EXPOSITION OF GENESIS VOLUME 1

by Herbert Carl Leupold

The first volume of Leupold's comprehensive commentary on Genesis, providing detailed exegesis of the creation narratives, the fall, the flood, and the early patriarchal history with conservative evangelical scholarship.

52 Chapters

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Exposition Of Genesis Volume 1

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Name of the Book The name universally used in English for this book is "Genesis." This name is a transliteration of the Greek word genesis, which constitutes the regular title from of old in the Septuagint and was taken over by Jerome into the Vulgate -- Liber Genesis. Luther made a new departure when he substituted in his German Bible the title "The First Book of Moses" -- a designation requiring no further commentary. In the Hebrew Bible the book constitutes the first part of the Pentateuch. As a distinct part it so naturally stands out as a unit that there can be no doubt that it was designed to be just such a unit; and so even criticism from its point of view is ready to accept the division of the Pentateuch as a whole into five parts and that the book of Genesis in particular was a part of it at so early a date as at least four centuries before the Christian era. Though no evidence is available, we are inclined to believe that the Jews discerned the fivefold division of the Pentateuch from the time that the work was put into their hands. They are wont to refer to the book by the title of Bereshith, the very first Hebrew word, meaning: "in the beginning." Author Genesis contains no statement as to who its author was. Yet we hold very definitely to the conviction that , Moses wrote Genesis as well as the rest of the Pentateuch, except (Deut.34). In our day such a position is regarded as so utterly outmoded that we must indicate, at least briefly, what grounds we have for standing thus. Our grounds are those which have satisfied conservative scholarship in the church throughout the ages. Neither is the group of those who still accept these arguments so inconsiderable as critics would have us believe. The internal evidence of the Pentateuch runs as follows. In Exodus the passages (17:14; 24:4; 34:27), if rightly construed, indicate that Moses wrote more than the specific passages that appear under immediate consideration, in fact, all of Exodus. In like manner the numerous statements of Leviticus to the effect that "the Lord spake unto Moses" ("and unto Aaron"), such as (Le 1:1; 4:1; 6:1, 8, 19, 24; 7:22, 28; 8:1), etc., again, if rightly construed, lead to the same result, in fact, cover Leviticus. For why should the exact nature of the revelation be emphasized, unless it be presupposed that this revelation was immediately conserved in writing in each case? In fact, the assumption that these directions were not committed to writing is most unnatural. The same argument applies to much of what is found in Numbers; but in this book the special portion that came by immediate revelation requires the background of the rest of the historical material of the book. (Nu 33:2) is the only passage that refers to the fact that Moses wrote, a statement inserted at this point in order to stamp even what might seem too unimportant to record as traceable to Moses. In Deuteronomy a comparison of the following passages establishes the Mosaic authorship: (De 1:1; 17:18,19; 27:1-8; 31:9; 31:24). If, then, on the basis of the evidence found in these four books we may very reasonably conclude that they were written by Moses, the conclusion follows very properly that none other than the author of these later four books would have been so suitable as the author for Genesis also. Certainly such a conclusion is far more reasonable than that Genesis -- or for that matter the entire Pentateuch -- is to be ascribed to another one of these genial Nobodies of whom criticism has a large number in reserve as authors. We shall not now trace down how the Old Testament in its later books historical as well as prophetic strongly supports the idea of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and by implication

also of Genesis. The critic, misreading the evidence, misdates all these books, and so the argument means nothing to him. The man who is not affected by critical arguments can find proof more ample than we can here reproduce in the writings of Hengstenberg, Keil, Rupprecht and Moeller. The support that the New Testament lends to our position is singularly strong and, for that matter, even decisive on the whole issue, at least for him who believes in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. It is sufficient in these introductory remarks merely to list the major passages as such, passages that all refer to the Mosaic authorship of the whole or of parts of the Pentateuch. In the Gospels we find: (Mt 8:4; 19:7, 8; 23:2; Mk 1:44; 7:10; 10:3, 4; 12:26); (Lu 5:14; 16:29, 31; 20:37; John 3:14; 5:45; 6:32; 7:19; 7:22, 23). Aside from these passages which are from the lips of Christ Himself there are the remarks of the evangelists found (Lu 24:27, 44; John 1:17). To the apostles must be ascribed the following words: (Ac 3:22; 13:39; 15:1, 5, 21; 26:22; 28:23; Ro 10:5, 19; 1 Corinthians 9:9; 2 Corinthians 3:15). To attribute ignorance on matters involved in literary criticism to Christ or to inspired apostles is unwarranted assumption. To class Christ's attitude as accommodation to prevalent opinion grows out of failure to apprehend the fact that Christ is absolute Truth. Any two or three of the above passages are sufficient , to indicate to him that weighs their evidence that to Christ and to His apostles the Torah (the Pentateuch) was Mosaic. In answering the question, At what time was Genesis written? we are, of course, entirely, in the field of conjecture. It seems highly probable that the bulk, if not practically all of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, was written after the fashion of a kind of journal, especially those parts embodying specific words of direction given by God. This would naturally suggest some introductory work like Genesis, which could easily have been written by Moses during the time of the Wilderness Wanderings, which extended over thirty-eight years. Since all the things recorded in Genesis transpired before Moses' day by more than four hundred years at the least, the question arises, Did Moses have sources available for compiling the Genesis account as we have it? We cannot deny the possibility that God may have revealed to Moses the entire subject matter of Genesis. On the other hand, since sources were, , no doubt, available and reliable, we see no reason why Moses should not have used all available material and, being guided in his task by the Spirit of inspiration, have produced an essential portion of divine revelation. For it seems highly probable that godly men preserved a reliable record of God's revelation and dealings with men, and that with most painstaking care. The Creation record was obtainable only by revelation, which revelation would have seemed essential for Adam. This as well as all other truth that was left to him, as well as a record of his own experiences required but few links in the chain of tradition to bring it down to Joseph's time. For a careful examination of the Biblical genealogies (Gen.5 and 11) reveals that Adam lived till the time of Lamech; Lamech to the time of Shem; Shem to the time of Jacob; Jacob would, without a doubt, transmit what he knew to Joseph. Since even Abraham already lived in a literary age, and Judah carried a seal (Gen.38:18), and Joseph was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, it seems utterly impossible that these men should have refrained from committing this valuable and reliable tradition to writing. Such tradition in written form Moses might well have found in his day and made extensive use of, nor would such use conflict with inspiration in as much as later historical books, especially Kings and Chronicles, testify to the abundant use of source materials. 3. Purpose The purpose of Genesis may be formulated thus: the book aims to relate how Israel was selected from among the nations of the world and became God's chosen people. Since, however, this choice was not made because of the merit or the excellence of Israel's ancestors but wholly because of God's unmerited and unmeritable mercy,

the book may also be said to be the story of God's free grace in establishing Israel for Himself as His people. 4. TextTwo major considerations deserve attention under this head. First, the matter of the state of the purity or the integrity of the Hebrew text. No one in our day errs in the direction of the one possible extreme, namely of venturing to claim that the Hebrew text is in a state of virgin purity, exactly as it appeared in the original manuscripts. But many err in the opposite extreme of considering the Hebrew text to be utterly unreliable and in need of continual correction. Such an attitude is dangerous and ungrounded. Occasional errors may be detected, a few may be surmised. The Jewish marginal corrections, the Keris, may occasionally prove suggestive. But on the whole we have a text which is quite pure and satisfactory. It is not to be tampered with or modified according to the far less reliable Septuagint, the Targums, the Peshitto, or the Samaritan Pentateuch, though occasionally these versions (or transliterations) may contribute a bit of material valuable from the standpoint of textual criticism. The text is, furthermore, not to be modified according to subjective principles, such as critical theories or clever conjectures, which are anything but scientific. Modern critical editions of the Hebrew text, such as Kittel's Biblia Hebraica, Stuttgart, (1929), contain much misleading material and must apart from the Masoretic text be used with great caution. The traditional Masoretic text is in a good state of preservation and deserves far more confidence than is usually accorded to it. In our Hebrew Bibles we have a very good Hebrew text.The other matter that may be considered in this connection is the question whether Genesis is a poem and therefore to be considered as Hebrew verse. On the question, which are the poetical books in the Canon, the Jews have always had a very reliable tradition. It would be strange if they themselves should have lost sight of the poetic character of the first one of their sacred writings if it had actually been poetic. The method by which outstanding exponents of this unusual hypothesis, like Sievers, arrived at their conclusions is enough to make anyone suspicious of the idea. This method involves abandoning the first principle of Hebrew poetry (parallelism); it necessitates changes or substitution of the divine name; it includes occasional textual alterations merely for the sake of securing the desired meter; and even then the type of meter which seemingly was discovered is not in evidence as clearly as we are led to believe. Neither the present text nor the original sources, as others claim, were ever cast in verse form, with the exception of such minor portions that bear the earmarks of poetry (4:23, 24; 9:25-27; 49:2-27). But we are perfectly ready to admit that Genesis has many portions of very fine rhythmical prose that rise almost to the level of exalted strains of poetry (cf.1:27, .28; 12:1-3, and many other passages).5. Historical Character of the RecordThe issue involved briefly stated is: Have we history or legend in Genesis? A notable array of famous scholars can be cited in support of what the great majority of writers on the subject in our day regard as the only tenable view, namely Genesis is legend. From Wellhausen down outstanding names are Gunkel, Jeremias, Driver, Skinner, Procksch, etc., etc. However, we are not impressed by this array of learning, which we must without reservation class as pseudo-science on matters of this sort. Strong dogmatic presuppositions are too definitely displayed by these scholars: miracles are considered as practically impossible; so is plenary inspiration; Israel's history can rise to no higher levels than the Babylonian or the Egyptian; an arbitrary evolutionary standard is to be employed in measuring historical evidence. Besides, the following facts of Israel's history are overlooked:a) the utter dissimilarity of the Genesis record and the legends of the nations (the sober common sense of average Christians has always been able to detect this difference much more clearly than the overtrained scholar, who often loses entirely his sense of perspective);b) the clear distinction

preserved by Israel's sacred records of the successive stages of revelation (4:26; 17:22-27; Exod.6:3; Exod.20; Deut.18:15,19; I Sam.3:1, etc.);c) the accuracy of Israel's historical tradition (13:10; chapter 14; 20:20-24; chapter 25; 26:1; cf. also chapter 5 and chapter 10);d) distinct efforts by the patriarchs to perpetuate the remembrance of events of outstanding religious importance (12:7; 13:18; 21:33; 33:20);e) the sober tone displayed in recording the most exalted revelation (we refer to the following chapters 12, 15, 18, 22, and 32:23-32); f the utter impartiality displayed in recording the history of those who are the patriarchs and the fathers of tribes (12:10 fi; 20:1-18; 26:1-17; 30:1-43; chapter 34; chapter 38). Koenig's Commentary (p.80 ff.) gives additional material on this score.A proper evaluation of the facts enumerated above leads definitely to the conclusion that Genesis gives a sober, accurate, historical account of the events that led to the separation of Israel from among the nations and to her establishment as a new nation with a divinely given destiny. If the other nations of this period are known to have had no records that for accuracy and sound historical pragmatism can begin to compare with the Biblical accounts, that cannot in any wise impugn the singular merit of the latter. Criticism has shown itself singularly weak in the direction of evaluating comparatively the merit of Biblical history. Attempts to cut everything of superior merit found in Israel's Sacred Writings down to the level of contemporary literature is still the bane of scholarship in the Old Testament field. We may at this point take issue with the claim commonly raised in our day that Genesis, as to its contents, as well as other older Biblical books falls in the category of poetry rather than history. Apparently, they who take this position are reluctant about claiming that such books are legendary in character. That would seem derogatory to their distinctive character. Yet they would prefer not to be bound to accept the Creation account, the record of the Fall, and the like as literal history. Then these ancient tales would be a grand poetic conception, involving a deeper view of truth yet allowing for a great variety of interpretations such as may be suited to the fancy of the individual. We are utterly out of sympathy with such an attitude; for it does not conform to the facts of theIt is rather a straightforward, strictly historical account, rising, indeed, to heights of poetic beauty of expression in the Creation account, in the Flood story, in the record of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, in Judah's plea before Joseph, and the like. But the writer uses no more of figurative language than any gifted historian might, who merely adorns a strictly .literal account with the ordinary run of current figures of speech, grammatical and rhetorical.The various other types of construction put particularly upon the patriarchal stories, like the tribal or ethnological theory; the astral myth theory; the purely mythical theory, and the like are evaluated at the beginning of the patriarchal record (Gen.12).Rather closely tied up with the question of history is that of chronology. The prevailing attitude on questions of chronology is to discard the Biblical data and to accept as authoritative the far more difficult and uncertain Babylonian and Egyptian systems of reckoning, as they are computed in our day. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, (Philadelphia, 1937), p.56-61, gives the beginner a good idea how these computations are made and how far back they reach with a fair measure of accuracy. But it must be said with emphasis that the Biblical chronology excels all others in completeness, simplicity and accuracy; and, though, indeed, there are unsolved chronological problems, the Biblical chronology deserves our fullest confidence also for the pre-Mosaic age and for the earliest history of mankind. Michell, The Historical Truth of the Bible, (London, 1926) shows excellently how Babylonian and Egyptian chronology, rightly construed, agrees with the Biblical system of chronology.6. CriticismUnfortunately, in the field of the Mosaic writings negative literary criticism -- higher literary criticism so called -- has wrought incalculable

confusion and still is the bane of fruitful investigations in this field. Therefore it behooves us, first of all, very briefly to summarize the critical position in reference to Genesis or, for that matter, in reference to the entire Pentateuch. This summary is designed primarily for non-theologians and, therefore, makes no claim to completeness.Critics speak with much assurance, as though the proof for their position were unassailable, , of the various sources that have been worked into the Pentateuch as we now have it; and they assure us that this composite work was finally compiled by an editor- commonly called Redactor (R) -- after the time of the Exile perhaps as late as 400 B. C. The four major documents that have been worked into the Pentateuch are not only occasionally discernible in the work as a whole, but the cord has, as it were, been unravelled, and the four strands that compose it are laid before us side by side. The names given to these four documents or their authors are: (a) the Elohistic document, written by the Elohist -- abbreviated designation E-;(b) the Jahvistic or Yahwistic document -- described as J; (c) the Priestly document or P; and (d) the Deuteronomic document -- or D. Some critics consider E, J, D, and P as persons, others regard them as literary schools.The reasons advanced for the separation of the whole into four major documents are again mainly four. First and foremost to this day the use of the divine names is a mark of authorship. Thus: the Jahvist (or Yahwist) uses the divine name Jehovah or Yahweh almost exclusively; the Elohist uses Elohim, the common name for God in the Hebrew; the Priestly writer also prefers Elohim; the Deuteronomist is marked by other characteristics. Secondly, each of these writers is said to have developed a vocabulary which is distinctly his own. However, in the case of J and E this is not as prominent a feature as in reference to P and D. Thirdly, certain types of subject matter are found quite regularly in certain of these original documents: J likes narratives whose scenes are laid in Judah; E prefers those that played in the territory of the Northern Kingdom; P deals with matters of legislation; and D is hortatory in his treatment of all he presents. Lastly, the style of these four presents quite naturally four different aspects: "J excels in picturesque objectivity' of description"; "E, on the other hand, frequently strikes a vein of subjective feeling, especially of pathos"; P is precise and formal; D is the orator. It must be admitted that an imposing array of arguments confronts us here. Certainly, an immense amount of labour has been expended on these studies. Many of the issues involved are of a so highly technical nature as to confuse the layman, especially when Hebrew terms multiply, that he believes the issues must be left to professional theologians and is all too ready to follow their guidance if they adopt, as is often the case, a tone of utter finality. First of all, on the matter of the use of the divine names, are we not taking a higher and more reasonable ground if we assume that they were used primarily according to their specific meaning and not merely because the writer in question knew only the one or tried to reflect a period where only the one was known, or was addicted to the stylistic peculiarity of the use of the one rather than the other? A good parallel on the New Testament level is the fine distinction observed by all the writers between the personal name "Jesus" and the official title "the Christ." Surely, if the one or the other had used the one of these names exclusively, it would have been a failure to appreciate deeper and vital issues. So on the Old Testamerit level "Elohim" is the generic name for God from the root which signifies "to fear" or "reverence." Therefore Elohim is the divine being whose power and attributes inspire mortals with due fear. "Jehovah," more correctly written "Yahweh," signifies the Abiding, Changeless, and Eternal One, and therefore describes God as the one true to His covenant relationship in reference to His people. When the writer desires to express the thought that the one or the other aspect of the divine character was especially displayed in a certain event, he uses the name appropriate to

this purpose. That does not say that the other aspect of the divine character was not in evidence at all. In fact, we might in some instances even have been inclined, but for the author's suggestive use of the divine name, to think the other of the two characteristics predominated. In the following exposition of Genesis we hope we have demonstrated the fine propriety that from this point of view is discernible in the use of the divine names according to their sense.This approach of ours to the problem of the use of the divine names is by no means in conflict with Exod.6:3: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as God Almighty; but by My name Jehovah I was not known to them." For, in the first place, of course, "name" according to the Hebrew significance of shem means about as much as "character." The statement, however, though made absolutely, is meant relatively, as are many other statements in Scripture (Hos.6:6; Matt.5:34; I John 3:9 by way of example). The revelation of God's Yahweh-character given to the patriarchs is so far below the revelation of the same character that is about to be displayed in the Exodus that by comparison one would say that now this character is first really being manifested. The critics had better not press the literal meaning of this passage (Exod.6:3) too much, for then it becomes a sharp two-edged sword. For when they use it to prove that there was an earlier period where Elohim was used and not Yahweh, this passage is having a new element foisted upon it by them. Exodus 6:3 does not set Eiohim and Yahweh in contrast but 'El Shadday (God Almighty) and Yahweh, a thought which the critical position cannot use at all, in fact, a very embarrassing thought. It militates directly against the earlier use of Elohim.The seemingly formidable argument from vocabulary, separate and distinct vocabularies for the four source documents -- especially where long lists of words appear used only in the one document -- this argument we say loses its imposing character when we discern on what ground it is built. Leaving J and E aside because the argument carries little convincing weight under this head, we notice what happens in the case of P and D. Everything of a priestly legislative character is primarily assigned to P as well as everything that is presented after a more or less formal pattern like Gen. I as well as summaries. From these portions primarily deductions are made as to P's vocabulary. Naturally quite a substantial list results. Then other passages in the Pentateuch that use these distinctive terms are stamped as coming from P, whenever possible. Note how in the. last analysis in legislative portions like Leviticus, where matters of priestly interest certainly predominate, a distinctive vocabulary has to be used and can very readily be listed. The fact of the matter really is not that a different writer is at work but that the same writer is dealing with an entirely different subject. No man can write a law book with the vocabulary of a book on history. From another point of view the argument practically amounts to this that one man could not write E or J and also P, because one man could not write both history and law. In like manner D's style, which is supposed to involve "a long development of the art of public oratory," covers the major part of the book of Deuteronomy as well as of later books whenever they con, in hortatory passages after the manner of Deuteronomy. One can quite readily build up a separate vocabulary out of such sections. In the final analysis this is tantamount to saying that Moses could not have written such admonitions and exhortations as well as laws and history. The critics operate on the assumption that such flexibility of style is beyond the range of the capabilities of one man. The other peculiarities that these major sources are supposed to display are most readily understood on the following assumption: take any longer work and divide it up into four portions on the basis of an approach that groups kindred things together, and the resultant four parts will naturally each have something distinctive.There are other failings that mark the critical approach to the problem. The argument in a circle is, for example, employed frequently.

We shall draw attention to quite a number of instances in the course of the following exposition. Passages having a certain type of vocabulary are assumed to belong to one source; when that type of vocabulary is discovered, the proof that there is such a source is treated as complete. Again, when added details appear that were not indicated at the commencement of a narrative, these added details, though they are merely supplementary to the original statements, are construed as being at variance with the original, and so evidence for the existence of two or more separate sources is manufactured, whereas, in reality, other sides of the matter are merely coming to the surface, as every unbiased reader can readily detect.Again and again the critical approach gives evidence of being guided by purely subjective opinion instead of by valid logical proof. The critic expected that the writer would proceed to follow up a certain approach by a certain type of statement -- at least the critic would have followed up by such a statement. The author's failure to offer what the critic expected is supposed to constitute sufficient proof that the case in point is an instance where two documents have been welded together rather crudely. Equally common is the critical practice of conjecturing how the Hebrew text may. originally have read, especially if the Hebrew text offers material conflicting, with the critical theories, and the Septuagint happens to disagree more or less with the Hebrew. Strangely, in such cases the conjectures as to the original form of the text always offer support to the critical position.Analogous to the above point is this: when the different aspects of a case are presented, critics quite regularly fail to discern the deeper harmony that prevails in spite of the surface disagreement. So very frequently, after one motive for a deed has been indicated, the mention of a second motive is treated as proof of a divergent approach by a different writer, as though life were always so simple a thing, as to allow for the operation of but one motive at a time, instead of the complex thing that it is, where motives, counter-motives, and subsidiary motives run crisscross through one another.Of the failings of the critical approach perhaps the greatest of all is the failure to evaluate rightly the attitude and the words of Christ and His apostles in reference to books like those of Moses. As Christ treated Moses' writings so should we. His clear words attributing them to Moses dare not be ignored. This is not treating the Old Testament without regard for the distinction between the Old and the New Testament. This is following the excellent Reformation principle: "Interpret Scripture by Scripture"; and a sounder principle cannot be found. Critics dismiss the Saviour's attitude with a shrug of the shoulder.Unfortunately, it is impossible to treat the Old Testament in an expository way without taking the major features of the critical approach into consideration, especially since these critical findings have been popularized and appear on the shelves of public libraries, as does Dummelow's One Volume Commentary. Surely, the main errors of criticism should be shown in order to combat the evil at its source. Those who do not stand in need of the aid that a refutation may offer or are not impressed by the critical claims may, of course, leave those paragraphs that deal with critical matters aside. We have sought to let this apologetic material occupy a place of very inferior importance. Hardly five per cent of the total deals with critical problems.We shall leave aside all the very able constructive works that orthodox teachers of the church have provided under this head: the works of Haevernick, Hengstenberg, Keil, Rupprecht, and Moeller. These men have ably refuted all critical contentions; only the critics fail to discern that they have been answered. Those who would specialize on these matters will find most ample treatment of the subject in the works of these men. We for our part prefer in this exposition to follow the course of showing in our own way the beautiful and the consistent harmony of the individual accounts, a harmony which is in itself the strongest index of single rather than of composite authorship.

Occasional critical questions naturally come in for their share of attention. Our treatment will show that we have drawn upon the above mentioned Old Testament scholars, a fact that we have acknowledged wherever feasible. It will also appear that much can be learned from the more recent Eduard Koenig, though in a number of cases his works must be used with caution. 7. OutlineOf course, the book naturally is divided into two halves: the first (chapters 1-11) dealing with the general history of mankind; the second (chapters 12-50) with the special history of God's people. Going into greater detail, we could devise many other subdivisions. However, the author himself has provided an outline indicated by special headings, for he uses the heading 'elleh toledôth, "these are the generations" (A. V.) =" this is the story," ten tiptoes and actually treats under this heading the story indicated by the heading, as of Adam, 5:1-6:8, etc. This is more than a formal division. If the inferior elements receive but scant consideration, viz. Shem, Ishmael, and Esau, in some cases, in fact, only about seven verses, that merely indicates that there are things of minor as well as of major importance to be treated in a work such as this. If the author provides an outline and clearly indicates what it is, why reject it and try to devise a better one especially in an inspired book? In the following outline we have merely shown the subdivisions of the ten toledôth or the Ten "Histories."Introduction (1:1-2:3)Introduction -- the Creation Account.

1. The First History -- that of Heaven and Earth (2:4-4:26).1. Supplementary details of the Creation count (2:4-25).2. The Temptation and the Fall (chapter 3).

3. The Early Development of the Sinful Human Race (chapter 4).The History of Adam (5:1-6:8).

1. The Separate Development of the Godly (chapter 5).2. The Commingling of the Two Races (6:1-8).The History of Noah (6:9-9:29).

1. Noah's Piety (6:9-12).

2. How Noah was preserved (6:13-9:17).

3. The Future of the Races of Mankind Foretold (9:18-29).The History of the Sons of Noah (10:1-21:9).

1. The Sons of Japheth (10:1-5).

2. The Sons of Ham (10:6-20).

3. The Sons of Shem (10:21-31).

4. The Tower of Babel, or The Confusion of Tongues (11:1-9).History of Shem (11 :10-26).The History of Terah (11:27-25:11).

1. The Life of Terah (11:27-32).

2. The Life of Abraham (12:1-25:11).1. The Call of Abraham and the Exodus from Haran (12:1-9).2. A trip to Egypt during a Famine (12:10-21).

3. Separation from Lot (13:1-18).

4. The Defeat of the Kings by Abraham (14:1-24).

5. God's Covenant with Abraham (15:1-21).

6. The Birth of Ishmael (16:1-16).

7. The Covenant Sealed by New Names and by Circumcision (17:1-27).8. The Manifestation of Yahweh at Mamre (18:1-33).

9. Guilt and Destruction of Sodom (19:1-38). Sequel: Lot's Degeneration.

10. Abraham and Sarah at Gerar (chapter 20).

11. Birth of Isaac and Expulsion of Ishmael (21:1-21).12. Abraham's Covenant with Abimelech at Beersheba (21:22-34).13. The Sacrifice of Isaac (22:1-19).

14. Nahor's Descendants (Rebekah) (22:20-24).

15. Death and Burial of Sarah (23:1-20).

16. Isaac's Marriage (16:1-67).

17. Abraham's Second Marriage and His Death (25:1-11).The History of Ishmael (25:12-13).The History of Isaac (25:19-35:29).

1. Birth and Early History of the Twin Brothers (25:19-34).2. Various Scenes from Isaac's Life (chapter 26).

3. Isaac blesses Jacob (27:1-45).

4. Jacob's Dismissal from Home and His First Vision (27:46-28:22).5. Jacob's Double Marriage (29:1-30).

6. Jacob's Children and His Increasing Wealth (29:31-30:43).7. Jacob's Flight from Laban; their Treaty (31:1-54).8. Preparations for Meeting Esau (31:55-32:32).

9. Reconciliation with Esau; Settling in Canaan (33:1-20).10. The Outrage on Dinah Avenged by her Brothers (chapter 34).11. The Last Events of Isaac's History (35:1-29).The History of Esau (chapter 36).History of Jacob (37:2-50:26).

1. Joseph Sold into Egypt (37:2-36).

2. The Danger that Threatened Jacob's Sons (chapter 38).3. Joseph's Imprisonment because of his Steadfastness (chapter 39).4. Interpretation of the Prisoners' Dreams by Joseph (chapter 40).5. Joseph's Exaltation (chapter 41).

6. The First Journey of Joseph's Brethren to Egypt without Benjamin (chapter 42).

7. The Second Journey to Egypt with Benjamin (chapter 43).8. The Test Successfully Met by Joseph's Brethren (chapter 44).9. Joseph Revealed to his Brethren; The Family Summoned to Egypt (chapter 45).

10. The Temporary Emigration of Israel to Egypt (chapter 46).11. Israel Established in Goshen; Egyptian Famine Measures (47:1-26).12. Jacob's Preparations for his End (47:27-49:32).13. Jacob's Death and Burial (50:1-14).14. Conclusion of Joseph's History (50:15-26).8. Mode of InterpretationThere are several modes of interpretation current in our day that deserve to be stigmatized as inadequate and unsatisfactory. Some still prefer to allegorize portions of Scripture

rejecting the literal sense and seeking a hidden spiritual meaning, although hardly any would venture to follow this procedure exclusively and consistently. In rejecting this type of interpretation we do not question the validity of the interpretation that sees types of Christ in outstanding Old Testament characters especially where the New Testament suggests such a use. Much more common in our day is the fault of attempting to press Old Testament Scriptures down to the level of the sacred writings of the heathen, making them to be works patterned particularly after Babylonian source material. This type of interpretation includes what for want of a better name must be described as

"debunking" -- interpretation that speaks irreverently of venerable Old Testament characters, imputes the lowest possible motives to them, and so utterly fails to understand their ofttimes great and heroic faith. This approach often attempts nothing less than to discredit these sacred Scriptures as unworthy of use by the New Testament church -- an approach common in Germany at the present. Of course, there still is need of reminding that sound interpretation dare not disregard the difference between the Old and New Testament levels of revelation. Good exegetes, even up .to the Reformation age, failed to reckon with the fact that the unchanging truth was revealed with ever increasing clearness and fulness, a revelation culminating in Christ Jesus. The fuller revelation of a later age was at times imputed to an earlier word that did not as yet embody the fuller expression. Of course, we do not for a moment imply any such thing as man's progressive achievement. Our principle of interpretation is to unfold the fulness of revealed truth by careful examination of the grammatical statement as well as of the historical circumstances of the inspired text in dependence upon the Spirit of revelation, who alone is able to lead us into all truth. 9. Value and Importance of GenesisIn a general way it would be correct to say that this book is singular in its kind, for it offers the only correct and satisfactory information that we possess concerning prehistoric times and the Urgeschichte ("history of the primitive ages"). It goes back beyond the reach of available historical sources and offers not mythical suppositions, not poetical fancies, not vague suggestions, but a positive record of things as they actually transpired and, at the same time, of matters of infinite moment for all mankind. But more specifically, all this material relative to prehistoric times and the Urgeschichte really provides the most substantial and even fundamental theological concepts. The major theological concepts are incomplete and leave much to be desired, if the content that Genesis offers should be subtracted. Before God can be known as Saviour, He must be understood as the Creator of humankind and of the world. Just what manner of Father and Creator He is we find displayed in the two Creation chapters, Genesis I and 2. In like manner no adequate and correct conception of man is possible without a knowledge of the essentials concerning his creation, his original state, the image of God, and the like. Again, the problem of sin will constitute much more of a problem if the origin of sin, that is to say, the Fall into sin be not understood. With that fact correctly apprehended, we achieve a correct estimate of the degree of depravity that is characteristic of fallen men. Without the promise of ultimate victory through the Seed of the Woman all further revelations concerning the salvation to come must stand minus an adequate base upon which they can successfully build. In other words, certain vital questions in reference to the type of revelation that mankind needs find a satisfactory answer in Genesis and nowhere else. Concerning some of these matters the legends and the traditions of mankind offer a bit of material, most of which is distorted by error; some of which, in the elements of truth that it contains, is too weak to be of any actual value. An illustration of the extent to which this material is available is the vague report current among the ancients that there once had been

a Golden Age. The unreliability of such material is demonstrated by the utter absence of any tradition concerning a Fall into sin. Disregarding the material relation to matters theological, we find that Genesis also provides the much needed foundations for all history. The vague surmises as to man's past prior historic times all stand corrected by the story of the beginnings of the human race in Adam, or by the story of the second beginning in Noah. Equally important are the very valid data concerning the unity of the human race as provided basically in Genesis 1 and in greater detail in chapter 10, incomplete though this latter chapter may be in regard to a few matters. So, too, the question as to the origin of the multiplicity of languages is disposed of by the account concerning the confusion of tongues. Similarly, the singular position of Israel among the nations, a challenge to every historian, finds an adequate explanation in the Call of Abraham. Of course, from that point onward Genesis no longer records general history but only the history of the Kingdom of God.If at this point we append a summary of certain of the better known cosmogonies, or at least of those which have a certain affinity with the Biblical account, anyone can judge for himself whether the Biblical account in any sense seems to be a derivative. The most famous of the non-biblical cosmogonies is the Babylonian or the so-called "Chaldean Genesis," which created such a stir at the time of its publication in 1876 after it had been unearthed as a part of the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh by George Smith in 1873. The several tablets on which the account is written are in a fairly good state of preservation. The story begins with an account that is a theogony -- an account of the origin of the gods -- in itself already an indication of a far inferior level. The true God did not come into being by a certain process, nor were there originally several deities. Now of these various deities one stood out as particularly aggressive and ferocious, the unsubdued Tiâmat -- again a decidedly inferior point of view. For the struggle that impended Tiâmat, the old mother of gods, enlists as many of the old gods as she can and a whole crew of horrid monsters. The resulting conflict for supremacy (note the low moral level even among gods) is a truly titanic struggle in which the forces of the opposition are led by the great Babylonian deity Marduk. Marduk proves himself the stronger. He prevails over Tiâmat, cleaves her into two montrous halves, the upper of which he fixes in place as the heavens, in which in turn he fixes the heavenly bodies; and the lower of which halves, on the other hand, he sets in place as the earth. Then he compounds material of his own blood for the creation of man, the chief purpose of whose creation is "that the service of the gods may be established." This account of creation is so pronouncedly different from the Biblical account that the points of difference completely overshadow the incidental points of resemblance. To speak of a "striking resemblance between the two cosmogonies" certainly is a partisan overstatement of the case; and to go on to say that "the cosmogony of Genesis I rests on a conception of the process of creation fundamentally identical with that of the Enuma elis (the opening words of the Chaldean Genesis) tablets" is simply a distortion of the truth. Of the Phoenician cosmogony it is sufficient to remark that it contains the idea of the world-egg, hatched out to produce the world. Analogous to this from this point of view is the Indian conception. The uncreated Lord appeared in chaos. The next step was to render this world visible by means of the five elements, by shining forth in brightest light and dispelling darkness. Into the water, which he creates first, he lays a germ cell. This becomes a gleaming egg in which Brahma is found, the source principle. A protracted period of hatching brings him to light. Aside from fantastic and confused elements it may well be that even this cosmogony carries within it certain echoes of the Genesis account which are all but forgotten. The Parsee Genesis, appearing in a late book of the Bundehest, has at least this sequence of created

things: 1. heaven, 2. water, 3. earth, 4. planets, 5. animals, 6. man. Nothing is said concerning the creation of light. The partial correspondence with the account of the Bible is obvious. But since this is a late book, this correspondence may have resulted from an acquaintance with the Biblical record. Still more nearly parallel to the Biblical account is the cosmogony attributed to the Etruscans by the writer Suidas, who lived in the tenth century A. D. For the sequence runs thus: 1. heaven and earth, 2. firmament, 3. sea and water, 4. sun and moon, 5. souls of animals, 6. man. To the six items six periods of a thousand years each are assigned. Yet the influence of the Bible record is so very likely in the case of a writer of the tenth century of the Christian era that there is great likelihood that the writer's Christian ideas will have led him to find these successive items, which another might not even have noticed in the same material. Or else the ancient Etruscan tradition had absorbed a high percentage of Biblical thought on matters such as these. One would expect the Persian cosmogony to be radically different and in conformity with the principles of dualism. In the Avesta time and light and darkness are uncreated. These constitute the true spiritual world. They are eternal because Mazda, the god of light, is himself eternal. Hesiod informs us how the Greeks conceived of the origin of things. First there existed Chaos; there-upon the earth; next Tartarus; then Eros (Love), the most beautiful of the deathless gods. Out of Chaos night is born. The earth begets the heavens; then the ocean comes into being. After these Saturn, father of gods, existed. The rest of the pantheon follow him. To the Egyptians several views on the origin of the earth are to be attributed. Some regarded the god Ptah as the craftsman who built the world. Others held that it was the goddess Neith who wove its fabric. The fundamental principle from which all things take their origin was thought to be water, for in it were fancied to be the male and the female germs of life. Even the great god Ra was supposed to have sprung from it, though others believed that he had been hatched out of an egg. We may well say that these cosmogonies are the best available outside the Genesis account. A man does not need any supernatural enlightenment to discern that not one of all these can compare even remotely with the scriptural account for depth of thought, simplicity, propriety and beauty. All the others disappoint us by their incompleteness, or by their confusion, or by their lack of sequence, or as being the embodiment of some deep-seated error. Their conception of God is most unsatisfactory and unworthy. Or if they rise to a higher level, we have reason for believing that the better element is traceable to the Bible as the source. 10. BibliographyA. CommentariesDelitzsch, Franz, Commentar ueber die Genesis, Leipzig: Doerffling and Franke, 1872.Dillmann, August, Die Genesis, Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 4. edition.1882.Dods, Marcus, The Expositor's Bible (Genesis), New York: George II. Doran Co. No date.Gunkel, IIerman, Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, W. Nowak, editor. Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht.1901.Jamieson, Robert, A Commentary Critical and Explanatory, (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown). New York: George II. Doran. No date.Keil, C. F., Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Genesis), (Keil and Delitzsch), Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.1875.Koenig, Eduard, Die Genesis, Guetersioh: Bertelsmann.1919.Lange, J. P., Bibelwerk (Genesis), Bielefeld: Velhagen und Klasing.1864.Luther, Martin, Saemtliche Schriften (Genesis), St. Louis, Mo. Concordia Publishing House.1881. (2 vol.)Procksch, Otto, Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Genesis), Ernst Sellin, editor. Leipzig: Deichert.1913.Skinner, John, International Critical Commentary (Genesis), Driver, et al, editors. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.1925.Strack, Hermann L., Kurzgefasster Kommentar (Genesis), Strack and Zoeckler, editors. Muenchen: C. H. Beck.1905.Vilmar, August Fr. C., Collegium Biblicum (Genesis), Christian Mueller, editor. Guetersloh: Bertelsmann.1881.Whitelaw Thomas, The Pulpit

Commentary (Genesis), H. D. M. Spence, editor. London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co.1882.References to these commentaries have been made exclusively by the author's name, as Delitzsch. Quotations appear, of course, under the verse that is being treated. Consequently, reference to pages was consistently omitted.As to the position taken by these commentaries, works such as those of Dillmann, Dods, Strack may be classed as moderately critical. Gunkel, Procksch and Skinner belong into the class of the extremely critical. Delitzsch finally yielded to the blandishments of the critical approach and accepted at least the source theory in its major features but still put the critical work into the category of secondary importance. Jamieson disregards critical issues. Keri, seconded in many a case by Lange, did very substantial work in the direction of establishing the validity of the conservative approach. Whitelaw works in a similar spirit. Luther's comments naturally have a very different purpose but are still to be read .with profit. Koenig does the most constructive work among modern writers, but unfortunately, he yielded to the source theory, though even in this his position is moderate.B. DictionariesBuhl, Frants, Gesenius' Handwoerterbuch ueber das alte Testament; Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel.1905.Brown, Driver, Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (based on Gesenius). New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.1907.Koenig, Eduard, Woerterbuch zum Alten Testament. Leipzig: Dieterich.1922. (2. and 3. edition.)C. VersionsHoly Bible, Revised Version, American Standard Edition.1901.King James Version.Luther's German Bible.Smith, J. M. Powis, The Old Testament, An American Translation (Genesis by Theophile J. Meek). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.1927.Rahlfs, Alfred, Septuaginta. Stuttgart: Privilegierte Wuertembergische Bibelanstalt.1935.Onkelos, Targum, New York: Hebrew Publishing Co. No date.D. Other Helps copiously usedBailey and Kent, History of the Hebrew Commonwealth (revised edition). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.1935.Barton, George A., Archaeology and the Bible (seventh edition). Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union.1937.Edersheim, Alfred, Bible History (The World before the Flood. Vol. I). New York: Fleming H. Revell Co.Hengstenberg, Ernst Wilhelm, Beitraege zur Einleitung ins Alte Testament (Die Authentie des Pentateuches), Berlin: Oehmigke.1836.Hengstenberg, E. W., Die Buecher Moses und Aegypten, Berlin: Oehmigke.1841.Hengstenberg, E. W., Christologie des Alten Testaments, Berlin: Oehmigke.1854.Hengstenberg, E. W., Geschichte des Reiches Gotres unter dem Alten Bunde. Berlin: Schlawitz.1869.Hofmann, J. C. K., Weissagung und Erfuellung. Noerdlingen: Beck.1841.Jeremias, Alfred, Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients. Leipzig: Hinrichs.1904.Kittel, Rud., Biblia Hebraica (Genesis), Stuttgart: Priv. Wuert. Bibelanstalt.1929.Koenig, Eduard, Geschichte der Alttestamentlichen Religion. Guetersloh: Bertelsmann.1912.Koenig, E., Geschichte des Reiehes Gottes. Berlin: Warneck.1908.Koenig, E., Die Messianischen Weissagungen des Alten Testaments. Stuttgart: Belser.1923.Koenig, E., Theologie des Alten Testaments. Stuttgart: Belser.1922.Michell, G. B., The Historical Truth of the Bible. (Part I. The Comparative International History of the Old Testament) London: Marshall Bros.1925.Moeller, Wilhelm, Biblische Theologie des AIten Testaments, etc. Zwickau: Herrmann.Oehler, Gust. Fr., Theologie des Alten Testaments, Stuttgart: Steinkopf.1882.E. GrammarsGesenius, Wilhelm, Hebraeische Grammatik (revised by E. Kautzsch).27. ed. Leipzig: Vogel.1902.Koenig, Eduard, Lehrgebaeude der Hebraeischen Sprache. (Part II. Syntax.) Leipzig: Hinrichs.1897. F. Abbreviations of the titles of the above works commonly usedA. V. King James Version.A. R. V. American Standard Edition of the Revised Version.B. D. B. Gesenius' Lexicon by Brown, Driver, Briggs.B. T. Moeller's Biblische Theologie.G. A. T. Koenig's Geschichte der Alttestamentlichen Religion.G. K. Gesenius' Grammatik rev. by Kautzsch.G. R. G. Koenig's

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Chapter 2

The Author--Dr. H. C. LEUPOLD

Dr. Herbert Carl Leupold, Columbus, Ohio, was born at Buffalo, N. Y., on July 23, 1891. He received his early education in the Lutheran parochial schools at Buffalo and later finished his elementary and secondary education in the Buffalo public schools. He received his pre-seminary and seminary training at the Martin Luther Theological Seminary at Buffalo, NY., which was discontinued when the Buffalo Synod became a part of the American Lutheran Church. Dr. Leupold graduated from the Martin Luther Seminary on June 24, 1914. Thereupon he served as pastor of a mission, Ascension Lutheran congregation in Buffalo, and at the same time held an assistant professorship at the Martin Luther Seminary until 1922. He served as professor of historical theology at the Martin Luther Seminary from 1922 to 1929. In 1929, when the Buffalo Synod dosed Martin Luther Seminary, Dr. Leupold was transferred to the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary at Capital University, Columbus, O., where he became professor of Old Testament Theology, in which capacity he is serving at the present time. He was elected secretary of the Theological Seminary faculty in 1941. Dr. Leupold received the Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Chicago Seminary in 1926 and the Doctor of Divinity degree from Capital University in 1935. Dr. Leupold has gained renown as an Old Testament scholar and an authority on liturgics. He has become a well-known lecturer and writer in these fields.

