

**F.B. Meyer:**

### **Preface**

The Angels who daily spread the table in the wilderness during the desert wanderings could hardly have had more pleasure in their work than I have had in preparing a daily meal for many of God's children; and the response has been quite remarkable.

From sick chambers, from souls in sore distress and perplexity, from discouraged servants of God, from those occupied in lonely outpost duty, from all parts of the world - testimony has come to the appropriateness and directness with which The Daily Homily has spoken to the needs of God's people. To Him be the glory, who still multiplies the five barley-loaves and two small fish.

In response to many requests, these brief meditations are now published in a permanent form; and it is hoped that they will be largely used in the private closet and at the family altar; especially where the holy habit prevails of reading the Word of God through, in due course, from cover to cover.

They do not profess to be comprehensive or profound. "A Homily," says an authority, "is distinct from mere exegesis or exposition; because the latter is addressed to the understanding, while the Homily is meant to affect the heart also, and to persuade those who hear to apply the lessons of Scripture for the reformation of their lives." This definition admirably describes my purpose. I have endeavored to build an exhortation to the heart from a careful consideration of the selected passage, often in the fresh light thrown on it from the Revised Version.

**F B Meyer**

### **The Evening and the Morning were the First Day - Genesis 1:5**

How different is God's method from man's! The creature works from day to night, his best is first; but darkness overshadows his fairest hopes and best-concerted schemes. The Creator's days begin with the preceding eve. He reckons the evenings and nights into the days, because out of them the day is born; they usher in the light, and recreate body and brain for the busy hours that follow.

Art thou disappointed in Christian work? - Remember that God wrought on through long dark ages, ere His schemes were evolved in order and beauty. Human schemes begin with blare of trumpet and roll of drum, but are soon plunged in darkness. The heavenly seed is sown in autumn shadows; the foundation-stone of redemption was laid amid the gloom of Calvary; the work that lasts generally begins amid disappointment, difficulty, and heart-break, but inevitably passes into the day.

Art thou passing through the bitterness of soul-trouble? - For weeks there has been no ray of comfort, no sign of deliverance. Yet every dark hour is hastening toward the dawn. Thou shalt see thy Beloved walking toward thee in the morning light.

Art thou in despair for the worm? - The times are dark, and threaten to get darker. But if the first creation began in the dark, can it be wondered at that the second must begin there to? But as the one emerged in daylight, so shall the other. The morning cometh; see the star of day standing sentry! Time, is bearing us to a day that shall never go down to night, but shall mount ever toward its meridian.

### **The Lord God put him into the Garden - Genesis 2:15**

Thus God started man in an ideal home. Memories of Eden, exquisite as dreams, weave the background of human life. Fellowship with the Creator, who walked its glades; its river, trees, and fruits; its blessed companionship; its light and ennobling toils - how fair the picture!

The Garden of Eden. - That was God's ideal. When men point thee to the scars on the world's face, left by the trail of the Arab slaver, the march of the army, the decaying glory of human civilization, and ask how such things are consistent with God's love, point to that garden and say, "That is what the love of God meant for man; Satan and sin have wrought this."

The Garden of Gethsemane. - When man forfeited Paradise, the Saviour was revealed to regain it. He trod the

winepress alone in the shadowed garden of the olive trees, that through its glades He might pass to His cross, and so make the wastes of sin bloom again as Eden. Is it wonderful that another Paradise is possible, when He sowed its seeds and watered the soil with His blood?

Turning wastes into gardens. - In Eden man wrought as God's fellow worker; and we are called each day to do something toward reconstructing the Lost Paradise. Find thy part in delving, sowing, watering, or tending the tender shoots! Seek that thine heart should be an Eden, kept sacred for thy King, and endeavor thy best to plant gardens where hitherto sand-wastes and thorn, thickets have prevailed. Then, "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

Where art thou? - Genesis 3:9

The cool of the day, when the breeze steals over the fevered landscape, is an appropriate time for man to hold fellowship with God. We need to have His hand laid on our throbbing temples, stilling, tranquillizing, shedding His serenity throughout our being. What the breath of evening is in summer, fellowship with God will be for thee, my soul; see that thou art not so absorbed with thy sins, thy love, or thy business, as to miss the tryst, when the sun is westering.

God misses His child. - That hour of fellowship was much to Adam, and it was more to God. Love, God's love, craves for fellowship.

As the musician for his lute, as the hart for the brook, as the mother for the twining arms and babbling talk of her child - so does God long for the free outpourings of His child's heart in prayer; misses them when withheld; is jealous when they are fitful and intermittent.

God seeks His child. - He did not wait till Adam found his way back to His side. But He hastened in search of him. So through the glades He comes to seek thee, O truant one! Where art thou, that for these many days thou hast withheld thyself from the hour of prayer? Wilt thou not say with the psalmist, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek?"

God mourns over His child. - These words, in one version, are rendered, Alas, for thee: as though the heart of God were wrung with sorrow for our loss, as well as His. But He does not content Himself with regret. By the pang of travail, by the prick of thorns, by the necessity of labor, by sacrifice and gifts of covering for our nakedness, He brings us back to Himself.

Where is Abel thy Brother? - Genesis 4:9

The first question God puts to the soul is, "Adam, where art thou?" The next, "Where is Abel thy brother?" We are our brothers' keepers. Each within our reach, all who need our help, all related to us by the ties of the family, have a claim on us. We must not take an advantage over them; their weakness and need are strong claims on our resources of every kind; we are bound to keep them so far as we can; we may at any moment be called to give an account of their whereabouts. To dispute this is to betray the spirit of Cain, who was a murderer.

God keeps an inventory of His saints. - In His book their names are written. Their names, abode, and circumstances; their fathers, mothers, and brothers; their occupation, whether they keep the sheep or till the land: all are known to Him, because fixed by His providence. Whatever touches them is, therefore, instantly known to Him. It is as though they were part of His very being, and a stab of pain to them thrills His heart.

God calls us to help Him in keeping one another. - We are to watch for each other's souls; to consider one another to provoke to good works; to bear one another's burden; to exhort each other, to convert the wanderer from the path of the destroyer, and to wash stains from his feet. The cure of souls is the work of all the saints. But this is only possible to those who have been baptized into the Spirit of Christ. Remember that you have just as much love toward God, as you are willing to show toward the brother whom you have seen. "This commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."

