called all his sons together to give them one last message before he died. He told them what would happen to the twelve tribes 'in the last days'."

"That refers to the days in which we are living now, doesn't it?" asked Ann.

"The term can apply both today as well as to the days of Christ," replied her father.

"How is that possible?" asked Peter. "Both could not be the last days."

"Read for me Hebrews 1:2," said Mr. Phillips in return.

Peter read: "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

"What days were those?" asked Mr. Phillips.

"They were the days of Christ's first advent," replied Peter.

"And how does Paul style them?"

"He calls them 'these last days'."

"But how could Paul call them the last days?" interjected Ann.

"Read Hebrews 9:26," said her father in return.

Ann read: "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

"To whom is Paul referring?" asked her father.

"To Jesus Christ," replied Ann.

"And when does Paul say he appeared?"

"He says he appeared 'in the end of the world'," replied Ann.

"Yes, and those were the last days," said her father.

"Daddy, you get terribly irritating sometimes," burst out Ann. "How could those days possibly be called the 'end of the world,' and 'the last days.' I always thought we were living in the 'last days'."

"So we are," replied her father with a smile.

"Now that is worse than ever!" exclaimed Ann impatiently. "How can the days of Christ and these days both be called the 'last days'?"

"Because Jesus came in 'the last days' of the Jewish

Commonwealth which was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70; and we live in 'the last days' of Gentile times, when Jesus Christ will return, to 'put down all authority and power' (1 Cor. 15:28) and reign as King (Dan. 2:44). Therefore, Paul lived at 'the end of the (Jewish) world,' and we live at 'the end of the (Gentile) world'."

"So both can be called 'the last days,'" said Graeham thoughtfully.

"Yes," replied his father. "Some people think the Apostles made a mistake when they spoke of the End approaching in their day, but they made no mistake. They were not referring to the End of Gentile times, but the approaching end of the Jewish commonwealth."

"Well does the blessing of Jacob, recorded in Genesis 49, refer to the days of Jesus' first advent, or today?" asked Peter.

"It concerns both," replied his father. "Some of it was fulfilled 1,900 years ago, and some of it yet awaits fulfilment today."

"What is the prophecy about?" asked Ann.

"This is a difficult chapter of the Bible," said her father, "And I doubt whether you would understand it. I think it would be better if you read what Dr. Thomas has to say about it in *Elpis Israel* p. 280, and then, afterwards, if you want to ask any further questions, you may do so."

"Couldn't you give us a brief outline of what it is all about, instead of explaining every verse?" asked Graeham.

"Yes, I could do that," said his father. "It shows how Reuben would not excel, his place being taken by Joseph; it shows how Simeon and Levi would be 'instruments of cruelty,' and in their anger they would slay a man; and when we remember what the priests did to Jesus at his first advent, we can see how truly his words are fulfilled. The blessing on . . ."

"Just a moment," interrupted Graeham. "That part of Jacob's prophecy concerns Simeon and Levi. I can quite understand how the statement regarding Levi was fulfilled by the priests, who condemned Jesus. But it was the Jews or Judah who conspired to slay Jesus, not Simeon."

"A good comment," said his father. "Your question is explained by the fact that the tribe of Simeon was included within the limits of Judah (Josh. 19:1,9). What was said concerning Simeon was fulfilled by Jews living in that part at the Lord's first advent. They 'slew a man' (i.e. the Lord Jesus), and 'dugged down a wall,' which was a Hebrew way of saying that they overthrew a city."

"I suppose the city represents Jerusalem," said Graeham.

“Yes, it was overthrown in A.D. 70 by the Romans in punishment for the wickedness of the people.”

“What about the blessing of Judah?” asked Peter.

“That is a wonderful blessing,” declared his father enthusiastically. “It contains the hope of Israel (vv. 9-12). From this tribe came Jesus Christ (the Shiloh of v. 10) before whom all will yet bow (v. 8). He shall wield the sceptre, and provide a righteous law for Israel; to him shall the people be gathered, and he shall establish a way of salvation. The blessing to Judah should be linked with that to Joseph (vv. 22-26). Joseph was a type of Jesus Christ, and the blessing to him foreshadows the work of the Lord Jesus. He is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel; he is the one whom the Jews hated, but who received the blessing of God above all others; he was ‘separate from his brethren,’ but yet prevailed above all others. You can read these verses with the knowledge that they apply to Jesus Christ. Do you think that you understand what I have said?”

“We will read the pages in *Elpis Israel* first,” said Peter, “and then we might understand it a bit better.”

“That is a good idea,” agreed his father. “Meanwhile let us complete the story. After giving the prophecy to his sons, Israel died. His body was embalmed in Egypt, and with great ceremony was carried back into the Land of Promise, and buried, as he desired, in the cave of Machpelah not far from his beloved Hebron. The Egyptians made great mourning over the death of the father of their great Governor. But now that Jacob was dead, the brothers of Joseph began to fear lest he might revenge himself of them. They sent him a message telling him that their father, before he died, had left word asking Joseph to forgive them (Gen. 50:16-17). This made Joseph weep, for he knew they were afraid of him. When they came and fell down before him. Joseph comforted them by telling them not to be afraid for he would take care of them.

“And so the years passed away. Joseph lived to see his children’s children of the third generation (Gen. 50:23). Then the time came when he knew that he, too, must die. He called all the children of Israel together, to give them one final message. He reminded them of the great promise that God had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and told them that the time must come when they would leave Egypt. ‘God will surely visit you,’ he said, ‘and you shall carry up my bones from here.’ Like his father, he did not want to be buried in Egypt. He believed in the resurrection, and in faith looked forward to the time when God would bring him from the grave to inherit the promises (Heb. 11:22). So he died at the age of 110 years. They

embalmed him and put him in a coffin to await the time when the children of Israel would leave as God had promised."

"What do you mean by being 'embalmed'?" asked Ann.

"To 'embalm' is to 'preserve,' " explained Mr. Phillips. "The Egyptians were clever at this, and many such bodies are to be seen today in the museums of the world. Embalming stopped the body from decaying. Even in this detail, Joseph typed the Lord Jesus. For, as the Apostle Peter told the people, his 'flesh did not see corruption' (Acts 2:31). And as baptised believers recall the death and resurrection of Christ week by week, so the people of Israel had with them the token of the death of Joseph, and his hope in a resurrection, in that they had to carry his body in the coffin throughout their wilderness wanderings until they arrived at the Land of Promise. The great important difference between Joseph and our Saviour, of course, is that Christ lives, whereas, as yet, Joseph does not."

"It is strange that Genesis should finish with a statement like that," remarked Graeham, who was thoughtfully reading the last verse.

"Yes, it tells a story in itself," remarked his father. "The book opens with the statement that God saw all that He made and it was 'very good' (Gen. 1:31), but it ends with the four grim words, *a coffin in Egypt*, signifying death in exile. But though this great man had died thus, he placed his confidence in the resurrection, and so could look forward to the future with hope."

"I have been thinking upon the blessing of Jacob on Ephraim and Manasseh," said Peter. "Why should the younger brother receive the blessing?"

"That was frequently the case," commented Graeham. "Remember that Shem received the blessing though he was a younger son; Abram received the blessing though he was not the firstborn; and the same is true of Isaac and Jacob."

"Why should that be so, Daddy?" asked Ann.

"It was to teach a very wonderful lesson which we will discuss" said her father. "However, it is too late to go into it now, for it is time you were all in bed, and Joan, indeed, has fallen asleep. But the Story of the Firstborn is a very important one, and we will talk about it another time. Now: off to bed with all of you!"



*Joseph's boyhood
had been spent amid
the sound of tinkling
camel bells.*



*"A strong,
good-looking lad;
almost a man,"
thought Potiphar
as he
saw Joseph.*



*Joseph meets
his brethren.*



Chapter Three

THE MYSTERY OF THE FIRSTBORN

"The elder shall serve the younger" — Gen. 25:23

"Our studies in Genesis should have helped us to avoid a very bad mistake that many people make," remarked Mr. Phillips the next evening.

"What is that?" asked Peter.

"It is the idea that Jesus pre-existed," answered his father.

"What do you mean by 'pre-existed,' Daddy?" asked Joan.

"It means that he existed before he was born," said her father.

"How could that possibly be?" asked Ann.

"It could not be," replied her father. "Yet many people believe it."

"Why should they do so?" asked Ann.

"Because they make mistakes in interpreting the Bible," said her father. "Take, as an example, Colossians 1:15. You might read it for me Ann."

Ann turned to the place and read: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."

"Who is Paul writing about?" asked Mr. Phillips

"Of the Lord Jesus Christ," said Ann.

"When was Jesus born?" continued Mr. Phillips.

"About 1,900 years ago," was the answer.

"Well, how could he be the firstborn of every creature if he was born only 1,900 years ago?" pursued Mr. Phillips with a smile.

"He is the firstborn from the dead," said Graeham. "That is what Paul says in v. 18 of this same chapter."

"That is quite true," answered his father. "Jesus Christ is the firstborn from the dead, but he is also the 'firstborn of every creature,' according to the previous verse which Ann has read!"

"You don't believe that he lived before he was born!" said Peter.

"Of course not!" exclaimed Mr. Phillips. "Such an idea is impossible. For example, we read that Jesus 'increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and man' (Luke 2:52). If he existed from all time, he must have forgotten all that he knew previously, and would have had to learn it all again! That would be a foolish thing to say. Moreover, how could it be

said that he 'increased in favour with God' if he had been from all time in His presence!"

"What does the statement in Colossians mean then?" asked Ann.

"It introduces us to a very beautiful part of the Bible," said Mr. Phillips, "and one which it is very fitting that we should study just now."

"Why is that?" asked Graeham.

"Well, we have just finished Genesis," said his father, "in which the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are clearly revealed. Those promises set forth God's purpose with Israel and with mankind generally, and they all centre on the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. God not only taught His people by plainly telling them His purpose such as when He spoke to Abraham, but, as we have seen, He also taught them by parable; He caused them to live the things that are to happen."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well, consider the circumstances when Abraham was told to offer his son Isaac as a burnt-offering: God was not only testing him, but also impressing him — and us — with the great price He was prepared to pay for the salvation of man. As Abraham was told to offer his son, so God later, offered His Son. By meditating upon this incident Abraham came to understand that the offering of Isaac pointed forward to the crucifixion of Jesus."

"I see."

"The same is true of the firstborn. In the book of Genesis, God was continually teaching His people how that a younger son would prevail. For example, though Seth was younger than Cain, he was given the right of inheritance. Shem was younger than Japheth (Gen. 10:21), but was given the pre-eminence. In like manner, as we have seen, Isaac was placed above Ishmael, Jacob before Esau, Joseph before his brethren, Ephraim before Manasseh. In all of these instances, as God told Rebekah, 'the elder served the younger.' Now all this was like a parable pointing forward to Jesus Christ, who was the younger Son of God, and yet given the highest position."

"Just a moment, Dad," interrupted Graeham. "All you are saying might be quite clear to you, but it is not to us. How can you say that Jesus was the younger son of God? Who was the elder?"

"Read Luke 3:38, and you will have the answer," replied his father.

Graeham read: "Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of

God."

"Adam was the first son of God as far as mankind is concerned, and Jesus Christ was a younger Son of God," explained Mr. Phillips. "But the younger was given the pre-eminence over the elder!"

"I can see that alright," said Peter. "But, getting back to Colossians 1:15, in what way can it be said that Jesus was the firstborn?"

"Not 'was the firstborn'," corrected Mr. Phillips. "He *is* the firstborn, and he is such because God made him so. You read Psalm 89:27."

Peter read: "Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the Kings of the earth."

"You know, Daddy, you can be very aggravating sometimes," said Ann a little crossly. "You are purposely trying to make this difficult for us! Why don't you explain it to us straight away! How could God make Jesus His firstborn when he was not His firstborn?"

"Well, my dear," replied Mr. Phillips with a smile, "I have been drawing this out a little because I want you to think about it. You know, the Bible is like a great mystery book. God makes a statement, and He gives us clues which we must search out and think upon, like detectives, if we would find the answer to the mystery. A Bible Concordance can help us. It is like the magnifying glass that Sherlock Holmes was supposed to have used; and like him, we must use our brains and *think* on the problems that sometimes come before us in the Bible. Take, for example, the problem we have now. The best way to go about gathering clues to explain it, is to take the Concordance and look up the word *Firstborn*, and then read all the references to it that might help. In addition to the Concordance, you can take a book like *Elpis Israel*, and by looking up the index at the back, see what the author has to say about this word. Now let us be detectives, and solve the mystery as to how God could call Jesus His firstborn when, in fact, he was not His firstborn. A good clue to commence with is found in Exod. 13:2. There God says that all the firstborn both of man and beast were to be sanctified, for they were His."

"What does 'sanctified' mean?"

"It means to *set apart*. Thus God commanded that all the firstborn, both of man and beast, were to be set apart from the rest, as belonging especially to God."

"But how does that help us understand Colossians 1:15?" asked Peter impatiently.

"That is only the beginning," said his father. "You don't

think that a detective comes upon a problem, and is able to answer it with the first clue he finds, do you?"

"I suppose not."

"Of course not! It requires much patience and research before the mystery is solved. Now Ann, you take a note of the clues as we find them, and we will see if we can unravel the mystery of how Jesus is the firstborn."

"How shall I do it, Daddy?"

"Get a piece of paper, and write on the top, *The Mystery of the Firstborn*. Under that heading put your first clue: 1 — The firstborn were set apart as belonging specially to God (Exod. 13:2). Do you understand what I want?"

"Yes, Daddy," replied Ann. "I have done that."

"Our next clue is found in Deuteronomy 21:15-17," continued Mr. Phillips. "There we learn that the firstborn received a double portion of his father's possessions. He thus received twice as much as any other son. Make a note of that Ann."

"Very well."

"Our next clue is found in Genesis 49:3, where Jacob, speaking of Reuben his firstborn, calls him the 'beginning of his strength, and the excellency of his dignity and power'."

"What does that all mean?"

"It means that the firstborn was held next in honour to his parents," said Mr. Phillips. "The other children were expected to look up to the firstborn, and the firstborn had to set an example for them. So put that down on your paper, Ann."

"I have already done so Daddy."

"Here is another clue in 2 Chronicles 21:3," said Mr. Phillips, who was looking through the large Concordance. "We learn from this place that Jehoram was made king, 'because he was the firstborn.' You can make your next heading — 'The firstborn was appointed ruler in his father's house'."

"Would that be on the death of his father?" asked Graeham, who, likewise, was taking notes.

"Not necessarily," replied his father. "In this case, as the margin shows, Jehoram ruled whilst his father was living; he was made joint ruler."

"Are there any more clues?" asked Ann.

"Yes," replied her father. "Here is another one. In Numbers 8:14-18 we learn that the firstborn acted as a priest, and led the family in its approach to God."

"I cannot read that in the passage," objected Peter.

"Verse 14 says that the Levites were to be separated from the rest of Israel and given to God, and because they were God's they did the service of the tabernacle. Then v. 16 says

that God took the Levites instead of the firstborn; so that, you see, the work that the Levites did in Israel was done before by the firstborn sons of each family group."

"Can you give Bible proof for that?" asked Graeham.

"Yes," replied Mr. Phillips. "Exodus 24:5 speaks of the 'young men of the children of Israel' offering sacrifices unto God. This was before the Levites were selected to do this, so that those young men would be the firstborn sons of each family group."

"Levi was not the eldest son of Jacob though!" remarked Ann.

"No, Reuben was the eldest, but God elevated Levi to the position of priesthood, one of the privileges of the birthright."

"Why did He do that?"

"Because the Levites remained faithful to Him when all the other tribes were disobedient (Exod. 32:26). Therefore God took them to be His instead of the firstborn of all other tribes (Num. 3:12,41,45)."

"The tribe of Levi was put in the position of the firstborn, though they were not the real firstborn!" exclaimed Peter.

"Yes," replied his father. "And in that we have the answer to the mystery of how Jesus could be the firstborn of every creature, though he was born thousands of years after Adam. The Bible shows that the real firstborn in a family could be replaced by a younger brother if he were disobedient, or could not perform the necessary duties. Thus we learn that Reuben was the firstborn, but because of his evil conduct, that position was taken from him, and given to Joseph (1 Chron. 5:1). In 1 Chronicles 26:10 we learn that Simri, the son of Merari, a prominent Levi, was made the chief, though he was not the real firstborn. He doubtless had the necessary ability for the high position he had to fill, and therefore was elevated above his older brother."

"Are there any other references to show that this could be done?" asked Graeham.

"Yes, there is a very important one in Deuteronomy 21:16-17," answered his father. "This verse shows that a younger son could only be made firstborn for a very good reason. It speaks of a man having two wives, one of whom he loved much more than the other . . ."

"Something like Rachel and Leah," interrupted Ann.

"Yes, that is right," agreed her father. "Well, in such a case, the Law would not allow the father to prefer as firstborn, the son of a more beloved wife rather than the actual firstborn, unless there was a very good reason for it. But the fact that such

a Law existed shows that it was possible to make a younger son the legal firstborn. Now I think we have sufficient clues to answer our problems, so I will get Ann to read them out for us."

"These are the clues," said Ann. "*One*: The firstborn were set apart as belonging to God (Exodus 13:2). *Two*: The firstborn received a double portion of his father's goods (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). *Three*: The firstborn was held next in honour to his parents (Genesis 49:3). *Four*: The firstborn became ruler for his father (2 Chronicles 21:3). *Five*: The firstborn acted as a priest for the family (Numbers 8:14-18). *Six*: The real firstborn could lose his position through misconduct and a younger son made firstborn in his place (1 Chronicles 5:1; Deuteronomy 21:16-17).

"Good," remarked Mr. Phillips. "Now see how this all points to Jesus Christ. It is clear that he was not the real firstborn, because as Peter read from Psalm 89:27, God said He would '*make him firstborn*,' which would not be necessary if he were *already* the firstborn. Now, in 1 Corinthians 15:45, the Lord Jesus is called '*the last Adam*.' That is, he is placed at the head of the race. It is as though the '*first Adam*' lost his position as '*firstborn*' through bad behaviour, and this younger Son of God was raised to the position instead. Therefore, Jesus can be called the '*firstborn of every creature*' though he was born thousands of years after Adam."

"It seems like a contradiction to me!" exclaimed Peter.

"It is no more a contradiction than to say that Joseph was the legal firstborn, when his father raised him to that position over Reuben the actual firstborn (1 Chron. 5:1)," answered Mr. Phillips.

"That is the key to the mystery," remarked Graeham. "As soon as it is seen that a younger son could be elevated to the position of head of the family, or firstborn, then we know why Jesus Christ can be called the firstborn."

"That is true," agreed his father.

"In other words, '*the firstborn*' is a title rather than a statement of fact," said Graeham thoughtfully.

"Yes," answered his father, "that explains it perfectly."

"I don't know what that means," said Ann.

"A title describes the legal position to which anyone can be raised," explained her brother a little loftily.

"All I understand is this," said Ann. "If the firstborn of the family disobeyed his father, he would be made to give up his position to a younger brother, who would then be looked upon as the firstborn. Because Jesus was obedient in all things, God

made him His firstborn (Psalm 89:27)."

"That is perfectly correct," agreed her father.

"What about the other clues?" asked Ann, who was studying the page of notes she had made.

"They were all fulfilled by the Lord Jesus," said her father. "He was set apart for God (Luke 1:32-33); he received a double portion of the inheritance (Heb. 1:3-4; Phil. 2:9-11); he acts as a priest (Heb. 7:17); to him will be given the government (Zech. 14:9); he is held next in honour to his Father (Matt. 28:18). So, you see, all the clues point forward to the Lord Jesus. Because he is the firstborn, he receives all this honour."

"And do you think that God was teaching men this when he caused Seth, Shem, Abraham Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and others to inherit the rights of the firstborn, even though they had older brothers?" asked Graeham.

"Yes," replied his father. "I believe that God was teaching them that He would provide one who, though he would come many thousands of years after the dawn of creation, would inherit all the rights of the firstborn, so that he could be called 'the firstborn of every creature'."

"It is a very interesting subject," remarked Peter.

"Yes," agreed his father. "Ann has the clues she has written on the paper. I suggest you study them, and then you can mark your Bible with the explanation of the mystery. It is just like a detective story, don't you think?"

"Yes," agreed Ann.

"There is a final, beautiful point in relation to this subject," concluded Mr. Phillips. "Because the Lord Jesus is described as 'the firstborn of every creature', those who are accounted as being 'in him' (see Galatians 3:27) likewise are treated 'as a kind of firstfruits of his creatures' (James 1:18), 'the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb' (Revelation 14:4). Therefore, all the privileges of the firstborn rest, in measure, on them."

"What do you mean by that?"

"The government and priesthood of the future age will be given to them," explained Mr. Phillips. "They will have a double portion of the inheritance in that they will not only obtain the Kingdom, but will also be granted eternal life; and they, too, will be held in honour by all mankind. You can see, therefore, that the statement of Colossians 1:15 is not only teaching a wonderful principle in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, but also in relation to those who accept him in baptism. Now, I suggest that you carefully think over what I have told you, and that you enter these facts in your Bible. List them in the front of your Book under the heading of *The Firstborn*."

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt . . ." (Hosea 11:1).

These words are also applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Matthew 2:15).

All who embrace the Truth in Christ Jesus and separate themselves from those about them are accounted as having come out of the system of things that "spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt" (Revelation 11:8).

Hence, the separation of Israel from Egypt, through the waters of the Red Sea typically foreshadows the baptism of all those in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 10:1,2,11).



It is said that History herself was born on the night that Moses led Israel out of Egypt. Before that time, the records of nations are clouded in legend and mystery, but with the emergence of Israel as a nation, they take on clearer form and substance.

Moses stands out as great, even among the great men of the Bible. We read: "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses whom Yahweh knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10). He is overshadowed only by the Lord Jesus, of whom he was a type. God told him: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deut. 18:18). The promised Prophet is the Lord Jesus (Acts 3:22).

The life of Moses, therefore, foreshadowed the life of Christ. As Pharaoh slew the male Hebrew children at the time Moses was born, so Herod did when Jesus was born. As Moses left Egypt, so did the Lord Jesus (Matt. 3:20-21). As Moses was "mighty in word and deed" (Acts 7:22), so was the Lord (Luke 24:19). As Moses led the people from Egypt, baptised them in the Red Sea, gave them a law, formed them into God's people, so the Lord calls his people to separate themselves from spiritual Egypt and devote themselves to his service.

Moses is termed the servant of God (Psa. 105:26), the chosen of God (Psa. 106:23), the man of God (Psa. 90). He was a prophet (Deut. 34:10), a mediator (Exod. 24:2; Deut. 5:5; Gal. 3:19), a lawgiver (Deut. 33:4), a man of war (Exod. 14:25-27; Num. 21:34), and a ruler (Deut. 33:5). And yet like the Lord himself, he was the meekest of all men (Num. 12:3).

Let us, then, gather around the Phillips' family, as they discuss together this great character of the Bible, and listen to Mr. Phillips as he commences the grand story that has thrilled so many throughout the centuries — the story that shows the triumph of God over a world of spiritual darkness and wickedness, a story which is typical of events yet to happen in the earth.

Chapter One

MOSES THE DELIVERER

How Israel Forgot Joseph's Message The family was gathered in the room of Mr. Phillips' book-lined study, and had already read Exodus chapters 1 and 2; each one in turn, reading aloud five verses until the chapters were completed.

"Why is it called 'Exodus,' Daddy?" asked Joan.

"The word 'exodus' means *departure*," replied Mr. Phillips. "The book tells how Israel left Egypt, and therefore it was called *the Book of Exodus* or *Departure*. About seventy years had passed away since Joseph died, and was placed in a coffin in Egypt. All that time, the coffin rested in the land of Goshen, reminding those who saw it of Joseph's final message. Do you remember what it was, Ann?"

"Yes, Daddy," replied Ann. "I underlined the words in my Bible (Gen. 50:24-25). They read: 'Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob . . . and ye shall carry up my bones from hence'."

"Thank you, Ann," said Mr. Phillips. "In those words there was the promise of a leader who should arise in Israel, and take them out of Egypt back into the Promised Land. At first the people looked forward to his appearance, but afterwards, with the passing of years, they gradually forgot. At first the presence of Joseph's coffin was a constant reminder to them of his message, but they became so used to seeing it there, that they took it for granted. As day followed day, and nothing happened, they busied themselves more and more with the things of life, and let the things of God drift from their minds. God was testing them, as He tests us today."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Graeham.

"God has left us a message similar to that which Joseph gave to Israel. He has told us in His word that He will send Jesus Christ to establish His Kingdom on earth (Acts 1:11; 3:19; Dan. 2:44). He has told us to wait and watch for this Leader who shall come (Rev. 16:15), but time goes slowly by, and Christ is not here, and the danger is that we can become so taken up with the business or pleasures of life, that we become indifferent to the message and warning of the Bible."

"When folk are studying for school exams they have little

time for the business or pleasure of life," said Ann jokingly.

"Even in such important matters as those," replied her father with a smile, "you shouldn't neglect the things of God. You will find that your studies in the Bible will help you with your other studies. And whilst we must not neglect our daily duties, God will bless us if we give Him the first place in our lives."

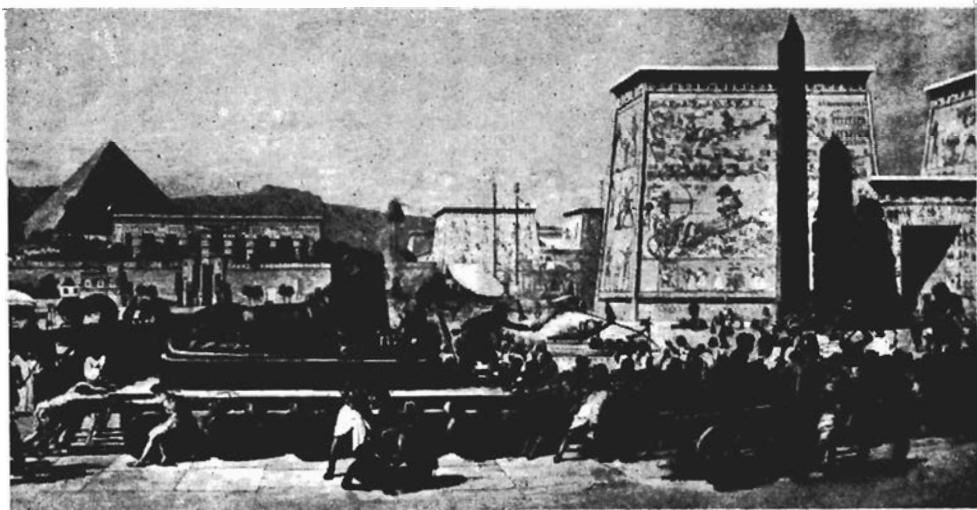
"Sheila and Marjorie are studying for their exams," said Ann. "That is why they have not been able to come here yet, though I have invited them."

"Never mind about them," interjected Peter. "Let us return to the story of Moses."

"Very well," said Mr. Phillips. "As the years went by, the children of Israel increased in numbers, until the Land of Goshen was filled with them. They began to grow into a powerful people, so that the Egyptians began to fear them and their strange, foreign ways. Then there arose 'a new king that knew not Joseph' (Exod. 1:8)."

"What does that mean?" asked Peter.

"It means that a new dynasty, or new set of kings, arose in Egypt. You will remember that when Joseph went down into Egypt, the Pharaoh ruling was one of the Hyksos, or shepherd kings, who had invaded Egypt and ruled the country. The true Egyptians hated them, and finally drove them from Egypt, and again set one of their own countrymen up as Pharaoh. This man, like all Egyptians, hated shepherds (Gen. 46:34). He feared, too, that the Hyksos might try and invade Egypt again,



and that the Israelites might then help them, and so defeat the Egyptians.”

“Is that what the king meant when he said, ‘When there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies’ (v. 10)?” enquired Graeham.

“Yes, that is right.”

“But it says that the king ‘knew not Joseph,’” said Ann. “Surely he would not have forgotten all that Joseph did for Egypt.”

“The word means more than ‘know,’” explained Mr. Phillips. “It means to ‘acknowledge’ and ‘approve.’ For example, in Judges 2:10 we read of a generation of Israelites who ‘knew not the Lord.’ They ‘knew’ Him in the sense that they knew He existed, but they did not truly acknowledge His power, or ‘approve’ His way (see also Psa. 1:6; 31:7; Hos. 2:8). Jesus also said, ‘This is life eternal to *know* God’ (John 17:3). There were many in his day who knew all about the teaching of God, but they did not ‘know’ Him in the true sense. To do so they would have had to profess Him by accepting His truth, and approving His way of life. This Pharaoh did not ‘approve’ of Joseph; that is the sense in which he did not ‘know’ him.”

“Do you think he would know that the Israelites were looking for the promised deliverer?” asked Graeham.

“Yes, it seems as though he did. In v. 10 he justified his harsh laws against the Hebrews by saying that they desired to leave Egypt. He was determined to prevent this.”

“Do you think that was why he ordered all Jewish baby boys to be killed?”

“It seems like it,” replied his father. “In that way he was like Herod, who knowing that Jesus was about to be born, and that he was born to be king and deliverer, tried to prevent it happening by killing all the male babies (Matt. 2:16). Thus Moses was born in times similar to those of the Lord Jesus.”

“Pharaoh said that the Israelites were more and mightier than the Egyptians. If that were so, why didn’t they resist the Egyptians?” asked Peter.

“Pharaoh probably meant that they would become greater than the Egyptians unless something were done to prevent it. He thus decided to make them slaves. And because the Israelites had deserted God, they were without any protection. The Egyptians treated them with terrible cruelty. They forced them to make bricks and build their cities. They whipped them to make them work harder, so that the Israelites groaned under their harsh rulers. But they still grew in numbers, until the Egyptians became really afraid.”

“It says that the Egyptians were ‘grieved’ because of the children of Israel,” said Ann.

“The word, in Hebrew, means *filled with alarm*,” explained her father. “The Egyptians not only hated the Israelites, but now the Israelites in turn hated the Egyptians. And as the Egyptians saw that the Israelites grew daily in numbers, so they feared the more that they might rise against them. Fear can make men cowards, and when a coward rules, he becomes a bully. This was the case with Pharaoh. He used his power in a terrible way. Not only did he command that the Israelites should be given the hardest possible labour, and be treated with the utmost severity and cruelty, but, in addition, he decreed that all the Hebrew baby boys should be killed at birth. He commanded the Jewish nurses who looked after the mothers when their babies were born, to do this terrible deed; but they, putting their trust in God, refused to do so.”

“It says, ‘Because the midwives feared God, that He made them houses’ (v. 21),” said Graeham, “What does that mean?”

“It means that He blessed Israel with children despite the efforts of Pharaoh to kill all the babies. The word ‘house’ is used in many parts of the Bible to represent a family. For example, we read of the ‘house of David,’ meaning the family of David, and you will find other examples of this in Psalm 113:9; Psalm 68:6 (see margin). Students of the Hebrew language say that the word ‘them’ in Exodus 1:21 is in the masculine gender, and therefore does not mean the nurses, but all Israel. The verse thus shows that God defeated the purpose of Pharaoh through the faithful action of the nurses who saved the babies from death, and so the children of Israel increased their families.”

The Deliverer Is Born

“When Pharaoh saw his decree was not obeyed by the Hebrew nurses, he proclaimed an even more terrible decree. He commanded the Egyptians to destroy all Hebrew baby boys that they might find. They were to throw them into the River Nile which the Egyptians worshipped (Exod. 1:22).”

“Something like a sacrifice to their god,” commented Graeham.

“Yes,” agreed his father. “Consider what a terrible time this would be for Hebrew mothers! Imagine their anxiety and fear when they gave birth to a baby boy! There would be no joy in the event. Only a terrible aching fear that the fact might be discovered, and some brutal, heartless Egyptian might kill the little baby. And as this was the law of the land, and as the

Egyptians hated the Jews, there were many prepared to do the bidding of Pharaoh.

“Thus a state of fear and misery settled over the Land of Goshen. Mothers mourned the murder of their children, and hatred between Hebrew and Egyptian grew more bitter every day.

“Then, one day, Jochebed, the wife of Amram, of the tribe of Levi, gave birth to a baby boy. This was her third child. She already had a son named Aaron, who was then aged three, and a daughter, Miriam, who was older. But this new baby was uncommonly beautiful; the Bible says he was ‘divinely beautiful’ (see Acts 7:20 — margin). He was such a lovely little boy, that Jochebed determined she would think out a way to save him. For three months she hid him in the house, and then when he was growing to the age when she could no longer hide the fact, she decided she would put all her trust in God, and leave it to Him to protect her little boy. She felt that such a beautiful child must surely have a wonderful destiny before him; and as she thought upon this, she wondered whether he might be the promised Deliverer of whom Joseph had made reference in his last message to Israel.

“Jochebed had kept to the true worship of God even though many in Israel had departed therefrom. She had complete faith in God (Heb. 11:23).

“And her faith was not misplaced, as we shall see.

“She poured out her heart unto God, beseeching Him that He would help her in her distress. Then, with aching heart, and anxious thought, she prepared an ark of bulrushes, or papyrus reeds, which grow so thickly along the banks of the Nile, and which were used by the Egyptians for many different purposes. Covering the little ark with pitch to make it watertight, she took it down to the river, and placed it among the reeds, leaving Miriam to watch it.

“Presently, along came Pharaoh’s daughter to wash at the river. She saw the little ark bobbing up and down upon the waves, and sent her maid to fetch it. The ark was opened, and there was seen the beautiful Hebrew child. As the Egyptian princess gazed at it, the little baby boy began to cry, and those tears washed away all the harshness and fears induced by the brutal decree of Pharaoh. The heart of the Egyptian princess filled with pity for the little deserted baby whom, she knew, was condemned to death. ‘This is one of the Hebrews’ children,’ she said to her maids.

“Meanwhile, Miriam had crept up to where the Princess was talking to her maids, and overheard what was said. Quickly

she intervened: 'Would you like me to call a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?'

"This pleased the Princess, and off flew Miriam, to fetch Jochebed for this purpose. We can understand the joy of Jochebed at this turn of events. Not only did she have her son safe and sound, but the very Pharaoh who had decreed the

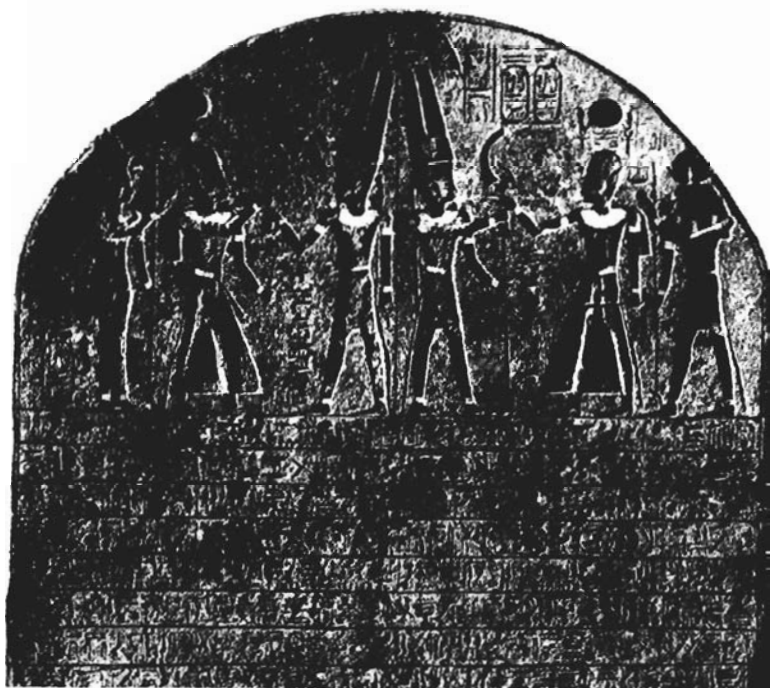


death of all Hebrew boys was paying her wages to look after her son! How she must have thanked God for His goodness to her!

"Shortly after this, the terrible decree of Pharaoh was withdrawn. Perhaps his daughter had something to do with this. Perhaps her pity for the little boy whom she now looked upon as her son was such that she prevailed upon her father to stop the terrible murders that were going on. Further: the presence of the Hebrew baby in Pharaoh's court was evidence to all people that Pharaoh had broken his own law. Thus it was withdrawn, so that through the little baby, God helped His people. Moses already had proved to be a deliverer!

“But the Hebrews still remained slaves under cruel task-masters, and the sound of the lash was heard, as they were driven to their duties.

“Pharaoh’s daughter called the little boy she found ‘Moses.’ In the Egyptian language this means *saved from water* being a combination of two words, *mo* meaning *water* and *ushe* meaning *saved*. For, she said, ‘I drew him out of the water.’ In Hebrew, however the word means *to draw out*. Both meanings can apply to the little boy, as we shall see as his history unfolds.”



EGYPTIAN MENTION OF THE ISRAELITES. On Egyptian monuments the only mention as yet discovered of the word *Israel* is in a hymn of victory engraved upon a stele from the mortuary temple of the Pharaoh Merneptah at Thebes: “*Israel is desolate, her seed is not.*” Merneptah was the Pharaoh whose army was overthrown in the Red Sea. To mislead the people, and explain why some of his army did not return, he claimed that Israel had been completely destroyed in the battle. Hence the inscription on the stele.

Chapter Two

REJECTED BY HIS OWN PEOPLE

Training For Leadership

"It is wonderful how God, in defeating Pharaoh, made him care for the very one who was to deliver Israel," said Graeham as the family discussed the story of Moses.

"Yes," agreed Mr. Phillips. "It shows the truth of the Proverb: 'There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of Yahweh, that shall stand.' Or take Psalm 33:10-11: 'Yahweh bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought; He maketh the devices of the people of none effect.' How true these words are in connection with Moses. Pharaoh had said, 'Let us deal wisely with the Israelites' (Exod. 1:10), but the wisdom of Egypt ended in Pharaoh having to bring up, educate, and prepare the very man who was to do that which he feared!"

"Do you think that his education in Egypt would do him any good?" asked Graeham.

"Yes, I think it would be all part of his training," remarked his father. "The life of Moses is divided into periods of forty years. He was forty years in Pharaoh's household, during which time he was trained for leadership (Acts 7:23), he was forty years in the desert as shepherd (Acts 7:30), and he was forty years leading Israel (Deut. 34:7)."

"He certainly saw many changes," remarked Ann.

"Yes," agreed her father. "From the ark of bulrushes, Moses was taken to the palace of Pharaoh, and brought up as a prince of Egypt in grandeur and luxury. He had slaves to wait on him, the finest teachers to educate him, and so became learned in all the culture of Egypt. He became the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and as such, he was set for a very high position in life. He was a prince, and could have become Pharaoh (Acts 7:21).

"He was also trained in leadership, so that he became 'mighty in word and deed' (Acts 7:22). According to some historians he led the Egyptian army into war, and won many notable victories. All Egypt would see in this beautiful young



man, a prince of outstanding ability and virtue.

“But he never lost touch with the Hebrew people. The faithful Jochebed doubtless saw to that. As she nursed her young son, she would not forget to educate him in the truths of God. She would tell him of the glorious promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of the closing message of Joseph, and how all Israel looked for a leader and a deliverer. And so a battle raged in the heart of the young Hebrew. He could be a great man among the Gentiles, or he could follow God. He could become a prince, a leader, and perhaps a Pharaoh, or if he followed the teaching of his mother, he would become associated with slaves. In the Palace he would hear the Hebrews spoken of with scorn and hatred, and would know of the harsh bondage into which they had been brought; and on the other hand he would see the wonderful riches, luxury and culture of the Egyptians. Perhaps he wondered whether God could be with such a poor, degraded people as were the Hebrews, and whether it was not best to forget the teaching of his mother.

“Being very intelligent, he would see that the gods of Egypt were useless, and then, perhaps, he would wonder why God did not save His people, if He were the true God. And then he would remember the closing message of Joseph, and perhaps the thought would come to him: ‘Am I the promised deliverer?’