CHAPTER I

The Introduction -- The Creation Account (1:1-2:3) The object of this double title is to indicate that on the one hand, this is the Introduction which Moses has provided for the entire book of Genesis as well as, on the other hand, that this Introduction is given in the form of an account of creation. It requires no deep insight to discern the basic character of this Introduction, both for the book as well as for all revelation. Man will go back in his thinking to the point where the origins of all things lie; he will desire to know how the world as well as all that is in it, and, most particularly, how he himself came into being. Here is the record, complete and satisfactory from every point of view, even if it does not perhaps answer every question that a prying curiosity might raise. He, however, who will ponder sufficiently what is here actually offered, will find facts of such magnitude as to stifle unseemly curiosity as to secondary matters. Enthusiastic have been the comments of all who have read this account in an attitude of faith. Believing hearts are moved to devout praise of God and to adoration of His unbounded wisdom, power and mercy. Over against the criticism of our day even moderately critical writers offer comments such as Skinner (p.11): "It is a bold thing to desiderate a treatment more worthy of the theme, or more impressive in effect, than we find the severely chiselled outlines and stately cadences of the first chapter of Genesis." Proksch, contrasting the basic thought of the chapter with all other literatures, advances the claim: "That the universe rises out of nothing by the almighty creative power of God is a thought so broad in its poetic as well as in its theological scope found nowhere in such clear-cut outlines in world literature before P." The Scriptures themselves treat this account as pure history. Note the following passages: (Ex 20:9-11; 31:17; Ps 8; Ps 104; Mt 19:4-6; 2 Peter 3:5; Hebrews 4:4) When the question is raised as to the. sources of the truths set forth in this Introduction, we must freely admit that we know nothing about them. There are several possibilities. That Moses himself received the whole chapter by direct revelation is possible. Equally, if not more, reasonable is the assumption that divine revelation communicated to our first parents the account of creation. From them it came by tradition to Moses, who recorded the whole under divine inspiration, purging it from errors or inaccuracies, should any have begun to creep into the traditional version of it by this time. That, however, such tradition may have continued relatively, if not entirely, pure appears from the following three facts: first, the number of links in the chain of persons from Adam to Abraham was very few because of man's longevity at this time, and Abraham's time was already one of intense literary activity; secondly: godly men who perpetuated this tradition would have employed extreme care to preserve it correct in all its parts; thirdly, the memory of men who trusted more to memory than to written records is known to have been unusually retentive. But whatever explanation an individual may devise to make plain to others that tradition may have played a part in bringing this priceless record to us, and even if he grant the possibility of written records of this tradition prior to the time of Moses, all such supposition dare never be construed as conflicting with the very basic fact that Genesis 1 is revelation. Suppositions like that of Dillmann and many others that the Israelitish mind was equipped with a better understanding of God and let the light of this insight, be trained on the problem of the origin of all things and devised this which is to date still the best solution; are not satisfactory. Such claims are an attempt to dispose of

immediate revelation as well as of plenary inspiration and are besides hardly reasonable. How could human ingenuity ever have penetrated into the divine order and manner of creation, when no witness to these works could ever be found? In any case, such explanations as to how the account was derived make of it a series of surmises and remove entirely the possibility of the objective correctness and the complete reliability of this record. All that remains is that of all speculations man ever elaborated about the origin of the world this is still by all odds the best. The claims and the attitude of the Scriptures, however, are met only by the explanation that says: This chapter was received by divine revelation; it contains full and absolute truth and only truth. In order to make this scriptural account appear as just one more cosmogony it has become a common procedure to make more or less extensive Comparisons with other cosmogonies as they are found here and there in the records of the traditions of the nations. We offer, however. a more extensive examination of these so-called "creation accounts" above in our Introductory Remarks (p.27). A fair comparison with such materials makes our remarks above appear all the more reasonable. Taking this creation account as a whole, how shall we arrange the work of the six days? Is there any possibility of grouping within the six days? Most schemes that are advanced are not entirely perfect, but they may yet contain a generous element of truth. It seems as though the best pattern or the categories that man employs are not of a big enough mould to serve for the creation as God brings it about. Let a few of these subdivisions be submitted. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), mentioned by Strack, suggested two triads of days, the first three concerned with works of division, the second three with works of embellishment. Yet the third day's work in its second half certainly comes under the head of embellishment. A second suggestion notices the manifest parallel between the two triads of days, pointing to the fact that both the first and the fourth days are concerned with a work that begins on high with light (or light bearers). Then in the work of the second and the fifth days the work drops to a lower level, namely, to the firmament and to the birds of the air. Lastly, on the third and the sixth days the creative work moves on the level of the earth and accomplishes a double objective, namely on the third, separation of dry land and water and the production of green things, whereas on the sixth day comes the creation of land animals and man. The correspondence of the two triads from this point of view cannot be denied, but to try to imagine it as entirely adequate would overlook the work of the fifth day, which is double in character and drops not only to the level of the creation of the birds of the air but also, unfortunately, to the submarine level of the creation of fishes of the sea. More satisfactory is Koenig's arrangement which sees four deficiencies or four instances of relative incompleteness listed in a definite order and sees the successive creative acts as removing these four in inverse order, as we shall presently demonstrate. But quite apart from such attempts to fit the whole creation into a pattern of our own devising it is immediately apparent that the account as a whole proceeds from the lower to the higher, providing first the basic essentials for existence as well as for plant and for animal life, then running to a climax in the creation of man for whose well-being and well-ordered existence all previous steps in creation provide the adequate setting. So the account abundantly displays that God is a God of order. The very general formula devised by Driver (quoted by Skinner) is as satisfactory as any: "The first three days are days of preparation, the next three are days of accomplishment." 1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The phrase "in the beginning" (berêshîth) refers to the absolute beginning of created things, to the Uranfang. This fact is supported by the following arguments in the face of many and strong claims to the contrary.1. The corresponding phrase in Greek, en arch, which the Septuagint

translators used here and which appears at the beginning of John's Gospel, is plainly a reference to the absolute beginning.2. The noun rêshîth appears without the article, appearing in use practically as a proper noun, Absolute Beginning (K. S.294g). The Greek Hexapla of Orion supports this, for its transliteration with few exceptions gives bohsin, seldom baohshn.3. The rendering which takes the expression as referring to the absolute beginning of things makes for a simple, natural progression of thought and avoids that peculiar periodic sentence structure, which shall presently be discussed as highly unnatural.Because this noun berêshîth is without the article, that does not allow for its being taken as a genitive or construct case, viz. "in the beginning of God's creating," etc., for with that rendering attention is at once centred on the second verse and no reason appears for mentioning "the beginning" at all.Here, then, at the opening statement of sacred Scripture we are taken back to that point to which the human mind naturally will revert and in reference to which it asks: "What was the beginning of things?" This solemn and pithy statement gives man the information: the beginning was made by God in His creation of heaven and earth. As far as this world is concerned, it simply had no existence before this time.He that did the creative work is said to be God, 'elohîm. This Hebrew name is to be derived from a root found in the Arabic meaning "to fear" or "to reverence." It, therefore, conceives of God as the one who by His nature .and His works rouses man's fear and reverence. It is used 2,570 times (KTAT-(K) p.144). This name is not a characteristic mark of a particular source as E, or in a measure also P, as Old Testament criticism is in the habit of claiming. It is used by Moses in accordance with its meaning. The work recorded in chapter one in a very outstanding way sets forth God's mighty works of power and majesty. God's omnipotence outshines all other attributes in this account. Omnipotence rouses man's reverence and holy fear rather than his love. In other words, it brings the Creator to man's notice rather as 'Elohîm than from any other point of view. In stressing this we are not blind to the fact that this chapter also shows forth God as Yahweh, the faithful, merciful one. The claim, however, , that Yahweh might just as Well be employed as 'Elohîm, if the meaning of these names is to be considered, really ignores the facts we have just emphasized above -- facts which criticism, by the way, gives heed to far less carefully than conservative writers give attention to the arguments in favour of the various sources, E, J, P, D, etc.A thought by Procksch should be noted here: "It so happens very appropriately that the first named subject of Genesis as well as of the Bible is God'."The verb describing God's initial work is "created" (bara'). This verb is correctly defined as expressing the origination of something great, new and "epoch-making," as only God can do it, whether it be in the realm of the physical or of the spiritual. The verb bara' does not of itself and absolutely preclude the use Of existing material; cf. Isa.65:18b: "Behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." Also note v.27 of this chapter. However, when no existing material is mentioned as to be worked over, no such material is implied. Consequently, this passage teaches creatio ex nihilo, "creation out of nothing," a doctrine otherwise also clearly taught by the Scriptures; (Ro 4:17; Hebrews 11:3); cf. also (Psalms 33:6, 9; Am 4:13). The verb is never used of other than DIVINE activity.The berõ', which Kit. proposes in the margin in conformity with the claims of many, for bara', i.e. the infinitive for the finite verb, and which yields the translation, "in the beginning of God's creating," etc., is not only entirely unnecessary but unfortunately, leads to an involved and confused sentence structure in place of a simple and a clear one. Besides, such a change is born entirely out of the desire to make room for a particular interpretation, viz. the interpretation that claims long ages of the earth's existence prior to the creative work here to be described. To use this change of vowels is the equivalent of substituting a

confused road for a straight and a simple one.The object of God's creation was "the heavens and the earth." We should have said, He created: "the universe." Since the Hebrew has no word for the universe and can at best say: "the all" cf. (Jeremiah 10:16; Isaiah 44:24; Psalms 103:19; 119:91; Ec 11:5), certainly the far more colourful "heavens and earth" is to be preferred. Besides, there is a deeper truth involved. In reality the world is bipartite; it is not a unit as far as we are concerned. The two parts constituting the world or the universe were originally in perfect harmony with one another. Now there exists a deep breach between the two. The term shamßyim signifies the "upper regions" (K. W.) and is a plural form, a plural of intensity (K. C.), pointing to the heavenly spheres or regions which rise one above the other. This explanation is to be preferred to the other (e. g. K. S.) which makes this a dual in reference to the two halves of the heavens which stretch each from the zenith to the horizon. The word for "earth," 'érets, bears a meaning which may be "that which is lower," des Niedere. Over against the claim that "the heavens and the earth" may well be the equivalent of "the universe" it is contended that "heavens" here can only mean the "firmament," as in v.8, and "earth" can only refer to the "dry land," as in v.10. But then the very proper question arises: why single out "heaven and earth" in this sense at all and mention their creation in v.17 Besides, in this creation account another word is used in a broader and in a narrower sense; cf. "day" in 5a with "day" in 5b with "day" in 2:4 -- actually three meanings.Now is this first verse a heading or a title? By no means; for how could the second verse attach itself to a heading by an "and"? Or is this first verse a summary statement akin to a title, after the Hebrew manner of narrative which likes to present a summary account like a newspaper heading, giving the gist of the entire event? Again, No. For if creation began with light and then with the organizing of existing material, the question would crowd persistently to the forefront: but how did this original material come into being? for v.1 could not be a record of its origin, because it would be counted as a summary account of the things unfolded throughout the rest of the chapter. Verse one is the record of the first part of the work brought into being on the first day: first the heavens and the earth in a basic form as to their material, then light. These two things constitute what God created on the first day. The Hebrew style of narrative just referred to may or may not be employed on occasion, depending on the author's choice. Here it does not happen to be used.Here also the statement may be disposed of which says: The initial creation was a chaos. Such an assertion is misleading. It may be meant in a way which Would be entirely wrong. If it implies that as the record stands v.1-2 show an unsatisfactory state of achievement, it is all wrong. However, if the disorganized state of the first steps of creation is called "chaos," with the reservation that this implies no criticism but is necessarily only the first and unavoidable step from lower to higher forms, then the statement may be used. Or if it is only intended as a statement which covers what v.2 covers with other terms, it cannot be said to be wrong.Before dropping this verse we should take issue with the question: "Does the term 'Elohîm, being a plural, embody a reference to the Holy Trinity?" Two extremes must be guarded against in submitting an answer. He goes too far who sees in this plural a direct and explicit reference to the Holy Trinity. The plural is a potential plural (K. S.263 a-c) indicating the wealth of the potentialities of the divine being, chiefly in so far as God by His very nature and being kindles man's deepest reverence. However, what all the wealth of this reverence-inspiring Being is, is not fully revealed in all detail by the Old Testament, least of all in the time of Moses. The term 'Elohîm, however, allows for all that which the fuller unfolding of the same old truth brings in the course of the development of God's Kingdom. When, then, ultimately the truth concerning the Trinity has been revealed, the fullest resources of the term

'Elohîm have been explored, as far as man needs to know them. Consequently, he who would claim that the term can have no connection with the truth of the Holy Trinity goes too far. Nor dare it be forgotten, as we shall show in connection with v.2 and 3, that the text itself introduces references to the persons of the Trinity without definitely indicating, of course, that they are distinct persons in the Godhead. In that connection certain New Testament words will be seen to have bearing upon the case. Consequently Luther's statement, made in reference to v.2, is quite in order when he says: "Consequently the Christian Church on this point displays a strong unity that in this description is to be founds the mystery of the Holy Trinity." Even a second statement of Luther's may be accepted, if it be construed in the sense of the first: "But we have clear testimony that Moses aimed to indicate the Trinity or the three persons in the one divine nature."Before we examine v.2 by itself it is necessary to see how v.1-3 stand related to one another. There would be no occasion for giving attention to this matter if the familiar English versions (King James or A. R. V.) and the German are followed, for these very correctly indicate that the sequence of clauses is as natural as it can be. But two translations, diverging from the familiar form, have thrust themselves to the forefront, leaning for support on eminent Hebrew scholars. As representative of the one may count what Meek submits (The Old Testament, An American Translation): "When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth being a desolate waste, with darkness covering the abyss and the spirit of God hovering over the waters, then God said: Let there be light.'" This translation makes v.2 a parenthesis, or it would practically have it set off by dashes and makes of v. i the protasis and of v.3 the apodosis. The second makes v.1 protasis and v.2 apodosis, thus: "When God created the heavens and the earth, then the earth was, etc. ... and God said, etc." (Raschi et al.). A third might be listed here, although it has been disposed of above. It is that which makes v.1 the heading and then proceeds with v.2 and 3 as follows: Now as the earth lay there, a waste and empty mass -- and darkness, etc. -- then God said, etc., (Procksch). The last mentioned having been refuted, we shall dispose of the details involved in the first two as we examine v.2 and v.3 more fully. For a summary refutation let the following points be noted, Grammatically such translations as Meek and Raschi offer are possible but in this case highly improbable. The Hebrew does co-ordinate clauses where we prefer subordination. Longer sentences of involved structure are found also in (Ge 5:1) and (Nu 5:12-15; Joshua 3:14-16) and in many other instances. But a chapter marked throughout by very simple sentence structure would never begin with so complicated a structure as any of the ones noted above. Besides, against the first combination it must be noticed that the first word of v.2 could hardly be ha'arets but would have to be wattehî, in spite of occasional exceptions noted here and there for emphasis' sake. Wellhausen's dictum in regard to this modern translation is worthy of being preserved; he called it a "desperately insipid construction" (verzweifelt geschmacklose Construction). 2. And now, as far as the earth was concerned, it was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was hovering upon the face of the waters.Of the two parts of the universe mentioned the author abandons the first, "the heavens," as lying outside of the sphere of the present investigation, for of its creation we need not know or perhaps could not understand its details. Moses definitely limits himself to the second of the two parts by emphatically setting "the earth" first in the sentence. This yields a shade of thought which our translation above tries to reproduce by saying: "And now, as far as the earth was concerned." Or one might render: "Now this earth," etc. As has been remarked, from this point onward the point of approach may be said to be geocentric.By an outstanding double expression (cf. for similar combinations 18:27 and

21:23) an almost onomatopoeic effect is secured to describe the utmost of an unformed and unshapen mass: "waste and void" -- tóhû wavóhû. Tóhû is really a noun used as an emphatic adjective (K. S.306 r), as is also, of course, bóhû. The verb "it was," hayethah, cannot bear the emphasis in a sentence where two such significant predicates follow (K. S.326 b). It must merely serve as a copula (K. S.338 q). Consequently, all attempts to put into this verb some thought like: the earth then was there, or lay thus for quite a time, are grammatically quite inadmissible. Now tóhû as such means originally unformedness (K. W.) and so can come to mean a "waste" only in the sense of being not yet put into shape, not in the sense of having been laid waste by some catastrophe, as all those would postulate who try at every point to make room for geologic periods of development. All later usage of the word points in the same direction. It occurs once again with bóhû, (Jeremiah 4:23). In (De 32:10) the parallel thought is "wilderness." Isaiah uses it to describe the unreality of idols. In (Isaiah 41:29), where it is rendered "confusion," its parallel is "wind," and similar terms are "vanity" and "nought." Similarly, (Isaiah 40:17) offers as parallels: "nothing" and "less than nothing." Cf. also (Isaiah 40:23; 49:4; 1 Samuel 12:21). The passage (Je 4:23) is not at variance with these claims, for though it pictures a state of desolation by the quotation of the whole phrase tóhû wavóhû, it evidently means that the land is again to be reduced to a state like unto the primeval chaos. (Isaiah 24:10) is analogous. Bóhû is derived from a root "to be empty," therefore "emptiness." It is applicable to a region without inhabitants of any kind. Its thought is clearly distinct from tóhû. Both terms together then indicate two directions in regard to which the newly created world will undergo further changes: first, it must be shaped and formed into definite molds; secondly, it must be peopled with all kinds of inhabitants or beings.The next sentence, "and darkness was upon the face of the deep," indicates the last two deficiencies or incompletenesses characteristic of this newly formed earth -- "deficiencies" being here taken not in the sense of a positive defect but negatively as mere want of those things which in the purpose of God were consecutively to be supplied. The verb "was" carries over from the preceding clause and need not be repeated here. All of what had thus far come into being was wrapped in complete and absolute darkness. This is the first deficiency. The second touched upon in this sentence is that which lay under the darkness was "the deep." Yet even here the expression used is not merely "upon the deep" but "upon the faces of the deep." This "deep" had a variety of aspects, "faces." In fact, since "deep," tehôm, from the root hûm, "to resound," signifies the surging, raging primeval waters, the term implies anything but a monotonous peace and uniformity. Besides, the absence of the article stamps the word as a kind of proper noun, viz. that one and only primeval deep. Whether now this original form is characteristic cf the whole earth or merely of its surface; whether it involved an earth that had, as it were, a solid kernel but merely a disturbed surface; or whether solid matter and water were originally churned up into one vast conglomerate neither solid nor liquid, no investigation on our part will ever determine.In fact, whatever efforts are made to throw light upon the matter by drawing upon Babylonian myths, and particularly upon the monstrous deity Tiâmat, only confuse the issues. Those who at once identify tehôm with Tiâmat do so without any warrant. The mere similarity of names does not make the Biblical account a derivative from Babylonian sources. As K. W. rightly remarks: "The spirit of the Old Testament has disavowed the personification of the term as well as its mythological implications." The holy writer was not going afield among the grotesque mythological figures of the Babylonian pantheon. His statement is too sober and the term employed quite uncontaminated by crude heathen notions. If any connection exists between the true; sober Biblical term tehôm and the mythological Tiâmat, the latter in the

sober light of facts must be a derivation form the former during the process of the degeneration of the original truth possessed by mankind. Tiâmat lies so much farther down the scale as to appear as a very manifest corruption. That mere "waters" are meant here by tehôm is also apparent from the next clause, where the term "waters" is actually substituted for it. Note well that we have above carefully avoided that rendering of the last clause of v.2 which makes the verb involved to mean "brooding." A good example was set by the Septuagint translators who used the term epefereto, "was borne along"; "moved" (A. V.) is less colourful but not wrong. The verb rachaph from which the piel participle is used, mera (ch) chépheth, signifies a vibrant moving, a protective hovering. No single instance of the Biblical usage of the verb would suggest "brooding," a meaning which was foisted upon the word in an attempt to make it bear resemblance to various old myths that speak of the hatching out of the world egg -- a meaning specially defended by Gunkel, the strong advocate of mythical interpretation. (De 32:11) surely will not allow for the idea of "brooding." An eagle may brood over eggs but not over "her young." The fact that the Syriac root does happen to mean "brood" cannot overthrow the Biblical usage, which takes strong precedence over mere similarity of root in kindred languages. Koenig (K. W.) rightly shows how such similarity may mislead. The Syriac and the Aramaic melakh, which is the Hebrew malakh, means in Syriac and Aramaic "to give counsel and incidentally "to rule," but in Hebrew it signifies "to be king." Comparative philology has its limitations. Or the Arabic hßlika, "to perish," appearing as the Hebrew verb halakh signifies "to go."But what exactly is "the Spirit of God"? Since in this account the noun for God 'elohîm is without a doubt definite, the word "spirit" also becomes definite, according to a simple rule of Hebrew syntax. Consequently, the thought must be ruled out that we are dealing with some such concept as "divine Spirit." It must definitely be rendered "the Spirit of God." Nor is there any warrant for rendering rûach as "wind" in this instance. The verb with which it is construed implies too much to let the statement merely mean that a wind fanned the face of the waters. Since, then, it actually is God's Spirit, the question might definitely be formulated thus: "Does rûach elohîm mean God's spirit or God's Spirit? Is it a mere potency in God or is it the Holy Spirit who is involved?, Or does the term refer to a principle or to a person?" We must guard against overstatement of the case, but we maintain very definitely: the Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity. For all the attributes ascribed to this divine person in the Old Testament agree fully with what is revealed in the New Testament concerning His person and His work. Absolutely none other than the Holy Spirit is here under consideration. Yet it would be inaccurate and premature to claim that this passage alone conveys this fact clearly to the mind of man. It may have been much later in the course of the fuller unfolding of divine revelation that the truth came home distinctly to the mind of believers that God's spirit was God, a separate person or hypostasis. Yet the harmony of the Word within itself and its inspiration by this same Holy Spirit necessitated that the statements made in earlier stages of revelation, nevertheless, are in accurate and full conformity with the truth. It may require the full light of New Testament revelation to enable us to discern that the Spirit of God here is the same as He who in the New Testament is seen to be the Holy Spirit; but having that light, we need not hesitate to believe that it sheds clear light back on the Old Testament usage of the expression. Davidson and Koenig in their Theology of the Old Testament may deny this. Even Oehler may hesitate to make a clear-cut assertion. This explanation, nevertheless, does better justice to the facts. Does it not seem reasonable that the Spirit of inspiration should have so worded the words that bear upon His activity that, when the full New Testament revelation has come, all statements concerning the Spirit are in perfect harmony

with this later revelation?We could never believe that this hovering of the Spirit over the face of the waters was idle and purposeless. From all other activities that are elsewhere ascribed to the Holy Spirit we conclude that His work in this case must have been anticipatory of the creative work that followed, a kind of impregnation with divine potentialities. The germs of all that is created were placed into dead matter by Him. His was the preparatory work for leading over from the inorganic to the organic. K.C. feels impelled to interpret this "hovering" as "an intensified and vitalized type of vibration." We should not be averse to holding that the foundation £or all physical laws operative in the world now was laid by this preparatory activity. Other passages relative to the Spirit as "the formative cause of all life" are to be found: (Job 26:13; 27:3; Psalms 33:6; 104:30; 143:10; Isaiah 34:16; 61:1; 63:11).From the grammatical point of view it may be remarked that the participle mera (ch) chepheth refers to the past in a context which refers to the past (K. S.237 a). Besides, as a participle it embodies the thought of continuation as well as the idea of repetition (K. S.238 a). This "hovering" was not a single and instantaneous act. It rather describes a continued process. Mßyim, "waters," is plural of extent not dual (K. S.259d). The article before "waters" is the of "relative familiarity." 3. And God said: Let there be light! and there was light.Nothing could be more uncalled for and unnatural than to try to make this verse a part of a complicated sentence structure. The simple statement wayyó'mer, "and He said," is apt to be estimated too lightly in this connection. It shows the manner in which God worked -- by His Word. Heb.11:3 gives the clearest expression of this fact. That in reality this creation was in and through the Son .of God, who is also called the Word, appears from (Colossians 1:16; John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6); so that the second Person of the Holy Trinity is seen to be involved in the work of creation. True, this is but obscurely taught at this point, but it becomes a matter that is clearly confirmed by the New Testament. In the light of these later passages we must admit that the truth itself is provided for by the nature of the statements found in this basic record. All this serves to explain and to confirm more fully what we said above on v.1 as conveying a reference to the Holy Trinity.But besides it is here very clearly taught in what manner the creative work proceeded. It was all wrought by God's omnipotent word, not by mysterious emanations from the divine being, not by natural processes, not by self-causation, but in a manner worthy of God and revealing the character of God. He is at once discerned to be divinely powerful, intelligent, and far above the level of His poor creatures: "He speaks and it is done; He commands and it stands fast" (Psalms 33:9). Nothing is altered in reference to this fact if it be pointed out that as we now read the record the primal substance, "heaven and earth," was not said (v.1) to have been made by a divine word. To argue that it was not is to use the poor argument from silence. We do not know how this was made. But that for all the works that follow God is said to have spoken simply aims to bring that mode of the process more strongly to our attention.After the primary substance on the first day the most ethereal of all things is brought into being, "light." It is at the same time the most essential prerequisite for life and existence. Since God proceeds in an orderly fashion, He begins at the natural starting point. We may not be shooting wide of the mark if we infer, that with light that other form of energy, heat, must have sprung into being. How inextricably both are interwoven in the sun we all clearly see.The Hebrew is really more expressive than the English for the word spoken by God which we render: "Let there be light." It is a vigorous imperative of the verb hayah, "to become": "Become light" and "became light." The German comes closer to the original: Es werde Licht und es ward Licht. He who notices at once that there, was no sun to serve as a vehicle for the light observes the truth. But it ill behooves man to speak an apodictic word at this point and to claim that light

apart from the sun is unthinkable. Why should it be? If scientists now often regard light as merely enveloping the sun but not as an intrinsic part of it, why could it not have existed by itself without being localized in any heavenly body? If, then, another hasty deduction is based upon this observation in reference to the length of the first three days, as though they could not have been twenty-four hour days because they were not regulated by the sun, the serious limitations of this argument are palpably apparent. The last three days are clearly controlled by the sun, which is created on the fourth day, and all of them are described in the same terms used for indicating the nature, and the course of the first three -- a strong argument that the first six days were alike in length and in nature and normal days of twenty-four hours.No one need think it strange that an inanimate object is addressed as animate when God speaks to the light. The situation is really even stranger: God speaks to the things that are not that they might be. The nature of creation requires just that. K.C. need hardly list instances where inanimate objects are addressed; they do not constitute real parallels, for in-every case objects already in existence are referred to: (Isaiah 43:6; Am 9:3; Na 1:4; Haggai 1:11).So of the four deficiencies listed above one has been removed, "darkness."A certain order prevails in regard to significant terms employed in this account. Delitzsch first drew attention to it. He finds ten creative words introduced by "and He said." Seven times the expression "and there was" is found, chronicling the result. "And He called" is found three times; "And He blessed," three times; "good" is used seven times. Whether these numbers were designed and counted by the author we cannot say. In any case, they tally with reality as it actually appears in the account: just so many times God spoke, blessed, etc. Even as in the world of nature certain things now appear in stated sequence or Uniformity according to regular patterns, so God Himself, being a God of order, operates after a pattern of order in harmony with His own being. For seven is the number of divine works and operations; three, the mark of the divine person; ten, the mark of completeness. In God there is nothing that is accidental. Even the number of steps taken by Him in His work are in fullest harmony with His nature and being. 4. And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.Any account may be misread, and thoughts may be imputed to it that are utterly unworthy of it. So here it would surely be beneath the level of the pure and worthy conception of God which pervades the account to make this verse yield the thought that upon inspection God discerned that the work had turned out well, and so He promptly expressed His approval. Rather, this is, on the one hand, for our definite information that we might note that all works wrought by God were actually good and perfect and in every sense adequate for their purpose. There was no experimentation of an unskilled craftsman. There was no trying and testing after the fashion of toiling men. In fact, another very noble conception pervades it all; since there are no other beings to herald the Creator's praise, He, having achieved so praiseworthy a work, in this account Himself voices His approval that all men might know that in the very highest sense His work merited praise. The word for "good," tobh, is perhaps best rendered as "excellent" in these instances (B D B).The construction of the first clause is marked by a slightly unusual order of words. It literally runs thus: "God saw the light that it was good" (A. V.), the noun "light" being taken into the first clause by "anticipation," also called antitopsis (K. S.414 b). Besides, the conjunction kî is used more commonly than 'asher to introduce such object clauses (K. S.384 f).It had better also be noted that we have thus far had two so-called anthropomorphisms: "God said" (v.3) and "God saw" (v.4). This should be remembered over against those who attempt to set chapter one to 2:3 over against the rest of chapter two as though two divergent accounts were being presented by different authors, who

held variant conceptions of God, the author of chapter one being usually regarded as having a more exalted conception of God, and the author of chapter two as presenting a more anthropomorphic and less exalted view of the divine nature. Anthropomorphisms are certainly found also in chapter one.When the next clause states, "God separated the from the darkness," this does not mean "separated" in the sense of "disentangled." They were not commingled together. Wayyabhdel means literally, "And he caused a division," that is in point of time, one functioning at one time, the other dominating at another. One is as much an entity or principle as the other. "Darkness" is not Cancelled and put out of existence. We can perhaps go so far as to claim that a "spatial" separation was also involved according to the terms of this account. (Job 38:19), though largely a poetic statement, seems to give warrant for such a deduction. To make the idea of separation still more prominent the preposition "between" is repeated before the second noun, and both nouns are given the article. "Light" appeared already at the beginning of the verse with the article of relative familiarity (K. C.).5. And God called the light day and the darkness He called night. Then came evening, then came morning-the first day.On "came evening" see v.8; also on the derivation of "evening."To appreciate what this act means it is necessary to bear in mind what the Hebrew idea of giving a name or "calling a name" to an object implies. For this includes not only finding a convenient label to attach to a thing that it might thereby be identified, but especially the idea of expressing the very nature of a thing. In this act God did not find names for man to use when speaking of day and night; there was not even a man present to hear these names. But this act reports that God fixed day and night separately for their respective purposes. This concluded the first day's work, for now the light prevailed that man might put it to the uses for which God intended it, and night was fixed to fit the general scheme.In the interest of accuracy it should be noted that within the confines of this one verse the word "day" is used in two different senses. "Day" (yóm) over against "night" (lßyelah) must refer to the light part of the day, roughly, a twelve hour period. When the verse concludes with the statement that the first "day" (yóm) is concluded, the term must mean a twenty-four hour period. If any attempt is made to fix the time of the year when the creative work was done, the vernal equinox seems most likely to fit the needs of the case.Extensive discussion has centred around the last statement of v.5: "Then came evening, then came morning -- the first day." To try to make this mean that the day began with evening, as days did according to the later Jewish reckoning (Le 23:32), fails utterly, because verse 5 reports the conclusion of this day's work not its beginning. Or again, to make this statement refer to two parts of a long geologic period: the first part a kind of evening; the-second a kind of morning; both together a kind of long period, runs afoul of three things: first, that "evening" nowhere in the Scriptures bears this meaning; secondly, neither does "morning"; thirdly, "day" never means "period." One major difficulty lying in the path is the attempt to make this whole statement like a problem in addition: evening plus morning, result: one day. Luther's translation, somewhat free at this point, seemed to support this view: da ward aus Abend und Morgen der erste Tag, i.e. "evening and morning went to make Up the first day." In reality, a vast absurdity is involved in this point of view. An evening may be stretched to include four hours, a morning could be said to be four or even six hours long. The total is ten, not twenty-four hours. The verse, however, presents not an addition of items but the conclusion of a progression. On this day there had been the creation of heaven and earth in the rough, then the creation of light, the approval of light, the separation of day and night. Now with evening the divine activities cease: they are works of light not works of darkness. The evening ('érebh), of course, merges into night,

and the night terminates with morning. But by the time morning is reached, the first day is concluded, as the account says succinctly, "the first day" and everything is in readiness for the second day's task. For "evening" marks the conclusion of the day, and "morning" marks the conclusion of the night. It is these conclusions, which terminate the preceding, that are to be made prominent. They are "the terminations of the two halves of the first day" (Procksch).There ought to be no need of refuting the idea that yôm means period. Reputable dictionaries like Buhl, B D B or K. W. know nothing of this notion. Hebrew dictionaries are our primary source of reliable information concerning Hebrew words. Commentators with critical leanings utter statements that are very decided in this instance. Says Skinner: "The interpretation of yôm as aeon, a favourite resource of harmonists of science and revelation, is opposed to the plain sense of the passage and has no warrant in Hebrew usage." Dillmann remarks: "The reasons advanced by ancient and modern writers for construing these days to be longer periods of time are inadequate." There is one other meaning of the word "day" which some misapprehend by failing to think through its exact bearing: yôm may mean "time" in a very general way, as in 2:4 beyôm, or Isa.11:16; cf. B D B, p.399, No.6, for. numerous illustrations. But that use-cannot substantiate so utterly different an idea as "period." These two conceptions lie far apart. References to expressions like "the day of the Lord" fail to invalidate our contentions above. For "the day of the Lord." as B D B rightly defines, p.399, No.3, is regarded "chiefly as the time of His coming in judgment, involving often blessedness for the righteous."Other arguments to the contrary carry very little weight. If it be claimed that some works can with difficulty be compressed within twenty-four hours, like those of the third day or the sixth, that claim may well be described as a purely subjective opinion. He that desires to reason it out as possible can assemble fully as many arguments as he who holds the opposite opinion. Or if it be claimed that "the duration of the seventh day determines the rest," let it be noted that nothing is stated about the duration of the seventh. This happens to be an argument from silence, and therefore it is exceptionally weak. Or again, if it be claimed that "the argument of the fourth (our third) commandment confirms this probability," we find in this commandment even stronger confirmation of our contention: six twenty-four hour days followed by one such day of rest alone can furnish a proper analogy for our labouring six days and resting on the seventh day; periods furnish a poor analogy for days. Finally, the contention that our conception "contradicts geology" is inaccurate. It merely contradicts one school of thought in the field of geology, a school of thought of which we are convinced that it is hopelessly entangled in misconceptions which grow out of attempts to co-ordinate the actual findings of geology with an evolutionistic conception of what geology should be, and so is for the present thrown into a complete misreading of the available evidence, even as history, anthropology, Old Testament studies and many other sciences have been derailed and mired by the same attempt. We believe that writers on the subject like Price and Nelson deserve far more consideration than is being accorded them.Now follows in v.6-8 the creative work of the second day, the creation of the firmament or the lower heavens (Erdhimmel).6. And God said: Let there be a firmament in middle of the waters, and let it be causing a division between waters and waters.Again a creative word having the same power as the one of the first day, in reference to which Luther said: "God does not speak grammatical words but real things that actually exist." The "firmament" that results is called raqîa'. It comes from the root meaning "to hammer" or "to spread out." Therefore, by some the word is rendered "expanse." Our "firmament" is from the translation of the Vulgate, firmamentum, which involves the idea of something that firmly put in place. The Greek sterewma conveys same idea. Yet the raqîa' is the

vault or dome of the heavens, or "that immense gaseous ocean, called the atmosphere, by which the earth is encircled" (Whitelaw). That so widely differing definitions as "dome" and "gaseous ocean" can be given in one breath is due to the fact, that whole set of physical laws is involved which makes the lower heavens possible: an air space encircling the earth, evaporation of waters, rising of gaseous vapours, etc. For the purpose of the firmament is declared to be that it be "in the middle of the waters" and "causing a division between waters and waters." Apparently, before this firmament existed, the earth waters on the surface of the earth and the cloud waters as we now know them were contiguous without an intervening clear air space. It was a situation like a dense fog upon the surface of the waters. Clear vision of all except the very nearest objects must have been impossible. Free activity unhampered by the fog blanket would have been impossible. Man would not have had an appropriate sphere for activity, nor could sunlight have penetrated freely to do its beneficent and cheering work. Now the physical laws that cause clouds and keep them suspended go into operation. These clouds constitute the upper waters. The solid masses of water collected upon earth constitute the lower waters. He who has observed that the heavens may pour down unbelievable quantities of waters will not hesitate to call these upper lighter cloud masses "waters" also. The languages familiar to us have the same viewpoint as v.8, which calls this firmament "heavens." The cloud heaven is the one we mean. The English word "heaven" is from the root "to heave" or "lift up." Very queer constructions have been put upon this raqîa'. A. Jeremias wrapped up in his speculations on Babylonian mythology and the great importance the signs of the zodiac played in Babylonian thought, identifies the raqîa' with the zodiac (Tierkreis). A sober reading of the definition v.6-8 gives of the "firmament" ought to make such an attempt impossible. Far more common is that view which imputes singular crudities to the Biblical narrative at this point. Let Dillmann furnish the picture: The raqîa'" was in olden times conceived of as made out of more or less solid matter, firm as a mirror of glass, ... supported by the highest mountains as by pillars ... having openings," namely the windows of heaven through which rain might be dropped upon the earth. But in spite of passages like (Re 4:6; 15:2; 22:1) there is no doctrine of the Scriptures to the effect that there were "ethereal waters," and though the "windows of heaven" are referred to (Ge 7:11; Psalms 78:23; 2 Kings 7:2; Isaiah 24:18), these purely figurative expressions (also e. g. (Job 26:11)) are such as we can still use with perfect propriety, and yet to impute to us notions of a crude view of supernal waters stored in heavenly reservoirs would be as unjust at it is to impute such opinions to the writers of the Biblical books, The holy writers deserve at least the benefit of the doubt, especially when poetic passages are involved. Again: the view expressed in this verse is not crude, absurd, or in any wise deficient. Its simple meaning has been shown above.The expression wîhî mabhdîl, "and let it be causing a division," presents a very strong case where the participle is used to express duration or permanence of a certain relationship (K. S.239 b; G. K.116 r). Yehî is repeated to make the separate parts of the process stand out more distinctly (K. S.370 s).7. And God made the firmament and He caused a division between the waters under the firmament and the waters above the firmament: and it was so.With a certain measure of circumstantiality the author reports in detail that God actually made those things-that He had bidden come into being. This now does not imply that the initial word (v.6), "Let there be a firmament," was inadequate to cause it to come into being, and so God actually had to "make" ('asah) it. This mode of statement of v.7 merely unfolds in greater detail that the initial command to come into being involved, the full exercise of God's creative power, which continued operative after the word had been spoken until the work was brought to completion. For "he made"