Enoch walked with God - Genesis 5:24

What an epitaph on this ancient saint! It is as clear-cut to-day as when first recorded here. We know nothing of Enoch but this brief record; but it tells us everything. It was not an act or a number of acts, but a high tone of

life constantly maintained. Better to walk with God every day in calm, unbroken fellowship, than to have occasional rapturous experiences, succeeded by long relapses and backslidings. The Hebrew word might be rendered, "Enoch walked, and continued to walk."

**Be sure to go God's Way.** - He will not walk with thee in thy way, but thou mayest walk with Him in His. To this He calls thee. Each moment, and especially when two or three roads diverge, look up to Him, and say, "Which way art Thou taking, that I may accompany Thee?" It will not be so hard to forsake inviting paths and engaging companions, if only the eye is kept fixed on His face, and the track of His footsteps determines thy road beyond hesitation or dispute.

**Be sure to keep God's Pace.** - Do not run impetuously before Him; learn to wait His time: the minute-hand as well as the hour-hand must point the exact moment for action. Do not loiter behind in indolence or sloth. Be loyal and true to His ideals, and quick to obey His least commands.

**Be sure to wear God's Livery.** - He is in the light; the light is His chosen symbol; it ill becomes thee to wear the unfruitful works of darkness. Put them off, and put on the armor of light. Walk with Him daily in stainless robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Then thy fellowship shall be with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and with all holy souls everywhere.

**Noah was just, perfect, walked with God - Genesis 6:9**

The eyes of God went to and fro over the ancient world, where sin reigned unchecked, to discover one grateful spectacle. But they were doomed to disappointment, till they lighted on Noah. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord, because him only had God seen to be righteous in all his generation. Like Antipas, he dwelt where Satan's seat was, held fast the Divine name, and was God's faithful witness. Be thou loyal to God, my soul, though thou stand alone. There are three characteristics in the man who finds grace in the eyes of the Lord.

**In himself he is Just.** - Not faultless, as judged by the white light of eternity; but blameless, so far as his own consciousness is concerned. He wears ever the white flower of a blameless life. His strength is as the strength of ten, because his heart is pure. He exercises himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and man. This condition is only possible to faith, that opens the door of the heart to receive the life of God. Wouldst thou be just, welcome that Just One. Let Him live within thee.

**Toward man he is Upright.** - He does not keep his eyes bowing down to the ground in shame, or furtively looking around to gain a secret advantage; he looks the whole world in the face. His eyes reflect the integrity and purity of his soul; they beam with sincerity, unselfishness, and love.

**With respect to God, he abides in Perpetual Fellowship.** - This were worth our getting, though we parted with all our jewels to win it. To be tuned into one deep accord with the Divine nature; to answer to Him with one full, responsive chord; to be always found where God is, and never where He is not - that were life indeed.

**As God had commanded - Genesis 7:9**

This is the secret of a Holy and Blessed Life. Most of our sorrows and disappointments have come on us because we have chosen our own path, and done according to our own will.

**In obeying, we must sometimes walk in the dark.** - When Noah began to walk with God, he knew not that it would lead him into collision with his generation, with the suggestions of common sense and experience, and with much that he held dear as life. But walking on each day, he grew strong to trust in the bare word of his Almighty Guide, and grasped it as men in the catacombs will keep their hand on a tiny string or cord, until the first streak of daylight appear. Obey absolutely the voice that speaks in thy heart; the way is dark, but it is the way.

**In obeying, we must learn to wait.** - For one hundred and twenty years the long-suffering of God waited, and during that weary period this true heart failed not. Then for seven days the patriarch waited within the closed doors. It is not easy to bear the long strain of endurance. To rush into the battle, to do something desperate, to strike for liberty - this is the choice of the flesh; but to live in hourly fear, to toil on without result, to see the years stealing away the bank or shoal on which our heart had erected its structures of hope - this is hardest of all, unless our hope is anchored beyond life's ebb and swell.

**In obeying God others obey us.** - How came it that these creeping things and flying fowls, these living

creatures, clean and unclean, entered the Ark so tamely and submissively? Surely a Divine constraint was upon them. When we are under authority, we can say, "Go," "Come," "Do this." All things serve the man who serves the Divine Master, Christ.

#### God remembered Noah - Genesis 8:1

He cannot forget thee, though all hearts that loved thee are cold in death, and though floods of trouble surge and break around. He comes nearest when there is none else to intercept His love. The floods but bear us nearer to His heart, above the tops of the highest hills. He could not forget because His honor was pledged. - There was a tacit understanding between Noah and Himself, that if His servant obeyed His mandate He would be responsible for the consequences that obedience might involve. There is no need to make bargains with God, as Jacob did. It is far better simply to obey, sure that whatever the highest honor may demand, God will be equal to it. He will have prepared more than we expected.

He could not forget, because He rode the waters with His child. - He said, "Come thou into the Ark," evidently He was inside; and when it is said that God shut him in, it was from inside that the door was locked. Whatever happened to Noah was an experience for his Almighty Friend. They had walked together on the earth; they now shared together the seclusion of the Ark. God is identified in the experiences of His saints. Their pangs, and tears, and waiting-hours are His. He can no more forget, than a mother her sucking child.

He could not forget, because Noah was a type of His beloved Son. - Across the dark sea of death, the cross of Jesus has brought Him and His own: so that we now belong, not to the old world which is under the curse, but to the world of Resurrection-Life. The dark woes of Calvary were imaged there: how could God forget? Reckon on God's faithfulness: He will not leave thy soul in Hades.

#### My Bow in the Cloud - Genesis 9:13

A covenant is a promise or undertaking, resting on certain conditions, with a sign or token attached to it. The rainbow on the raincloud, the Lord's Supper, the wedding-ring, are signs and seals of the respective covenants to which they belong. Whenever we see them we should bethink ourselves of the covenant. Whenever you see a rainbow, recall the covenant into which God has entered with thee; for as He has sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so His kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the covenant of His peace be removed. Three things are needed to make a rainbow.

A cloud. - When man's sin overshadowed Paradise, the bow of promise shone; and when the thunderclouds gathered about the Saviour's path, the Divine voice assured Him that as He had glorified the Divine Name by His life, He should glorify it much more by His death. When the black clouds of conviction, bereavement, soul-anguish beset thee, look out for the bow: it is always there, though sufferers do not always perceive it.

Rain. - There are no rainbows unless there be falling drops to catch and unravel the sunbeams. It may be that all evil is worse in its anticipation than in its endurance; but this is certain, that the big drops of sorrow have to patter on our souls before we can realize all that God is prepared to be to us.