“And always, around him, there were evidences of the misery of his people. He would see the toiling slaves, he would hear the cruel lash of the whip, he would learn of the groaning of his people. . . .

“At last he could stand it no longer; he decided he would go down and see for himself the condition of the people, and whether he could help them.

The Flight

“When Moses was about forty years of age, it ‘came into his heart’ (Acts 7:23) to visit his brethren. God moved him to do this, whether by revelation we know not. By now, however, Moses was convinced that he was the promised Deliverer of Israel. He no longer wanted the praise or glory of Egypt. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter (Heb. 11:24), and decided to throw in his lot with the Hebrews.

“But the Israelites had lost all faith in such a Deliverer (Acts 7:25). They had foolishly embraced the gods of Egypt (Josh. 24:14), and turned from Him Who could have saved (Psalm 106:7). They were not ready for Moses.

“But he was ready for them. And having renounced the court of Pharaoh, he visited his brethren in the land of Goshen.

There he saw the full measure of their terrible lot. He saw one of the Egyptian taskmaster thrashing a Hebrew slave. The heart of Moses was stirred at the sight. As he saw the poor slave, crouching before the whip, and perhaps pleading for mercy, he rushed to the defence of his countryman. In the struggle the Egyptian was slain, and they buried him in the sand.

"Next day, as Moses went among his people, he saw two Hebrews fighting. This upset him terribly. They should not be fighting each other, they should be helping one another against the Egyptians. 'You are brethren,' he reminded them, 'why fight among yourselves!'

"But the Hebrew turned harshly upon Moses. He had probably heard how that he had left the court of Pharaoh, and was no longer a prince in Egypt; and realised that Moses was in disgrace. 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?' he said. 'Will you kill me, like you did the Egyptian yesterday?'

"Moses was afraid when he heard this. Already he was in disgrace at Pharaoh's court through having rejected the honours of the country. And now, if the killing of the Egyptian were made known, his very life was in danger. But what about his work as Deliverer? It was obvious that the people were not ready for him, they did not want him. A terrible depression came over Moses. For a moment it must have seemed as though he had lost everything. Not only had he rejected the riches of Egypt to deliver his people, but having done so, he found he was not wanted as a deliverer. There is nothing worse for a man than to feel he is not wanted, especially after he has sacrificed for a cause as Moses had. And so Moses fled from Egypt. He travelled down the eastern side of the Red Sea, moving south until he came into the mountainous country of Sinai, and into the country of Midian, that then extended to that area. But before we go on, are there any questions you would like to ask?" enquired Mr. Phillips.

"Yes," said Peter, "Where do you get all this from?"

"From the Bible," answered his father.

"But I don't read all that in Exodus," replied Peter. "There are only a few verses there."

"Yes," agreed his father. "But you need to put other references in the Bible side by side with what you read in Exodus in order to get the full picture. For example, Stephen in Acts 7:19-42, and Paul in Hebrews 11, as well as the Psalms in various places, speak of this same time. They add to what we read in Exodus, and help us to put many details in. By placing all these accounts together we get a full picture."

"Did Moses fear Pharaoh?" asked Graeham.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Phillips, “It says in Exodus 2:14 that he ‘feared’.”

“Well in Hebrews 11:27 it says he did not fear the wrath of the king. Is that a contradiction?” asked Graeham.

“What do you think?” replied his father.

“I don’t suppose it is, but what does it mean? How can we make the two accounts agree?”

“Did Moses leave Egypt only once?”

“Oh, no! He fled from Egypt as you have just told us, then, after returning, he left Egypt with the Israelites.”

“Yes, and that is the time to which Paul is referring,” said Mr. Phillips. “He did not fear Pharaoh, for he went boldly to him and demanded that he let the children of Israel go free; and then, after the plagues had been poured out upon Egypt, he, in company with Israel, left it never to return. There is no disagreement between Hebrews and Exodus.”



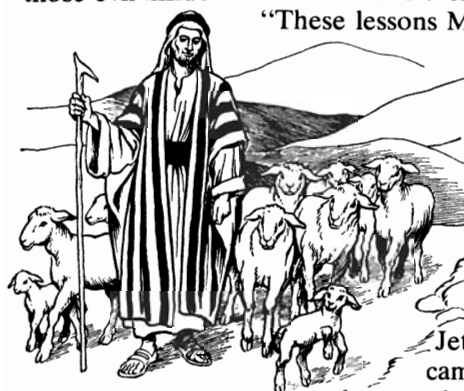
*Huge statue of
Rameses II —
the Pharaoh of
the oppression.*

Chapter Three

PREPARING FOR LEADERSHIP

Moses The Shepherd

“It is interesting to notice how many of the great men of old were shepherds,” remarked Mr. Phillips, as he continued the story of Moses. “Abel, Abraham, Joseph, Moses and many others, had this occupation. The quiet, lonely life of tending the sheep gave them plenty of opportunity to think upon God and His ways, and to speak to Him in prayer. They learned to become leaders of men as they led their flocks, guiding and protecting the animals under their care. Such labour taught them the virtues of humility and patience, qualities that they were able to put to great use later on in their lives. The greatest shepherd of all is the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd who so faithfully cares for those whom he styles his ‘sheep’ (i.e., his followers), and whom he tries to protect from those evil influences that can lead them away from God.



“These lessons Moses was to learn in the solitude of the land of Midian. As he fled from the wrath of Pharaoh, he came upon a well in Midian where the shepherds watered their flocks. He sat down to rest a while, and as he did so, the seven daughters of Jethro, the Priest of Midian came and drew water, filling the troughs for their father’s sheep.

“Some rude shepherds, however drove their sheep away when the troughs were filled, but Moses instantly stood up in support of the young women, and watered their flocks for them. They thanked Moses, and returned to their home.

“Jethro, their father, asked them why it was they arrived home so early, and when they explained that an Egyptian had helped them when the other shepherds had rudely driven their sheep away, he sent for Moses to stay with him.

“Moses thus lived with Jethro. In course of time he married one of Jethro’s daughters, Zipporah, and they had a

son whom he called Gershom, which means *a stranger*, for, said Moses, 'I have been a stranger in a strange land.' And a little later they had another son whom he called Eliezer, which means *My God is a help*, for, he said, 'The God of my father was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh' (Exod. 18:4).

"And so the years rolled by. In the land of Midian, Moses cared for the sheep, and thought upon the things of God. His mind was being prepared for the great work ahead of him whilst, in Egypt, the people continued to groan under the oppressor. They became a nation of slaves. Great monuments of that time have been preserved that depict slaves working at brick-making and building. They are shown bending to their labours under the taskmasters, who are armed with heavy whips. Men are harnessed like beasts to heavy loads, and thrashed by their inhuman drivers. Treated like this, the Hebrews cried unto God because of their miseries, and when they did this, God Who is ever merciful, hearkened unto their cry. He remembered the covenant He had made with Abraham (see Genesis 15:13-16), and as the time had elapsed, He prepared Moses for the task of delivering His people. Meanwhile, the Pharaoh who had threatened the life of Moses died.

The Vision In The Desert

"Almost forty years had passed since Moses had fled from Egypt, and the great leader had become used to the quiet life of a shepherd. But the time had come when he was to be roused out of his settled state, and sent on one of the most dramatic and important missions ever given to any man," said Mr. Phillips, as the family completed the reading of Exodus 3.

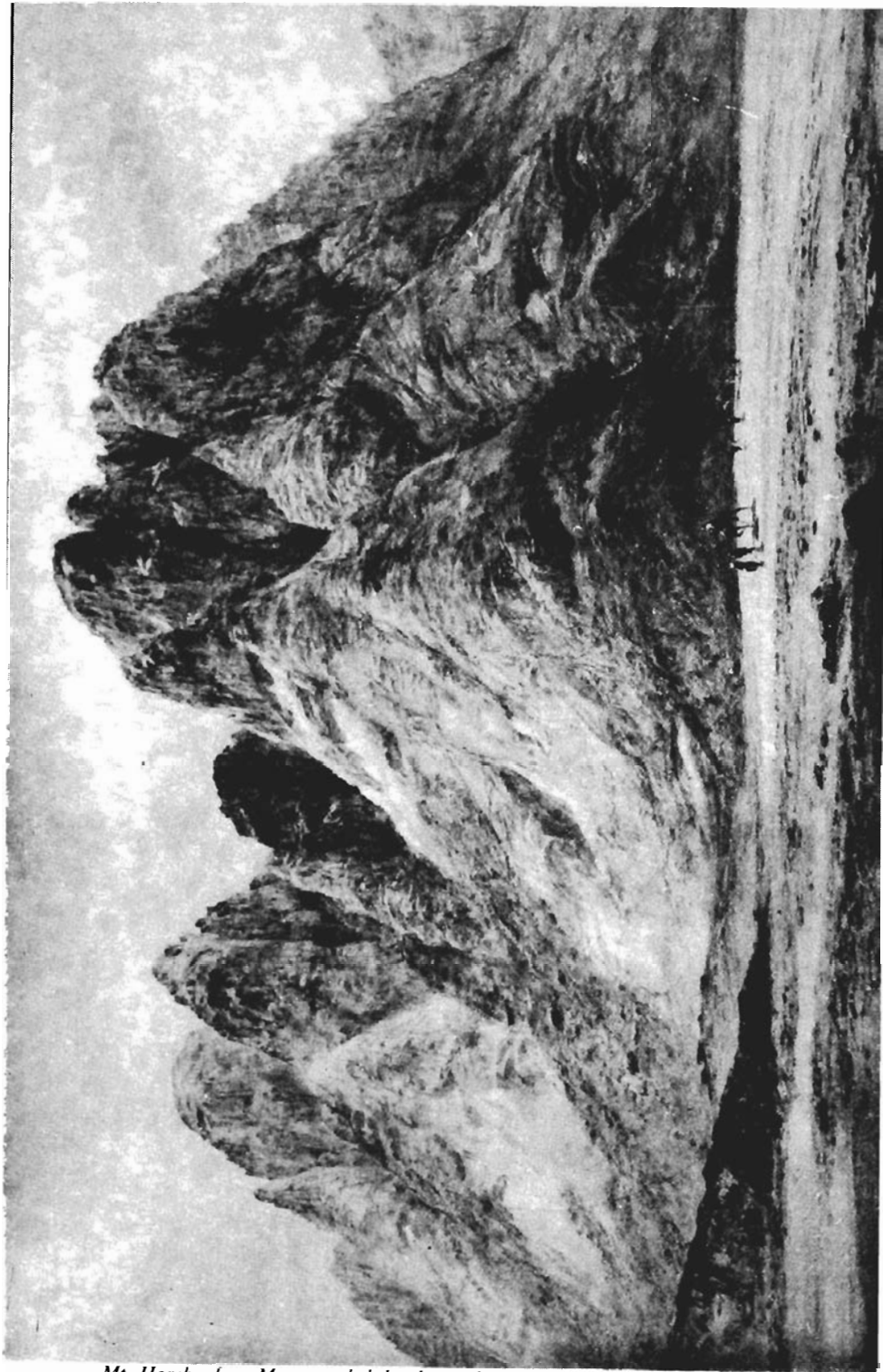
"He had taken his flock of sheep to graze in the valleys close by Mt. Horeb. This is a very lonely part, and well suited as a place where God might meet with man. It is surrounded by huge mountains of harsh, jagged granite, rising one above another. Those rugged mountains, lofty and precipitous, set in deep and lonely silence, depict the grandeur of Creation. Such greatness diminishes man's importance. Along the valleys, separating these mountains, Moses led his flocks, as later, he was to lead the children of Israel."

"In my Bible it says that Moses went to Horeb, not Sinai," said Joan, at this stage.

"I noticed that also," remarked Peter, "but I also see that in Acts 7:30 it says that he went to Mt. Sinai."

"What is right, Daddy?" asked Ann.

"Both are right," said Graeham. "Horeb and Sinai are



Mt. Horeb where Moses tended the sheep of Jethro and saw the burning bush.

twin peaks on a mountain plateau, or so I have been told.”

“That is correct,” agreed his father. “Horeb is called ‘the mount of God’ (Exod. 4:27; 18:5; 24:13), and is distinct from Sinai which is another peak on the same plateau. There is a wide plain in front of Horeb, and on it the Children of Israel encamped. It was there that they heard the Voice of God, for He spake to them from Horeb. But when Moses was called into ‘the mount’ or to ‘the top of the mount’, he ascended Sinai which is about three miles distant from Horeb. It was there that he remained for forty days, after which he received the tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments on them. The difference between Horeb and Sinai is shown by an incident that occurred later. He had been told to return to the camp because of Israel’s disgraceful conduct. Because it was so far from the camp (about three miles) neither Joshua nor Moses witnessed the revelries taking place until they reached Horeb, which is directly above where the people were. Then the full enormity of Israel’s conduct became evident. Before then, they questioned one another as to why they should have to return (Exod. 32: 7-19). In all places where Horeb is mentioned, it is described as ‘the mount of God’, and it is shown to be distinct from Sinai.

“When Moses reached the mountain,” continued Mr. Phillips, “he saw a very strange sight. A bush was blazing with fire, but, to his amazement, he saw that it was not consumed. It appeared like the filament in an electric light globe; it glowed with light without itself being affected.

“‘That is strange,’ said Moses to himself, ‘I must have a closer look at it.’

“Starting to walk towards the bush, he was startled to hear a Voice. It said to him: ‘Moses, Moses, draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground’.”

“Before you go on, Daddy,” interrupted Ann. “Why should he be told to do that?”

“It was a mark of respect,” answered her father.

“Yes, but what did it mean?” asked Ann.

“We are not told directly,” said her father, “but the act itself should teach us. In those days of dusty tracks, the sandals worn by people became very dirty; and as earth is used as a symbol of sin, so dirty shoes speak of walking in the way of sin. To take off one’s shoes, therefore, as Moses was here commanded to do, represented the laying aside of a walk in life in

Mt. Horeb where Moses tended the sheep of Jethro and saw the burning bush.

which we please ourselves for one pleasing to God.”

“What is meant by ‘holy ground’?” asked Peter.

“The word ‘holy’ means ‘set apart’ for God’s use,” explained his father. “Anything thus set apart should be treated with the greatest respect by mortals, whatever the condition of the thing might be.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“The word *holy* does not necessarily mean that the object so described is any better than others, but merely that God has set it apart for His special use. The ground around Sinai was no better than that elsewhere; in fact, it might have been worse. But God had *set it apart*, or made it holy, for His use. In the Bible, we read of the holy people, the holy land, the holy city and so forth. The holy people are the Jews. As people, they are no better than other nations; in fact they have been very sinful at times. Nevertheless, God has *set them apart* for His use, and woe betide anybody who touches that which is God’s. That is why all nations who have persecuted the Jews have suffered themselves. It is not that the Jews did not deserve to be punished, or were any better than other people, but that God has reserved the nation for Himself. The same is true of the Holy Land, or Israel, as we know it today. Though it is dry and arid in parts, it is a land that God has set apart for Himself (Deut. 11:12), and will punish those nations that invade it.”

“Is that why God will punish the nations at Armageddon when they invade His land and trouble His people (Ezek. 38:14)?” asked Graeham.

“Yes, in Joel 3, God condemns the nations because they have ‘scattered His people, and parted His land’ (v. 2). Therefore He will go forth to punish them. That was also His mission when He appeared unto Moses on this occasion. He told Moses that He had seen the affliction of His people, had heard their cry for help, and was determined to deliver and take them to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. ‘Come now therefore,’ said the angel of God to Moses, ‘and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.’

“But Moses was not ready for the task. Forty years earlier he had tried it, and had suffered the bitter hostility of his own people. For forty years, quietly tending the flocks of Jethro, he had lived happily with his wife and sons, and did not want his peace disturbed. Besides, he did not think he was capable of delivering the children of Israel. He did not realise that his forty years of meditation upon the ways of God whilst tending Jethro’s sheep had made him more skilful in leading the flock of God. It

had taught him how to shepherd men as he did sheep. Nevertheless he replied: 'Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?'

"But God instructed him that he must not rely upon his own strength or wisdom. 'Certainly I will be with thee,' He told Moses, 'and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee, and when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, you will bring them to this mountain'."

"That seems a strange token," said Graeham.

"What does?" asked his father.

"That the Israelites should serve God at the mountain; it indicates that Moses would not know that God was with him until he had delivered the people."

"It does not mean that!" remarked Mr. Phillips.

"Well it reads like that," said Peter. "It reads: 'This shall be a token that I have sent thee. . . . ye shall serve God upon this mountain.'"

"If you try and picture the scene you will understand the verse a little better," said his father. "Remember that Moses was gazing upon the burning bush, and as he watched it, God said, 'Certainly I will be with thee; and this (i.e. the burning bush) shall be a token (or sign) that I have sent thee.' The rest of the statement really commences a new sentence."

"What does the token, or sign, mean?" asked Ann, who was studying the Bible with a little frown on her forehead.

"The bush stood for Israel; the fire that enflamed it represented the sufferings of the people; but as the bush was not consumed, it showed that God would not allow persecution or opposition to destroy Israel. It was thus a sign for those times, and for all the years that have rolled on since. Time and again, the Jews have been cruelly persecuted and afflicted, but as a people they have not been destroyed. The fire has burned around them but not consumed them. The sign of the burning bush taught the same truth as is found in Jeremiah 30:11. Read it for me, will you please, Joan?"

Joan read: "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."

"Those words truly describe Israel," commented Mr. Phillips. "God has punished the Jews, for they have deserved it, but He has not allowed them to be completely destroyed. And, today, they are returning to the land in fulfilment of the prophecies of God. Thus the sign, or token, shown to Moses

nearly 3,500 years ago, amid the silent grandeur of the everlasting mountains of Horeb, is true of our days also. Read Isaiah 43:1-2, please Joan."

Again Joan read: "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. . ."

"In that verse," explained Mr. Phillips, "the waters and rivers represent nations (Rev. 17:15), and the 'fire' speaks of the afflictions that Israel has endured. However, as I mentioned



earlier, though the Jews have suffered more than any other people, they still continue as a nation. The sign of the burning bush that was not consumed, still has a meaning today. It taught Moses that God would not allow Egypt to destroy the Hebrews, and it teaches us the same lesson today."

"It must have made a wonderful impression on Moses!" remarked Ann.

"Indeed, yes," agreed her father. "Many years later, when Israel stood at the borders of the Promised Land after forty long years of wandering in the wilderness, and Moses was about to die, he made reference to it. He prayed for the blessing of Yahweh upon the people whom he had led for so long, and exhorted them to seek 'the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush' (Deut. 33:16). The vision in the desert had lasting impact on him. So, also, did the next statement that God made. It is a most important one, but as the time is late, we will not deal with it now. We will discuss it later."

Chapter Four

HOW GOD REVEALED HIS NAME TO MOSES

The Name of God On the following evening, the family again assembled in the library of Phillips' home, to continue their discussion on the life of Moses. The four children had armed themselves with notepads and pencils to take notes. The two boys, being older than the girls, had wide-margin Bibles designed to take notes in ink, and were, indeed, interrupted in the course of marking in their Bibles some of the things discussed the previous evening.

"Tonight," declared their father, "we are to consider a very important statement that God made to Moses. You will remember that the angel of God had told Moses to get ready to return to Egypt to deliver the people from their hard bondage. But before doing so, Moses said to the angel: 'When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, they shall say to me, What is His Name? and what shall I say unto them?' (Exod. 3:13). Moses thus desired to know the Name of God, in order that he might teach it to the Hebrew people."

"But why should he desire to know the Name of God?" asked Ann. "Would it not be enough to say unto the people that God had sent him?"

"Moses wanted to know the Name of God, because in those times, names had a special meaning," replied her father. "It is different today. Children are called Graeham, or Peter, or Ann, or Joan, merely because their parents might like the sound of those names. But that was not the case in Bible times. The names then given to people revealed something personal concerning those who bore them, and it was quite common for people to change their names to conform to some incident in their life. For example, God changed Abram's name to Abraham, meaning *A father of many nations*, because that name expressed God's purpose with him; Jacob's name means *supplanter*, and his life revealed how he supplanted various people; the word Jesus means *Saviour*, and so people were taught, by the very name of the Lord, that he was the one whom God had sent into the world to save men from their sins. Right throughout the Bible you will find that the names of men reveal some-

thing about their characters, or else God's purpose with them. And that is why Moses wanted to know the Name of God. He knew that it would reveal something concerning the purpose of God, enabling him to go to the children of Israel with a Name that would proclaim God's purpose with them. Do you think you understand what I mean?"

"Yes," replied Graeham. "The Name of God tells of the purpose of God, the same as the title of the book tells one what the book is about."

"That is right."

"Did He reveal His name to Moses?" asked Joan.

"Yes," replied her father. "God's reply is given in Exodus 3:14. You might read it for me, please Joan."

Joan read: "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

"That seems a strange name," remarked Ann. "I do not see how that would teach the Hebrews anything about the purpose of God."

"The words, 'I AM THAT I AM' are better rendered 'I WILL BE WHOM I WILL BE'," explained her father. "Notice that in verse 15, God says, 'This is my Name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.' He thus expects this name to be known by those who would seek to serve Him throughout all generations."

"But 'I WILL BE WHOM I WILL BE' does not make the meaning any clearer to me," persisted Ann, a little impatiently. "I still cannot see how that would explain God's purpose to Israel. And please don't say you are just trying to make us think, for we are doing that already. Can you understand it, Peter?"

"No, it is double-Dutch to me!" exclaimed Peter.

"It is, of course, a deep subject," said Mr. Phillips, "and to understand it we must consider it in stages. Now, firstly, the statement *I will be* points forward to something that is to happen in the future. Can you see that?"

"Yes, I can follow that."

"Well, when God declared to Moses, *I will be whom I will be*, He taught him that that He intended to manifest Himself *in* certain ones Whom He would select for that purpose, and not merely *to* them."

"What is the difference?" asked Graeham.

"God manifests Himself *to* us when we learn of His purpose," explained Mr. Phillips. "But He manifests Himself *in* us, when we build into our characters His glorious character-

istics such as were exhibited by the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was 'the word made flesh' (John 1:14), and John says concerning him: 'We saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' The character of Jesus was the character of God, so that his Father was manifested in him. Therefore, Paul taught, 'God was in Christ.' God can also be in us by the influence of His word. When that happens, His word will change us so that we will be 'like Jesus'. When that happens, God is manifest *in* us, for the change in us has been brought about by His word. Paul explains it as 'God working in us' (Phil. 2:13). He does so by His word which creates in us a new way of viewing things, and thinking upon them. Therefore, Paul exhorted: 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2:4). This means that we think as God would have us think, and act as He would have us act."

"How does that apply to Moses?" asked Graham.

"The name of God as expressed to Moses taught him God's purpose in calling the children of Israel out of Egypt," explained Mr. Phillips. "His action in so doing was not merely to save them, but to reveal Himself in them. They were to become His people by revealing His ways in action. In that way, He would manifest Himself *in* them, and not merely *to* them. Accordingly, He gave them a law, and commanded them to keep it. That law was an expression of His will and His ways, and when the people kept it, they revealed God's glory unto others. Moses told them that when they obeyed God's law, 'all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of Yahweh' (Deut. 28:10). Through Jeremiah, God declared that He called Israel out of Egypt, 'that they might be unto Him for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory' (Jer. 13:11). Through Isaiah, He declared: 'every one that is called by My name . . . I have created him for My glory' (Isa. 43:7). One great Hebrew scholar, A. B. Davidson, in a book entitled *The Theology of the Old Testament* (p. 55) made a statement that perhaps Graham and Peter might like to jot down to mark in their Bibles. He wrote: 'The expression, *I will be*, is no predication regarding His nature, but one regarding what He will approve Himself to be to others, regarding what He will show Himself to be to those in covenant with Him'."

"Goodness me! What a lot of hard names," exclaimed Ann. "You surely don't expect me to understand what that is all about!"

"That's all right, Ann!" said Peter, a little loftily. "Don't you worry about it! Dad gave that extract for us."

"Alright Peter!" answered Ann sharply, "You explain it

for us!”

“Certainly Ann. It means, er, er. . .”

“It means this, Ann,” said Mr. Phillips. “That God’s name, *I will be*, was prophetic of something yet to be revealed. Do you understand that?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“The next point is that what it proclaimed was to affect only a certain number, and not all mankind.”

“How do you make that out?”

“Because God says, ‘I will be WHOM I will be.’ In Exodus 33:19 He uses a similar expression. There He says, ‘I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy, on whom I will shew mercy’. Now God will only show mercy to those who are prepared to accept Him in truth. This statement, therefore limits His mercy and grace to those only who believe His word, and seek His favour. Thus God’s statement to Moses in Exodus 3:15 taught that the future would reveal something for those people who were prepared to accept Him.”

“But the statement does not say what God is going to do for them!”

“Yes it does. It shows that God will identify Himself with those who accept Him, and that He will reveal His glorious characteristics in them. That is the meaning of the declaration: *I will be*.”

“How does He do that?”

“We have an example of how this can be done if we consider the Lord Jesus Christ,” replied her father. “When he was on earth he revealed God unto the people. He did this, not only by his teaching, but by his actions, and his character. All that the Lord Jesus said or did was to God’s glory. God was revealed in him. He spake God’s words unto the people; he obeyed God’s laws; he revealed the character of God. There was only one way in which he was not like God. Do you think you can guess what that was?”

“He was mortal like all other men,” said Peter, “and in that he would not be like God.”

“That is true,” answered his father. “And that was the only way in which he did not reveal God unto the people. But after he was raised from the dead, God gave unto him life eternal, that is, God’s own nature, so that now he is like God, not only in word, deed, and character, but also in nature. When Jesus Christ returns to the earth men will see in him a complete revelation of God. In his loving compassion and mercy, in his just punishment of sin and evil, in his righteous ways, as well as

in the glorious nature he now possesses, God will be manifest in him. And not only in him, but in all others who have sought to live as Christ commanded. They, too, will be raised from the dead and given eternal life. In other words, what Jesus is today, we also can become at his return. That is the meaning of the wonderful prayer he made, and which is found in John 17. Read verses 20 and 21 for me, Peter."

Peter read: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."

"Thank you, Peter," said Mr. Phillips. "That statement of the Lord Jesus teaches us that he is the manifestation of the divine Name in its fulness. Accordingly, when God told Moses that His name is expressed in the statement *I will be whom I will be*, He proclaimed that He was about to separate His people (the Israelites) from the Egyptians, that He Whose name is *I will be* may be manifested in them."

"Did the Name only concern the Israelites in Egypt?" asked Graeham.

"No," answered his father. "Remember that God said, This is My name for ever, and My memorial unto all generations. God continues to call out a people for His name even now. Read Acts 15:14 for me, will you Joan?"

Joan read: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name".

"Thank you Joan. That verse shows that God has continued to call out of the Gentiles a people for His name. If it be asked what that means, the answer is exactly what we have been discussing. The call of the Gospel is not merely to teach people God's purpose, but to influence them towards living in a Godly manner. By that means God will be revealed in them as He was in those Israelites who obeyed Him."

"I think I see what you are trying to tell us," commented Graeham slowly. "The proclamation of God's name when properly understood, taught Moses what His purpose was in delivering the people of Israel: it was that they might so obey His laws as to reflect to His glory."

"Yes," agreed his father. "And that was why Moses wanted to know the Name of God. He wanted to go to the people with a Name that would explain God's purpose with them. It is a wonderful thing, when you think of it, that the whole purpose of God can be reduced to one word — the Name of God."

"Oh, you have made a mistake there, Daddy," said Ann

with a mischievous smile on her face. "There are seven words in the statement God made to Moses, not one as you have just said."

"Well, anyway, if God's purpose can be given in seven words it is a wonderful thing," remarked Peter.

"Yes," replied his father, "but I still stick to my statement, that the whole purpose of God, in fact, the whole teaching of the Bible, can be expressed in one word, for God finally reduced the seven words to which Ann has made reference, to one word."

"What word is that?" asked Ann.

"It is the word 'Yahweh'," declared her father. "That is the Name of God. It means *He Who Will Be*. When an Israelite, truly educated in God's purpose, like Moses, or David, used this wonderful Name of Yahweh, it brought to mind the grand purpose He taught them through His Word. They thus worshipped the One Who will be revealed in those whom He selects for that purpose."

"Does the word 'Yahweh' appear in our Bible?" asked Ann.

"It appears in the Hebrew Bible," answered her father. "But in our Bible it has been translated by the words 'LORD' or 'GOD'."

"Does that mean that every time we read 'Lord,' or 'God' the word should be Yahweh?" asked Ann.

"No," replied her father. "There are many other words also translated 'Lord' and 'God,' but there is a very easy way of finding out where the word Yahweh is used."

"How is that?"

"Wherever the word 'Yahweh' appears in the Hebrew, the translators arranged to have the words printed in what printers call 'small capitals' to distinguish it."

"Could you show us an example of that?" asked Ann.

"Yes, there is one in the very chapter we are considering," answered her father. "See how the word 'LORD' is printed in v. 16. It is all in capitals."

"So it is! I never noticed that before!"

"Turn to Ezekiel 38, and you will find a very good example of what I have been telling you," said Mr. Phillips.

The family turned to this well-known chapter, and Joan read the first verse: "The word of the LORD came unto me, saying . . ."

"Notice how the word LORD' is printed in that verse?" said Mr. Phillips. "See, it is all in capitals. Now notice how the word 'Lord' is printed in v. 3. Only the first letter is there

printed as a capital. That means that the original word is different from that in v. 1, though, in our Bibles, the same word is used in both instances.”

“Yet both statements concern God,” remarked Peter.

“Yes, God has many titles, as well as His great Name, but, unfortunately, most of them have been hidden by translating them all as ‘Lord’ or ‘God,’ with the result that we do not see the true meaning of them. At a later date we might go into some of the other titles of God.”

“In verse 3, the word ‘GOD’ is given in capitals,” remarked Graham.

“Yes, that is because the word in Hebrew is Yahweh,” said his father.

“Why should the word ‘Yahweh’ be translated by two entirely different words?” asked Peter.

“It would have been better if the true Name of God were given,” answered Mr. Phillips. “Then, perhaps, men might seek to study its meaning more, and come to understand better what God stands for.”

“The word ‘God’ is not always in capitals, is it?” asked Peter.

“No,” replied his father. “In Ezekiel 38:3, the word ‘GOD’ is printed in capitals, but in v. 27 of the previous chapter you will notice a difference. There the word ‘God’ has only a capital ‘G’ and ‘od’ is given in small letters. Wherever you find the words ‘LORD’ or ‘GOD’ in small capitals as in vv. 1 and 3 of Ezekiel 38, remember that the word should be ‘Yahweh’.”

“It seems a very difficult subject to me,” said Ann.

“Well, it is one that we must come to understand slowly,” remarked her father. “As our studies in God’s word develop, its wonderful meaning will gradually unfold for us.”

“If this Name was first given to Moses,” said Peter, “then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would not know of it.”

“That is true,” agreed his father.

“But the word ‘LORD’ appears in Genesis,” said Graham, “and is printed in small capitals.”

“That is true, but you must remember that Moses was the writer of Genesis, and he doubtless used the name where it could apply.”

“Oh I see.”

“How do you know that Abraham did not know the Name?” enquired Peter.

“Because we are told. If you turn to Exodus 6:3 and read it for us, you will find that that was the case.”

Peter read: “I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by

the name of God Almighty, but by my Name Jehovah was I not known to them."

"The Name is given there as Jehovah," said Ann.

"Yes," replied her father. "In a few cases, the word has been translated Jehovah, but authorities are agreed that it should be Yahweh. This Name was proclaimed to Moses for the first time when God was about to deliver His people. And that reminds us of what we learned a few nights ago."

"What was that?" asked Ann.

"Remember how we were talking about Jacob wrestling with the angel all night?"

"Yes, I remember."

"Do you remember what he asked the angel?"

"No, I do not."

"Jacob asked that the angel tell him his name, but he would not!"

"Oh yes! I remember now!"

"The time was not then ripe for the Name of Yahweh to be made known unto men," said Mr. Phillips, "and particularly to Jacob."

"Why particularly to Jacob?" asked Graeham.

"Before his name was changed to Israel," explained his father, "Jacob stood as a type of the Jews after the flesh, and they have not generally revealed the Name of God unto men. But Moses, the leader of Israel, was a type of Jesus Christ (Deut. 18:18), who, as I explained earlier, completely revealed God's ways unto men. Moses *proclaimed* the Name unto Israel, but it was the Lord Jesus who *revealed* it unto the people. He did this so completely, that he was able to say to his apostles: 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father' (Jhn. 14:9)."

"Some people believe that when Jesus said that, he was claiming to be the second person of a Trinity," said Peter.

"That, of course, is incorrect, as you know," answered his father. "What Jesus meant when he used those words was that in all he said, and did, and taught there were to be seen the ways of God. He could only speak the words he did because God's spirit was with him; he could only perform miracles through God's power; he was only able to overcome because God strengthened him to overcome, as he, in turn, can strengthen us (Phil. 4:13). Thus the Son of God reflected the glory of his Father."

"I do not quite understand all you are saying," said Ann, "but I can see that the Name of Yahweh is a very wonderful one."

"Yes," declared her father. "The name *Yahweh* is the

covenant Name of God, first proclaimed when He was about to save His people. It reveals God as a loving Father Who will extend Himself to bring others into His great family, and make them sons of God; it shows Him as a merciful Saviour Who will save His people, not merely temporally, but in order that He might reveal His glory in them, and that they might live forever. You may not understand it all now, but think upon what I have told you, and as God's purpose unfolds in the Story of the Bible, so you will gradually see the great beauty of this theme."

Chapter Five

MOSES RETURNS TO EGYPT

Instructions For Moses

“Having made His great Name known to Moses, Yahweh told him to return to Egypt, call all the elders of the children of Israel together, proclaim unto them the great purpose that He had in mind for them, and then go boldly before Pharaoh and demand that he let Israel go that they may worship in the wilderness.

“He told Moses that this time the Hebrews would listen to him, but as for Pharaoh, Yahweh said: ‘I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. And I will stretch out My hand, and smite Egypt with all My wonders . . . and after that he will let you go.’ Proud Egypt would thereby be humbled until it released the hated Hebrews.

“But the children of Israel were not to leave Egypt empty-handed. God told Moses, ‘But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver and gold, and raiment . . . and ye shall spoil the Egyptians’ (Exod. 3:22). Now . . .”

“Just a moment, Dad,” interrupted Graeham. “It doesn’t seem altogether honest that the children of Israel should borrow from their neighbours when they knew full well that they would never return what they borrowed.”

“The word in the Hebrew rendered *borrow* does not mean what we understand by the word, explained his father. “The Hebrew word should be rendered *to ask*, or *request*. The same word occurs in Psalm 2:8, but there it is translated *ask*. Read it for us, will you please, Ann?”

Ann turned to the place, and read: “Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance . . .”

“You see, the word ‘ask’ does not mean to ‘borrow’ in the sense of asking for something that is to be returned. It is a request: ‘Ask of me, and I will give.’ The word means to ‘ask,’ to ‘request,’ to ‘demand.’ God thus instructed the Hebrews to ‘request’, or ‘ask’ the Egyptians for jewels of silver and gold, as well as raiment, before leaving for their journey in the wilderness, as was only right.”

“Why do you say it was only right?”

“Because for over forty years the children of Israel had been working as slaves for the Egyptians, performing hard toil

without pay, but now the time had come when God demanded that they be paid wages. He is just in all His ways, and He was determined that His people should be paid for their services in Egypt. Later, He used the precious metals they obtained to make a glorious Tabernacle at which the people could worship Him in the wilderness," concluded Mr. Phillips.

**Wonderful Signs
For Moses —
Exod. 4**

"But though Yahweh promised to help Moses in his work of delivering the people," continued Mr. Phillips, "he still did not want to go. He remembered the treatment he had received forty years earlier when, full of enthusiasm, he had tried to help his people. They had turned on him with the rebuke: 'Who made you a prince and a ruler among us?' Since then, during those long years, he had enjoyed the quiet life of a shepherd, and was happily married with a young family of his own. The troubles of Israel no longer afflicted him as they had in Egypt, for in the isolation of Midian he was far removed from them. Gradually his mission as Leader and Deliverer of the Hebrews had faded from his mind. He enjoyed the peace and quiet of a shepherd's life, and did not want it disturbed. He certainly did not desire to return to the troubles, anxieties and difficulties that he knew would accompany the work of delivering the people from Egypt. They had refused to listen to him before, and would probably do so again.

" 'Behold,' said Moses to Yahweh, 'They will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice, for they will say, Yahweh hath not appeared unto thee' (Exod. 4:1).

"Yahweh therefore gave Moses three wonderful signs, to demonstrate to the people of Israel, that God's power and authority were with him.

"Firstly, He drew Moses' attention to the rod which he, like all shepherds, carried with him to defend the sheep against wild beasts. Yahweh instructed him to cast this rod on to the ground. Moses did so, and to his astonishment it turned into a serpent. It looked so dangerous that Moses fled from it. The angel then told Moses: 'Put forth your hand and take it by the tail.' Though Moses was afraid of the serpent, he had faith in Yahweh, so he did not hesitate to do as he was told. He took the serpent by the tail, and, to his amazement, it turned back into a rod in his hand. Yahweh told Moses: 'This is a sign that they may believe that I am with you'."

"What did the sign signify?" asked Graeham.

"The serpent rod taught that Yahweh had given into the hands of Moses power to deliver from the serpent power of

Egypt. In other parts of the Bible (*e.g.* Isa. 27:1), Egypt is described as the serpent power, for it represented the serpent, or sin, in national manifestation. Moses had fled from Egypt, as he did from the serpent. Now he is taught by the sign to return to it, in the assurance that he will have the mastery over it."

"Would he understand that?" asked Peter.

"I believe so," replied his father. "For the serpent was a common emblem for Egypt. The Pharaohs used to wear a cobra on their headgear as indicative of this."

"What did the next sign teach?" asked Peter.

"God next told Moses to put his hand into his bosom. When he did so, his hand appeared as leprous as snow. Moses was afraid when he saw this. Leprosy is a terrible disease. It is described as a 'disease of Egypt' for which Yahweh promised protection for Israelites if they obeyed Him (see Exod. 15:26). It is treated in the Bible as representing active sin, so that when a person suffered from leprosy he sought help from a priest, not from a doctor."

"Where do you find that?" asked Peter.

"In Leviticus 13," replied his father. "In addition, do you remember the disease Naaman suffered from?"

"I do," answered Joan. "It was leprosy."

"True," said Mr. Phillips. "And how was he cured?"

"He had to bathe in the Jordan."

"Yes, and as a result he was cured. In like manner, baptism brings forgiveness of sin, as the Apostle Peter told the people (Acts 2:38)."

"In what way did the sign relate to Moses?" asked Graeham.

"The sign taught that Yahweh would provide means whereby the sins of the people could be conquered. That was essential if the people were to be delivered."

"What of the third sign?" asked Ann.

"The third and last sign related to the water of the Nile. Moses was to take of that water which would become as blood, and pour it upon the dry ground. The water of the Nile represented the life of Egypt, as blood represents the life of a man (Lev. 17:11). To pour it upon the dry ground was to destroy it. If either Pharaoh or the people failed to heed the message of the first two signs by refusing Moses, their lives would be destroyed. The signs were to be shown to both Pharaoh (Exod. 4:21), and the people (vv. 29-31). Pharaoh failed to heed the signs, and the nation suffered as a consequence; but the people did believe (v. 31), and the nation was saved from the death that threatened it. You will notice from

v. 9, that this third sign was only to be displayed, if the first two were ignored.

"It is interesting to learn that these three signs are the first recorded miracles by man recorded in the Bible. In performing them at the bidding of Yahweh, Moses typified the Lord Jesus Christ. They showed the great power of God which was with both Moses and Christ. They taught that He is not to be trifled with. He can turn the shepherd's rod which was used to defend the sheep, into that which can destroy; He can forgive sins and cure man of the deadly disease of mortality that came through sin; He has power over life and death, as was shown by the water that was poured out as blood upon the earth.