('asah) dare not be construed, as involving a mode of operation radically different from creating (bara'), for a comparison of the use of the two verbs in v.21 and in v.25 shows that they may be used interchangeably. From one point of view one and the same task is created, i. e. is one of those marvellous, epoch-making achievements characteristic of God; from another point of view this task is made, i. e. God-employs His almighty power and energy to carry it through till it is completed.A textual problem needs to be considered here. Kit. in the margin suggests removing the "and it was so" (wayhi khen) from the end of v.7 and appending it to the end of v.6 after the example of the Septuagint translators and after the analogy of v.9, 11, 15, 24, 30, where it is inserted before the actual carrying out of the thing ordained is reported. However, though a certain quite stereotyped pattern is followed by the author throughout the account in recounting the work of the individual days, the adherence to fixed forms need not be so rigid as to preclude the slightest departure from them. The situation at the close of v.26 is the same as that of our verse. There the Greek translators did not insert the wayhi khen, proving themselves inconsistent in their corrective endeavours. The text here needs no improvement.No effort should be made to render literally the compound preposition mittßchath le, "from under to." Mittßchat alone means only "under." Compound prepositions are wont to be followed by le (K. S.281 p, and G. K.119 c2).8. And God called the firmament heavens; and came evening, and came morning -- second day.Again, the giving of the name to the object just created is more than an outward thing. What the term "heavens" implies, that is what the new arrangement will serve to be for man. All this, especially the term "heavens," gives us warrant for describing this creative work as we did in connection with v.6.Our rendering, as in v.5, "then came evening" is not as exact from one point of view as it might be. Wayhî is not the verb "come," but is from hayah, "to be," or even better "to become." This latter idea to show the progression of time we felt could well be marked by the English idiom, "then came evening," etc. The word for "evening," 'érebh, is commonly derived from the corresponding Hebrew root whose Arabic parallel means "to enter," "to go in." So, apparently, a poetic thought is involved in that the sun is thought of as going into its chamber, a thought found also in Ps.19:5. After "one" the ordinals are used, "day the second" (K. S.315 n).There follows in v.9-13 the double work of the third day.9. And God said: Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so.The second day's work may still be regarded from one point of view as being connected with the work of the first day. The light of the first day requires a free space, the clear atmosphere, in order that it might make its life-giving work felt upon plants and upon man. So "the heavens" (v.6-8), i. e. the firmament, aids in the distribution of light. But three of the deficiencies noted under v.2 still prevail. The tekôm is now to be disposed of in the work of the third day.The expression "waters under the heavens" must be taken in the light of the preceding division made on the second day. The "waters above the heavens" are the clouds. The waters on the unformed surface, perhaps seething and surging as tekôm suggests, are here under consideration. Waters are to be gathered together to be by themselves; dry land is to assemble by itself. If the waters are to be gathered together "unto one place," this expression may be regarded as sufficiently general to cover all oceans, or "the seven seas" for that matter. These water are by themselves; that is their "one place." So again "the dry land," hayyabbashah, literally: "the dry," involved a limitation in the figure of synecdoche; the term really means continents, but continents are primarily "dry land." The verb "let be seen," tera'eh, is an imperfect used as an optative (K. S.183 b).The verse concludes with the customary "and it was (or became) so" to indicate that which is bidden to come into being at once forms itself.As to the

method followed in the separation of dry land and water we can Say little, Did depressions form and the waters rush down into them? We might think so. Or did elevations and mountains thrust themselves upward in the process of the congealing of the-dry land and shed the waters as they rose? (Psalms 104:7-9), in describing the work of this day, seems to imply the latter Course, though the expressions used may be poetic rather than exact. No one, it seems, will ever be able to speak a final verdict in regard to this question.But, surely, in the course of these gigantic, upheavals, not catastrophic in nature because they involve organization rather than disruption, there was a tremendous amount of geologic formation. In fact, it would be perfectly safe to assume that all basic and all regular, formations were disposed of in this day's work. As a result, indeed, no record of the rapidity with which, certain formations took place is written upon the various formations, for vast as these formations were, they were controlled by the orderly operations of divine omnipotence and by these potentialities, no doubt, which the Spirit "hovering over the face of the waters" had implanted. Even these basic forms might, therefore, offer to him who acts on the assumption that there never were any accelerated formations the appearance of things laid down by the slow process of nature that we see in operation at this late day. But this ninth verse surely teaches that what we call geologic formations took place in titanic and gigantic measure at a vastly accelerated pace in a truly miraculous creative work as astounding as the rest.As far as the expression yammîm, "seas," (v.10) is concerned, it must be noted that it is used in a loose sense so as to include every body of water, like inland lakes and also the rivers. But since the area of the seas is vastly in excess of that of the smaller bodies, the name is taken from the outstanding part, a parte potiori.Just because the Greek translators misread the word miqweh, "collection," for the word maqôm, "place," that does not give any better reading or occasion for a textual change (Kit.). To call the newly assembled waters "the collection of waters" is most appropriate (v.10); to say that they are to collect in "one place" is equally appropriate (v.9). The clause added by the Septuagint is a pedantic attempt at improvement.10. And God called the dry land earth and the collection of waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.The meaning of the word "earth" was discussed under v.1. The propriety of the use of the term "sea" Was treated just before this verse. What God's calling signifies was shown in connection with v.5.Here is the place for discussing what reasonable explanation may. be offered for the fact that at the conclusion of the work of the second day the customary approval of the Creator is not recorded (v.8); but that it does appear now at the conclusion of the work of the third day (v.10). As was shown at the beginning of the explanation of v.9, the work of the second day reaches back and completes the work of' the first day from one point of view. In a more decided sense the work of the third day reaches back and completes the work of the second in reference to the separation of water. The second day merely raises the surface fogs making them clouds, but the earth waters are still entangled with the solid matter. So the work of the second day was relatively incomplete, so much so that the divine approval, "it was good," was withheld, but it is in reality included in the approval bestowed upon the third day. Note the chiasmus of v.10: verb, object -- object verb (K. S.339 o).11. And God said: Let the earth produce grass, and herbs yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind whose seed is in them upon the earth; and it was so.The second half of the work of the third day is here recorded. This work attaches itself quite naturally to the preceding work the dry land just formed is at once to bring forth all forms of vegetation. The work of this half of the day is not immediate creation in the sense of the works preceding. For in the instances that went before the word was spoken and the result followed. In this instance the earth is the mediate agent, being

bidden to produce whatever vegetation is necessary by a process of highly accelerated growth. Such a work is neither of a higher nor of a lower character than are the other works. Upon closer reflection this verse is seen to answer a question often asked, whether the· plant preceded the seed, or the seed the plant. Since the seed is not bidden to bring forth but the earth is, and since, the things brought forth are first to produce seed, and since nothing indicates the prior creation of seed, the only possibility left open to us is to believe that plants and herbs came first. This still leaves room for the possibility that the Spirit in His hovering implanted the potentialities that here unfold themselves.How do the things produced by the earth differ from one another? The three orders mentioned are (1) grass, (2) herbs, (3) trees. Some put the three items down as independent classes in an ascending scale (e. g. Delitzsch). Some make (2) a genitive dependent on (1), having as a result a pair of doubles "grass of herb" and "tree of fruit," as the Greek version botanhn cortu and eulon carpimon. Still others make (1) the general term covering all and (2) and (3) subdivisions of (1). We feel that the first point of view alone is correct and does justice to the meaning of the words employed. "Grass" represents the word déshe', whose root signifies "to be damp." Whatever grows in a well-watered spot will be of a fresh green, therefore the word is rendered frisches Gruen. Since, no doubt, these three classes aim to cover all vegetation in so far as it is of interest to man, the word déshe' may well be said to include such things as mosses and other plants designed to carpet the earth. The second term, "herbs," is a singular collective noun 'ésebh, also translated "herbage." That the word is really distinct from déshe' in meaning appears first from its use in passages like (2 Kings 19:26) and (Isaiah 37:27) where in an enumeration both are mentioned separately. Again the characteristic mark ascribed to it in this verse is noteworthy: mazría' zéra', literally, seeding seed, therefore "yielding seed." Grasses, for that matter, yield seed too, but if specific mention of the seed is made only in the second class, apparently this refers to something like seed-bearing pods which make the seed more prominent as a separate feature. According to scriptural usage man eats 'ésebh; see 1:29 and 3:18. So do cattle, (De 11:15). This being a broad class name, it must include things such as vegetables, or at least, generally speaking, everything between grass and trees and, without a doubt, the various grains.So, too, the last term must be used in a very broad sense. "Fruit-bearing trees," again a singular collective 'ets peri, must include both trees that bear fruit as well as trees yielding nuts and cones and, surely, all bushes yielding berries. For the expression translated literally means only "tree of fruit." Two other marks, however, are appended to this class: first, these fruit trees bear fruit "after their kind," a peculiar and definite limitation, which all those understand best who have seen how the "kind" sets limitations upon all who would mix kinds and cross them. Nature itself here is seen to have definite limits fixed which appear as constant laws or as insurmountable barriers. The last mark stamped upon this third class of vegetable growth is "whose seed is in them upon the earth." The seed needed for the propagation of the particular kinds is seen to be in the fruit. So whether the fruit be edible or not, as long as it has seed qualities, it meets the requirements of this mark. The concluding phrase for this mark, "upon the earth," might perhaps better have been rendered as "above the ground." For to try to make this phrase modify the verb tadhshe' at the beginning of the sentence certainly removes it far from the word modified. Besides, the characteristic thing about this "fruit-bearing seed" is that it usually hangs at some distance above the ground. Then, too, 'érets does mean "ground," and 'al does mean "above."These three broad classes of vegetation may not coincide with botanical distinctions as science now makes them. But, assuredly, they are seen to be a general and a very appropriate type of division as far as man's use of them is

concerned, and in some ways the distinctions made are seen to be very apt. The lines of demarcation drawn at creation are just as sharp now as they were then. This verse closes with an, "and it was so," to indicate again how immediate was the fulfilment of the thing commanded.Tadshe' is, of course, a jussive or a yakteel elevatum (K. S.189), and déshe' and zéra' are cognate objects.We should yet draw attention to the fact that the things mentioned in 2:5 are not to be included in the above classification, and so reservations must be made in reference to our use of the terms "vegetables" and "bushes" in the above discussion.If above in v.7 the "and it was so" stood after it had been reported that the individual things to be created had actually come into being, here in v.11 the "and it was so" precedes this latter statement, (K. S.369b).12. And the earth produced grass and herbs yielding seed after their kind and trees yielding fruit whose seed was in them after their kind; and God saw that it was good.The accomplishment of the things ordered in v.11 is reported in this verse in terms that are not a wooden repetition of v.11; for after "seed" is inserted "after their kind"' to emphasize how the "kind" limitation also applies to the herbs, though this had not been mentioned previously. So, too, after "trees" the word "of fruit" is omitted, since this idea is covered by the qualifying phrase "bearing fruit." The work of the second half of the third day is also to be found "excellent" in divine approval, so that the statement, "and it Was good," appears for each of the two halves of this day.13. Then came evening, then came morning, -- the third day.On this verse compare above v.5.It is true that the first three days have no sun and no moon to furnish and to measure the needed light. But that fact does not in any wise warrant trying to make these days appear as different from the following three or four, for the pattern into which all six days of work fall is consistently the same for all, "then came evening, then came morning." It is the author's purpose by this means emphatically to declare the six days alike as to length and general character regular twenty-four hour days. Nothing but the desire to secure harmony with the contentions of certain physical sciences ever could have induced men to tamper with this very plainest of exegetical results.Follows the work of the fourth day in v.14-19.Since this has to do with the appointment of luminaries, we see, first of all, how this day's work attaches itself to the work of the third day, as well as how it reaches over to the works that are yet to follow. For the vegetation that was brought into being by the work of the preceding day needs not only light but also seasons with modification of light. Consequently, that intricate set of operations that brings seasonal changes for vegetation and for man now appropriately follows.14, 15. And God said: Let there be luminaries in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs and seasons and for days and years; and let them be for luminaries in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth; and it was so.It at once stands out in reference to the work of this day that the purpose of the things that are made to function is stated in a far more detailed fashion than is the ease in regard to any other of the creative works. Nothing in the text explains this greater fulness of statement, but the suggestion advanced by Dillmann and others may be as satisfactory as any: "is there perhaps a silent contrast involved with the superstition of the heathen that is wont to attach itself to the stars?" The statement, therefore, is unusually exhaustive in order to show what purposes the Almighty fixed for the heavenly bodies and to leave no room for heathen misconstruction.At once now the next problem suggests itself: how do the "luminaries" stand related to the light which was created on the first day? With this is involved a second question: how do these luminaries stand related to the heavens, which were created on the first day (v.1)? The analogy of "the earth" created simultaneously with "the heavens" (v.1) and its equipment and arrangement up till this point through v.2-13 points in the

proper direction. In other words, the earth is created in the rough, subject to certain deficiencies or incompletenesses which are removed one by one through the following days; similarly the heavens are created in the rough, heavenly bodies in vast spaces, not yet functioning as they shall later. What still remains to be done in and with them is now completed on the fourth day. The sun, moon and stars were in existence but were not yet doing the work which gets to be theirs in the fourth day's work. Light was in existence, but now these heavenly bodies come to be the ones that bear this light in themselves -- "light-bearers," "luminaries," me'ôrôth. Heavenly bodies were in existence, but from this point onward they begin to serve a definite purpose in reference to the earth. Consequently, we are out of keeping with the plan according to which the course of creation has been proceeding if we separate the elements of 14a so as to make a definite pause after the statement, "let there be luminaries." This would imply the initial creation of all heavenly bodies. Rather, translating still more literally, the thing that is to transpire is this: "Let there become luminaries in the expanse of the heavens to divide the day from the night," etc. This really involves a double achievement: the non-luminous heavenly bodies become bearers of light, and this for the purpose of dividing the day from the night. The expression, "let there be lights"(A. V.) and Lichter (Luther) is inaccurate and misleading. "Light" in Hebrew is 'or; here stands the word ma'ôr, "light-bearer." This does not, however, now mean that "the atmosphere being completely purified -- the sun, moon and stars were for the first time unveiled in all their glory in the cloudless sky" (Jamieson), for such a result would have been achieved automatically without divine fiat by the work of the second day. More reasonable is the assumption that the existing light, by being allocated to the sun, was tempered specifically to the needs of plant and animal life upon our planet. In any case, the purposes following arc definitely tied up ; with having the sun in particular function, as the primary light-bearer. Consequently, though day and night following One another in rotation function satisfactorily as day and night without sun and moon, from this point onward the dividing of day and night is tied up specifically with these luminaries. So this purpose is stated first. The adverbial modifier "in the firmament of the heavens" shows the relation of the fourth day's work to that of the second. The firmament prepared in advance had to be thus prepared, otherwise the light of these luminaries would have failed to benefit the earth. The singular verb yehî is followed by the masculine plural (feminine only as to form) me'ôrôth, according to general Hebrew practice of letting the most general form of the verb begin the thought (G. K.145 o).But the luminaries have functions other than to divide day and. night. The fourteenth verse alone expresses two more general functions. The first of these two is so broad in scope as to cover four items, expressed by the terms, "and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years." A wide diversity of opinion exists as to the actual enumeration here given: are these two, three, or four distinct objects? Nothing very vital hinges on the answer. For though we stated above that four purposes are here listed, we could readily from one point of view consent To reduce them to three. For the preposition "for" (le) is used but three times and has a double object in the last instance -- the closely related terms: "days and years." Others, like Koenig, make a double hendiadys, thus, "for signs, as well for seasons as also for days and also years." This again, depending on the individual's, viewpoint, might mean either three or two purposes. But though hendiadys is a common enough figure, we feel that nothing definitely indicates its use here; and also we notice that such translations push the independent meaning of the word "signs" too much into the background.Now "signs" ('ôthôth) is here used in the broadest possible sense. Indeed, the luminaries are signs from various points of view. They are "signs" to devout faith, declaring the

glory Of their Creator (cf. Ps.8 and-19). -- They are "signs" by which men get their bearings, or the point of the compass by day or by night. They may , convey "signs" in reference to future events (Mt 2:2; Lu 21:25). They furnish quite reliable "signs" for determining in advance the Weather to be expected (Mt 16:2, 3). They may be "signs" of divine judgments (Joel 2:30; Mt 24:29). That they may well serve in all these capacities is clear both from Scripture and from experience. Dwelling only on one scriptural parallel, Skinner, pointing to (Jeremiah 10:2), where "astrological portents" are referred to, misconstrues the use of the word when he claims to find a similar use here, "though it is not quite easy to believe the writer would have said, the sun and moon were made for this purpose." But (Jeremiah 10:2) does not identify the expression "signs of heaven," with "astrological portents." These signs become such portents only by the fact that the "nations," who are "dismayed at them," make them to be considered such. Skinner construes the forbidden abuse of "signs of heaven" as: the normal meaning of the expression. How Procksch injects the meaning "epochs" into the term is more than we can discern. The fact remains that men always have and in manifold ways still do regard and use luminaries for signs.Besides, the luminaries are "for seasons." A certain brevity of expression obtains here. We could supply the implied term quite readily, for "fixing seasons, days and years." But without this added term the expression is not unclear. But "seasons" are called mô'adhim, from the root ya'adh, "to appoint"; therefore, "appointed time." The luminaries do serve as "indicators" (Meek) of such fixed, appointed times, whether these now be secular or sacred. To attempt to exclude what we are specifically wont to call seasons is unwarranted and grows out of the assumption that the hypothetical author P has a special interest in things ritual. Therefore, "seasons" or times in the widest sense are to be thought of: agricultural seasons (Ho 2:9, 11; 9:5), seasons for seafaring men, seasons for beasts and birds (Jeremiah 8:7), as long as they are times that are fixed and come with stated regularity.To complete the list of the things determined by the luminaries the divine command adds "days and years." These are respectively the shortest and the longest measures of time definitely fixed by the movement of the heavenly bodies. What "day" yôm, is (here the whole twenty-four hour day) every one knows, and yet the etymology of the term is entirely unknown. The word for "year" (shanah) seems to be traceable to the Assyrian root "to change."Note that after the imperative "let there be" there may follow a converted perfect wehayû (K, S.367 c).When now v.15 says distinctly that these luminaries are to be "in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth," this plainly indicates that from the time of this creative work onward all light that the earth receives is to be mediated through the luminaries. How light functioned in the universe prior to this time we shall never know. How the regular alternation of day and night was regulated will for ever escape our discernment. What we know is only that as day and night now follow upon one another due to the light centred in luminaries, is an arrangement which God ordained on this day. It all certainly is a marvellous and praiseworthy work, but that is all that these luminaries are appointed for, as far as we are able to discern. 16. And God made the two great luminaries, the greater luminary to rule the day and the lesser luminary to rule the night -- and also the stars.The previous verse closes the initial command of the work to be done on the fourth day with the customary notice that "it was so," that is, what God commanded came into being. According to the almost invariable rule of this chapter we should now expect an account in detail as to how God actually wrought what He had ordained, beginning like all the others with either wayyß'as, "and He made," or with wayyibhra', "and He created." This is just what we have with the usual situation that the account of how the original order was carried out affords sufficient variety of form to serve as a commentary upon the

first statement of v.14, 15. Stereotyped repetition would be both mechanical and wearisome. However, critics fail to see this clear situation in a number of instances. Skinner brings an indictment against the account: "The laboured explanation of the purposes of the heavenly bodies is confused, and suggests overworking (the difficult 14b and 15a a). The functions are stated with perfect clearness in v.16-18." Yet we have found both v.14 and 15 perfectly simple and plain. The only difference between the initial command v.14, 15 and the account of its being done v.16-18 is that of the supplementary but entirely harmonious statements of purpose, the first gives greater prominence to the secondary purpose of serving for "signs, seasons," etc.; the second stresses particularly the primary function of controlling day and night and giving light.So v.16 is supplementary in mentioning for the first time the chief luminaries -- "chief" as far as the earth is concerned. They are "the two great luminaries, in reference to the earth and also in view of how they appear to man. Naturally, a simple account such as this will not attempt to give to man the useless information as to which of the heavenly bodies are the largest in the absolute sense. Besides, in the very nature of the case the expression, "the great luminary," must be understood as a comparative, "the greater." Likewise "the small" (haqqaton) means the smaller (K. S.308 a). Because the definite and very specific use of "the stars" in reference to the earth is very much inferior to that of sun and moon, they may well be added as a kind of afterthought, "and also the stars." Now man at least knows how important they are and how they originated -- a type of account which is the complete negative of all astrological conceptions. So as a whole v.16 is seen to be a very helpful commentary upon what preceded.17; 18. And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth and to rule over the day and over the night and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good.Lest anyone be inclined to attribute any other or further purpose to these luminaries, v.17 reasserts what was stated v.15b, they are in the expanse of the heavens "to give light upon the earth." It would be a crude interpretation of the opening verb "and he put," if this were understood to mean that God first fashioned the luminaries in one place and then took them and set or suspended them in the firmament. For a literal translation of wayyitten is "and He gave" in the sense of "appointed." Yet the original idea of "to give" is also very appropriate here inasmuch as the luminaries are one of God's good gifts to mankind.Verse 18, in stating again what v.14 said, "to separate the light from the darkness," prefixes the supplementary statement, "to rule over the day and over the night." This allows for that control of day and of night which expresses itself in their varying length as indicated and regulated by the sun and the moon.This work also is so excellent (tobh) as to merit divine approval.19. Then came evening, then came morning -- the fourth day.Cf. v.5 and 8.In this connection one particular problem still requires our consideration, and that is the computation of the light years by which the distance separating the earth from certain stars is measured. Some claim that then, of necessity, certain stars now visible could not yet have appeared to our first parents. If the astronomical calculations involved are correct, what if all stars were not at once visible but have only become apparent as time went on? Such a situation is not out of harmony with the Creation account; it would indicate merely a greater vastness to creation's work than man had first surmised. Where, however, it is claimed that this situation involves a greater antiquity of the earth than our construction of the Mosaic accounts allows for, we on our part still believe that the laws of light refraction in the interstellar spaces cannot be asserted to be identical with those prevailing under conditions as we know them. There still is the possibility that the tremendous spaces and the times resulting from certain astronomical calculations are based on assumptions

whose correctness will always be only in part demonstrable. The claim of Skinner must yet be disposed of when he maintains that the Genesis account presents a "religious advance to pure monotheism" over against "the idea of them (the heavenly bodies) as an animated host" as it "occurs in Hebrew poetry (Jude 5:20; Isaiah 40:26; Job 38:7); but here it is entirely eliminated." We do not grant that the passages cited are earlier than Genesis 1. But they are poetic and, when rightly construed, offer no other view than that which any enlightened Christian now holds. They are far from teaching anything about heavenly bodies as "an animated host." The attempts of the critics to prove evolution of ideas where no such evolution occurs are unconvincing.20. And God said: Let the waters swarm with swarms of living souls, and let birds fly above the ground across the face of the firmament of the heavens.The work of the fifth day is also in a sense a double one, but its double character is by no means as pronounced as that of the third and the sixth days. For to have the waters and the skies filled with such creatures as these parts are best adapted to is in reality a work whose two parts are practically identical in nature. However, here the situation is not analogous to the work of the third day, where "the earth brought forth." Here it is not the waters that bring forth. A. V. is in error when it translates: "Let the waters bring forth abundantly." Luther did not make this mistake. The optative of the verb sharats followed by the cognate object shaérets here must mean: "Let the waters swarm with swarms." Meek is more idiomatic: "Let the waters teem with shoals," but he loses the cognate object. We simply do not know from what source fish and birds sprang. They are simply bidden to people their respective domains. In apposition with the cognate object shérets stands the expression, "living souls" or literally, "souls of life." The word "soul" (néphesh) is here used for the first time -- a collective singular -- as a designation of these aquatic creatures, because the soul is the most important part of them, and at the same time the term definitely points to the new and distinctive thing involved. This is the first time that life in souls or living souls appears. According to the Biblical viewpoint plants have no life. But the life of living creatures is present in their "souls," and so they have souls ascribed to them. But this "soul" again is regarded as nothing more than "that which breathes" (B D B) in any being. A kindred form of life to that of fish is that of birds. Each type has its special element. The polel form ye'opkepk is intensive and so implies: birds shall "fly back and forth." Their element is described as being "above the ground across the face of the firmament of the heavens." The firmament is regarded as having a face, that is a side turned toward and, as we say, "facing" the earth. Across this the birds are to disport themselves. Shérets used in reference to the fish is a graphically descriptive term. All forms of life that love to move in continual agitation through one another, like shoals of fish and the like, are involved. This pronounced gregarious instinct marks these creatures to this day. By this work the emptiness (bóhû) of the heavens and the waters is cancelled.21. And God created the great sea monsters and each one of the creeping creatures with which the waters teem after their kind and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good.Verse 21 in its relation to v.20 furnishes a very excellent example as to how the account of what actually was done furnishes an invaluable commentary upon the original command of what was to be done. We ourselves would, as a rule, not have discerned what the original commands involved if the following statements had not made the full breadth of the original command plain. As far as the "swarms of living souls" of v.20 are concerned, we are given to understand, first of all, that these swarms included not only the smaller fry among the fish but also "the great sea monsters" (tannînîm), a word whose root indicates a creature of some length. In this category are found not only "whales," as A. V. translates, but all larger marine animals like sharks and, no

doubt, also crocodiles: Nor do we hesitate to include under this head amphibians like the saurians of every class and description. Then the account specifically mentions what we have translated, "each one of the creeping creatures!" For here, apparently, néphesh has the common meaning of "individual" or "one," and what the account wishes to emphasize is that of the teeming multitudes of these marine creatures each one owed its existence to God's creative work. On this meaning of néphesh see K. S.302a. The term rendered "creeping" (roméseth) literally implies "moving lightly about" or "gliding about" (B D B). Difficulty in fitting in these terms led to our rendering "creeping," which strictly does not apply to movement in the water. Another distinctive thought conveyed by this half of the verse is the added assertion that these creatures appeared "after their kind," a phrase not new but as important in its bearing as above. (v.12) and allowing for no transmutation of species. In the second half of the verse it is applied also to the birds. The expression "winged bird" is literally "bird of wing," kanaph, "wing," being a genitive of quality and the phrase' as a whole what is known as an "ornate epithet" (K. S.335 a) similar to our expression "yellow gold." Of course, birds have wings. But here, besides, where the very broadest of class distinctions are being made, without a doubt, the expression is meant to include every type of being that has wings -- the small and the large, and not only what we call birds.But on the whole an entirely new type of being has come into existence, creatures that breathe and are animated and have power of their own volition to go from place to place. To give existence to such is the peculiar prerogative of God and is a monumental, epoch-making achievement that deserves to be described by the verb "and He created" (wayyibhra') as the opening verse does.22. And God blessed them, saying: Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas and let the birds multiply on the earth.That this which was last made now actually represents a more important form of life is also made manifest by the fact that God bestows a blessing upon these creatures, a blessing by virtue of which the needed powers for continuance and for multiplying are imparted. The very idea of an initial single pair of creatures of this type is excluded by the statements of v.20 and 21 where, when called into being, these creatures are bidden "to swarm" and the waters to "teem." But from these copious beginnings these creatures are to keep on multiplying until they fill the earth. Every vestige of emptiness is to be ultimately cancelled. This blessing of God, however, is not a mere wish or a wishing-well on the part of the Almighty. It is a creative word of power which makes possible the things that it commands, and it continues in power to this day. The Creator is glorified by the multitudes of beings which His creative word makes.It will be worth our while to make a check-up upon what is supposed to be an index of the style of P, to whom critics assign this chapter (P is the author of all that criticism calls the Priestly Codex). Skinner remarks about the double expression "be fruitful and multiply," perû ûrebhû, that it is "highly characteristic of P" and is used "only three times elsewhere." By such unwarranted remarks are the unwary misled, and by such insubstantial arguments is the case of the source criticism of the Pentateuch supported. B D B lists all the instances of the use of this double expression. The fictitious P is said to have it Gen.1:22, 28 and 9:1. as well as 35:1.1 and 47:27, yet the last two expressions differ in that one is singular and the other not imperative but future. Yet Jeremiah uses these two verbs jointly in (Jeremiah 3:16) and (Jeremiah 23:3); so does Ezekiel in (Ezekiel 36:11). Is it not an overstatement to call a phrase that one author uses five times and others three, "highly characteristic" of the one? It is not so much a characteristic of style but a case of having the author describe several situations that of themselves demand such a statement. By his statement of the case Skinner would lead men to believe that the so-called P must have used the phrase at least a dozen times.In trying to make

the fictitious P as real a figure as possible and to invest him with distinct characteristics Procksch remarks on this verse: "A tone of solemn joy pervades the knowledge that it is ordained that life should increase; P is in no sense a pessimist." The same note of "solemn joy," if you will, can be discerned just as plainly in chapter 2:4 ff, which is not ascribed to P.23. Then came evening, then morning -- the fifth day.Cf. v.5 and 8.24. And God said: Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, domestic animals, reptiles, and wild beasts of the earth after their kind; and it was so.We have come to the work of the sixth day. The nobler and higher forms of animal life are to be brought forth and finally man himself. We have a kind of mediate creation as on the third day (v.11), for the earth is bidden to produce them or bring them forth -- tôtse' -- cause to come forth." The situation is really very simple, as far as the text is concerned. God could have called forth these creatures by His mere word; instead He speaks the word that enables the earth to bring them forth. They are to have such kinship with the earth that they may again be able to return to the earth. There is no confusion here of two points of view, which P here fails properly to reconcile with one another: namely an old view, which is the outgrowth of some ancient natural philosophy, and a higher conception of pure creation by the word (Procksch). That both types of creation here flow into one is the simple fact noted by the text. To create artificial difficulty and to pose as having ability to detect strains of older and imperfectly assimilated elements of tradition, merely serves to make the unlearned suspicious without reason and is proof on the critic's part of not having fully comprehended what the author said.On the shortened form tôtse' see K. S.189. The "living creatures" brought into being on this day are first described by this general title, which we have noted above (v.20) to mean literally "soul of life," because the.animating thing, the soul (néhesh), is the most prominent feature about them. Let it be remarked separately at this point that according to the Scriptures not only man has a soul but also all living creatures even down to fishes and birds. However, the soul as such is then regarded merely as the animating principle, the thing that causes them to breathe. Yet the soul of other creatures is not the same as that of man; it originated in a manner which makes it inferior by much to the animating principle in man, as a comparison with 2:7 indicates.These "living creatures" now are of three classes. First we find "domestic animals," behemah, which may also be translated "cattle." According to its root, "to be dumb," this classword describes these creatures as dumb brutes. Used sometimes in reference to all animals, it is here employed in reference to cattle or domestic animals because of its manifest contrast here with the wild beasts. Yet "cattle" is still a bit too narrow a term; "domestic animals" (Meek) is better. The second class is described as rémes, which comes from the root meaning "to move about lightly" or to "glide about." "Creepers" almost covers the term, however, "creeping things" is too narrow (A. V.), for it does not seem to allow for bigger creatures like reptiles. "Reptiles" (Meek) again is too narrow, for it does not allow for the smaller types of life. Everything, therefore, large or small, that moves upon the earth or close to the earth, having but short legs, may be said to be included: The third class comes under" the head of "wild beasts of the earth" (chayyath ha'ßrets). This is an appropriate designation from two points of view: the original comes from the root chay, to live, for these beasts are wild because "of their vital energy and activity" (B D B), an abundance of life throbs in them; then the modifying phrase "of the earth" is added to their name, because in a sense different from the other two classes these beasts have freedom of movement upon the earth. The first time this name is used in v.24 we have the archaic connective, a remnant from an old case ending chaythõ and the word 'érets without the article -- poetic -- making a more solemn and dignified double term coming from the lips of the Almighty (K. S.268

and 292). -- When the narrator continues his own account, he lapses into the unarchaic prose chayyath ha'ßrets (v.25). A double "after their kind," first applying to "the living creatures" as a whole then to the three classes separately, impresses this distinctive limitation upon all these creatures -- a truth amply confirmed as not to be eradicated, as all who have engaged in crossbreeding of animals can abundantly testify.The three class names are in the singular, collective (K. S.255 d).An unwarranted critical verdict in regard to the three classes just mentioned is rendered by Procksch, who calls this classification "very imperfect, based half on the history of civilization half on natural history." It certainly is uncalled for to expect a writer of hoary antiquity to operate with the specific scientific nomenclature of the twentieth century. Without a doubt, all readers who perused the accounts in a sympathetic spirit clearly detected that this popular grouping was sufficient to call to mind all types of living creatures as men not trained scientifically are wont to think of them.25. And God made the wild beasts of the earth after their kind and the domestic animals after their kind, and the reptiles of the ground after their kind; and God saw that it was good.The report as to how God proceeded to carry out the thing He ordains in v.24, in v.25 inverts the order of the classes -- a merely chiastic inversion -- and provides a comment upon "reptiles" by calling them "reptiles of the ground." Strictly speaking, the inverted order of names changes from 1, 2, 3 to 3, 1, 2. Then the expression "after their kind" is separately added to each class. The word for "ground," 'adhamah, used with "reptiles" (for reptiles creep on the ground) most likely is to be associated with the root 'adhom, meaning a "reddish-brown," a term descriptive of the covering of topsoil found wherever "ground" covers the rock layers. Lest anyone suppose that perhaps portions of the animal world may originally have been characterized by some defect, we find that all: meets with divine approval: "God saw that it was excellent" (cf. v.4). No blessing is specifically mentioned as in v.22, apparently because the writer is hurrying to the climax.26. And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the domestic animals and over the whole earth and over every thing that moveth about upon the earth.A divine counsel precedes the creation of man. By this means the singular dignity of man is very strongly stressed. From every point of view man is seen to be the crown and climax of God's creation. The hortative "Let us make" (na'aseh), is particularly striking because it is plural. Though almost all commentators of our day reject the view that this is to be explained in connection with the truth of the Holy Trinity and treat this so-called trinitarian view as a very negligible quantity, yet, rightly considered, this is the only view that can satisfy. Koenig (K. C.) may brush it aside with the very briefest remark to the effect that "the number three cannot be expressed by the plural," yet he like many others labours under a misunderstanding of the trinitarian view. Those that hold that a reference to the Trinity is involved do not mean to say that the truth of the Holy Trinity is here fully and plainly revealed. But they do hold that God speaks out of the fulness of His powers and His attributes in a fashion which man could never employ. Behind such speaking lies the truth of the Holy Trinity which, as it grows increasingly clear in revelation, is in the light of later clear revelation discovered as contained in this pural in a kind of obscure adumbration. The truth of the Trinity explains this passage. It would not occur to us to call this an express and unmistakable, clear presentation of the full trinitarian truth. So also, in substance, Keil. So practically also Luther, after he has valiantly championed the trinitarian view even beyond what we might deem the legitimate statement of the case, goes on to remark: "Therefore what is first presented more or less dark, difficult and obscure, Christ has all made manifest and clearly commanded to preach. Nevertheless, the holy fathers held this

knowledge through the Holy Spirit, yet by no means as clear as we now have it."Some have seen the solution of the difficulty to lie in calling this the majestic plural, such as sovereigns are wont to employ in edicts. This type of plural, however, cannot be demonstrated as used in the Scriptures. Luther's somewhat ironical remark should also be considered here: "The Holy Spirit is not wont to employ the courtesies employed for royalty" (kanzleiische Hoeflichkeit). Rightly speaking, a kind of potential plural is involved (K. S.260 a-e), as the fullness of the potentialities that lie in God is expressed by the plural of 'elohim, which may even be used with a plural form of its predicate adjective (Judg.24:19; Ps.58:12), but abstract plurals like these are not yet quite the same thing as a verb used in the first person plural, hortatory, as Strack tries to persuade himself to believe.The common explanation, perhaps the most popular at present, that God is addressing the angels has been shown up in its deficiencies by Koenig (K. C.). It cannot be denied that on occasion God addressed the angelic host before His throne; (Isaiah 6:8; 1 Kings 22:19-22). Angels are found standing in His presence (Job 1; 38:7; Da 4:14; 7:10). But never once does God actually counsel with them. The distance between God and angels is seen to be a very pronounced one. Even in (Isaiah 6:8) this important difference stands out: "Whom shall I send?" God acts independently without angelic counsel. Besides, it must be considered that neither here nor by the time 3:22 is reached has anything been revealed about the creation of angels. And lastly, man is not considered in the Scriptures to have been made in the image of angels. If this remark included angels, man would be made in an image which blurred the divine and the angelic into one. The Old Testament does not muddle such important concepts.Koenig's interpretation deserves mention (K. S.207 a). He claims that an individual reflecting upon a course of action to be followed may appear to himself both as giving orders and as carrying out these orders. He claims such a thing would happen "quite naturally and easily" (naturgemaess leicht). We can hardly imagine any explanation more stilted and artificial. It is a figment of the clever brain, invented to extricate its inventor out of a predicament.We should yet especially emphasize that the trinitarian view, presented in modified form above; is not, as many charge, transferring the New Testament back into the Old. We have emphasized above that the New Testament marks an advance upon whatever the Old offers under this head. What the Old Testament offers here would never have been fully grasped if clearer and more. elaborate revelation had not thrown its light upon this passage from the New Testament.The being to be made is called 'adham, a term whose root significance must very likely be sought in the cognate word 'adhamah (see v.25) which refers to the soil capable of cultivation. 'Adham would, therefore, be "the cultivator of the soil."The double modifying phrase, "in our image, after our likeness," requires closer study. It is in the last analysis nothing more than a phrase which aims to assert with emphasis the idea that man is to be closely patterned after his Maker. This feature in man's being is a second mode. of setting forth prominently the singular dignity of man: Man is not only made after the deliberate plan and purpose of God but is also very definitely patterned after Him. In making both phrases practically result in an idea which is one composite whole we are not erasing the distinction between the terms. "Image" is for the word tsélem, whose root means "to carve" or "to cut off." We cannot go so far as to apply this idea to the physical similarity of man with God, as some have. But, at least, the term refers to more concrete similarity, whereas the second word demiûth, "likeness," refers more to similarity in the abstract or in the ideal. But here again we cannot venture with the Greek fathers to apply the term to man's inner or spiritual resemblance to God. Nor dare we press the change of prepositions; be "in" and ke "as." For though be describes man as being within a certain mold as it

were, it yet must also be called a kind of Beth normae (K. S.332r), for (Ex 25:40) it is used practically like ke. To this must be added the fact that v.27 considers the use of tsélem without demûth sufficient to express what God did, "image" being used twice. Again it 5:1 demûth with be and not with ke, as in our passage, is thought to be an adequate statement of the case. So we shall have to regard the second phrase, "according to our likeness," as merely supplementary to or explanatory of the first. Of course, the possessive "our" in connection with these two nouns is to be explained like the plural of "let us make" above. But yet we have not defined what the term "the image of God" implies. Those who would rule out the clear passages of the New Testament and construe a picture only by the help. of what this chapter offers, fail to discern the true unity of scriptural revelation and are bound to arrive at a misleading conception. True, the author of the account may himself not have had a full apperception of what all was involved in this concept, but here most especially the principle must be applied. Scripture must be explained by Scripture. Especially such passages as (Ephesians 4:24) and (Colossians 3:10) must be drawn upon. The reformers clearly saw that the most important thing involved was a proper attitude of heart in faith. Luther says: "I understand this image of God to be ... that Adam not only knew God and believed in Him that He was gracious; but that he also led an entirely godly life." Cf. also Apology II, 17-22. As adequate a summary of all features involved as any is that of Koenig in TAT, p.226 S. He lists the following items as belonging to the outward side of the divine image: (a) man's countenance which directs his gaze upwards; (b) a capacity for varying facial expressions; (c) a sense of shame expressing itself in the blush of man; (d) speech. It cannot be denied that all these are physical features which are noticeably absent in all animals. To the inner side of the divine image the same author assigns the following items: (a) on the material side of man's inner make-up stands immortality; (b) on the intellectual side is self-consciousness, reason and Vernunft;(c) on the voluntative moral side is the ability to discern good and evil, the freedom of the will, conscience, and the right use of his moral capacities -- the most important of all. We understand Koenig to make this last statement in the sense of the reformer's quoted above.To sum up from a slightly different angle we should like to append the thought that the spiritual and inner side of the image of God is, without a doubt, the most important one. It will hardly be safe to say that the body of man is also patterned after God, because God, being an incorporeal spirit, cannot have what we term a material body. Yet the body of man must at least be regarded as the fittest receptacle for man's spirit and so must bear at least an analogy to the image, of God, an analogy that is so close that God and His angels choose to appear in human form when they appear to men (Strack). In fact, we are justified to go even so far as to say that whatever this man is said to have is in a far more real sense a reality in God. Here lies the basis for the propriety of all anthropomorphisms. If man has a hand, an ear, an eye, a heart, not only may these also be possessions of the Almighty; in a far truer sense such potentialities lie in God. Yet, let it be well marked, in saying this we in no sense ascribe corporeality to the Eternal One.Skinner confuses all basic concepts and departs far from revealed truth, glorifying man and his native ability in an unscriptural fashion, when he remarks: "The image' is not something peculiar to man's original estate, and lost by the Fall." He justifies this radical departure by the further remark: "Because P, who alone uses the expression knows nothing of the Fall, and in 9:6 employs the term, without.any restriction, of post-diluvian mankind." What an untenable assumption even from the standpoint of criticism! Just because what is ascribed to P does not happen to mention the Fall, we at once know what P actually knew or did not know about the Fall. The critic is coming to the point where in his mind the document P and the

person P are identical. The passage 9:6 is, of course, to be taken in the light of all that precedes, namely in the light of the Fall, which intervenes between chapters 1 and 9.When evidence fails to support pet theories in this instance the theory of the derivation of Israelirish knowledge from Babylonian sources -- pure suppositions such as the following are resorted to: "The origin of the conception ('image') is probably found in the Babylonian mythology" (Skinner).What follows is one direction in which the possession of the image of God on the part of man expresses itself dominion over the earth. "Let them have dominion" is the verb radhah signifying "to trample down" or "to master." The breadth of the domain to be ruled by man is expressed by the various spheres of man's dominion that are now enumerated. They are, first of all, the classes previously described as having been brought into being, listed with a slight modification of terminology. The "swarms" or "shoals" previously created (v.20) are referred to by a term covering the chief members of this class, daghah, "fish" in a collective sense. "The birds of the heavens" are the second group mentioned. Though we have translated behemah "domestic animals," we cannot deny that it might here, as a broader term often so used (cf. (Ex 9:25; 12:12)), include all larger animals, wild and domestic, because man's dominion certainly covered the wild beasts as well, as appears from the remaining terms, yet the wild beasts are not separately mentioned. For the list goes on to mention "the-whole earth," which cannot, as Koenig suggests (K. C.), here be taken to mean "all beings upon the earth" (Erdlebewesen), for then the very last term in the list would duplicate this; nor can it mean "the dwellers upon earth,"-a meaning which "earth" sometimes has, for then the idle statement would result: let man rule over himself. Consequently, we take "the whole earth" in its simplest meaning, as the inanimate earth proper, which man is to master and subdue. We then list, as belonging in this department of his activity, man's mastery the powers of nature, physical, electrical, chemical, physiological and the like. Whatever true scientific endeavour has produced comes under this broad charter which the Creator has given to man. Since, however, man's dominion is to find most frequent expression in the direction of the control of living creatures, the closing statement, the broadest of all, mounts to a climax in the words "over everything that moveth about upon the earth." Every type of being is to be subservient to man. The word employed for this last class is rémes, which appears here in the broadest application of its root sense "to move about" and less in the specific sense of "moving about lightly." The verb used (yirdû) is a jussive (K. S.364h) and actually establishes as a divine word the situation it outlines. Man in reality became the controlling power. Yet there remains -- even in the primeval state there remained -- much to be achieved by way of a perfect mastery of his whole territory. Taking the verse as a whole, we cannot but notice that it sets forth the picture of a being that stands on a very high level, a creature of singular nobility and endowed with phenomenal powers and attributes, not a type of being that by its brute imperfections is seen to be on the same level with the animal world, but a being that towers high above all other creatures, their king and their crown.27. So God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.The higher strain of diction is made apparent by a threefold parallelism of the statement -- a kind of solemn chant is here inaugurated in the creation narrative. And well might any man who writes an account, of the subject write in a manner that betokens his joy, for the honour bestowed upon man is indeed great. In fact, none could be greater than that a created being be made in the image of God.The threefold use of the verb "create" (bara') is significant in this connection. To bring things into being that had no previous existence is well described by this word (v.1). To bring into being creatures endowed with life and a soul is also covered by this word (v.21). To do so