Sunshine. - It is only when God comes into our grief that we can see the treasures of Love and Grace which are stored for us in Him. We never know how great a blessing sorrow may be till we carry it into the light of the King's face. It is the dark canvas on which the artist produces his most marvellous effects.

#### The Isles of the Gentiles - Genesis 10:5

Few realize the treasures that lie in this heap of names. This chapter is the key to ancient histories and contains many of the names that lie on our modern maps. What teeming myriads are here! We learn three things.

The Oneness of the Human Race. - "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth." The slave that crouches in the African wood, the meanest outcast that creeps along in the dark, the veriest ruffian red-handed in crime - are bone of our bone, no less than the kings and saints, the prophets and martyrs.

The Wealth of our Saviour's nature. - He loved all; He gave Himself for all; He became the Propitiation for the sins of all; through Him all will rise; and He is able to satisfy all from His royal heart. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." There is not one child of man who may not find his consummation and bliss in Jesus, the One Man. All men are but broken lights of Him; and of all men that have

ever lived He is the one flawless, sinless, perfect Man, the apex of the pyramid of humanity, the Head and Prince.

The warrant for Foreign Missions. - If the races of mankind have sprung from a common stock, the experience of one is the key to all. Each may learn from his own heart to estimate the hopes and fears, the yearnings and temptations, the weariness and sin-consciousness of the rest. The Gospel which has brought the blessing will do as much for each of those who bear, however obliterated, the print-mark of our race. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Let us go Down - Genesis 11:7

God comes down into human life. Though the world is corrupt and full of violence; though His arch-enemy has taught man to dread and hate Him; though attempts are on foot to resist Him in open rebellion, by making a unity apart from Him, and in exclusion of His cornerstone, yet He comes down.

He comes down to see. - He will not pronounce judgment till He has satisfied Himself by personal inspection how things stand. He comes down to our bedrooms, and overhears the words we speak, the deeds we do there; to our home-life, and is a silent listener and observer of all its incidents; to our shops, warehouses, and bank-parlors, auditing our accounts, casting up the columns, examining our samples, our weights and measures, our advertisements and circulars. From Him no secrets are hid.

He comes down to punish. - "Let me alone, that I may destroy." Never forget the punitive side of God's character. How easily He asserts His power! He can disorganize the memory, breathe on the brain, touch one small nerve or muscle, and the best-concerted schemes fail. Why shouldst thou fear every day the fury of the oppressor, when God is at thy side!

He comes down to save. - If there be one Lot, He will bring him forth. What was the Incarnation, the descent to Calvary and the grave, but the coming down of the "us" of the blessed Trinity. He that ascended is the same that also first descended. He has come that He may heal our wounds, take us in His arms, and bear us with Him far beyond all principality and power. He is the way, by which we may pass from the confusion of Babel to the love of Pentecost, and the one speech of heaven.

Get thee out - Genesis 12:1

Never did a corn of wheat more utterly fall into the ground to die. It seemed as though he were urgently needed in his country and among his kindred; but man's thoughts and ways are not God's. The blessing of Abraham's life could only come in the land of promise, and after he had died to the whole life of nature. To every one who is to be richly blessed and made a blessing there is the inevitable command, "Get thee out. Be willing to die."

Get thee out of the land of idols. - Beyond the flood of the Euphrates, Terah and the rest served other gods. Had Abram remained there, he might have touched the unclean thing; hence God's desire to get him beyond the reach of infection, that he and his race might remain monotheistic. Hast thou had communion with darkness, with Belial, with idols? Get thee out and be separate; touch not the unclean thing. Be clean, thou who art to bear the vessels of the Lord. Reckon thyself to have died.

Get thee out in loneliness. - "I called him alone, and increased him." If thou art unwilling to abide alone, thou must fall alone into the ground and die. God must reduce us to a minimum before He can work through us to the maximum. But there is also no loneliness to the soul who is one with God. Alone against the world, it is still in a majority.

Get thee out in faith. - "He went out, not knowing whither." It was what man calls a venture; but as he stepped out on what seemed a void, he found it rock beneath his feet. Day by day a track appeared across the desert, and all his needs were met till he reached the place of blessing. Death was the gate of life. Having died to Haran, he began to bring forth much fruit in every soil of the world.

The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him - Genesis 13:14

Abram's life was one of an ever-perfecting separation. But out of these experiences sprang his rarest joys. The separate and obedient soul may reckon on:-

Fresh Revelation. - Whenever Abram dared to step out in obedience, the Lord spake freshly to him. But in Egypt we find no trace of the Divine voice. If God spake there, it would be in warning and rebuke. Has the voice of God

long been silent to thee - no fresh command, no deeper insight into truth? See to it that thou art not in Egypt. Separate thyself, not only from Haran, but from Lot; not only from what is clearly wrong, but from all that is questionable; and the Lord will speak to thee things it is not possible for men to utter.

Further Vision. - Lot lifted up his eyes to espy what would make for his advantage and well-being, and beheld only the plain of Sodom, which indeed was well-watered, but the seat of exceeding sin. But when Abram lifted up his eyes, not to search out ought for himself, but to see what God had prepared, he looked northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward-words which remind us of the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of Christ. The single eye is full of light; the far climber gets the widest horizon; if thou wilt do His will, thou shalt know.

Hundredfold old Compensation.-Whatever Abram renounced, when he left his home, or gave Lot the right to choose, he received back in the usual measure of God, with an overflowing overpass. God gave him the entire land, including Lot's -portion. We can never give up for God, without receiving in this life more than we gave.

**God Most High, Maker of Heaven and Earth - Genesis 14:19**

It was to Melchizedek, the lonely king-priest living outside the busy rush of the world, that this new name of God was given. There are some to whom God gives these direct revelations of Himself, that they may communicate them to others. These are our seers. This title for God, which Abram immediately appropriated, was the source:-

Of Humility. - To think of God as the Maker and Possessor of heaven and earth induces the profoundest humility of heaven. "They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou didst create all things." How great God is! His greatness is unsearchable. Earth and heaven are His handiwork. Take time to think of this, but never forget that He is Love; then, with the familiarity of the child, thou wilt combine the lowly reverence of the creature.

Of Steadfastness in the hour of temptation. - When the king of Sodom desired Abram to share in the spoils of the kings, setting before him a most subtle temptation, and one which might have dragged him from the life and walk of faith, Abram fell back on the revelation of God just vouchsafed to him, and said in effect: "What need is there that I should do this thing, or receive of thy gold? All God is mine; in God all things are mine also. What I need He will assuredly give. What He withholds I will receive from no other source." There is no need for us to get wealth wrongly; God can supply all we need.