**A Helper
For Moses**

"But in spite of these wonderful signs, Moses still did not want to return to Egypt. He remembered, only too well, the bitterness of his previous attempt to save the people. He recalled how he had to flee from the wrath of the king, so that he barely escaped with his life.

"He did not say this, of course. It is a weakness of human nature to try and justify oneself at all times. And Moses did this then. He excused himself by saying: 'I am no speaker; 'I am slow of speech, and have no command of words' (Exod. 4:10). In the Septuagint (Greek) version of the Old Testament, Moses is represented as saying, 'I stammer and hesitate in speech.' The statement is interesting. We have the picture of this great man, one of the greatest leaders and heroes of all time, lacking that very attribute that most men would say is essential to his position.

"But the ability to speak well is not necessary to a leader when God is with him. So God answered Moses: 'Who gives man his mouth; who makes one man dumb, or deaf, or gives him sight, or makes him blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? Go then, I will be with your mouth and will teach you what to say.'

"But still Moses hesitated. 'O Lord,' he said, "Send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send'."

"That's a strange statement, isn't it?" asked Ann.

"It is obvious that Moses had somebody clearly in mind," remarked her father. "The Hebrew can signify: 'Send now by the hand (whom) Thou wilt send.' It seems to me that Moses was asking Yahweh to send the promised seed who would bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15)."

"Do you mean Christ?" asked Graeham.

"Yes, I believe that he was praying that Yahweh would send the one whom He had promised to send from the

beginning; the great Redeemer and Deliverer of mankind. Moses foreshadowed him as we learn from Deuteronomy 18:18-19, and earnestly looked forward to his appearance in the earth. We learn from Hebrews 11:26 that Moses 'esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt,' and, again, that 'he endured as seeing him who is invisible'."

"Moses looked forward to the coming of Christ," commented Graeham.

"Yes. Nevertheless his request made Yahweh angry. Moses had a work to do and could not evade it. The angel declared: 'I know that Aaron, your brother, can speak well. I will send him out to meet you and when you see him, you will tell him all that I have told you. I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth to instruct you. And he shall be your spokesman to the people, and he shall serve as a mouthpiece for you, and you shall inspire him. Now, return to Egypt, taking your rod in your hand, and do all my signs before all the people in Egypt.'

"Moses was obedient to this command. Returning to Jethro his father-in-law, he told him that he was about to leave in order to return to Egypt.

"Meanwhile, Aaron had left Egypt to seek Moses, as God had instructed him. The brothers met at Mt. Sinai. There Moses told Aaron of the wonders that Yahweh had shown unto him. He explained how that God intended to deliver the children of Israel, and showed him the signs He had given him. Finally he revealed to Aaron the part that he was to play in this. 'You will be my mouthpiece unto the people and to Pharaoh,' he told him, 'and together we will work for the deliverance of the nation.'

"Moses was given a message for Pharaoh from Yahweh, saying, 'Israel is My son, even My firstborn: and I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.'

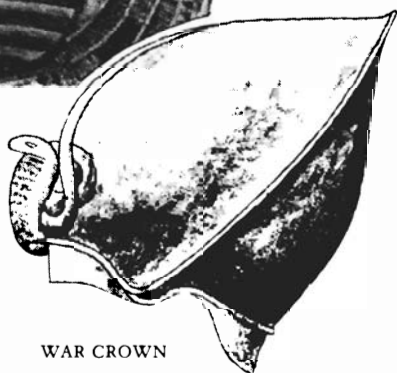
"Armed with this message, Moses and Aaron commenced their return to Egypt. They took with them Zipporah, Moses' wife, and his two sons. On their journey, an incident occurred that warned Moses that he must carefully carry out everything God commanded of him. Moses had neglected to circumcise his son though God had commanded that all the descendants of Abraham should observe this rite. And because of this, as they went on their way, they were opposed by an angel of Yahweh who threatened their young, uncircumcised son with death. Zipporah instantly realised what had to be done, and attended to her son accordingly. Moreover, her understanding of the situation and her prompt action brought her within the cove-

nant of Abraham. 'You are a bridegroom of blood because of the circumcision,' she declared. Her union with her husband was made closer because of her endorsement of the covenant of Abraham. Nevertheless, for the time being, she returned to Jethro awaiting the call of Moses to rejoin him.

"So Moses and Aaron returned to the land of Egypt. Forty years earlier, his people had despised his message, and rejected his approaches. But forty years of slavery and misery had humbled them, and made them ready to welcome a deliverer."



The cobra was a symbol of Egyptian authority, and as such always worn by the Pharaoh as part of his state head-dress. Note its prominence on the war-crown to the right.



The sign of the serpent given to Moses demonstrated that he would dominate the sin-power of Egypt.

WAR CROWN

Chapter Six

MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH

The Return Of Moses

In Egypt, the Hebrews continued to groan under the terrible burdens placed upon them. It seemed as though they were to be slaves for ever, for there was nobody who could deliver them. They cried unto God but received no answer. They saw about them evidences of the great power of the nation they were forced to serve: the grandeur of the cities they had helped to build, the gorgeous wealth of the temples filled with Egyptian idols: the immense pride of Pharaoh, the King of the land, who was treated as a god, and could do as he pleased with the poor Hebrew slaves.

Never had Egypt seemed so powerful as at that time; and never had the children of Israel seemed so helpless.

But now God was ready to act. His power is greater than the greatest human might, and He is ever ready to help the poor and lowly when they turn to Him.

Thus, one day, there passed through the splendid city of Memphis, the capital of Egypt, two Hebrew brothers, old in years, but full of energy. With rods in their hands, and bearing the badge of the oppressed race of the Hebrews, they walked towards the palace of Pharaoh. Moses looked with curiosity at this city of wonderful buildings and temples, beautifully painted and decorated. Forty years had elapsed since he had dwelt here as a prince, and had proudly driven through the streets in the royal chariots. In those days the crowds had thronged the streets to see him pass by, and had cheered him as the prince of Pharaoh, and perhaps their future ruling monarch. But now he wore the rough clothing of a shepherd, and wondered rather fearfully what the outcome of his mission might be. Nevertheless he preferred "to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25).

But all did not go as well as might be expected in Pharaoh's court.

Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh, and demanded, in the name of Yahweh, that he let the children of Israel go, that they might hold a feast unto Him in the wilderness.

"Who is Yahweh, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not Yahweh, neither will I let Israel go!" was the

arrogant answer that Moses received from the proud king (Exod. 5:3).

Moses then explained that Yahweh was the God of the Hebrews, and that He had commanded Israel to hold a festival in his honour in the wilderness.

This made Pharaoh angry. "I will not let them go," he answered roughly. He ordered the slavedrivers to increase the labour of the poor Hebrews. In Egypt, bricks were made by mixing straw and clay together, and baking them hard. Normally, the materials were given to slaves, and they made the bricks. But now Pharaoh ordered that the Hebrew slaves had to gather the materials as well as make the bricks. He claimed that their request to be granted leave to go and worship their God was but a pretence to escape working.

Thus the children of Israel found themselves worse off than ever. They were scattered throughout Egypt as they travelled about trying to gather straw, or stubble, to mix with the clay and so make the bricks. This extra work made it impossible for them to make the same number as before. When this happened, the Egyptian officials complained to the slavedrivers; the slavedrivers then thrashed the Hebrew foremen whom they had put in charge of the work, driving them to work harder; the foremen, in turn, demanded of the people longer hours of work, to produce more bricks.

But the number still fell short of what was demanded.

The foremen complained to Pharaoh that it was unreasonable to expect the Hebrews to make the same number of bricks if they had to gather the materials as well. But they were driven from his presence with the rebuke: "You are lazy; you are lazy; that is the reason why you ask, Let us go and do sacrifice unto Yahweh" (Exod. 5:17).

The Hebrews found themselves in a worse plight than before Moses returned. They became worn out with long hours of hard work, whilst the slavedrivers thrashed them without mercy to make them work harder.

For this they blamed Moses. In anger they turned on him and said: "May Yahweh punish you for what you have done! You have made us to be hated by Pharaoh and his servants; you have placed a weapon in their hands that threatens to kill us!" (v. 21).

What could Moses do in such a case? There was only One to whom he could turn and obtain help. "O Yahweh," he prayed. "What is Thy purpose in thus ill-treating this people? Why did Thou ever send me here? Ever since I came to speak in Thy name to Pharaoh, he has ill-treated this people, and Thou

hast done nothing to rescue them.”

In answer Moses heard the Voice of God, explaining His great purpose with Egypt and His people. He revealed that though Pharaoh might first resist, he would be forced to let Israel go, for upon Egypt there would come great judgments. These judgments would bring about the deliverance of the children of Israel. God promised that He would take them for His people, and He would be their God, and “would bring them into the land that He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Exod. 6:2-8).

Moses returned to the people with this message of encouragement, but they were so hard pressed with their terrible bondage, that becoming impatient with him, they refused to heed.

The Voice of God came to him again. It told him to go to Pharaoh and command him to let the Israelites go from his country.

But was Moses now so discouraged himself that he did not believe he was capable of delivering the people. “The Israelites have not listened to me, and how will Pharaoh hearken to such a poor speaker as I am?” he protested.*

But Yahweh commanded him to go in before Pharaoh. “I have made thee a God unto Pharaoh,” He said, “and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet” (Exod. 7:1). That meant that Moses could go before Pharaoh and speak to him in the Name of God, with all the authority of God. He was given a position like that of the angel whom Yahweh later set over the nation to act in His stead (Exodus 23:20).

The Contest Begins With this great authority vested in him, Moses again appeared before Pharaoh. The princes in Pharaoh’s palace looked with curiosity and respect at this Hebrew shepherd, now aged 80 years of age, who, forty years earlier, had refused the position that Pharaoh then held. The king, however, despised Moses. The gods of Egypt were greater than the God of Israel, in his eyes. The cries of the oppressed Hebrews showed how mighty was the power that he, the king, wielded.

Undaunted, Moses and Aaron stood before Pharaoh. Around them were all the lords and princes of the land including the magicians of Egypt, of whom the chief were two

* This seems to be the meaning of the phrase, “I am a man of uncircumcised lips.” Moses, apparently, had some impediment in his speech. Though not eloquent, he was still “mighty in words” (Acts 7:22), for at his command the plagues were poured out.

men called Jannes and Jambres (2 Tim. 3:8). In the sight of all these people, Aaron cast down his rod, as commanded by God and instantly it became a serpent, wriggling and twisting on the ground.

But Pharaoh was not impressed. He called before him the magicians of Egypt who pretended to have the power of the gods of Egypt, and claimed to be able to perform miracles. They imitated the miracle of Aaron's rod. There is a serpent, in Egypt, which can be taught to imitate a rod, and which, when held in a certain way, will hold itself out stiffly like a rod. The magicians came before Pharaoh with these "rods", and casting them on the ground they naturally started to twist and wriggle around. But Aaron's rod attacked these serpents and swallowed them up.

Nevertheless Pharaoh's heart was hardened. He did not believe that the magicians had tricked him. He thought that the gods of Egypt were working through them, and that his gods were more powerful than the God of Israel.

He dismissed Moses and Aaron from his presence.

The Nile Is Turned To Blood

The Voice of Yahweh again came to Moses, commanding him to stand by the River Nile with the rod in his hand that had turned into a serpent, and warn Pharaoh when he came to the river that if he did not let the Israelites go, he would smite the waters with the rod, and they would become as blood.

The Nile is one of the greatest rivers in the world. It travels for a distance of over 1,300 miles, and each year overflows its banks, and so waters the land. Egypt receives very little rain, so that the people rely upon the water of this river, which was believed to be among the best in the world, being very sweet and refreshing. The Egyptians are very proud of this beautiful river, and in ancient times they worshipped it as a god, even sacrificing to it. To turn its waters into blood would be like desecrating their god.

Moses took up his position at the place where he knew Pharaoh would go. Soon the arrogant king could be seen approaching with all his princes and men of state about him. Moses the shepherd was face to face with the haughty monarch. By now Moses was well known to Pharaoh's court, and the people waited to see what new sign he would display. Again, in the name of Yahweh Moses demanded that Pharaoh let the people of Israel go. "If you do not let them go," he warned, "I will smite all the waters of the river with this rod, turning them into blood. And I will smite all the water throughout the land,

and it, also, will turn into blood.”

Angrily Pharaoh refused Moses' request. Turning to Aaron, Moses commanded him, in the name of Yahweh, to do as he had threatened. To the amazement and horror of Pharaoh and his princes, the waters of the Nile became as blood. It was quite undrinkable. Whereas before they drank it with pleasure and enjoyment, they now loathed it (Exod.7:18). The fish in it died, and being cast up in heaps began to smell. Throughout the land the water likewise became as blood, and the Egyptians had to dig wells and drink of the hard, bitter water they found therein.

Surely this was enough to show that the God of Israel was all-powerful! But, no. Jannes and Jambres, the chief of the magicians, were equal to the occasion. Taking some of the water from the wells dug around the banks of the Nile, they caused it to appear red like blood. They claimed that the gods of Egypt were quite as powerful as the God of Israel. The foolish Pharaoh was so deluded he hardened his heart and refused to let the people go. For seven days the people suffered as the waters remained as blood in the rivers.

The people were relieved when the water again turned normal.

A Plague of Frogs Again Moses appeared before Pharaoh.

This time he warned that if the king refused to let the people go, Yahweh would send frightful swarms of frogs throughout all the land.

The King refused to heed the warning. The rod, in Aaron's hand, was stretched out over the Nile, and from its waters there came great swarms of frogs, crawling into the palace of Pharaoh and the houses of the Egyptians. The people found them in their rooms, in their beds, in their ovens and kneading troughs. The frogs were everywhere, filling the air with their croaking, jumping upon the furniture, and even upon the people themselves, sickening the Egyptians with their evil, slimy appearance.

But again Jannes and Jambres did likewise through their clever tricks. But they could not destroy the plague of frogs. For days the Egyptians endured the sight and sound of the frogs, until at last, Pharaoh asked Moses to plead with Yahweh to destroy the frogs. “If you do this, I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto Yahweh,” he promised (Exod. 8:8).

“Very well,” replied Moses. “You may also have the honour of saying when this shall be done, in order that you may realise that it is Yahweh of Israel who is performing the miracle. When would you like the frogs to disappear?” “Tomorrow,” answered the King. And on the morrow, in answer to the

prayer of Moses, the plague came to an end. As suddenly as the frogs appeared, they commenced to die. The people gathered them in heaps, until the whole of Egypt stank with the smell of them.

But Pharaoh still refused to let the people go. He was a very obstinate man. When he saw the plague had ceased, he again hardened his heart (Exod. 9:34-35), and refused to heed God.

In that, he was like many people today. When times of trouble come upon them they turn to God, pouring out prayers unto Him; but they soon forget Him when times of peace and happiness come (Isa. 26:16). God, Himself, has recorded: "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness . . . he will not behold the majesty of Yahweh" (Isa. 26:10).

This was the case with Pharaoh. He was a hard, selfish, obstinate man. A man who had been thoroughly spoiled by the way people had revered and worshipped him. They treated him like a god, and therefore, in spite of the terrible trouble brought upon his nation, he could not bring himself to humble himself before the hated Hebrews.

God endured the stubbornness of this powerful man, one whom all the world looked up to, in order that His mighty power might be revealed. If Pharaoh had been less obstinate, he would have given way sooner, and men would not have seen Yahweh's power manifested to the same extent. Thus, "when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not" (Exod. 8:15).

Swarms of Lice

And so further punishment was heaped on Egypt. Obedient to the Voice of Yahweh, Aaron took the rod in his hand and smote the dust of the earth. Immediately it became crawling with lice. This is an evil insect which buries its head in its victim, and sucks at blood, inducing painful sores on the body. Thus the words of Scripture were fulfilled; the dust became lice "*in man and in beast.*" All over the land of Egypt, myriads of these terrible insects attacked the people and the animals, bringing great pain and discomfort to them all.

Jannes and Jambres, the two magicians tried to imitate this miracle with their trickery, but they could not. It had been comparatively easy for them to make water look like blood, or to pretend to produce frogs that leaped upon the ground at a safe distance, but they could not produce lice which would burrow into man and beast. They recognised that Moses

possessed greater power than they. "This is the hand of God" (Exod. 8:19), they declared.

But still Pharaoh refused to heed.

The Land Corrupted With Flies

Pharaoh now knew that Moses possessed greater power than his magicians. Moses, on the other hand, gained confidence as he saw how completely God was with him. He realised that the contest would end in the triumph of Israel, and the discomfiture of Egypt.

The two men met again by the River Nile. Again Pharaoh saw the stern, old man with his rod, and heard the awful message: "Thus saith Yahweh, Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Else, if thou wilt not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and thy servants, and thy people, and into thy houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are."

But, declared Moses, Israel would not suffer from this plague. Yahweh would separate the Land of Goshen where they dwelt, so that no flies would make their way there! He promised an astounding miracle. He told Pharaoh that Yahweh had declared: "I will put a division between My people and thy people; tomorrow shall this sign be." (Exodus 8:21).

Faithful to these words, the morrow witnessed this terrible plague. Swarms of flies invaded the land. They were no ordinary flies. They are said to have "corrupted" or "destroyed the land" (Exod. 8:24), and to have "devoured" or bitten the Egyptians (Psa. 78:45). The "flies"* referred to were most likely Egyptian beetles. This is a loathsome, black beetle, which devours everything that comes its way, even clothes, books and plants. It also inflicts nasty bites on both men and beasts. The Egyptians, in their strange religion, worshipped this horrible insect, and today huge stone figures of the Egyptian beetle are to be seen in the museums of the world. By inflicting this plague, therefore, it seems as though God was teaching the foolish king of Egypt that He could use the very things that the nation worshipped to punish the people. Not only so, but He also showed that He could control the movements of His creation, because during this plague the beetles did not invade the land of Goshen. Whilst all Egypt suffered from the bites, and found many of their possessions ruined by the ravages of

* There is no Hebrew word for "flies" in the original Scriptures, and thus the word is printed in italics in our version. Many students believe that the Egyptian beetle is meant.

these horrible insects they worshipped as a god, the children of Israel experienced no discomfort at all.

Thus against the very "gods of Egypt," Yahweh of Israel was pouring out His judgments (Exod. 12:12).

Pharaoh soon tired of this terrible plague. He called for Moses and said: "Go and worship your God in the land."

But Moses recognised how dangerous that would be. The worship of God required sacrifice, and the Egyptians looked upon the animals that the Israelites would slay for that purpose as gods. If they saw them killing them they would turn with rage upon the people they despised and hated, and murder them. He demanded of Pharaoh that they be given permission to go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice unto Yahweh. Pharaoh did not want to give way to Moses; but as he saw the beetles crawling about him, eating everything in their way, and as he itched with their bites upon his person, he sullenly agreed.

The plague was halted; the land was cleared of the beetles; but the obstinate heart of Pharaoh was unchanged. He refused to let the people go.

All The Animals Destroyed

And now a grievous sickness* affected all the animals in the land of Egypt. Many of these animals, including the goat, ram, calf, and bull were worshipped as gods in Egypt, so that, again, the plagues were felt by the gods of Egypt. Everywhere animals were dying, or staggering around at the point of death. The plague was so bad among the cattle that all were destroyed.

But in the land of Goshen it was not so. None of the cattle of the Hebrews was affected. Pharaoh, curious to see if this were the case, sent a messenger to the land of Goshen for that purpose. He found that whilst the sacred animals of Egypt were all dead, those of Israel had escaped. There was only one way to restore the herds of Egypt, and that was to purchase animals from the Hebrews. This the Egyptians were forced to do.

But still Pharaoh refused God's request.

* Murrain is a contagious disease among cattle. The symptoms are a hanging down and swelling of the head, abundance of gum in the eyes, rattling in the throat, difficulty in breathing, palpitation of the heart, staggering, a hot breath, and shining tongue. Picture all the poor animals in Egypt affected in that way through the folly of the king. The disease is usually fatal. The word in Hebrew translated "murrain" in our version, signifies "death," and relates to a plague or pestilence affecting animals.

Burning Boils On Man & Beast

Once more the Voice of Yahweh instructed Moses and Aaron. They were told to take ashes from the furnaces where the poor Hebrews slaved to make bricks and sprinkle it towards heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. They were told that the ashes would then become as boils breaking forth with blains upon man and beast throughout all Egypt (Exod. 9:8).

The ashes, coming from furnaces where the Hebrews laboured, would remind Pharaoh and all Egypt that this plague was sent, because of the way they had treated Yahweh's people.

Moses did as he was told, and boils or blisters broke out upon the people. They caused itching, burning ulcers which burst with tormenting pain, and spread from person to person, and from animal to animal. Soon all Egypt was suffering from this terrible affliction, and the people could find no relief from their misery.

The boils also affected the magicians. Jannes and Jambres had long ceased trying to imitate the terrible plagues which had one after another afflicted the people. But they were forced to witness the power of Moses, for they were always in attendance upon Pharaoh. Perhaps they had encouraged him in his refusal to let the people go. If so, now they had had enough, and they fled from the presence of Moses.

But still the foolish, stubborn king refused to give way.

A Terrible Storm Of Hail

A further terrible disaster now threatened Egypt. Once more Moses was ushered into the presence of the angry, sullen king. Again Pharaoh heard the warning voice of this aged shepherd, speaking in the name of his God: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For I will send all My plagues upon you and your officers and your people, to teach you that there is no one like Me in all the world." And then Moses continued with words that showed God could instantly destroy all Egypt, if He so desired. "Thus saith Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews: 'If now I had stretched out My hand and had smitten thee and thy people with the pestilence, thou shouldest have been cut off from the earth. But truly, on this very account, have I caused thee to continue that I might cause thee to see My power, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth' (Exod. 9:15-16)."

* According to Hebraists, this is the sense of the original Hebrew, and not as appears in our version, which threatens that Pharaoh would be destroyed with pestilence.

Pharaoh, was worshipped as a god by his subjects, and personally believed he was greater than anyone on earth. Wielding more power than other kings, he was humbled by none other than the leader of his slaves. He was told that he was only permitted to live by favour of the God Whom he despised.

The plagues now followed in quick succession. "Tomorrow," declared Moses, "Yahweh will send a grievous hail, such



The storm of hail that devastated the land of Egypt.

has not been in Egypt since the foundation of the nation. Send and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field, for the hail will be very destructive."

There were some among the Egyptians who had come to respect the word of Yahweh, and to believe in Him. They did as Moses suggested, and called their servants to shelter their animals.

On the morrow the wisdom of these precautions was evident. The heavens were dark and heavy with cloud. Soon a terrible storm was raging. Ear-splitting claps of thunder were followed by sharp flashes of lightning which, streaking down from heaven, ran along the ground until the very earth seemed to be in flames. Then a storm of hail broke in all its fury. Huge hail-stones thundered on the roofs of the dwellings, deafening the inmates with the noise, splitting the trees, and flattening the crops of flax and barley which were fully grown, and almost ready for harvesting, for it was February. Those who had failed to hearken to the warning of Moses, to shelter from the storm, were destroyed by the terrible hail. Those Egyptians who did shelter in their homes crouched in fear at the incredible storm. In Egypt, any storm of hail is of such rare occurrence that it was obvious that this one was an evidence of divine judgment. What mighty power did this man Moses possess that the very elements obeyed him? Why did Pharaoh continue to oppose Yahweh, the powerful God of the Hebrews? These were thoughts that must have troubled the Egyptians.

But the land of Goshen was untouched by the hail!

At last Pharaoh conceded defeat. He called for Moses and pleaded that he stop the terrible storm that threatened to destroy all Egypt. "I have sinned this time," he confessed. "Yahweh is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Stop this terrible thundering and hail, and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer."

"I will do as you request," replied Moses, "but I know that you and your servants do not yet fear Yahweh."

The storm was stilled. A calm came over the land of Egypt. But what a terrible sight the countryside presented in the aftermath of that storm! Men and animals lay dead; crops were flattened; trees smashed down. Yet the land of Goshen remained untouched. As reports came in to Pharaoh, he was seized with violent passion. Was he not the great king whom the people worshipped? Why should these hated slaves go free when his land was so badly smashed? His servants supported him in this. Let the Hebrews remain to build up the greatness of Egypt!

A Mighty Cloud Of Locusts

Thus the stubbornness of the king brought ruin to a mighty nation. His selfishness, his refusal to humble himself before God, and his fear, were causing millions to mourn.

But now Pharaoh was afraid to let the Hebrews go.

He remembered, no doubt, the time when the Shepherd Kings ruled Egypt, and he was frightened lest Israel should go into the wilderness on pretence of worshipping God, but actually to join the enemies of Egypt, and invade the country in force.

However Moses again demanded an audience with Pharaoh. How the king must have hated the very sight of the shepherd! But he was also frightened to harm him, having witnessed the great power that was with him. Fearfully he listened again to the warning voice of Moses: "If you refuse to humble yourself before Yahweh and let His people go, He will bring a terrible cloud of locusts upon the land, and they shall eat all that remains from the hail, and they will fill your houses. It will be such an invasion as Egypt has never before seen."

So saying, Moses turned and went from the palace of Pharaoh.

He no longer feared the king nor Egypt; he was full of confidence in the power of Yahweh.

The princes and nobles of the land heard his words with fear. They turned to Pharaoh pleading with him to let the people go. "If you do not do so," they warned, "the whole country will be destroyed" (Exod. 10:7).

Sullenly the king agreed. Moses was recalled. Unwillingly Pharaoh agreed that the people could worship their God. "Who is to go?" he asked.

"All must go," replied Moses.

This did not suit Pharaoh. "The men alone can go," he replied, "but the women and children must remain."

"No," was the firm reply, "all must leave together."

"You will not leave," declared Pharaoh angrily, his temper dominating him, "for I believe you are out for some mischief. The men can leave if they want to, but their families must stay behind."* So saying, he drove Moses and Aaron from his presence.

* Why did Pharaoh continually refuse to let the Jews go? The answer is given in Exod. 10:10, which, according to the R.S.V., reads: "Look, you have some evil purpose in mind." He feared that the Hebrews, having removed their families to safety, would return to destroy the Egyptians, and thus avenge themselves for the harm he had brought on them. He thus feared the plagues of God, and yet feared to let the Israelites go.

Next day, the Egyptian people saw the result of Pharaoh's angry stubbornness. A thick cloud of locusts appeared, filling the sky above, blotting out even the light of the sun, and bringing a pall of darkness over the land. The air was filled with these leaping, flying insects. They covered the trees, and any green fields, gnawing at any growth that remained until everything was left bare. They even invaded the homes, and leapt on the people. The Egyptians could not walk anywhere without crunching them underfoot; they could not eat their food without having them jumping into it; they could not sleep for locusts invading their beds.

It was not long before Pharaoh had had enough of this! Hastily calling for Moses, he pleaded with him to stop this terrible plague. Again Moses' hands were held out to Yahweh in prayer, and again the plague stopped. A strong wind from the west drove the locusts out of Egypt and into the sea where they were destroyed. They left a ravaged Egypt with crops totally destroyed, and trees completely denuded of their leaves. But, miraculously, the land of Goshen was untouched!

Still Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel go!

Complete And Utter Darkness

The punishment continued. Many years later, the prophet Jeremiah was to recall it saying, "In Egypt's land Thou didst provide signal deeds of awe, both for Israel and for outsiders" (Jer. 32:20 — Moffatt's trans.). A period of three days of intense darkness came over the land. The sun, which the Egyptians worshipped as a god, was blotted out, and darkness prevailed such as "could be felt" (Exod. 10:21). It seemed to close in around the people like a wall. They could not see before them, and when they walked about, it seemed as though they were moving into something solid.

Yet there was light in the land of Goshen, for "the children of Israel had light in their dwellings" (v. 23).

Once more Pharaoh was forced to call for Moses. Humbly the king acknowledged that he had sinned. He agreed to allow Israel to go and worship their God, but he insisted that they leave behind their flocks and herds. But Moses refused. "All must go," he said. "Both our families and our cattle; there shall not a hoof be left behind."

This made the stubborn king angry. "Go from me, and take heed to thyself," he angrily shouted at Moses. "Thou shalt see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face, thou shalt die."

If he thought that such a threat would frighten Moses, he

was mistaken. "Thou hast spoken well," replied the calm, courageous leader of the Hebrews. "I will see your face again no more" (v. 29).

All Egypt Mourns The most terrible of all the plagues was now about to smite Egypt. It was a plague that was to bring deep mourning to every home in the land, but would result in the deliverance of Israel.

Great preparations had to be made for this, and no time was to be lost.

Hurrying from the court of Pharaoh, Moses went directly to the land of Goshen, and calling the elders of the people together, he issued them with instructions. Firstly they were commanded to demand of the Egyptians jewels of silver and gold, and raiment for the journey they were to take. When the Hebrews did this, they found the Egyptians so fearful of them that they were only too glad to give them what they wanted in order that they might leave the land. Consequently, they returned to Goshen laden with treasures from the land in which they had laboured so long without pay.

Chapter Seven

THE FIRST PASSOVER

Preparations now had to be made for what was to prove the last terrible plague. It would be followed by the deliverance of the people from Egypt, and their attainment of nationhood at Sinai. As they were to be formed into a special nation, devoted in worship to Yahweh, the very year was changed. Moses told the people that that month (called Abib and corresponding to our March-April) should be for them the beginning of a religious year (Exod. 12:2). The Israelites' normal year commenced about seven months later, answering to our October, but from now on they were to follow two calendars: a religious one and a civil one: the former for purposes of worship; the latter for the normal business of life.

Moses then taught them that on the tenth day of the first month, each household in Israel were to select a lamb from the flock. They were to carefully examine it to see that it had no blemish, and to pen it up ready to be sacrificed. On the fourteenth day of the month they were to kill it in the evening between three and six o'clock (v. 6, margin). The blood of the lamb was to be caught in a basin, and with a bunch of hyssop it was to be sprinkled upon the doorposts and lintels of the houses they occupied (v. 7). Two things they had to avoid: they had to be very careful that not a bone of the lamb was broken; and they had to be sure that whilst the blood was placed on the doorposts and lintels, it was not found on the doorstep. In regard to the first, the lamb was to be offered without blemish; and in regard to the second, they must avoid "treading under foot . . . the blood of the covenant" (Hebrews 10:29).

The Lamb was then placed on a spit (or crucified) and roasted whole. In the evening, all the Hebrews had to enter their homes, carefully close the doors behind them, and were prohibited leaving the house all that night (v. 22). No uncircumcised stranger was allowed to eat of it. To participate he had to completely join himself with the Hebrews, making their hope his hope. The lamb was to be eaten hastily with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (v. 8). Those partaking of it had to do so with staff in hand, sandals on their feet and with their long robes such as Hebrews wore, conveniently tucked up so that they might be ready to depart as soon as Moses gave the word (v. 11). What portion of the lamb might remain in the morning

had to be burned.

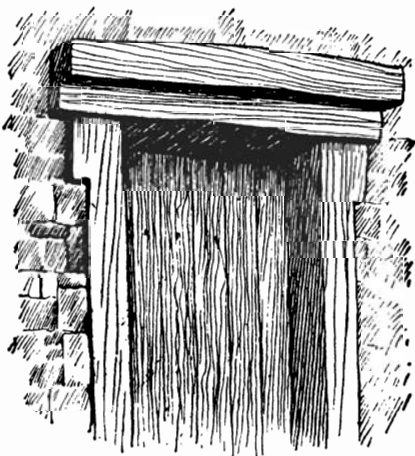
The Significance Of The Passover

Moses instructed the people in the significance of what he had called upon them to do. He warned the Israelites that Yahweh's patience with Egypt was at an end, and that He was about to send a Destroying Angel to pour out the last, terrible plague on the land. It would result in the firstborn of every family dying, except those who sheltered in homes displaying the blood of the Passover Lamb on the doorposts and lintels (v. 23). The Passover Feast, therefore, set forth principles of separation and deliverance. It commemorated the fact that the Angel of Protection hovered over Israel, whereas the Angel of Destruction moved against the houses of the Egyptians. Moses called it "Yahweh's Passover" because it proclaimed His deliverance. Though men were dominated by fear, and the Israelites were oppressed as slaves, the Passover festival taught them that unknown and unseen by the world, the Angel of Protection hovered over them caring for them in this a time of need.

It was a wonderful type pointing forward to "Christ our Passover" (1 Cor. 5:7). And it was fulfilled by him to the letter. On the tenth day of the first month in the Jewish year, just before the Feast of the Passover was celebrated, the Lord entered Jerusalem, prepared for the great trial and crucifixion that lay before him (Matthew 21). He continued to visit that city, day after day, until he was crucified on the fourteenth day, the time the nation was preparing the Passover Lambs to be slain! He was the



Hyssop



Lintel and doorposts

antitype of such. As the Passover Lamb was penned up on the tenth day and subjected to inspection, so the Lord was constantly under observation by the people; and as it was sacrificed on the fourteenth day, so also was he. The Passover Lamb was eaten "in haste", and it was with haste that the Jews hurried through the circumstances associated with the Lord's trial and execution (Luke 22:6; John 19:31). In his case, as with the Passover Lamb, there was "no bone broken" (John 19:32-36). He knew the bitterness of trial (answering to the bitter herbs the Hebrews had to eat with their Passover Lamb), but with him there was no sin, no "leaven of wickedness", (1 Cor. 5:6-8). To typify that this should be the case, the Israelites had to remove all leaven (yeast) from their homes before eating the Passover. The Passover Lamb "saw no corruption," for it was either eaten or burnt, and this was true also of the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:24,27), who after a short period in the grave was raised to life eternal. And as the blood of the Passover Lamb was sprinkled upon the doorposts of the houses in which the Hebrews sheltered, so in a figure, the blood of the Lord Jesus is sprinkled upon the doors of believers' hearts by faith (1 Pet. 1:19; 1 Cor. 6:20).

As the Hebrews were strictly warned against leaving their houses until commanded to do so, true believers likewise must be careful to shelter in Christ until their time of complete redemption comes.

As there were numerous houses throughout Israel, but only one nation, so there are numerous Ecclesias, but only one true multitudinous Body of Christ.

Thus the Passover pointed forward to Christ, whom Paul termed "our Passover" (1 Cor. 5:7), and John styled "the lamb of God slain for the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Believers do not observe the Passover as did the Hebrews, but as Christ commanded them to do. They eat bread and drink a little wine to represent his body crucified and his blood shed. They have separated themselves from the world as the Hebrews were separated from Egypt, and await the great deliverance that will come when their leader and Lord returns to the earth. Thus in this Jewish feast there is a wonderful lesson pointing forward to Christ.

Meanwhile, in the land of Goshen following the instructions of Moses, the Israelites made preparations for their coming deliverance. They gathered together in family groups as commanded; they selected the lambs for the offering; they searched their houses for leaven in order to remove it. At last the fourteenth day came. The lambs were slain, the blood

sprinkled upon the doorposts and lintels of their houses, and all was ready for the great moment of deliverance.

The Final Message To Pharaoh Once again Moses entered the palace of Pharaoh. This time, however, he did not meet Pharaoh himself, but gave the message Yahweh had commanded him to deliver, to one of the king's princes.

"Thus saith Yahweh," declared Moses "Israel is My son, My firstborn, and I said unto thee, Let My son go that he may serve Me. But you have refused to let him go; behold Yahweh will slay your son, your firstborn. Thus saith Yahweh: About midnight will I go forth into the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh to the firstborn of the lowest in the land. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it before. But against the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue against man or beast, that you may know that Yahweh doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And these your servants shall bow before me, and say, Get you out and all the people that follow you, and after that I will go out" (Exod. 11:4-7).

Having delivered this message, Moses left the court of Pharaoh, full of anger at the stupidity of the king who had brought such miseries upon his people.

His warning words caused the princes of Egypt to fear. They knew and dreaded the great power of Yahweh, and realised that what Moses warned was invariably carried out. They now recognised that there were no gods in Egypt powerful enough to help. They feared and respected the words of Moses, and no longer derided the shepherd-leader of Israel.

In the land of Goshen, however, there was a state of excitement and expectancy. All preparations had been made by the Hebrews to leave the country where they had laboured as slaves for so long, and where they had been so terribly ill-treated. In the homes of true Israelites the Passover lambs were roasting, and as sunset came and a new day began (for the Jews count their days from 6 o'clock in the evening until 6 o'clock the following evening) the people gathered together in their houses as commanded, to commence the feast of remembrance.

But the rest of Egypt greatly feared what would happen. Rumours of the terrible warning of Moses had passed from lip to lip. A sense of impending doom gripped the people. What would happen? Why did Pharaoh not give way? They might all be destroyed through his folly! As night came on, and the

people went indoors, a quietness settled over the land. But it was an uneasy quiet. Very few of the Egyptians were resting. They were too troubled by the terrible words of the leader of the Israelites for that!

It was midnight. In the homes of the Hebrews too there was a sense of foreboding as to the immediate future. Families clustered around the tables having consumed the lamb, standing ready with shoes on, clothes tucked up, and staves in hands ready to leave at the word of Moses.

Then, suddenly, the night was disturbed by a terrible shriek that arose from all over the land. The Angel of Death had performed his terrible work, and every Egyptian home was plunged into mourning as death struck down each firstborn son. The people rushed out into the streets in terror and alarm. They beat upon their breasts, howling in a frantic and mournful way at the awful tragedy. Panic took hold of them. They had had enough! They rushed to the palace of Pharaoh demanding that he let the children of Israel go. Pharaoh, also, was completely humbled. In his palace his beloved firstborn lay dead; the one appointed to succeed him on the throne. Harshly he called for his ministers, and sent them in haste to the land of Goshen commanding Moses to depart instantly with the people.

For the Hebrews, the time of deliverance had come. Snatching up a few possessions, they instantly left their homes, in their haste carrying the dough in the kneading troughs bound upon their shoulders. They had not time even to complete the baking of the bread, the very essentials of life. Some six hundred thousand men, as well as women and children and a number of Egyptians who had thrown in their lot with Israel, left the land of slavery. Figuratively, they cast away the shackles of restraint and rejoiced in their liberty (cp. Gal. 5:1). They were slaves no longer, and looked with joy to the first morning of freedom that was about to dawn.

There is much to be learned from this dramatic incident. As Yahweh plagued Egypt because the people refused to listen to Him, and because they ill-treated His people, so the world is plagued with trouble today. Moreover there is a "time of trouble such as never was" approaching (Daniel 12:1) which will bring death throughout the whole world (Jeremiah 25:33). Thus the times in which we are living are as ominous as those in Egypt in the days of Moses.

However, signs of deliverance are also seen today. The return of the Jews to Palestine, the revival of the nation of Israel, the manner in which the lands of the Bible are springing into life, the growing might of Russia, the vast preparations for

war are all tokens of this. In the world (answering to Egypt) there is growing fear of the future (Luke 21:26), but in Christ there is peace and assurance in the knowledge of God's purpose of deliverance. The Lord himself told his disciples: "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

How important, then, to listen to the Voice of God, to partake of the Lamb of God by baptism into Christ (Gal. 3:26), to have the doorposts of our hearts sprinkled with his blood by this same means (Rom. 6:3; Eph. 2:13), and to be able to live in confident assurance that though Egypt might be in trouble, the time of our deliverance fast approaches.



The Death of the Firstborn

Chapter Eight

HOW ISRAEL LEFT EGYPT

From Goshen To Succoth

Israel marched out of Egypt in orderly fashion, as a mighty army (Exod. 13:18).

No trumpets were sounding, no military banners were displayed, no spears were brandished, but the army moved to the sound of its own tread, which seemed to shake the earth.

They left shortly after midnight, and at their head there advanced a pillar of fire, as though borne along by a gentle breeze. It illuminated the darkness of the way, and led the host in the direction Yahweh required. This was the symbol of His presence manifested through the angel into whose charge Israel had been placed (Exod. 14:19). Gradually, as the darkness of night gave way to the bright dawning of a new day, so the Israelites saw the pillar of fire slowly change to a snow-white cloud.