outstanding a thing as to call into being a creature like unto man is in every sense. "to create." However, whether the threefold use of the term is to be accounted for by the fact that the triune God is the Creator, is a question that we feel inclined to leave open. To us such a conclusion seems to lay more into the statement here made than it can justly bear.Rather important is the possessive pronoun attached to the word "image," namely the singular "his." As much as God, on the one hand, speaking out of the fulness of His powers in the persons of the Holy. Trinity, is able to say, "Let us make," and ,"our image," just so much is it a valid and proper statement for Him to say that He. created "in His image." One accords fully with the other in the mystery of the Holy Trinity: there is but one God. The Septuagint translators removed a difficulty in a portion of revelation which they should not have tampered with when they simply omitted the phrase "in His image." The notes in the Hebrew Bible of Kittel should not have suggested the deletion of the word.The change from "His, image" to "the image of God" shows the attempt on the writer's part to make his statement as strong and as dignified as possible. Then, since the second statement, telling of the carrying out of the original command, usually serves in a measure as a commentary of the former, so here.a very necessary suggestion is offered. Though from one point of view it is entirely proper to say that God on the sixth day created "man" ('adham), yet, as the rest of the account at once indicates, this term is meant genetically; and, since by a special work of the Almighty woman is brought into being, this first statement of the case amplifies itself into the more exact statement of the case that "the man" (the article of relative familiarity, K. S.298a) was created "male and female" (zakhar, from the root meaning male; neqebhah, from naqab, meaning to perforate). In other words, all queer speculations about the first man are cut off as well as the quaint heresy. that he was created androgynous, half man and half woman -- a notion offered in crudest form by the Jewish speculation which had the two halves of the double creature attached back to back, and then had the Almighty saw them asunder. This account, then, of chapter one shows that its writer knows chapter two and writes in full harmony with the facts of that chapter. As will appear more and more clearly, the first two chapters are in perfect harmony with one another and by no means represent divergent or discrepant accounts. So, according to very permissible different viewpoints, yet without contradiction, the writer may well say: "He created him" and "He created them," even as "our image" and "His image" blend into perfect unity.Procksch says on this verse: "Man, God's image, man, the crown of creation, man, male and female -- we, too, have not been able to advance beyond these thoughts." A characteristic utterance of modern theology and a -- platitude. Of course, we have not been able to advance beyond this thought; we never advance beyond revealed truth or God's thoughts. This account is not an achievement of the religious genius of P; it is revelation pure and simple.28. Then God blessed them, and God said to them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living creature moving about upon the earth.That there is a similarity as well as a dissimilarity between man and all other living creatures is indicated by various means, here particularly by the fact that man's perpetuation of the human race is made to depend upon an effective divine blessing, as in the case of other creatures (v.22), and by the use even of similar terms: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill." This last expression, therefore, is not a stylistic peculiarity but a historical fact indicative of the similarity just mentioned. "Subdue," the new word in the account of man's dominion, is kabhash, and it differs from "have dominion" (radhah) in that its root rather implies "to knead", or "to tread," whereas the latter is the stronger according to parallel roots, meaning "to stamp down." Yet this difference is not to be

pressed. The statement of the things to be ruled is a bit more condensed than in v.26, for the last statement summarizes, "every living creature moving about upon the earth." This expression covers everything beyond "birds" and "fish," namely everything mentioned in addition in v.26 with the exception of "all the earth." Again the text needs no correction or addition of "over the cattle" as Kittel suggests after the pattern of the Septuagint and of the Samaritan Pentateuch. This would merely secure a kind of wooden uniformity plus an idle. repetition. The statement in the text covers all this. This broader meaning of the verb ramas, "to move about," (B D B) is assured by the passages: (Ge 7:21; 8:19; Psalms 104:20). "Subdue it," the verb with the object suffix (kibhshúha). offers the only. instance in this chapter of an object without the sign of the accusative ('eth).A very important institution is brought into being at this point, the institution of marriage. Here is another point of correspondence between chapter one and chapter two, though the latter gives greater detail. After v.26 has now given the summary account of the creation of one pair, "male and female," v.27 proceeds to have the divine command laid upon this one. pair: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." The primary purpose of marriage is here indicated. On "fill the earth" Whitelaw remarks: "This clause may be regarded as the colonist's charter" -- a very proper observation.29, 30. And God said: Behold, I have given you all herbs yielding seed which are upon the face of all the earth, and every tree upon which there is seed-bearing fruit -- to you it shall be for food. And to all the wild beasts of the earth, and to all the birds, of the heavens, and to all the land reptiles in which there is a living soul (I have given) all the green herbs for food. And it was so.Such basic directions as man needs for guiding his steps in this world which is entirely new to him are here given in the matter of food (v.29), and at the same time it is revealed to man what manner of food is to provide sustenance for beasts (v.30). Besides being a very welcome direction, this word is also another indication of the rich and abounding love that the Heavenly Father bears to His creatures, made in His image.The opening "behold" imparts a certain vigour to this gracious bestowal. The verb "I have given" (nathßtti) stands in the perfect, the usual construction in ordinances or abiding decrees. The perfect gives the impression of a rule firmly fixed and already unwavering. (G. K.106 m; K. S.131). Man is permitted to use a great variety of things comprising a vegetable diet. Two great classes are laid open to him: "herbs yielding seed" and, "fruit trees which have seed-bearing fruit." The classes are indicated and the distinguishing marks that are to be observed are stated. This marks two of the three classes of v.11 as adapted to man's use. Since there is the possibility that since the Fall vegetation may have suffered a very material change, perhaps we are no longer in a position fully to appreciate how apt the the descriptive marks mentioned really are. However, the word "all" is indicative of the rich bounty bestowed. In a marvellously rich and beautiful world the rich bounty of very many different kinds of herbs and trees provided the finest proof of the Creator's goodness.Without a doubt, this word covering what food is permissible was intended to be a complete guide as to what man might eat. If 9:3 be held at the side of this word, the contrast implies that animal food was not permitted. It will hardly do to point to man's dominion over the beasts of the field, over fowl, and over fish (v.26), for this word (v.29) very definitely shows man what he may use for food. We believe that sincere regard for the very letter of God's command will have led our first parents to stay strictly within the limits of this word. As to the question, whether any men ventured before the Flood to eat animal food, we can only offer surmises. Not all men continued in the right relation to God, and so there may have been some of the ungodly who ventured to transgress this original permission. But we cannot venture to call such procedure common. Least of all could any true believer have

disregarded the restriction implied in this word.Certainly, a measure of latitude is allowed to man in respect to what may be permissible and wholesome food for him. This broad allowance was never tended to be exhaustive. So it has been pointed out (Dillmann) that nothing is said, for example, about the use of milk and of honey, which may be thought of as lying on the borderline between animal and vegetable food. The critically minded should not forget that a being endowed with the high intelligence that we find in the first man needed no more than a broad outline to guide him to a choice pleasing to God and beneficial for himself. 30. So it will also be observed that the directions that obtain for the other living creatures are not exhaustive. Fish are not mentioned. But, no doubt, this word was merely to inform man in reference to the creatures with which he had the more immediate contact. So all living creatures are summed up in this verse in three classes: wild beasts of the earth, birds, and reptiles -- and, summing up still more, comes the closing phrase applicable to all, "in which there is a living soul." The food, however, that by God's ordinance is appointed for all these is described as "all the green herbs." It is taken, therefore, from the second of the three classes of v.11 and the restrictive modifier preceding yéreg, yielding the expression "greenness of herb," which we have rendered "the green herbs." That cannot be identical with everything that comes under the class of "herbs." Meek, therefore, renders quite appropriately "all the green plants." The verb of the main clause of this verse is missing; "I have given" is best supplied from the preceding verse.In brief, this verse is an indication of the perfect harmony prevailing in the animal world. No beast preyed upon the other. Rapacious and ferocious wild beasts did not yet exist. This verse, then, indicates very briefly for this chapter what is unfolded at length in chapter two, that a paradise-like state prevailed at creation.Skinner pronounces v.29.and 30 to be an indication of one of the sources which P worked into his account, because these verses, as he says, "differ significantly in their phraseology from the preceding sections.". The trifling difference of an abbreviated summary is exaggerated into what is said to "differ significantly." The critics need far more substantial arguments than untenable exaggerations. The same author claims that we have in these verses an "enrichment of the creation story by the independent and widespread myth of the Golden Age." Why, pray, cannot the simple unadorned account merely be a narrative of things as they actually transpired? Answer: the critics have decreed that such accounts cannot exist; all such narratives must be patchwork in which a generous measure of myth has been incorporated. But decreeing that it must be as the critics surmise is not proof. We refuse to be intimidated by claims which lack actual substance.Let the student of the original note in v.29 an instance where the relative is not separated from its adverbial term belonging to it 'asher-bõ (K. S.58).31. And God saw all that He had made and behold it was very good. Then came evening, then came morning -- the sixth day.The writer says with emphasis that no imperfection inhered in the work God had wrought up till this point: For after all preceding statements to the effect that individual works were good comes this stronger statement to the effect that it was "very good," making a total of seven times that the word is used -- seven being the mark of divine operation. The thought that God might be the author of evil and imperfection must be guarded against most strenuously (Strack). The "behold" moves the expression "very good" prominently into the foreground (K. S.341V). Kol before 'asher lies on the borderline between partitive genitive and appositional genitive (K. S.337 h). "The Sixth" has the article with the numeral for the first time (G. K.126 w), meaning: "the sixth day,"' that last memorable creative day of God.The next three verses had best be taken as the conclusion of the summary creation account of the first chapter, because the record of this account cannot be

complete till all of the seven days have passed in review. More appropriate would have been the chapter division at 2:4.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThere is so much matter in every line of this chapter that perhaps the chief danger encountered is the tendency to use too short a text. We personally believe that here for once it might be permissible to use as a text one verse such as v.1 or v.27. But to treat such a Scripture properly requires true homiletical skill. We feel that it might be best to treat the work of each of the creative days separately in six distinct texts, always stressing how each day's work displays primarily God's great power but then also very manifestly His wisdom and His mercy. The apologetic approach should be avoided. Attempts to harmonize science and religion lie too much in the realm of apologetics and usually are not handled very successfully. A warning should be offered here against allegorizing the chapter, as is done by all those who see in the successive stages of creation a picture of the successive steps in the process of conversion. Attractive as the parallel may be, it does not lie in the purpose of the chapter and should not be injected. In sermons on other texts it may be appropriate to use material from Genesis Chapter One incidentally as providing a kind of illustration -- a use found in (2 Corinthians 4:6). But allegorizing as such does violence to the purpose of this chapter. Talley's A Socratic Exposition of Genesis as well as Rimmer's books tend toward this unwarranted allegorizing.

CHAPTER II

I. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their host. Though the first word literally reads "and they were finished," yet the idea of retrospect involved in the verse was caught, very beautifully by Luther, who rendered "and" also;" thus" is an equally correct rendering of A. V. Attention is particularly drawn to the elaborateness and completeness of this work by the added subject "and all their host" (tsebha'am). Without a doubt, this expression includes all the works found in heaven and on earth as a result of the creative work thus described. "Host" (tsabha') may refer to the stars; cf. (Ne 9:6; De 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kings 17:16), etc. It may refer to angels: (2 Kings 22:19; Ne 9:6; Psalms 148:2). Here its connection determines its reference to the things just made. Since the creation account has up to this point said nothing about angels, it will hardly be safe to advance the claim that the angels are meant to be included in this term. The time of the creation of angels is as little fixed by this account as falling on this day as it is assigned to the fourth, We simply know nothing definite as to the time of their creation. 2. And on the seventh day God declared His work on which He was engaged, finished, and He desisted on the seventh day from all the work on which He had been engaged. After the first verse has plainly stated that all was finished, the statement of v.2 to the effect that not until the seventh day God finished His work (A. R. V.) is, to say the least, misleading. A.V. evaded the problem by substituting "ended" for "finished" (v.1), although the same verb root is involved yekkullû (v, 1), yekhal (v.2). But the verb used in v.2 is of the Piel stem, which is sometimes declarative in sense, as tiher means "to declare clean," Lev.13:6- 14-48, and timme' means "to declare unclean," Lev.13:8; 20:25. So here we may have the meaning, "He declared finished." Thus the difficulty, which prompted the Septuagint translators and many since (cf. K.) to alter "seventh" to "sixth," is satisfactorily removed. Cf. K. C. The pluperfect, adopted from Meek, "on which He had been engaged," is not a necessary translation. Pluperfect renderings should be employed with great caution. The meaning is the same when the imperfect is used: "on which He was engaged." Since the primary meaning of the verb shabhath is "to cease" or "to desist," we are freed of all misconceptions which may attach to God's activity if we adopt this meaning. If God desisted from labour on this day, then no more work was done on it, then nothing had to be completed, then no unseemly thought about God's being weary needs to be rejected. The verse then amounts to an emphatic statement to the effect that just as on the preceding days a marvellous creative work was in progress, so now that type and that manner of working on God's part came to an end. He declared all finished, He desisted from all. The "work" that He desisted from is described by the term mela'khah, meaning a special task He had set for Himself and afterward "used regularly of the work or business forbidden on the Sabbath" (Driver quoted by Skinner) (Ex 29:9, 10; 35:2; Je 17:22, 24) et al. Incidentally, in this connection Skinner makes the very sane observation that "the actual Jewish Sabbath as we know it (is) without any point of contact in Babylonian institutions." However, the thing under consideration in these verses is not the Jewish Sabbath but the creation Sabbath. 3. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He desisted from all His work which He had created by making. Creatures have been blessed (v.22), man has been blessed more richly (v.28). The summary creation account which began at 1:1 is aptly concluded by an act of divine blessing,

which, however, in this case attaches itself to the seventh day. The object of this rather unusual procedure is twofold: on the one hand, such an act serves as an indication to man that rest such as the divine rest is noble and holy and by no means to be lightly esteemed; in the second place, those blessings of the Sabbath that are later to flow forth for the good of than are potentially bestowed on it. For on the one hand, the verb "he sanctified it" (qiddesh), being a Piel stem, has the connotation of a causative -- as the Piel often does (K. S.95) and on the other hand, it at the same time has a declarative sense: "He declared holy, or consecrated." However, it should be well observed. that no commandment is laid upon mankind at this point. Procksch remarks rightly and pointedly: "for the present the Sabbath stays in heaven." Yet this does not make the Sabbath a futile abstraction, but, as was remarked above, its connection with the divine rest or cessation from labour is made to stand forth as. a worthy divine act. At the same time the entire groundlessness of the critical assumption becomes apparent, where the arrangement of works according to days is attributed to clever and purposeful manipulation on the part of the author. For, having eight major works, he (it is said) nevertheless compresses them within six days, to be followed by a seventh rest day, in order to secure a divine parallel to the Hebrew week. This is not a week ordained for man. It is entirely a divine week. Nor is there clever editorial manipulation, but simply an accurate and straightforward account of things as they actually took place. With a certain fulness of expression this part of the account comes to a dignified close with the causal clause, "for on it He desisted," etc. The adjective clause "which He had created by making" conveys the thought that, though it was creative work (bara'), yet at the same time this creative work was accomplished by work which was done through successive steps: "by making" (la'asóth). This gerundival use of the infinitive is explained in K. S.402 y and G. K.114 o. Before leaving this initial account we must yet take definite issue with one problem involved in the account as a whole. On the one hand, is this a strictly factual account, reporting what actually transpired in the manner in which it transpired? Or have we here a picture devised by human ingenuity, which picture seeks to convey truth by its general outlines or by the basic thoughts which are here expressed in terms highly figurative? Though this latter view has come to be held almost universally, it is still by no means true. We have not in this chapter a marvellous product of the religious creative genius of Israel. Such efforts would merely have produced just one more trivial and entirely worthless cosmogony. The account as it stands expects the impartial reader to accept it as entirely literal and historical. The use made of it in the rest of Sacred Scriptures treats every part referred to as sober fact, not as a fancy-picture. Compare on this chapter the dozens of marginal reference passages found in almost any Bible. By answering this question we have answered a second one: Does the value of this account lie "in the broad basic truths it embodies" (K. C.), or in the details by which these truths are conveyed? The form of this question is unfortunate. It should not postulate an "either -- or," but a "both -- and." The details are truthful, exact and essential, being in all their parts truth itself. Only since this is the case, are the broad, basic truths conveyed by the account also of infinite moment and in themselves divinely revealed truth. Faith in inspiration, as taught by the Scriptures, allows for no other possibility. II. The First History (Toledôth) viz., that of Heaven and Earth (2:4-4:26)Unfortunately, every inch of this chapter is a battleground. Instead of accepting its simple revelation as harmonious in itself and with what precedes, an unbelievable amount of ingenuity is displayed in an effort to prove certain preconceived critical contentions, which are not only misleading but entirely erroneous and mischievous, for their acceptance breaks down all possibility of firm faith in these portions of revealed truth.These erroneous contentions centre

around the major critical error of the various sources of the Pentateuch: the author of this portion is no longer P but J, the Jahwist. The amount of supporting arguments advanced by the critics is truly imposing. Their arguments are set forth in four or five major claims, which Dods sums up: two chapters "glaringly incompatible in details."1. It is asserted that the different divine names employed are in themselves almost convincing proof of material from the pen of quite a different writer than he who submitted 1:1-2:3. It is true that the divine name Yahweh (or Jahweh) appears regularly in this chapter in conjunction with the name employed heretofore, Elohim. However, by way of refutation let the following facts be noted. In the first place, the critical assumption is a very narrow one, nor has it ever been proved, namely, the supposition that the writers of the various source-documents knew for the most part but one of the divine names, at least J and P for the most part knew but one name. It was blithely assumed that the earliest writers, of whom J was one, could know God from only one aspect. Secondly, all manner of arbitrary assumptions bolster up the initial assumption, so, for example, when in 3:5 Elohim alone appears, this is supposed to be a portion of another source which J used. Or when Elohim and Yahweh appear jointly in chapter two, i. e., regularly as Yahweh Elohim, this is supposed to be explained by the activity of some later redactor, not J, who combined the two to smooth over the transition from the one name to the other, and so aimed to teach that in reality both authors believed in one and the same divine being. Such claims can never be proved.Moeller, B T, p.67, draws attention to a very remarkable parallel in this connection. He makes a count of the divine names in 1:1-2:3 and then of the divine names in 2:4-4:26 and presents these findings: "In 2:4-4:26 it must be observed that Yahweh Elohim is used successively twenty times, with the name 'Elohim interrupting five times, but always for a very definite reason, and the name Yahweh is used ten times, making a total of thirty five (built up out of the sub-totals 20 plus 5 plus 10). Furthermore it must be observed that these thirty-five correspond exactly to the thirty five Elohim found in 1:1-2:3, which thirty five names are again contained in the tenfold expression "and God said" ('Elohim) and therefore also resolve themselves into 25 plus 10. Consequently, the seventy divine names of 1:1-4:26 can in no wise be regarded as being used in a purely arbitrary sense ..."2. It is also asserted that the writer of this portion uses a vocabulary different in many other noticeable aspects from that of the author of the first chapter. It certainly cannot be denied that quite a number of different words occur in this chapter. But the far simpler and very evident reason is not change of author but change of. subject matter. When a new subject is taken in hand, new words must needs be employed to describe it. Self-evident as this is, we have never seen a critic face this argument squarely.3. It is furthermore asserted that the difference in point of view between the two authors involved goes so far as to make very prominent a noticeably different conception of God: the Yahweh Elohim of 2:4 ff, is much more anthropomorphic than the God of chapter one. He "forms" man (v.7); He "plants" a garden (v.8); He "takes" the man whom He has formed and "puts" him into the garden (v.15); He experiments with man to find a helpmate for him (v.19); He "builds" a woman out of the rib (v.22); He "walks" in the garden (3:8); He "drives" man out of the garden (3:24). So e. g. Dillmann. Other items are occasionally cited; there may suffice. More detailed refutation of these points will be offered as they occur. It should, however, be borne in mind that chapter one, as. we pointed out, offered certain very prominent anthropomorphisms, which may very well be classed as arguing a conception of God no different from that of the next two chapters. A trifling difference, which may not even be worthy to be called a difference of style, is exaggerated to the point of being made to appear as a radical difference. Practically identical with this argument, from another point of view,

is the claim that was considered above under 2 as "different vocabulary." On the negative view consult especially Skinner.4. Then, with practical unanimity the critics point to what on the surface looks like a different conception of the sequence of the works of creation. For in this chapter the sequence of events is claimed to be: man (v.7), trees (v.9), beasts (v.19), woman. If this were actually what J claims, there would certainly be a radical difference between the first two chapters. The difference would be so violent as in no sense to allow for merely divergent points of view. One account would of necessity rule out the other. A fiat contradiction would prevail. Oehler (J A T, p.76) has rightly remarked under this head: "It is just as unlikely as it can be that the author should have been such a dunce (so borniert) as to set down at the very outset two mutually exclusive records of creation." The truth of the matter, however, is simply this: the account of chapter two does not aim to present a complete creation story, nor is the time sequence followed by the author, Moses. Rather, those supplementary facts, essential to the right evaluation of chapter three, are given in a sequence which is entirely logical. In other words, the connective "and" (waw) is not to be taken in the sense of "next" (e. g. next God did thus and so) but rather in the sense of a loose "also" without thought of time-sequence. The stage is being set for the tragic drama of the next chapter. The things enumerated by the author as appearing on the stage, as it were, need not be listed in the order in which they were placed there. The logical sequence will, however, have to be explained in detail as we proceed with our exposition infra. 5. To all this is added one of those farfetched conclusions, which offsets by its boldness what it lacks in substance and so manages to impress the unlearned, the conclusion that even the different backgrounds of the two authors-involved can be definitely discerned. For P, it is said, sees all the creative work of God rise out of the primeval waters and therefore must have been a man coming from a well-watered country; whereas J sees the beginnings of God's creation in dry, desert-like land (cf.2:5 b) and so must himself have been a desert-dweller. First of all, the conclusion that because a man writes about a certain type of land as having been the original, he himself must be a native of that type of land is quite devoid of logic. In the second place, the idea that the face of the earth was for a time practically bone-dry, is the outgrowth of the misreading of 2:5 and utterly without factual foundation.An illustration of argument 2, above, on the question of different vocabulary, so-called, may be submitted. Skinner offers the following expressions, characteristic of this document J: "to the east of," (2:14); "now" (happa'am, 2:23); "what is this?" (mah-zo'th 3:13); ,"cursed" ('arûr, 3:14,17); "pain" ('itsabhon, 3:16, 17); "for thy sake" (ba'abhur, 3:17). There was no occasion to use these terms prior to the time when they finally do appear in this concise narrative. Now the account actually demands them. That does not make them stylistic peculiarities, nor in the least indications of the hand of another writer. This critical claim comes very close to being an absurdity. Yet with almost one voice critics keep advancing it.4 a. This is the story of the heavens and the earth at the time of their creation.This simple and very correct title, placed here by the author himself, must be retained and defended as being the most correct and appropriate. By disregarding its suggestion criticism has fallen short of the right understanding of this portion, which extends to the end of chapter four. This is, then, a story in which heaven and earth share. Both are vitally interested. It is, besides, a story that is enacted just at the time of creation, or when the newly created world in its pristine freshness was about to begin its career. To overlook the interplay of the divine and the human factors is one of the common shortcomings of the treatment of this chapter.Ignoring or deleting this heading, men have devised captions like the following, either for the chapter or for the section 2:4-4:26: "The Course of Creation and the First Relations of the Earth and Mankind"

(Koenig); "Paradise" (Procksch); "The Details Concerning the Creation of Man and Woman" (Delitzsch); "Creation -- Second Account" (Knobel); and all these, strange to say, practically in opposition to the author's own title.One method of dealing with this heading is to refer it to the preceding section, so that it is not a superscription but a kind of subscription. In that event it is usually translated about as follows: "These are the origins of the heaven and the earth." Now it is a well-known fact that the book of Genesis is by its own author divided into ten sections, to each of which he gives the title "story" (toledôth); cf.5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, (9); 37:2. This circumstance alone, plus the use of the round number ten, would definitely point to the fact that here the expression, "these are the toledôth" must also be a heading. In all other instances of its use in other books the same fact is observable; cf. Num.3:1; Ruth 4:18; I Chron.1:29; it is as always a heading.Besides, though A. V. translates: "these are the generations," the term never means "generations" or "origins." It never tells how things or persons came into being. It tells what happened after such things or such persons had appeared on the scene. Another good rendering is "history." The plural form toledôth merely conveys the idea, so common in Hebrew, of the many individual items that go to make up a "history" or "story." B D B, limiting itself too closely to the idea of "begettings," interprets the expression to mean "account of heaven and earth and that which proceeded from them." It cannot mean "descendants" (Meek), for far more than a list of "descendants" is given in each toledôth; cf. especially 37:2 where the descendants are not given. B D B's error is practically the same.Criticism makes a great problem for itself at this point. This first half of v.4, being a "formal" expression, the critics must attribute to P. Now all evidence points to its being a heading over a J account. How did that come to pass? One answer is a mistranslation; Meek renders "origins," contrary to all usage. Others claim that 2:4 originally stood at the head of chapter one. They at once become responsible for an answer to the question: "How, then, did this portion slip into chapter two at this point?" Consult the critics for answers that are either naive or impossible. To others the activity of some later redactor suggests itself.The expression "at the time of their creation" (behibbare'am) is rendered literally: "in their being created." Since it is a temporal phrase, we have rendered it: "at the time," etc. It marks the occurrences that are to follow as practically a part of the creation story (K. S.401 k). The small Hebrew letter heh in the word has been fantastically explained, but never successfully. There is no call for textual alterations, (Kit.). The heading makes clear and very good sense. Luther's rendering cannot be retained: "Also ist Himmel und Erde geworden," "thus the heavens and the earth came into being." Kautzsch belongs to the same class: "Das ist die Geschichte der Entstehung"(" this is the story of the origin") an attempt to combine the right and the wrong views.4 b, 5. At the time when Yahweh God made earth and heaven, then no shrub of the field was as yet in the earth and no plant of the field was as yet sprouting forth; for Yahweh God had not caused rain to descend upon the earth, nor did man exist to till the ground.Verse 4a and 4b are usually translated as a whole, with the result that two temporal clauses of nearly identical meaning appear within the sentence, calling forth artificial attempts at distinctions. By keeping 4 a separate as a title and by combining 4 b with 5, this trouble is removed, and a very natural rendering results. For the two initial clauses of v.5, introduced by waw, may be correlative, as K. S. suggests: "when God made heaven and earth neither was there a shrub ... nor had any plant sprouted" (K. S.371e). At the same time the complicated. sentence structure which the critics make of v.5-7 is shown to be quite unnecessary and quite cumbersome: v.5 protasis; v.6 rather parenthetical, or a concessive clause; v.7 apodosis, (e. g. Dillmann) -- all of which calls for a very artificial rendering (K. S.416a,

413 a). Nor is térem the conjunction "before," but the adverb "not yet" (K. S.135, 357 r).Verse 4 b takes us back into the time of the work of creation, more particularly to the time before the work of the third day began, and draws our attention to certain details; which, being details, could hardly have been inserted in chapter one: the fact that certain forms of plant life, namely the kinds that require the attentive care of man in greater measure, had not sprung up. Apparently, the whole work of the third day is in the mind of the writer. When verdure covered the earth, the sprouting of these types of vegetation was retarded, so that they-might appear after man was already in full possession of his domain and in a position to give them their needed care. That is why it is remarked in the double causal clause 5 b: God had not yet .caused rain' to descend upon the earth; also, man did not exist as yet to till the ground. The fact that not the whole of vegetation is meant appears from the distinctive terms employed, neither of which had as yet appeared in. the account. They are sîach hassadheh, well rendered by Meek "field shrubs"; we render above: "shrub of the field"; and 'ésebh hassadheh, also well rendered by Meek, "field plants"; our rendering: "plant of the field." For the word sadheh means tillable ground, arable fields, the ground "yielding plants and trees" (B D B). That at least must be the meaning in this connection where man's cultivation is referred to. It is not important to the author to mark the point of time within the creation week when this condition prevailed. Consequently, the opening phrase of 4b, beyôm, is to be rendered as it so often is "at the time" and not "in the day." Apparently, too, though it is not specifically stated, types of vegetation are here under consideration that grew up specifically in Paradise, for the account centres around Paradise throughout the rest of the chapter. Consequently, it will be very difficult to determine just what is to be understood by this finer type of vegetation here referred to as "field shrubs" and "field plants."From all this it appears sufficiently how absurd the claim is that in this account (chapter 2:4 ff) man is made first, then vegetation.6. So a mist kept rising from the earth and kept watering all the surface of the ground.We render the opening conjunction we "so," in order to show how closely this verse is tied up with the preceding. This verse aims to show how the deficiency of water mentioned in v.5 was met. For the same reason the noun begins the sentence (K. S.339 e): "mist" is in the first place for emphasis. 'Edh is not a wave, Wasserschwall, but may, well mean. "mist," or "fog," according to an Arabic parallel (K. W.). The Septuagint translators guessed at the meaning of the difficult word, making it phgh "spring." A regular and continuous mode of operation now begins, as the durative imperfect (ya'aleh) indicates, (G. K.107b; K. S.157; yaktûl durans).This may refer to the continuous evaporation which began to set in, or to the more or less frequent but periodic mists of evening or morning. In any case, since the lack of moisture has just been mentioned in v.5, the likelihood is that in this concise account we are to think of the following threefold process: the rising of the mists, their condensation and the regular falling as rain; and are so to picture to ourselves the process of the "watering of all the surface of the ground." That this is the most likely sense appears from the fact that v.7 at once proceeds to mention the removal of the second deficiency mentioned in v.5; for v.7 tells how man was put on the scene. The author is hastening onward in his report and cannot insert almost self-evident details (Strack). Critics evidently make little effort to understand what is comparatively simple. Verses 5 and 6 are supposed to represent a "confusion of two points of view...there may be a Babylonian basis to the myth, it must have taken its present shape in some drier region, presumably in Palestine" (Skinner). Note the strange logic: only a native of a dry country can write v.5 about the deficiency of water; only a native from a well-watered region is competent to write v.6. In an effort to discover sources, criticism ends in

absurdity. Unwilling to believe a simple reliable Scripture, criticism puts on it the stamp of "myth."7. And Yahweh Elohim molded man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.For the present, in direct connection with v.5, it is stated how God provided for the deficiency that had to be removed before the special plants and shrubs mentioned could be allowed to spring forth. When then reporting that God did form man, the writer takes occasion to provide a few supplementary details, which will enable his readers to form a more adequate estimate of man. The title "Yahweh Elohim suggests, as it does throughout the chapter, that this was a work of God that significantly displayed the faithful mercy of Yahweh as well as His awe-inspiring power. The verb employed here accords more with the "Yahweh"character of God; yatsar means to "mold" or "form." It is the word that specifically describes the activity of the potter (Je 18:2). The idea to be emphasized is that with the particular care and personal attention that a potter gives to his task God gives tokens of His interest in man, His creature, by molding him as He does. No crude material notions of God need to be associated with this verb. Let them misunderstand who insist that they must! Nor can it justly be claimed that an author who previously spoke of this work as a "creating" and "making" must be so limited and circumscribed in point of style as to be utterly unable to describe such a work of the Almighty from any other point of view and say He "formed." Such an author must have an exceedingly cramped and wooden style.Employing an accusative of material, the writer tells us that the material God employed in making man was "the dust of the ground." 'Aphar, rendered "dust," does not refer to dry pulverized earth only. Here, without a doubt, a damp mass of the finest earth is under consideration. Luther's rendering is still unsurpassed, Erdenkloss, lit. "lump of earth." The term does not mean "mud," as the skeptics irreverently declare. Lest man form too high an estimate of the first man, it is here recorded that, in spite of the high station involved in being made in the image of God, man has a constituent part in his makeup, which forever forbids unseemly pride on his part -- a thought frequently stressed in the devotional literature of the church from days of old. Without this fact to reckon with we could hardly have been in a position to understand how a temptation and fall were even possible. Practically everything written in chapter two definitely paves the way for chapter three.Yet, in this strange mixture of dignity and lowliness, the story of man's creation definitely indicates how high above all other types, of life man stands. The earth brings forth the others (v.24). Man is formed out of the earth by God's personal activity. But more, a far more prominent distinguishing mark characterizes man's creation: God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." A personal, vitalizing act of the Creator imparts life to man -- an honour bestowed upon none of the lesser creatures. This breathing on God's part must, as Keil rightly reminds us, be understood ueopoepwv i. e. in a manner befitting God. Nor can we for a moment hold that air or human breath was what God breathed into man's nostrils. It was His own vital breath. Nor will it do to associate a particular lapse of time or anything like toilsome effort with the whole process. This creative work may well have been the matter of a moment. In language such as man can grasp but which hardly can do justice to such noble divine works, the author depicts the singular grandeur of this work. Much as we may be inclined to claim that the distinctive element in man's creation is the "breath of life" breathed into his nostrils, this is a supposition that cannot be maintained. For the expression involved, nishmath chayyîm, is practically the same as that used in 7:22 with reference to all life that perished in the flood, the only exception being that the phrase is altered to "the breath of the spirit of life" (nishmath rûch chayyîm). Not this breath itself but the manner of its impartation indicates man's dignity. So also the claim that man became

"a living being," or literally, "a living soul," (A. V.) does not point to the distinguishing glory of man. For the same expression is used of other animate beings in 1:24. It must be remembered that the author is at this point chiefly reporting the fact that this lifeless clay became animate by the breath of the Almighty. The fact that man is a superior being is indicated by the manner in which this is done, and this was already amply indicated before by the divine "image" (1:26). The expression "living being" employs the term néphesh, "soul," because the soul is the animate thing in man. God's Spirit animates the soul, though in a higher sense than is the case with the soul of beasts. Koenig (T A T) correctly defines: "According to 2:7 the soul is that portion of the spirit which breathed into man." The neshamah is "only the life breath" (Keil); cf. (1 Kings 17:17). 8. And Yahweh God planted a garden in Eden toward the east and put there the man whom He had molded.Here is a statement which more directly helps us to understand the things that follow and also furnishes further proof of the generous goodness of God toward man. The scene and the background of the third chapter are being supplied. God plants a garden. All that was written up to this point leads us to conceive of this activity as being also creative and divine. Yet the word that man would employ for such activity, "to plant," is appropriately used of God. The word "garden" (gan), an "enclosure" (B D B), or a sheltered, protected spot, corresponds to the Oriental conception of a garden. Paradise, the conception borrowed from the Persian by the Septuagint translators, is appropriate but suggests rather a royal, park. A place of particular beauty and excellence best reflects God's favour toward His chief creature. From the author's point of view this garden lay "eastward." Though miqqédhem literally means "from the east" not "to the east," nevertheless our translation is correct. For the Hebrew point of view is gained by transporting oneself to the utmost limits in the direction indicated, then coming back: from the east (K. S.318 a). This garden lay in a territory called "Eden," a name used variously in later times in memory of the first Eden. 'Édhen gains its name, no doubt, from the corresponding noun meaning "delight." In all instances following, the expression is less exact, and the garden is simply called "Eden"; it does not lie "in Eden."In a summary way, moving ahead and including the outcome, the verse at once reports in newspaper style that man was put into this garden. The fact of the matter is that a few other items must still be inserted in order that we may have a complete background of the events transpiring. When these have been recorded, the author will revert (v.15) to the fact of man's being placed in the garden. No man will deny to an author the privilege of writing after this fashion. Practically all writers do something of the sort. This surely is no indication of called "doublets" -- a term critics are so free to use -- or proof of two parallel and not quite harmonious sources.No doubt, the fact that man is created outside of the garden and then put into the garden serves the divine purpose of making man clearly aware at the very outset of the distinction between the garden and all the land that lay outside. In what manner man was taken and placed in the garden by his Creator cannot be determined. At the word of the Lord he may have been removed thither.9. And Yahweh God caused to spring forth all manner of trees pleasant to the sight and good for .food, and in particular the tree of life in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowing of good and evil.The focal point of the supplementary items that this chapter has supplied is being reached. Attention centres upon two trees, more particularly upon one of these two. The statement of v.9 is an amplification of the summary report in v.8: "God planted a garden in Eden." Overlooking this simple fact, criticism shoots wide of the mark by drawing conclusions such as: according to J man's food originally was only fruit of trees; only after the fall, according to 3:18, does he eat of the herb of the field. Such claims are merely attempts to bolster up a poorly

substantiated theory of divergent sources and are at the same time an unwarranted use of the argument from silence.Again, the fact of the matter is that God caused an infinite variety of trees to spring up in the garden. The Hebrew expression used is the strongest possible, kol ets, "the whole of trees," every tree, which is even stronger than our rendering above, "all manner of trees" (B D B, and K. S.78 b). Descriptive phrases indicate how attractive they must have made the garden, for they were "pleasant to the sight and good for food." An epexegetical "and" (K. S.375 c) in the sense of "and in particular" now concentrates our attention on two, rather on one, of these. To talk of "the confusion regarding the two trees" (Skinner) is proof of the critics' lack of understanding. The whole issue is really very simple. Both trees are mentioned because both were there and both were destined for a very definite purpose. The tree of life, as appears from 3:22, would have served its purpose in the event of the victory of man in the first temptation. Its existence shows that God had made ample provision for man's good. Since, however, it never came to be used, it at once very properly recedes into the background after the first mention of it and is alluded to only after the Fall in 3:22. Its purpose apparently was to confirm man in the possession of physical life and to render physical death an impossibility. More of this in a moment.The second tree is called "the tree of the knowing of good and evil." We have used "knowing" instead of "knowledge" because the infinitive dß'ath functions chiefly as a verb and takes a double object. For this reason, as in (Jeremiah 22:16), the word "knowing," though in a sense in the construct state, takes the article rather than its objects, "good and evil." sides, "knowing good and evil" is thus stamped as one complete idea. Naturally, this expression aims to cover the whole range of moral concepts in brief (K. S.92 b), or, better still, the ethical contrast between good and evil. To try to make a distinction between these two trees, as though the idea of "the tree of knowledge is a more refined conception" than the tree of life, is to render a hasty verdict and to give proof of a misunderstanding of the whole situation. This misunderstanding comes to the surface in the further claim in reference to the tree of knowledge that "its property of communicating knowledge of good and evil is, however, magical" (Skinner). Here, again, perfectly sound, and entirely correct presentations of the case have long been offered by the church. But the critics completely ignore these explanations and offer instead a, view derogatory to the dignity and inspiration of the inspired Word and drag it down to the level of the cheap magic of corrupt heathenism.The church has always understood in reference to these trees that, in the nature of the case, eating of the fruit of one tree cannot impart life, just as little as partaking of the fruit of another cannot impart a sense of moral distinctions. However, we have an analogy to these cases in the matter of the sacraments. As in the sacraments by virtue of the divine Word the visible means, become vehicles of divine grace, so here by virtue of the divine word, which designates the one tree as "the tree of life," "life" can in reality be imparted by its use when and under whatever circumstances God decrees. In like manner, the second tree, as its name implies, becomes, an agency through which under certain circumstances, divinely appointed, man may come to an experimental knowledge of good and evil. He may through she presence of the tree be confronted with a choice, he may exercise his freedom to do God's will in the choice, or he may refuse to make use of his freedom. Had man persisted in his freedom, the experience as such would have wrought in him a knowledge of good and evil analogous to that of God, in this sense that, without having consented to evil, an awareness of its existence and its implications would have been aroused in him. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil would have effectively done its work. Then the posse non peccare would have resulted on man's part in the non posse peccare, and this state would have

received fuller confirmation in his physical being by the use of the tree of life, the eating of whose fruit would have communicated to those using it in faith rare benefits even for the body. So the trees are rightly regarded as sacramental in a sense. Since the New Testament, by the analogy of the sacraments, presents so adequate a parallel and so satisfactory an explanation, criticism has gone sadly astray by drawing upon the analogy of magic from heathen sources.The coarsest misconstruing of the purpose of the tree of knowledge is that of men like Ehrlich (K. C.), who says: "good and evil" here bear a physical, in fact an outright "sex connotation." All capacity of spiritual insight is lacking when commentators speak thus.Unwilling to accept the high moral conceptions involved, Jeremias uses the common device of criticism of stamping the words "good and evil" as a later interpolation, using, however, the less obnoxious term "a theological interpretation" (Theologumenon).When it is noticed that the trees stood "in the midst of the garden," though, to be exact, the expression occurs only in connection with the tree of life, the question is usually raised, whether there was not danger that man might have discovered and eaten of the tree of life before he even found occasion to eat of the tree of knowledge. However, on such purely speculative questions we may well trust that divine providence foresaw and regulated the affairs of man quite adequately. So also the other question, commonly asked here, may be rejected as merely curious and impossible to answer: "Did man know also the existence of the tree of life and did he know which it was?" To those demanding a suggestion, we offer one, as likely as any: Events may have begun to happen in such rapid succession from this point onward, that the very next issue confronting man was the Temptation.10. There was a river going forth from Eden to water the garden; leaving there it divided and became four branches.The report goes on to indicate how the fruitfulness and freshness of the vegetation in the garden was guaranteed, a thought that would appeal particularly to the Israelites, who, too, dwelt in a region where water was none too plentiful. So the impression of a perfect place is created in an all-sided way. Since the river is the important thing, the noun stands first. The participle (yotse') emphasizes the continuousness of the act, but it is not to be translated as a present, "goes forth" (contra K. S.237 c), because thus far the whole account lay entirely in the past, nor does the author at any time indicate that he still believed in the existence of the garden. The verb yotse' is repeatedly used in reference to the actual source of waters (Ex 17:6; Nu 20:11; Jude 15:19; Zechariah 14:8). Therefore the stream originates in "Eden," whether within or just without the garden is not said. "Leaving there" (so Meek), for mishsham -- "from thence," it divided and became four chief branches (lit. "heads"). This is a very unusual situation. We know of no parallel to it. We know of streams uniting to form one major stream. Here the reverse is true: one major stream becomes four. These four divisions are now enumerated. Criticism had not expected that they would be and therefore expresses its disapproval. Procksch calls The verses 10-14 "an erratic stone" built into the structure. Only prejudice can make such claims. What is more natural than to refer to the mighty garden stream that provided ample irrigation? What is more natural, if the truth concerning the mighty four resultant streams still was known, to make mention of them and briefly to indicate their course? By so doing the author intensifies the impression of a much different past and answers a number of questions as to how those streams may have run at that time. He who is in sympathy with the author's purpose finds all this very natural and easy to understand. Not so the critics. They also claim to be able distinctly to see the points where J glued together his sources.Without going into needless detail -- Delitzsch [1] offers that in his Wo lag das Paradies? -- let us note at once that only the last two of the four rivers mentioned can still be identified, but whether they still flow as

they once did is highly doubtful. They certainly no longer spring from one source, though their present sources in the Armenian highlands are said to lie only 2,000 paces apart.As for the first two, Keil identifies them with the Cyrus, or Kur, and the Araxes, or Aras, which also flow together into one and flow into the Caspian Sea. To give greater likelihood to this interpretation he identifies the land of "Cush" with the old Koccaía, which is reputed to have reached to the Caucasus. The scriptural "Cush," however, lies south of Egypt and is Ethiopia. The old expositors, also Luther, report the tradition that the "Pishon" is the Ganges and the "Gihon" the Nile. Others, like Koenig, then identify the Pishon with an arm of the Indus. But the problem of having the four come from a common source is thus made still more complicated. Delitzsch makes Pishon and Gihon two canals connecting the Tigris with the Euphrates. But canals are not rivers. Some, following the old tradition, say that these four famous rivers of antiquity are indeed meant, but that either the author's geography was quite faulty, or else he had in mind some oceanic river flowing about the whole ancient world.The solution to the problem apparently lies in the fact that what the account pictures was once actually true, though we may never identify the first two rivers. But the extensive changes in the earth's geography caused by that vast catastrophe, the Flood, have entirely disarranged the old order.The most fantastic interpretation is that of Gunkel, which Jeremias (p.103) adopts: "The notion of the four rivers of Paradise will be a reflex from a heavenly picture. Gunkel assumes that the writer is thinking of the milky way with its four arms." We report this merely as a curiosity.11, 12. The name of the first is Pishon. This is the one which encircles all the land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the onyx stone.The "first" in Hebrew, according to common usage, is.the "one" (K. S.315 n). Encircling, (sobhebh) does not mean to flow entirely around; cf. (Nu 21:4; Jude 11:18). Havilah means sandy-land. Gold is often found in such sandy regions. The article before "gold" is the article of complete familiarity (K. S.297 a); others call it the generic article; see G. K.126 m.12. "Gold" stands first because it is the prominent noun. "Good" is used in the sense of "fine" or "excellent." The demonstrative "that" (written hî' with waw rather than yodh for the feminine) is the first instance of this so-called Keri perpetuam and is a stylistic peculiarity of the author of the Pentateuch (so still Koenig) and not the result, of redactional activity (so most critics). What could have prompted a redactor to make so trifling and yet so characteristic a change and make it so consistently? -- "Bdellium" apparently was a precious gum of antiquity. Israel must have been thoroughly familiar with it, since in (Nu 11:7) manna is likened to it in appearance. The shóham stone, rendered "onyx" above, may never be identified. Two other suggestions come down from antiquity, equally well substantiated: the beryl (Targum) and the chrysopras (Septuagint). To the original readers of the book all these terms were quite familiar, and the names involved suggested well known localities.The attempt to identify the Pishon with the Phasis, or present-day Rion, flowing into the Black Sea, is also futile.13. And the name of the second river is Gihon. This is the one that encircles all the land of Cush.The possibilities involved have been discussed above. Attempts to identify Cush with any land other than Ethiopia (like the Babylonian Cash or an Arabic land Cush) are farfetched.14. The name of the third river is Hiddekel. This is the one that goes eastward of Ashshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.All interpreters agree that Hiddekel stands for the river called in Assyrian Hidiqlat, and in old Persian Tigrâ, i. e. Tigris. Qidhmath must mean "eastward." The Ashshur, or Assyria, referred to must be the ancient city of that name which actually once lay to the west of the Tigris, though the Assyrian kingdom later lay eastward of it. The excavations of the German Oriental Society (1904) uncovered the site, now named Kal'at