Of Security. - God owns all; all the earth is His empire; wherever we travel we are within His dominion, breathe His air, are ministered to by His angels. We have a right to the best in all good things, since they are our Father's, and we are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.

**Behold, a Smoking Furnace and a Flaming Torch - Genesis 15:17**

Fire is the chosen emblem of God; and as these fire-emblems passed slowly between the divided carcasses it was as though God accommodated Himself to the methods of human oath-taking, and solemnly bound Himself. But in all His dealings with us He is prepared to be both a furnace and a torch.

God as a Furnace. - Take up a piece of iron ore, and see how the metal is scattered amid commoner substances. How can it be disintegrated? The chisel cannot do it, but fire will. Plunge it now into the fire; let it fall in the heart of the glowing furnace, and presently the stream of liquid metal will issue forth, pure and beautiful. It is thus that God deals with human hearts; the blood makes propitiation, but the fire cleanses. The love of God, the purity of God, the spirituality of God brought home to us by the Holy Ghost, search and try us to the innermost fibre of our being, and burn out of us the evils which had long held empire.

Refining Fire, go through my heart,  
Illuminate my soul;  
Scatter thy life through every part,  
And sanctify the whole.

God as a flaming Torch. - The torch guides the footsteps through the dark; and God's Spirit waits to shed light on many dark and hidden things, and to guide us into all the truth. It is one thing to comprehend by the intellect; it is altogether another to apprehend by the heart. There is no such teacher as God; and the mistake of our modern religious life is to receive so much from man, instead of waiting in rapt silence until God Himself

communicates His truth to us. The conditions are purity of desire, cleanness of heart, and willingness to obey.

**Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands - Genesis 16:9**

Poor Hagar! No wonder that she fled. Her proud Arab independence and the sense of coming motherhood made her rebel against Sarah's hard dealings. We have often meditated flight, if we have not actually fled from intolerable conditions. Of course, when God opens the door out of a dungeon we need not hesitate, as Peter did, to rise and follow. But this is very different to flight from the post of duty.

**Our Cross.** - For Hagar, Sarah; for Hannah, Penninah; for David, Joab; for Jesus, Judas; for Paul, Alexander the coppersmith. Life assumes hard and forbidding aspects. Sometimes the cross is not a person, but a trial, the pressure of a slow and lingering disease; the demand for grinding and persistent toil; the weight of overmastering anxiety for those dearer than life, who have no knowledge of God.

**Our Demeanor.** - Return and submit. We are apt to suppose that we shall get rest and peace elsewhere. It is not so, however. Nowhere else shall we find the path less rugged, or the pillow less hard. To evade the yoke will not give us heartsease. The Master's advice is that we shall take His yoke, and bear it as He did; remain where God has put us, till He shows us another place; and bear what He ordains and permits, even though it comes through the means of others.

**Our Faith.** - We cannot patiently submit to our lot unless we believe that what God permits is as much His will as what He appoints. Behind Sarah's hard dealings we must behold His permissive providence. Through all the discipline of life we must believe that God has a purpose of unfailing love and wisdom. Then our submission is not stoicism, but loving acquiescence in our Father's will.

**Walk before Me and be thou Perfect - Genesis 17:1**

God precedes His commands with such revelations of Himself, that obedience is rendered easily possible. Before calling Abram to perfection, He described Himself as El Shaddai, the Almighty. What may we not do if we learn to avail ourselves of the all-might of God? Oh to know the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe! Our lack is that we do not know our God, and therefore fail to perform exploits. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me." Lie on thy face, and let God talk with thee, and tell thee the conditions on which He will make thee exceeding fruitful. First - Walk before Me: Second - Be thou whale-hearted.

There must be wholeness in our surrender. - No part of our nature barred or curtailed off from God. Every chamber must be freely placed at His disposal; every relationship placed under His direction; every power devoted to His service. All we have and are must be entirely His.

There must be wholeness in our intention. - The one aim of our Lord was to bring glory to His Father; and we should never be satisfied till we are so absolutely eager for the glory of Christ that we would seek it though at the cost of infamy to ourselves; and be as glad for another to bring it to Him, as we should be in bringing it ourselves.

There must be wholeness in our obedience. - It was clearly so with Abram. As soon as God left talking with His servant, he took Isaac and performed the rite which had just been enjoined.

**And Abraham drew near - Genesis 18:23**

The patriarch's attitudes are well worthy of note: he sat (Genesis 18:1), bowed (Genesis 18:2), ran (Genesis 18:7), stood by (Genesis 18:8), went with them (Genesis 18:16), stood before the Lord (Genesis 18:22); here, he drew near.

He drew near with awful reverence. - "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." The place whereon he stood was holy ground; and if he trod or crossed it, in the intensity of his desire, he never forgot that the most intimate fellowship of man with God must be mingled with the reverence of godly fear, which remembers that He is a consuming fire.

He drew near in faith. - He had enjoyed a blessed prevision of the day of Christ. There had been revealed to Him that one perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, in virtue of which sinners are welcome to draw near to God. They have

**boldness to enter the holiest, and draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, who know the new and living way which Jesus has opened for us.**

**He drew near as intercessor. - We never get so near God as when we plead for others. At such times we enter the holiest and innermost chamber, and talk to Him with an urgency which we dare not use for ourselves. Whilst the Syrophenician pleaded for her daughter, she came to the very feet of Jesus. Wouldst thou know the inner chamber? Go thither on errands for others.**

**He drew near in Intensity. - When Haman pleaded for his life, he fell on the Queen's couch in the anguish of his soul. Sometimes God appears to hesitate; it is only to draw us on, ever further and deeper, till we awake to find ourselves alone in His presence.**

**Abraham got up early to the place where he stood before the Lord, and looked - Genesis 19:27**

**There was not much sleep that night for this loyal heart I With the spring of day he was where, probably, Lot, years before, had looked on the face of the country, and beheld it as a garden of the Lord. But how great the contrast! The smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace!**

**Have a place where you stand before God. wit may not always be to speak to Him, but to be spoken to, to be judged, to have the motives and intentions of the heart winnowed and sifted. Well is it to stand each day before the judgment-seat of Christ, and to receive His verdict on our innermost life. Oh that the grass of that trysting-place may be well worn through our frequent intercourse with our beloved Lord!**