In the midst of the marching columns of Israelites there went the heavy, stone coffin of Joseph. Over 150 years had passed since he gave his last message to the people of Israel, telling them that God would surely visit them, to take them back to the Land of Promise. Now the moment had come (Gen. 50:26). Though many Israelites had forgotten his message, or had lost faith in it over the years, Moses had not. During the bitter years of trial and exile, the silent testimony of the coffin, with the body of Joseph embalmed within it, had given him great encouragement. Now, as the marching host left the land of slavery, Moses arranged for the coffin of this great man to be brought with them (Exod. 13:19).

Onwards the cloud moved, in an easterly direction, towards the Gulf of the Red Sea. This was a longer and more lonely way to the Land of Promise. The shorter route would have been through the Land of the Philistines, but that would have brought the Israelites into contact with a warlike enemy. Being untrained in battle, they may have lost heart and returned to Egypt (Exod. 13:18). So God led them through the longer, but safer route.

This brought them to Succoth, a pleasant, fertile part of Egypt. By now the sun was high in the heavens, and marching became more difficult. But still the cloud moved on, until, at

last, it stopped at Succoth, where the people rested. While the women baked unleavened bread, for, of course, there was no leaven in their homes when they left Egypt, the men cut down boughs of trees under which their families sheltered from the heat. At last the meal was ready. What an impressive moment it was. From hundreds of thousands of throats there ascended thanks and praise unto Yahweh for His mercy and goodness in delivering them from slavery. As they relaxed under the shade of the booths they had made from the boughs of the trees, the people rejoiced in the freedom they experienced: a freedom relieved of the tension they had felt in Egypt.

They never forgot that moment. The word "Succoth" means *booths* or *tabernacles*. When, later, the people were established in the land, they celebrated this glorious occasion in what was called the Feast of Tabernacles (or Succoth). For seven days in every year Israel enjoyed a glorious outdoor picnic, living in booths as they did when they came out of Egypt, and rejoicing before Yahweh. God told the people that He wanted them to celebrate this from year to year in order that they may ever remember that He "made them to dwell in booths, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. 23: 39-43).

On To Etham

But again the cloud moved and the people marched. It took them to Etham, which means *Edge*, for it was situated on the "edge of the wilderness" (Exod. 13:20). The pleasant, fertile country of Succoth had been left behind, and before them lay the rough, inhospitable, barren waste of land on the eastern side of the Red Sea. It was as though God was warning the people that their pilgrimage would involve trial, and bring them into difficulties.

In that way, the experiences of Israel foreshadowed those of Christ's followers. When a person comes to a knowledge of the Truth, he rejoices in the promised freedom that opens out before him, as Israel rejoiced at Succoth. But the blessing is not unmixed. Soon difficulties and problems arise, and he must make a decision as to whether he will endure to the end. Sometimes the future looks grim like the wilderness that now opened out before the Israelites, and some are disposed to turn back.

But such an action is fatal. It will not relieve life of its problems, but only add to them. A person in Christ can share his troubles with the Lord, and find the strength to surmount them; but outside of Christ there is no hope.

Yahweh brought the Israelites to the wilderness in order to test them. Were they prepared, in faith, to endure its arid harshness, or would they turn back? Before them was the desert, but behind them there were slavery and death. They did not want either, but the ultimate prospect of that which lay before was far better than the best of that which lay behind.

So the people followed the white, gleaming cloud that beckoned them on through the desert.

On the Shore Of The Red Sea

And then a remarkable thing happened. Israel could have continued its journey from Etham down the eastern side of the Red Sea without having to pass through its waters as, later, they were forced to do. But suddenly the white, gleaming cloud turned and led the way down the western side of the Red Sea for a distance of about fifteen miles. This brought the children of Israel to Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea (Exod. 14:2). Here they saw a place of rugged desolation. Harsh, barren mountains, with steep valleys cutting between them, ran right down to the edge of the sea itself. Along one of these deep valleys the children of Israel marched, until they were halted by the deep waters of the Red Sea.

What was Yahweh's purpose in turning them back, and bringing them to such a place? It was to show Israel how completely they owed their deliverance to Him, and also to finally humble Egypt. For, in Egypt, the desire for revenge now dominated the mind of Pharaoh. He had recovered from the stunning blow of the death of his son, and when he heard from his spies that Israel, instead of continuing into the wilderness from Etham, had turned down the western shore of the Red Sea, he believed that he had them trapped. He thought that they were lost. "They are entangled in the land," he exclaimed, "the wilderness has shut them in!" (Exod. 14:3).

He made ready his own chariot, called up the 600 chosen chariots that formed his bodyguard, and with the rest of the chariots of Egypt, prepared to chase and destroy the children of Israel.

Meanwhile the Israelites rested on the shore of the Red Sea, and looked rather fearfully at the barren harshness that surrounded them, and the wide expanse of sea that lay before them. Then another terrible sight came into view.

In the distance they saw a cloud of dust advancing steadily towards them, and learned that it was formed by the chariots of Pharaoh advancing at the head of the marching infantry of Egypt. Fear took hold of the people. There appeared no way of



The Passage of the Red Sea

escape. Before them was the wide expanse of ocean; on either side rose the steep precipitous slopes of mountains; the deep ravine in which they had encamped gave them no shelter from the attack of a ruthless enemy. There seemed nothing they could do. As they watched the massed ranks of Pharaoh's host ominously move nearer to them, their faith melted. They forgot the wonderful works of God; they forgot the miracles He had already performed; fear filled their hearts, and they turned angrily upon Moses: "Why have you brought us to this wilderness to die," they complained. "Were there not sufficient graves in Egypt? Did not we tell you in Egypt not to worry us, but to let us serve the Egyptians? It would have been far better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness!"

The people turned on Moses with faces contorted in rage and terror. They threatened to kill him. But Moses did not give way to their threats. At that moment of crisis he strengthened himself in Yahweh. He perhaps recalled the words of Joseph, whose body he had carried out of Egypt with him. That great man had declared that there was to be no grave for him in Egypt, for "God shall surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence" (Genesis 50:25). Now Moses, moved by a similar faith, courageously faced the rebellious crowd of Israelites. He declared: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Yahweh, which He will shew to you today; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever. Yahweh will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Exod. 14:13).

With these words of encouragement, Moses returned to his tent, and prayed unto Yahweh. And soon the Voice of Yahweh came to him: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea" (vv. 15-16).

Deliverance

Meanwhile, the angel that was leading Israel, went behind them, and the pillar of cloud divided them from the Egyptian army. To the Egyptians it was a wall of pitch darkness, but as night came on it gave light to Israel.

Moses then stretched forth his rod towards the sea. A terrible, awe-inspiring storm broke out. The heavens shook with claps of thunder; fierce streaks of lightning flashed across the eight miles of ocean that lay before the Israelites; in the distance could be heard the noise of the hurricane approaching from the east. Suddenly it swept down upon the ocean,

throwing the waves into an angry turmoil, causing them to roar as they beat upon the rocky cliffs that led down to the sea (Psalm 77:16-20). This frightening manifestation of heaven's artillery filled both Israelites and Egyptians with fear. The roar of the hurricane could be heard, and then the effect of it was seen. The strong current of God-directed wind had cut a path through the ocean itself. What had been sea was now a pathway flanked on both sides with walls of ocean (Exodus 14:21). And once that path was cut, Yahweh congealed the waves so that they stood back to let Israel pass through (Exod. 14:22; 15:8). He solidified the waters in some way, so that they appeared hard like ice.

The people were silent in wonder now! No longer did they doubt Moses! They obediently followed as Moses and Aaron led them through the ocean in safety to the other side (Psalm 77:20), and the pillar of cloud which appeared as fire in the night, protected their rear from the enemy.

But as the cloud retreated, the Egyptians advanced until the whole army had entered the road across the Red Sea. Then, suddenly, Yahweh caused the Divine glory to shine upon the Egyptians. From out of the pillar of cloud there shone forth a blinding light more powerful than the brightest sun. It made the Egyptian warriors afraid. They remembered the terrible plagues that had come upon Egypt. They feared for their own lives. Forgetting all that they had been taught in the way of obedience to Pharaoh, panic seized hold of them. "Let us flee from the face of Israel," they said one to another, "for Yahweh fighteth for them against the Egyptians." The charioteers tried to turn their vehicles, but their wheels sank and then broke in the deep clay which the wagons of the Hebrews had churned up. The army was thrown into complete confusion and terror. Soldiers began fighting with soldiers as they struggled to retreat to safety.

On the eastern side of the sea, Moses again stretched forth his rod over the sea. The two walls of water began to swell and heave, as by some mighty force. And then, all at once, with a tremendous roar that filled the air to the exclusion of all else, the angry waves burst over the host of Pharaoh, the two walls of water roaring and rushing together, bringing destruction to the entire army of the Egyptians.

But on the eastern side of the Red Sea, the children of Israel stood safe, delivered from the terrible fate that could have been theirs. What they had witnessed, filled them with awe. Those who had murmured against Moses, bowed themselves before him and sought his pardon, whilst in the hearts of all was the realisation that the Yahweh of Israel is indeed, power-

ful to save. "They believed Yahweh, and his servant Moses" (Exod. 14:31).

In commemoration of this great deliverance, Moses composed a song of victory to the honour of Yahweh. It spake of His great power; how His enemies were overthrown and His people delivered; and how all mankind should acknowledge His goodness and power. Led by Moses, the men of Israel sang this song, whilst the women, led by Miriam, sang a refrain. Thus, on the shores of the Red Sea the people of Israel celebrated their deliverance, and renewed their vows before their God.

Every time the Jews celebrate the Passover, they remember this wonderful occasion. They repeat the words: "The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Jer. 23:7). Yet great as that mighty deliverance was, there is a greater one to come at the second advent of the Lord Jesus. He shall not only raise from the dead and give life eternal to all those who have lived as God would have them live, but he shall regather the Jews from all nations (Jer. 23:8), and extend his kingdom into all parts of the earth (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 60:12; Zech. 14:9). Some nations will resist him as Pharaoh did Yahweh in the days of Moses, but they shall be rebuked (Psa. 2), and forced to submit to his rule.

In that day of glory, Moses will be with the Lord Jesus sharing the honour of the occasion. He will be raised from the dead, granted eternal life, and join in the celebrations that will take place at the time. During the course of these, the people will recall this earlier victory over Pharaoh. The book of Revelation predicts: "They shall sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb (Christ), saying, Great and marvellous are thy words, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways Thou King of nations" (Rev. 15:3 mg.). The Lord will be given that title, for he shall then exercise dominion over all nations (Dan. 2:44), bringing to all peoples the blessings of his administration (Gal. 3:8; Isa. 2:2-4).

Let us so order our lives, that we might be among the immortal ones of that age, and experience the wonderful privilege of raising our voices in that wonderful and thrilling chorus.

**Mr. Phillips
Answers Some
Questions**

"We have read two very impressive and dramatic chapters of the Bible tonight," remarked Mr. Phillips after Joan had completed the last verse of Exodus 14.

"The world will never see a more wonderful incident until Christ returns to set up his Kingdom on earth. When Israel

passed through the Red Sea, they not only travelled from one continent to another, from Africa to Arabia, but their state was changed from slavery in Egypt to freedom therefrom. Paul says that in passing through the Red Sea, they were 'baptised into Moses' (1 Cor. 10:1)."

"Has the name 'Red' Sea any significance?" asked Graeham, as his father paused.

"Yes, I believe it has," replied Mr. Phillips. "When we are baptised, we are baptised into the death of Jesus (Rom. 6:3). We see, as it were, the water figuratively tinged with the blood of the Lord. In type the 'Red' Sea spake of the same thing."

400 Years or 430? "I have a question on Exodus 12," said Peter, who had been busily turning over the pages of his Bible. "In verse 40 it says that the children of Israel were 430 years in Egypt, but in Genesis 15:13 the time is given as 400 years after Abraham! As they did not go down into Egypt until the days of Joseph, one or other of the dates must be wrong!"

"That is so, and in Acts 7:6 the time is again given as 400 years," remarked Graeham with a smile, hoping to catch his father.

"You boys must learn to read the Bible more carefully than that!" answered Mr. Phillips. "It does not say the Israelites were in Egypt 430 years."

"Yes it does!" replied Peter, emphatically.

"No, Peter, you are wrong," replied his father. "It says, 'the sojourning of the children of Israel *who dwelt in Egypt* was 430 years.' The 'sojourning' was longer than the 'dwelling in Egypt,' and included all the time from Abraham onwards."

"Are you sure you are right?" asked Peter, doubtfully.

"I am certain of it," replied his father. "You have read something into the Bible that is not there, and therefore you think that the Bible is wrong. When you reason like that, remember that *you* can be wrong, but God is never wrong."

"There is still a disagreement though, Dad," continued Graeham, as Peter remained silent. "In Genesis 15:13 it gives 400 years, and not 430."

"That is true!" agreed Peter hoping yet to catch his father.

"And can't you think of the answer?" asked Mr. Phillips, with a smile.

"No," replied the boys, after some thought.

"The answer is this," replied Mr. Phillips. "The 400 years dated from the time when Isaac was born, whereas the 430 years was dated, as Exodus shows, when the sojourning of

Abraham commenced. Thus both dates are correct, but they commence at different times. If you read Genesis 15:13 carefully you will find that it is speaking of the 'seed of Abraham'!"

"I can see that now," said the boys.

**Who Ate The
Passover?**

"Apparently only Israelites were allowed to eat the Passover," remarked Graeham.

"Strangers could eat of it if they had become Israelites by submitting to circumcision," remarked his father (see Exod. 12:43-49).

"That is so also in regard to the Lord's Passover, the partaking of bread and wine in remembrance of the death of Jesus," said Peter.

"That is true," agreed his father. "Only those who have accepted Christ in the way appointed, by baptism, should partake of that ceremony. Paul says that others 'have no right' to eat of it (Heb. 13:10)."

**Israel:
God's Firstborn**

"I have a question now," said Ann, eagerly. She had been busily writing down the answers her father had given the boys, and had openly shown her pleasure when he had so easily answered their question regarding the 400 years, with which they had tried to catch him. Now she said: "A few nights back you told us about the *Mystery of the Firstborn* and showed us that when God caused the older sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to be placed under younger sons, He was teaching that He would send a younger son (the Lord Jesus) who would take upon himself the right of firstborn over all mankind."

"That is right," replied Mr. Phillips.

"Well I notice in that chapter (Exod. 13:12) that the firstborn males were set aside as belonging to Yahweh. Does that mean that they only were given to God's service?"

"It means that they were given to His service in a special sense above all other sons," replied her father. "At that time they acted as priests in Israel, but later, through disobedience of the people, the tribe of Levi was selected as the priestly tribe instead of the firstborn of each family (Num. 3:12,41,45)."

"What was God's purpose in choosing the firstborn of every family to be given to God?" asked Ann.

"It was to teach the people what Yahweh expected from them as a nation," explained her father. "Israel is called His 'firstborn' nation (Exod. 4:22) because it was called to be 'a kingdom of priests' (Exod. 19:6), and that was the status given to the firstborn of every family. Israel, as the firstborn nation,

had to devote itself to Yahweh in obeying His laws. To show what He wanted, God commanded that all the male firstborn of animals were to be sacrificed unto Him; but all the firstborn of men were to be redeemed (Exod. 13:15). Accordingly, whether they were animals or men, they were given to God. Israel's existence as a nation likewise depended upon it giving itself unto God."

"What do you mean by redeemed?" asked Joan.

"It means to 'purchase'." said her father. "Israel's firstborn had been saved, or redeemed, by the blood that was sprinkled upon the door-posts of their houses in Egypt, and having been thus purchased by God were His property."

Why The Ass Was Redeemed

"Not all the firstborn of animals were sacrificed," said Graeham, who had been reading the verse in Exodus 13 very closely. "I see in v. 13 that unlike the other animals, the ass could be redeemed with a lamb. Why was that?"

"It is because the ass was used as a symbol for Israel. Abraham (Gen. 22:3,5) and Moses (Exod. 4:20) both used asses to ride upon. The judges and kings of Israel used them as a symbol of high rank (Judges 5:10; 10:4; 12:14; 2 Sam. 16:1-2), and that is why the Lord Jesus used one to ride in triumph to Jerusalem (Matt. 21:5). The ass is a high-spirited, but stubborn, animal. It can be a patient worker, or a 'stiff-necked,' obstinate beast. That is true of Israel also. Through the stubbornness of the people the nation was often at variance with God, but it was also capable of good work. Because the ass represented Israel, it was not sacrificed like the other animals, but was 'redeemed with a lamb.' That pointed forward to the Lord Jesus who, as the 'lamb of God' (John 1:36), will one day redeem Israel (Isa. 49:6)."

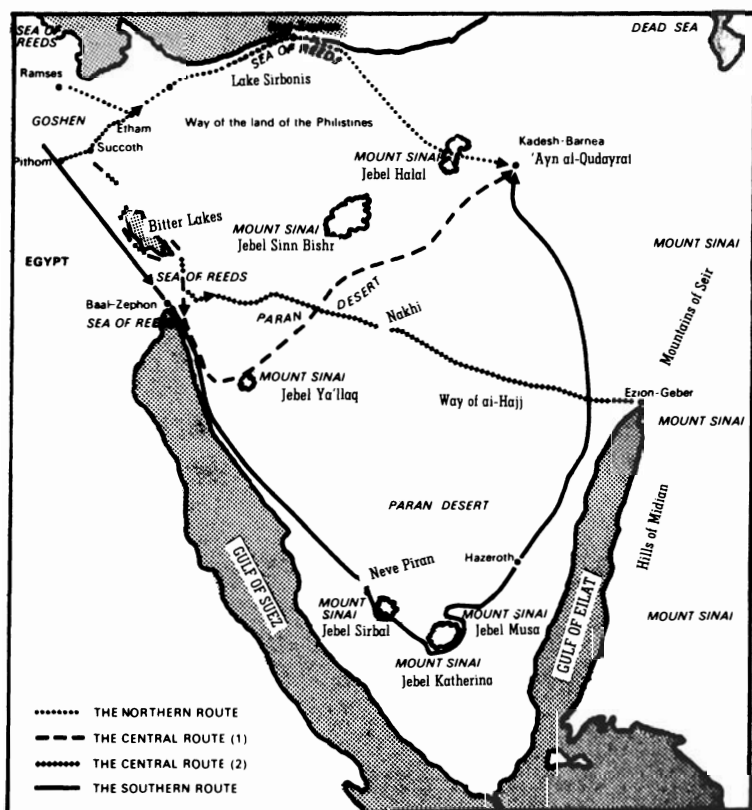
"If it was not redeemed, the Jews had to break its neck," remarked Graeham, as he read verse 13 again. "Why not sacrifice it as the other animals?"

"A sacrifice implies something given to God, and acceptable to Him. But the ass was unworthy of that. Therefore, unless it was redeemed with a lamb, its neck was broken as rejected," said his father.

"It is interesting that fleshly pride is called 'hardening the neck in the Bible (Neh. 9:17; 2 Chron. 36:13)," said Graeham, thoughtfully. "So I suppose that in ordering that its neck be broken, God was warning Israel against the consequences of fleshly pride."

"That is a very good thought," remarked Mr. Phillips.

“The law regarding the ass showed Israel that they had to humbly and patiently labour for God, for nobody would think of destroying an animal that is a good worker. It would also teach them to seek the salvation from death that will come alone from Him through the Lamb that He has provided. That lesson we all must learn. But now, as I have much work to do, we must bring these questions to an end. So, girls, kiss me goodnight, for you had better be off to bed!”



Thus there are a number of conflicting theories as to the route taken, as the accompanying sketch shows. Note the nine suggested locations for Mount Sinai.

Chapter Nine

FROM THE RED SEA TO SINAI

The Bitterness Of Marah

The family had already read the 16th chapter of Exodus, and had been discussing it for some time, when little Joan

asked:

“Have you ever seen a desert, Daddy?”

“Of course he has!” replied Ann, a little sharply. “Every time Daddy goes to Western Australia he travels through the Nullabor Plain, which is a very great desert.”

“That is true,” remarked Mr. Phillips. “The Nullabor Plain is a vast wilderness, stretching for hundreds of miles across Western Australia. Like so much of Australia, and of deserts all over the world, it lacks but one thing — water. If it could get sufficient rain, it would be a desert no longer. The Nullabor covers such a vast area, that the train swiftly travels through it all day long without covering it. At one time, it used to stop at different parts, and travellers were allowed to get off and walk around for a little while. They would then see the horizon as a vast circle, unbroken by hills or elevation of any kind, and stretching into the distance, seemingly as if without end. It is a most amazing sight.”

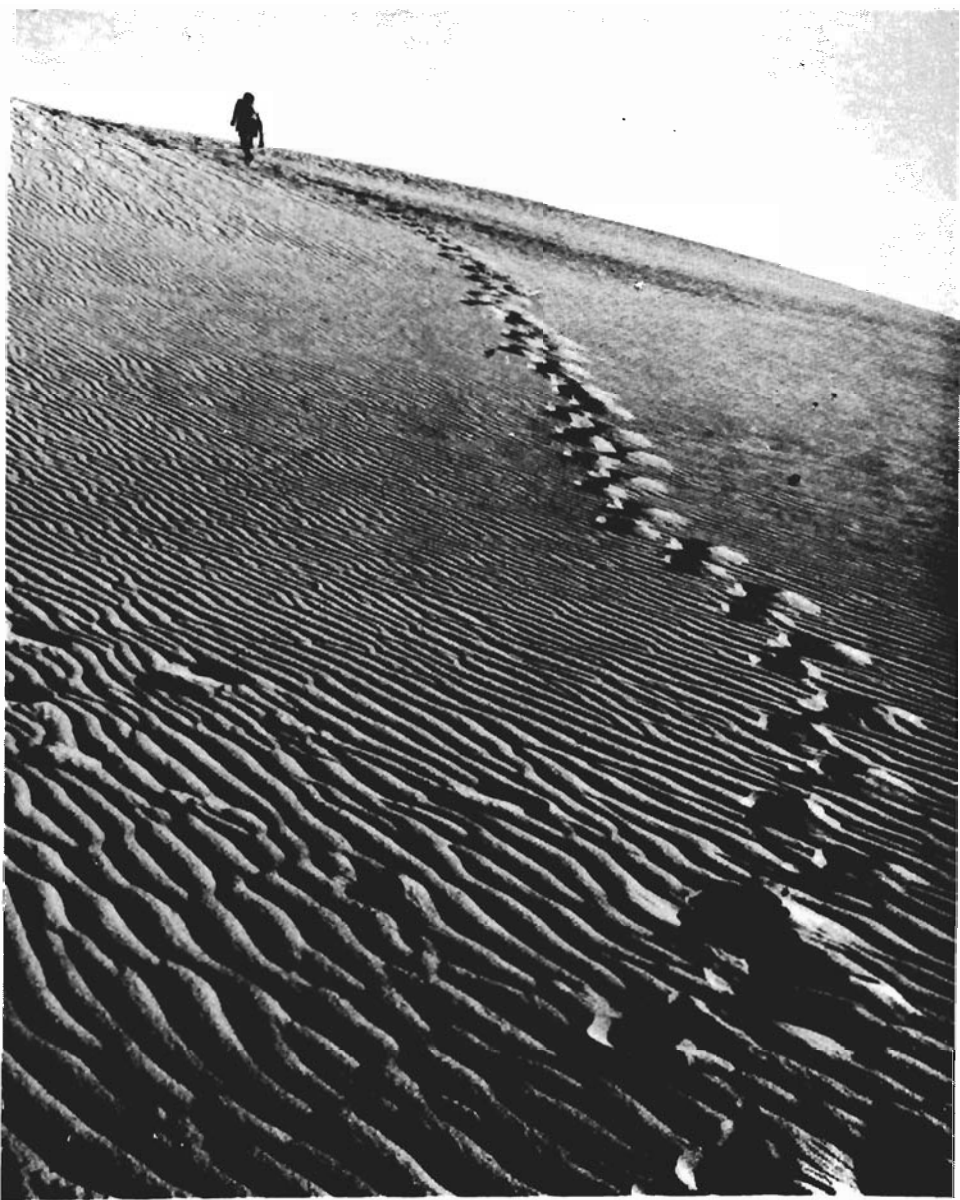
“Was the wilderness, through which the children of Israel wandered, like that?” asked Joan, once more.

“No,” replied her father. “The wilderness of Etham, concerning which we have read this evening, is not flat, but a desert of long, rolling hollows and hills, like the huge waves in an angry sea. Silence broods over it, making it seem even more lonely. In the hollows, the view is shut in, and one seems cut off from his fellows, whilst from the heights, the confusion of hills and valleys stretching into the distance, presents a dismal view of boundless, burning waste.”

“You called it the ‘wilderness of Etham’,” said Peter, “but it is called the wilderness of Shur’ in Exodus 15:22.”

“It is called Etham in Numbers 33:8, and Shur in Exodus 15:22,” replied his father. “‘Etham’ means *Edge*, and the wilderness was on the borders of Egypt; whilst ‘Shur’ means *wall* or *fortification*. The Egyptians built a long line of frontier forts along the wilderness to keep their enemies at bay, so that it was sometimes called the ‘wilderness of Shur’.”

“How long were the Israelites travelling through that



Sand dunes were part of the scenery encountered daily by Israelites during their journeying in the wilderness of Sin.

part?" asked Ann.

"They were three days following the cloud until they came to Marah," replied Mr. Phillips (Exod. 15:23).

"What would they eat and drink?" asked Peter, who delighted to seek out difficulties.

"When they left Egypt they took provisions with them," replied his father (Exod. 12:34). "They included doubtless both food and water, and, in addition, they could have milk to drink from the cattle they had with them."

"What would the cattle eat?" persisted Peter.

"The wilderness was not entirely devoid of vegetation," replied Mr. Phillips, "and, as it happens, it would be at its best at the time when the Israelites passed through it — though, even then, it is not very good. In March, it usually receives a latter rain, which increases the vegetation. Moreover I am quite sure that Yahweh would see that there was ample rain to cause sufficient growth. Indeed, I have seen the Nullabor Plain very lush with growth after a good rain. Thus there was sufficient feed for the cattle, although it was by no means plentiful."

"It would make the people very anxious about the future," remarked Ann.

"Yes," replied Mr. Phillips. "It was not a very pleasant experience. Imagine that great company of people wandering down through the winding valleys and up over the hills until they became completely lost. They were entirely dependent upon the white cloud that led them by day, and the pillar of fire that hovered over them by night. At last they came, tired and dusty, to Marah. There, to their delight, they saw several pools of water. It was an oasis in the desert. They could hardly wait to replenish their containers, and to drink of the refreshing and life-giving water. But their joy was shortlived. The waters were bitter, and the place was called *Marah*, which means 'bitter'."

"You can understand how disappointed the people would be," continued Mr. Phillips. "For three long days they had struggled through the wilderness, and now, as their provisions were diminishing they found the life-giving water undrinkable. They felt that Moses had led them in the wrong direction. Turning angrily upon him, they asked him what they were to drink. In response, God performed the first of many miracles. After Moses had turned to Him in prayer, beseeching His help, God showed him a tree, and told him to cast it into the waters, and they would be made sweet. He did so, and the people found the waters were no longer bitter. They were able to drink them, and were refreshed."

"I suppose that they were then sorry for the way they had

turned on Moses,” said Ann, who had been listening to her father with her chin cupped in her hand, and a thoughtful frown upon her forehead.

“They were certainly humbled,” replied her father. “And to teach them to show more faith in the future, Yahweh gave them a statute and an ordinance (Exod. 15:26). He called upon them to:

(1) Acknowledge Him as God, and avoid idolatry;
(2) Receive His word as binding, and observe all its commandments;

(3) Look to Him as the great Healer of mankind, for as He had healed the waters, so He could heal the people from the great plague of mortality that ends in death.”

“That is rather good,” said Ann, her face lighting up as she saw the point. “It would be a wonderful lesson for Israel to learn. I can see how eagerly the people would rush to the water, after three days in the dry and arid wilderness, and then how disappointed they would be to find the waters bitter and useless. I should think that they would be very much impressed when Moses healed the waters, and then told them that this was a lesson teaching them that Yahweh could heal them.”

“There is another lesson that I see in this incident,” remarked Graeham. “The next verse (Exod. 15:27) shows how they came to Elim where there was ample fresh water, unlike Marah, showing that sufferings come before glory, the cross before the crown.” (Luke 24:26,46; 2 Tim. 2:11-12; Rom. 8:17-19).

“That’s pretty good, Graeham,” remarked Peter. “You must have been reading a book! Do you think there would be any significance in the tree being thrown into the waters?”

“There was no more virtue in the tree than there was in the clay Christ used to make the blind man see (John 9:6),” remarked Mr. Phillips. “The real power was in God, Who did the healing (Exod. 23:25). At Marah, He taught the Israelites that such trials are given to prove them; and if they continued to trust Him, they need have no fear. We, too, must learn that lesson, and recognise that He Who declared unto Israel, ‘I am the LORD (Yahweh) that healeth thee’ (Exod. 15:26), can heal us even of mortality and death. Remember that I told you that the name Yahweh proclaims the future purpose of God? Here it is joined with another Hebrew word *Ropheka* (Physician or Healer). This makes the name mean: *He Who Will be thy Healer*. Significantly, Yahweh becomes such, as at Marah, through a tree!”

“Whatever do you mean by that?” asked Graeham.

"The cross of Christ is called a tree (Gal. 3:13)," explained his father, "and through the sacrifice of the Lord upon the tree, we are healed (Isa. 53:5). Thus, as Yahweh healed the waters of Marah through a tree, so He will heal the bitter waters of mankind (for so they are represented in Isaiah 57:20) by the same means."

"That is very interesting," said Peter.

Refreshed At Elim "Having been taught this lesson by God," continued Mr. Phillips, "the Israelites again moved on, following the white cloud that went before them. Soon they came to a very pleasant oasis in the desert called Elim (Exod. 15:27). Here they found twelve wells of sweet water, surrounded by seventy palm trees. And here they were refreshed. Elim means *mighty ones*, and it was as though God was teaching His people that they could only become Mighty Ones in the Kingdom He will establish, through the bitterness of trial."

"What would the twelve wells represent?" asked Peter, who was busily scribbling untidy notes.

"They, doubtless, represent the twelve tribes of Israel," answered his father. "Thus the palm trees surrounding them are shown as drinking from the wells of Israel, or partaking of the hope of Israel."

"What would the palm trees represent?" asked Ann.

"I believe they represent the nations," replied Mr. Phillips. "According to Genesis 10, the descendants of Noah were divided into seventy different nations (cp. Deut. 32:8 with Deut. 10:22), and if the palm trees represent the nations drinking water from the wells of Israel, we have a wonderful picture of the future. We see Israel at rest and refreshed, we see the nations at peace and drinking from the twelve wells representative of the Israelitish hope, whilst the name of the place (Elim — *Mighty Ones*) points forward to the Lord Jesus and his followers, who will reign with him as Mighty Ones in that day (Isa. 32:1). And, remember that this beautiful picture of the future came after the bitter experience of Marah."

A Last Glimpse Of The Red Sea "But now, as we read in Exodus 16, an even greater trial was experienced by Israel. It took place in the terrible wilderness of Sin, into which they were about to enter. But before taking them into that wilderness, one more arid than even Etham, Yahweh led them down to the Red Sea, where they encamped for a while."

"Why did He do that?" asked Joan.

"Right throughout this remarkable journey, leading to Sinai God taught the Israelites important lessons," explained her father. "In leading them back to the shores of the Red Sea where they encamped, He impressed another important lesson on them. The people had become despondent by their trials. Murmurings had broken out among them, and they were beginning to forget the goodness and mercy of God. So He brought them back to the shores of the Red Sea, on the opposite side of which loomed the mountains of Egypt. From the view before them, they were again reminded of the house of bondage from whence they had been delivered when they were 'baptised into Moses' (1 Cor. 10:1). As they gazed across the waters that divided them from their enemies, they doubtless recalled that the whole of Egypt was still filled with mourning over the death of the firstborn in the last dreadful plague, and in the destruction of their army in the Red Sea. The Israelites would also be reminded, by the deep waters of the ocean that lay between them and Egypt, that there was no hope of return to that land of plenty, (and of slavery), even if they had desired it. Such a sight was well calculated to still any murmurings, and cause them to turn to God with solemn thanks."

"Just a moment, Dad," interjected Graeham. "It doesn't say anything about the Israelites encamping by the Red Sea in Exodus."

"No, that is true," said his father, "but in Numbers 33 there is recorded the complete journeyings of the children of Israel, and in verse 10 you will find that after leaving Elim they 'encamped by the Red Sea'."

"We are taking a long time to get to tonight's reading from Exodus 16," said Peter, with a sly grin, at his sisters.

"I quite agree," said his father. "It does not take long to read a few verses of the Bible, but if we do not think upon what we read, we will not derive the greatest benefit. We must learn to read in pictures: to develop a clear understanding of what took place. We must try to see the desert as it really was in its monotonous, arid, hopelessness, and to feel for the Israelites in their wanderings. Imagine the feelings of parents as they, with their children, were led deeper and deeper into the terrible isolation of that wilderness. If we do that, we will appreciate better why they complained; and instead of condemning them, we may be induced to consider whether we, ourselves, would have acted any differently. To do that takes a little time, Peter! For example, in Exodus 16:2, we read the simple statement, 'the whole congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron in

the wilderness.' It has been a matter of wonder to some, that the people should have turned from God so soon. But by reading the story more carefully, as we have tonight, we can appreciate better why the people murmured, and might well ask ourselves whether we may not have acted similarly under such conditions. We might then learn to be a little less critical, and a little more understanding of others."

"Don't take any notice of him, Daddy," said Ann. "I like it better when you explain it slowly as you do."

"It is really the only way to properly understand these things," said Mr. Phillips. "Care and attention is needed, and that means that we progress slowly."

**The Terrible
Wilderness of Sin
Exodus 16**

"Shortly after leaving the Red Sea," continued Mr. Phillips, "the huge company of Israelites, led by Moses and Aaron, and preceded by the majestic pillar of cloud, entered the Wilderness of Sin."

"Is it called the *Wilderness of Sin* because of the wickedness of Israel?" asked Graeham.

"No, the word in the Hebrew is different to that normally used for transgression," explained her father. "Some have translated it as meaning *bush*. They say that Sinai means *pertaining to the bush*. You will remember that it was in Sinai that Moses saw the bush that burned so fiercely, and yet was not consumed. Now they commenced to enter the Wilderness of the Bush. The people should have remembered what Yahweh had told Moses; that they would worship Him in that place (Exod. 3:12), but, like us sometimes, they had forgotten."

"Is the wilderness of Sin the same as the wilderness of Etham?" asked Ann.

"No," replied her father. "It is different from Etham. Instead of the rolling hills and valleys, it is a place of ravines and cuttings which run through harsh red granite mountains that thrust steeply upwards. These ravines, which are deep and narrow, twist and turn in awful confusion among the mountains, and in their rugged and wild appearance look as though the marks of creation are fresh upon them. Not only were the people completely lost in the wild maze of valleys, and awed by the harsh, rough scenery about them, but now their provisions were running out. Each day found less and less to eat, until their state became desperate. As Moses and Aaron went in and out among the people, murmurings were heard on every side, until, at last, they erupted in one terrible accusation. You can read it for me, please Joan, in Exodus 16:3."

Joan read: "The children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

"Thank you, Joan," said Mr. Phillips. "You can see how that in just a few weeks the people had forgotten their sufferings in Egypt, and remembered only the plenty that they had to eat. However, there is one word in that verse that you should underline in your Bibles. It is the key to the statement the people made. Do you know what word I am referring to?"

"It is the word *ye*," said Graeham. "It shows that the people no longer thought that God was with Moses, so they said, '*ye* (and not God) have brought us here'."

"That is correct," said his father. "Now notice Moses' reply recorded in verse 6. He gathered the people before him, and told them that they would receive flesh and bread from God that they might know that '*Yahweh* brought them out of Egypt,' and Moses was but His servant to that end. As he spake the 'glory of *Yahweh* appeared in the cloud' (v. 10). It shone forth in a blinding light as though as to warn the people of the folly of their ways. The murmurings of the people died down as they saw this sight, and heard the words of Moses. Then, as evening drew on, they beheld a miracle. The sky was covered with quails which God had drawn to the spot. The birds flew low, and settled upon the ground, enabling the people to catch sufficient for their needs. Thus they were provided with flesh to eat."

"That should have caused them to think," remarked Ann.

"It should have done so," agreed Mr. Phillips. "But unfortunately people soon forget."

The Wonderful Manna From Heaven

"The appearance of the quails in the desert was but the beginning of wonders," continued Mr. Phillips. "Next morning, when the Israelites arose, and the rising sun had caused the dew to ascend, the people found the earth covered with small, round flakes. 'What is this?' they asked in amazement, for they had not seen anything like it before. Moses explained that this was the bread that *Yahweh* had provided (v. 15). He set the people to gather it up, and when it was measured out, an omer (7 pints) was provided for each person. They ground it in handmills, or beat it in mortars, and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. It was then used as bread, tasting like wafers made with honey."

"Before you continue," said Graeham, interrupting his father, "Exodus 16:15 says that the people called it *Manna*, and yet it goes on to say that they 'knew not what it was.' That seems a contradiction."

"The word 'Manna' should not appear in that way in the verse," explained his father. "Manna is a Hebrew word meaning *What is this?* (see the Margin, or the Revised Version). It should appear in the Bible as a question. The Israelites asked, 'What is this?' for they knew not what it was."

"Where did it come from?" asked Joan.

"God provided it by His angels. In Psalm 78:25 it is called 'angels' food'."

"Does that mean the angels eat it?"

"No. I rather think it means that the angels provided it. The giving of the Manna was a miracle which appeared every day, and sustained the Israelites throughout the forty years of their journey through the wilderness until they reached the Promised Land. Then, as suddenly as it began, it stopped (Joshua 5:12). Meanwhile they had to gather it every day, and like the Passover Lamb, they had to consume it all, leaving none for the next morning. Some people did not observe these instructions, and the manna they had went bad, which caused Moses to be angry with them. On the sixth day of every week, however, the people were told to gather twice as much, to last them over the seventh day, when they had to rest from their normal activity, and give their time completely to God. God preserved the manna on that day so that it did not corrupt. He also instructed Aaron to put some in a golden pot that was later placed in the Ark of the Covenant when it was built; and this manna was miraculously preserved until the Ark was lost (Exod. 16:33; Heb. 9:4)."

"That all seems very strange, Daddy," remarked Ann.

The Manna As A Type Of The Truth "It is a beautiful type of the Truth in Christ Jesus," explained her father.

"Many centuries later, Jesus taught the people that the Manna was a type pointing forward to himself (John 6:31-38). He told them that as their fathers had eaten the manna of Moses in the wilderness to preserve their natural lives, so they should eat the manna which he could give them in order that they might attain unto everlasting life (John 6:51). All the incidents connected with the giving of the manna point forward to him. As the Israelites said of the Manna, 'What is this?' so they asked the same question of Jesus (John 9:29), for they could not understand his teaching or his mission. As the

Manna came from God, so also did the Lord (John 8:23), for he is the Son of God. As the Manna was necessary to sustain life in the wilderness, so Christ is necessary for our spiritual life today. As the Israelites were not allowed to let the Manna corrupt, so God did not suffer His holy one to see corruption (Acts 2:24,27). As the Manna was preserved in the Ark, in the Most Holy Place, so Christ has entered into the Most Holy (heaven), never to see corruption (Heb. 9:24). As the Manna was hidden by the dew, and was seen at the beginning of the new day, so the Lord speaks of the hidden manna to be revealed at his second coming, and given to the faithful. He declared: 'To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna' (Rev. 2:17)."

"What does that mean?" asked Ann, who was intently following all this.