Schergat. Nothing is mentioned about the familiar Euphrates except the name. The river required no further identification.All this would seem to indicate that the site of the garden of Eden may have been in the Armenian highlands, although no man would dare make any positive claim. No man has ever discovered any trace of its location. But how can men advance an unwarranted claim like that of Skinner: "a locality answering to the description of Eden exists and has existed nowhere on the face of the earth."15. And Yahweh God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to till it and to look after it.What was summarily reported in v.8 is here resumed in order to be amplified, for it is at once stated why the Lord put man into the garden. This natural explanation adequately explains everything. The claim of two distinct accounts, not fully amalgamated, is quite unwarranted. Man's task in the garden is defined: he is "to till it and to look after it." The ideal state of sinless man is not one of indolence without responsibility. Work and duty belong to the perfect state. "To serve," 'abhadh, is here used transitively in the sense of "to till." The second verb shamar, usually meaning "to watch" or "to guard." is here to be taken in the milder sense of "keep." B D B very well suggests "have charge of." Meek does even better: "to look after." For according to the nature of the whole account, which gives the record of a creation, every part of which was "very good," there can be no thought of an evil power abroad in the world and trying to penetrate into the garden, as even Delitzsch and Whitelaw surmise. For in that case, we have the preposterous notion besides of man pacing along the border-lines of the garden at regular intervals during the day and at night doing sentinel duty -- a very uneasy and disturbed existence. The more general sense of "have charge of" is otherwise substantiated in the Scriptures (see B D B). For even though the garden was in every sense good, yet care was necessary to keep it from growing in exuberant disorder.Yannichéhû is a 2. Hifil, G. K.72 ee.16, 17. And Yahweh God laid a charge upon the man, saying: From any tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but from the tree of the knowing of good and evil thou must not eat, for in the day of thy eating of it thou shalt certainly die.Everything preceding in this chapter has paved the way for this climax. The future of the race centres upon this single prohibition. Man is not to be confused by a multiplicity of issues. Only one divine ordinance must be kept in mind. By thus limiting the number of injunctions to one, Yahweh gives tokens of his mercy. Besides, to indicate that this one commandment is not grievous, the Lord sets it against the background of a broad permission: "from any tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." We prefer to render kol "any" rather than "every," lest it appear as though the permission suggested to man to gorge himself; so also Meek. But this statement of.the case in no wise conflicts with 1:29 where herbs are also mentioned, as though here, according to the construction of the critics, fruit of trees alone is allowed for man's food. This verse does not aim, like 1:29, to indicate the full scope of man's diet but has under consideration for the moment only of what trees man may eat fruit. The Hebrew construction puts the absolute infinitive by the side of the verb, something like: "eating thou mayest eat," in order to convey: "thou mayest freely eat." Of course, the imperfect is here permissive (K. S.180).17. However, the imperfect to'khal with the negative lo' involves the strongest form of prohibition, which we have sought to reproduce by "must." The kî that follows the negative clause does not in this instance mean "but," for the clause preceding was imperative not declarative. In this instance the expression beyôm, "in the day," is to be taken very literally and not in the sense "at the time," a meaning that would not fit here. For the thought actually to be expressed is the instantaneous occurrence of the penalty threatened, which is also again expressed in part by the imperfect with absolute infinitive, "dying thou shalt die" -- " certainly die." This at once raises the question, "Why was this penalty not carried out as

threatened?" We answer: "It was; if the Biblical concept of dying is kept in mind, as it unfolds itself ever more clearly from age to age." Dying is separation from God. That separation occurred the very moment, when man by his disobedience broke the bond of love. If physical death ultimately closes the experience, that is not the most serious aspect of the whole affair, The more serious is the inner spiritual separation. Oehler (T A T p.254) rightly maintains: "For a fact, after the commission of sin man at once stepped upon the road of death." The contention that the Old Testament does not know spiritual death, because it does not happen to use that very expression, is a rationalizing and shallow one, which misconstrues the whole tenor of the Old Testament. The common claim raised in this connection, e. g. by Skinner: "God, having regard to the circumstances of the temptation, changed His purpose and modified the penalty," makes of God a mutable being, who, like a rash parent, first speaks severe threats, then sees Himself compelled by developments to modify His purpose. The explanation, "He shall be mortal," is based on the erroneous translation of the Septuagint. Before leaving this verse it is a good thing to observe how definitely the account teaches that the first man was gifted with freedom of will. The moral sense must not first develop later; it is a part of the original heritage of man. It has been pointed out that in records such as these the Old Testament "veritably reechoes with imperatives," (Koenig, T A T p.233). A moral being standing on a very high plane of perfection at the time of his creation m such is the man of the creation account of Genesis.18. And Yahweh God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper like him.The justifiable question, "How did woman originate?" has not yet been answered in an account dealing with all such basic origins. Besides, unless her status has been clearly defined, we are not ready for the narrative of' chapter three. Therefore the account of the creation of woman follows. It is introduced by the basic assertion of God Himself: "It is not good for the man to be alone." Only quibbling can seek to find a discrepancy between this "not good" and the "very good" of 1:31. For in the latter instance the idea of moral perfection and perfect adaptation to its purpose is involved. In this instance, however, we have a "not good" of incompleteness, where the supplying of the deficiency lay in the original purpose of the Creator. Besides, to all intents and purposes, in point of time the work of the creation of woman falls within the sixth day, and so after all 1:31 comes later.God did not create man an unsocial being. He, knowing better than man the social nature of man, voices it in a word spoken for man's guidance. In every way the normal thing for man is to go through life in fellowship with a wife. Man needs her. Her position in reference to man is defined as first "a helper," literally, "a help," 'ézer, abstract for concrete (K. S.243 b). If a man is to achieve his objectives in life, he needs the help of his mate in every way, from the propagating of his kind down through the scale of his varied activities. Her position is further defined by the expression "like him," keneghdô, literally, "as agreeing to him," or "his counterpart." She is the kind of help man needs, agreeing with him mentally, physically, spiritually. She is not an inferior being.19. And Yahweh God molded out of the ground all the wild beasts of the field and all the birds of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever man called each living creature, that was its name.Without any emphasis on the sequence of acts the account here records the making of the various creatures and the bringing of them to man. That in reality they had been made prior to the creation of man is so entirely apparent from chapter one as not to require explanation. But the reminder that God had "molded" them makes obvious His power to bring them to man and so is quite appropriately mentioned here. It would not, in our estimation, be wrong to translate yatsar as a pluperfect in this instance: "He had molded." The insistence of the critics upon a plain past is partly the result of the

attempt to make chapters one and two clash at as many points as possible.The bringing of these creatures before man to have them named is a pedagogic device on God's part to arouse man to the awareness of his not having a mate as the other creatures had. Such an awareness makes him appreciate God's gift the more. However, that there is a limitation of the number of creatures brought before man is made apparent by two things. In the first place, the beasts are described as beasts of the field (hassadheh) not beasts of the earth, as in 1:24. Though there is difficulty about determining the exact limits of the term "field" in this instance, there is great likelihood (cf. also v.5) that it may refer to the garden only. In the second place, the fish of the sea are left out, also in v.20, as being less near to man. To this we are inclined to add a third consideration, the fact, namely, that the garden could hardly have been a garden if all creatures could have overrun it unimpeded. Since then, very likely, only a limited number of creatures are named, the other difficulty falls away, namely that man could hardly have named all creatures in the course of a day.At once we are made aware of the high intelligence level of the father of the human race. For the expression to give names, in the Hebrew usage of the word "name," involves giving a designation expressive of the nature or character of the one named. This was not a crude fable, where, according to a Hebrew notion, the accidental ejaculations at the sight of new and strange creatures were retained as names for the future. Here was a man in deeper sympathy with nature than any have been ever since. That these names were appropriate and significant names for the various creatures appears also from the confirmatory statement of the author: "whatever man called each living creature, that was its name." Such a statement, imbedded in so marvellous an account, could hardly be made, unless the names given had been appropriate and worthy of man's intelligence. Our translation of the close of the verse smooths out a certain difficulty in the original, where a literal rendering reads: "whatever man called it, the living creature, that was its name." That "living creature" (nephesh chayyah) stands in apposition with "it" (lô) is somewhat unusual. However, far from being a stylistic defect, it deserves to be called entirely appropriate. By it, as it seems, the writer is reminding us that each living creature was getting a name in conformity with the type of life it lived. The critics, always on the lookout for what might serve as proof of their, peculiar source theories, mostly see in this phrase an addition by a redactor. But if the phrase be unnecessary, as they claim, they impugn the intelligence of their redactor. However, if it serves a good purpose, why cannot the original writer have possessed sufficient intelligence to insert it? The chief concern of a writer must not always be smoothness of style. Intelligibility, clearness are of greater value. Here smoothness is sacrificed to clearness.The crudest misinterpretation of this giving of names to the creatures is that rather common claim, utterly without warrant in the text, that God was experimenting to produce a mate for man, and when it was found that of the existing beings none adequate for him had been produced, then God proceeded to make woman. Surely, the text never intended to convey that impression, as is also amply testified by the fact that this erratic notion was reserved for the invention of critics of a recent date. The more reverent approach of olden times guarded men against such crudities. Some go so far as to see a parallel with the Gilgamesh epic, whose hero first consorts promiscuously with the beasts and is beguiled by a fair being to renounce their companionship. How such filthy vapourings can be placed on a parallel with the chaste and true scriptural account is beyond our power to understand.Yabhe'(brought) is without its object, because it is readily supplied.20. So the man gave names to all the domestic animals and to the birds of the heavens and to all the wild beasts of the field; but a helper worthy of a man was not found corresponding to him.Man carries out the appointed task. Queer

notions as to how man proceeded have been advanced, based largely on the misconception that all creatures upon the face of the whole earth had been supplied with names. Whitelaw, quoting Willet, remarks: "Nor did angels muster them, nor did the animals come themselves, and, passing by, while he sat on some elevation, bow their heads at his resplendent appearance; nor were Adam's eyes so illuminate that he beheld them all in their places, all which are but men's conceits; but through the secret influence of God upon their natures they were assembled round the inmate of paradise, as afterward they were collected in the ark."In the enumeration of those creatures which were given names, a third class appears at this point, "the domestic animals" (behemah), showing that certainly those nearest to man had not been overlooked. In reality, then, these must have been included in the term chayyath hassadheh, which could have been rendered (v.19) "living creatures of the earth," although, to preserve uniformity of expression, we did not use that rendering. Let it also be observed that the rémes, "the creeping things" of 1:24, are also passed by in the matter of naming. Besides, no one will ever determine how diversified the species were already at the time of their creation.The fact that it is here remarked that "a helper worthy of a man was not found corresponding to him," does not argue for the fact that this review of the beasts was an attempt to find a mate for man among them, but rather that a realization of man's loneliness was to be aroused in him. We consider the text perfectly correct with its le'adham. Nor does matsa"' one found" need to be changed to a passive (Kit.); impersonal constructions are quite common. The le'adham, without article, cannot here signify "for Adam," as the noun without the article definitely does after 4:25. Yet there is reason for using the generic "man" in this instance, because, as our rendering shows, the thought is a helper for a man, in the sense of "worthy of a man." He alone finds none of his kind.21, 22. And Yahweh God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man; and when he slept, He took one of his ribs and closed the place with flesh. And Yahweh God built the rib which He had taken from man into a woman and brought her unto the man.We think the sequence of clauses as given above, following Meek, to be admirable. To say: "He caused a deep sleep to fall upon him and he slept" is too self-evident to have been intended by the writer. The Hebrew very readily allows for the above subordination, although it certainly did not follow from the Hebrew accents, which put the Athnack (something like a semicolon) after:" and he slept." Tardemah, is indeed a "deep sleep," not a state of ecstasy, as the Greek translators render; nor a "hypnotic trance" (Skinner), for traces of hypnosis are not to be found in the Scriptures. A "trance" might be permissible. The root, however, is that of the verb used in reference to Jonah when he slept soundly during the storm. God causes such a deep sleep, because it surely would have been in part almost a horrid experience to live through to see a portion of yourself removed. A sleep like that caused by an anesthetic envelopes man's feelings and consciousness. The word tsela', translated "rib," definitely bears this meaning, (contra v. Hofman), although it is not necessary to think only of the bare bone; for, without a doubt, bone and flesh will have been used for her of whom the man afterward says "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh," (v.23). Though no definite reason for this type of procedure in creating woman is assigned, we are able to see the most eminent fitness in this much ridiculed act. For one thing, the absolute unity of the human race in its descent from one ancestor is established -- a vital doctrine of the Scriptures (cf. Ro 5:18 ff). Besides, at the same time the true dignity of womankind is guaranteed: woman is not of inferior substance. The truest of kinship with man is also established: she is of his bone and flesh. Even the very part of the body from which she is taken is of deepest moment: woman is neither of the foot nor of the head, for she is neither superior nor inferior to man; she is exactly on the same level

with him as far as being a creature of God is concerned. If then, lastly, a part of the substance of man is to be used, none could be found that could be more conveniently dispensed with than a rib. Deeper thought on the subject throughout suggests a most excellent propriety in God's procedure in the whole matter of the creation of woman.The preposition min replaces the more usual construct state in "from-ribs-his" (K. S.278 a).The activity of God in fashioning the rib taken from man is described as a building (wayyi'bhen). Rather than being an indication of the work of a different author, the verb grows out of the situation. as being the most appropriate. It would not have been seemly to use yatsar "to mold," a verb applicable in the case of clay, not of flesh. "Build" applies to the fashioning of a structure of some importance; it involves constructive effort. Both of these factors are in evidence in the case of the creation of woman. When God brings her unto man, this act of his is the institution of marriage and stamps marriage as a divinely willed and approved state.23. And the man said: This now at length is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken from man.There is a certain animation prominent in the first recorded word of the first man as he recognizes the purpose of this new gift to him -- an animation which is made noticeable by the thrice repeated "this" (zo'th). The last two of these cannot well be made apparent in the translation of the second clause, which, translated literally would read: this one shall be called woman because from man was taken this one. Besides, that a being of this sort had been looked for with anticipation appears from the word happa'am, "now at length." Whether the article in this term really has demonstrative force in connection with a triple demonstrative already noted may in this instance well be questioned. The most complete physical congruity of this new person with himself is at once recognized by this first man. lie gives expression to the thought in the words: she is "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh,"He gives further expression to this idea by giving her a class name, which marks her as being far above all the other creatures upon whom names had been bestowed. By a clever play upon words he gives expression to this thought in a form that can at least be approximated by other languages, as also by the English: "called woman because she is taken from man," although all interpreters recognize that this is not the proper etymology of "woman." Luther does a bit better by coining a word: Maennin vs. Mann. The thought of the writer is only to give prominence to the most possible intimate kinship of these two beings and to express this by the kinship of sound. However, it must not be forgotten that the language used by the first man has, no doubt, been lost, so that the Hebrew must approximate the thought as nearly as its element allows. If, then, it be objected that the two words involved have, in reality, two different roots, we shall not be greatly disturbed. "Man," îsh, according to a parallel Arabic root, may have the basic idea of "exercising power." Similarly, "woman," 'ishshah, must, because of the double consonant, be derived from a root with original nun, which according to an Arabic parallel, would mean "to be soft." But the writer is not studying etymology. He is expressing a fundamental similarity by the use of the best terms available.The verb used for "she shall be called" is in reality the common impersonal: "it shall be called to her" (K. S.324).24. (For this reason a man leaves his father and his mother, and they become one flesh).This verse might at first glance appear as the conclusion of Adam's first remark, and it is usually construed as such. However, the major difficulty in this interpretation is the fact that it must impute to the first man, in addition to all the other gifts that he possesses, also a kind of prophetic insight; for as yet man has had no experience of the fact of propagation whereby persons become father and mother. To attribute so much of foresight and insight to him is hardly feasible. But all of this difficulty is obviated if the explanation be adopted that here we have

nothing other than a parenthetical remark of the author, who seeks to account for the deep and almost unaccountable attachment which man has for his wife. Several other parenthetical observations of the author are found in Genesis. See (Ge 10:9; 26:33; 32:32). The imperfect ya'azobh expresses the customary thing (G. K.107 g): "man leaves." "Forsake" (A. V.) is too strong a verb. Meek renders 'al-ken very well as "that is why." "Becoming one flesh" involves the complete identification of one personality with the other in a community of interests and pursuits, an union consummated in intercourse. 25. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, but they felt no shame.In this brief statement one more feature is added to the picture of the primeval state of perfection: nothing had transpired to rouse in man a sense of guilt. For to feel no shame is in a perfect state due to having no occasion to feel shame. Everything was at harmony, and man was in complete harmony with himself and with his God.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSA number of good texts are found in this chapter. For expository treatment we should suggest the following: v.1-3 deal with the subject of "Sabbath in Heaven," a good text for stressing the blessedness of rest after the divine example. Though v.7 is somewhat short for a text, it yet presents adequate material for full treatment of the subject of "The Dignity and the Lowliness of Man." The divine creative act supplies the material for the first half of the subject; the substance employed, for the second half. The section v.9, 15-17 suggests "the Place of Temptation in the Life of Man." Even for the perfect man tests, or at least a test, was essential for his proper moral development. A being so frail as not to be able to stand a test would have had little moral worth. There is sufficient material in the text to indicate that man had adequate proofs of God's will toward him and therefore was adequately equipped to ward off insinuations to the contrary. Then the section v.18-25 provides occasion to develop the subject so little understood in our day, where thoughts of emancipation too largely have replaced the scriptural point of view -- we mean the subject "Woman's Place in Life." It could be treated under the head of the "Institution of Matrimony." However, v.28 of chapter 1 should really be added to round out the text, lest a neglected aspect of matrimony be passed by entirely.

CHAPTER III

The Temptation and the Fall This is the most tragic chapter in the Bible. Perhaps no commentator has caught the sense of the full measure of tragic consequences entailed by the Fall more clearly than Luther in his detailed exposition of the chapter. This Scripture is an inspired account of how sin and all evil came into the world. From one point of view we may call it pure revelation, namely in the sense that man, left to his own devices, had forgotten this lamentable event of his early history, and so God had to renew the knowledge of it by revelation. For the very strange fact is to be observed that an actual parallel, which ties up the evils of the human race with the Fall and so with human sin, is not to be found in the traditions of the various races and peoples, who may yet have had a bit of truth concerning an earlier state of blessedness in a golden age of antiquity. Even those who persistently trace Biblical truth to Babylonian sources must admit: "The Babylonian version of the Fall of man (if any such existed) has not yet been discovered." Attempts to make certain dubious pictorial representations bear some resemblance to our chapter are based too much on forced meanings. It cannot be denied that many things about the entire account may prove quite puzzling. We are provided with too few details concerning the exact measure of man's capacities in the original state: besides, the activities of the tempter may puzzle us. But these and the many other problems about which we may vex ourselves are difficulties that lie rather in our limited understanding than in the account as we have it. Nor should we overlook the didactic skill of the writer who aims primarily to emphasize the fact that man fell by his own guilt and dragged down upon himself and his posterity a mass of miserable consequences. So the writer in a very satisfactory way informs us how evil originated in the world. The curious questions that we might desire to have answered beyond that are left aside, so as not to detract unduly from the major truth which is to be declared. However, at least this one question must be touched upon. in this connection: "Does this chapter present an actual narrative of facts, or have we here perhaps a skilful allegory, as many fathers of the church believed, or shall we label this merely a pictorial representation intended to convey some general impressions' (Dods)?" Without a doubt, things are recorded as they actually transpired; this is a strictly historical account fully approved by the New Testament (2 Corinthians 11:3; 2 Timothy 2:13). Regarding the chapter from this. angle does not impede our discernment of the deeper spiritual issues involved. In fact, the only safe interpretation of the Fall is that which accepts the record as unequivocally true and interprets it in the light of the rest of clearly revealed Scripture. The claim of a few modern commentators that the chapter gives distinct evidences of meter (heptameter) has been demonstrated by K. C. as built on sand. 1. Now the serpent was the most clever of all the beasts of the field which Jahweh God had made, and she said unto the woman: And (is it really the case) that God has said ye shall not eat from every tree of the garden? The serpent appears on the scene as the new and prominent factor in the discussion, and so hannachash is placed first for emphasis (K. S.339 h; G. K.142 d). This serpent actually spoke to Eve. This speaking is not to be regarded as indirect, in the sense of speaking by what she did, as for example perhaps eating of the fruit herself (K. C.). She actually spoke. However, when we go farther into the Scriptures, we find the very definite fact, especially in the New Testament, that the devil is regarded as the actual tempter. When Christ says (John 8:44)

that the devil is "a murderer from the beginning" and that he is. "a liar and the father thereof," this word is a manifest allusion to the event of this chapter. (2 Corinthians 11:3) compared with v.14 of the same chapter suggests the same thought. (Ro 16:20): "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly," cannot be anything other than an interpretative allusion to v.15 of our chapter. The words of (Re 12:9), "the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan," harmonize only with our interpretation of the passage. Cf. also (Re 20:2). It will hardly do to claim with modernists that the New Testament writers saw the devil in the serpent, but that on the level of the Old Testament men never thought of the tempter as any other than only a serpent. For, as Lange has clearly demonstrated, the truth concerning Satan emerged very clearly within the limits of the Old Testament, and we surely have no warrant to hold that the enlightened believers of the old covenant never penetrated more deeply into truth than to discern the mere letter. Even before the New Testament revelation shines forth, the apocryphal book of Wisdom (2:23 f.) ascribed the entrance of sin into the world to the envy of Satan. These modern misconceptions disrupt the manifest unity and harmony of revelation as given by the one Spirit of Truth. The truth of the matter is, of course, as Luther already clearly stated, that the third chapter as such states the case in such a manner that we cannot but puzzle over the speaking of a serpent, but the later revelation of God has unfolded what still lay hidden in the first statements of revealed truth. So we are driven to the conclusion that Satan used the serpent as his tool or instrument and was in the final analysis the one who spoke through this creature. With his superior knowledge Adam ought at once to have sensed a grave irregularity in the serpent's speaking. If, then, the further question be raised, why the devil used this means of addressing Eve, it must be admitted that such an approach successfully disguised the tempter. But if the more difficult question be raised, why the writer, who may have known about this Satanic agent, mentions only its visible tool, we have a twofold answer, in common with many other commentators: in the first place, the writer gives a faithful account of what actually transpired just as it transpired; in the second place, by describing the course of the temptation as directed by this visible agent he removes from the thoughts of his readers the possibility of the notion that since so dreadful a tempter assailed man, therefore man is not to be blamed for his fall -- the mention of the devil might have led to the offering of excuses for man and so to a minimizing of man's guilt. There can be no reasonable doubt as to the meaning of nachash. Scriptural usage, as well as all versions and an uninterrupted tradition through the centuries, vindicates the meaning "serpent." The word we have rendered "clever" is 'arûm. "Most clever" is the Hebrew superlative, which literally says "more clever than all beasts." (K. S.308 b). We prefer "clever" to "subtle," because the word cannot imply a trace of evil in the animal world, for that would seriously conflict with 1:31. This was a purely harmless cleverness, after the pattern of (Mt 10:16). Such cleverness may well make this creature the most suitable vehicle of Satan's evil devices. From all this it. dimly appears that the chief agent is a spirit of unusual power and cleverness and clearly, too, a fallen spirit. This again necessitates the assumption that the fall of the angels must have occurred prior to this temptation, yet not necessarily prior to the completion of the entire creative work. However, the other rather common assumption that evil had already penetrated into' the world among the creatures, and that so the serpent herself was already tainted by evil, is clearly refuted by the modifying clause, "which Jahweh God had made," which clause applies indiscriminately to the whole creature world and describes it as good. "The woman" is singled out to be tempted, because she is not naturally as strong as man, nor did she hear God's command from His own mouth but only, as it seems,

mediately from Adam, and consequently she may have felt its weight less. The tempter's cunning is made manifest by this approach but much more so by the temptation which he presents and the adroit presentation of this temptation step by step. The temptation opens with an 'aph ki, i. e. "indeed that." The simplest explanation of this expression is that.the verb "to be" is omitted, because it is so readily supplied. Therefore B D B is correct in rendering, "Indeed (is it) that?" So also K. C. Our translation above says practically the same thing. From the woman's answer it appears that the serpent's word was a question, although, as is often the case, it is not introduced by an interrogative particle. The Giver. of the commandment is referred to by the serpent as "God," 'elohîm, not as Yahweh; for the tempter could not with any measure of truth know anything of God's grace and fidelity. The most common term is employed. The thought aimed at by this suggestive question is that there must be something about God's restraint of man that puts a very unwelcome curb and check upon man. The circumstance that God has permitted man to make use of all the rest of the trees is pushed aside as negligible. The fact that man is definitely barred from one tree is dragged into the forefront and magnified into a grievous and very unwelcome restraint that could hardly be thought of as imposed by God. A suspicion is cast upon God's goodness, and suspicion, as experience has amply demonstrated, most insidiously worms its way in where other sins often could not find entrance. In other words, man had had ample proof of God's love of and regard for him. To trust this loving Father was the normal attitude of this first man and the very soul of his proper relationship to God. The moment such trust begins to waver man has fallen.To approach the question from another angle, as Luther rightly points out, the temptation involved directs itself against God's Word. More specifically, it seeks to make that Word doubtful to man. This Word was for Adam both law and gospel. Adam and Eve are to be led away from its truth according to the purposes of the tempter. In this respect the temptation is a type of all temptations which the evil foe presents.By approaching the question as we have, we have eliminated the necessity of assuming that other words of the serpent had preceded and that here merely the continuation of that discussion is submitted. Rather, without preliminaries and with a subtle boldness a word is thrust at Eve, a word pregnant with evil and in substance a very dangerous temptation.We must yet definitely reject the very common claim that lo' mikkol should be translated "not from any" (Meek). Though this use of the negative with kol ("all") is common enough, it can hardly be intended here. The exaggeration would be too gross and crude. The devil would have completely overshot his mark and roused a feeling of resentment at the coarse insinuation. Therefore A. V. is correct: "not from every." Cf. K. S.352 s.Some very strange modern interpretations must at least be referred to at this point. In the face of the plain meaning of this first key-verse, it is a wilful misreading of the plain meaning of words when Haupt offers "the explanation of the Fall of man as the first connubial intercourse." Equally erroneous is Gunkel's claim that the chapter aims to overthrow "the then current opinion that agriculture was a blessing inaugurated by the deity," and to work this overthrow by "setting over against such an opinion the myth about God's curse upon the ground." Such views are entirely without a foundation and are shown forth as unwarranted by the simple fact that through the centuries no man ever even remotely discerned that such thoughts could be hidden in the narrative. Skinner finds difficulties in the chapter, chiefly in the temptation by the serpent, and offers as explanation the claim that the treatment of the story gives evidence of the "incomplete elimination of the mythological element under the influence of a monotheistic and ethical religion." What the critic finds hard to understand must have the source of its difficulty not in the critic but in the record. So a harmless and plain

record is misinterpreted because the critic will not believe that "the function of the serpent" is as the text claims it to be.Yet a word on the question often raised at this point: "Why must there be a temptation?" or "Why does God permit His chief creature on earth to be tempted? Does He not desire man's supreme happiness? Why, then, does He permit a temptation which leads to death and all our woe?" The answer must always be that God will have only that count as moral behaviour worthy of a being made in God's image, which is freely given and maintained even where the possibility of doing otherwise offers itself. To do what God desires merely because one cannot do otherwise, has no moral worth. It would be a morality like unto that of beams which uphold the house because they have been put in place and cannot but bear their load. To do the right where there has never been an opportunity of doing wrong is not moral behaviour. The opportunity to do otherwise must present itself. This is temptation. A being who could not even suffer to be tempted would be a poor specimen of God's handiwork. But the true wisdom of God appears in this, that, though His creature falls, God is still able to achieve His original purpose through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, a redemption for which provisions are already beginning to be made in this chapter.2, 3. And the woman said unto the serpent: From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God has said: Ye may not eat of it, neither touch it, lest ye die.In a way it may seem as though the unsuspicious Eve, who has never been tempted, is at a grievous disadvantage because of the very subtle nature of the suspicion that the serpent seeks to engender in her heart. But her advantages are sufficient amply to offset the cleverness of the attack. There is, first of all, the empirical knowledge of God's goodness and mercy toward man. The whole of creation formed a strong symphony of protest against any suspicions of God's good will. Then, Eve had a very clear word from God, simple and unencumbered by many details as to what her moral duty was. Whether this word was heard immediately from God or mediately from her husband matters little and cannot impair the power of that word upon her heart. And then, too, there was one feature about the temptation that could well have aroused instantaneous suspicion of the tempter: a mere irrational creature spoke. The insight into the limitations of the being of the animal was sufficiently clear to a creature like man, who had but recently been entirely qualified to give names to all these beings and discern their very nature. At this point Eve could easily have probed farther and divined the actual truth. Our first parents certainly had been adequately prepared for an emergency such as this. At this point already we must begin to take issue with the claim that in the temptation as such the penalty resulting is quite out of proportion to the trifling nature of the misdeed. For those who raise such a claim liken the sin of our first parents to the taking of forbidden fruit by children and then claim: the mere taking of an apple certainly does not merit such dreadful consequences as are here pictured as resulting. Over against such misconceptions we strongly maintain that the taking of the fruit was not the fall into sin; that fall had occurred before this act; the taking of the fruit was an incidental bit of evidence of the fact that man had fallen. However, the Fall as such was nothing less in character than an entirely inexcusable piece of rebellion against a very gracious Father who not only had withheld nothing good from man but had even bestowed such an overwhelming wealth of good things that revolt against such a one must in the very nature of the case be a sin of the deepest hue, yes, even the one great sin in the history of the human race.The beginning of this tragic and wretched fall is to be discerned in this section before us (v.3). Eve's reply should have been an emphatic disavowal of the suspicion that God had been withholding good from man. Instead, it becomes a temporizing, a partial refutation, but at the same

time a statement that allows room for the suspicion that perhaps God has not been as entirely good and gracious as they had hitherto supposed. But as soon as one does not wholeheartedly and unreservedly trust God, mistrust is gaining ground and sin has entered. Nothing of this appears definitely as yet in v.2 where Eve restates what God has allowed them. Whereas the devil's charge pointed to unwelcome restrictions, Eve emphasizes the fact that God had allowed them to eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But a significant omission in her statement of the case must be noted. The original charter of privileges under this head (2:16) had carried the word "all"; then followed the one exception. Eve omits the "all." She was beginning to lose sight of the boundless goodness of God. Apparently, there sin took its beginning; God's mercies are lost sight of. Of course, the imperfect no'khal is permissive, not merely a present (K. S.180). Therefore "we may eat," not merely "we eat."(3) Now follows a half-hearted defense consisting in a restatement of the prohibition. During the course of this restatement Eve veers from indirect discourse to direct with the words: "God has said"; but unfortunately she mars a good case by sharpening and thus altering God's original demand. Nowhere has it been indicated that God said: "nor touch it." By this insertion Eve betrays the course her thoughts have taken. She feels that the prohibition was unduly sharp, so unconsciously she sharpens it herself. But, again, already the attitude of the heart to God is clearly seen no longer to be one of perfect trust. The suspicion which Satan so cleverly suggested was allowed to take root. To have suspicions of God and His goodness is a wicked insult of His majesty. All this, it is true, does not at once appear in its most fully developed form. The first steps on the road away from God have been taken. Here the Fall took place. What follows is the further unfolding of what lay in this first act and the full evidence of it. A being that had been made holy, just, and true and had been equipped with the strength necessary for maintaining its moral integrity and right relation to God, freely chose to ignore and to despise His goodness and to mistrust Him, and so severed its vital relation to Him.On the ending of the form temuthun cf. G. K.47 m.Proksch shows the critical tendency to set harmonious things at variance with one another very significantly at this point. Because 2:9 mentions only the tree of life as having been "in the midst of the garden," but here, without doubt, it is the tree of knowledge which is said to be "in the midst of the garden," we are to class these two statements as being "divergent" from one another. The plain fact is that they are entirely supplementary: both were in the midst of the garden and perhaps even near one another.Satan is not slow in discerning the advantage he has gained and promptly presses on to overthrow completely an opponent who has begun to waver, or, as Luther puts it, he observes that the wall has begun to totter and so braces himself against it, so as completely to crush Eve, as we now see.4, 5. And the serpent said to the woman: Ye shall certainly not die; for God knows that as soon as ye eat of it, your eyes will be opened and ye shall be like gods who know good and evil.After a careful approach, which tendered a mild suggestion, the devil boldly advances to a positive denial of the Word of God. It should not be lost sight of how in temptations the attack centres about God's Word. The very boldness of denial carries all before it. The denial, for that matter, is even a perversion of the word into its very opposite. God said: "You shall die." Satan replies: "Ye shall certainly not die." The father of lies is so saturated with lying that he even attempts to make God out to be a liar. Note the strength of the statement. A. V., "Ye shall not surely die," is not strong enough; rather, "Ye certainly shall not die." For the negative, which in cases where the absolute infinitive accompanies the finite verb usually stands between infinitive and verb, here emphatically stands first, yielding the emphasis we suggest by our translation. Cf. G. K.113 v; K. S.3521. Now follows the positive

charge against God, that He "knew all along" (yodhe a, Kal participle, suggestive of continued action) that "as soon" (beyôm, here meaning "on the very day," that is to say, "at once") as they should venture to eat of this fruit, their eyes would be opened. Such a charge attributes envy to God and makes Him appear as one who withholds good from His creatures lest they mount to heights reserved for Himself. The heathen and the devil attribute envy to God. If Eve ventures to eat, it will mean on her part the complete disavowal of faith, and the Fall will be entirely consummated. The lead suggested by the Septuagint may be followed in the translation of the expression ke'elohîm. The Greek has wv ueoi, "as gods," plural. For the preceding verb hayah is more than just "to be," rather: "ye shall exist as gods" (K. S.338 d), in other words: "you shall exist in the class of higher beings." This word of the devil's is calculated to beget an overbearing pride which aspires to wicked heights. Immediately preceding this lying promise is another which purposely savours of a certain vagueness: "your eyes will be opened." This must imply ability to discern and to penetrate into things not otherwise perceived, as the German expression has it, hellseheng werden. Just what advantage this involves is not further indicated. and so an attractive suggestiveness, more seductive than a specific promise, is achieved. However, the definition of what is involved in "existing as gods" savours of a similar elusiveness and vagueness. The devil gives assurance that that state will bring with it the knowing of good and evil. What advantages this entails is not stated. The good thing promised charms by its vagueness. But, surely, it was a bad bargain to accept such vague phantasmagories. True, "to know" (yadha') implies more than intellectual apperception; "it is a function of the entire soul" (Procksch); it is Empfindung, perception. Here lies some of the diabolical cunning of the temptation: it seems to offer something very good-"ye shall be like gods."Very clearly, as in ali temptations, the devil's beguilements are an inextricable tangle of truth and falsehood. All the things promised were relatively true, as the sequel proved, but at the same time they were so far from offering the true realities that they could also be stamped as the most colossal falsehoods. However, their subtle cleverness cannot be denied.6. And the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was attractive to the eye and that it was a tree desirable for acquiring wisdom; she took of its fruit and ate and gave also to her husband who was with her, and he ate.This verse pictures not the genesis of sin but its full development and definite expression. The woman speaks not a single word. She is entirely engrossed in the contemplation of the things promised and in the hope of the realization of the spurious greatness suggested. By a natural law of progression the sin develops to the point where the one divine restriction is definitely cast off, and Eve stands forth in open defiance of her Maker. Sin always develops in this manner after foot has once been set on the downward path.A closer contemplation of the tree in the light of the Satanic suggestion leads Eve to notice first something purely physical: "the tree was good for food." This is its appeal to the appetite. Here some commentators rightly sense that aspect of sin which (1 John 2:16) is called "lust of the flesh." For, in reality, all aspects of sin lie embodied in this first transgression. Every part of the being of the first mother was drawn into the destructive vortex of the participation in sin. Then follows, introduced by a kind of polysyndeton (wekhi -- "and that"), to make the separate parts of the temptation as they were felt one by one to stand out more prominently, the statement: "it was attractive to the eye." The aesthetic finds itself appealed to, or better, as again (1 John 2:16) has it, it was the "lust of the eyes" that here became operative. This was not a clean and holy perceiving but an unholy lusting. Note how every bodily function operates perniciously. Sin in all its enormity is most effectively portrayed as the monster that it really is. To this is added intellectual perversion:

"it (was seen to be) a tree desirable for acquiring wisdom." This is what St. John describes as "the vainglory of life." Haskîl is intransitive, "to acquire wisdom," not, "to make wise." Meek offers the cumbersome and inaccurate "for its gift of wisdom."So the picture is complete: every function of body and of soul is wrested from its original purpose and becomes embroiled in one vast confusion of its divine purpose. Nowhere is a more drastic picture offered of the horrible disturbance wrought by sin.The actual evidence of full consent to the sin suggested, as far as man can see, lies in the taking of the fruit and the eating of it. Man cannot read the heart, but he can discern from the outward act what had transpired in the heart.The man's consent to the same sin is reported with such brevity as to amaze us: "she gave to her husband who was with her and he ate." There must be a reason for this. This reason is primarily that through the woman, now already fallen, the same temptation was presented to Adam as had previously been presented through the serpent to Eve, and with the same result. Adam, then, must have fallen exactly as Eve had, with as little excuse, with as great a guilt. The only difference appears to be that, as Eve had eaten and apparently had suffered no ill effect, this constituted an additional argument why Adam need not hesitate to adopt the same course. Whatever stouter resistance Adam might have offered was completely overcome by this argument. The fact, however, that the prepositional phrase "with her" ('immah), which we rendered as a clause, is first found at this point, strongly suggests that at the outset, when the temptation began, Adam was not with Eve but had only joined her at this time. Here, too, Satanic ingenuity displays itself: to approach both while they were together would have found them in a position where they would mutually have supported one another. Such notions, then, as Milton's, that Adam sinned from a kind of sense of chivalry, not desiring to abandon Eve to her fate, have no support in the text. Nor has the opinion any value that Adam was too closely attached to Eve, a thought that would lead to a fall before the Fall, for it involves that he loved her more than he loved God. Two scriptural points of view apply here. On the one hand, contrasting Adam and Eve, the Scripture may say: "Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression" (1 Timothy 2:14). Eve has a relatively greater guilt, if the comparative guilt of the two be mentioned. On the other hand, the sin of the two has so much in common that it is practically one sin, and Adam, as the head, may be referred to exclusively as the originator of sin and the Fall (Ro 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:22): "as in Adam all die," etc.Describing the whole scene as such, Delitzsch quite aptly points out how, after God had so bountifully offered proof of His goodness, our first parents behaved as though the devil intended only good and God intended only ill, and so he calls this "the devil's communion" (Abendmahl),The min in the expression "of its fruit" is the min partitive.7. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they perceived that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made girdles for themselves.The act of sin having developed into a full-blown deed, which manifested itself outwardly, there now follows in v.7-13 a description of the immediate effects of this sin upon man. The first noticeable effect is shame. Both are equally guilty; both experience the same result. Here is one of the saddest anticlimaxes of history: "they eat, they expect marvellous results, they wait-and there grows on them the sense of shame" (Procksch). They now have a knowledge of good and evil, but not as a result of having remained steadfast in the good but from the low level of sin, as it has been aptly put. The immediate gain of the experience of sin is so utterly sordid. How men like Driver can here find nothing more than the ordinary experience of transition "from the innocence of childhood into the knowledge which belongs to adult age," is more than we can understand. It is that too but much more. Here it is the direct reaction of a guilty conscience. The

good Lord with definite purpose lets this effect be felt first in order that the baseness and the utter worthlessness of all of sin's achievements may be made apparent. To shield themselves from one another's gaze they fashion "girdles" for themselves from "fig leaves" (Hebrew: te'enah "fig," by metonomy for "fig tree"). No particular importance attaches to the fig tree in this connection. It is not that so-called fig tree of India which has leaves several feet in length. These leaves would not have required to be sewn together. Apparently, the leaves of the nearest available tree were seized, and this just happened to be a fig. That the sense of shame should concentrate itself around that portion of the body which is marked by the organs of generation, no doubt has its deeper reason in this that man instinctively feels that the very fountain and source of human life is contaminated by sin. The very act of generation is tainted by sin. If this scripturally portrayed origin of the sense of shame be accepted as true, then all contentions of anthropologists that shame is rather the outgrowth of inhibitions and custom fall away as secondary and incidental. The scriptural account goes to the root of the matter. The only gleam of light in the verse is the fact that where shame is felt, the evildoer's case is not hopeless. He is at least not past feeling in the matter of doing wrong. God's prevenient grace allows this feeling to arise.Chaghoroth is not "aprons" (A. V.), for the root of the word means "to gird oneself"; primitive girdles is all that can be meant.8. And they heard the voice of Yahweh God walking about in the garden at the time of the breeze of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from Yahweh God in the midst of the trees of the garden.Yahweh God is represented as "walking about in the garden." The almost casual way in which this is remarked indicates that this did not occur for the first time just then. The assumption that God had repeatedly done this is quite feasible. Besides, there is extreme likelihood that the Almighty assumed some form analogous to the human form which was made in His image. Nor is there anything farfetched about the further supposition that previously our first parents had freely met with and conversed with their heavenly Father. In this instance they again hear His "voice." Though qôl does often mean "sound" (cf.2 Samuel 5:24; 1 Kings 14:6) and now by almost common consent is quite regularly translated thus in this verse, yet v.10 definitely points to the use of the word in the more common meaning of "voice," and this must be a reference to the word qôl used in our verse. This "walking about" (in the case of a man, we should have translated: "taking a walk") of Yahweh in the garden is said to have taken place "at the time of the breeze (rû'ach -- 'wind') of the day." The le introducing this phrase is the "le temporal." Experience has shown that in oriental countries the wind springs up at the close of day. Consequently, all this transpired in the evening. The article before "day" is the article of absolute familiarity (K. S.297 a), for this phenomenon occurred daily. Divine wisdom chooses the time of day best suited for sober reflection and retrospection. The waves of feeling that beat higher through the day are beginning to subside, and the first parents see things more nearly as they are. No other transporting change or effect has been observed since the disturbing sense of shame arose. Upon hearing the voice of the Lord "the man and his wife hid themselves." The second and the third major results achieved by the misdeed are here portrayed. Mistrust and fear have, for one thing, taken the place of the trust and the free communion with Yahweh, that had previously prevailed. Instead of running to Him they run from Him. Communion with the heavenly Father is no longer their highest delight. It is shunned as an evil and vexatious thing. What damage and destruction sin is working from the very moment of its appearance! The other grievous hurt that has afflicted mankind is here set forth as one that centred in. the intellect, whereas the one just mentioned had its seat in the affections. The intellect is so disturbed that it fails to perceive for the present-what would have been recognized at

once on sober second thought-that man cannot hide himself from God, the omniscient and omnipresent. We have rendered mippenê "from" rather than "from the presence of," because it really is only an expressive "from." Either translation may be used.Meek gives a ludicrously flat rendering when he anthropomorphizes beyond what Scriptures allow and offers the following example of quaint rendering: "They heard the sound of the Lord God taking a walk for His daily airing." Such a rendering is shockingly irreverent. The inspired writers nowhere give evidence of such low conceptions of God. Besides, the Hebrew phrase cannot be rendered thus. Procksch offers a similar unworthy interpretation when he calls the conception of "God leaving His house at evening to take a walk" "tremendously childlike" but yet "chaste and noble." When the inspired Word shows God's condescension by His consorting with men, instead of catching the valuable truth, the critics try to degrade the Word by imputing to it inferior motives. True scholars glorify revealed truth; they do not belittle it.9. And Yahweh God called the man and said unto him: Where art thou?But God's will to set man right and help him out of his difficulty is so definitely fixed that it does not desist as soon as an obstacle is encountered. If man seeks to avoid God, God seeks out man. So the definite searching question rings out through the garden: "Where art thou?" God is not seeking information. God's questions are pedagogic. Man is to be made to realize that something must be radically wrong when the creature, who hitherto had his chief delight in associating with the good and loving Father, slinks away in hiding under the trees deep in the garden. Of course, there is the possibility that the calling and the saying of this verse represent two separate acts (K. S.369 o), but the likelihood is that, as frequently, the second verb is epexegetical to the first: "He called and said" -- He called saying.10. And he said: Thy voice did I hear in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and so I hid myself."Thy voice" stands first in the sentence by way of emphasis. It would certainly be rather insipid in this instance to render qôlekha "thy sound" or even "the sound of you" (Meek). The first word of fallen man lies before us. It is a revealing word. It is a compound of half-truth, evasion and attempted deception. So dreadfully altered has man become. The admission that he was afraid at hearing God's voice is the only true thing about his statement. Fear grows out of sin and is its natural accompaniment, especially in man's relation to God. But man's explanation of what it was that caused such fear is not frank and honest. For while his conscience thunders in his breast that this fear is the outgrowth of his disobedience, his mouth utters the half-truth that it is because of his being naked. One cannot but marvel at what a wreck of his former good self man has become. The damage wrought by sin is almost incomprehensibly great. The tongue of man can hardly describe it, except where inspired utterances like those of this chapter lie before us. Here is one of the most telling indictments, of the viciousness and supreme sinfulness of sin."I hid myself" 'echabhe' is a Nifal form, used in the older reflexive sense.11, 12. And He said: Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee not to eat? And the man answered: The woman whom thou didst set at my side, she gave me of the tree and I ate.The rather prominent sense of shame on man's part still predominates over the more necessary sense of guilt. God's cross-examination continues in order to arouse the latter. How could God be conceived of as asking these questions out of ignorance, when His higher purpose is so clearly in evidence? The first question clears the ground by drawing attention to the fact that something must have occurred to make man aware of his nakedness: "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" Of course, since he found it out by himself, he himself must have done something which made him aware of this situation. As soon as his thoughts have been led to see that this admission is inevitable, the next question drives him still

more inescapably to the admission of his guilt, namely the very direct question: "Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee not to eat?" The inquest has been quite brief, but, like all the dealings of the all knowing God, successful in convicting the sinner. Adam sees that he has not eluded God. He that aspired to godlikeness now stands a shamefaced culprit without a word of defense left. The lame reply that he does make causes us to blush for him. It is a reply that offers further evidence of the complete corruption and contamination of all of man's nature by his sin. It is a reply that in cowardly fashion refuses to admit plain guilt and in an entirely loveless fashion lays the blame for it all first on his wife and then by a wicked charge upon God Himself in the words: "The woman whom Thou didst set at my side, she gave me of the tree and I ate." Her whom he first recognized as a great blessing from God he now describes as the cause of his fall, bug chiefly he charges God, by imputation, by asserting that God set her at his side. Mutual recrimination as well as finding fault with God's works are some of the further fruits of the Fall. "Set at my side," literally, "give with me"; but "give" is frequently used almost as the verb "set" (B D B). The preliminary purpose of the inquest has been achieved as far as man is concerned: he sees what he did, what is wrong with him, and what is the basic cause of his unfortunate state. His excuses and his charge against God are not worthy even of refutation or defense on God's part. So man is left at this point, and the inquest proceeds to the woman, with a like purpose.13. And Yahweh God said to the woman: What is this that thou hast done? And the woman. said: It was the serpent that misled me, and so I ate.There is truth in the man's assertion that the woman gave to him. On this truth God's inquiry builds up, demanding of her in grave displeasure and with a note of reproach: "What is this that thou hast done?" The "this" points to the enormity of the misdeed and to the fact that it is almost, impossible to believe that one who has seen such unnumbered tokens of love should cast off such love and the allegiance which it involves. Evasion characterizes also the woman's attitude. Truth no longer dwells in her breast. She knows that what she did was done of her own volition, yet she charges the serpent with it exclusively. "Serpent," standing first in the sentence, gains the peculiar emphasis that our translation seeks to express above by: "it was the serpent," etc. All true fear of God and love of Him has, of course, departed also from her heart, for by laying the blame upon the serpent she indirectly also charges the Creator for having let the creature cross her path. This charge and excuse does not merit an answer. The woman well feels what insufficient defense she has offered and feels it still more when God does not honour it as worthy of refutation. Man never can bring a good case into God's presence as long as his own works are being considered.The Vulgate mistranslates when it offers a "why" for a "what" in the beginning of God's question.14. And Yahweh God said unto the serpent: Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou from out of the number of all the animals and of all the wild beasts; upon thy belly thou shalt go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.The serpent was the third active factor in the temptation. But because the agent behind her was a fallen spirit who was beyond the possibility of salvation, there is no attempt made to arouse a sense of guilt by a series of pedagogic questions. The divine word at once becomes a sentence of condemnation. The first part of this word definitely busies itself with the serpent as a beast, but already toward the end of this verse the Satanic agent behind the serpent is also under consideration. Then in v.15, though still speaking in terms applicable to the serpent, the word is concerned almost exclusively with the evil power that mastered the serpent in the temptation.At the beginning of v.14 the causal clause stands first (K. S.414 s). The sentence pronounced is a divine curse ('arûr -Kal passive participle; no verb form to express the voluntative, K. S.355 1). The use of the preposition min bears close

watching. Although it may be used to express a comparative, and so grammatically one might arrive at the meaning "cursed above all animals" (A. V.), yet nothing indicates that all animals are cursed. The extent of the curse should not be spread beyond what the circumstances actually warrant: for the present only the serpent and the ground are cursed. Later (4:10) Cain comes under the divine curse. Consequently, the min partitive in the sense of "out of the number of" (G. K.119w; K. S.278b) is under consideration. This particular or exclusive meaning of min is established by cases such as (Ex 19:5; De 14:2; 33:24). Therefore, this beast is singled out for a curse over against "all the animals" (behemah) in general as well as over against "the wild beasts" (chayyath hassadheh) in particular. Kittel questions without good reason whether "out of all animals" originally belonged to the text. It makes excellent sense.The fact that this beast still stands under a curse is apparent from the peculiar revulsion that it still rouses in most men. Its peculiarly sinuous movements, its silent glide as a form of locomotion, its sinister, dread and fascinating look, its vibrant tongue, its peculiar rearing of the head: all contribute to remind men of the peculiar history in which the serpent once shared.Just what the curse, however, involves is also plainly stated in the verse. The first element is, "upon thy belly thou shalt go." This does not necessarily mean that a complete transformation of the serpent took place, so that "form and movements of the serpent were altered" (Keil). Some speak quite boldly at this point about a former erect posture, as though, for example, the serpent had strutted about proudly as a cock. It has been rightly, pointed out that several parallels are available. Man worked before the Fall and still works since. Now work is in a measure a punishment. It seems likely that the rainbow existed before the Flood; but since that time it is a pledge of God's covenant. So for the serpent the going upon the belly becomes a badge of degradation; because for Israel the principle obtained that whatever crawled upon its belly was an abomination (Le 11:42). And, certainly, no man has ever seen anything noble or attractive about the serpent's gliding through the dust. Her type of movement reflects her humbler station. The second half of the curse involves a parallel thought: "dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." This is not a crude misconception like that of the Arabs who hold that certain types of spirits feed on dust. Serpents do not eat dust, and the Scriptures do not mean to say that they do. Parallel to the expression "eat dust" is the other more common one in the Scriptures, "lick dust," (Micah 7:17; Isaiah 49:23; Psalms 72:9) which in every case implies "to be humbled," "to suffer defeat." So in addition to a humiliating manner or mode of locomotion there will be a continual suffering of defeat "all the day" of her existence. The serpent will always be a creature that is worsted. But here already the words spoken reflect more upon the higher agent that employed the serpent, a thought that gets exclusive emphasis in the next verse. But the question is bound to rise: "Why should an unmoral and therefore irresponsible agent be singled out for punishment?" Strictly speaking, this is not so much punishment as emphasis upon the defeat and humiliation of the old evil foe. To make his failure as apparent as possible he as well as the irresponsible agent that he employed will be crushed in a joint overthrow. Parallel run such instances of Holy Writ where a beast that kills a man is commanded to be destroyed (Ge 9:5; Ex 21:28), or where in the destruction of mankind the rest of the creature world must perish (Ge 6:7; 7:21). This makes the seriousness of God's punishment more drastically apparent. Here may also be cited cases like that of Achan's destruction (Joshua 7:24). Since the rest of the creature world exists for man's sake, its destruction may serve a salutary purpose for man. Then, there also enters in the thought expressed by Chrysostom: God destroys the instrument that brought His creature to fall "just as a loving father, when punishing the murderer of his son, might snap in two

the sword or dagger with which the murder had been committed."15. And enmity will I put between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; he shall crush thee in respect to the head, thou shalt bruise him in respect to the heel.A marvellous text which Luther praises so highly as to say: "This text embraces and comprehends within itself everything noble and glorious that is to be found anywhere in the Scriptures." The same writer, however, indicates with equal emphasis that these glorious things are spoken in a form which for the present partly veils the full measure of truth, thus challenging the early believers to ponder deeply upon the word; but it is the New Testament that sheds a refulgence upon this word, so that it is seen to be a glorious compend of the Gospel and so rightly deserving the title long in use in reference to it, the Protevangelium, i. e. the first gospel proclamation. Lest this restriction, that we have made above, be pressed too strongly in the direction of making this appear as a very mysterious and veiled utterance, let us yet add that, since it was intended to furnish light for the first believers and for centuries was the only light that their faith had, it certainly must have furnished, as God's providence no doubt intended that it should, sufficient light for these patriarchs to enable them to walk by that light. In other words, we can and must subscribe to the statement that this word held up the Saviour before their eyes, and so made it possible for them to believe on Him.In the light of this fact, which we trust our exposition shall fully substantiate, we cannot but marvel at the rationalistic exegesis which says on every hand in our day: "it is doubtful if the passage can be regarded in any sense a Protevangel" (Skinner). Such interpreters see in the word before us nothing more than that "in the war between men and serpents the former will crush the head of the foe, while the latter can only wound the heel." Such a trite platitude would not have been worthy of recording. It stands about on the level of the astute observation that a man will slap at the mosquito that bites him. Such commonplace reflections are not worthy of the Scriptures. They are a type of exegesis like unto that which in connection with v.5 attributes a deep sense for spiritual realities to serpents. But let us aim to gather in the fullness of meaning embodied in this verse.The object, "enmity," stands first for emphasis (K. S.339 m). Now enmity ('êbhah) is a term not applicable to dumb beasts. Its scriptural use limits it, like its verb root, to enmity between persons or morally responsible agents. This fact alone, as well as the sequel, rules out the idea of mere hostility, which is not enmity, between man and serpents. The personal tempter emerges ever more distinctly as the verse progresses. Besides, this statement emphasizes that it is God who will not suffer this enmity to die down: "I will put." God wants man to continue in undying opposition to this evil one and He rouses the enmity Himself. This He does first in the case of the enmity on the woman's part. We dare, however, not go so far as to attribute to God that He also rouses Satan to enmity. That would make God the author of evil. But true enmity on man's part against the evil foe is a virtue. The woman, as one factor in the enmity, is stressed to the exclusion of man because the woman was beguiled, but from her shall definite retribution arise for the serpent. There is an eminent propriety about having the one at whom the devil aimed his attack be the one from whom his downfall emanates. So the first step in the process is that the woman herself is brought to substitute enmity for the confidence that she shortly before displayed. The present of the verb ('ashith) is the type of present or future that is used in depicting a future scene in a more elevated rhetorical style (K. S.132). The marvellous promises of God's achievements can be recounted by this type of form. The promise expands. This enmity is to be of broader scope; it is to involve coming generations: "between thy (the devil's) seed and her (the woman's) seed." There would be something supremely trivial about this solemn utterance if it did no more in the expression, the serpent's "seed," than to think of

generations of serpents as yet unhatched. There must be meant the children of the evil one who are of their father the devil and will do the lusts of their father (John 8:44). If "seed" must refer to a whole class and so is used in the collective sense in the one half of the statement, then "seed" (again zéra') in the second half or parallel member of the statement must be used collectively for the descendants or posterity of woman. To take the word "seed of the woman" at this point at once in the sense of an individual and so as a definite and exclusive reference to Christ the Saviour is wrong and grammatically impossible. Even Hengstenberg and Keil unreservedly admit that. So the second part of the verse points to an enmity established by God and involving on the one side the posterity or children of the evil one and on the other side the posterity or children of the woman, those who share her definite opposition to the evil one.Now a peculiar thing happens in the course of the further unfolding of the clash between the forces listed thus far. First came: Satan (1) vs. Woman (2). Then came seed of the one (3) vs. the seed of the other (4). The seed of the woman (4) is now mentioned by "he" or "it" (hû). Though the pronoun is singular, , it refers back to zéra'(4) which we just proved to be used collectively. The peculiar thing that now happens is that the climax of the struggle is seen to be not between (4), a group, and (3), a group, but between (4), seemingly a group, and (1), an individual, "thee," and in this conflict between (4) and (1) the battle is fought out and won by (4). That the battle is actually fought to a decisive conclusion appears from the verb employed and from the manner in which it is employed. The verb shûph decidedly means "crush" (K. W.), a meaning which even Skinner finally decides it is "better to adhere to." Of course, as Luther clearly shows in his translation, we have a zeugma (K. W.) in the use of this word: the head is crushed but the heel is bruised; Luther: zertreten vs. stechen. This is too obvious to require lengthy defense; for when man steps on a serpent's head, a crushing results; but when the serpent strikes while the contest is on, only a sting on the heel or a bruising results. But at the same time a crushed head spells utter defeat. A bruised heel may be nursed till healed, and if the bite have been poisonous, the poison may be removed by sucking or cauterizing. (4) merely suffers; (1) is crushed. So in a very positive way the victory is guaranteed to the seed of the woman. The struggle is not to be interminable. It does end in complete defeat of the serpent, who is here, to cap the climax in establishing her identity, again addressed as "thou," a form of address involving, where moral issues are at stake as here, a being with moral sense and responsibility, i. e. Satan himself. But we cannot stop short at this point.If (4) engaged with (1) in the decisive battle and (1) was an individual, there is, on the very face of it, great likelihood that (4) points also to an individual. This thought becomes clearer when we reflect on the term "seed of the woman." Within the broadest sense of the term would lie all mankind; they are all Eve's posterity or seed. But plainly the word cannot here be meant in that broadest possible sense, for only they are under consideration who hold enmity against (3), i. e. against .all the children of the evil one. For that matter, they even constitute a minority of all of the woman's descendants; they are a "little flock," (Lu 12:32). So within the circle of the broadest possible meaning of zéra' must be drawn a circle quite a bit smaller. These represent the true seed of the woman. But even as those who constitute (3) find their cause represented most sturdily by and embodied in (1), an individual, so they who constitute (4). must find their cause represented most sturdily by and embodied in an individual in whom the idea "seed of the woman" finds most perfect expression. He is the very centre of the circle above referred to. And since our thinking must naturally arrive at this conclusion, it seems that godly thought on the part of earnest believers in days of old must have arrived at the same conclusion. The victory would be concluded by one born of woman. Both the ultimate victory and

its achievement by the seed of the woman are taught with unequivocal plainness by this word. Our interpretation, therefore, of the term "seed of the woman" sees in it perfectly natural concentric circles of meaning, even as such also is the case with the term "servant of Yahweh" in Isaiah. Israel as a whole bears that name; also the godly in Israel; Cyrus is honoured by it; but in Isaiah 53 and elsewhere it is pre-eminently the designation of the Messiah. To such an interpretation of zéra' there ought to be still less objection when it is remembered that the word is also used in reference to an individual and not only in the collective sense; cf. (Ge 4:25; 1 Samuel 1:11; 2 Samuel 7:12). When these contentions are attacked on the score that zéra', when used of an individual child, "denotes the immediate offspring as the pledge of posterity, never a remote descendant," then an intentional feature of the whole prophecy is overlooked. There is a vagueness about the whole in point of time which invited men to trust God for whatever time He might be pleased to choose to bring it to fruition. Men had to be ready to settle down to a wait until it might please the sovereign Ruler to bring to pass what He here definitely had promised.It should be clearly observed that this gracious promise is the opening of the sentence or doom that God pronounces. Even on the first pages of the Bible we are shown the face of a God "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex 34:6). He delights in showing mercy. "Where sin abounded, grace did the more abound" (Ro 5:20). Grace, provocative of faith, precedes the sentence.One point of view, usually overlooked but made plain already by Luther, deserves mention. By leaving open the question of just what woman the Saviour was to be born, God mocks the tempter, always leaving him in uncertainty which one would ultimately overthrow him, so that the devil had to live in continual dread of every woman's son that was born.But is the particular expression "seed of the woman" perhaps so phrased in reference to Mary and the virgin birth? Not primarily, but at least incidentally. The expression "seed of man" would not have been so directly motivated. As pointed out above, the one tempted and brought to fall is chosen by God to produce the one that is to bring Satan to fall, that Satan might in no wise boast himself against.God But at the same time, to show how completely God governs and controls all things as well as foreknows them, an expression is chosen that meets with literal fulfilment in Him who is virgin born and not of the seed of man. Yet we prefer to state the case thus the expression used does not specifically prophesy the virgin birth, but it coincides and agrees with it under divine providence. For it is not to be forgotten that the expression "her seed" in its first meaning is a collective noun and includes all who are enrolled in the struggle against Satan, without being themselves virgin born.After modernists have refused to let the Messianic import of the passage stand, which was of old accepted by the Jewish and by the Christian Church, it is interesting to observe what they substitute for it, for even for them the mere notion of enmity between men and snakes is rather a trite matter. Some hold that we have here "the protest of ethical religion against the unnatural fascination of snake-worship." Rather a farfetched substitute! Again, since the word does have a rather solemn sound, how account for that? It is suggested that here we have one of those strange words that like oft "recurring motives of the Genesis' narratives" explain "the more perplexing facts in the history of men and peoples" and "are the working out of a doom or weird' pronounced of old under divine inspiration." Similar instances are listed, , as 4:15; 8:21 ff.; 9:25 ff.; 16:12; 27:27 ff.; 46:19 ff., ch.49; The thought is that mysterious things are to be explained as the working out of words of fate uttered long ago. But rather than think of some word of blind fate about snakes, this should be listed as a definite word of prophecy and promise. Procksch lets the word carry no more meaning than that man and serpent both perish in this weird contest: the fight ends in a kind of draw -- a very hopeful prospect

outlined by the Lord! Even Koenig dares go no farther (Die Mess. Weissagungen) than to find in the word the sure promise of the defeat of the serpent but no reference to the Messiah.Those who would charge our interpretation with being too deeply involved or to abstruse or too difficult for the Old Testament believer to discover, should remember that the Jewish Church, according to the Targum, regarded this passage as messianic from a very early day. If Irenaeus is mentioned as the first one of the Christian church fathers definitely to state this view, that does not materially alter the situation. Not every messianic passage is mentioned definitely in the New Testament, yet cf. (Ro 16:20). A significant New Testament fact, however, looms up very prominently and serves the same purpose: after Christ's public ministry is officially inaugurated by His baptism, He encounters the devil in a temptation, even as the first parents encountered him. This, first of all, confirms the fact that the first tempter was the devil, but it more distinctly displays the first crushing defeat that the seed of the woman administered to His opponent. On the cross this victory was sealed and brought to its perfect conclusion. The cry, "It is finished," marked the successful completion of the task.Unfortunately, the Catholic church, following an error of the Vulgate, translates hû as "she" (ipsa) instead of, as the Hebrew alone allows: "he" (ipse). So she refers the passage to the virgin Mary. Even the original translator of the Vulgate, Jerome, was aware that the retention of this form was an error. 16. To the woman He said: I will increase very greatly thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; unto thy husband thou shalt be attracted, and he shall rule over thee.Divine wisdom and justice dictate this sentence. Justice is made apparent in the fact that in the three elements embodied in the sentence each stands in direct relation to the misdeed of the woman, being a penalty commensurate with the wrong. In this way divine wisdom displays itself; for such punishment is calculated to keep awake in womankind a direct remembrance of the fateful deed of the first mother. The first part of the penalty is found in the words: "I will increase very greatly thy pain and thy conception." This does not imply that pain would have been the normal thing for womankind. Nor is this the pain connected primarily with childbearing; although that is included. What is done is that woman from this time onward has numerous forms of pain laid to her lot. Physical infirmities of a painful kind are in a great measure her portion. Because of her more delicate makeup many things besides cause her a greater measure of mental and spiritual pain. The just retaliation lies in this that she who sought sweet delights in the eating of the forbidden fruit, finds not delights but pain -- not joy but sorrow. For 'itstsebhon includes both "pain" and "sorrow," in fact, everything that is hard to bear. The conjunction before "conception"is to be taken in the sense of "and in particular," a meaning found e. g. in (Psalms 18:1) (Heb.); (Isaiah 2:1). Nowhere shall the rich measure of "pain" be more in evidence than here. We have here more than what a hendiadys ("the pain of thy conception") allows, for (cf. K.W.). "Conception" will be multiplied. When its painful character becomes apparent, woman will seek to have little of it, but her common lot according to this word will be a frequent recurrence of it, as, barring a few exceptions, the history of the race amply testifies. To allow for no misunderstanding of the word at this point, for frequent conceptions might in themselves at first glance not appear to be an evil, the explanatory sentence is appended without a connective (K. S.338 p): "In pain thou shalt bring forth children."This asserts that each conception shall culminate in the pains of parturition. This form of the word for "pain" is briefer than the preceding one, but since the same root appears in both, we used one word for both. "Misery" (Besckwerde) would also cover the term quite well.The second part of the penalty is: "Unto thy husband thou shalt be attracted." Teshûqah might be rendered "desire" or even better "yearning."

This yearning is morbid. It is not merely sexual yearning. It includes the attraction that woman experiences for man which she cannot root from her nature. Independent feminists may seek to banish it, but it persists in cropping out. It may be normal. It often is not but takes a perverted form even to the point of nymphomania. It is a just penalty. She who sought to strive apart from man and to act independently of him in the temptation finds a continual attraction for him to be her unavoidable lot.The third part of the penalty is: "he shall rule over thee." She sought to control him by taking control into her own hands (II Tim.2:14) and even by leading him on in the temptation. As a result her penalty is that she shall be the one that is controlled. Man's position in reference to woman now is fixed: he bears the rule. When all is done in the spirit of Christ, such rule is not harsh or unnatural; nor is it cancelled. There it expresses itself in such a way that it is not to be felt as a burden. But where sin prevails, such rule may be degraded into a miserable domination, such as the East has particularly, experienced. God did not ordain this harshness, but man transcended his rights, and sin poisoned a necessary restriction. This word, then, does not reflect the narrowness of the East but is a wholesome restraint and reminder for womankind.The expression, "I will increase very greatly," is the usual verb plus absolute infinitive. On the ending of the infinitive see G. K.75 ff. Verbs of ruling with be; see K. S.212 e.17. And unto the man He said: Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying: Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed be the ground on thy account; in misery shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.The penalty laid' upon man is given at greater length; but then it must be observed that a good part of the word, especially the conclusion of v.17 as well as v.18 and v.19, apply to woman as well as to man. In other words, the first word of v.17 should be pointed la'adham and rendered "unto the man" rather than "unto Adam." Note also the contrast with v.16, "unto the woman." Observe also that at v.20 the proper name, Adam, has not yet emerged.But man's punishment fits his particular misdeed. Because he submitted to his wife, whereas he should have ruled, therefore he shall experience insubordination on the part of the soil, whereas otherwise he would have exercised complete control. This involves, first of all, difficulty in the matter of securing his sustenance: "in misery shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." It shall yield produce, but the winning of it shall always be attended by 'itstsebhôn, "misery," "toil," "sorrow." The former ease of tilling the soil shall be a thing of the past. On no place of the earth's surface can such toil be evaded. In some places there may be more of it, in others less, but "toil" is the common lot of man. The immediate cause for this is the fact that "the ground is cursed." A divine word blighted its fruitfulness. There was a deep reason and a necessity for that. It was no longer fitting that an imperfect man dwell in the midst of a perfect dwelling place. Divine pedagogy makes the outward circumstances correspond to the inward state, so that man might the more keenly feel his wretchedness. Therefore the explanatory phrase says that it was done "on thy account," not by accident, not because God delights in blasting a perfect world, but for man's sake: such a world would best tend to induce man to be ready to accept God's salvation. Of course, the expression, "thou shalt eat of it" (the ground) means "to derive a living from it" (Meek). But the thing that stands out as prominently as any in this verse is that this, as well as the consequences yet to be enumerated, are directly traced to man's sin: "because thou hast eaten." etc. There are not some mysterious words of doom that trail man wherever he goes, but there is an inescapable divine sentence, which man has fully merited, which follows him wherever he goes through life. Not blind fate but human guilt and consequent divine punishment explain man's lot; and chief of these is man's guilt. It may not be amiss to add that a bit of gracious promise lies imbedded in this

hard word of punishment; viz., the expression, "thou shalt eat of it," does give to man the assurance that as a return for his hard labour he shall not lack the food he needs. 18. Thorns also and thistles shall it cause to spring forth for thee and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.While man is eating and is destined to eat the "herb of the field" ('ésebh hassadheh -- here for all the food of man which was still vegetable in character), the ground was of itself bringing forth thorns and thistles. This seems to us to be the connection of the two halves of this verse. So that not only is difficulty and toil experienced while man is winning his food (v.17), but also that which he does procure is gotten in meagre quantities only (v.18), because undesirable elements grow without receiving attention. This, too, is one of the effects of the curse of the ground. God is here not ordaining a different diet for man -- "the herb of the field," an expression erroneously translated by some, "wild plants."However, the disorders and irregularities observed throughout the world are far more numerous than those recorded in v.17-19. Why should only those be mentioned that accompany agricultural endeavour? First of all, because in that particular direction they are most readily observed, for all men must in a measure engage in tilling the soil. But besides, no doubt, we have one type of disorder mentioned here as a sample of all the rest. As the soil and its culture are disordered, so is every department of life and the world. So Calvin interprets. Luther surmises that at first only these few disabilities were laid upon man and that they increased progressively as time went on -- a view that is less acceptable. In any case, the penalty agreed with the simpler aspects of life that were in evidence in the early history of mankind.19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return unto the ground, for from it thou wast taken; for dust thou art and unto dust thou must return,This part of the penalty emphasizes primarily the lifelong continuance of the toil imposed on man-till he returns unto the ground. Otherwise, the opening words of the verse are nothing more than a paraphrase of v.17 d, "in misery shalt thou eat of it." But the paraphrase is drastic in its colouring. It actually represents man as having such brief respite between portions of his work that, as he sits down to meat, the sweat still courses down his face as a result of his previous hard toil. From this lot there is no deliverance until man's return to the ground. It is not here said that this return is man's death, for, in reality, "death" is used in a far more comprehensive sense in these chapters. But the fate of his body is foretold: being of dust, it must return to dust. Though this is stated as an inevitable consequence, it will not do to claim that such physical dissolution would have been man's lot anyhow. For this statement is part of the general penalty. This penalty now determines that man's lot after the body must be to return to the dust whence he came. This is a solemn word whose truth is felt with overwhelming force each time we see it fulfilled. "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return" is not, we repeat, a general maxim, which holds good in any event.It would be one-sided in v.16-19 to speak only of penalty. Of course, the thing dwelt on is primarily penalty. But, at the same time, there are traces of mercy that shine through it all. It is not plain penalty but corrective penalty. There may be much pain and suffering on the woman's part, especially in childbearing, but the future of the race is guaranteed in such childbearing. At the same time this experience effectually reminds the woman of her grievous transgression -- also a salutary effect. The same result is secured by the particular form of punishment that is laid upon man. So, on the whole, it must also be admitted that, though work may be a grievous burden, it is also a very definite and valuable blessing. Thus God stands revealed even in this, not only as a God of justice but also as a God of mercy.Though spoken to Adam and Eve, these words are not addressed to them merely as individuals but as progenitors of the human race, as is amply indicated by experience. For all the children of Adam and Eve have

found themselves suffering the same lot as that which our first parents were here told would be inevitable. Such Scriptures as II Tim.1:14, 15 more particularly support this contention.20. And the man called his wife's name Eve (Life) because she was the mother of all living.God's wise pedagogy through it all has not been in vain, as now appears from Adam's reaction. The account still refers to him by the generic name "the man," as appears from the use of the article before 'adham. This act of Adam's, whereby he gives his wife the name "Life," is proof of a faith that involves more than the idea that God is indeed speaking the truth when He indicates that Eve will bring forth offspring and so be the mother of all the living. That would hardly be significant enough to mention, being quite self-evident and quite readily believed. But we do justice to this word when we see in it the conclusion on man's part, that, since all living beings shall come forth from her, therefore also life itself in that fulness of sense in which the word is often used in the Scriptures ("death" is also used in the fullest sense in these chapters). Consequently, by the significant nature of the name employed, as well as by the significant way in which the matter is reported at this important juncture, we are to understand that Adam refers to the things implied in the promise of the victory over the devil. In other words, he here gives evidence not only of believing that God spoke the truth but evidence of belief in the salvation which God had promised. This, then, was on Adam's part, as far as was possible under the circumstances, a true and living faith in Christ. This faith of his surely could not have all the clearness that marks the faith of New Testament believers. But the essentials of faith were in evidence. And since faith cannot come into being unless true repentance precedes, we are justified in saying that indirectly the repentance of Adam is here taught. Again everything has been done in perfect harmony with the rule that God follows of begetting faith by the means of grace. The words of the sentence spoken had prominent elements of the Law in them and so were calculated to work repentance. Equally prominent were the elements of Gospel which were calculated to work faith in the hearts of these first hearers. So the question is answered, whether after the Fall Adam repented and believed. The proper name for Eve, chawwah, is by far not as uncertain in meaning as some would claim. Nor is there any evidence that the Hebrew root could yield the meaning "serpent" just because of a similar Arabic form. A parallel is found in the analogous verb hayyah, which also existed in the parallel form hawwah (Ge 27:29) and survives in this form in the proper name Yahweh. So chayyah, meaning "to live," could easily have had the older form chawwah with the same meaning. "Life" is the well-established meaning of this proper name. The second half of the verse is the author's statement, not Adam's, as 2:24.21. And Yahweh God made garments of skin for the man and for his wife and so clothed them.Now God makes necessary provision for man's physical well-being. The covering that man had made for himself was inadequate, and so God showed him how to provide a more suitable and durable covering for himself. By so doing God gave His approval of the sense of shame which had led our first parents to cover their nakedness, and at the same time He furnished protection against the rigors of climate which would be encountered outside of the garden. The expression "and he made" (wayyß'as) is best understood not that He personally did the making, but that He gave such directions as man required to learn how to make appropriate skin garments. That God does provide for the proper clothing of man's body does suggest and does render reasonable the conclusion that He will provide for the proper covering of man's guilty soul. But this verse does not teach that, nor is it an allegory conveying a lesson to that effect. The meaning is what the letter of the statement says -- no more. God's reason for the choice of just such a type of garment was that there was none simpler and more readily prepared. That being

the case, no deeper meaning need be attached to the fact that these garments were of skin. Nevertheless, since the slaying of beasts for man's needs was thus sanctioned, this may have suggested to man the idea of sacrifice, yet not of sacrificial meals, for man had as yet no divine warrant for the use of animal food. Further reflection on this means of providing garments may have taught man some useful lessons. One certainly was that there must be some deep seated disorders in the world at large since man's sin, if the giving up of the lives of beasts was necessary to provide man with garments. Death was present in various forms since man's lapse into sin. It is difficult to say whether the slaying of beasts for purposes of clothing in Adam's day already involved sacrifice.Kothnôth does generally mean "tunics," but here, no doubt, it is used in the general sense of "garments" (Klied-K. W.); "coats" (A. V.) is too specific. The pointing of the text should be slightly altered to la'adham, "for man," instead of le'adham, "for Adam." The generic use of the word is intended because "and his wife" follows, also generic, not "Eve."22-24. And Yahweh God said: Behold, man is become as one of us to know good and evil, and now lest he reach forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever -- so Yahweh God expelled him from the garden of Eden to till the soil whence he was taken; and He drove the man forth and placed the cherubim eastward of the garden of Eden and a revolving sword like flame to guard the way to the tree of life.Since the actual commission of sin the author has with very deliberate purpose been using the name "Yahweh God" for the deity. In the temptation the devil naturally could not want to refer to Him as such. But now, since v.8, it has been the definite purpose of Moses to portray God as one who, though eternal and unchangeable, manifested the unchangeableness of His mercy toward even the fallen ones. The God of mercy has been portrayed since v: 8. So here too in v.22 barring man from approach to the tree of life is mercy. Therefore Yahweh is used, as well as 'Elohim.Whereas in v.8-21 We had the substance of what God spoke to man in mercy and in judgment, we have in v.22 the persons of the Holy Trinity in divine counsel among themselves. As might well be expected, from the divine point of view man's act is not only trivial but sad. Man achieved in a relative sense a kind of parody of godlikeness. A divine and holy irony takes note of this. True, there is nothing in these remarks of God that could for a moment make it appear as though the Lord found fallen man a fit object for venting His amusement. Perhaps, since human terms but imperfectly describe the deity, words such as sarcasm or irony -- over the relative propriety of which a vigorous debate is still being waged in reference to this passage -- had better both be avoided, lest we create a conflict with the pure pity that, without a doubt, stamps his mercy as truly divine. We might, then, substitute the word "sadness" as descriptive of God's attitude. At the same time, the turn of the narrative practically requires that attention be drawn to the equivocal sense in which the promise was made: "Ye shall be as gods." What a sorry godlikeness, if we may use the paradox, and what a pitiable achievement on man's part! The expression "like one of us" cannot, be made to include the angels, as though God were saying that He and they constitute the class of higher beings. For, in the first place, in any case such a levelling process that puts God and created beings in one class is precarious; and, in the second place, the like expression 1:26 stands too near to leave room for anything other than a reference to the persons of the Trinity. If, then, it be claimed that the revelation of Scripture is up to this point too meagre to allow for a clear understanding of this fact, we readily admit that in the earlier stages of revelation this word may not have been fully apprehended. But some of the revelation coming from God must be progressively apprehended. The Old Testament pointed in the way of the full truth. The New Testament sheds its light back

upon this word too clearly to be ignored. But as Luther already rightly claimed, this word shows the unity of the divine being ("God said") and a plurality of person ("us"), this latter fact, however, primarily in the light of the New Testament.At the same time, there is one very necessary step that must be taken before this episode of the Fall is completely adjusted, and that is, man must be completely shut off from access to "the tree of life." About the purpose of this tree we learn only from its name and from the remark here made in reference to it. It had the power to impart imperishable physical life-for the plain statement of the case is that had man eaten, he would have "lived forever." But since, to the best of our knowledge, no tree of itself can possess such virtue, it seems best again with Luther to assume that this remarkable power was characteristic of the tree not by its inherent natural qualities but by virtue of the power of the Word of God, who was pleased to ordain that such should be the effect of partaking of the fruit of this tree. For man in his fallen and sadly altered state the acquisition of the quality of imperishability for this sin-torn and sin-defaced body would have been a grievous calamity. He would never have been able to "shuffle off this mortal coil." Christ's work of restoration would have been precluded, where He "changes this body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Philemon 3:21). Further speculation about the nature of this tree is useless. But this purpose is clearly revealed by this one word of divine revelation. The whole purpose of the narrative becomes distorted by the critics who claim to find in v.22 a "crude form of the legend" besides "more of the characteristically pagan feeling of the envy of the Gods." There is nothing crude about divine pity. Nor, to tell the truth, can anything crude be extracted from this verse except it be first placed there by the critic.The construction ladhß'ath offers that use of the preposition which is best rendered "in respect of knowing." For the whole, see G. K.114o. On the expression "as one from us" cf. G. K.130d on the construct state before a preposition; also K. S.277 n. K. S. tangles up the situation by supplying words before "lest" (pen). This negative clause of purpose must be attached to what follows.Of course, there is a bit of truth in what K. C. claims, that withholding man from the tree of life was punishment. But in the altered state of man the results of eating of the fruit of it would have been most disastrous.Now with v.23 the sentence structure is altered. Direct discourse merges over into the doing of the thing that lay in the divine intention -- an effective way of saying that God carries out His purposes.(23) The act of God in putting man out of the garden is here described as He "expelled" him (shillach). Being the Piel stem of the verb to "send," "expel" (Meek) is a good rendering. That is, however, only the more general statement of the case. The more specific word, describing the manner of doing it, is given in v.24, and He "drove forth" the man. This second verb garash pictures Him vividly as driving man before Him. The first verb would be covered in all its connotations if Cod had merely ordered man to depart. Now according to v.5 as well as v.15 it was already ordained that one of the duties of man was to be to "till the soil." But now after his expulsion from the garden this remains as his only work, and there is the suggestion that there is something unwelcome and degrading about it all because the clause is added, "from whence thou wast taken." All the other noble prerogatives of man are largely cancelled, such as "having dominion" and "ruling." Man now actually stands in heavy bondage to the very soil that he was first privileged to control. Some try to make this verse a mere doublet of v.24, whereas, in reality, both tell two very different stories, even on the expulsion there is no overlapping: the one describes the act in general terms; the other is more specific.(24) There was something particularly shameful about being driven forth from the garden. Divine goodness aimed to make man feel his altered

state very keenly: first blessed fellowship, then harsh expulsion. To make the severity of His judgments immediately apparent and the removal of them humanly impossible, a double guard is placed against any possible attempts at re-entering the garden. Between man and the garden, that is "to the east," "cherubim" are placed. They are a type of being somewhat like angels. Because they are elsewhere in the Scriptures definitely described as "the living ones," chayyoth and zwa, we are well justified in claiming that because of this distinctive name they must represent the highest type of living beings. They are particularly found in the Scriptures as honoured by the privilege to stand in the immediate presence of the heavenly King, and they are specially associated with Him in works of judgment, as here. K. W. well defines that they are "representatives and mediators of God's presence in the world" (Ps.18:10), Repraesentanten und Vermittler der Weltgegenwart Gottes. The root from which the word may be derived would suggest that the word as such means "a brilliant appearance" (Glanzerscheinung). How these marvellous beings appeared was well remembered by the Israelites at least, for they seemed to require no further description when they were told to make two cherubim upon the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant and otherwise to use the figures of cherubim for ornamental purposes; cf. (Ex 25:18; 26:1). Quite distinct from these cherubim was the "revolving swordlike flame," which is often represented erroneously as a sword in the hand of the cherubim. The only connection that the flame and the cherubim have is that they both effectually bar the way to the tree of life, and since God's wrath at man's misdeed is displayed by their presence, it is perfectly correct, as Keil does, to let the flame represent God's wrath. However, the literal expression is "the flame of the sword, the turning one." This is best taken as meaning a flame, swordlike in appearance and continually rotating-or even, perhaps, moving zigzag like flashes of lightning; at any event, a sight effectually deterring man from attempting to enter, so effectually, no doubt, that he did not even venture to approach the garden from any other side.All speculations as to how long the garden of Eden continued upon earth after the Fall are bound to be quite hopeless. Certainly, for at least a time after the expulsion the garden was still upon earth, and both the cherubim and the vibrant flame of fire continued in their God-appointed place. But to venture to say that the garden as such remained until it was destroyed by the Flood is an assertion that can be as little proved as the other claim that is was removed or "vanished from the earth with the expulsion of men from the garden of Eden" (Keil).We leave this chapter with a sigh over the glory that was lost and with deep regret over the loss of man's original innocence. There is no chapter in the Scriptures that more effectively reveals the source of all evil that is in the world; and so it becomes a very helpful chapter for the man that is ready to accept its truth.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSA few suggestions as to the homiletical use of this chapter. "The Fall into Sin" as such can be expounded on the basis of v.1-8, though to an extent the basic elements of the narrative are fairly well known to most Christians from their childhood days. Yet many trivial conceptions have been carried over into maturity which may well be corrected. Since our day is particularly weak on the subject of sin and its pernicious effects, v.9-19 presents a very suggestive portion for the treatment of "the Curse of Sin," or, "the Consequences of the Original Sin." Within this section is one verse that for all its brevity still contains enough material .for a complete sermon, namely v.15 which contains "the First Gospel." As we showed above, v.20 gives indication of man's penitence and faith. Therefore it would be quite in order to treat v.20-24 under a heading like "Tokens of God's Mercy to Penitent Man."