**Follow up your prayers. - Abraham was not content with shooting arrows into the air; he followed them to see how they sped, and where they fell. We do not need to reiterate our petitions with unbelieving monotony, as though they were not safe in God's keeping; but we should remind Him by our upward look that our expectation is from Him.**

**View the fate of the ungodly from God's standpoint. - We are apt to consider it from that of our own pity, or commiseration, or tolerance of shortcoming. We judge lightly, because we dread too searching a judgment on ourselves. But we need sometimes to see sin as God sees it. Stand on Calvary and learn what sin is, and how much it has cost the Saviour. There, too, you will learn that God goes further than His servants' prayers. Though He may not be able to discover the ten, yet He will deliver the one righteous man. "His countenance doth behold the upright."**

**I also withheld thee from sinning against Me - Genesis 20:6**

**As we review our lives, we can see many occasions on which our feet had well-nigh gone - our steps were on the very brink of the precipice. Another inch, and we should have brought shame on Christ and lasting remorse to ourselves. To what can we attribute our escape but to the grace of God, which withheld us, even though we failed to recognize it?**

**He does not withhold us from temptation. - He could not do so without serious and permanent loss. The waves of ink will surge up against the white marble palace of the soul. To us, as to our Lord, fresh from under the opened heavens, the tempter will come. What the fire is in fixing the color on the porcelain vase, that temptation is in rendering permanent the lessons and impressions made by God's providence and grace.**

**He does not withhold us from occasions in which it would be easy to transgress. - Abimelech was not hindered from taking Sarah into his palace. The door of occasion and opportunity stood open before him; but he was withheld from the fatal act. We must never infer that occasion confers license. The fact of an opportunity being present does not warrant indulgence in wrongdoing.**

**If God withheld Abimelech, who did not seek His special help, how much more those that seek Him! - You are not insensible of the perils of your life; but wait earnestly and persistently on God. Are you more eager to be kept than He to keep? Did He not implant that desire? Will He not do exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think? Is not the good Shepherd strong enough to keep one poor trembling sheep? Begone, unbelief! My God whom I serve is able to deliver, and He will! (Dan 3:17).**

**And God opened her eyes, and she saw - Genesis 21:19**

**Poor Hagar! There was no help for it; and she, who a little before had thought she was giving Abraham his heir,**

found herself and her boy homeless wayfarers on the desert sands. Their one need was water; they little deemed it was so near. No need to create a new fountain, but to open their eyes. We need the opened eye to see:-

The finished work of Christ - The work of propitiation for sin is complete. We are not required to add to it one tear, or prayer, or vow. "It is finished." To go to heaven to bring Christ down, or to the deep to bring Him up, is alike superfluous. All we need is the opened eye to see what Jesus has done, and recognize that it is all that was demanded to meet the claims of God's holy law.

The things freely given to us of God. - God hath given us in Jesus all things that pertain to life and godliness. There is no possible gift or grace, in which we are deficient, that is not stored in Him, in whom the fullness of God abides. But we are blind; the eyes of our heart have not been opened to see the hope of our calling, the riches of our inheritance, the greatness of God's power. Did we know these things, surely not a moment would elapse without our availing ourselves of God's rich provision.

The alleviations which God provides against excessive sorrow. - Hagar's anguish, as Mary's at the sepulchre in after years, blinded her to available comfort. So grief puts a bandage over our eyes. Life is sad, and lonely, and dark, but God is near; and if you ask, He will show springs of consolation, of which you may drink. There is no desert without its springs; no dying child without the angel of the Lord.

Jehovah-Jireh; In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided - Genesis 22:14

Abraham knew it would be. Probably he never told Sarah what God had asked of him till he and the lad were safely back in the tent. What need to trouble her? Her weak faith could not have stood the ordeal. It was with an unfaltering tone that the patriarch told his young men that they two would presently return. Even though he should actually take Isaac's life, he was sure that he would receive him again from the altar in health. It was only at the very last moment that God indicated the ram as the sufficient substitute. So God's deliverances always come; they are provided in the mount of trial and sacrifice. When the foe seems secure of victory. - So it was with Israel. Pharaoh, with his hosts, counted on an easy victory, the precipices around, the sea in front. To the eye of sense it seemed impossible to escape: all hope died. It was just then that the Almighty cleft a path through the mighty deep. "In the fourth hour of the night." - Strength was well-nigh exhausted in long battling with the waves. For hours the disciples with difficulty had kept themselves afloat. It seemed as if they must give in through physical collapse. It was then that the form of Jesus drew nigh unto the ship. On the night before execution. - Thus Peter lies sleeping whilst the Church is gathered in prayer. To-morrow he will be a corpse. But the angel comes then to open the prison doors. So you may have come to an end of your own strength, and wisdom, and energy. The altar, wood, and fire are ready, the knife upraised, your Isaac on the point to die: but even now God will provide. Trust Him to indicate the way of escape.

I am a Stranger and a Sojourner - Genesis 23:4

The minute details of this purchase are recorded to emphasize the fact that, though the whole land was Abraham's by the Divine gift, he would not enter on its possession till God's time was come. We may be sure of certain blessings - ours in God's safe keeping - though they are withheld till the moment that His wisdom sees best. It was a touching confession. The aged patriarch had for long years owned no settled dwelling-place. After years in the land of promise he was still without land enough for a grave.

Faith cannot be satisfied with the things of this world. - The sons of Heth had goods and lands, but Abraham did not envy them; he had caught a glimpse of the city which hath foundations, and this so satisfied and attracted him that he had no desire for aught that Palestine could yield.

Faith detaches us from the present. - We are content to dwell in tents, because here we have no abiding-place. The shows and vanities of the world, in comparison with the vision of eternal realities, are as the glare of the streets compared with the steady glory of the constellations of the night.

Faith prompts to confession. - It bewrayeth itself. We should be careful and orderly in our business arrangements; but, in our dealings with our fellows, in our justice, fairness, honor, the lightness of our hold on the present world, we should make it manifest that we are seeking a country not our own.

Faith cannot be ashamed. - The God who prompted it must satisfy it, else He would have reason to be ashamed of having failed the souls that trusted Him. But now He is not ashamed to be called our God, because He has prepared for us a city.

**My Master Abraham - Genesis 24:12**

This worthy man, Eliezer, the steward of Abraham's house, was almost garrulous about his master. Count up the number of times in which he contrives to bring in the two words, "my master." We may learn from him how to speak of our Master, whenever we get the opportunity. "Rabboni, which, being interpreted, is, My Master."