"It means that if we are faithful to the teaching of the Bible, we will receive everlasting life at Christ's coming. You remember that the Israelites were commanded not to gather manna on the seventh day. Instead they were told to gather twice as much on the day before, and God promised that He would preserve this additional manna. Every seventh day, therefore, they witnessed that miracle: the additional manna they had gathered was preserved. So it will be at the millennium which was foreshadowed by the seventh day. Those who have faithfully followed the commandments of God will be preserved for ever. Meanwhile, as Paul taught, 'their lives are hid with Christ in God,' and when he appears, 'they shall appear with him in glory' (Col. 3:3)."

"What does that mean?"

"It means that our characters are kept in memory by God, and at the coming of the Lord, those approved by him will receive their reward. But we must follow the conditions set down by God. They include a daily gathering of the Manna of Life that today is found in His Word. When we study the Bible, we are figuratively partaking of manna. When we pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' we need to bear in mind something more vital than natural food: even the spiritual bread which, eaten daily, will give us strength to do those things pleasing in the sight of Yahweh, assisting us to attain unto eternal life. We are to eat of that bread, absorbing it into our minds, so that it becomes part of ourselves, causing us to think and act as God would have us do. By that means, we will be, as Jesus said, 'taught of God' (John 6:45)."

"Do you think the Israelites would have drawn that lesson from the giving of the manna?" asked Graeham.

"I believe some would," answered Mr. Phillips. "In any case, Moses tried to teach the people the lesson. Read Deuteronomy 8:2-3 for me please, Joan."

Joan read: "Thou shalt remember all the way which Yahweh thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Yahweh doth man live."

"Thank you, Joan," said Mr. Phillips. "You can see by those words that Moses understood the lesson of the Manna. It was to teach the people that they were to be more concerned with following God than seeking their natural wants."

**Did Jesus
Pre-exist?**

"Christ's teaching concerning the manna in John 6 is always difficult to understand," said Graeham, as his father paused.

"Yes, some of the disciples found it so when he spake those words, so that we read that 'many left him' (John 6:66)," remarked his father. "There is a splendid account of this chapter given in *Nazareth Revisited* (p. 285), which you will find well worth reading. But what are you particularly referring to?"

"All of it," replied Graeham. "Consider verse 38 as an example. Jesus there says that he came down from heaven! How are we to understand that?"

"Jesus, himself, explains it," answered Mr. Phillips. "He called the Manna given the Israelites in the wilderness 'bread from heaven' (v. 32), and in the same verse likened himself to 'the true bread from heaven'. How did God give the Israelites Manna in the wilderness?"

"It was a miracle, performed by His spirit, I suppose."

"True. It was 'bread from heaven' in the sense that it was bread supplied to the people by God in heaven. The Manna was not made in heaven and then made to float down the interminable distances between heaven and earth in order to supply the people; but rather God in heaven, miraculously formed the Manna on earth for their benefit."

"I can understand that!"

"Well, that is how Yahweh provided the 'true bread from heaven', even the Lord Jesus Christ. As Gabriel explained, he

was born by the Holy Spirit coming upon his mother. In that sense, he 'came from heaven' because the Holy Spirit is from heaven (Luke 1:32-33). The statement does not mean that he was bodily in heaven before he appeared on earth, any more than it does when it describes the Manna as 'bread from heaven'. By the Holy Spirit Jesus was born, and later raised from the dead. By it also, his nature was changed to immortality, which in other places is called 'divine nature' (2 Pet. 1:4), or a spirit body (1 Cor. 15:44; Rom. 1:3); and so he ascended into heaven. Thus he ascended to where he originated (v. 62). Likewise, the Manna was supplied by the Spirit of God, and what remained after the people had gathered their requirements, melted in the sun, and so was gathered back from whence it came (Exod. 16:21)."

"Are there any further lessons to be learned in the giving of the Manna"?

"There are many lessons, but we have not the time to deal with them all," said Mr. Phillips. "The provision of Manna taught the people to have faith in God Who provides all the necessities of life. Jesus taught this when he said: 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on . . .' (Matt. 6:25). Paul also impressed the same lesson, in some wonderful words of which we should take note. He wrote: 'Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content' (1 Tim. 6:6-8).

"But it is necessary to take some thought for these things," protested Ann, a little impatiently. "After all, if mother did not take any thought about getting dinner you would not have any; and then I think we would hear some complaining!"

"The word really means *anxious thought*, and is so rendered in some versions," explained Mr. Phillips. "Christ told his disciples to exercise faith, and not to be over-anxious about the things of this life. We are to take normal care, of course. We are to work for our living, and engage in the everyday duties of life, but we must not make these things our whole concern. Many in Israel did. They had no faith in the Almighty as a Provider, and so they sinned grievously. If we work well, as God would have us do (Ephesians 6:5), and faithfully seek His face at all times, He will bless our labours, both temporal and spiritual, so that we will have a sufficiency in all things, and our natural strength will be adequate for the work He would have us do in His service."

Chapter Ten

WAR IN THE WILDERNESS

Thirst At Rephidim (Exodus 17) The cloud moved ever onwards, pausing at Dophkah and Alush, and the huge concourse of Israelites followed it, camping every evening and moving on again next morning. Gradually the people began to tire of their lot. The monotony of their journey is implied in the Bible particularly in Numbers 33, where their wanderings from place to place are recorded. Constantly the words “departed” and “pitched” occur, until it becomes tiring even to read them!

At last, tired, weary and thirsty, they came to Rephidim (meaning: *The Places of Rest*). Rephidim, today known as the Wadi Firan, contains the largest oasis in southern Sinai. Palm trees flourish there in profusion. The people viewed the sight of those trees with hope, but to their disappointment, “there was no water to drink” (Exod. 17:1). In fact, the water is underground, and must be dug as a well. But the people did not know that. All they could see was a sandy waste overshadowed by massive, rugged, granite mountains. They could see no relief from the death by thirst that seemed to threaten them. In despair they turned on Moses with demands for water. Once again Moses made the complaints of the people a matter of prayer, beseeching Yahweh for help. And once again the Voice of God came to him, instructing him what to do. He gathered together all the elders of Israel, and led them to a rock in Horeb which stood boldly apart from all others. Then, at the command of Yahweh, he smote it with his rod, and to the amazed eyes of the elders, a large stream of living water gushed out and flowed along the valley providing for the needs of the people.

Once again, Yahweh showed the people that they had no need to fear if they would but trust Him. However, because of their lack of faith, the place was called “Massah” and “Merri-bah.” The first word means *temptation* or *trial*. It was given that name to remind the people of the way in which they had tried Yahweh saying: “Is Yahweh among us or not?” The second word means *strife* and it recalled the way in which the people had striven against Moses and against Yahweh. Indeed, so angry had they been that they were on the point of stoning Moses to death (Exod. 17:4).

**The Battle Of
Rephidim
(Exodus 17)**

A new danger now threatened Israel. As the people rested, having toiled up the steeply-rising valley that leads to Rephidim, which is in the heart of the Sinai

Peninsula, close to Mount Horeb, they were suddenly, and without warning, attacked by a band of Amalekites. These cowardly and ruthless marauders, swooped down upon the Israelites, cutting off those who lagged behind while they were "faint and weary" from their journey (Deut. 25:17-18; Exod. 17:8).

For a moment, the future of the Israelites trembled in the balance, as partial success attended the attack of the Amalekites; but, fortunately, they were not in sufficient strength to complete the attack, and Israel was successful in driving them off.

Once again, the people had learnt the meaning of fear. How long were the difficulties of this terrible journey to last! Little did they realise that the troubles were of their own making, and were brought about by their own lack of faith. If they had put complete trust in Yahweh, they would have been saved much evil and many disappointments. "Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways," declared God. "I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand against their adversaries . . ." But "My people would not hearken to My voice, and Israel would have none of Me" (Psalm 81:11,14).

Meanwhile, the camp of Israel was fearful. The Amalekites might again attack at any moment, in greater force. They were a very powerful people, the "first of the nations" at that time (Num. 24:20). Their leader was a powerful chieftain called Agag (Num. 24:7), or Gog, according to the Greek Old Testament (the *Septuagint*). Josephus, the Jewish historian says that his army comprised a combination of various tribes.

Israel was threatened by an army that foreshadowed the latter day opponent prophesied in Ezekiel 38, that will invade the land of Israel "to take a spoil and to take a prey" (v. 16). That army, likewise, will be commanded by one called Gog, and will likewise head a confederacy of nations. And it, like the Amalekites, will be overthrown by the might of Yahweh.

Because of Gog's cowardly attack on His people, Yahweh commanded that he must be punished. Following His instructions, Moses appointed Joshua as captain of the army of Israel, and told him to choose sufficient men to join battle with Amalek.

On the morrow Joshua led the army of Israel against their

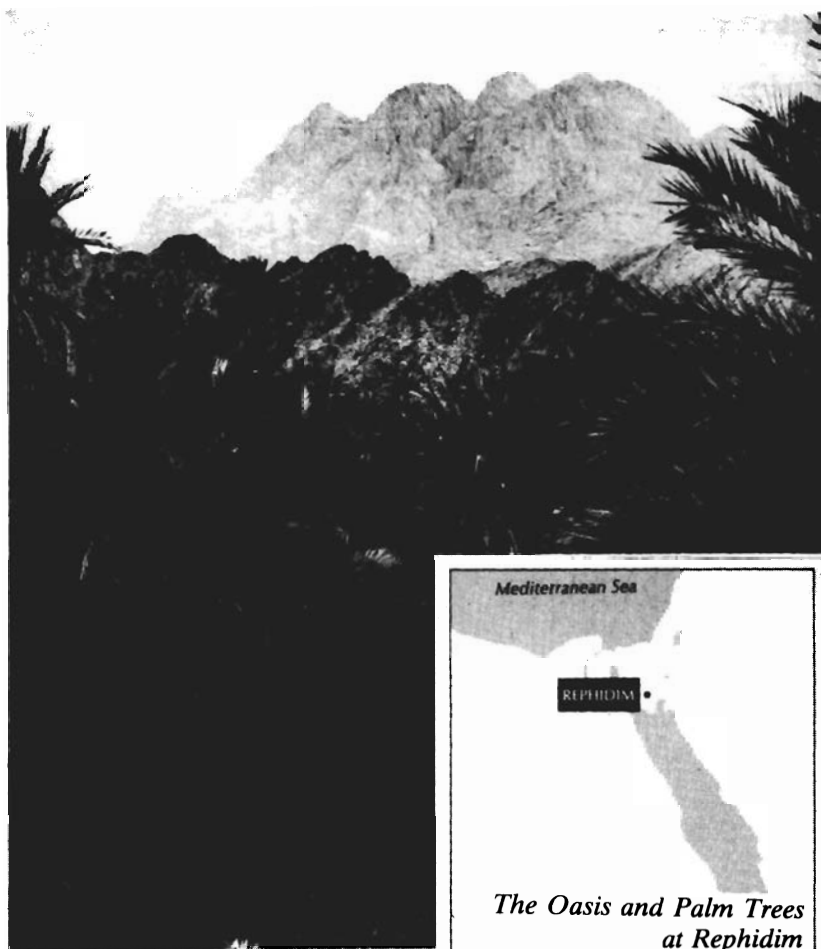
powerful enemy. The odds were with Amalek, but Israel knew that they must succeed, or be completely destroyed. The battle raged fiercely in a valley, under a hill, upon which Moses, Aaron and Hur (the Lawgiver, the Priest, and the Prince) were able to watch its progress. Down below they could see the opposing forces struggling for the victory. Men fought one with the other, as the powerful army of Amalek battled to gain the mastery over Israel, which fought for its very existence. As he gazed down upon the scene of confusion and warfare, Moses lifted his hands in prayer. Instantly a change in the fortune of battle took place. Amalek was driven back, and thus encouraged, the soldiers of Israel pressed forward their attack. But Moses' hands grew tired, and as they drooped through weariness of the flesh, Amalek prevailed, and Israel was driven back discouraged.

This experience revealed to Israel that the nation would not be "saved by the multitude of an army," but by faith in Yahweh (Psalm 33:16-18; 20:7). Furthermore, as the people saw how Moses' hands drooped through weariness, they were taught that whilst the spirit might be willing, the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41), and there is a constant need to "lift up the hands that hang down" (Heb. 12:12). This can be done by seeking strength for life's journey through prayer and faith.

The battle raged all day long, but gradually the mighty forces of Amalek were driven back and, at last, were compelled to flee in complete disorder. Israel, who had appeared so small and feeble in comparison, was left in triumphant possession of the field.

But Yahweh was the real Victor. Amalek had fought in the name of its god, Baal, and its defeat demonstrated that this god was a mere idol, of no power. In attacking Israel, the nation had fought against God, and now He took up the challenge. Amalek had fled from the scene of battle, but Yahweh pronounced a declaration of war against that nation. He decreed that there was never to be peace between Israel and Amalek; the battle would be resumed at a later date, and would be maintained until Amalek ceased as a nation (Exod. 17:14). Not until the advent of David was this Declaration of War brought to a successful conclusion.

Yahweh decreed this bitter conflict against Amalek because that nation, figuratively, represented the power of the flesh. True Israelites must never make peace with such an army, but must continue the bitter warfare until the end. If the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) does that, and fights the flesh in the strength of Yahweh, its ultimate victory is sure.



Meanwhile, the people returned to their tents with this further evidence of Yahweh's power, and His care for them. In view of the outstanding victory, Moses built an altar and called it *Yahweh-nissi*, which means: *Yahweh my ensign*. This altar prefigured the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:10) who is called the Ensign that Yahweh will set up in Israel (Isaiah 11:10-12). He will obtain the victory of Israel when the latter-day Gog (the Amalek of the time of the end) swoops down upon God's people of Israel then dwelling in the land.

This wonderful victory over the mighty Amalek confederacy foreshadowed Christ's coming conquest of the world

of Gentilism. This was revealed, not only in the parable of the altar that Moses erected, and which pointed forward to Christ, but in the action of Moses on the mount when the army of Israel was battling with that of Amalek. He sought rest by sitting on a stone, whilst Aaron and Hur supported his hands in prayer. Moses' state speaks of the weakness of flesh, but the stone that bore his weight, and the arms supported in prayer by Aaron and Hur suggest Yahweh's strength made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The type presented by this incident is a faith-stimulating one. The Lord Jesus Christ is described as the Stone of Israel (Genesis 49:24; Matt. 21:42). All who desire strength can rest on him Paul wrote: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

The three men on the mountain overlooking the fighting in the valley foreshadowed both the work and status of the Lord. Moses represented the Law; Aaron represented the priesthood; Hur, the prince of Judah, represented the government. Christ combines all these offices. He is Lawgiver, Priest and King. As Moses rested upon the stone that typified the Lord, so the whole Israelitish system rested upon the success of Christ's ministry. Moreover it foreshadowed the means of victory; it illustrated the principle set forth by John: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Moses underlined these lessons when, after victory had been won, he built the altar and called it *Yahweh Nissi*. If we would succeed in the battle of life, we must gather at the Christ-altar. It sets forth the principle of sacrifice as a means of victory, for the altar speaks of the first, whilst the ensign proclaims the second. This is a subject worthy of close study and meditation. And whilst some of our young readers may not understand all that we have set down in relation to this wonderful incident, if they continue to think upon it, its significance will gradually unfold for them, as did victory for Moses and Joshua in the battle of Rephidim.

**How Moses
Preached The
Gospel To His
Father-in-law —
Exodus 18**

"This chapter is really a gem!" commented Mr. Phillips, as Joan completed the reading of Exodus 18. "You will remember that Moses had sent Zipporah, his wife, and Gershom and Eliezer, his sons, back home to stay with Jethro, his father-in-law, whilst he returned to Egypt to deliver the people of Israel."

"Yes, I remember that," said Ann. "You explained what the names Gershom and Eliezer mean, but you did not tell us

what Jethro means, and I find it very interesting to learn the meanings of these names.”

“I think Dad might have dodged that point because it is a bit difficult,” said Peter, with a grin.

“What’s difficult about it?” asked Graeham.

“In Exodus 18, Moses’ father-in-law is called Jethro, but in Exod. 2:18 he is called Reuel,” said Peter. “Did Moses have two fathers-in-law?”

“No, Peter,” replied Mr. Phillips. “It was quite common, in those times, for men to have two names. For example, Peter was also known as Cephas; Paul was sometimes called Saul, and Solomon was also named Jedidiah (2 Sam. 12:25).”

“What was the reason for that?” asked Peter.

“A man’s name might be altered because of some change in his life, such as when Saul accepted Christ and became known as Paul (Acts 13:9). Or, he might have an official name and a personal name,” explained Mr. Phillips. “The official name told something of the position he held among men, whilst his personal name was that by which he was known among his friends.”

“Did that apply to Jethro?” asked Graeham.

“I believe so,” replied his father. “The word ‘Reuel’ means *a friend of God*, whilst ‘Jethro’ means *One who is pre-eminent*. Jethro was pre-eminent because of his position as prince and priest of Midian, but the name Reuel also became him, for I feel sure that God would approve of some of his ways.”

“Why do you say that this chapter is a ‘gem’?” asked Peter.

“It only tells us that Jethro brought Zipporah, his daughter, back to Moses, and then gave him some advice, and went home.”

“There is much more in it than that!” replied his father.

“But you have to open your eyes to see it Peter! When you do, you will find that the events of this chapter affected the family of Jethro for hundreds of years afterwards and will yet do so in the future!”

“Well, I must confess that I agree with Peter,” said Graeham. “I really don’t know what you are driving at!”

“That’s two in the family with blind eyes,” answered Mr. Phillips, with a chuckle.

“Now, Daddy, enough of this!” said Ann, impatiently.

“You are only leading us on. Now tell us all about it.”

“Well, you know what the chapter is about,” replied her father.

“Yes, it shows how Jethro brought Zipporah, the wife of Moses, and his two grand-children back to Moses,” said

Peter.

“Jethro must have been very surprised to learn that the shepherd who used to look after his sheep was now the leader of a mighty nation,” said Ann.

“I think Moses would have told Jethro all about that before he left to deliver Israel,” remarked Graham.

“That is probably true,” agreed his father. “Moses knew that God was going to bring the children of Israel to Mt. Sinai to worship (Exod. 3:12), and doubtless sent Zipporah back to the home of Jethro until he returned there with the people of Israel. Now that he had arrived at Rephidim, he sent and told Jethro of all that God had done for Israel (Exodus 18:1). As a result, Jethro brought Zipporah and her two boys to the encampment of Israel.”

“Moses and Jethro seemed to have thought very highly of each other,” said Ann, who was pondering verse seven.

“Yes,” replied her father. “After they had asked each other of their welfare, Moses took Jethro into his tent, and proceeded to teach him the gospel.”

“Just a moment, Dad!” protested Peter. “I have not read that in Exodus 18.”

“I told you that you have blind eyes, Peter,” said his father with a smile. “Though you cannot see it, it is there all the same, and, indeed, is one of the gems of this chapter. You know what the word *gospel* means, don’t you?”

“Yes, it means *good news*, or *glad tidings*.”

“And what is the ‘good news’ about?” Mr. Phillips.

“It is about the Kingdom of God,” replied Peter.

“True,” agreed Mr. Phillips. “But what constituted the Kingdom of God in the past?”

“The nation of Israel was the Kingdom of God,” answered Peter.

“How do you make that out?” asked Ann.

“Because it was God’s Kingdom,” said Peter. “God was its Lawgiver, and the people obeyed Him. In fact, it is called the ‘Kingdom of Yahweh’ in many places (Exodus 19:6; 1 Chron. 28:5; 1 Chron. 29:23). I understand that, but I cannot see what Dad is driving at!”

“Peter is right,” said Mr. Phillips. “When God sent Moses to deliver His people, and then taught them to seek His salvation through the lesson of the Passover Lamb, and then baptised them in the Red Sea, and cared for them in their journey to Mt. Sinai, He was preparing the people to become His Kingdom on earth. He became their King, and they became His nation.”

"I know that," said Graeham, "but I still do not see what it has to do with Exodus 18, nor how it shows that Moses preached the gospel to Jethro."

"We read how he did that in verse eight," said his father. "When Moses took Jethro into his tent, he told him all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and Egypt for Israel's sake, and all the troubles that had come upon Israel on the way, and how Yahweh had delivered them. In telling Jethro all that, Moses was actually explaining to his father-in-law the way of salvation which leads to the setting up of God's Kingdom on earth. That was the 'gospel,' or 'good news' concerning Israel. When Jethro heard all this, he 'rejoiced for all the goodness which Yahweh had done to Israel' (v. 9)."

Horeb: Where Moses fed his flock.



"Did it make any impression on him?" asked Ann.

"Yes, indeed!" replied her father. "Jethro told Moses, 'Now *I know* that Yahweh is greater than all gods' (v. 11). Moses had evidently told him the truth concerning Yahweh before he left for Egypt, but now that Jethro had seen and heard all that God had done for Israel, he was convinced. He accepted Yahweh as supreme, and worshipped Him by offering a sacrifice unto Him and by eating bread before God in company with Moses and the elders of Israel (v. 12). In that way Jethro accepted the worship of Yahweh, and the hope of Israel."

"If he were a priest of Midian he would have to forsake its gods," said Peter.

"That is true," agreed his father.

"But if he took upon himself the hope of Israel, why did he not stay with Moses?" persisted Peter, trying to find a flaw in his father's explanation.

"Perhaps he returned home to tell his family also of the hope of Israel," replied Mr. Phillips.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because we find the family of Jethro finally throwing in their lot with Israel, and travelling with them to the Promised Land."

"That is very interesting, if it can be proved," said Graeham.

"It can be proved, alright," remarked his father. "In Numbers 10:29-32 we find Hobab, the son of Jethro, invited by Moses to join with Israel, and promising that if he did so, 'it shall be, that what goodness Yahweh shall do unto Israel, the same would be done unto Hobab' (v. 32)."

"Did they join with Israel?" asked Ann.

"Yes," replied her father. "In Judges 1:16 we read that 'the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law . . . dwelt among the people.' The Bible traces the history of these people throughout the centuries. They proved very faithful, and rendered valuable service unto Yahweh."

"That is very interesting," said Peter. "Can you give me the references?"

"Yes," said his father. "In Judges 4:11 you read how they came into the Land of Promise; in Judges 5:23-27 you find that the whole of Israel learnt to sing the praises of Jael, the wife of Heber, who was a descendant of Jethro; in 1 Chronicles 2:55 you learn that the descendants of Jethro were registered with the tribe of Judah, and that Rechab was a notable man among them; in 2 Kings 10:15 you learn that the sons of Rechab, the

descendants of Jethro, remained faithful when most of Israel had departed from God; in Jeremiah 35 you find the prophet setting the Rechabites (descendants of Jethro) before Israel as a notable example of righteousness, and promising that when the Kingdom of God is set up in the future there will be found in it some of Jethro's descendants having obtained life eternal (v. 19)."

"Does the Rechabite Lodge get its name from this chapter?" asked Graeham.

"Yes," replied his father. "Jonadab, the son of Rechab, commanded his sons that they were not to drink wine (Jer. 35:6), the Rechabites in ancient Israel became noted for abstinence. Today, the Rechabite Lodge uses the name because it does not believe in drinking wine either. But, unfortunately, that is as far as they go in the beliefs of the

"Well, this is an amazing chapter," said Ann. "Whoever would have thought that out of this visit of Jethro to Moses, we would be able to trace the story of a family throughout the ages, and even link it up with a Lodge with which we are familiar today. Why, we conduct our Sunday School in the Rechabite Hall! It is a pity we can't teach the Rechabites the Truth as Moses did to Jethro when he looked after his sheep!"

"It shows you the value of searching the Bible, and not merely reading it," explained her father. "Moses taught the Truth to Jethro. He embraced it, and as a result, many of his descendants will gain an inheritance in the Kingdom when Christ comes to restore it. But, before we leave our friend Jethro, remember also the good advice he gave Moses."

"What was that?"

"He stayed a few days with the great leader, and discovered to his surprise and consternation that each morning there was a long line of people, waiting to pour out their complaints or accusations against others into the ears of Moses. He had to listen to all this, and judge between right and wrong. As Jethro watched, he saw that the people became impatient because many of them had to wait so long before their turn came. He saw, also, that Moses became increasingly tired. Later in the day, he told Moses, quite bluntly, that his method was foolish. 'Both you and the people will be worn out by this method,' he said. 'Appoint some of the best men among you to sit in judgment upon the smaller matters, and reserve the most important decisions for yourself.'"

"Moses, seeing the wisdom of this, appointed able men of Israel to assist him in the work of judging. Thus his labours were lightened, and the people also were better pleased, for

now their affairs were quickly settled, avoiding the delay that they previously endured (Deut. 1:13-18). By this even Moses was taught to apply wisdom as well as faith to the work of God."

"Well," said Ann, as her father finished. "I quite agree that this chapter is a gem! What do you think now, Peter?"

"Oh, I think Dad is doing quite well; he's improving," said Peter, with a grin, as he saw an indignant look spreading over the face of his sister. "But there is one little matter I still want to clear up. Dad quoted Judges 4:11 and referred to Hobab as the son of Jethro, but there it says that Hobab was the father-in-law of Moses. Did Jethro have three names?"

"No, elsewhere we read that Hobab was the son of Reuel (i.e., Raguel — the same word in Hebrew). The Hebrew word translated *father-in-law* really denotes a relation. It can be translated *brother-in-law*. The Revised Version reads: 'Hobab, the *brother-in-law* of Moses.' Does that clear the matter up alright for you, Peter?"

"Yes, thank you, Dad," replied Peter. "It is very interesting."

"There is one final point to remember," continued Mr. Phillips. "As the attitude of Jethro affected the future of many of his descendants, so our attitude towards the Truth can influence the lives of those who are close to us. We need ever remember that fact throughout life, and so seek the way of Yahweh that we may experience His goodness."

Chapter Eleven

BEFORE SINAI

After a short stay at Rephidim, the white cloud — the symbol of Yahweh's presence with His people — again moved forward, and the huge company of Israelites left their "places of rest" for Mt. Horeb.

Almost three months had elapsed since they left Egypt (Exod. 19:1), and they were to remain in the vicinity of Mt. Sinai for about eleven months (Num. 10:11).

The cloud led them through a long, winding valley, that led ever upwards, shut in by huge, granite mountains that rose steeply on either side, and which were eroded into many curious shapes. The valley was so hemmed in that it caused a feeling of claustrophobia, of loneliness and awe in the Israelites who slowly wandered along its path. They felt cut off from all mankind, and became concerned at what the outcome of their journey might be. Finally they entered a large plain some two miles long and half a mile wide. Here the cloud stopped, and the people encamped.

Before them was Mount Horeb — a huge mass of hard, red granite, rising abruptly from the plain beneath, like a massive altar of unhewn stone built by the hand of God. Its base was a sheer and precipitate cliff, so that it is described as "a mountain that could be touched."

What feelings of wonder and awe must have gripped the people as they encamped before Mount Horeb, and awaited the revelation of God. The very surroundings must have induced a feeling of solemnity in them as they saw themselves shut in by huge, granite mountains that rose on every side. And this feeling of awe must have increased as they recalled the events of the past months — how they had doubted God, how they had murmured against Moses, how Yahweh had manifested Himself in miracles of power.

After the people had encamped, Moses ascended the Mount. Again he heard the Voice of Yahweh through His angel. It called upon the nation to accept the covenant that would be put before it:

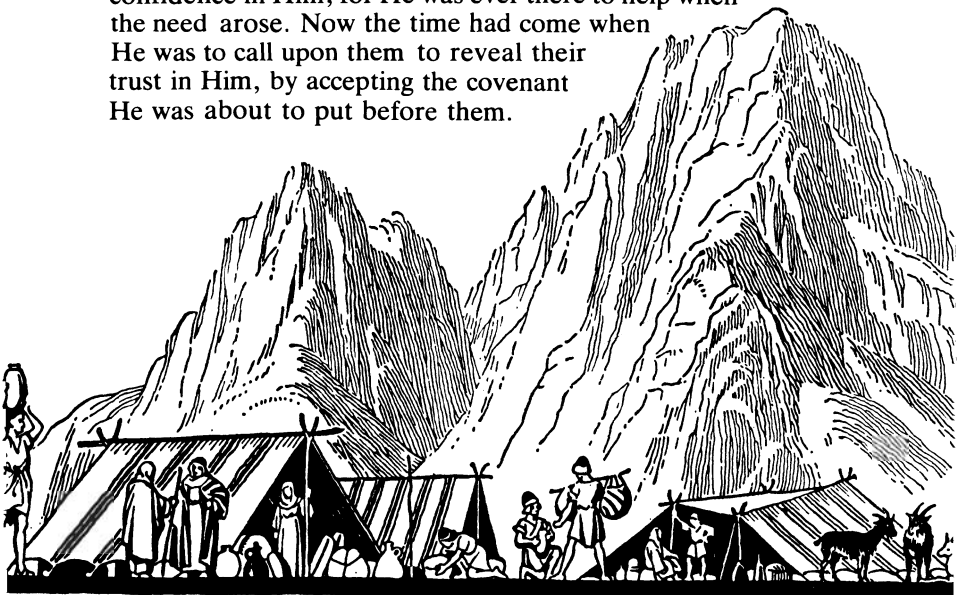
"Thus shall ye say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed,

and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation” (Exod. 19:3-6).

The words reminded Moses of the wonderful events that had taken place since he had witnessed the burning bush at the foot of the Mount, the terrible plagues that had brought Egypt to its knees, the destruction of Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea, the loving care Yahweh had manifested towards the people despite their murmurings in the provision of manna and water, the remarkable victory over warlike Amalek. As he thought upon those things, Moses’ heart would have filled with gratitude to the loving, merciful God Who had preserved His people to that moment of time.

Yes! Moses appreciated how Yahweh had carried Israel as the eagle is said to carry its young. It is said that some species of birds try to harden their young, and give them confidence for flying, by driving them from the nest. As the young bird flutters down helplessly towards what must seem like certain death, the parent bird will swoop down, and bear its young to safety upon its own broad wings. Thus the young birds learn to trust the parent birds. They are conscious of their presence, hovering over them, keeping them from danger, and assisting them to gain the confidence to fly.

Similarly, God had allowed His people to suffer difficulties, and to face danger, that they might develop faith and confidence in Him, for He was ever there to help when the need arose. Now the time had come when He was to call upon them to reveal their trust in Him, by accepting the covenant He was about to put before them.



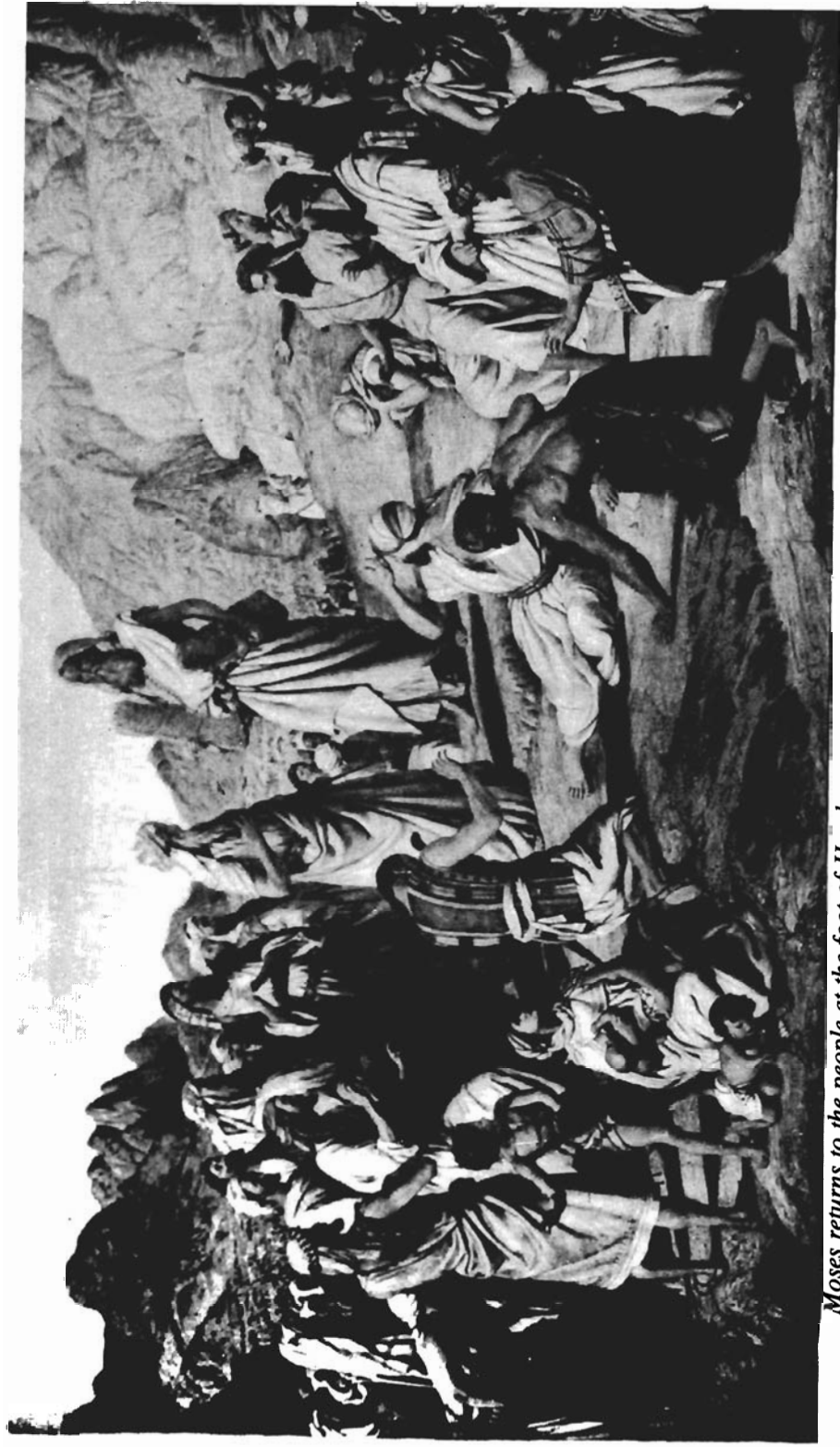
It must not be thought that God's covenant was a mutual agreement that the people could accept or reject as they desired. His covenant was a decree, a commandment (Deut. 4:13; 29:1; Psa. 105:8) which He called upon them to obey. To refuse to do so meant death for Israel (Deut. 30:19). It would have been like the young eagle refusing the protection of its parent's wing — certain destruction would be its lot. Yahweh had led Israel to a place from which there was no escape, in order to teach them that man is without hope apart from Him. Then He revealed unto them the way by which they could reach the Promised Land.

With this message and command of God, Moses returned to the people. They accepted the covenant, saying: "All that Yahweh hath spoken we will do" (Exod. 19:7).

How God Manifested Himself at Sinai — Exodus 19 That was the first of seven ascents that Moses made into the Mount to meet with the angel of God, and to mediate on behalf of the people (1) — Exodus 19:3-6; (2) — Exod. 19:8-13; (3) — Exod. 19:20-24; (4) — Exod. 20:21; (5) — Exod. 24:15-18; (6) — Exod. 32:31-33; (7) — Exod. 34:1-4. At the conclusion of these negotiations, Israel, was properly organised into a nation designed as the Kingdom of God on earth. It was given a law, a tabernacle at which to worship, and clearly defined regulations for the well-being of the people.

Moses ascended the Mount the second time, to convey to the angel the answer of the people. He then received further instructions. The people were commanded to prepare themselves to meet with the angel of God in three days' time. They were to be clean both in mind and body, and were strictly warned against touching the Mount "lest they die." God told Moses: "Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever" (Exodus 19:9). Yahweh was about to openly manifest Himself to Moses, and proclaim the basis of His covenant in the ears of all the people, in order that they might see, hear, and obey. Apart from such an open display, the people may have argued that Moses had only pretended to have spoken with the angel of God, and that the Law was not from God. But that could never be said, and, indeed, was never said. In fact, Israel knew "that God spake unto Moses" (John 9:29).

Moses returned to the people, and instructed them of what they were to do. Filled with awe, the people prepared themselves for the great day when Yahweh would manifest His glory



Moses returns to the people at the foot of Horeb

to them. On the third day, when they arose, they found a thick cloud covering the top of the huge, rough mountain before them. And as the people watched fearfully, wondering what the day would reveal, they heard the beginnings of a terrible storm. First they heard a long roll of thunder, that gradually increased in strength, until it erupted in a tremendous explosion of noise that seemed to rock the valley in which they were encamped, and to echo among the surrounding mountains until it was lost in the distance. But this was only the beginning. Peal after peal of thunder crashed across the heavens, brilliant flashes of lightning darted out from the thick cloud above, to illuminate the gloom; and then, sounding louder than all this, there was heard the steady voice of a trumpet.

At the noise of the trumpet the people trembled. It was the sign that Yahweh was about to speak to them. For the purpose of meeting their God, Moses led them to the foot of the Mount. As they stood there, trembling and afraid, the scene grew more vivid and impressive. The angel of Yahweh descended upon the Mount in blinding light, so that Horeb seemed as though capped with terrifying flames, the thick smoke of which ascended into heaven like a volcano. As the terrified people watched this sight, the whole mountain quaked, the sound of the trumpet became louder and louder. Then, in the hearing of the people, Moses was invited to again ascend the Mount.

**The Ten
Commandments
Exodus 20**

Moses soon returned, bringing with him further instructions for the priests and people. He warned them, particularly, to stand away from the Mount, lest they should be destroyed. Any animal, or person, who touched the Mount was to be stoned, or thrust through with a dart (Exod. 19:13,21).

Terror-stricken (Heb. 12:18-21), the people watched the awful sight before them: the dense cloud which covered the upper portion of the Mount, the play of lightning that illuminated it, the flames of fire and thick volumes of smoke that ascended. They trembled also at the terrible claps of thunder, and heard again the loud, steady note of the trumpet, sounding long, and waxing louder and louder.

Then, all of a sudden, there was a deep silence. And in the silence, a clear, divine, majestic Voice was heard:

'I am Yahweh thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage . . .' (Exod. 20:2).

The Voice paused for a moment. Then it continued

proclaiming ten great commandments, that laid the basis of Yahweh's covenant with Israel established through Moses (Deut. 4:13). The first four commandments concerned the relations of a man with God. The fifth concerned his attitude to his parents. The last five had to do with his dealings with his fellowman. In that order, Yahweh showed the people of Israel that their first duty was to Him; their next to their parents; and their third duty to their neighbours. They were taught to look upon their own requirements as of last importance. The Voice continued, proclaiming these great duties:

1. *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*
2. *Thou shalt not worship any graven image.*
3. *Thou shalt not take the Name of Yahweh thy God in vain.*
4. *Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.*
5. *Honour thy father and thy mother.*
6. *Thou shalt not murder.*
7. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*
8. *Thou shalt not steal.*
9. *Thou shalt not bear false witness.*
10. *Thou shalt not covet what belongs to others.*

The whole assembly heard these Ten Commandments, and then the Voice suddenly ceased. But the people had seen and heard enough! Awe and fear filled their hearts as they gazed upon the terrible Mount which was clothed with fire, cloud, and thick darkness, hiding from their view the full glory of the angel of Yahweh. They began to edge away from it and from the awful Presence of God. Moses tried to calm them. "Fear not," he said, "For God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not" (Exod. 20:20). The people preferred to deal with Yahweh through a mediator. They instructed Moses: "Go thou near, and hear all that God shall say; and speak thou unto all what He speaks unto you; and we will hear it and do it" (Deut. 5:27).

Even Moses shared their fear (Heb. 12:21), but blended with his fear was the knowledge of God's mercy and love. At the invitation of God, he told the people to return to their tents (Deut. 5:30), whilst he entered the thick darkness which overshadowed the Mount, to hear further instructions from God (Exod. 20:21).

**The People
Promise To Obey
— Exodus 24**

From the angel (Acts 7:38; Galatians 3:19), Moses received further laws based upon the Ten Commandments. These are recorded in Exodus 20:22-23:33. They

decreed how the people were to be governed and led; they pronounced judgments for certain sins; they instructed the people how they were to approach Yahweh in worship; they taught them to keep separate from the surrounding nations.