CHAPTER IV

The Early Development of the Sinful Human Race The book of Genesis has thus far progressed in a very natural and logical sequence of thought. After the story of Creation was unfolded as an orderly work, displaying to the fullest extent the mighty power of Him who is its Creator, chapter two informed us more in detail in regard to the conditions of our first parents, enabling, us to appreciate fully the situations that were soon to be encountered. Then in chapter three came the necessary test of man, resulting in his tragic Fall; at the same time we were informed in detail what far reaching consequences grew out of this initial sin, consequences that burden the human race ever since and help us far more readily to understand what man's lot actually is and why it is as it is. Now, in the fourth chapter, we are shown what transpires as the human race embarks upon its career under the curse of sin but also with the promise of hope as a guiding star. Just what was the development of our race in its first steps toward fuller maturity? Unfortunately, students of history and of anthropology too largely ignore this one chapter, which happens to be the only authentic record of this early development. Having cast off the only reliable account of man's first deeds and achievements, practically all writers of the present then proceed to draw very largely upon their imagination, which happens to be cast into the thought-patterns of evolutionistic conceptions. Then they misread the available archaeological hints-for actual archaeological evidence for earliest man is not available-and the result is a highly fantastic and entirely incorrect story of man's development from the cave-man stage, as it is claimed, to the point where the first higher cultural achievements are found and the historical period actually begins. At the same time the very reliable Biblical chronology of chapter five is distorted and generous insertions of long periods of time are made, and so the value of our chapter (A) is completely lost sight of. For man not only did not start on the low anthropoid or simian state that is usually assumed, but as a human being he at once stood on the high intellectual and physical level that the preceding chapters described. But, unfortunately, the actual degradation that sin brought is not reckoned with. Whereas man was not an inferior being on a lower level, such writing of history degrades him without warrant. Whereas he was brought low by the Fall, this pseudo-science ignores his true degradation. In both respects the chapter before us, being strictly historical and entirely correct, serves to set the student of the history of mankind right; and at the same time it gives to all men a clear account as to how man progressed and how sin grew. The following is the natural division of our chapter: (a) v.1-16 give an individual instance of the early development of The now sinful human race, as significant an instance as skilful writing of history could have found; (b) v.17-24 give an account of the development of the family of those who were estranged from God; (c) v.25, 26 give an account of the development of the family of the godly. All this, of course, is done in the characteristic lapidary style of the Scriptures, where significant individual instances are made to display graphically what course was being pursued. Modern criticism, proud in its own conceit and refusing to accept instruction, fails to see all this and loses itself in a seemingly wise discussion about the various and inconsistent sources from which the author (J) drew his material, but at the same time such criticism cannot successfully hide the fact that in reality it too knows nothing about these sources. Nobody does. At the same time criticism, seeks to undermine the credibility of the

record by disparaging remarks. We, however, accept the chapter in its fullness of truth as an accurate and correct account as to how the development of the human race after the Fall progressed-a progress, by the way of which we cannot feel particularly proud. 1. And the man knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and she said, I have gotten a man-child with Yahweh. The relative completeness of the Biblical record appears from this that the first descendants of the first parents are reported in it. Adam, here still called by the generic title "the man," begets a son, Cain. With a significant delicacy and a very proper euphemism it is said he "knew" his wife. This common expression, used only in reference to connubial intercourse, signifies, as usual, a deeper knowing, an understanding of the divine purpose, in this instance the purpose which lay behind the forming of woman. As a protest against any notion of promiscuity on the part of the first man the account significantly adds to the proper name Eve, "his wife," as though to indicate that he knew and instinctively felt that the marital relation was intended to be monogamous: it would not have occurred to our first parent to "know" any other than "his wife." Apparently, the statement coming at this point, aims to indicate that Adam did not know Eve during the time of their stay in the garden. Whether this was largely due to circumstances, or to the brevity of the stay in the garden, or was providentially regulated, will, perhaps, never be fully determined, although it will be practically impossible to rule out the providential factor. With a certain measure of fullness of expression, characteristic of Hebrew style at times, it is reported that "she conceived and bare Cain." The giving of this name is at the same time accounted for by the remark that she made at the time he was born. She said, "I have gotten a man-child." The Hebrew verb for this is qanah; the Hebrew proper name is qa'yin. The similarity of the two is sufficiently apparent for practical purposes. It matters little if it be objected that as to form the noun can hardly come from the verb root qanah. Eve was not at the time of her remark aiming to establish an exact etymology as philologists might. She could well be satisfied with a kind of alliteration between the two; as long as the name only served to recall her significant utterance, and that it adequately did. Though now modern philology guesses about at various meanings of the word, from "smith" to "lament," it is sufficient to hold that to the first mother the name served to recall her hopeful utterance. Qanah, by almost universal consent, must here mean "acquire" or "get." To us it still seems that in spite of the philologists' protests she wanted after she had said "gotten" to give a name like "Got," if we may be permitted to coin an English parallel. Such a name would continually recall how she "got." However, the significant part of her remark is that she got this son "with Yahweh." The experience of birth with its travail having been successfully ferminated, she ascribes what she acquired to Jehovah's help. In this phrase lie both thankfulness and praise: thankfulness at deliverance from pain and danger, praise that Jehovah is manifesting His grace and faithfulness in giving a son. So the use of the name "Yahweh" should be observed. Apparently, then, since the name stresses His gracious faithfulness, Eve praises God that He who promised victory to the seed of the woman actually lets "seed of the woman" be born. Nothing indicates whether Eve did or did not anticipate that this very seed, Cain, should personally crush the serpent's head. But, in any case, she had a token of Yahweh's fidelity. That she expresses it as she does also affords proof that the mother of our race had not remained in her sin but had come to repentance and faith in God's promises. Consequently, her utterance is also to be regarded as a word of faith. This translation of the expression 'eth Yahweh is sanctioned by almost all versions: the Targum has "from"; the Greek has dia tou yeou; the Vulgate has per deum. The preposition 'eth has the meaning "with" or "with the help of" also in Gen.49:25 a; Judg.8:7 b; Esther 9:29. Luther

translated.: "I have the man, the Lord," making eth the regular sign of the accusative. However, grammatically we must object to this original rendering on the score that 'eth, being the sign of the definite object, sets the definite object Yahweh by the side of the very indefinite object 'ish, "a man." In the second place, nothing had as yet indicated to Eve the divine character of the seed of the woman. To claim that she could quite naturally have anticipated that fact, would practically make revelation unnecessary: man could adequately surmise the most vital of truths. Thirdly, Luther himself wavered on this point. In his commentary stands den Mann des Herrn, "the man of the Lord." That the word 'ish in that case must then mean "a human being" (Mensch) is not unusual. It has the same meaning in Num.23:19. We believe we have caught the spirit of the word in rendering "manchild." Eve in spirit sees the child already grown to full manhood. It is necessary to observe that this remark of Eve's demonstrates clearly how our first parents put all their hope and trust in God's Word. They had but few words from the Lord. Outstanding was the word of gospel concerning the ultimate victory of the woman's seed. This furnished the ground for a true hope, for a distinct, though as yet not fully developed, faith in the Christ. An interesting argument for the unity of Genesis and its composition by one author may briefly be inserted here. Popular etymologies, like that of the name "Cain," are found repeatedly in Genesis, and, strange to say, in .all the chief so-called sources, J, P, and E. This constitutes one of the many strong arguments for the composition by one author, although criticism refuses to use this valid argument. Here are the facts (according to Strack): J has (Ge 2:23; 4:25; 5:29; 9:27; 10:25; 11:9; 50:11) etc.; P offers (Ge 17:5); E gives (Ge 41:51, 52); cf. also chapters (Ge 29, 30; 35:18; Ex 2:10, 22) etc. On watta'har see G. K.75 r.The fact that Eve, the mother, is the one that supplies the name is no indication that the Bible teaches that the matriarchate existed from days of old. Naturally, on occasion the mother will desire and fix a certain name upon a child. Occasionally the father's wish will prevail. Note that among the instances to be cited on v.25 both sides of the matter stand out clearly.Meek's rendering is poor exegesis: "I have won back my husband; the Lord is with me." It requires several highly improbable things: a serious quarrel between the first parents and several grave deficiencies in the text. To alter texts when the desired meaning is not readily forthcoming is poor scholarship.2. After that she bore his brother Abel, and Abel was a keeper of sheep and Cain was a tiller of the soil,The scriptural record definitely knows who the second one of the sons of Adam was. The fact that it is not again reported that Adam "knew his wife and she conceived," but merely, "she bore," does not in any way indicate, as has been frequently maintained, that Abel was of the same birth and Cain's-twin brother. The following cases of the omission of the mention of conception without the suggestion of twin births may be listed: 4:20, 22, 25; 6:4; 22:20, 24; 25:2; 30:10, 12, 21; 35:16; 36:4; 38:5 etc. (K. C.).The name Abel is significant. Hébhel means "breath," "vapour," "vanity." Somehow the vanity of human existence had impressed itself on our first parents. The exact occasion for this realization cannot be determined. It may have been due to the fact that man was barred from access to the tree of life. Those that argue that Eve thought Cain to be the Messiah see in Abel's name proof of her disillusionment. Even more likely is the supposition that the sum total of human existence marred by sin had impressed man with the emptiness of it all.The expression, "after that she bore," in Hebrew offers the idiomatic statement: "she added to bear," the main verb being used almost as an adverb (G. K.114 m). On lalédheth cf. K. S.399 b.The condensed account at once advances to the point where the two sons have each their own occupation. Abel was a shepherd of sheep, i. e. of tso'n, i. e. of smaller cattle like sheep and goats. Cain is a "server of the ground," the more realistic. Hebrew expression for "tiller of the soil."

Nowhere does the account intimate that any one of these two occupations was inferior to the other. In fact, the great likelihood is that both were already followed by our first parent. He had warrant for the first both in his original destiny to tend the garden (2:15) as well as in the burden laid upon him in 3:17, 18, 23. He had warrant for the second in God's clothing him with skins (3:21). The word spoken in 1:29 no doubt excluded the use of cattle for food; whether for milk will have to remain an open question. Each son assumed one phase of his father's double activity, and so each had a life's task well-pleasing to God. There is no need for man, as the Bible knows him, to wander through mazes of development because of his crude state before he can arrive at agriculture. In flat contradiction to evolution the first man was an agriculturalist and a shepherd-at least, these two occupations were followed by his children.3-5. And it came to pass after a time that Cain brought some of the Fruits of the field as an offering to Yahweh; and Abel on his part also brought some of the firstborn of his flock, namely, some of the fat pieces. And Yahweh regarded Abel and his sacrifice; but Cain and his sacrifice He did not regard. Then Cain became exceedingly angry and his glance Fell.With rapid strides the narration progresses and takes us to the point where on one occasion the two brothers bring a sacrifice. Nothing indicates that this episode marks the inauguration of sacrifice by mankind. It may not even have been the first time that these brothers offered sacrifices. The casual way of reporting the fact that they brought sacrifices would rather lead us to believe that something was being done which was not of a character to challenge attention because of its newness. There is no ground for the claim: "The whole manner of the narration suggests rather that the incident is conceived as the initiation of sacrifice," More nearly, true is the supposition that sacrifices were originated by their father, Adam. And since no commandment is recorded authorizing or requesting sacrifice from man as a thing divinely sought, we are, no doubt, nearer the truth when we let sacrifices originate spontaneously on man's part as a natural expression of a devout spirit and of gratitude toward the omnipotent Giver of all good things. Sacrifice meets a deep need of the human heart. If sacrifice had originated in a commandment of God, it might well be thought of as a thing of sufficient importance to be permanently recorded in divine Scriptures. The later Mosaic regulations merely take the sacrificial customs prevalent at the time and regulate and sanction them.Consequently, we dare not construe the terminology of our account after the analogy of Mosaic sacrificial terminology of the period of the wilderness wanderings. The word for offering, minchah, is used in its broadest sense, covering any type of gift man may bring. Nor do the later connotations of sacrifice apply at this time. Neither of the two sacrifices is made specifically for sin. Nothing in the account points in this direction. Consequently, the merit of the one over against the other does not lie in the fact that it was a bloody offering. The nature of the sacrifice as to its material is determined entirely by the occupation of him who brings it. In fact, throughout the narrative one should carefully guard against imputing to these sacrifices things that we cannot prove to have been part of them. We are not even sure that an altar was built for the purpose. The first altar is mentioned after the Flood. We cannot prove that fire was employed to consume the sacrifice. That the animal sacrifice was killed is made apparent by the use of the term "fat pieces."But to follow the account step for step-these sacrifices are brought "after a time" literally translated: "after the end of days." The expression is intentionally vague. It seems to suggest nothing as to the lapse of time since the birth of the brothers. Since sacrifices would most naturally be brought after the termination of the agricultural year, we may incline to think of the fall of the year. But the time element is entirely unimportant and therefore left indefinite.We can only surmise why Cain is mentioned first as

bringing a sacrifice. It may be because he was the first-born. It is more likely that it is so reported because he actually brought his offering first. There is even the possibility that this particular incident occurred after the brothers had many times before brought their sacrifices after the example of what they had seen their father do. Though the first to bring his offering, Cain does not thereby prove himself the more devout in his religious observances.What he brings is described as "some of the fruits of the field." Min before peri is the "min partitive." These constitute an "offering to Yahweh." Minchah may be merely a "gift" or "tribute." But when brought to Yahweh, it constitutes an actual offering. "Fruits of the field" are the natural offering of the agriculturalist and are as acceptable as any kind, if brought in the right spirit. The law of Moses specifies many different kinds of vegetable or meal offerings as the natural offering of a grateful people. One of the most unwarranted claims made is that of Gunkel: "This myth indicates that God loves the shepherd and the offering of flesh, but as far as the farmer and the fruits of the field are concerned, He will have none of them." Apparently, this offering is described as brought "to Yahweh" because hitherto when sacrifices had been brought, it was because God was being thought of as the faithful and gracious Lord. To the Yahweh to whom sacrifice had regularly been brought Cain assayed to bring his sacrifice.It should not be overlooked that v.3 begins with an idiomatic expression frequently used when details are to be introduced, the expression, namely, "and it came to pass" (wayhî). Instead of: "after a time he brought" the Hebrew prefers to say: "And it came to pass after a year and he brought," co-ordinating rather than subordinating clauses (K. S.341 s; 369 i).(4) In order to make the contrast of Abel's offering more apparent, the construction of the sentence begins, not after the rule of the verb first, but with the subject "Abel," emphasized by a gam hû'-" even he" or "on his part." Since the contrast is so marked, there can be no doubt that the significant words "of the first-born" and "some of the fat pieces" in addition to "of his flock" aim to show a distinguishing feature of this sacrifice. Since one merely gave of what he had acquired, but the other gave "firstlings" and "fat pieces" of what he had acquired, it is evident that the one gave because it was time and custom to give -- pure formalism; whereas the other gave the best -- pure, devout worship. Chélebh means "fat." The plural of the noun cannot mean "fatlings" nor only "fat" (A. V.) but must be the "fat pieces." The "and" before this word is used, as often (cf. Exod.24:12), in the sense of "namely" (waw explicative). Those that see the merit of Abel's sacrifice in the fact that it was bloody certainly do so without the least warrant from the text. Nothing anywhere indicates that that particular aspect of sacrifices had as yet been developed or considered at such an early age.(5) With characteristic spiritual discernment the Scripture goes to the heart of things. Formalistic worship is of no value in God's eyes; it is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. Our narrative gives expression to this thought by stating that "Yahweh regarded Abel and his offering; but Cain and his sacrifice He did not regard." The meaning of the verb sha'ah is "to gaze," but when it is used with 'el in a connection-such as this, it means "regard with favour." But the significant thing, noticed by Luther and most commentators since, is that this regarding with favour directs itself first to the person, then to the offering; so in the case of both the brothers. This fact very significantly shows that the determining factor in worship is the attitude of the individual. Him, or his heart, God weighs. If he is not found wanting, the gift is acceptable. If he fails to please the Almighty, his gift is reprobate. This fact is so important that it alone is stated. The writer regards it as quite unimportant to record how the divine favour or disfavour was expressed. Since this fact will never be determined, we may at least mention what has been suggested. An old Greek translation rendered the word sha'ah enepurisen, "He kindled." Evidently the translator had in mind

that God on various occasions did kindle an acceptable sacrifice (Jude 6:21; 13:19, 20). However, the double object "Abel and his sacrifice" makes this view untenable. Others think of some visible token such asthe rising of the smoke of the one sacrifice as proof of its acceptance and the falling of the smoke of the other as proof of its rejection. This, however, is a pure guess. To suppose that God's favour was displayed in the ensuing prosperity of Abel and His displeasure in Cain's failure to prosper as time went on, seems the most reasonable of all but lies open to the criticism that such gradual unfolding of favour or disfavour would have come to light sooner or later anyhow, whereas our account centres attention on a particular sacrifice and what apparently were the immediate results. But, then, there is still a possibility which dare not be rejected. If the garden still remained on earth and was, as many suppose, the place of God's manifestation to men -for cherubim are the mediators of His presence to the world-then He will have conversed with these sons of Adam somewhat after the pattern of His conversing with, Adam and Eve in the garden. In that event they who brought their sacrifices would have brought them to Him whose presence was manifest in the garden, and they could have discerned from His attitude whether their offering was accepted or not. But all this raises the difficult question: "Was God's presence actually manifested in some visible way from the garden up to the time of the Flood?" Our answer must be, "No man knows," Enough that both brothers recognized how God felt about their offerings. The rest actually does not matter.Cain's reaction to God's disapproval is twofold: he "becomes exceedingly angry and his glance falls." God's displeasure had revealed to Cain a reprehensible state of heart. That such was his attitude should have duly alarmed Cain. God's not looking with favour was also a gracious divine warning (N. B. "Yahweh"). Cain adds a second sin to the first by his anger, and a very serious sin at that, by his excessive anger. The Hebrew uses the expression wayyíchar leqßyin -- "and it burned for Cain," the verb omitting the natural subject 'aph, "anger," and using an impersonal expression. With true psychological insight the author narrates how this strong anger displayed itself outwardly. This was done by the falling of the glance, literally of "the face" (panîm). Here, without a doubt, "the glance" is meant K. W. -- Blick. For anger that does not break out into violence seeks to hide itself by not looking freely into the eye of the one at whom it is directed. Since the glance thus feels checked, it naturally falls. So there was the inward passion and the visible outward indication of its presence. Even if commentators insist on translating panîm "face," they scarcely have anything different from our explanation above, for the falling of the countenance still centres in the expression of the eye.6, 7. And Yahweh said unto Cain: Why art thou angry and why has thy glance fallen? Is it not so, if thou doest right, there is acceptance; and if thou dost not do right, then at the door there is sin, a crouching beast, striving to get at thee, but thou shouldest rule over it?The wayyó'mer, "and He said," requires attention. It expressly forbids making this whole experience one that plays entirely in the heart of Cain as an inner struggle with the clash of conscience and the evil desire. The author does not play fast and loose with the expression "Yahweh said." Equally incorrect is the attempt to get around the problem as to how God may have spoken by assigning the words to Adam, the father, who, as an enlightened personality, admonishes his son with words that may be called God's words because they were suggested by His Spirit, But there is really nothing in the text to indicate Adam's participation in the admonition. The fact, then, remains that in some objective way God actually transmits this warning to the man Cain who stands on the verge of a very grievous sin. God's mercy to fallen mankind is amply displayed in this warning; therefore again "Yahweh."The first part of the warning is a question calculated to arouse Cain to a realization of some grievous disorder in his conduct. If he

analyzes "why" he did begin to be angry and drop his glance, he will realize that what caused him to act thus-God's acceptance of one offering and the rejecting of the other-should rather have made him feel that the one who was justified in becoming angry was the Almighty Himself. Cain should have displayed sorrow over his sin rather than anger over the God who graciously warned him. This initial searching question is followed by another double question (v.7) both parts of which are controlled by the initial interrogative particle halo', a particle suggesting an affirmative answer (K. S.353 e; 353k; 318 1). The second question more definitely constitutes a warning, since Yahweh discerns that the initial suggestion is not being heeded. Note that all this is ascribed to "Yahweh" who displays His grace in what He does. Now the double question as such, though it has manifest difficulties, is not as perplexing as the critics stamp it, who either make it "the most difficult verse in the chapter, yea, in all Genesis" (Procksch), or else assail Scripture by asserting: "Every attempt to extract a meaning from the verse is more or less a tour de force." The first major difficulty is the rendering of the infinitive se'eth, from nasa'. This verb has as primary meaning, the idea of "lifting," "lifting up," and "taking," and so occurs in a wide variety of meanings. However, several of these, though legitimate meanings, reject themselves as ill-suited to the connection. So the attempted improvement of the A. R. V. "shall it not be lifted up." This rendering supplies as object panîm, "countenance," considering the expression to stand in contrast with v.6, the falling of the countenance. Luther objects: "Is such a remark not just a little too trite and obvious? Of course, if you do right, you wear a cheerful countenance and a free and happy glance; but is that, of sufficient importance for a divine utterance to Cain?" So, in the second place, all attempts to supply the otherwise proper object "sin" or "guilt," and following the basic sense of "take away" for se'eth, and so causing the expression to be equivalent to "forgive" -- all such attempts, we say, naturally shatter on the fact that Scriptures nowhere teach that forgiveness is achieved by our doing right: we simply do not merit forgiveness. Why impute such a saying to the Lord here? However, if we supply the panîm of v.6 as object, the resultant expression "take or accept the face" means "to receive graciously,", a meaning found also 32:21. This meaning is covered by our translation "acceptance." AV., therefore, was perfectly correct: "shalt thou not be accepted." Luther has the same thought: so bist du angenehm. The meaning of the whole statement, then, is this: As long as you do right you are acceptable to God, not in the sense of meriting such acceptance, but rather in the sense, warranted by the connection, of a warning and a searching question: Have you forfeited your acceptability by doing ill? This thought is also implied in the form of the verb têtîbh, a Hifil, and therefore causative, emphasizing the moral responsibility. For if a man does not make his doings right, for that he is personally responsible.Now the warning becomes still more pointed, applying directly to Cain's case, showing what the situation is if a man does "not do right," or (Hifil) "cause his doing to be good." In that event "sin" (chatta'th, here mentioned for the first time in Scripture, a word bearing the basic meaning of "missing the mark") has become a very definite possibility, even a menacing threat. It is to be likened to a wild beast (therefore robhets, masculine, not feminine agreeing with "sin") crouching at the door. And as promptly as such a beast immediately at hand would seize a man going out at the door, so promptly will sin leap upon one and hurt him. This figure is appropriate also from this point of view: the hurt is inevitable, the ultimate escape possible but problematic. Completing the picture, there is the expression "striving to get at thee," which A. V. rendered: "unto thee shall be its desire." Literally the preposition and the noun must be rendered: "toward thee its striving." We believe we catch the meaning well in this connection by rendering: "striving to get at thee." The added thought is that this "crouching beast"

is not a mild, passive thing, a tame leopard or some harmless pet. Rather, it thirsts after your blood. So the threatening character of the danger is made fully apparent to Cain, and the warning is complete.Now follows the clear suggestion, what course to take: "thou shouldest rule over it." Such a statement at this point does not imply that a sinful man of himself is readily capable of mastering sin that threatens. But we have here a statement in full conformity with the tenor of revealed truth: in the strength, which the Word of God here offers to man as a means of grace, supplies for man, he is to rule over and master the threatening danger. We believe that in this sense the imperfect timshol expresses obligation: "thou shouldest rule." If some of these words happen to occur in 3:16 in reference to the woman (there rendered: "unto your husband you shall be attracted (striving) and he shall rule over you"), we see nothing more than an accidental similarity in this. To hint at textual corruption because of this similarity is presumption.When Jamieson and others suggest that chattath should be translated "sin-offering," that imports a rare and technical meaning, of whose use we have no evidence until at a much later date, and necessitates as Jamieson himself suggests "previous instruction in the mode of worship." On the improbability of the divine institution of sacrifices we suggest the consideration that had this outward act been divinely ordained, man, too much inclined to purely outward acts in religion, might quite readily have overemphasized the importance of the external. Consequently, the Scriptures do not represent sacrifices as originating at God's command. When the practice, natural enough in itself, requires regulation and purification, God supplies such regulations in the days of Moses. There is something ominous about Cain's silence. He is not reported to have thanked for the warning, or to have repented of his jealousy, or to have mended his ways. A stubborn silence seems to have been all he had to offer.It should be pointed out more directly that Cain's sin in reference to his brother was primarily jealousy culminating in hatred, a sin that seems comparatively weak and insignificant but which carries possibilities of great development within itself.Now the account proceeds in a drastic manner to show what possibilities for development lay in the sin which had by this time fastened itself strongly upon man. Possibilities for evil that no man would have suspected lay hidden in sin. Of a sudden it breaks forth and displays to the full its vicious nature and terrible curse. There is no book that so emphatically reveals what a cursed thing sin is as the Bible. Man should know what an octopus fastened its tentacles upon the race when sin took hold of it. With terrible realism the narrative continues.8. And Cain said unto Abel his brother-and it came to pass when they were out in the field, Cain attacked Abel his brother and slew him.There has been much needless speculation as to what Cain said to Abel. There are also unnecessary attempts to supply what some deem an accidental omission. A R V. acts on a wrong assumption when it translates wayyó'mer "told." There is a different verb for "telling." Wayyó'mer actually means "and he said." This verb is almost always followed by direct discourse. The few instances where it is used in the sense "and he spoke" like (2 Chronicles 32:6; Ex 19:25) might allow us to translate "spoke" in this instance; but the result is practically the same if we assume that the obvious object of the verb is omitted, as in 2:19 a; 3:21 b; 4:9 b. This object, as quite naturally follows from the ensuing context, is, "Let us go out into the field," as the Greek and the Latin translations, as well as the Samaritan translation suggest. But this merely supplies what is obviously meant. The text (contra Kittel) needs no correction. Therefore all the other suggestions fall away, such as: He told Abel what God had said; or, He feigned friendliness; or, He discoursed on God's providence, and the like. But if the object that we suggest be supplied, then, apparently, Cain, far from heeding the divine warning, has even gone to the point of planning to remove his

brother from the scene of action. He induces him to go "out in the field," or "out in the country" (Meek), where both will be "safe from observation" (1 Kings 11:29).When they are out there, Cain "attacks his brother." The Hebrew says: "he rose up against him." But in such connections that verb rise (qûm) does not mean the literal rising from a sitting posture but, in a more general sense, "to undertake something"; therefore "attack," in this case. We could call this "arise in a hostile sense" (B D B). To make the horrid and wicked nature of the deed doubly apparent, the appositive noun, "his brother," is appended to the object "Abel." His attack is so successful that it results in actual murder: "and he slew him." So the first murder was fratricide. Sin could hardly have displayed more drastically the potentialities that lie in it. In the second generation it has already grown to the proportions of murder. Clearly, the term "seed of the woman" (3:15) must suffer modification. Here already is a clear instance how "the seed of the woman had already (in part) become the seed of the serpent" (Keil).Even more effective than the account of the nature and horribleness of sin is the account of God's mercy shown to the sinner, as v.9-15 records it. For though this mercy has to be tempered by justice, it, nevertheless, looms up large as being entirely undeserved by a murderer like Cain. This mercy first takes the sinner to account, trying to rouse him to repentance (v.9). Note: Yahweh is the subject.9. And Yahweh said unto Cain: Where is Abel, thy brother? And he said: I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?As always, God does not ask in order to secure information. The question is pedagogic, in order to remind Cain that God knows where Abel is. To ascribe those words to Adam as a spokesman for God is farfetched. Here is the second cross-examination found in the Scriptures. The contrast with the first is apparent. The first found Adam and Eve humble, though given to evasion and excuses. The second finds Cain impudent and hardened, at least at the beginning of the interview. Yet the first question had effectually presented to Cain the startling reminder of the slain man lying inert in his own blood out in the field. The heartless lie and bold rejoinder on Cain's part is: "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" The question gains a slightly different force in the Hebrew, where the predicate stands first for emphasis: "Am keeper of my brother I?" like: "Am I supposed to watch him all the while?" He feels too guilty to draw attention to himself by way of contrast and to say: "Am I my brother's keeper?" The interrogative ha anticipates a negative answer. 10. And He said: What hast thou done? The voice of the spilt blood of thy brother is crying out to Me from the ground.First the divine word attempts to waken in the man a realization of the enormity of his misdeed. The "what" naturally implies: "What horrible thing?" On the form meh see G. K.37 d. Then the word proceeds to a direct charge which completely startles the sinner out of his security.God reveals that He knows of the blood that has been spilt, He refers to it as damîm, plural, vividly suggesting the many drops shed, a shade of meaning that we have tried to convey by the rendering "spilt blood." This is represented as crying, out persistently and continually; for the participle expresses what continues in the present or keeps repeating itself (K. S.236 a; 238 a). Here the participle involves the idea of a certain insistence. That a voice should be attributed to blood is not strange inasmuch as the soul is regarded as lodged in the blood of man (Le 17:11), and the death of God's saints is precious in His sight (Psalms 116:15). That God requires blood, that is, seeks out and avenges all instances of unjust shedding of blood, appears from (Job 16:18; Ge 9:5; Eze 3 :18; 24:7, 8.; 33:6; Psalms 9:12). Men may esteem souls or blood lightly. Not so God.The tendency to render qôl, "voice," as "hark," supported also by G. K.146 b, should be restricted. The far better and more vivid rendering here is "voice."Now with v.11 the word of Yahweh reveals Cain's punishment. Behind this punishment and the revelation of its scope, no doubt, also lies divine mercy; for Cain's

hard lot is to drive him to repentance.11, 12. And now cursed shalt thou be, driven away from the ground which has opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the soil, it shall not in the future yield its produce to thee; thou shalt be shifting and straying about in the earth.Hitherto the ground had been cursed (3:17) and the serpent (3:14), certainly not humankind. Now for the first time the divine curse is laid upon a mortal. This fact alone stresses, as perhaps nothing else could, God's earnestness over against sin. However, this curse is carefully defined as to what it includes, for it is not a curse that bars Cain from the possibility of salvation. This curse is not the sentence of damnation. It merely involves two things: (a) being driven away from the cultivated and arable portion of the land and winning his sustenance under the greatest of difficulties; and (b) being compelled to shift and stray about in the earth.There is something very proper about the first part of this curse. The precious human blood was spilled upon the 'adhamah, the tillable soil. That soil opened its mouth and greedily drank in the blood. This was a profaning of blood and a staining of the soil. Mankind must at once be taught that such precious things as blood, or life, are not to be wasted so lightly. This lesson can be taught in the fate of the first murderer. To make that fate stand out Cain is cursed min-ha'adhamah, "away from the ground." The construction is pregnant. The preposition min practically presents a condensed negative result clause, and the phrase means "so that there is no ground for you" (K. C.) or, as we have rendered somewhat more concisely: "driven away from the ground." Cain is not to be permitted to settle down where cultivated areas (Kulturland) offer themselves. Of course, he will have to do some work by way of raising fruits of the earth; he will till the soil. But from this time on (this is practically the force of lo'-thoseph; see G. K..109 d. h) the ground will not give of its strength (kóach cf. (Job 31:38), here, of course, means "produce") to Cain as readily as it does to others. Only with the hardest of struggles will Cain be able to gain a bare pittance.The second part of the curse may also quite properly be regarded as involved in the first, or as producing the first. For if a man be continually "shifting and straying about in the earth," it will not be possible for him to settle down to any fixed occupation like agriculture. So God lays on Cain the second part of the curse in order to gain the result, namely, the first part. Na' wanadh was rendered by the King James' translators as "a fugitive and a vagabond." This was a good rendering; not quite as apropos, however, as Luther's unstaet und fluechtig. "Vagabond," from the Latin vagare, "to stray about," has, however, come to mean "tramp" or "hobo." Therefore A. R. V. substituted "wanderer" quite appropriately. We have rendered "shifting and straying about" in an effort to recapture the telling an alliteration of the original. Na', from the root nûa', is allied to the Arabic root meaning to sway like a branch. Nadh (root: nûdh) basically means "to nod," "to stray about." Behind all this lay an added purpose: to impress the sanctity of human life and the enormity of the sin of murder upon mankind. Cain was not only known by report to these early generations of men, but he, the fugitive, had no doubt been seen by most of them, unhappy wretch that he was, straying about from place to place without peace or rest. Quite inaccurately and with a shallow interpretation Procksch sums up the case with the remark: "Thus Cain ceases to be a farmer and becomes a bedouin." 13, 14. And Cain said unto Yahweh: My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, Thou hast this day driven me forth of the ground and I must stay hidden from Thee, and I must be shifting and straying about, in the earth, and it will happen that whoever finds me will slay me.The bold impudence of Cain's first answer to Yahweh now yields to a hopeless despair. Note that throughout the account God is designated as Yahweh, to remind the reader of the gracious faithfulness which characterizes His dealings with sinners. Cain's answer, however, gives no

indication of a repentant spirit. There is no grief over sin in the word, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Cain is very sorry to have gotten into such a mess. He does deplore the set of miserable consequences that he has brought down upon his head. All he speaks about is the punishment that has fallen to his lot. Therefore, the word awon must be rendered "punishment." It might mean "guilt," or just "sin." But here the context demands the common enough meaning "punishment for sin." Therefore, it is not the enormity of his guilt that strikes heavily into his conscience, as Luther's translation suggests: "My sin is too great to be forgiven." Cain merely cringes at the thought of what he must bear. This is a rather common experience in the psychology of sinners: bold impudence becomes a whining fear and complaint. This thought is elaborated in v.14. Gadhol as comparative, see G. K. I33 c, K. S.308 b. Min introduces a negative result clause: K. S.406h.(14) The "behold" (hen), used with perfects, only marks a measure of vivacity or agitation in the expression (Lebhaftigkeit: K. S.131) and is akin to our "look," or "see." There is complaint in the words: "Look, you have this day driven, me off the ground." Cain recognizes that the fruitful portion of the earth, "the ground," is barred from him. He feels that in such favoured portions of the earth God can be thought of as being present in a more intimate sense. To be barred from this portion of the earth is, therefore, to him synonymous with being hidden from God. So he exclaims, still by way of complaint, "I must stay hidden from Thee." For though the sinner has no personal desire for communion with God, he may yet recognize, as a result of training and earlier experience, that to be kept from approaching God is a grievous punishment. An analogy to this view of the superior blessedess of the 'adhamah is found in 27:27 where Isaac speaks of "the field which God has blessed" as a particularly favoured spot. Similarly, Israel and David later considered the land of promise as a place of the very special manifestation of God's favour and felt that it was not a light thing to be separated from it, for there God had vouchsafed to manifest His goodness in richer measure; cf. (Ge 46:3, 4; 1 Samuel 26:19). Yet this way of looking at the situation does not imply wrong views about God's person, as though He were not omnipresent, for, as K. C. has pointed out, at once God is viewed in v.15 as a God whose power reaches everywhere and is able to avenge wrong no matter where it be done. The earliest writers, like Moses, had an adequate and correct conception of God, as the spirit of inspiration speaking through them gave it to them. So, too, according to the Scriptures man is not a being, who is by slow degrees penetrating through, the mists of unenlightenment. From the very outset God has granted to him a true and correct conception of Himself. No trace of evolution here. We have tried to capture the imperfect, or present idea in 'esather by rendering it "stay hidden." Besides, the imperfect here rather expresses necessity ("must") than futurity (K. S.181: soll ung muss). The article in hayyôm, being the article of what is customary, comes to mean "today" or "this day" (K. S.299 a).Two more items of bitter complaint are voiced by Cain. First: "I must be shifting and straying about." He has heard his doom and knows it is inescapable. Gone is the boldness with which he first faced God. His complaint reaches its climax in the last item, expressing his gravest fear: "It will happen that whoever finds me will slay me." The psychology of the reaction is characteristic. Murderers fear that they in turn will be slain by others. The coward Cain did not hesitate to slay Abel, but he is dreadfully afraid lest another slay him. In fact, he is so apprehensive that he anticipates that everyone whom he meets will be inclined to wreak vengeance upon him. The Bible records all this in order to make it very apparent that "the way of the transgressor is hard."Critics try to prove the unhistorical, if not mythical, character of the whole narrative by the oft repeated charge that Cain speaks as if he were living in a world quite full of

people. Such an assumption is quite unnecessary. There is no flaw or inaccuracy in the record. The sequel proves that other children of Adam were already living at this time or shortly thereafter. These, as well as others who may yet arrive at years of maturity, the conscience-stricken, guilty murderer fears. Such an assumption squares with all facts and is perfectly natural. Such simple and satisfactory explanations, however, do not satisfy the critics. Procksch claims that the only satisfactory explanation of the statement is to be found in the assumption that Cain was not an individual but a clan (Stamm), and so the origin of a clan feud is here being described. A natural explanation is thereby rejected for an unproved and unprovable hypothesis. 15. And Yahweh said to him:. Wherefore, if anyone slays Cain, vengeance shall be exacted sevenfold. And Yahweh gave Cain a sign that whoever found him would not murder him.Because Cain pleaded so earnestly "therefore" (lakhen) Yahweh (who is merciful) appointed that "vengeance was to be exacted" (yuqqam-Hofal of naqam) from such a one "sevenfold." This "sevenfold" apparently means "seven times as heavy a punishment as Cain had merited" (Delitzsch). The statement as such gives assurance to Cain. This divine word will become known. Men will not soon dare to fly in the face of it. The Jewish fables, reported by Luther, telling how Cain was later slain by Lamech, though accidentally, are not worth recording. For the presumption is very strong that Cain was not slain. In fact, the merciful Lord ("Yahweh" again) made assurance doubly sure by even giving Cain a sign.Now when the question is raised, "wherein did this sign' consist?" it is usually regarded as a "mark" (A. V.) set upon him (so also Luther). But this assumption overlooks the fact that the text does not say that God set a mark in or on Cain (Hebrew, be) but for Cain (Hebrew le), marking a dative of interest or advantage. Consequently, we are rather to think of some sign that God allowed to appear for Cain's reassurance, "a sign of guaranty" (K. W.) or a "pledge or token" (B D B). As parallels might be cited the signs vouchsafed to certain men to whom God promised unusual things: Gideon (Jude 6:36-40); Elisha (2 Kings 2:9-12). God let this sign appear, therefore, for Cain, and he felt reassured. There is, therefore, no ground for supposing that Cain went about as a marked man all the rest of his life. Anyhow, 'ôth does not mean "mark."Yet in the face of later developments, especially 9:6 where the principle of the need of execution of murderers is laid down without exceptions, it seems strange that the first murderer should have been spared. A multitude of reasons can, however, be adduced why God should have spared Cain. Among those that have been offered the following stand out. The presence of this tragic figure, the "fugitive and the vagabond" among men, served as a more potent warning, to men as to the enormity of the curse of murder by the very misery of his existence. In addition, it must be admitted that banishment from God's presence was the heaviest punishment of all, heavier than the loss of life, and this heavier punishment Cain knows he has suffered. Then, too, there was a salutary lesson in this that God reserved for Himself the right to determine which life was to be terminated and which not; so God's supremacy as the Judge of all flesh was guarded, and a premium put on the value of human life. Then we may also consider the validity of the principle enuntiated later, that it pleases the Almighty to let tares and wheat both grow together till the harvest. Closely allied to this is the other argument that God allows sin to run a free course and to develop to the full the potentialities that lie in it, so that the nature of evil as evil may be fully revealed in the historical development of mankind. To all these may yet be added the argument that the more rapid development of the human race, which had to be guaranteed in the days when men were few upon the earth, would certainly have been seriously checked if the first one of the sons of Adam had been put to death. However, it appears that one other argument perhaps ought