We too can speak of the Lord God as our master. - The servant did not know Jehovah directly; it was enough that he had seen and heard Abraham pray to Him. This encouraged him to draw near for himself. So we are emboldened to draw near, because God is the God and Father of our Master Jesus. We love Him that was begotten, and are attracted to Him of whom Jesus said, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God."

We, too, ran plead for our Master's sake. - When asking for good speed to be sent to himself, he alleged as his plea that it would be showing kindness to his master Abraham. So when we ask great things from God, we can plead in the name of Jesus, and urge that in answering our petition God will be showing kindness to His Well-beloved.

Live, too, should bless in our Master's name. - When the answer was given, this reverent soul gave thanks as though the favor had been shown to his master. Indeed, all through his intercourse with Bethuel and Laban he seems to have lost his identity in Abraham. He could talk of nothing else but that one scheme; was only eager to carry his point for his master's sake; and when the errand was done, longed only to get back to his master's side. It is a beautiful lesson for those who call Jesus Master and Lord.

**And he sold his Birthright - Genesis 25:33**

Every one is born with a birthright, which the devil tries hard to make him barter away for a mess of pottage. In that birthright are included:-

Innocence and purity. - The child of the vilest ancestry enters this world unsullied by the filthy touch of unclean habit. But how eager Satan is to induce us to part with this for his unsatisfying pleasure.

The love of our kind. - Few are the children, of all the myriads of our race, that are not loved by some fond heart. In some cases the infant life is cradled in love. But Satan is glad when he can get the soul to break away from all earthly affection, which might possibly soften and refine it, and to renounce mother, sister, wife, child, for the drunkard's cup, the wanton's kiss.

The redemption of Jesus Christ. - Every one is born into a redeemed world; the propitiation of the blessed Lord, the blood that flowed on Calvary, the concealment of the effects of Adam's sin, are for all. As all the world was affected by Adam's sin, so all are included in God's love in Jesus. But again Satan is eager to induce men to abjure and cast away these benefits; he blinds the eyes of those that believe not, so that they refuse to "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

The grace of the Spirit. - Every one may build up a strong and beautiful character by yielding to the Holy Ghost's gracious promptings. That grace knocks, like sunshine, at the windows of every soul; but how often it is sold for a mess of pottage! The choice between these two is constantly being presented to us. God help us always to choose the divine, the spiritual, the eternal!

**Because that Abraham obeyed My Voice and kept My Charge - Genesis 26:5**

It is awful to realize how our sins may repeat themselves in our children. Here is Isaac following in the precise steps of Abraham, who had acted in a similar manner toward Sarah when entering Egypt. In each case there was a sad lapse of faith; but it was even worse for Isaac, with Abraham's example to warn him. But a man may pass blessings on to his children, as well as the sad entail of evil habits.

He leaves the blessing of the divine covenant. God had entered into covenant with Abraham, and was prepared to fulfill its provisions to his son. "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." So a godly ancestor may be able to secure for all his seed a share in the divine grace and favor. The spirit that is put on him does not depart from his seed, or his seed's seed forever.

The blessing of his prayer. - It is impossible to over-estimate the effect of a good man's prayers; they are as streams or trees, which go on flowing and bearing fruit long after they were originated. The legacy of a good

man's prayers is of priceless worth. He may have long since passed to his rest; but God remembers them, and answers them in blessings to the next generation. How often in this chapter we read that "God blessed Isaac."

The blessing of a noble name. - We may all leave that, if we can transmit nothing else. To have had a father that knew God, walked with God, pleased God; who was on intimate terms with Him, and could speak to Him, as a man with his friend - illumined the ordinary nature and existence of Isaac with unearthly beauty. Let us live so that our children may be ranked as nobles, because they bear our name.

**Esau cried with an exceeding great and bitter Cry - Genesis 27:34**

On this incident the writer to the Hebrews founds the impressive lesson, that the choices of the past may cast a bitter and irrevocable shadow on all our future. When he afterward desired to inherit blessing he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears (Heb 12:16, Heb 12:17, R. V.).

Beware of the cravings of appetite. - In an evil moment Esau yielded to these, and sold his birthright to secure their gratification; he found afterward that the choice made in that hour was irrevocable. How needful that we watch and pray, lest we fall into temptation!

There are four facts which, when borne in mind, guard us against the sudden oversetting of passionate appetite.

We were once dead in sins. - Surely we do not want to go back again to the charnel-house with its corruption.

We died for sins in the person of Christ our Representative. - In Him we have met the demands of God's holy law; but surely that must be an awful thing which cost our Saviour so dearly.

We died to sin with the Lord Jesus. - We have passed with Him on to Resurrection ground; so that we belong to the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

We are called on to reckon ourselves dead in sin. - The nearer we live to God, the more sensitive we shall be to the most distant suggestion of evil, closing doors and windows against its entrance, reckoning ourselves "not at home" to it, and yielding our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

**Behold a Ladder set up on the Earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven - Genesis 28:12**

All men feel that earth and heaven touch at the horizons of the distant past and future; but we ought to feel that the present moment of time and this bit of the world's surface are linked with heaven. This is what the ladder meant for Jacob. The moorland waste, where he lay, and Laban's home, whither he journeyed, were as near God as his father's tent. Earth is linked with heaven:-

By God's daily providence. - His loving eye is ever upon us, His ears always open to our cry, and His angels go to and fro on our world performing ceaseless ministries.

By our Saviour's mediation. - As He intimated to Nathanael, His own nature as uniting God with man, and especially His Ascension glory as the man Christ Jesus, is the one great connecting link. "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

By daily fellowship and holy thought. - We should practice the sense of God's presence, often stopping ourselves amid our ordinary avocations and interests to say, aloud when possible, ' God is near, God is here.' In all likelihood we are daily living amid the glories of the eternal world; but our eyes are blinded. Oh that by humility and purity we may become more sensitive, and awake to the things that are unseen and eternal! Lord, open our eyes, that we may see! (2Ki 6:17).

By holy yearning. - When Jesus ascended, He unrolled a path behind Him, along which we shall one day travel to meet Him. Hope treads that glorious Ascension ladder; and as she does so, again we see the heaven opened, and our destiny unfolded at Christ's right hand.