In addition, Moses was told that Yahweh had appointed a specific Angel in whom He would be manifested, and into whose hands the affairs of Israel would be placed (Exod. 23:20). That Angel would overshadow the nation, guiding it through problems, and delivering it from evil if it were obedient to the Divine will. To that end, the might of the Angel would be available to Israel in assisting the nation to drive out the present ungodly inhabitants of the Promised Land, enabling the people to inherit it.

Returning once again from the Mount (Exod. 24:3), Moses recited all these instructions to the people. Again they agreed to do as God desired. Moses then wrote them in a book (v. 4), and assembled the people before him that he might bind them to their agreement by a very impressive ceremony. Sacrifices were offered, and the blood sprinkled upon the altar. Then Moses read all the laws in the hearing of the people. Again they agreed to perform the will of God. He then sprinkled them with the blood, saying: "Behold the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exodus 24:8). This sealed the covenant, or agreement, with blood. In endorsing it, the people testified that they would be prepared to give their lives in order to keep their part of it.

Once more, Moses ascended Mount Sinai, this time to receive the two tablets on which the Angel had inscribed the Ten Commandments. The people watching below, saw him enter the dark cloud and so pass out of their sight. They were not to see him again for forty days, and when he returned, it was not in very pleasant circumstances.

The Mosaic Covenant Types That of Christ

Meanwhile, let us go forward in time nearly 1,500 years, and, in thought, enter the city of Jerusalem. It is quite a busy time, for all the Jewish people are preparing for the Passover Feast. But in the upper room of one of the houses there is a quiet gathering of thirteen men. One at the head of the table is speaking to his companions in tones that are solemn and grave. They listen to his sad but gracious words, but they do not really understand him. He tries to impress them with the importance of the occasion. He takes bread, and giving thanks to God for it, he passes it to his companions, saying: "This is my body which is given for you;

this do in remembrance of me.” Then he passes them around a cup containing wine, and in explaining what this means, he uses words similar to those of Moses: “This is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you. . .”

A few hours later this man, the Lord Jesus, was crucified. He died that men might be brought to God, the antitype of the animals sacrificed under the Mosaic covenant. But God raised him from the dead, and he ascended into heaven, there to remain until the set time when he shall again return (Acts 3:19). As the Apostles watched him ascend into heaven, they saw him, as the Israelites saw Moses on the Mount, disappear in a cloud (Acts 1:9). They heard, also, the voice of an angel, saying: “Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (v. 11).

Therefore, in the sealing of the covenant with the people of Israel by Moses, and his ascent into the Mount, there is revealed a wonderful type of the work of the Lord Jesus at his first advent.

Chapter Twelve

WITH THE ANGEL IN THE MOUNT

**Directions For
The Tabernacle —
Ch. 25 to 31**

Moses, in company with Joshua, ascended the Mount of God (Exod. 24:13). They reached the bank of thick cloud that covered its top, and there they stopped.

The watching Israelites below could see the two men on the edge of the cloud that enfolded the Mount in darkness; above they could see the terrifying flames that capped its peak. Then the Voice of the angel was heard, calling Moses into the cloud. Once more the faithful leader entered into the presence of the Messenger of Yahweh.

On this occasion, Moses was instructed concerning the Tabernacle where Yahweh would meet with His people, and where they could assemble to offer their worship unto Him. He was shown a vision of the Tabernacle (as Ezekiel, later, was shown one of the Temple of the future age), and told to build it according to the pattern presented before him at that time (Exodus 25:9). The greatest care had to be given to this, for it was not only to be the centre of Jewish national and religious life, but intended also as "a pattern of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1).

Moses was also instructed as to how the priests had to be robed, how they were to conduct the service, what their duties entailed. The priests were to represent Yahweh to the people, and the people to Yahweh, and therefore Israel was to be a holy nation, given over to a divine way of life.

Accordingly, Moses was told that God would give special wisdom unto certain Israelites (Exodus 31:2,6), enabling them to develop skills so as to properly construct the intricate design of the Tabernacle. However, as all Israelites could share in that wonderful work, he was instructed to call upon all the "wise-hearted" in Israel to help these specially endowed men (Exodus 25:2).

Finally, the angel of Yahweh gave Moses two tables of stone, upon which he had engaved the Ten Commandments. These formed the basis of the covenant made through Moses, and were carved into the stone to emphasise the importance of keeping them.

Forty days were spent receiving these instructions for the people; the plans for the wonderful Tabernacle to be erected,

the patterns for the robes the priests were to wear “for glory and for beauty,” and the inspiring teaching concerning the worship that the people were to observe. As he communed with the angel, Moses’ heart must have filled with love and thankfulness to Yahweh Who had so bountifully blessed Israel, drawing the nation from slavery in Egypt to the privileged position it enjoyed in covenant relationship with God.

But his joy was shortlived. He learned that there was a very unpleasant duty to perform. He saw that the countenance of the angel had changed. It now looked stern. Moses was told to immediately return to the people, for they had disobeyed God in such a way as to jeopardise the divine purpose with them. Indeed, so serious was the wickedness of the people that Yahweh threatened to destroy them. He declared: “Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation” (Exodus 32:10).

But Moses did not want that! He desired that the people he had brought out of Egypt might enter the Land of Promise. He pleaded for them before Yahweh, reminding Him of His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, calling upon Him to have mercy. And because “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16), God hearkened to his prayer, and the people were saved.

**How The People
Sinned in Moses’
Absence —
Exodus 32**

When Moses left the people, they little thought that he would be absent for forty days. His earlier ascents into the Mount had been for short periods only. But now the people were tested by a longer absence, and they failed miserably.

This failure of the people is a solemn warning for believers today. For as the people tired of waiting for Moses, and gave themselves over to idolatry and pleasure, so may they in regard to the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ — unless they are very careful.

The Israelites saw Moses ascend the Mount, and enter the thick, black cloud that hid him from their view. They waited for him to return, but day followed day without his appearing. One week, two weeks, three weeks, a whole month went by — without the return of Moses. Doubts began to arise in the minds of some as to his safety. Perhaps he had been destroyed by the terrible flames that seemed to consume the top of the Mount. If Moses were dead who would lead them out of the terrible wilderness that hemmed them in? As day followed day, doubts

and fears began to worry the people. Gradually a rumour went through the camp that Moses was dead and would never return. Aaron could not tell them where his brother had gone, and became, himself, troubled at his long absence.

And before them was the massive Mount of hard granite, with the thick cloud covering the upper portion, and its top ablaze with terrifying flames, filling the people with dread. They desired to leave the place.

Among the people of Israel were some very wicked men who had little respect for Yahweh, or for Moses, His servant. In the presence of Moses they had agreed to serve God, but now that he was lost, or dead (as they thought) they began to undermine his influence, by spreading the rumour that Yahweh had deserted them. They remembered the gods of Egypt, among which was the calf, the symbol of Hathor, the goddess of love and pleasure, one of the most popular of them all. Gradually they won other people's support, until they felt themselves powerful enough to rebel against Aaron, who had been left in charge of the nation in Moses' absence. Finally, gathering their many supporters, the wicked throng challenged Aaron, demanding that he make unto them gods to lead them. "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what is become of him" (Exodus 32:1), they declared.

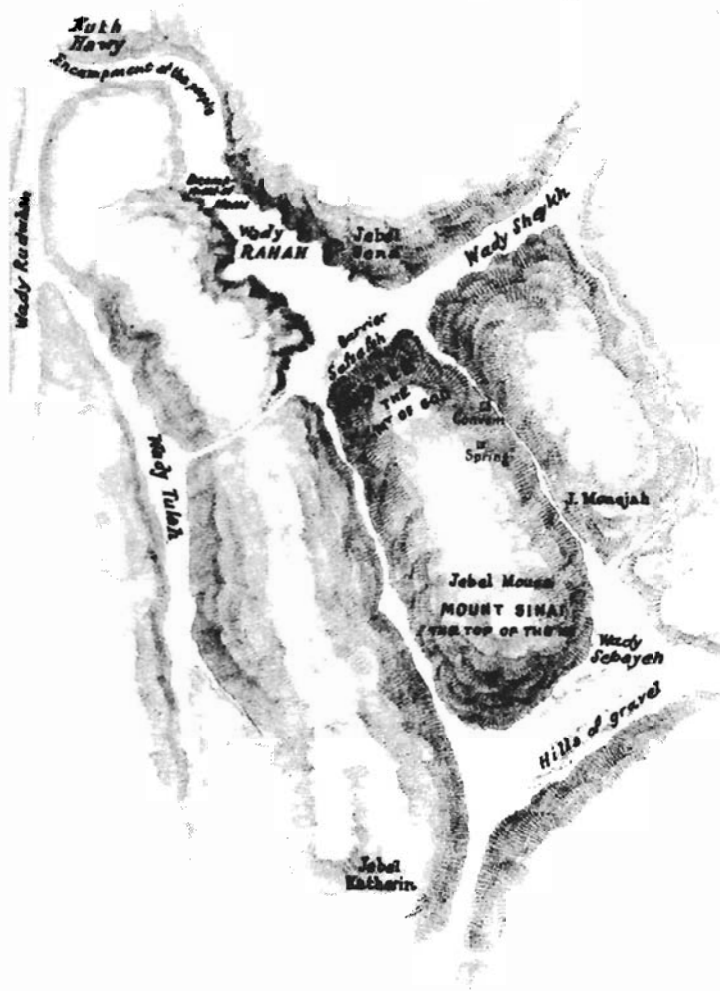
Aaron looked fearfully at the angry, rebellious crowd in front of him, and gave way to their demands. He called upon them to bring him their golden ornaments, and these he melted down and made into a calf. He built an altar to this idol, and called upon the people to see in it the representation of the God they worshipped. He then proclaimed that the morrow would be a day of feasting and celebration in its honour.

Next day the people assembled for the purpose. They gave themselves over to feasting and pleasure, imitating the immoral rites they had seen done in Egypt. All thought of Yahweh and their solemn agreement with Him had departed. The enactments of the Ten Commandments were forgotten as they gave themselves over to all forms of wickedness (Exod. 32:6).

The Ten Commandments Are Broken

Meanwhile, very troubled in mind, Moses hurried from the presence of the angel, to return to the people. As he descended the Mount he was joined by the waiting Joshua. Moses was too grief-stricken to explain to Joshua the reason for his sudden return. Silently they clambered down the mountainside until they could hear from far below

HOREB AND SINAI.



the noise of the people, as they wickedly worshipped the idol that Aaron had made for them. Joshua could offer but one explanation for the noise. He thought that some enemy had attacked the Israelites in the absence of their leader. Turning to Moses he said: "There is a noise of war in the camp!"*

But Moses, the Man of God, knew better. With the words of the angel ringing in his ears, he knew it was no enemy attack, for God would protect His people from such. Sorrowfully he turned to Joshua and said, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of singing and pleasure-making that I hear."

Soon they had covered the distance from Mt. Sinai to Mt. Horeb. From the height of the latter mount they were able to look directly down upon the camp of Israel. What they saw disgusted and angered them. They saw the people dancing and singing to the idol that they had made. Then suddenly, when all thoughts of God were far from their minds, they suddenly became aware of the presence of Moses descending from the Mount. It was a different Moses to what they had become accustomed. His face was suffused with anger. What was the use of the two tables of stone upon which were inscribed the Ten Commandments! Already they had been broken by the people! In frustration and fury he cast them from him, at the foot of the granite mountain, where they broke in pieces. Consumed with a burning wrath, he strode towards the camp. Reaching the golden idol, around which the people had been dancing he thrust it into the fire of its own altar. When it had melted, he ground it in powder, and sprinkling it upon the water, made the people drink of it.

Then he came face to face with his brother. Before the stern, wrathful gaze of Moses, Aaron became afraid. He tried to excuse himself for his part in the rebellion. He blamed the people, saying that they had threatened to kill him if he did not make the god. But Moses swept all such excuses aside. Aaron had been weak and cowardly. He should have put his trust in Yahweh, and refused to obey the demands of the people. Because he did not do this, Moses rebuked him before all the

* This incident shows that Mt. Sinai and Mt. Horeb were two different peaks, though on the same mountain plateau. Horeb rises directly above the plain which is easily seen from its summit, but Sinai is some distance away. If Moses and Joshua had been on the summit of Horeb, they would have instantly heard and seen all that went on in the camp below. The fact that they did not establishes the fact that Horeb and Sinai were twin peaks on one mountain range. In the narrative, Mt. Sinai represents the Most Holy, Mt. Horeb the holy, and the encampment the court outside.

camp. But, at the same time, he pleaded for Aaron, asking God to overlook his sin, knowing that it had been the fear of man that had caused him to act in such a manner. Once more, God allowed Moses his petition, and Aaron was forgiven (Deut. 9:20).

But there was no forgiveness for the leaders of the revolt. They probably were responsible for all the murmuring since the Israelites left Egypt. "Whoso is on Yahweh's side? let him come unto me," called Moses. The tribe of Levi, his own tribe, responded. He commanded them to take their swords, go through the camp, and slay the disobedient. Three thousand men were killed on that terrible day of wickedness and slaughter.

The celebrations of pleasure were replaced by remorse. Families were mourning, whilst the people were terrified that God might destroy them all.

On the morrow, Moses solemnly addressed the sobered assembly. "You have sinned a great sin," he said, "now I will go up unto Yahweh and try and make atonement for your sin."

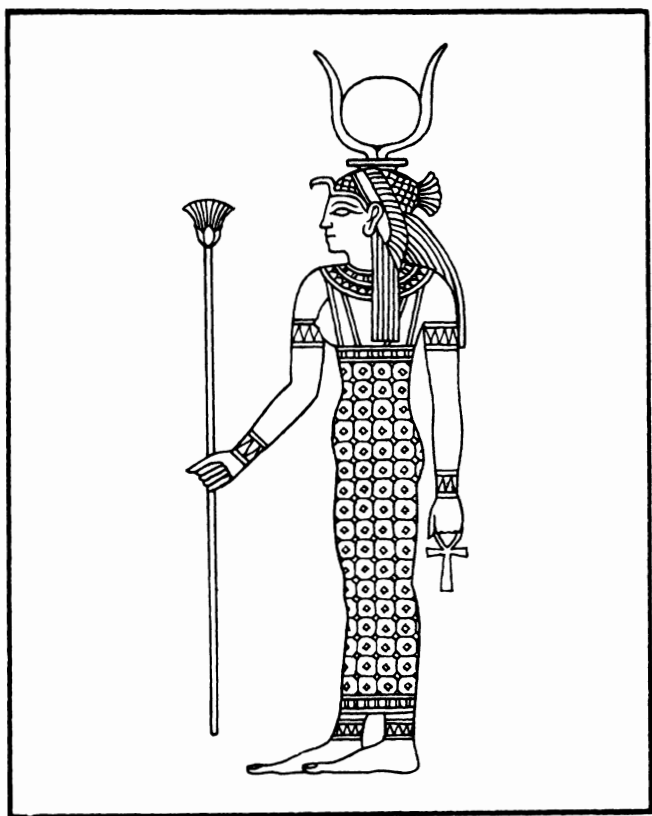
Once more Moses ascended the mount, this time to plead for the people who had so often failed him. His prayer was not long, but it was very eloquent and moving. "This people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold," he said unto Yahweh. "Ye now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin — and if not blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written."

It was a prayer of a man so moved by love for his people that he was prepared to lay down his life on their behalf. But Yahweh has no use for substitutionary offerings; He does not want a sacrifice in the absence of the reformation of the people. A sacrifice is designed to set forth an ideal to which those who seek forgiveness try to attain. He answered Moses: "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, Mine Angel shall go before thee; nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them."

Yahweh smote the people because of the calf which they had made, but Moses' name remained in the Book of Life wherein is recorded those who have faithfully served God. There are many references to that figurative Book throughout Scripture (see Psa. 56:8; 69:28; 139:16; Dan. 12:1; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19). Malachi called it "a book of remembrance", and he declared that there are found therein the names of those who "fear Yahweh and think upon His Name" (Malachi 3:16). How important it is that our

names are found therein! In order for that to be so, we must seek to know God, and do His will (John 17:3).

Meanwhile, the work of Moses continued. He again ascended into the mount.



Hathor, horned cow-goddess of love, was also deity of happiness, dance and music. When a child was born, seven Hathors came to his bedside to decide his future life. The golden-calf, worshipped at the foot of Horeb, was probably an imitation of this Egyptian superstition, as this was frequently the form in which it was depicted.

Chapter Thirteen

HOW THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WERE RESTORED — EXODUS 34

Whilst Moses remained in the Mount, the frightened people fearfully waited on the plain in front of Horeb. Many were scared that God would blot out the whole nation, and, indeed, He did send a plague among the people (Exodus 32:35). But in His mercy, Yahweh again listened to the pleading of Moses, and Israel was saved.

The people were humbled by their experience. When Moses returned to them, he again impressed them with the awful sin they had committed. He called for a day of national mourning, and ordered the people to remove all ornaments from off their clothing.

For Yahweh had declared His intention of abandoning the people. He told Moses that He would send an angel to help them subdue the Canaanites, but, "I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people," He concluded.

This caused the people to mourn. They remembered how completely Yahweh had cared for them. They recalled the guidance of the cloud (Exod. 13:21), His counsel when needed (Exodus 15:25), His aid in battle (Exodus 17:8-13). Whereas Gentiles may be able to get on alright without God, it is impossible for true Israelites to do so. Hence they "sorrowed to repentance" (2 Cor. 7:9-10), and sought in every way to secure the forgiveness of God.

Meanwhile, as Yahweh had removed His presence from the camp, and as Moses desired to commune with Him, he removed his tent from the midst of Israel, and set it up outside the camp. He called it *The Tent of Meeting* (Exodus 33:7). Anyone who desired to commune with Yahweh had to go outside the camp, and seek Him through that means. When Moses himself entered the Tent, the eyes of those who desired to worship in Truth centred on him. When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud that had led the people to Sinai descended and stood at the door of the tent, hiding the Divine Presence (the angel) from the people who worshipped in the camp (Exod. 33:10).

What a remarkable lesson was conveyed by that means! Israel had sinned, and, for a time, Yahweh was no longer with the people. Any who wanted to worship Him in truth had to

seek Him “without the camp”. It foreshadowed that which later came to pass in the days of the Lord Jesus Christ. The terrible sin of the Jewish people in crucifying their Messiah was followed by Yahweh casting them off for a time (Romans 11:11-12). Consequently, those who desire to worship Yahweh in truth must seek Him in the temporary dwellings (Ecclesias among the Gentiles) that have been set up since then outside the scope of the Mosaic order. Accordingly, Paul exhorted believers: “Let us go forth therefore unto him (Christ, the antitypical Moses) without the camp, bearing his reproach” (Hebrews 13:13).

Moses continued to plead with God on behalf of the people. He was concerned at the statement made, that Yahweh would no longer go with them. He realised that if God carried out His threat, Israel would no longer remain His “peculiar treasure” (Exodus 19:5). Hence he continued to plead that the divine presence remain with the nation, and again, Yahweh, in His mercy granted his request.

Having succeeded in that regard, Moses now asked an even greater privilege. The crisis he had endured had taxed him greatly. He felt the need of a sustaining influence. Above all else, he desired to know Yahweh even more intimately. He therefore prayed that Yahweh might reveal unto him His glory. But it is not possible for mortal man to view the full glory of Yahweh and live (1 Tim. 6:16). Even when it is manifested through an angel it can prove to be too much (see Matthew 28:3-4). Yet Yahweh could sympathise with Moses in his desire, and appreciated the reason for the request. He promised to grant it in measure. He would cause His angel to go before Moses, but the fulness of the divine glory must be hidden, and therefore he would be permitted only to see the angel’s back, and to hear the proclamation of the Name of Yahweh. For this purpose Moses was told to prepare two tables of stone upon which the Angel would write again the Ten Commandments. Moses was then invited to again ascend into the Mount in order to renew the covenant on behalf of the people; and to see the glory of Yahweh (Exodus 34:2).

On the morrow, Moses did as he was directed. He hewed two tables of stone upon which the angel could inscribe the Ten Commandments, and then ascended the Mount that he might witness the glory of Yahweh. For that purpose, the angel placed him in the cleft of a rock, carefully covering his eyes as he did so, in order that, when he removed them, only the back of the angel would be seen. But it was seen encompassed with divine light, a shining forth of powerful glory; and as Moses watched,

he heard the declaration of the divine Name:

"Yah, Yahweh El, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will be no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation of those that hate Him" (Exodus 34:6-7; Deut. 5:9-10).

This declaration of the Name of Yahweh proclaimed that its glory is both moral and physical. Moreover, there are two parts to the moral excellence: a manifestation of goodness, blended with the severity of judgment (Romans 11:22). The declaration of *Yahweh El* proclaimed that He will manifest Himself in Strength (the meaning of *El*), and the qualities that follow reveal the objective of that channel of strength. He will be noted for mercy, grace, longsuffering, truth, and so forth. But mortal man must not presume on that. Therefore, the declaration continued, that He will not clear the guilt of those who hate Him, nor that of the children of such who continue to manifest the attitude of their disobedient parents.

Moses could clearly see how the attributes of the divine Name had been revealed in the experiences of the nation. The mercy extended to Israel in the Passover deliverance, the care that Yahweh extended to the nation in the provision of food and drink, the protection He afforded them in the defeat of Amalek, evidenced His goodness, whereas the judgments poured out upon Egypt, or upon Israel at the foot of Horeb, demonstrated His severity. Yet Yahweh's abounding mercy in forgiving those for whom Moses pleaded, His continued goodness to Israel in spite of their wickedness, revealed these principles of the Name. They showed Him to be a loving and merciful heavenly Father to Whom all can turn with confidence in time of need.

On the basis of this, Moses pleaded for his people once again. And Yahweh, in His goodness and mercy granted his request. The angel reiterated what was required of the nation (Exod. 34:11-26), and on the basis of the people accepting those conditions the covenant was renewed (v. 27).

For the seventh and last time, Moses descended the Mount, bringing with him the joyful news that once again Yahweh had extended forgiveness, and would renew the covenant.

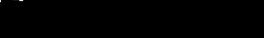
The rest of the year was occupied in building the Tabernacle according to the plans God had given Moses. The materials were supplied by the people, who offered willingly of

their substance, and placed themselves at the disposal of those who were given the charge of the work. By the end of the year the Tabernacle was set up. The cloud, which had led Israel to Sinai, took up a position over the tent, and the glory of Yahweh filled the Tabernacle.

But unknown to Moses, his face shone with the reflected glory of Yahweh, seen by him in the Mount. When he met with Aaron and the elders of Israel, they saw this, and it made them afraid. It was a witness that the authority vested in him came from God, and therefore he was a leader to be feared and respected. However, in time the light reflected on the countenance of Moses began to fade, and lest this resulted in the Israelites despising his divinely-given authority, Moses, after he had finished speaking with the leaders, covered his face with a veil. But when he went in before Yahweh to speak with Him, he took the veil off, that the glory might be rekindled in his face, and so be seen by the people.

Thus the glory of the Mosaic covenant was a fading glory. In 2 Corinthians 3:13-18, the Apostle Paul refers to this incident and contrasts the greater glory of the gospel in Christ, to that of the covenant in Moses. There is no fading glory in Christ, but an ever increasing glory, until, at his second advent, those who prove faithful will be changed into the likeness of his glorious body (Phil. 3:21). And whereas Moses saw the glory of Yahweh reflected from the back of the angel, believers of the gospel message, can perceive the light of God shining out of darkness, in the *face* of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6). In other words, though the work of Moses was a wonderful one, it does not equal that performed by Jesus Christ. There was no promise of eternal life in the covenant that Moses established between God and Israel; but there was in that confirmed by the offering of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the work performed by Moses was extremely valuable, and can continue to help us today. We therefore invite you to come once more to the home of Mr. Phillips, to hear a discussion upon the things that we have set before you in this part of the *Story of the Bible*.





The various steps of Redemption portrayed in The Book of Exodus reaches its climax in the construction of the Tabernacle which provided a centre of divine worship in the midst of Israel. There are three sections relating to it. First, the pattern of the Tabernacle is revealed to Moses during his forty days in the Mount. Then, in the episode of the golden calf, the execution of the plan is delayed through Israel's lapse into idolatry, during which interval a temporary substitute for the Tabernacle is provided in a tent pitched "without the Camp" (Exod. 33:7). Finally, the Tabernacle is completed and erected, and the divine glory descends upon it, so that, in this way, Yahweh dwells in the midst of Israel.

Accordingly, the subject is divided into three parts: (1) The Tabernacle proposed; (2) The Tabernacle resisted; (3) The Tabernacle accomplished. The sections are divisible as follows:

*(1) — **Designed:** by the pattern revealed to Moses (Chapters 25-31);*

*(2) — **Delayed:** through the idolatry of Israel (Chapters 32-34);*

*(3) — **Completed:** by its construction when Moses returns the second time (Chapters 35-40).*

The Bible devotes more room to the description of the Tabernacle and its appurtenances than to any other single subject. Its details are described minutely in the Old Testament, whilst the New Testament writers draw upon it largely in setting forth the principles of redemption in Christ. It was designed not merely for architectural beauty, but as a symbolical and typical expression of wonderful spiritual truth: as a parable of God manifestation in three developments: Preparation (the court); Application (the holy place); Glorification (the most holy place). The details of the Tabernacle are worthy of the closest study, for they remind us of principles that Yahweh would have us ever to keep in mind.

Chapter One

SUMMARY OF THE TABERNACLE

"It is very hard!" said Ann, with a sigh.

She was sitting in the library of her father's home, with a writing pad in front of her, and a puzzled frown on her forehead.

Her exclamation caused the family to look at her in amazement. Mrs. Phillips put down her sewing, Mr. Phillips glanced up from his writing on the desk which seemed always piled high with books and paper, Joan paused in her homework, and the boys looked up from their reading.

"What is very hard?" asked Mr. Phillips.

"I have to write an essay on the Tabernacle," explained Ann, "and I don't know how to go about it. For one thing, I find it hard to understand all the measurements given in the book of Exodus, and why God designed it the way He did. Why are there two accounts given of the Tabernacle in Exodus? Why did the people have to be so particular as to the way it was built? What was God trying to teach them by it? And, Oh! a lot of other things."

"Would you like me to write it for you?" suggested Peter, with a grin.

"No, thank you, Peter!" said Ann, sharply. "I want to have a good essay to read!"

"You should find plenty to write about on that subject," remarked Mr. Phillips, "for the Bible gives more space to the description of the Tabernacle, and those things attached to it, than to any other single subject. God was very particular that Moses should have an exact description of it, and that he should exercise the greatest care to make it exactly as was intended. On no less than seven times in the Bible, reference is made to God's solemn charge to Moses, that he should make all things according to the 'pattern' which was shown him 'in the Mount' (Exod. 25:9,40; 26:30; 27:8; Num. 8:4; Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5)."

"Why should the instructions be given twice in the book of Exodus?" asked Ann.

"They are not really two separate sets of instructions," replied her father. The second account is a statement showing that Yahweh's request had been carried out to the letter. For example, you read in Exodus 26 such instructions as, *Thou shalt*

make, but in Exodus 36, where many of the details are repeated, you read, *He made . . .* You can divide these chapters up as follows:

1. The Tabernacle designed (Chaps. 25-31).
2. The Tabernacle delayed (Chaps. 32-34).
3. The Tabernacle completed (Chaps. 35-40).

"In what way was the building of the Tabernacle delayed?" asked Graeham.

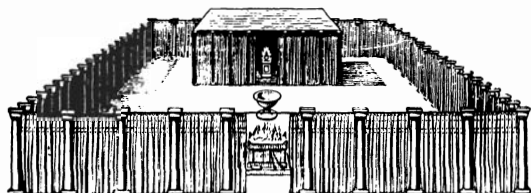
"It was delayed by the sin of Israel," explained his father. "When Moses came down from the Mount, he brought with him the details of the Tabernacle, as well as the two tables of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments; but when he saw how wickedly the people had sinned in his absence, he broke the two tables of stone, and had to return to the Mount to have them replaced. Thus the building of the Tabernacle, which could have proceeded if the people had not sinned, was delayed."

"It seems strange that God should explain every little detail of how to make the Tabernacle," remarked Graeham. "Why did He not leave it to Moses to work them out?"

"The Tabernacle was designed as a place where Israel might come and worship Yahweh," explained Mr. Phillips. "He said to Moses, 'There I will meet with thee' (Exod. 25:22), and commanded him, 'Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them' (Exod. 25:8). God was very anxious to impress upon the people one very important fact that we too, must ever remember, and that is, it is not sufficient that a man might *desire* to worship God, but he must worship Him in the manner in which *God* desires. Therefore, it was not sufficient that Moses should desire to build a sanctuary for Yahweh, but it had to be built as God required, and not as man thought."

"What is the meaning of 'Sanctuary'?" asked Joan.

"The word means that which is *set apart*. The Tabernacle was set apart from Israel for worship. It showed the people of Israel that though they had been called by God as a special people to worship Him, yet they must not take Him for granted. They had to treat Yahweh as holy, that is separate and remote from mere man."



"I find all the different measurements recorded in the book of Exodus very confusing," said Ann.

"It may help you if you set the chapters out in headings," said her father. "Take your pencil and jot down these points. Head it:

THE TABERNACLE DESIGNED

(Exodus Chps. 25-31)

Ark, Table, Lampstand (Ch. 25).
Curtains, Boards, Veils (Ch. 26)
Brazen Altar, Hangings, Oil (Ch. 27).
Priests' Garments and Consecration (Chps. 28,29)
Incense Altar, Laver, Anointing Oil (Ch. 30).
The Workmen, the Sabbath Sign (Ch. 31).

THE TABERNACLE COMPLETED

(Exodus Chps. 35-40)

The materials subscribed (Ch. 35).
The framework and hangings (Ch. 36).
The Tabernacle furniture (Chs. 37,38)
The Priestly garments (Ch. 39:1-31).
Work Finished: Tabernacle erected (Ch. 39:32-40:33)
Tabernacle filled with Divine presence (Ch. 40:34-38)."

"That is interesting, Daddy," said Ann, when she had copied this down, "but it does not help me to see what the Tabernacle looked like."

"The Tabernacle was not a large building," explained Mr. Phillips. "But it was a most important place of worship. It is given many names in Scripture. Probably the most significant names were the *Mishkan*, or the Dwelling, which denoted the place where Yahweh dwelt in Israel, and the *Ohel Mowade* rendered the Tent of the Congregation, but meaning *Tent of Meeting*, and signifying The Place where Yahweh meets His people. The best craftsmen in Israel overlooked its construction, and the finest of materials including gold, silver, bronze, fine linen and so forth were used in its making. The Court of the Tabernacle, in which the Tabernacle itself stood, was a rectangle 150 feet (45m) long and 75 feet (22.5m) wide. The Tabernacle, or Sanctuary proper, was placed at the far west of this area, and the entrance was at the east. In the court were the altar of the burnt-offering, sometimes called the brazen altar, and the laver, at which the priests washed, half way between the altar and the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary itself was forty-five feet (14.7m) long, fifteen feet (4.5m) wide, and fifteen feet (4.5m) high. It was separated into two parts called respectively, the

Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place. The former was thirty feet (9m) long, and the latter was fifteen feet (4.5m) long, and therefore formed into a cube. Though the work of construction was ordered by Moses, it was organised and supervised by two men Bezaleel and Aholiab."

"Who were Bezaleel and Aholiab?" asked Ann, who had been studying the chapters in Exodus.

"They were two men to whom God gave special wisdom (Exod. 35:30; 36:1), that they might supervise the building of the Tabernacle, so that the work might be done in the best possible manner. When God intends a work, He also provides persons qualified to perform it. And it is wise for all who would be educated in God's way, to avail themselves of such helps."

**How The
Israelites
Encamped**

"The Tabernacle was set in an enclosure isolated from contact with the people by a wall from seven to eight feet high which stood all around it," continued Mr.

Phillips. "This wall was not a brick or stone wall, but a curtain wall of linen suspended on wooden pillars standing in brass sockets let into the ground. All the measurements in the book of Exodus are given in cubits. A cubit is about 18 inches or half a metre long, and from that we learn of the size of the Tabernacle as I mentioned before.

"Is there any significance in the Most Holy being in the shape of a cube?" asked Graeham

"Yes," replied his father. "Among the Hebrews the cube was the symbol of perfection, because every side formed a perfect square, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height all being equal. This reminds us of the words of Paul, when he exhorted the Ephesians to 'comprehend what is the breadth, the length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. . . .' (Eph. 3:18). Here is perfect love, symbolised by the cube."

"Where was the Tabernacle set up?" asked Ann.

"It was set up right in the very centre of the camp of Israel," replied her father. "Let us, in imagination, visit the nation of Israel in the wilderness to view the wonderful Tabernacle that God caused to be built that men might worship him. First of all, like Balaam (Num. 23:28), we will climb up a mountain where we can see 'Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes' (Num. 24:2). Notice that the camp is set out so as to form a great square with the Tabernacle in the middle (Num. 2). On the East of that square are found the tribes of Judah, Isaachar and Zebulun (Num. 2:3-9); on the south are found

those of Reuben, Simeon and Gad (vv. 10-16); on the west are those of Ephraim, Manessah and Benjamin (vv. 19-24); and on the north those of Dan, Asher and Naphtali (vv. 25-28)."

"What is the significance of that?" asked Graeham.

"It showed that God was at the very heart of Israelitish things," explained his father. "Israel was gathered around the Tabernacle as a symbol of what the true Israelite should do as far as God was concerned. But there is still another important feature we have not considered. Notice that the tents of the tribes do not go right up to the Tabernacle, but that there is a break, occupied by the priests and Levites. On the east, between the tents of the tribes and the tabernacle, there are the tents of Moses, Aaron and the priests (Num. 3:38); on the south there are found the tents of the Kohathites (v. 29); on the west are found the Gershonites (Num. 3:23); on the north are the Merarites (Num. 3:35)."

"Who are the Kohathites, and Gershonites, and Merarites?" asked Ann.

"They are the three families which made up the tribe of Levi," explained Mr. Phillips.

"Well, what is the difference between 'Priests' and 'Levites'?" asked Graeham.

"The 'priests' were descendants of Aaron whilst the Levites comprised the rest of the tribe. All were Levites, but only the sons of Aaron were accounted priests. The Levites acted as servants to the priests. Thus God took one family out of the tribe of Levi and made them priests above all the others."

"Why did God do that?"

"In setting the tribes as we see them, and in appointing one family above all others in Levi, God was teaching Israel a very important lesson we, too, must learn," said Mr. Phillips. "Israel, as you know, was selected by Yahweh from all other nations, to be a 'peculiar treasure' unto Him 'above all people' (Exod. 19:5). Paul tells us that outside of Israel, people are 'without hope and without God in the world' (Eph. 2:12). In other words, to approach unto God, we must do so through the 'hope of Israel' (Acts 28:20), by baptism into Christ who is the Messiah of Israel. Even in the days of Moses, anybody desiring to approach Yahweh had to do so through Israel; there was no other way. But, Israel, itself, was cut off from access to the Tabernacle, and God, by the Priests and Levites. Yahweh was teaching them that though they were accounted a holy nation, according to the flesh, or from the natural viewpoint, they were no better than any other nation, unless they made a real effort to serve Him aright. Therefore, out of this one nation, selected

from all others, God selected one tribe, and taught Israel they must approach Him through that tribe. But then men of that tribe might have thought they were more worthy than the other tribes merely because they were born Levites, so God selected one family, the family of Aaron, above all the others, and made it chief. Even the family of Aaron could not go into the Most Holy. Only one man, the chief of them all, could do that: the High Priest. The other priests had to defer to him. This taught them humility. It caused them to recognise that there was no virtue in themselves above what is in others, for they had been born into the priesthood. So all were forced to look to the High Priest. Without his mediation on the Day of Atonement they could not officiate as priests. He was supreme in the appointed worship of the nation. But even he was humbled, for before he could enter the Most Holy Place, he had to offer a sacrifice. This reminded him, that though his position was a high one, it was his by divine appointment, and not because he was physically better than others. It also brought home to him that as he sinned, he was in need of the mercy of Yahweh. In this wonderful worship, therefore, all flesh was humbled before God. Do you think you understand that?"

"Yes."

"Now notice how the tribes of Israel are set out four-square around the Tabernacle. See the division between the tents of the tribes and the Tabernacle. It is a portion of land occupied by the tents of the Priests and Levites. Try to keep in mind the lesson of it all. Is there anything else you notice?"

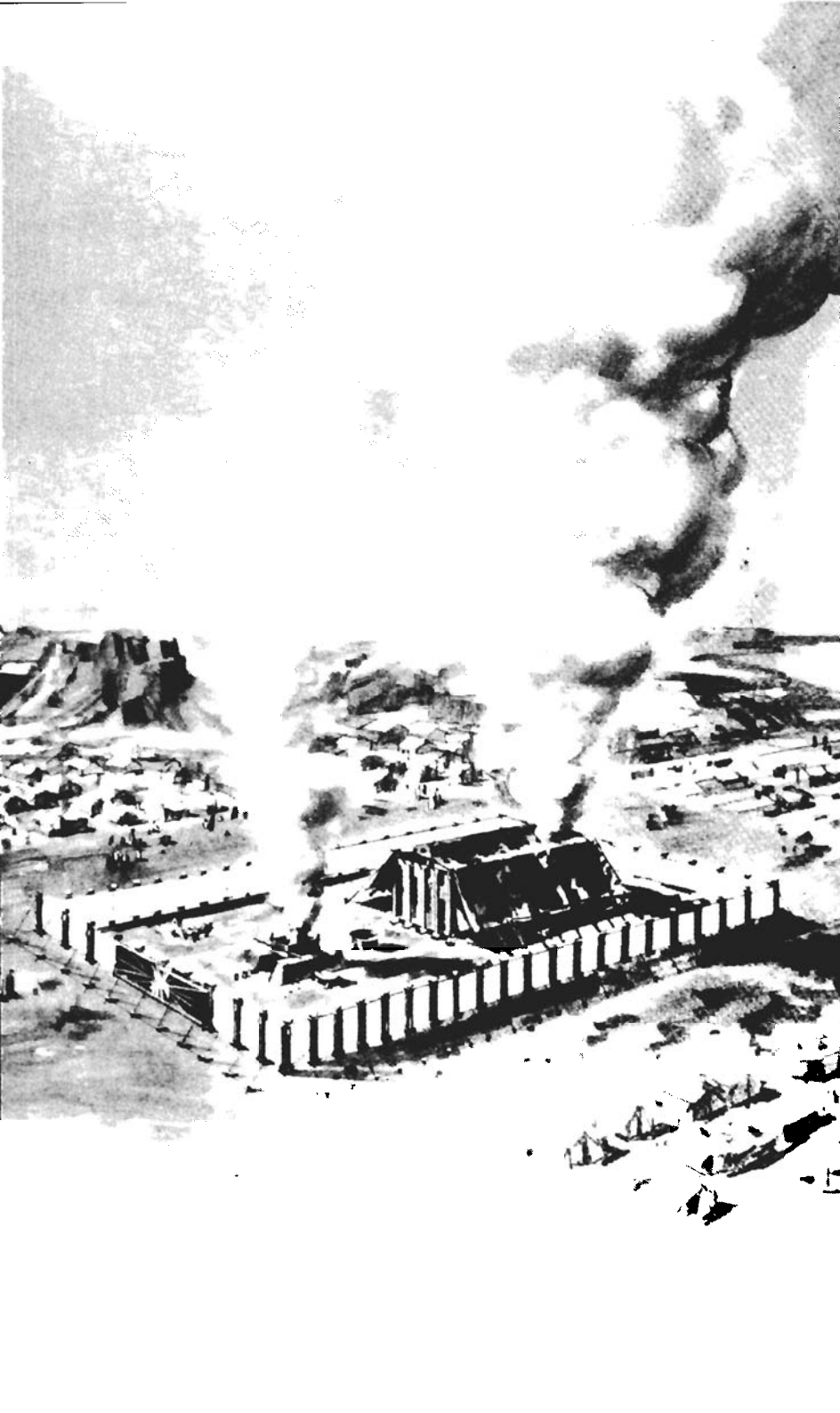
"Yes," replied Graeham. "The tents of Israel are all dark, being blackened by the sun, but the wall of the Tabernacle is white. It stands out in great contrast in the midst of the tents of Israel."

"That is a very good point," remarked his father. "What does the white linen of the Tabernacle represent?"

"Revelation 19:8 tells us," said Peter, quickly. "It reads, 'Fine linen is the righteousness of saints'."

"Excellent," said Mr. Phillips. "The gleaming white Tabernacle in contrast to the black tents of the people taught Israelites that though they might be a special nation, chosen and separated from all others, they still had to look towards God for righteousness, for in themselves they were no better than any other people. Now let us in imagination descend this mountain, and have a closer look at the Tabernacle."





A Visit To The Tabernacle

The Tabernacle faced east, or towards the sun's rising, reminding thoughtful Israelites of that "morning without clouds" that shall one day appear (2 Sam. 23:4), when the "Sun of Righteousness" (the Lord Jesus) shall arise with healing in his beams (Mal. 4:1-2). For that time all true Israelites long and pray for then God's Kingdom shall be set up, and His will shall be done in earth as it is in heaven.

To reach the entrance of the Tabernacle, it was necessary to pass by the dark-coloured tents of Judah which were set out in orderly fashion, to move on past the tents of Moses, Aaron and the priests, and cross the open space that lay beyond. This brought an Israelite to the eastern side of the Court of the Tabernacle: a white curtain fence, 75 feet (22.5m) wide and about 8 feet (2.5m) high. In the centre of this fence was an opening formed of a curtain made of finest linen worked with blue, purple and scarlet, so arranged that it could be pulled aside.

"What do those colours represent?" asked Ann.

"The Tabernacle was like a parable," explained her father. "It taught the people how they should worship Yahweh, and it pointed forward to Jesus Christ. He is the door, as he, himself, declared (John 10:9). So, in these colours, we see a foreshadowing of him. Blue spake of his heavenly calling (Num. 15:38). Purple was the colour of royalty, and he was the man born to be king (Matthew 2:2). It is also the colour of God manifest in the flesh being a combination of red and blue. Red is the colour of sin (Isa. 1:18), referring to the nature he possessed in common with us all (Heb. 2:17), and the sacrifice he offered. The white linen spake of the righteousness of his character. Now have a look inside the entrance of the court of the Tabernacle, and see if there is anything you want to ask."

The Tabernacle itself was placed at the far end of the court. The first object that could be seen from the entrance was a large square altar made of wood and overlaid with brass. It was 7 ft. 6 in. (2m) square, and 4ft 6 in. (1.5m) high. The four corners of the altar projected upwards, and outwards, so as to resemble horns.

By the side of the altar were various articles for use in the service of sacrifice, such as pots or urns to take away the ashes, shovels, basins, flesh-hooks and fire-pans, all made of brass. There was a fire burning upon the altar, a most remarkable fire, for it had been kindled by God Himself (Lev. 9:24). Having been once kindled the priests were commanded never to allow it to go out (Lev. 6:12,13).

"What does the altar represent?" asked Ann.

"It represents Jesus Christ," replied her father (see Heb.

13:10). "All our sacrifices to God must be offered through him, apart from which they are of no value. In like manner, the priests in the Tabernacle had to make contact with the altar before they could proceed any further. This teaches us that we must first make contact with Christ before we can serve God aright. And we do that, as you know, by being baptised into his name (Gal. 3:26-29)."

"But is not Jesus the sacrifice?" asked Peter.

"He is both the sacrifice and the altar," replied his father. "All these things point to the Lord Jesus in different aspects of his work."

"Did Jesus die instead of us?" asked Peter.

"No, he died *for* us," replied his father.

"What is the difference?" asked Graeham.

"The difference is a very important one," explained Mr. Phillips. "If Jesus had died *instead* of us, we should not die, but of course, we do! But he died for those who are baptised into him, that is, those who accept him as their representative. His sacrifice demonstrated what they must do if they would please Yahweh. The Bible teaches, and experience shows, that the flesh tends to please itself, and in doing so, it sins. But Christ never gave way to the lusts of the flesh; he conquered them through the power of God, and his own determination, and so rendered perfect obedience. His life of service culminated in a sacrificial death upon the cross. As he represents us in giving his life as a sacrifice, we are expected to 'present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God' (Romans 12:1). Paul wrote: 'We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead' (2 Cor. 5:14). By this, he means that if Christ is our representative, we should do what he did. In Galatians 5:24 Paul declared: 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' Christ's followers do this by denying themselves those things which might be pleasing to the flesh, but are displeasing to God. We should aim to obey God as Jesus did, if we acknowledge that he is our representative."

"But we do not always obey God," protested Graeham. "Even the great men of faith recorded in the Bible failed some time or other!"

"Granted," agreed his father. "Paul says, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23). However, though God looks for perfect obedience, He does not *demand* it. Indeed He knows that it is beyond us, and therefore He has promised that He will forgive us our sins if we seek Him in truth through Jesus Christ, and strive to overcome. Yahweh is very understanding and merciful. David declared: 'Like as a father

pitieth his children, so Yahweh pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust' (Psalm 103:13-14). The Tabernacle altar was a constant reminder to Israelites that they should strive to obey Yahweh through personal sacrifice, for that is the measure of worship He desires. Christ our Altar (Hebrews 13:10) impresses the same lesson on us. The Israelites had to identify themselves with the sacrifices they offered by leaning their hands upon the head of the offering, and then slaying the animal. By so doing they exhibited the principle that it is through the mind, not through giving way to the flesh, that we serve God. Paul expressed it in the following way: 'With the mind I serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin' (Romans 7:25). Israelites confessed their sins over the animals slain, asking forgiveness of them. Baptised believers do the same through the offering of Christ. However, the difference between the two forms of offerings, is great. There was no promise of life in the animal slain, for once killed it remained dead. Not so with Jesus Christ. He rose from the dead, and led the way to a resurrection to eternal life for all those truly 'in him'. That is the difference between the Mosaic covenant of law confirmed by the sacrifice of an animal, and the Abrahamic covenant of grace, confirmed by the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 15:8). The first was merely a bridge leading across the gulf of sin to Christ. True Israelites saw in the sacrifice of the animal a type of the Redeemer promised from the beginning (Genesis 3:15). David looked forward to his coming, and to the promise of life in him through a resurrection (Acts 2:29-36). Those men of faith treated the Law as a 'schoolmaster' leading unto Christ (Galatians 3:24)."

"Why did Yahweh give Israel a Law which the people found impossible to keep?" asked Graeham.

"As Paul told the Galatian brethren, the Law was a schoolmaster leading to Christ," explained Mr. Phillips. "The Law revealed both flesh and sin for what they are. The former is prone to sin, and the reality of sin itself was made obvious by law (Romans 3:20). The commands of the Law showed up sin as sin (Romans 7:13), and made obvious the need of a redeemer. The fact that mankind could not keep the Law drove men of faith to seek the Redeemer promised from the beginning."

"The altar is called an altar of burnt offering," remarked Peter. "What does a burnt offering represent?"

"The burnt offering was first put to death, and then completely consumed by the special 'divine' fire that burned on the altar (Lev. 9:24)," explained his father. "It represented an

offerer who entirely dedicated himself to doing the will of God. Jeremiah likened the word of God as a 'burning fire shut up in his bones' (Jeremiah 20:9), and Paul declared, 'Our God is a consuming fire' (Hebrews 12:29). The Lord Jesus Christ was the complete example of a human 'burnt offering', for it was said of him, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up' (John 2:17). When we fully understand God's word, and it takes possession of our hearts, we too, become as a burnt offering. As I mentioned earlier, we are told by the Apostle to 'present our bodies as a living sacrifice' in the service of God (Romans 12:1). When we do that, being moved to do so by His word, we become as a burnt offering."

Between the altar and the Tabernacle was placed the Laver. It was a large basin with taps made of brass. The priests approached the Laver in order to wash their hands and feet before performing their duties. Mr. Phillips and his family proceeded to discuss this article of the Tabernacle.

"I suppose the Laver represented baptism," commented Graeham.

"It represented more than baptism," answered his father. "It represented the cleansing power of the Word of God. Jesus told his disciples, 'Ye are clean through the word I have spoken unto you' (John 15:3), and Paul told the Ephesians, 'Christ loved the Ecclesia, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word' (Ephesians 5:26). The word 'washing' is better rendered *Laver*. Hence Paul likened the Laver at which the priests washed, to the Word of God which teaches us how to work and walk as God would have us do. The Word of God informs us as to how we should conduct ourselves. That is what King David meant when he remarked, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Thy word' (Psalm 119:9).

"Now consider the Laver in the Tabernacle in conjunction with the Altar. The priests first washed at the Laver, and then proceeded to the Altar. When we study the Word of God we learn that we are sinners in need of redemption. That knowledge sends us to the Altar, the Lord Jesus Christ, that we might obtain forgiveness of our sins. But before the priests could go from the Altar into the Tabernacle proper, they had to wash again at the Altar (Exodus 30:19-21)."

"Why did they have to do that?" asked Joan.

"It was to teach them that they were constantly in need of the cleansing influence of Yahweh's teaching," explained her father. "What is the first essential to baptism?"

"It is to understand the purpose of God," answered Ann,

(see Mark 16:15-16).

“True. But unfortunately some seem to imagine that once they are baptised, they have no need to further study the Bible. The lesson of the Laver taught otherwise. The priests were taught that they needed constant cleansing, and therefore were directed to the Laver before and after they attended the Altar. We must learn the same lesson. There is just as great a need to study the Bible after baptism as before it. That is the lesson the Laver teaches us.”

Down the far end of the court, beyond the Altar and Laver, there stood the Tabernacle proper. It was a flat-roofed structure. Its top was a covering of goats’ hair, rams’ skins dyed red, and blue badgers’ skins fixed into position by cords that were pegged into the ground. This protected the Tabernacle which was underneath. It was an oblong structure, the walls of which were constructed of shittim or acacia wood covered with gold, set in silver sockets that were made firm in the ground.

“It is a pity we cannot see inside it,” remarked Ann.

“With the description that Moses has given us, we are able to do that,” said her father. “If we were to pass through the veil of blue, purple, red and fine-twined linen that you see at the entrance, we would enter a building from which the natural light of the sun has been completely excluded. You notice, for example, that there are no windows in it. Moreover, as the entrance faces east, the priest would have to turn his back upon the sun, to enter the Holy Place each morning.”

“Why did God exclude the light of the sun?” asked Ann.

“It was to teach an important lesson. In that relationship, the light of the sun represented natural light, or the natural thoughts of man. By turning his back on the sun, the priest was taught to turn away from the thoughts of the flesh.”

“How would he see, if the inside of the Tabernacle were completely dark?” asked Peter.

“He would see by the light of a seven-branched lampstand that illuminated the darkness. By walking in the Holy Place in the light of the lampstand, he was taught to walk in the light of God’s truth, of which the lampstand is a symbol” (Psa. 119:105).

“What did the lampstand look like?”

“It had a central stem, and six branches, or arms, coming out on each side, and bending upwards in a quarter circle, reaching upwards towards the central stem. Therefore, it had seven lights in all. In Revelation 1:20 we are told that it represented the Ecclesia, or community of the faithful. Seven speaks of completeness in the Bible. The word for ‘seven’ in the Hebrew is similar to the word for *oath*. An oath establishes a

covenant so that the seven-branched lampstand provided the light of the covenant. It was the light, or truth, of God shining in a dark place."

"Why do you call it a lampstand when it is called a candlestick in the Bible?" remarked Ann.

"It should be rendered a *lampstand*," replied her father. "The Israelites did not have candles. The lamp was fed by oil which all the Israelites supplied (Lev. 24:2), and it had to be filled each morning and evening. It reminds us that if the 'light of the knowledge of the glory of God' is to shine forth from us, we, too, must work to supply the oil, and replenish it from day to day. We can only do that by studying the Bible. And we must do that for ourselves."

"Was the lampstand made of brass?" asked Ann, who was busily taking notes as she, in imagination, gazed upon the Tabernacle.

"No," replied her father. "Brass was only used for those things in the court; in the Tabernacle the furniture was covered with gold. The lampstand was made of beaten gold (Exodus 25:31) which speaks of a tried faith (1 Peter 1:7). The Scriptures compare the 'precious sons of Zion' to fine gold because such were truly men of faith (Lam. 4:2). When we think of the lamps lighting up the darkness of the Holy Place, we think of the communities of faithful men and women shining as 'lights in a dark place' (Phil. 2:15), that is, in the darkness of the world about. It is a wonderful symbol of what we are called to be now."

"What else was in the Holy Place?"

"There was a wooden table overlaid with gold, with an ornamental border around it. Upon this table were placed twelve unleavened loaves, which were changed for fresh loaves every week. These loaves, called the shewbread, were arranged in two piles, sprinkled with frankincense. Each week, the priests ate the shewbread, and new loaves took their place."

"What does the word 'shewbread' mean?"

"It means *bread of the faces* (of Yahweh), because it was set forth in His presence. It therefore is sometimes referred to as the *bread of His presence*. His 'faces' were the faces of the Cherubim which were embroidered in the veil which divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy. They were also found worked in gold in the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place."

"What did the bread represent?"

"The twelve loaves point to the twelve tribes of Israel, and thus to the 'hope of Israel' (John 4:22; Acts 26:6-7; Romans 9:4). We figuratively 'eat' of this hope when we accept Christ."

“What else was in the Holy Place?”

“As I told you earlier, the Tabernacle was divided into two parts, the Holy and the Most Holy. The Holy Place was twice as long as the Most Holy, which was shaped as a cube, and was divided from the Holy Place by another curtain, or veil, of blue, purple, red, and fine-twined linen. Close to this dividing veil was a golden altar for burning incense. Each morning and evening the priests were required to burn incense upon this altar of gold. The gold, as we have seen, spake of a tried faith, whilst incense is likened to prayer (Psalm. 141:2). In Luke 1:10 we learn that when Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was ministering in the Temple for this purpose, ‘the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.’ Thus, you see, the people of Israel followed the priestly duties in thought and action though they could not penetrate into the Holy Place.”

**In The
Most Holy Place**

“We shall now, in thought, enter the Most Holy Place of all,” said Mr. Phillips.

“For that purpose, we draw aside the curtain that divides the Holy from the Most Holy, and step inside these sacred precincts. Three things must impress us. First, its size. It measured ten by ten by ten cubits. It was, as I told you earlier, a cube, and in this, it is like the New Jerusalem of Rev. 21:16, which is a symbol of glorified believers. The ‘length, and breadth, and height’ of the New Jerusalem are like the Most Holy, for they, too, are equal. The Most Holy, of course, represents the immortal state to which we can attain.

“Next, consider its purpose. It was like a noble residence, for the symbol of Yahweh’s presence was found in the Most Holy (Exodus 25:8). His glory was there (Exod. 40:34), shining as did the pillar of fire which led the children of Israel through the darkness of night.

“And, finally, bear in mind the special sacredness of this place. Only the High Priest was permitted into the Most Holy, and even he only on special occasions, and after due preparations. This taught Israel, as we have seen, that there cannot possibly be acceptable worship of God without men recognising the true sacredness of that which is Divine. Before I go on, are there any questions you want to ask?”

“Yes,” said Graeham. “Where did the light of God shine from?”

“It shone from between two Cherubim and above the Mercy Seat,” said his father (Exodus 25:22). “The only furniture in the Most Holy was a simple chest made of wood overlaid

with gold within and without. There was a cover lid called the mercy seat made of pure gold, and arising out of this lid, two cherubim of gold, one at each end. The faces of these cherubim looked towards each other in fellowship, and downwards towards the mercy seat in hope. Inside the Ark there were placed the two tables of stone whereon the Law was inscribed, a golden pot containing manna, and, later, Aaron's rod that budded, concerning which I will tell you something later. On the side of the Ark there was a compartment to hold a book containing all the Law.

"What did it all represent?" asked Ann.

"The principle is that of God manifestation," answered her father. "God calls us to His truth that we might reveal His ways, and so be fitted to bear His glory in the day when the Lord Jesus returns to this earth. Jesus Christ manifested the Father's glory when on earth; he was 'a light shining in darkness' (John 1:5), for he revealed Yahweh unto men. We, too, are expected to be 'as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life' (Philippians 2:15). Christ is also set forth as a 'Mercy seat' (see Romans 3:25, where *propitiation* should be rendered *mercy seat*), so that this furniture pointed forward to him. The tables of stone reminded Israelites of the Law; the pot of Manna pointed to God's Word as the Bread of Life; the rod that budded symbolised divine Selection and Resurrection. All these symbols were fulfilled in the Lord. He magnified the Law and made it honourable; he was the Bread of Life; he was the subject of divine Selection and Resurrection (Romans 1:3). And, remember this! All these things in the Tabernacle were purified by sacrifice. On the day of Atonement, the blood of the offering was brought into the Most Holy place and sprinkled on and before the Mercy Seat. This shed blood pointed forward to the Lord's own sacrifice which was a necessary part of his own salvation (Hebrews 13:20). Remember this, too! The faces of the Cherubim were directed towards each other as they bent towards the Mercy Seat (Exodus 25:20). It reminded Israelites, as it should remind us, that mortals are entirely dependent upon the sacrifice provided in Christ our mercy seat in order to attain unto life eternal."

"What were the Cherubim?" asked Joan as her father paused.

"We are not told very much about the Cherubim," explained Mr. Phillips, "though we know they had faces and wings. The best description is given by Ezekiel in his first chapter. From that place we learn that they had four faces: Lion, Ox, Man and Eagle. As Israel was also divided into four sections, at

the head of which there were four banners, it is considered that the faces of the Cherubim answer to the symbols on the Tribal banners. From Revelation 4:6-8 and Chapter 5:9-10 it is quite clear that they represented the redeemed in glory. This is quite appropriate, for the redeemed are called 'the Israel of God' (Galatians 6:16; Ephesians 2:11-12).

"It is significant that the Cherubim were formed out of the same sheet of gold as was used for the Mercy Seat (Exodus 25:19). This teaches that we must strive to be 'one' with Christ our Mercy Seat. If we do so, we will attain unto a wonderful unity with him in the age to come (John 17:20-21). As their faces looked towards each other and also down towards the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat (Exodus 25:20), the lesson was shown that true believers should seek the fellowship of each other, whilst directing their attention to the sacrifice of the Lord. That is a lesson we also must learn."

"Was there anything else in the Most Holy Place?" asked Ann as her father concluded.

"There was one more item, and that a most important one," remarked Mr. Phillips who delighted in this particular subject. "Between the Cherubim, and above the Mercy Seat, the glory of Yahweh shone forth. As the Most Holy represents the state of immortality, this set forth what will take place at the return of Christ. Those believers who prove faithful will be given eternal life, and they will be associated with Jesus Christ as one in glory. Paul wrote: 'We stand in hope of the glory of God' (Romans 5:2). Peter declared that we will receive 'divine nature' (2 Peter 1:4). Christ promised that the 'name of God' will be named upon us (Revelation 3:12). In anticipation of this, the Lord Jesus prayed on behalf of those who believe in him that 'they may be one' with the Father and the Son in the day of glory (John 17:21-23). Accordingly, believers are called to a great honour: to manifest the divine glory. There are three stages in that: Mental, Moral, and Physical. We commence when we endorse Yahweh's truth; we move a stage closer when we manifest it in action; and we will attain the final glory when we are granted divine nature. That is why the call of the Gospel is said to be for the purpose of separating believers from the world as 'a people for God's Name' (Acts 15:14).

"These are deep matters, and difficult for young minds to grasp, but if you learn little by little, and think upon these things, their wonderful meaning will gradually unfold for you. In that connection, never forget the words of James: 'If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him' (James 1:5). Now, is

there anything more you want to ask?"

**The Parable of
The Tabernacle**

"Yes," said Graeham. "There were really three divisions to the Tabernacle: the Court, the Holy Place and the Most

Holy."

"That is true," agreed his father, "and they represent the three stages in a believer's life."

"How is that?"

"The Tabernacle was a wonderful parable teaching the way of salvation. It set forth three steps as essential to life eternal. *First*: that of Preparation; *Second*: that of Walking in the Life; *Third* that of Sharing the Glory.

"To commence those steps, all must first enter the outer court through the doorway, that is, through Jesus Christ. They must make personal contact with the Altar of sacrifice by baptism into his name. They must wash at the Laver by studying the Word of God, and learning of His will. All this answers to the requirements of the priests in the outer court, and it constitutes the *PREPARATION* for a true walk in Christ.

"Then, when the priests entered the Holy Place to minister at the furniture contained therein, they typified a believer's walk in Christ. They walked in the light of the seven-branched lampstand, as a baptised believer walks in the light of the Truth; they ate of the shewbread on the table, as he eats of the figurative Bread of Life. They burned incense upon the golden Altar, as he, in faith, pours out his heart in prayer. This is the second stage of an acceptable walk, and it can be designated as *WALKING IN THE LIGHT*. The final stage is 'beyond the veil, in the Most Holy.' The Apostle says that the veil symbolised the flesh (Hebrews 10:19), so that to go beyond the veil is to put on immortality. There, in the Most Holy, was seen the full glory of Yahweh, and this believers will be able to share with the Lord Jesus, their Mercy Seat, if they so order their steps that they walk rightly before God. Then they shall *SHARE HIS GLORY*. Do you think you understand this?"

"It is a little difficult, but we can only try."

"That is so, and there is one further lesson you can learn. The tents of Israel were outside the Tabernacle; the priests and Levites worked in the open court; the priests only were permitted in the Holy Place, and the High Priest alone was allowed in the Most Holy. In other words, the further we enter, the less people we see. How true that is of life. The glorious hope of Israel in Christ is proclaimed to thousands, but there are few who are prepared to listen, and fewer still who make

themselves ready to walk in the Holy Place. Finally, even of those who do, some will not enter the Most Holy. In other words, they will not receive life eternal because they become weary of the way. Though you are young, think upon these things and very seriously consider your lives. Keep in mind the words of the wise man: 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment' (Ecclesiastes 11:9). God would not have you to be miserable. He desires you to enjoy life and the good things He has provided. But always let your choice be wise. You have the freedom to select your own ways, but remember that you can be brought into judgment regarding these things. Therefore let the God-fearing wisdom of the Bible be ever your guide in the things you do."

"Do you think you will have enough matter for your essay now, Ann?" asked Graeham.

"Yes," replied Ann, who had been busily scribbling whilst her father had been talking, "but it is still all very hard for me, because now I don't know what to leave out!"

"Exodus 26 refers to a curtain of goats' hair over the tent (v. 7) followed by a covering of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of badgers' skins. What are 'badgers' skins'?" asked Peter.

"It is not known exactly what they were," replied his father. "Some say that the term signifies 'blue skins', or skins dyed blue. That being the case, the coverings placed on top of the Tabernacle were, in order: first, the curtains of goats' hair; second, the red rams' skins; finally, the blue badgers' skins. This order taught a powerful lesson. The goat represented sinful nature; the red denoted sacrifice; the blue stood for God manifestation. Now observe the sequence. We need first to recognise the sinfulness of flesh; then learn to sacrifice it; and through that means attain unto God manifestation."

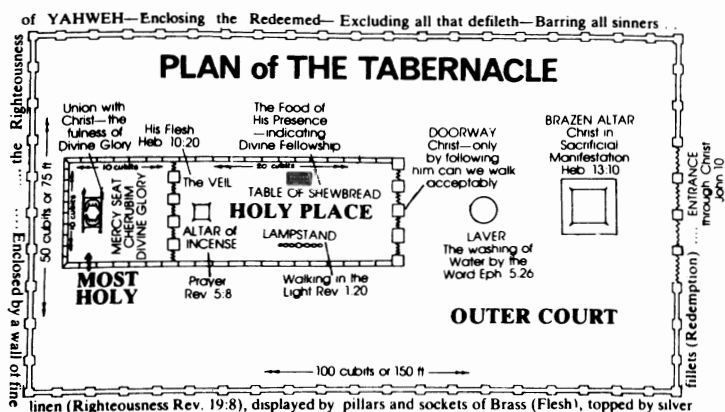
"If the curtain of goats' hair was put on first, would it form the ceiling of the Tabernacle?" enquired Graeham.

"No," answered his father. "The curtain of goats' hair formed a covering over the Tabernacle, or dwelling place of Yahweh in Israel, and as such it is called a tent (*Ohel* in Hebrew). But the Tabernacle proper was given its own ceiling, formed of highest quality linen, beautifully embroidered in blue, purple and scarlet cherubim (Exodus 26:1). In order to view these cherubim, the priests would have to look up; an action we are invited to imitate. Paul, for example, exhorts: 'If

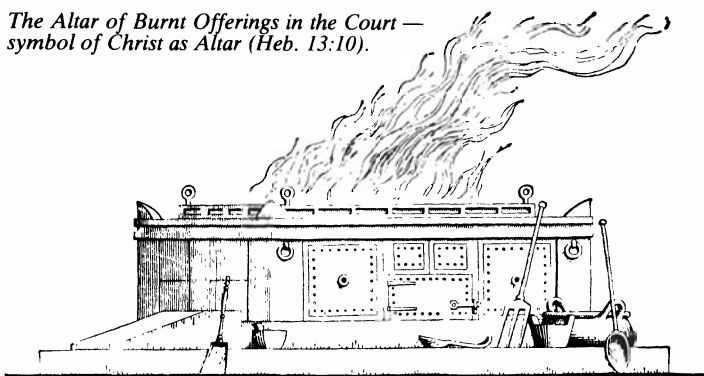
SUMMARY

The Furniture	Typical Meaning	Antitypical Fulfilment
IN THE COURT		
1. Brazen Altar	Approach to God by Sacrifice	Christ our Altar (Hebrews 13:10).
2. Brazen Laver	Spiritual cleansing	The Word of God as the transforming power (Ephesians 5:26).
IN THE HOLY PLACE		
3. Table of Shewbread	Spiritual sustenance	Partaking of the Israelitish hope of the Gospel through Christ the bread of life (Acts 28:20).
4. Lampstand	Spiritual illumination	The Light of Truth. (Rev. 1:20).
5. Altar of Incense	Acceptable supplication	Prayer through the name of Jesus Christ (Psalm 141:2).
IN THE MOST HOLY		
6. The Ark	Access through the Covenant	Covenant in Christ as the basis of access to God.
7. Mercy Seat	Forgiveness through sacrifice	Christ our Propitiation or Mercy Seat (Rom. 3:25).
Cherubim	The symbol of Israel	The true Israel in glory (Revelation 4:7; 5:9-10).
Divine Light	Symbol of Yahweh's presence	His glory manifested in the saints (John 1:14; Col. 2:9-10).

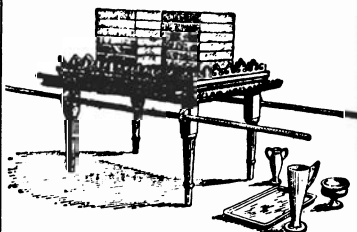
"The Law . . . a shadow (dark outline or silhouette) of good things to come" — Hebrew 10:1).



The Altar of Burnt Offerings in the Court — symbol of Christ as Altar (Heb. 13:10).



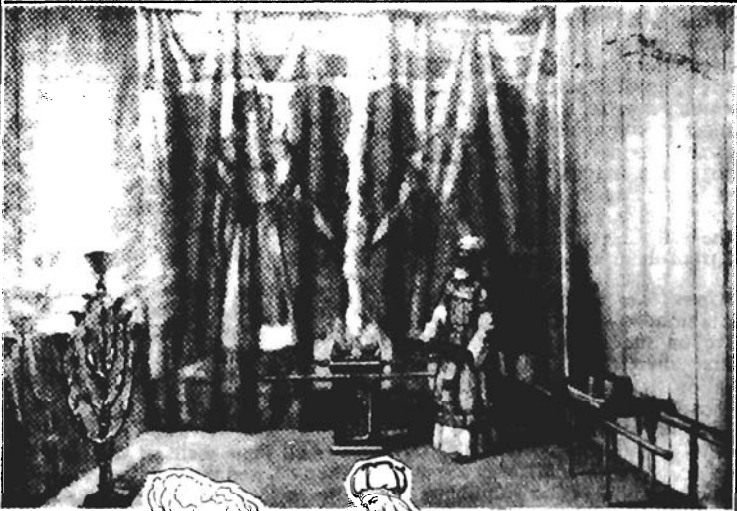
The Laver in the Court. The priests washed at the Laver not in it. It symbolised the cleansing influence of the Word (Eph. 5:26; John 15:3).



The Shewbread, eaten each week by the priests as the bread of life (John 6:48), the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20).

The Lampstand illuminated the complete darkness of the Tabernacle's interior, symbolising the Word as the Light of the World. The priests walked in its light; as such it foreshadowed the Ecclesia (Revelation 1:20).

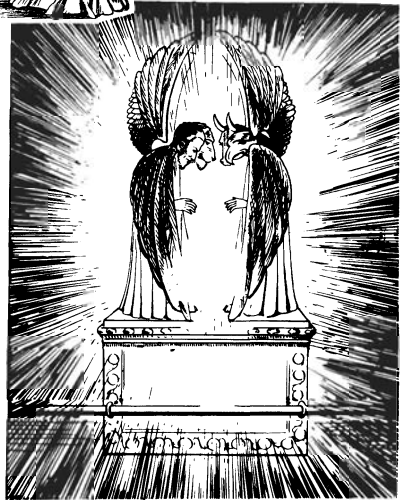




The Holy Place foreshadowed the present walk in Christ (Heb. 3:1).



The Altar of Incense — symbolised prayer (Psa. 141:2), our present access to the Most Holy (Hebrews 10:19).



The Cherubim in the Most Holy. symbol of the immortal state (Rev. 4:7; 5:9-10).

ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above . . .’ (Colossians 3:1). The Lord Jesus told his disciples: ‘When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh’ (Luke 21:28).”

“The Tabernacle is a very interesting subject,” commented Ann as her father paused.

“Yes,” he replied. “Its spiritual lessons are inexhaustible, showing that its design and purpose were divinely arranged.”

**The Garments Of
The Priests —
Exodus 28**

In addition to the glory of the Tabernacle with its beautiful lessons teaching Israel of God’s way, Yahweh also appointed Aaron (and after his death one of his sons in succession) to be High Priest of Israel. As befitted his high position and important duties, there were special garments designed for him “for glory and for beauty” (Exodus 28:2). These were adorned with gold, blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, and flashing gems, so that Israel’s High Priest must have looked both dignified and resplendent.

The gold and the colours were significant. The gold represented tried faith (1 Peter 1:7); blue is the colour of heaven, and reminded Israelites of their responsibility to observe Yahweh’s laws (Numbers 15:38-39); purple was the colour of royalty (John 19:2-3), and being a blend of blue and scarlet (God’s way, plus the sacrifice of the flesh) represented God manifested in the flesh.

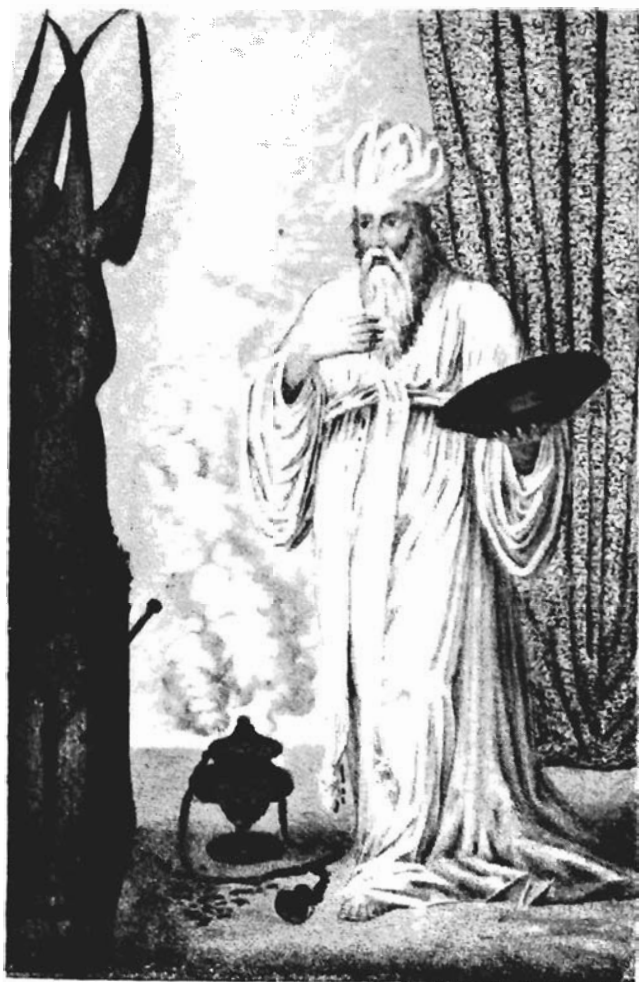
The glory and beauty of these garments were designed not so much to draw attention to Aaron himself as to the sacredness and holiness of his office. Each part of his attire spake eloquently of the glories, virtues, and beauty of our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. They represented qualities that we need to build into our lives if we would be pleasing unto the Father in heaven, and attain unto the honour of king-priests in the age to come (Revelation 5:9-10).

There were seven main articles of dress for the High Priest to wear; and as seven is the number of completeness, they spake of the perfection to be found in the antitype of Aaron: the Lord Jesus Christ as High Priest. They comprised Linen Breeches, Coat, Robe, Ephod, Breastplate, Mitre, and Holy Crown.

The Breeches reached from the loins to the knees, and were designed to cover the “nakedness” of the priests only when they were engaged upon their activities associated with the Tabernacle (Exodus 28:42-43). In Scripture, nakedness is a symbol of sin (Revelation 16:15), so that in wearing this article

of dress there was a more careful hiding of sin. What does it teach? That when we are engaged in the work of Yahweh, we should take extra care to be circumspect. It is significant, that no one would know if this article of dress were worn by the High Priest except Yahweh. And this seems to teach, that care should be taken when engaged in His service, that we do not offend even in thought. He alone knows whether our thoughts conform to His requirements.

On the other hand, the coat was a long garment that reached from the neck to the feet. It covered the whole body as is depicted in Revelation 1:13. Like the Breeches, the coat was



The High Priest dressed in his linen garments entering the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement.

made of linen which is the symbol of righteousness (Revelation 19:8). When the High Priest put on this article of dress, he figuratively "put on righteousness as a garment".

Next there was the robe, a long, seamless dress worn over the coat. It was of linen dyed blue, and was fastened into place by a girdle of the same colour. Whilst the blue speaks of the remembrance of Yahweh's laws, the girdle suggests service (cp. Ephesians 6:14; 1 Peter 1:13). Our High Priest declared of himself: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

The robe was shorter than the coat. It permitted the white linen to be seen below the blue. As the blue recalled the commandments of Yahweh, and the white stood for righteousness, the relation of one to the other is clearly noted. The blue stood for the remembrance of what Yahweh requires, whilst the white represented the application of these things in our lives.

On the skirt of the blue robe were embroidered bells of gold, and pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet. The golden bells represented the activity of faith, for the tinkling noise of them sounded as the High Priest went about his duties in the Holy Place (Exodus 28:35), whilst the pomegranates suggest the fruits of righteousness (Luke 3:8; Galatians 5:22-23). The pomegranate is a remarkable fruit. Its skin is purple, the colour of God manifest in the flesh. When it is cut open it is found to be packed with white seeds and red juice. How appropriate for the work of Christ. Concerning those who are "brought nigh by his blood" it is predicted: "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53:10).

The Ephod (Exodus 28:5-14) was a short garment reaching from the shoulders down to the waist. It consisted of two pieces, back and front, joined by two shoulder pieces. It was made of fine-twined linen, embroidered with gold, blue, purple and scarlet, and held to the body by a girdle intertwined with the same colours. On the shoulder pieces were two onyx stones set in sockets of gold, and upon the stones were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, "for a memorial" (v. 12).

The breastplate (Exodus 28:15-29) was a piece of finely woven linen about seventeen inches (43cm) long by eight and a half inches (21cm) wide, doubled over so as to make a square eight inches (21cm). It displayed the same colours as the ephod, and must have been very beautiful, for in it also were placed twelve brilliant gems, each one bearing a name of one of the tribes of Israel. All twelve gems were enclosed in settings of pure

gold.

The breastplate was held in place by two chains of wreathen gold which connected it with the shoulder pieces of the ephod. It was tied by a lace of blue at the two lower corners which also fastened it to the ephod. The reason for this is given: "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial unto Yahweh continually" (v. 29).

The names of the twelve tribes were borne by the High Priest in two places on his dress: inscribed in the onyx stones on his shoulders as a weight, and engraved in the gems in the breastplate over his heart as the centre of affection. However there was a difference in the order of the tribes as given. Those inscribed in the onyx stones as borne on the shoulders were according to fleshly birth; those on the breastplate of judgment were according to the ordering of the tribes as they encamped around the Tabernacle. This taught that whereas the High Priest would carry on his shoulders the burdens of Israel that arise from the flesh; the stones as arranged in order over his heart pointed to the wonderful destiny of Israel as the Kingdom of God, and the divine order to be manifested therein. In like manner, our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, will bear away our weaknesses, and keep us in his affections, if we come unto him in the correct manner (Matthew 11:28-30).

Israel in the wilderness, represented the Ecclesia today (Acts 7:38). Concerning the faithful among the nation, Yahweh declared through Malachi: "They shall be Mine, in the day when I make up My jewels" (Malachi 3:17).

The Mitre was a head-covering of linen, representing a crown of righteousness on the High Priest. It is in the mind where the battle of faith is fought. If we give our minds unto God we will not fail before Him. Unfortunately, through the weakness of the flesh, we do not always do so!

Finally, there was plate of pure gold fastened to the front of the mitre inscribed with the words: *Holiness to Yahweh* (Exodus 28:36). Aaron was instructed to wear this when he officiated on behalf of the people: "It shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things. . . ."

What is meant by that strange statement? It taught Israelites that they were tainted with imperfection. Even their offerings failed to measure up to what Yahweh really required. The only way that they could be acceptable before Him was by mentally recognising what He required, and seeking forgiveness when they failed to render it unto Him. Aaron, himself, was of

the same nature as all Israelites, and failed as did they. It was only by ever keeping before his mind the principles of Yahweh's holiness, as indicated by the golden plate on his forehead, that he could acceptably approach God on their behalf.

This, again, foreshadowed the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was of our nature, and yet he never succumbed to the flesh. He conquered it in life, and crucified it in death. How did he conquer it in life? By giving his mind completely unto his Father in heaven, by drawing upon the strength that Yahweh granted him to that end, and by disciplining his thoughts to ever meditate upon the things of God as recorded in His word. His example showed that the way to conquer sin is to fill the mind with divine principles. When that is done, evil thoughts will be driven out, and one is freed from much of the temptation that otherwise will assail him. That is why, in answer to temptation, Christ invariably replied: "It is written . . ." (Matthew 4:4,7,10). Instead of thinking about the items with which he was tempted, he filled his mind with thoughts of God, and that drove the temptation away. Therefore, Paul exhorted believers: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). The mind of Christ was foreshadowed by the band of gold bearing the inscription: *Holiness to Yahweh*. Israelites were reminded by this article of Aaron's dress, how they can acceptably worship Yahweh, and its lesson remains with us to this day.

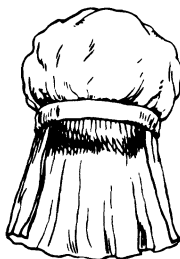
For it is in the mind that true holiness to Yahweh begins. The Bible refers to "the mind of the flesh", or the carnal mind in contrast with "the mind of the spirit", or the mode of thinking generated by God's truth (see Romans 8:6). The former is natural to us, but the latter must be stimulated by the influence of the Spirit Word (see John 6:63; Ephesians 6:17; 1 John 5:6). If we discipline our thoughts, and bring them into "captivity to Christ," our actions, which are the product of thought, will be of such a nature as to reflect holiness to Yahweh. But evil thoughts develop evil deeds. That is why Paul exhorted the Philippian believers to "think on those things" that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, virtuous and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8). By governing our minds to think on such things, our way of life will change. We will develop good habits, and these, in turn, will mould our characters into a form acceptable to God.