**But a few days, for the Love he had - Genesis 29:20**

That touch is enough! We can fill in all the rest. This old-world love was of the same quality as our own. Oh, blessed God I what a priceless inheritance this is! Time itself never tedious, but always too short; labor never

hard; distance never long; sacrifice unheard of, the word almost in disuse - where Love is queen. This is how we would feel to our dear Lord: so that the missionary away from home and friends, as well as the invalid suffering for Jesus, might feel years of loneliness and pain but a few days, for love of the beloved Master. We may acquire such love thus:-

Meditate much on the love of Jesus. - Sit with the Apostle beneath his cross, and say, each time with deeper appreciation: He loved me, He gave Himself for me. Do not think of your love to Him, but of His. It is well to take the Lord's Supper frequently, as affording opportunities for remembering His dying love.

Be on the alert to detect His love in daily providence and trifles. - It is amazing how much is ever being arranged by His tender thoughtfulness to alleviate and brighten our lot. If you cannot detect it, dare still to believe it.

Ask the Holy Spirit to breathe His love into your heart. - He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit; and when the doors are open between Christ and the soul, the aroma of His love freely enters.

Show His Love to every one. - Whether you like people or not, do to them as He would do; let His love flow through you to them; what we manifest to others for His sake, we shall come to feel toward Him, and them also. "This commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."

The Lord has blessed me for thy sake - Genesis 30:27

Laban requested the longer stay of Jacob because he felt sure that the Divine blessings had been brought by, him into his home. It was a selfish, low motive for desiring the postponement of his departure; and Laban was destined, alas! to be terribly undeceived. He would wake up one day, to find that during his sojourn with him, and under the cloak of religion, Jacob had been ruthlessly plundering his property. It was a shameful betrayal of trust on Jacob's part; and it conveys a searching warning to those who, because of their religious professions, are trusted by their relatives or others:-

With their property. - Always do the best possible for your employer or friend, who has entrusted his interests to you, acting toward him as the servant and steward of God. Bear in mind that God has bidden you undertake the office for Himself, and accepts your fidelity as rendered to Him: He will recompense.

With their friendship. - Be very careful here. God puts us into one another's lives, that we may be the medium through which His love and tenderness may enter them; but there is such danger of our monopolizing for ourselves the place He would fill. Sometimes we almost unconsciously deteriorate rather than elevate our friends by the intrusion of our own personality.

With their Christian instruction and training. - Ministers of God's holy gospel must specially guard against the tendency to make name, fame, money, out of a position which they should occupy only as God's stewards. There is such subtleness in the temptation to attract men to ourselves, instead of attaching them to Christ.

Take heed to thyself that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad - Genesis 31:24

This visitation of God made a deep impression on Laban. He refers to it afterward as restraining him from injuring his runaway son-in-law. Jacob, too, was struck by it. It is very wonderful to find the Holy God casting the mantle of His protection around this crafty and deceitful soul. No doubt it was due to His covenant relationship with the family and race, of which Jacob was a most unworthy member (Genesis 30:13, Genesis 30:42). But if God thus interposed for Jacob, will He not much more interpose for those who desire to be His obedient children?

God will lay an arrest on your persecutors. - Israel was rebuked because the exiles in Babylon thought they would perish before a man that could die, and the son of man who was as grass, and forgot their Maker, the Lord of heaven and earth. All around you the fire may rage; but you shall walk amid it unscathed, if only you trust. No weapon formed against you shall prosper.

God will lay an arrest on trial. - His finger is always on our pulse; and the moment the pain becomes more than we can bear, He will stay it. His eye is ever upon His own.

God will lay an arrest on the power of the evil one. - We shall not be tempted beyond that we are able to bear. There is always a thus far and no farther. "The Lord maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters." The Only-begotten of the Father keeps the sheep whom His Father has entrusted to Him. Not one of them can

be devoured by the lion of hell. If only we believed this, we should be calmer, happier, even though circumstanced as Jacob. No need to altercation with Laban, but to look beyond him to the "Fear of Isaac."

He touched the Hollow of his Thigh - Genesis 32:25

Our greatest victories are wrought out through pain, and purchased at the cost of the humbling of the flesh. Jacob learned that the secret of prevailing with God and man was not in the strength, but in the weakness and suffering of the flesh. It must ever be so. The victor Lamb bears still the scars of Calvary, and appears as one who had been slain.

Had Laban met Jacob that morning, he would have pointed to that limp as an indication of God's wrath and displeasure; but if he had looked into his face, he would have seen all its hardness and cunning gone, and would have been arrested by the unwonted tenderness in his voice.

The shrunken sinew counteracts pride. - So high a spiritual achievement as to prevail with God might have tempted Jacob to arrogance and self-esteem. But God anticipated the possible temptation by this physical infirmity, which was constantly present to Jacob's consciousness.

The shrunken sinew was the secret of victory. - Had it not been shrivelled by the angel's touch, Jacob would have continued to resist in the pride of his strength, and would never have clung convulsively to the angel, crying, "I will not let thee go." It was only in that act that he became Israel, the Prince.

The shrunken sinew makes us think little of this world and much of the next. - From this moment Jacob takes up more of the pilgrim attitude. He finds that for him, at least, the pace will have to be slower; but it is well, for he relaxes his hold on the seen to entwine more tenaciously about the unseen. "The days of the years of my pilgrimage " - such is his epitome of his life.

I will lead on softly, Until I come unto my lord unto Seir - Genesis 33:14

This was rather unworthy of the man who, the night before, had seen the face of God, and learned to prevail. The man who had seen God, and prevailed, was doubtful of His newly-given blessing! He did not realize that it would carry him through the difficulty that threatened him. He had not as yet learned to apply it to every emergency. It is a solemn lesson to those who have passed through some rapturous experience.

After blessing, often trial. - When the fair colors have been laid on, the vessel is plunged into the furnace, that they may be burned in.

The trial frequently presents itself in the home or ordinary life. - Some are led into the wilderness to be tempted; but more often it is the contact with our Esaus that furnishes us with the supreme test of the worth of what we have received.

Failure comes from not reckoning on God. - Jacob looked at Esau's four hundred armed men, and compared his own following with despair. So Peter looked at the winds and waves. At such times we must fail, if we rely on schemes or plans, instead of saying, God is.

Oh for the peace that floweth as a river.  
 Making life's desert places bloom and smile;  
 Oh for the faith to grasp Heaven's bright "forever"  
 And the shadow of earth's "little while."

We must act faith. - If Jacob had refused to use this subterfuge, and had spoken simply and manfully, he would have found that Esau would have acquiesced and left him. The angels who had gone forward to deal with him (Genesis 32:2) had done their work effectively, and God had changed his purpose.

Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the Inhabitants of the Land - Genesis 34:30

The Bible does not hesitate to hold the mirror up to our fallen nature, or show us what we are. Here is Israel, the prince with God, who had power with man, in a very sorry plight. His children had involved him in it; but first, he had involved them.

Dinah. - Little did she realize all the evil which that visit of hers would bring on her people and on those whose

quest she was. What took her there? Had her upbringing been unnecessarily strict, and did she want a little more freedom? There is an inevitable rebound with young people to the other extreme, if needless severity has been brought to bear on them in their early days.

The probability, however, is that the laxity of her father's home, and the effect of her mother's gods, had made the line of separation a very faint one, and she felt no difficulty in overstepping it.

Simeon and Levi. - "Ye have made me to stink." On his dying bed Jacob remembered this treacherous cruelty and pronounced their scattering in Israel; though Levi undid the effect of that bitter curse by his obedience and devotion. In after days it was said, "My covenant was with him of life and peace," and though scattered, he was as salt. In Simeon's case the curse was not cancelled by any subsequent manifestation of obedience and devotion, and ran out its course.

There is encouragement and warning here.

Jacob. - The real mistake of it all was that Jacob bought that land, and settled too near the city (Genesis 33:18). As a pilgrim he had no right to do this. If Christian parents will settle down in fellowship with the world, they have themselves to thank for all the misery which accrues to themselves and children, and the dishonor to God.

Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there - Genesis 35:1

God had set His hand to make Jacob a saint. He had given him a glimpse of His ideal at the Jabbok ford, but his nature was not then capable of taking in the Divine conception; and, as we have seen, both in his subterfuge to Esau and his settling outside Shechem, he had fallen back into the schemer and money-maker. In this chapter God uses several methods of awakening and renewal.

The Divine summons. - "Arise, go up to Bethel." He had been in the lowlands too long: too long had he "lain among the pots." The voice of God spoke words of resurrection life into his grave, as afterward into that of Lazarus.

The power of old association. - What memories clustered around that name and place of Bethel! It recalled his distress and fear; the angel-ladder, and the comforting assurance which had inspired him with new hope. Directly he heard it, he seemed to have felt the incongruity of the life that was being lived in his camp, and he said to his people, "Put away the strange gods... Arise, let us go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God."

A fresh revelation. - God appeared to him again. For long there had been no vision of God; but now that the idols were put away, his eyes were opened to see Him who had been beside him amid all his backslidings.

Death. - Deborah, the beloved Rachel, the old father - one after another were taken from him; and there came the far-away look into his eyes which showed that he had imbibed the pilgrim-spirit and had become Israel the Prince. So God stripped him that he might be better able to run the race set before him.

The Kings that reigned in Edom before there reigned any King over Israel - Genesis 36:31

Apparently Esau had the best and happiest lot.

What he escaped. - For him there were no few and evil days of pilgrimage; nor the pressure of famine; nor the going down into Egypt; nor the forty years of wanderings in the desert; nor the vicissitudes of the Judges. All these he escaped and must have congratulated himself merrily. But he had no vision of God; no communion with Jehovah; no contact with the messengers of heaven.

What he enjoyed. - A line of dukes; a royal dynasty, which was old when Israel's first king ascended the throne; a rich and fertile territory; peace and comfort. He reminds us of the Psalmist's picture of the man of this world, whose portion is in this life, and who is filled with hid treasure. But Esau never awoke satisfied with God's likeness; nor ever enjoyed the blessedness of the man who is "a prince with God."

How he bore himself. - His heart was generous, full of good nature, jovial, and free-handed. When the land could not bear both Jacob and himself, he went off into another, and settled down in Mount Seir. It was no hardship with him to leave the land of promise. Most would, doubtless, have preferred his society to Jacob's; but God did not (Mal 1:2-3).

What made the lot of these brothers so different. - The one lived for the world; the other was a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, a pilgrim to the City of God. The one was an ordinary man of the world; the other had been selected of God as the channel of blessing to mankind. The flower and fruit which are to be propagated require the special attention of the gardener's knife. What solemn words! (Amo 3:2).

They look him and cast him into a pit - Genesis 37:24

It is impossible to read this inimitable story without detecting in the water-mark of the paper on which it is written the name Jesus. Indeed, we lose much of the beauty and force of these early Scriptures if we fail to observe the references to the life, character, and work of the blessed Redeemer. Notice some of these precious analogies:-

Our Saviour's shepherd-heart (Genesis 37:2).

The love of the Father before the worlds were made (Genesis 37:3).

The dreams of empire, which are so certainly to be realized, when we shall see Him acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords (Genesis 37:7).

Envied by His brethren, to whom He came, though they received Him not (Genesis 37:11).

His alacrity to do His Father's will, and to finish His work, in which will we too have been sanctified (Genesis 37:13).

Cast into the pit of the grave, as a seed-corn into the ground to die, that He might not abide alone, but bear much fruit (Genesis 37:24).

The thirty pieces of silver for which He was betrayed (Genesis 37:28).

The indifference of the Jewish people to their great Brother's fate (Genesis 37:25).

Rejected of the Jew, and turning to the Gentile (Genesis 37:28).

The bitter grief which His rejection has brought on the Jewish people (Genesis 37:35)-

It is as though the Holy Ghost, eager to glorify the Lord, could not wait for the slow unfolding of history, but must anticipate the story of that precious life and death which were to make the world new again.

Judah - Genesis 38:1

This was the destined heir of the birthright of which Reuben had shown himself unworthy; and yet this chapter is a dark story of his unbridled passion. O my soul, remember that the possibilities of all these sins are latent in thee! Thou mightest have been as one of these men or women but for the grace of God.

There is nothing so absolutely priceless as the white flower of a pure and blameless life.

The pure in heart are the children of the presence-chamber - entrusted with secrets hidden from the wise and prudent - vessels by which God does not hesitate to quench the thirst of men, because the water of the crystal river will not be diluted or contaminated by contact with their natures. Above all other gifts, covet that of a cleansed heart. You may be very conscious of temptation, and that naturally you are no better than others, and yet if you will constantly live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, you will be kept absolutely pure; and the sea of ink that is sweeping through the world will leave no stain on you.

The blood cleanseth- "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1Jo 1:7).

The Saviour keepeth - "The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil" (2Th 3:3).

The Spirit filleth: - "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and that ye are not your own?"