Aaron, the High Priest, foreshadowed the Lord Jesus Christ as High Priest (Hebrews 4:14). All the glory manifested in the specially designed garments of Aaron symbolised the complete beauty of Christ's character. They expressed prin-

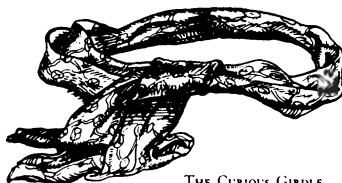
Special garments of the High Priest for "glory and beauty" figurative of Christ's character (Exod. 28:2). The gems in the Breastplate were arranged "according to the 12 tribes" (v. 21), hence the setting shown here.



THE HOLY CROWN



THE MITRE.

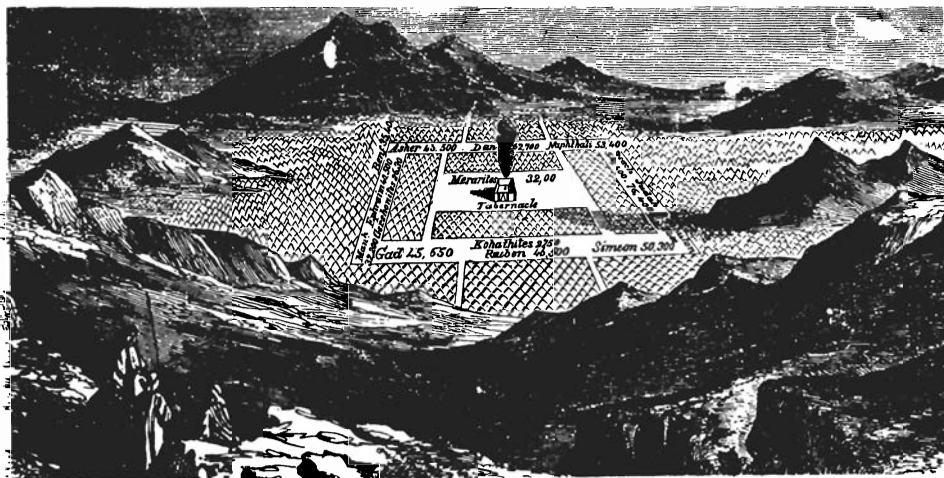


THE CURIOUS GIRDL.

ciples of righteousness, faith, sacrifice, God-manifestation, royalty, activity in Godly words and deeds, and the fulness of all that they represented is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. As High Priest, he does not need any specially made garments for “glory and beauty”, because the antitype of such is revealed in the perfection of character and beauty of holiness that he reveals. He does not need a plate of gold upon his forehead ascribing Holiness to Yahweh, because that was revealed completely in his way of life.

Aaron’s antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, was made like unto his brethren, and became “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17). Unlike Aaron’s sacrifices, our great High Priest has offered one sacrifice for sins forever, and is seated at the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:11-12). If we have “put on him” through baptism (Galatians 3:26-29), he acts as our Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1), ministering forgiveness and cleansing for those who have accepted him as their Redeemer (1 John 1:7,9). We await his return to this earth that he may reward with eternal life those who have put their trust in him, and who have built into their lives, the characteristics of glory and beauty displayed by him.

Meanwhile, at the foot of Horeb, Israel was provided with the Tabernacle for worship, a priesthood to conduct a service that would lead them to Yahweh, and now the people awaited the next move that would take them from Sinai to the Promised Land.



The Israelite camp in the Wilderness, from a 17th-century engraving

Chapter Two

HOW ISRAELITES FOUND A PLACE IN THE TABERNACLE

How The People Of Israel Were Redeemed — Exodus 40

“The tabernacle took about six months to complete,” remarked Mr. Phillips, discussing the Bible reading of Exodus 40 with his family. “It was set up by Moses on the first day of the first month of the second year since leaving Egypt (Exod. 40:2,17). It was a most unusual structure. All the boards and curtains were measured in such a way that they easily fitted into place. Like a prefabricated building, they were provided with hooks, sockets, or supports so that no nails or screws were necessary. It was just what Israel needed as the people journeyed day by day through the wilderness, for it could be quickly set up when they camped, or taken down when they were about to move off.

“Moreover each Israelite could identify himself in some way with the wonderful building in all of its divinely designed glory. No matter how rich or poor he might be, something of himself was found in it.”

“How was that, Daddy?” asked Ann.

“Yahweh explained to Moses that every Israelite was in need of redemption, and —”

“Just a moment, Daddy,” interrupted Ann. “What do you mean by ‘redemption’?”

“It means to be saved from death. All mankind is mortal, and therefore subject to death. This being so, all are in need of salvation. To impress that lesson upon Israel, God commanded every Israelite to pay a ransom for his life, which He set at half a shekel of silver (Exodus 30:13; Leviticus 5:15). Its actual value was not great, being less than a dollar, but the payment was compulsory. Yahweh warned that those refusing to pay, would suffer from a plague that He would send among them (Exodus 30:12). As I mentioned before, the price was so small that all could afford to give it. The rich were told that they could not give more, nor the poor less (v. 15). That command was designed to impress the people that salvation did not depend upon what a person may give God in material things, but upon the mercy that Yahweh would freely extend to those who seek Him in truth.”

“What has this to do with the Tabernacle?” interrupted Peter.

“The silver which each Israelite was forced to give was used to make the silver sockets, hooks and so forth which helped to keep the Tabernacle in position (Exodus 38:25-31),” explained his father. “This became a ‘memorial for Israel’ (Exodus 30:16), teaching a very powerful lesson.”

“What lesson was that?”

“It not only showed the people that they were in need of redemption,” replied his father, “but also revealed that in the sight of God both high and low, rich and poor, are treated alike. God doesn’t think more of one than another merely because he has more money, for all are sinful and doomed to remain forever in the dust unless saved by God.”

“That is a good lesson for everybody, and not only for Israel,” remarked Peter, who was busy scribbling notes in a very grubby-looking notepad.

“Yes,” agreed Mr. Phillips. “A man’s wealth, wisdom or position cannot save him from the death that faces us all. When we are young, death might seem very remote, so we do not give it much thought. But the years pass swiftly, and it is not long before we find some of our friends and loved ones are missing. By bitter experience we learn of the limitations of our mortal existence. Then, as old age gradually creeps on a person, he begins to view his life ‘as a tale that is told.’ He recognises that in a few short years’ time he will be no more. If he gives thought to this, he will realise the need for seeking God’s way. He possibly will recall how he has failed to grasp the opportunities to serve Yahweh, that have come his way and will realise that the time to do so now is brief. Then time will appear more valuable to him.”

“Poor Daddy!” murmured Joan.

“We need to value time,” continued Mr. Phillips. “It is the most precious possession we have. For most things you can obtain substitutes. For example, instead of wood you can use plastic. But you cannot find a substitute for time. You children have years before you. Make the best use of them. Remember what Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:1: ‘Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth . . .’ That is the time to listen to the Word of God. Our minds are more capable of taking it in when we are young; our memories are more retentive; our habits have not become so firmed as to be difficult to change. That is why I love to talk to you about God’s holy Word. King David came to realise the value of using time to serve Yahweh. In Psalm 63:3 he declared: ‘Because Thy lovingkindness is

better than life, my lips shall praise Thee'. Yahweh's loving-kindness is better than this present life because through it, and by wisely spending time in His service, we can attain unto life eternal in His glorious kingdom. That was the lesson Yahweh taught Israel when He commanded the people to pay half a shekel of silver for their redemption. Yahweh found a use for that which they gave Him; it helped to glorify the Tabernacle. In like manner, if we seek His salvation by doing those things He requires of us, He will find use for us in the Kingdom He will set up on earth, no matter how humble our service may be in His name.

"But surely we are not saved by paying a silver coin!" objected Peter.

"Of course not!" answered Mr. Phillips. "The half shekel of silver, the small coin that Israel had to pay, pointed forward to redemption in Christ Jesus. In 1 Peter 1:18-19 we read: 'Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold. . . but with the precious blood of Christ.' The small coin Israelites had to pay showed that they were in *need* of redemption, and it also revealed that God was prepared to give them something of inestimable value (life itself) for a comparatively small payment on their part. Every time the people approached the Tabernacle to worship, they could recall that they were somewhere represented in it through the tiny piece of silver they had contributed as a symbol of the price of their redemption. Yahweh took the small thing that they offered, and made it great in His Tabernacle. He will do the same for us. As the Israelites helped to glorify the place of worship, we can do the same in Christ.

Opening Ceremony Of The Tabernacle — Leviticus 8

"I suppose there was an opening ceremony for the Tabernacle when it was completed," remarked Peter.

"Yes, a very impressive ceremony," answered his father. "The people were specially assembled for the purpose (Leviticus 8:3). First they saw the cloud, the symbol of Yahweh's presence among them which had led them to Horeb, majestically return to the Tabernacle. Because of the grievous sin of the people when Moses was in the mount, it had left the camp of Israel, and had removed to the tent that Moses had pitched outside (Exodus 33:7-9). Now it returned to the Tabernacle which was in the centre of the encampment. It must have been a most awe-inspiring sight to see this white cloud, which hid the Divine glory from mortal sight, majestically and slowly move from outside the camp to settle down upon the

Tabernacle. It revealed to the people that Yahweh had returned to them, and that He endorsed all that was done by Moses that day (Exodus 40:34). Then, Moses at the command of Yahweh, and in the sight of the people, took Aaron and his sons, and publicly washed them with water (Leviticus 8:6).

"Whatever did he do that for?"

"It was to show the people that as Aaron and his sons had been selected for the priesthood, they were expected to be 'clean' in Yahweh's sight. As the priests represented the people it also revealed what was expected of them! They, too, had to be clean in His sight."

"Were they dirty?"

"No, the washing was a symbol of a *moral cleansing* or *purification* such as Yahweh requires of us all. David had such a cleansing in mind when he said: 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity' (Psalm 51:2). Jeremiah exhorted the people: 'Wash thine heart from wickedness' (Jeremiah 4:14). Peter taught that it was not the 'filth of the flesh' that we need to guard against but the 'answer of a good conscience toward God' (1 Pet. 3:21). In the light of these statements the public washing of the priest illustrated to the people what Yahweh required of them all. They were in need of moral cleansing or purification. We, too, need such a washing."

"By that you mean baptism, I suppose," remarked Peter.

"I mean more than baptism," replied his father. "The Lord Jesus told his disciples that they were 'clean through the Word he spake unto them' (John 15:3). Paul likewise referred to believers being washed 'by the word' (Eph. 5:26)."

"How can listening to the Bible cleanse us?" asked Ann.

"It cleans us mentally," replied her father. "When we heed the Word of God we learn to discern right from wrong, and if tempted to sin, our conscience pricks us. In that sense, we have been mentally cleansed. Those who have never heard nor heeded the Word of God, do not know when they are breaking His laws, and are in need of such a 'washing'. But the mental cleansing by the Word must be followed by a moral cleansing as we put it into practice. Do you think you understand this?"

"Yes."

"Next Moses clothed Aaron with the robes specially prepared for him 'for glory and for beauty' (Leviticus 8:7-9). He put on him the white linen coat with the girdle that symbolised righteousness; then the robe of blue which reminded Israel of Godly ways, with its bells and pomegranates (words and deeds); then the ephod with its shoulder onyx-stones and its magnificent breastplate containing the twelve glorious gems

with the names of the tribes engraved on them. Finally, he put on him the white mitre or cap that represented a crown of glory, affixing to it the golden band with its title: *Holiness to Yahweh*. Having first been *cleansed* by washing, Aaron was now *covered*. He therefore went through the same process as we must if we would serve Yahweh acceptably."

"How do you mean?"

"I have already told you that the washing by water represented the influence of the Word of God. In our case, the first step towards salvation is to attain unto an understanding of the Truth. Such knowledge must be followed by baptism, by which we 'put on Christ' (Gal. 3:27). This is equivalent to being clothed with the 'garments of salvation' (See Isaiah 61:10; Galatians 3:26-29; Romans 13:14). This clothing, of course, anticipates the final clothing: that of immortality (see 2 Corinthians 5:1-3). The resurrection of the Lord to immortality confirmed his status as High Priest; the granting of immortality to us at his coming will confirm our status in him as king-priests in the Kingdom he will set up (Revelation 20:6).

"Did that complete the ceremony as far as Aaron was concerned?" asked Graeham.

"No!" replied Mr. Phillips. "After Aaron had been washed and robed, Moses presented him to the people. Then taking up a cruse of oil, he anointed the Tabernacle, and its contents. On coming out into the court he anointed the altar and laver with their various vessels and utensils. Having done that, he proceeded to anoint Aaron. He copiously poured the oil on his head, so that it ran down over his shoulders to the full length of his garments. Do you know why Moses did that?"

"The Kings, High Priests and Prophets of Israel were always anointed to show that they had been appointed to their high office," answered Graeham.

"Yes, that is true. And in this case also, it is said that Aaron was anointed to sanctify him for his office, as Leviticus 8:12 declares."

"What does *sanctify* mean?" asked Joan.

"It means *to set apart*," replied her father. "When the Tabernacle, the Laver and the Altar were anointed it proclaimed that they had been 'set apart' for God's exclusive use. When Aaron was anointed, it proclaimed to all Israel that he had been *set apart* exclusively for divine work. The people were expected to respect him because of his God-appointed position."

"What did the anointing teach?" asked Graeham.

"It was a symbol of God's spirit," replied his father. "It not only set whoever was anointed apart as belonging to

Yahweh, but also demonstrated from whence they could derive their ability to grace the office to which they had been called. The anointing oil was a symbol of God's spirit. We read of the Lord Jesus that he was 'anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power' (Acts 10:35). Again: 'God anointed thee (Jesus) with the oil of gladness above thy fellows' (Hebrews 1:9). In these places the anointing oil is identified with God's spirit. The spirit of God can equip us for the work we may be appointed by Yahweh to do."

"But the Holy Spirit is not available today," protested Peter.

"The miraculous gifts of the Spirit are not available to us today," answered his father. "But the Holy Spirit is available in the sense that Jesus taught, 'the words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life' (John 6:63). If we allow his words to motivate us, we will 'walk in the spirit' as Paul exhorts us to do (Galatians 5:16). It is quite common for God's spirit to be identified with His word. Paul declared that 'the sword of the spirit is the Word of God' (Ephesians 6:17); and John taught that 'the spirit is the truth' (1 John 5:6). If we understand this, we will realise that the more we study the word of God, the greater measure of its spirit we will receive. To illustrate that the priests had a need to seek Yahweh's help, they were anointed with oil."

"In that case, Aaron foreshadowed Christ as High Priest."

"Certainly he did. The Lord Jesus is a High Priest, as we all know (Hebrews 4:14). As Aaron was washed, clothed and then anointed in the sight of the people, the Lord was washed by the spirit-word, clothed upon with divine nature, and displayed for all to see as the Son of God 'according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead' (Romans 1:4)."

"That is a very good type," remarked Graeham.

"After the anointing of Aaron, Moses brought Aaron's sons before the people," continued Mr. Phillips. "They had special garments, but they were not as resplendent as those of their father. They were given white linen garments, fastened with a linen girdle. But they were not anointed immediately as was Aaron, but had to wait until special sacrifices had been offered. You will see this recorded in Leviticus 8:12,30."

The children turned to the passage, and then Peter commented upon it.

"According to verse thirty, Aaron was anointed twice," he declared slowly as he pondered the verse.

"Yes," agreed his father. "It foreshadowed the double anointing that the Lord Jesus Christ received. In his lifetime on

earth he was anointed with the Holy Spirit 'without measure' (John 3:34), and then, as I have already remarked, he was 'declared to be the Son of God *with power*, according to the *spirit of holiness* (or holy spirit), by the resurrection from the dead' (Romans 1:4). That double anointing was foreshadowed by the two anointings Aaron received at the service of consecration when he was presented to the people."

"Who do the sons of Aaron represent?"

"As Aaron foreshadowed Christ as High Priest, his sons foreshadowed those of Christ!" said Mr. Phillips with a smile.

"Daddy, you are most irritating sometimes!" burst out Ann. "You know the Lord did not have sons!"

"Oh yes he has, Ann," answered her father. "Read the second part of Hebrews 2:13."

"Ann read: 'Behold I and the children which God hath given me.'"

"Those words describe the Ecclesia," explained Mr. Phillips. "Its members are treated as the sons of Jesus Christ. That is why, Isaiah 53:10 declares that 'he shall see his seed'. Again, Psalm 22:30, which is prophetic of the Lord, states: 'A seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.' By baptism into his name, we are accounted as the seed, or sons, of the Lord, and as such are called to be priests with him. Now notice that on the day of consecration for Israel's priests, the High Priest was anointed twice: first before the sacrifice, and then after it; and remember that this was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. Then, after the sacrifice, and after Aaron had been anointed the second time, his sons were anointed. That was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when the Apostles were anointed. In addition to that, the truths they proclaimed to the people, and which we embrace to this day, represent the oil of the word, with which we are figuratively anointed (see 1 John 2:20,27). Those who embrace the Word, or are figuratively anointed by it, Yahweh claims for His own, and they are called to be priests in His service (1 Peter 2:5). Therefore, in the very impressive ceremony, through which the priests of Israel were consecrated to their service, Yahweh foreshadowed His purpose to be revealed through the great High Priest He would send, even His own son."

"Do you think they would understand that?" asked Ann.

"I believe some would," replied her father. "David, you remember, prayed that God would open his eyes to 'wondrous things out of His law' (Psa. 119:18), and I believe that God would grant his request."

What The Sacrifices Taught

“What else took place?” asked Peter, whose notebook was rapidly filling up.

“Three sacrifices were offered,” said his father. “The first was a bullock for a sin offering, the blood of which was sprinkled upon everything; the next was a ram used as a burnt offering; and then followed a ram sacrificed as the Ram of Consecration.”

“What does that long word mean?” asked Joan.

“It means ‘set apart’?”

“Why were three sacrifices required?” asked Peter.

“The first was a sin offering,” replied his father. “It showed that the priests were mortal men, touched with sin, and in need of redemption. The sin offering provided the forgiveness of sins, and cleansed anything, such as the altar, that had contact with sin. The burnt offering —”

“Not so fast, please!” exclaimed Peter. “In what way did the altar have contact with sin?”

“Though the Altar, like all of the Tabernacle, had been set up through Yahweh’s direction, it had been built by mortal, sinful men, and therefore had to be cleansed from the defiling contact of such. Accordingly, it, like the High Priest, had to be atoned for by sacrifice (Leviticus 8:15). This was necessary because it foreshadowed Christ, as we have observed on numerous occasions. In Hebrews 13:10, Christ is described as ‘our altar’. He had to be purified, or cleansed of human nature, and given divine nature; and his own sacrifice provided the means to that end.”

“Does that mean the Lord Jesus had to offer a sin offering?”

“Jesus Christ never sinned, as we all know,” replied Mr. Phillips. “But his nature was the same as ours, a nature that all mankind has proven to be sinful, and which, itself, is sometimes called *sin* because of that (see Romans 5:19; 7:17; 2 Corinthians 5:21). He needed redemption from the mortality he inherited from his mother, and the way to victory was through the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8-9). That was part of the perfect obedience he gave his Father, and which ensured his resurrection from the dead. Peter taught that ‘it was not possible that he should be holden of death’ (Acts 2:24) because of his flawless life. Again, I stress, his offering was part of that obedience he gave to his Father. Therefore we read: ‘The God of peace, brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*’ (Hebrews 13:20). That blood was his own blood. And the Apostle reasons that it was through his shed blood that he

was redeemed from mortality to life eternal. Therefore, Jesus benefited from his own sacrifice. However, it is important to remember that his offering was not for himself only, but for all those *in him*. In fact, it is folly to consider the sacrifice of Christ apart from those for whom he died. But try to understand, that as the Tabernacle, its furniture, the Laver and the Altar (all of which foreshadowed the Lord in some way or other) were all atoned for by the blood of the sacrificial animal, so was the Lord. The Tabernacle and its furniture had to be atoned for because of its association with sinful man, and so with the Lord Jesus. He was of our nature, a nature that was defiled by sin from its original 'very good' state. From that nature he had to be redeemed, and his offering was an element in that redemption. The sin offering was designed to teach that we must be on our guard against the flesh, and that we must learn to 'crucify it with its affections and lusts' (Galatians 5:24)."

"The next offering was called the burnt offering," declared Peter who was carefully examining the chapter before them.

"The burnt offering was given that title because it was placed upon the altar and wholly consumed by the fire of Yahweh upon it," explained Mr. Phillips. "Fire was often used to represent the spirit of Yahweh. Remember that when the Apostles were anointed with the Holy Spirit, cloven tongues of fire rested upon them (Acts 2:3-4). The burnt offering was first killed, teaching that we must 'put to death' the desires of the flesh that run counter to the will of God, and then give ourselves to be completely consumed by the spirit-word of God. It is said of the Lord Jesus that he was 'eaten up' with divine zeal (John 2:17), and in that regard he was like a burnt offering. Again, Paul exhorted the brethren to 'Quench not the Spirit' (1 Thess. 5:19), and in so doing he likened the spirit-word to the altar fire. Jeremiah referred to the Word of Yahweh as a 'burning fire shut up in his bones' (Jeremiah 20:9), which meant that he was as a 'living sacrifice' consumed by the Truth (Romans 12:1). The sin offering taught Israelites to beware of the flesh; the burnt offering taught them to give themselves entirely unto Yahweh."

"The next sacrifice was the ram of consecration," remarked Peter. "I certainly cannot understand what it represented. It was killed, and the blood was placed on the tip of Aaron's right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot."

"Aaron's sons were also subjected to the same ceremony," remarked his father. "It taught a most impressive lesson. Indeed, the whole chapter should be very carefully examined,

for it shows what Yahweh requires of each one of us. The ram of consecration followed the burnt offering because it showed the avenues in which one manifests a dedicated life unto Yahweh. Therefore, as Peter has observed, when the offering was slain, Moses took of its blood, and before all the people, he placed some of it upon the right ear of Aaron, then on the thumb of his right hand, and finally, on the big toe of his right foot. Later he did the same with the sons of Aaron (Leviticus 8:23-24)."

"Yes, I cannot understand what it represented," repeated Peter.

"It was to show the priests, and all Israel, what Yahweh required of them. Blood represents life (Leviticus 17:11), and blood shed in sacrifice signifies a life given to God. But how is that life to be devoted? The answer is by hearing, working and walking in the way that He approves. To symbolise that, the animal was slain (indicating death to normal behaviour), and the ear, the thumb, and the toe tipped with blood. It indicated that the priests must devote their hearing (ears) to the Word of God; their labour (hands) to the Work of God; their actions (feet) to the Walk of God."

"That is interesting," exclaimed Peter.

"You say that all Israel would see what Yahweh required of them, but how could that be so if only the priests were set apart by this sacrifice?" asked Graeham.

"Because the priests represented the people!" replied his father. "Therefore what was expected of them was expected of all. Israel was 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exod. 19:6) and the people were expected to act accordingly. Therefore, in these three sacrifices, there was a wonderful parable of what God required, and still requires: first — a cleansing from sin through forgiveness in the offering He provided; second — the giving of ourselves completely to His service; third — the devoting of our ears, our hands, our feet to the ways of God. You can therefore understand what a wonderful ceremony this was, and how meaningful to those Israelites who took the trouble to find out what it was all about."

"Was that the end of the ceremony?"

"No, it lasted for seven days. During those seven days, Aaron and his sons had to stay at the door of the Tabernacle day and night (Leviticus 8:35), eating the flesh of the sacrifice that was given to them (for the priests had a portion of sacrifice which they ate). The people saw the priests daily eating of sacrifices for seven days. It was like a parable, teaching that priestly ministrations will be required for the seven thousand

years of man' probation; for even during the Millennium, when Christ reigns on earth, there will be need for priestly ministrations for the mortal people (Revelation 5:9-10). But at the conclusion of that time, there will be a change, for sin and death will be no more (Revelation 21:4), and 'God will be all and in all' (1 Corinthians 15:28). Therefore, to foreshadow this, on the eighth day there was another day of sacrifice. Special offerings were made for both the priests and the people. They included sin offerings and peace offerings."

"What is a peace offering?"

"It is an offering of fellowship. The Hebrew word for 'peace' means *to be at one*. The peace offering, therefore, showed that Yahweh was at one with the people. He accepted them, and they enjoyed fellowship with Him. But notice what this demanded of the people. Aaron took the breast and right shoulder (which in the sacrifice represented the heart, or mind, and the strength of the offerer) of the sacrifice, and waved them before Yahweh (Leviticus 9:21). That denoted activity. It meant that they had to give their mind and strength to Yahweh. Fellowship demands that. It is not a passive thing, but depends on how we give ourselves to God. Having done that, Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people, that he might bestow upon them the blessing of Yahweh. Moses then conducted him into the Tabernacle, possibly to give officially into his care the supervision of its worship. When they both returned to the people, they again blessed them. It was a most important occasion. It brought to a climax all the agony and effort of Moses in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, conducting them to Sinai, establishing them in covenant relationship with Yahweh, and building the Tabernacle as a place where He could be worshipped. At that moment a blinding light attracted the people's attention. It was the glory of Yahweh appearing above them. Then, suddenly, fire stuck down from heaven, consuming the sacrifices on the altar. It was the climax of everything. The people had been standing in great expectation as they had watched the actions of the two brothers, and awaited the appearance of the promised manifestation of divine acceptance (cp. v. 4). With its appearance, their feelings were raised to the utmost enthusiasm and awe. They shouted in excess of wonder, and then bowed deeply to the ground in adoration of Yahweh."



Chapter Three

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

**The Tragedy Of
Nadab And Abihu:
Leviticus 10**

“Unfortunately, all was not glory and joy at the opening ceremony of the Tabernacle,” remarked Mr. Phillips, as he continued his account of the record in Leviticus. “A frightful tragedy occurred that marred the occasion and caused Aaron and all Israel to mourn. This event also helped to show what Yahweh means when He says, ‘I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified’ (Leviticus 10:3).

“What does God mean by being ‘sanctified?’” asked Ann.

“To be ‘sanctified’ means to be *set apart* as something special,” explained her father. “It requires that we reverence Yahweh, seeking to perform what He desires us to do as revealed in His Word. When we act like that, we glorify Him before mankind, and that is pleasing to Him. Many people cannot see the need for such an act as baptism. They believe that so long as their hearts are right with God, all is well. And because *they* cannot see the need for what He has commanded, they *ignore* it. Such people do not ‘sanctify’ Yahweh, because they please themselves.”

“I understand.”

“It was that attitude of mind that brought tragedy to the family of Aaron on this day which was designed to be one of rejoicing and glory. In addition to the labours of Aaron himself, it was the duty of his sons to burn incense on the golden altar in the Holy Place. To do that, they had to take some of the burning coals from off the brazen altar in the outer court in order to burn the incense. You remember, of course, that the fire from this altar had come down from God out of heaven (Leviticus 9:24). By taking this God-given fire, and burning the incense with it, the two altars (the altar for sacrifice in the outer court, and the altar for incense in the holy place) were joined together as one, and because Yahweh had given the fire, they were both linked with Him. Two of the sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, did this service exactly as required by God, but Nadab, the eldest son of Aaron, and Abihu, his brother, took common fire in their censers to burn the incense in the Holy

Place. That was wrong, for Yahweh had commanded otherwise. And it was followed by tragedy. As they were moving towards the Holy Place in the sight of all the people, the fire on the altar leaped out and consumed these two foolish priests.

"Aaron was shocked by the dreadful tragedy!" continued Mr. Phillips. "There, on the ground, destroyed by divine fire, were his two sons, dead! He realised, of course, that they had brought this terrible punishment upon themselves; that no one was to blame but them. He knew that Yahweh is righteous, and must be obeyed. He loved his sons dearly, and was struck dumb by the awful sight, yet he realised that as High Priest he could not condone their sin (v. 3). As a father, he was overwhelmed by what had happened; as High Priest and loyal worshipper of Yahweh, he realised that He must be honoured before all the people, and even above his sons. Moses endorsed Aaron's action. He commanded that there should be no sign or grief, nor of mourning, at the death of these two men (v. 6). Their crime was clear to all, and all must endorse the righteousness of Yahweh's judgment."

"That seems hard to me!" remarked Ann.

"It is not really," replied her father. "Men must understand the great and exalted position of the Creator. He honours us by even noting that we exist, and His love is manifest towards us in that He has made open a way of eternal life. If we deliberately reject or disobey Yahweh, we are worthy of death. If God had not punished Nadab and Abihu, then all Israel might consider that they could disobey God without punishment."

"I can see that," said Peter, "but it still seems hard that Aaron was not permitted to mourn the death of his sons."

"Aaron, of course, was grief-stricken at the loss of his two sons. But if he had gone into mourning, it would have put Yahweh in a wrong light in the sight of the people," explained his father. "They may have called in question the divine judgment as they sympathised with the sorrowing father. Remember, the two priests had deliberately disobeyed Yahweh, and if their action had been imitated by the people, the whole of Israel might have been destroyed. Thus Aaron realised that Yahweh's judgment was just. As priests a greater responsibility rested upon Nadab and Abihu: they should have known better. Moreover, the terrible effect of the sin of Israel at worshipping the golden calf was still fresh in the memory of the people. Many had died as a result of that wickedness. So the judgment on these two erring priests taught that Yahweh must be sanctified in all those who approach Him. It is a lesson we, too,

must learn."

"I see what you mean."

"As the priests were not permitted to leave the Tabernacle at that time, and as it was considered defiling to touch a dead body (Numbers 19:11), Moses called two Levites, cousins of Aaron, to carry the bodies of Nadab and Abihu out of the outer court. We can imagine the hush that would occur as the bodies of the two priests were silently carried away for burial, and the awe-inspiring lesson this sad incident would bring home to the people.

"Meanwhile, the sacrifices were being consumed upon the altar. It was the duty of the priests to eat portion of these but in view of the family tragedy, Aaron did not feel up to doing so. Instead, he allowed all the offering to be consumed on the altar. When Moses saw that this flesh had been burned as well (v.16), he was angry. 'Why have you not done as God required?' he asked Aaron. But Aaron's reply was full of dignity and feeling. He replied: 'God certainly has commanded me to eat of the sin offering; but when such things as these have happened unto me, could it be good in the sight of Yahweh to do so? Does He not expect that I should feel as a father under such afflicting circumstances?' (v. 19). Moses saw the wisdom of these words, and said no more to his sadly afflicted brother."

"That raises a question," said Graeham. "If God commanded Aaron to eat the flesh and he burned it instead, he also disobeyed. Why, then, did not Yahweh treat him as He did his two sons?"

"Because of the circumstances," replied Mr. Phillips. "In Aaron's case, God forgave him."

"Well, why were Nadab and Abihu not forgiven?" asked Peter.

"Because their sin was bold and presumptuous, a 'sin unto death' (1 John 5:16) for which there was no forgiveness; but Aaron's omission was brought on by the weakness of the flesh, and God Who is ever kind and loving, overlooked it. The incident of Nadab and Abihu teaches us not only that Yahweh will reward those who seek Him, but that He will punish those who spurn His goodness. It also shows us, as in the case of Aaron, that God will forgive those things which through weakness of the flesh we might omit to do. There is also another important lesson that all mankind must learn."

"What is that?"

"The incense that was burned on the golden altar in the Holy Place represented prayer (Psa. 141:2; Rev. 5:8). The Israelites knew that, and their custom was to engage in prayer

when the priests were burning incense (Luke 1:10). The fact that the incense had to be burned by coals kindled at the altar of sacrifice, teaches that prayer, to be acceptable, must be made through the antitypical altar and sacrifice that Yahweh has supplied (Hebrews 13:10; John 1:29), even the Lord Jesus Christ. When Nadab and Abihu used common fire to burn incense they approached God other than the way that He provided. That was presumption, and punishable with death."

"Does that mean that all prayers should be offered in the name of Jesus Christ?" asked Peter.

"That is so," replied his father. "He has commanded that we do so (see John 14:13). But that means more than merely repeating the words '*in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*.' For prayer to be acceptable, we must have contact with the Christ-altar. To do that we must be baptised."

"Does that mean that we must be baptised before we can pray?" asked Ann.

"I am not saying that," replied Mr. Phillips, "because Cornelius' prayers came up 'for a memorial before God' before he was baptised (Acts 10:4), but true acceptable prayer, and prayer for forgiveness of sins, can only be offered in the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore before such prayers are acceptable we must be baptised. Baptism commences our life of service before God. It represents an act of humble submission to His will such as He desires in every one of us."

"It seems a pity that this terrible chapter is in the Bible," remarked Ann.

"Not really, it taught a very important lesson. The Israelites learned by the tragedy that they had to exercise care in divine worship. It is significant that the chapter is followed by a list of animals deemed 'clean' and 'unclean.' This again taught that Yahweh is selective. All the unclean animals manifest characteristics that spiritually considered we must avoid. They either gulped their food down greedily, or preyed on other animals or birds, or were dirty in their habits. Yahweh taught His people to observe nature around them, and to extract lessons from what they saw. There was also another important lesson taught by the tragedy of Nadab and Abihu."

"What was that?"

"It demonstrated that for all their beautiful garments, the priests of Israel were weak, mortal men, prone to sin like each member of the nation. Accordingly, the priesthood was bound to fail sooner or later, revealing the need of one that would not fail. That immortal, infallible order of priests founded by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is set forth as a High Priest 'for ever

after the order of Melchisedec' (Hebrews 6:20). To that priesthood, faithful men of old looked. For example, David, who was of the tribe of Judah, looked for the time when he 'may dwell in the house of Yahweh' (Psalm 27:4). He looked for this immortal priest to come, and in Psalm 110 spoke prophetically of his ministrations as a King-priest. So though tragedy marked the opening ceremony of the Tabernacle, and reminded Israelites of the limitations of the Aaronic priesthood, they were not left without hope. Faithful Israelites could look forward to the one promised from the beginning: the Seed of the Woman who would bruise the serpent's head."

"Whatever caused Nadab and Abihu to act so foolishly?" asked Ann.

"We are not specifically told," answered her father. "But there is an indication of what caused it. This is implied in the warning issued by Yahweh to Aaron immediately after the tragedy. Aaron was commanded that those who were engaged in the service of the Tabernacle must strictly abstain from intoxicating liquor of any kind (see Leviticus 10:9). Evidently Nadab and Abihu had been intoxicated when they acted as they did. As such, they would not have seen clearly to 'put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean', as Aaron was instructed they should do (v. 10). Abstinence is valuable in all avenues of life, but particularly in regard to divine service. Therefore Paul warns us to be on our guard against the unwise use of intoxicating liquor."

"Where does he do that?"

"In Ephesians 5:18. He exhorts: 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit.' His words apply not merely to wine as such, but to the intoxicating influence of merely emotional religion. In the Book of Revelation, Babylon the Great, representing apostate religion, is represented as having a cup of wine to offer her paramours (Revelation 17). Figuratively, a person can become inebriated, or drunk, through false doctrine, and this can cause him to act foolishly before God. We need to partake of the 'sober words of truth,' for they will keep us in 'the strait and narrow way that leads to life eternal.' The tragedy of Nadab and Abihu, unfortunately, has been repeated by many who have never tasted of literal wine, but who have been made figuratively drunk by the emotional impact of false teaching. We need always to be on our guard against such, for it can lead us astray."

Chapter Four

THE OFFERING OF THE PRINCES

The Valuable Present Of The Princes(Numbers7)

One final act marked the end of the ceremony at the setting up of the Tabernacle. The princes of Israel, twelve men, leaders of the tribes, made a valuable and useful offering unto God. It was six covered wagons and twelve oxen, to assist in carrying part of the Tabernacle from place to place. There were sacred portions of the Tabernacle, such as the Ark of the Covenant, that Yahweh had commanded to be carried in a particular manner, and His instructions, of course, had to be obeyed (Numbers 7:9). But other portions of the Tabernacle and its courts could be carried upon these covered wagons.

Yahweh was pleased to accept this thoughtful offering (vv. 4-5), teaching that He is pleased with individual initiative when it conforms to His word, and that He is prepared to accept such offerings.

As well as these gifts, the princes each presented a further valuable offering of a silver charger (or dish), and a silver bowl, both filled with flour and oil. These gifts would not only be helpful to the work of the priests, but were also full of meaning in themselves. Silver is the metal of redemption (Exodus 30:13), so that in these silver dishes filled with flour and oil (which symbolise life and joy — Hebrews 1:9), there was symbolised the redeemed, moulded into divine shape, and filled with life and joy.

In addition, each of the princes presented a golden spoon filled with incense. Incense symbolised prayer, and gold is a symbol of faith (1 Peter 1:7), so that this gift represented the prayers of faith.

Like the priests, these princes also offered burnt offerings, sin offerings and peace offerings, on behalf of both themselves and the tribes they represented.

This must have been a most impressive ceremony. We can picture the representatives of Israel standing in their various tribes in front of the Tabernacle, and then in the sight of all, the twelve princes, stepping forward in order, so as to present their offerings unto Aaron at the altar.

The names of these princes are significant. They are given in Numbers 7 as follows: Nahshon (meaning, *the oracle*),

Nethaneel (*God-given*), Eliab (*God is father*), Elizur, (*God is a rock*), Shelumiel (*God is peace*), Eliasaph (*God gathers*), Elishama (*God hears*), Gamaliel (*God recompenses*), Abidan (*Father of Judgment*), Ahiezer (*helping brother*), Pagiel (*God meets*), Ahira (*brother of evil*).

As each prince stepped forward to present his gift, the meaning of his name would be on the lips of all the onlooking multitude, and each man would contribute, as it were, a word in a sentence that proclaims the great purpose of God in the earth. For when all these names are joined together, this is the sentence that is made:

"The oracle is God given. God is a Father, He is a rock, He is peace. He gathers (His people), He hears them, He recompenses them. He is the Father of Judgment, and through a helping brother (the Lord Jesus), God will meet, and destroy the brother of evil."

Israel now stood in a special relationship to Yahweh. Having been delivered from out of death and slavery in Egypt through the Passover Lamb and Baptism into Moses, and having entered into covenant relationship with Yahweh, Israel now constituted His Kingdom on earth. The Tabernacle in the midst of the nation was the dwelling place of Yahweh upon the earth, and the symbol of this was seen in the cloud by day and the fire by night. In spite of all the difficulties of their deliverance from Egypt, and the limitations stressed by the failure of some of their priests, the status of the people in the sight of Yahweh was an honourable one. Israel was a privileged nation, and the opportunity now opened for the people to manifest their loyalty to the One who had called them out of slavery, to be a people for His Name. The blessing was pronounced upon them: a blessing that pronounced Protection, Pardon and Peace for all true Israelites. It is expressed in Numbers 6:24-27:

"Yahweh bless thee, and keep thee" (promising Protection);

"Yahweh make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee" (promising Pardon);

"Yahweh lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (promising Peace and Fellowship).

The blessing concludes with the statement: "And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them."

That Name proclaimed their status as Yahweh's people, separated from all others to fulfil His will in obeying His commands, and so exhibiting to all others, the glory of divine ways. That Name they could honour or dishonour according as they responded to the opportunities that would open out to

them. Significantly, that Name is also named upon those who accept Christ in truth (Acts 15:14), and, today, they have the opportunity of demonstrating their unswerving fidelity to Yahweh.

How Israel reacted to the challenge presented them is revealed in the record of their wanderings through the wilderness.



Carrying the sacred vessels during the Exodus was the duty of the Levites



The Ten Commandments form the basis of the Mosaic Covenant by which Israel was constituted the Kingdom of God on earth (Exodus 19:6). Above: The Ten Commandments, as they appear in a 17th century English Bible.

Opp.: Moses with the Tablet of Stone.