not to be pressed, namely that God lengthened Cain's days that he might repent. True, God's mercy is displayed richly in His dealings with Cain as Yahweh, but it also has become very much apparent by this time that each successive advance of mercy resulted in a more rigid shutting of Cain's heart. Mercy apparently had done its work before this last provision was made by God. The ultimate impenitence of Cain seems to be suggested by the nature of his descendants, who are described in the following words.The participle horegh is rendered as a conditional sentence in this particular verse; see G. K.116 w.16. And Cain went forth from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of wandering east of Eden.The expressions: "driven forth from the ground" (v.11), and "driven forth from the ground and I must be hidden from Thee" (v.14), and that of this verse, he "went forth from the presence of the Lord," all refer to the same thing. Where God had hitherto by preference revealed Himself, there Cain can no longer stay; he is shut off from God. It is somewhat precarious to assume, that the revelation of God took place in a special sense from the site of the old garden of Eden, where here by various statements the text associates it with the region where "the ground" was. The land which A. V. calls "the land of Nod," 'érets nodh, signifies "the land of wandering or straying," and it will, therefore, hardly signify any special land or country. Because of the nature of the curse upon him Cain was simply condemned to ceaseless wanderings, To these he now went forth, the text says. However, one general region alone saw him; that was the region "east of Eden," the region where mankind as a whole dwelt at first (3:24). No "land of Nod," furthermore, has ever been identified. Not without reason the fathers saw in these first sons of Adam prototypes of the two divisions into which the human race is divided ever since: the church and the world. The antagonism between the two began at this point and is characteristic of all human history ever since. This is a point of view clearly maintained by the New Testament. There the opposition of Cain to. Abel is traced to the fact that "his works were evil and his brother's were righteous" (1 John 3:12); and at the same time it is stated that "Cain was of the evil one." It was more than a momentary flash of anger that revealed itself in Cain's deed. A basic change of heart had taken place in him, a shift of allegiance to "the evil one." Since such opposition is fundamental, it is the beginning of the tragic division of the race that is in reality the explanation of a good bit of the history of the world.Confirming our interpretation of the relative merits of the two sacrifices, comes the other New Testament passage (Hebrews 11:4), which with characteristic depth traces the ultimate source of every good work to "faith": "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice." The same author (Hebrews 12:24) makes excellent use of the thought of Abel's blood crying for vengeance when he contrasts the efficacy of Christ's blood that, pleading for mercy for them that are sprinkled by it, will surely "speak better than that of Abel."(b) 17-24: The Development of the family of the Cainites17. And Cain knew his wife and she conceived and bare Enoch, and he (Cain) was engaged in building a city and he called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch.Though this portion may rightly be said to sketch the development of' the family of the Cainites, it would not be incorrect to regard it as an account of the beginnings of civilization or culture. For, strange to say, civilization did make far greater strides among those alienated from God than among those who were devoted to Him. Yet this is not very strange, if closely considered, for they, being addicted and devoted to the things of the world and not satisfied with the world's treasures-for who can be? -- they, we say, do all in their power to make an empty existence attractive by the cultivation of the natural resources of the world. Besides, the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.First, however, the development and growth of this family as such is sketched through several

generations, with such brief historical events inserted as are of moment in this history.Cain is first disposed of. For that matter, a characteristic feature of the author of Genesis may well be noted at this point. He regularly disposes of the less relevant but necessary by taking it first and sketching it briefly. Then the heavier emphasis can be laid on what is of particular moment in the development of the kingdom of God. So here after the Cainites come the Sethites from 4:25 practically to 9:28. Then the families of Ham and Japheth are briefly disposed of, as well as that of Shem (ch.10-11:26); to make room for that of Terah, or Abraham 11:27-25:11. Ishmael is treated briefly (25:12-18) to prepare for Isaac 25:19-35:29. Again Esau's development is sketched 36:1-37:1; then follows the story of Jacob at length from 37:2 to the end of the book.Cain's wife must have been his sister who followed him into exile; for Adam had sons and daughters according to 5:4. Nor can marriage to a sister at this early stage of the development of the human race be considered wrong or unnatural. If according to divine purpose the human race is to develop from one pair, then the marriage of brothers and sisters as well as of other close relatives will for a time be a necessity. Later on the nations may see fit to classify such unions as incestuous and seek to keep the human race from running its shoots back to the parent stem; and so they further its natural spread. But in the earlier history of mankind the union of those closely related was not abhorred. Abraham's wife was his half-sister (20:12); cf. also 24:4 and 28:2.On the expression "knew his wife" see 4:1. The name Enoch, Hebrew chanôkh, signifies, "dedication" and so by metonomy may come to mean "commencement" or more concretely "beginner"; K. W. Anfaenger. It appears that Cain promises himself a new beginning in life through this son; Enoch is to initiate a new start. At the time, however, when the son was born, the father was building a city, and with the pride characteristic of the children of the world sought to perpetuate his son's name by applying it to the city.Cain's building of a city does not conflict with and remove his curse (v.12) which involved inability to settle permanently anywhere. It may have been on Cain's part a kind of titanic attempt to fly in the face of Heaven's decree. But the very nature of the statement implies that he did not complete what he undertook; for we read "he was building," wayhi boneh, progressive, which we have rendered "he was engaged in building," to make the inceptive nature of the undertaking more prominent. The city may have been finished, but not by Cain. Others may have lived there, not he; Nothing points to an amelioration of the original divine sentence. On the participle boneh as expressing this idea of progression see K. S.239 b. Consequently, the text correctly treats the participle as a verb with a direct object, as is indicated by the seghol; the treatment of it as a noun making him an actual builder would have necessitated the construct state of the participle and consequently a tsere. The critical objections to the idea of the building of a city at so early a date in history, fall away as soon as we remember that, of necessity, nothing more could be meant than a walled enclosure with a few houses. The primitive city need have been no more. Besides, this well accords with the accursed timorousness that marked Cain. In spite of promise and sign he never felt safe. He felt a city might afford a feeling of safety; but he was never able to complete his city. The Hebrew word for city agrees with our explanation. For îr is most likely derived from the root 'ûr, "to rouse" or "to raise an alarm." Consequently, the city was the place of refuge when an alarm was raised: K. W. succinctly: Alarmplatz.It is very interesting to note how early cities in reality appear on the scene. During the lifetime of the second generation of mortals the first one is built. Evolutionistic thinking, of course, grievously distorts the picture and tells fanciful tales about many many earlier stages through which human development had to run.We append a double list of names of Cainites and Sethites in order to make the similarity of

the names as apparent as possible. It will be observed that Enoch and Lamech appear in both. All the rest bear strange resemblances each to some one of the other group.Adam Adam

Cain Seth

Enoch Enosh

Irad Kenan

Mehujael Mahalalel

Methushael Jared

Lamech Enoch

Jabal-Jubal-Tubal Cain Methuselah

Lamech

Noah

Shem-Ham-Japheth.It is quite reasonable to assume that the identity or similarity of names is traceable to the contact, more or less close, that the two branches of the human family had with one another. No one will be able definitely to say which group did the borrowing. Both may have done it in a measure. Nor does the fact that one group runs through seven generations before it branches out into three prominent characters, and the other through ten before it does the same prove these to be artificially constructed genealogies. The God of history may well have guided things according to a definite pattern of numbers even as He does in the field of botany or chemistry. Unfortunately, we cannot be very sure about the meaning of many of these names, a difficulty which is increased by the fact that these are Hebrew equivalents of the original language of the race.If one critic remarks about this section that "it involves a series of anachronisms and is not historical," and goes so far as to claim that this is so self-evident that it "requires no proof," we regard such bold assertions unwarranted; for the truth has often been explained, but some people fail to see it. If, then, another critic praises Buttmann for having been the first to recognize that the two genealogical tables, 4:17-24 and chapter 5, are but two variant forms of one tradition concerning the genealogy of the human race, we can do no more than marvel at the unproven claims that men will make when they seek to discredit the Scriptures.18. And to Enoch was born Irad; and Ifad begat Mehujael; and Mehijael begat Methushael; and Methushael begat Lamech.No one will ever satisfactorily explain, as far as we are able to discern, how the two variant forms of the one name crept into this verse: Mehujael and Mehijael. That the subject 'Iradh is counted as a kind of retained object with the passive is discussed K. S.108; G. K.121 b. Ifad may mean "townsman" (Keil). Mehujael may mean "God is the giver of life" (K. W.). Mehijael seems to mean "God is the fountain of life" (K. W.). Methushael perhaps means "man of God," the sh being a kind of relative. The meaning of "Lamech" is extremely doubtful. It seems strange to find at least three of these names compounded with the divine name 'el -- God. However, that may indicate that occasionally a Cainite was devout or at least had better aspirations, or it may be traceable to the borrowing of names by the Cainites from the Sethites. Many a man has a name of the noblest meaning without even being aware of it. At least the great antiquity of the name 'el is indicated by these compounds (K. T. A. T. p.143).19. And Lamech took unto himself two wives; the name of the

one was Adah, the name of the other Zillah.In this simple statement is. recounted the origin of bigamy. Note well that the practice originated among those who had become estranged from God. Up till this age the original purpose of God in creating one man and one wife and uniting them in marriage had apparently been understood as sanctioning only monogamous marriage. In the seventh generation from Adam comes a man in the line of the Cainites who dares to fly in the face of this divine institution. The names of these two wives, if they be at all indicative of their character, as names in these, early days often were, suggest that physical attractiveness may have been a governing motive in Lamech's choice. For Adah means either "ornament" or "morning"; whereas Zillah may signify "shade" or "shelter." Nevertheless, the ungoverned lust of the flesh will, as usual, have played a large part in inducing the man to take a second wife. It should also be noted that the expression "take a wife" (laqach ishshah) is the one that signifies "to marry." The dative of the personal pronoun lô is used as a reflexive (K. S.28). 20-22. Adah bore Jabal. He was the ancestor of those who live in tents and have cattle. And the name of his brother was Jubal. He was the ancestor of all who play, the lyre and the pipe. Zillah on her part bore Tubal Cain, a hammerer (smith) who devised all manner of things of bronze and iron. Tubal Cain's sister was Naamah.Here we have the record, of the most important cultural achievements of early days. Strange to say, they are traceable to the gifted sons of the bigamist. Of these sons Adah bore two and Zillah one.Jabal perhaps means "wanderer," a name indicative of the later nomadic habits of the man. It appears that many of the names of these early days may not originally have been given, to their bearers, but may have originated in the course of time as descriptive of the outstanding characteristic of the person. The notable thing about Jabal is that he hit upon and developed the idea of having a movable domicile, a tent, to use while travelling about with his flocks in search of pasturage. This new departure, of course, describes nomadism. The noun 'abh, "father," is used to describe him as the "originator" of the idea or as the "ancestor" of all such-one of the many and varied uses of the word 'abh. A still more elastic use is found when miqueh, "cattle" (more than tso'n, including even camels and asses Ex 9:3) is attached, thus: "father of cattle." This may also be explained by the figure zeugma, where one verb takes two objects, the second of which ought more properly to be joined to a second verb. The participle yoshebh is used collectively and is used with the accusative, as in our English phrase, "inhabiting a tent"; cf. G. K.117 bb."Jubal" may mean "sound" (Hall -- K. W.) because the man originated sweet sounds. He had inventive genius along another less practical line. He was the originator ('abh) of all who "catch" (tophes) the strings of the "lyre and pipe." Kinnôr is more of a zither than a harp; therefore we render the word lyre, because only as lyres developed did harps result. The 'ûghabh was by far not as elaborate as an "organ" (A. V.) but merely a combination of a few reed pipes. However primitive they may have been, these two instruments laid the foundation of musical development; for both stringed instruments and wind instruments owe their origin to this invention.(22) Zillah's son was an inventive genius too. "She too" (gam hî') or, as we translated above, "on her part," shared in producing famous men. Her son's name, "Tubal Cain," is sometimes explained as meaning "Tubal the smith," or again Eisenspan von Schmiederei (K. W.), "the splinter of iron resulting from pounding the iron." The words that follow are variously translated: either as above, or as "the hammerer of every cutting device of bronze and iron." This latter construction puts four successive words in the construct relation to one another -- rather unusual. Therefore we take kol in the sense of "all kinds of things" and construe it as the object of choresh and make "bronze and iron" accusative of material. In both cases the meaning is much the same, with this major difference: the

one lets the man devise only cutting instruments, the other, all kinds of instruments and utensils. Observe, though, that bronze precedes iron.Na'amah's name means "pleasant." This is significant. This family knew by various devices to make life pleasant for itself. Though these inventions bring a kind of taint with them, being originated by the godless, yet two things must be remembered. Music, for example, carries many elements in itself that can distract the soul unduly; so can other worldly productions unduly absorb the soul. On the other hand, all such achievements may be taken in hand and sanctified by injecting in them a spirit from on high. Such is again especially the case with music, which has thus been taken in hand and has experienced its noblest development in sanctified use.23, 24. And Lamech said unto his wives: Adah and Zillah, hear my voice, Ye wives of Lamech, give ear unto my speech. I slay a man for wounding me And a youth for giving me a stripe. For, if Cain is to be avenged sevenfold Then Lamech seventy-seven fold.This portion caused commentators in days of old untold difficulties. Jamieson reports that Origen devoted two whole books of his Genesis commentary to these verses, and finally rendered the verdict that they were inexplicable. Other commentators were misled by the Jewish fable of the accidental slaying by Lamech of old Cain and a youth who guided him through the forest, and so for a long while they went off on a false scent.Yet, on the whole, the present-day approach, which classifies this as' "Lamech's Sword Song," is correct. Incidentally, here is the first piece of poetry of which we have a record, not so noble an origin, it is true, but under such circumstances did it take its rise. We claim that approach, then, to be correct which pictures Lamech as handling one of the weapons just manufactured by his son Tubal Cain and as sensing the possibilities that lie in possessing such a weapon. For the waw conversive which binds the opening wayy'omer to the preceding section, bears just this connotation; as a result of his son's invention of weapons, Lamech, seeing what possibilities lay in such weapons, "said." This poem does not hang suspended on thin air. That it is a poem is apparent from the very manifest parallelism of the members; the characteristic feature, at least, of Hebrew poetry. From one point of view, of course, this poem is a glorification of the sword. But penetrating deeper into its character, we find it to be a glorification of the spirit of personal revenge. So the poem has an unholy savour and reflects admirably the spirit of those who have grown estranged from God and His Word. So all human culture and the achievement of civilization degenerate apart from God. It need not surprise us that this word was spoken to Lamech's wives. They are an audience that needs must listen, and boasting is most safely done at home before their ears. Whether Lamech really was the dangerous fellow that his words make him out to be we have no means of knowing. The elevated tone of the poem is made apparent by the sonorous and dignified double address. "Adah and Zillah" and "ye wives of Lamech." Again, the poetic character of the piece is reflected in the use of a poetic shortened form for the imperative, shema'an (G. K.46 f), as well as by a term used largely in poetic diction, 'imrah, "utterance, speech."The perfect tenses that follow have been the source of much difficulty. Some, taking them as simple historical perfects, read them as a record of a deed done. But in that event it strikes us as most peculiar that Lamech should have slain both a man and a young man. Murderers very rarely proceed to wholesale slaughter, all the more not when, as in Lamech's case, they have reason to recall what befell a notorious ancestor of theirs when he committed murder. Then, since apparently the preceding verses had just recorded an invention, the next and more natural step in the narrative would be to canvass the possibilities latent in the invention. So it would be far more plausible to picture Lamech as handling a newly forged sword or swinging it boldly about his head and uttering this sonorous bit of poetry as he does so. In this event, the perfects would have to be

regarded as expressing complete assurance, or definite certainty, or promise. Some compare 1:29 and 4:14 a. They are, of course, then analogous to prophetic perfects and refer definitely to the future. What Lamech threatens is: if any man wounds me, or if any young man bruises me, I shall kill the offender. "Man" and "young man" constitutes a more picturesque way of saying: "anyone." "Wound" (pits'i, a cut wound, introduced by le of norm) and "bruise" (chabburathi, a stripe caused by a blow) include all forms of hurt, the more grievous and the less grievous. Consequently, the threat covers every case where a painful wrong is inflicted, no matter who does it. Lamech tries to give his threat a veneer of just retribution by making the distinction: for a real wound, I shall take a man's life; for a bruise, the life of a youth. Yéledh here hardly means "child," as its first meaning might lead us to suppose. The suffix on "wound" and "stripe" is called by Strack the suffix expressing the eventual. Not: the "wound," etc., that I have received, but: the wound I may receive. We have sought to indicate this by: "for wounding me," etc.Now comes the climax of this ungodly song of hate. The "for" introducing it introduces as reason not what immediately follows but "the second part of the sentence." Lamech remembers the sentence and the divine promise to his ancestor. On this he builds up. If God will see to it that the one who harms Cain will have a sevenfold measure of punishment, Lamech, not needing or even despising God's avenging justice, will provide for himself by the strength of his own arm, re-enforced by his son's weapon, a far more heavy punishment than God would have allowed-seventy-seven fold. The arrogance and presumption are unbelievable. The spirit of self-sufficiency here expressing itself overleaps all bounds. This, then, coupled with its hate and revengefulness, makes it one of the most ungodly pieces ever written. Such are the achievements of human culture divorced from God, "My fist shall do more for me than God's vengeance for Cain," Strack paraphrases. An allusion, by way of contrast to this wicked utterance, apparently lies in (Mt 18:21), where such a high measure of forgiveness, "seventy and seven," is laid upon Christ's followers. They are not only to be free of the spirit of retaliation but are to possess instead a rare spirit of forgiveness.c. An account of the Development of the Family of the Godly (v.25, 26)Without lengthy introduction, without the use of explanatory phrases, the writer sets another group that was developing in those days into sharp contrast with the development of the group just described. This makes for very effective writing, Such contrasts by their very sharpness give evidence of comsummate literary skill. The critics, somehow, cannot understand such skill and see merely what they claim to be evidence of a different document. So they speak with great erudition on a subject about which no man knows anything. Incidentally, they hardly notice that the two branches of mankind are as widely different from one another as they possibly can be. Simplicity of life and devotedness to their God characterize this second group, the Sethites.25. And Adam again knew his wife and she begat a son and called his name Sheth, for God hath set for me other seed in place of Abel; for Cain slew him.When the expression is a bit more detailed, there is not always a special significance attached to it. Here we are hardly justified in supposing that the author is trying to say that sexual communion was interrupted for a time because of Abel's death but was now again resumed. The fact is a son was born. How thoroughly different the spirit of this family is from that which we have just studied appears from the fact that in the birth of their children already these parents see the gracious hand of God. This son is "set" (shah) by God in place of Abel. The mother wishes this fact to be continually in evidence and so gives her son a name indicative of this fact: sheth, A. V.: "Seth." The play on words is: thus made apparent in English. Since "set in place of" means "to substitute" we may adequately interpret the name Seth to mean "substitute," Ersatzmann (K. W.).

Procksch, without good reason, questions the propriety of this very obvious interpretation. The explanatory remark "for Cain slew him" is not inserted by Moses as his own explanation, the fact being too evident to require explanation. But as a word of Eve it definitely connects the two acts and states that God meant Seth to be a substitute for the slain Abel; or, because Cain slew the one, God gave the other -- an explanation which amounts to the same thing as the first. In this verse we have the first undoubtedly clear use of 'adham as a proper noun. Apparently, from this point onward, Adam is under consideration as an individual more than as the first "man," as his name signifies (K. S.295 b). Besides, it may be well to append a list of the instances where the father or the mother give the names to their children and so to show the futility of the contention that the matriarchate prevailed of old according to the Scriptures. The mother gives the name in 19:37 f.; 29:32 f., 35; 30:6, 8, 11, 13, 18, 20 f., 24; 35:18; 38.4 f. The father gives the name in 4:26; 5:29; 16:15; 21:3; 38:3; 41:51f. The impersonal subject "one" is found in 25:25 f.; 38:29 f. in the matter of giving names.26. Also unto Sheth there was a son born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time a beginning was made of calling upon the name of the Lord.For the present there is no need of tracing this family through many generations. The spirit that animates becomes evident at once. When Sheth, or Seth, who has the godly spirit of Adam begets a son, he gives to him the name 'enôsh, a word which we still believe bears the basic meaning of "frailty." For though the lexicographers unanimously (Buhl, B D B, K. W.) derive it from a root "to be intimate with" in the sense of social familiarity, we yet feel that that derivation fails to do justice to those instances of the use of 'enôsh as a common noun, where it is used in contrast with God, as B D B lists these passages. In fact, this gets to be so distinctive a use of the term that it stands out. Cf. especially in Job the passages: (Job 4:17; 7:17; 9:2; 10:4, 5; 15:14; 25:4; 33:12). Other significant instances are (2 Chronicles 14:10) (Eng. v.11); (Psalms 8:5; 9:20; 90:3; 103:15) etc. Since this third root 'anash, according to Arabic parallels, is quite possible, we strongly cast our vote for this meaning: enôsh-the "frail one," "the mortal." Seth was so impressed with the weakness of mortals that he gave his son a name indicative of this truth. Such a name, however, does not reflect pessimism or discouragement. It is expressive of truth, deep unvarnished truth. But the very next statement now goes on to show what this family did when their own frailty became clearly apparent to them: they turned all the more eagerly to their God and sought him, making a regular and public practice of it in worship. For by common consent the lexicons interpret the expression qara' beshem yahweh to mean: to "use the name of Yahweh in worship" (B D B). The preposition be before Yahweh expresses a kind of means: to call out by the use of the name. K. S. makes it a Beth of interest (212 c). The adverb 'az, "at that time," distinctly binds such public worship back to the time when Seth called his son Enosh. The "name" here, as usual, means the whole truth that God had revealed about Himself. Since the name "Yahweh" is attached to "name," this means that from days of old God was known in the capacity of Yahweh, or in the character of Yahweh, whether that word as such was known at this early date or not. The thing that the name stood for was known. Men do not first in the age of Abraham or Moses begin to comprehend God's faithfulness, unchangeableness, and mercy. Since this calling out by the use of the' name definitely implies public worship, we have here the first record of regular public worship, Private worship is presupposed as preceding. The great importance of public worship, both as a matter of personal necessity as well as a matter of public confession, is beautifully set forth by this brief record. This act bears eloquent testimony to the courage, of this group, who wanted to be known as such whose hope was placed only in Yahweh. It is not enough to say that "Yahweh's religion began with

Enoch." It began with Adam and developed into regular public worship in three generations.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThe first fifteen verses of this chapter may be used as a unit. In that event they may be treated under the head of "the First Murder," or "the Rapid Development of Sin," or even "the Horrible Possibilities Latent in Sin." Verses 9-15. lend themselves to the treatment of the subject of "Impenitence" or "the Despair of the. Impenitent."The second half of the chapter offers a topic that is always helpful and perhaps more timely now than ever. In v.16-24 one may find "the Beginnings of Civilization." Here, of course, a certain caution is in order. Though it was the Cainite group that devised these beginnings, and though this was a typical instance of worldly-mindedness, yet over against these undeniable facts it should be clearly stated that attempts made by godly men to "subdue" the world and the created things in it are in conformity with God's original purpose. (1:28). If worldly minded men make inventions and discoveries because they know no higher goal, godly men should make endeavours along the same line in order to-fulfil their God-given destiny and to please their Father in heaven. If the entire section v.16-26 is treated, in some way the contrast between the spirit of the world and the spirit of God's children should be the dominant thought.

CHAPTER V

III. The History of Adam (5:1-6,8) We may find subdivisions in Genesis and append to them our own titles. Moses has taken care of the major divisions by inserting them himself as "histories" (toledôth). On the meaning of the term toledôth and the instances of its occurrence see 2:4. As it was necessary at 2:4 to determine with what propriety the section there beginning could be called the "history of heaven and earth," so here there is necessity to discern how very appropriate it is to term this portion "the history of Adam." Had the choice of title been left to us, we should perhaps have felt inclined to term this a genealogy of the patriarchs, which it also certainly is. But with greater propriety Moses speaks of the "history" or "story" of Adam. For this whole period of development of the line of godly men was Adam's history working itself out; the age was dominated by the spirit and the influence of Adam. This group, not the other described in 4:16-24, had the spirit of Adam. So we notice at the same time that only the group described in chapter 5 carries along with it the promise of the seed of the woman. The men here described are for the present the woman's seed, and in this line the Seed of the woman is ultimately to develop. The writer saw this, for he knew the promise given to Abraham and Israel and observed that only this one line terminated in Abraham. We may further say that in another sense Adam dominated this age and this group. For what he taught as truth or as God's Word concerning the original state, concerning the Fall and God's promises after the Fall, as well as his attitude in faith toward all these promises of God dominated more than one half of the entire period, namely Adam's lifetime, and continued to be the controlling influence during the rest of it. For this whole group walked in his footsteps. True, in the concluding section 6:1-8 the definite departure from what he taught and exemplified is recorded, but just that prepares for the definite conclusion of this era. It certainly was in a prominent sense the Story of Adam. On the whole, these patriarchs, it appears, may well be regarded as men deserving of an unusual measure of renown. If during a millennium and a half these are the only names worthy of being handed down in the inspired record, we may well conclude with Luther that they "were the very greatest heroes who ever came upon earth barring Christ and John the Baptist." Besides, since this point of view is supported even by the fact that in point of longevity their strength and natural vigour far excelled that of later generations, it would seem quite proper to conclude that in other respects also they represented a less decayed stage of human life. (a) The Separate Development of the Godly (5:1-32) 1, 2. This is the book of the history of Adam. At the time when God created Adam He made him in the likeness of God. Male and female He created them and He blessed them, and He called their name man at the time of their being created. In this instance the demonstrative "this" points forward: what follows is Adam's history. The heading is unusual: instead of the usual expression, as in 2:4 and in all other headings of this character in Genesis, "this is the story," we read: "this is the book of the story." "Book" (sépher) refers to any document, long or short, as long as it is complete in itself. In Deut.24:1 the term is applied to a bill of divorce; in (Jeremiah 32:12) to a deed. Here 5:1-6:8 is the "book." Does this seem to indicate a written document from antiquity which Moses incorporated in his book? Who can say? At least, such a possibility cannot be ruled out. Since we have no means of knowing who was the one that penned the document, we are hardly safe in following Whitelaw,

when he ascribes the writing to antediluvians and so arrives at conclusions concerning the culture and the degree of advancement of these early peoples. Yet the possibility of what he contends for cannot be denied. The first Adam, 'adham in v.1, is certainly a proper name, according to the analogy of all the other headings of this nature in Genesis, in all of which, with the necessary exception of 2:4, proper names occur. The next 'adham in v.1 seems to hover on the border-line between the proper noun and the generic word "man." The 'adham of v.2 is quite likely the generic. Then v.3 ff. the word again is to be regarded as the proper noun. Such seeming vacillation is due to the process of gradual crystallization of the generic noun into a proper noun (K. C.). The rest of v.1, plus v.2, is not to be combined into a very complex sentence, a thing foreign to the simple style of Genesis here (K. S.416 a). But why repeat things previously stated? Why recall the God likeness, the two sexes, God's blessing and the naming of the race? This brief recapitulation serves to recall the first chapter and the glorious original state of the first man as well as his glorious destiny. After the things recorded in chapters 3 and 4 man, destined to such high things as the opening chapters indicate, achieves a record no higher than that of this fifth chapter. All things in these opening chapters belong together in a most intimate sense. Here is not a more or less clumsy combining of various sources, P dominating the scene (except in v.29) for the first time since 1:1-2:3. The whole is poured into one mold by one author, and part balances and supplements part in the most skilful style of writing possible. Verse I b and 2 recall the following to our mind: "At the time (beyôm "in the day" in the broader sense) when 'elohîm (the Creator who is to be feared) did create man He made him in the likeness (not "after the likeness" as in 1:26, for the two prepositions are often used interchangeably) of God" (not merely His likeness -- emphatic repetition); besides, even as in 1:26; 2:5, 2:18 ff. man is first referred to generically and then follows the definite indication that man had a woman at his side, so here v.2 supplies "male and female He created them" -- the separate mention of woman's being created as well as man's being quite necessary for the Orient in days of old already. That these persons enjoyed God's blessing is recalled as a matter still calling for grateful remembrance. A fact not previously mentioned is supplied here, that the naming .of man, which might have been inferred from 1:26, was attended to by God at the time when He created man. After such a beginning of man's history what a marvellous future could not have been expected! Instead, what a poor and meagre history -- as the chapter now proceeds to unfold! 3-5. And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years and begat (a son) in his likeness, according to his image, and he called his name Seth. And the days of Adam after his begetting Seth were eight hundred years, and he begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Adam which he lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died. This gives the brief record of the first of the patriarchs in the form which is stereotyped after this pattern with a few exceptions, such as the more elaborate form of v.3; v.22 and v.24; the words after "saying" in v.29; v.32; wayhi v.31 for wayyihyû in the preceding instances. Of course; the critical assertion is now almost universal; that so precisely formal a style is one of the outstanding characteristics of P. But the simpler and more obvious explanation is that Moses, the inspired writer, possessed the capacity of employing a great variety of styles as the circumstances suggested. What is more concise than such a formal style when a broad area of time is to be covered rapidly in a condensed account that emphasizes the chronological aspect of history? Yet, even so, the author is complete master of the situation. Outstanding matters like 3 a, v.22 and-24, as well as v.29 are preserved, and the iron fetters of routine form are broken. Criticism ascribes v.29 to another author J, so postulating for P a binding rigidity of style. This priestly author appears to them to have been

so tightly manacled by his style that, after he once had cast the mold, it was impossible for him to extricate himself. But by the solemn repetition of the concluding phrase, "and he died," Moses was able to emphasize besides the sad mortality of man. There is something appalling about the dread finality of this phrase. Bonar is said to have described this as "the solemn toll of the patriarchal funeral bell." When discussing the style of the chapter, critics should extol the merits of it and laud that capable flexibility of it which Moses, like other great masters of style, displays -- although this is a matter that has to do purely with externals. At once we are struck by the longevity of these patriarchs; all except three lived in excess of nine hundred years, It is useless to attempt to evade this fact. The attempt to let the personal names represent tribes shatters on the clear statement of how old each father was when he begot a son. A complete generation is not thus brought forth within a tribe. Equally abortive is the attempt to claim that numerous links in the chain may have been omitted. Again the precise measuring of each forward step in reference to successive individuals peremptorily rules out such a claim. The most common suggestion by way of escape from the difficulty is to make "year" mean a shorter period, either one month or two, etc. Unfortunately, the term "year" knows of no such usage, and the suggestion must be treated as a mere surmise. He, however, who is duly impressed by the excellence of man's original estate, will have no difficulty in accepting the common explanation that even under the curse of sin man's constitution displayed such vitality that it did not at first submit to the ravages of time until after many centuries had passed. Besides -- a fact established by fossil finds -- there are ample indications of a more salubrious climate in the antediluvian days. Nor should we forget that here is the race of godly men who lived temperately and sanely.If Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when Seth was born, and if, on the other hand, it seems extremely likely that Cain and Abel had been born quite a while before that, we may well wonder at the great lapse of time between the birth of the first two and the birth of Seth. The common explanation is not without merit, that the grief over Abel weighed very heavily upon the first parents. On the other hand, there is a very strong possibility that, as in many instances, a century or more passed before the son was born that carried on the line, so in the more deliberate course of events of these early days Adam may have been nearly a hundred years old before Cain and Abel were born. But we do observe distinctly that all life was marked by a certain leisureliness and temperate self-control that makes it stand out over against the hectic present.The outstanding thing to be remarked about Seth is that he was in the likeness and according to the image of his father. First, note that the order of nouns and of prepositions is reversed from 1:26; for here we read, "in his likeness, according to his image." This, of course, proves nothing more than that the distinction between "image" and "likeness," as well as the distinction between the two prepositions "in" (be) and "according to" (ke), is not very pronounced. Yet this use of both phrases here emphatically asserts what it asserted when it was said of man that he was to be made in God's image and according to His likeness, namely: he was made in a very distinct resemblance with, and correspondence to, the original Pattern. Here now with emphasis: Seth was a being essentially like Adam. Now, as stands out as clearly as it can, between 1:26 and 5:3 the Fall intervened. The pristine likeness is God. It may yet be said with far less emphasis than in 1:26 that man is "according to the likeness of God," but after all that chapter three told that implies, as our dogmaticians so aptly have stated the case, that the formal side of the divine image alone remains; the material side has been lost. Therefore Scriptures do in a modified sense assert that man has something of the divine image left; cf. I Cor.11:7; Jas.3:9. This verse, then, by contrast actually may be read thus: "Adam begat a son in

his image according to his likeness."Criticism, treating Genesis as a book made up of composite elements that have not been fused into a unified and harmonious whole, gets into somewhat of a tangle at this point, a tangle that works out to the sad discredit of Genesis. Since this is ascribed to P, and P did not write chapters three and four, P knows nothing of a Fall (argument purely from silence). Therefore, if 5:1 says God made man in His image, and v.3 says Seth was in man's image, ergo: Seth must be in God's image as Adam originally was. Then, concludes criticism, the Bible does not rate the Fall half as seriously as do our dogmaticians. But notice what this says about the Scriptures. The author of chapter three (J) knows of a Fall extremely serious in its consequences. Chapter five (P) knows of no such Fall: contradiction within the Scriptures. So, while forfeiting the reliability of the Scriptures, the natural powers of man are exalted and man is praised and flattered. What a sorry denial of truth!Seth is mentioned as the one who carried on the line of promise. Cain belongs to another group, see 4:16 ff. Abel is dead. Criticism again makes the assertion: P knew nothing of Cain and Abel.After the birth of Seth other sons and daughters are born. How many, we are not told. The emphasis lies on the chronology and on setting forth the prominent links of the chain. Adam came to be among the oldest of mankind. His total age was 930 years. The solemn "and he died" is offset by the fact that in spite of death God's promise prevailed in the more abundant seed of the woman. God's justice and wrath against sin as well as His mercy are thus strongly emphasized in this chapter. These two facts are held in clear balance over against one another. "Death reigned" indeed "from Adam" (Ro 5:14) onward; so by emphasizing the mortal consequences of sin the scriptural record lets no man esteem lightly the transgressing of the commandments of God. But where sin prevails, grace does the more prevail. This the Scriptures never minimize. Man is not to be left comfortless.For convenience sake we tabulate at this point what the record offers, as well as a few suggestive computations based on the figures of this chapter.Chronological Table -- Adam to NoahAge at birth

of first soneYear of

birthYears after

birth of sonTotal

ageYear

of death

Adam> 130 1 800 930 930 Seth> 105 130 807 912 1042 Enos> 90 235 815 905 1140 Kenan> 70 325 840 910 1235 Mahalalel> 65 395 830 895 1290 Jared> 162 460 800 962 1422 Enoch> 65 622 300 365 (987) Methuselah> 187 687 782 969 1656 Lamech> 182 874 595 777 1651 Noah> (500) 1056 450 950 2006N. B. We have included two of the above numbers in parenthesis. The 987 stands under the caption, "Year of death," but Enoch did not die; consequently marks of parenthesis, In the case of Noah the same mark enclosing the 500 indicates a mere possibility: nowhere does the account indicate that the above, mentioned after Adam, are really the first-born. Seth definitely was not. The likelihood is very strong that the three sons of. Noah, born when he was 500 years old, will not have been his eldest children.Other suggestive points to be discerned from this Table are that Enoch's translation (987) occurred about midway between Creation and the Flood (1656). Again, Adam was still living when Lamech, Noah's father, was born (874). Any tradition, that Adam desired to hand down was only in the second generation at the time the Flood

came: Adam to Lamech. Methuselah died in the year; of the Flood (1656), yet he need not have perished in the Flood. It is facetiousness to let him perish in the Flood and then to remark that he died "of an accident." Apparently, the Flood did not sweep a single one of the Sethites, the true "seed of the woman," away. There is a fine propriety of divine grace in that fact. Besides, it may be remarked that Noah barely missed knowing Adam and Seth; Lamech did know Adam. What a power for godliness that should have been to see so many staunch believers living simultaneously and encouraging one another in steadfastness!There is no reason for doubting the correctness of the chronology submitted by the Hebrew Masoretic text. This is and is intended to be a complete chronology, complete as far as marking the actual lapse of time is concerned. No other nation has anything to compare with it. Yet, strange to say, the only reliable chronology which we have, which actually purports to be an adequate chronology dating back to Creation, is continually being questioned, corrected, amended and condemned in favour of fallible documents which are historically but poorly attested and marked by many a gap. The claim that the Scriptures do not give a complete and accurate chronology for the whole period of the Old Testament that they cover is utterly wrong, dangerous and mischievous. At the slightest objection men are ready to cast aside as inadequate the only adequate chronology mankind possesses.The variations, offered both by the Septuagint and by the Samaritan Pentateuch are so manifestly altered according to a particular principle as to be useless, especially when we consider that both groups were ready to alter the text to suit their convenience, a charge that cannot be laid against the Jewish scribes. So, for example, the Greek version lengthens almost all the figures in the first column, usually by adding one hundred years, so that their first column would read 230, 205, 190, 170, 165, 162!, 165, 167!, 188!, 500. Then they are able later on to give a total for the age of the postdiluvians until Abraham that is more nearly like the age limit of Moses' time, i. e., seventy to eighty years. Again, the Samaritans have diminished a few of the totals of the first column to make it appear that the decrease in age from Adam on was more regular. The numbers of the first column, if taken from the Samaritan Pentateuch, would run thus: 130, 105, 90, 70, 65, 62, 65, 67, 53, 500. Such artificial regularity does not mar the Hebrew numbers. Volumes have been written on this question, and most of the present-day treatment is entirely without value, because the reliable figures of the Hebrew text are, without valid reason, treated as undependable. If a man wants the only correct chronology reaching back to the beginning, here it is -- Chapter Five. The famous list of the first ten Babylonian kings, as given by the Babylonian priest Berossus, quoted by Eusebius, has nothing in common with our chapter, except the number ten and perhaps a few very minor points of similarity on the meaning of certain names. But these points of correspondence become the merest trifles if held over against the glaring dissimilarities of the two lists, which Strack has successfully emphasized. Chief among the dissimilarities is the fantastic age limit of these Babylonian kings: Alorus begins with 36,000; Megalorus, Euedorachus, and Xisouthrous each achieve 64,800 years. This whole fantastic record may have retained a few traces of the original tradition which the Bible gives with unimpaired correctness. N. B. "begat" (v.3) has no object; the object is easily supplied.Verse 3 says: "he called"; 4:25 says: "she called his name Seth." No contradiction. Both concurred in calling him Seth; Eve may have first suggested the name.6-8. And Seth lived one hundred and five years and begat Enosh. And Seth lived after his begetting Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and he begat sons and daughters, and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died.The meaning of the names Seth and Enosh has been discussed; see 4:25 and 26.9-11. And Enosh lived ninety years and begat

Kahan. And Enosh lived after his begetting Kahan eight hundred and fifteen years and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years; and he died."Kenan" perhaps means "smith." As might have been remarked above on v.5, the expression "all the days of" is idiomatic for "the whole length of his life."12-14. And Kenan was seventy years old and begat Mahalalel. And Kahan lived after his begetting Mahalalel eight hundred and forty years and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Kahan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died.The name Mahalalel may be interpreted to mean "Praiseworthy is God."15-17. And Mahalalel lived sixty-five years and begat Jared (or Heb. Jeredh). And Mahalalel lived after his begetting Jared eight hundred and thirty years and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years; and he died.Jared means "descent." It may indicate the decline in longevity which has been in evidence in each successive case, Jared being the first man to fall under the total of nine hundred. This explanation acts on the assumption that Jared may not have been the name originally given at birth, because he was born in the year 460 from Creation. The name surely has nothing to do with the chimerical Jewish notion that the name was given in remembrance of the fact that in his day angels began to "descend" to earth in order to commingle with men.18-20. And Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years and begat Enoch. And Jared lived after his begetting Enoch eight hundred years and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Jared were nine hundred, and sixty-two years; and he died.Enoch (Heb. chanôkh), means, as in 4:17, "beginner.". This name and that of Lamech are identical in the Cainite and the Sethite line.21-24. And Enoch lived sixty-five years and begat Methuselah. And Enoch walked with God after his begetting Methuselah three hundred years and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.Methuselah seems to mean "man of the weapon" or spear (Mann mit Wurfgeschoss -- K. W.). Why he should be so called is hard to determine, except that he may have excelled in the use of the spear, but surely not for murderous purposes like Lamech the Cainite. Then also not for the purpose, of hunting, unless it be for securing the pelts of animals for clothing.But this man Enoch, who represents the seventh generation in his line, even as Lamech the Cainite did in his, commands attention. If seven, be the number of divine operation, then Enoch's case would exemplify what divine grace can accomplish by way of complete consecration. We do not believe that the seven is secured in this instance by manipulation of the genealogy or by skipping intervening grades. Enoch actually was the seventh from Adam.Now the significant thing reported concerning him is that he "walked with God". (hithkallekh'eth ha'elohîm) The Hithpael stem signifies "to walk about" -- "to live." The particular preposition used, eth, denotes "intimacy, fellowship" (B D B). Here it is customary to collate the other prepositions that are used in connection with the same stem. "Before God" (Heb. liphne) is found in 17:1; 24:40; or "after" ('acharey) in De 13:5 (4); 1 Kings 14:8. Now it is true that 'eth in reference to God appears only in reference to Enoch and Noah (6:9) and so gains the meaning in Malachi 2:6 of the most intimate communion with God as exemplified by the most godly of men. But true as all this is, the expression as such is not sufficiently, analyzed when this fact is determined. Does "to walk with God" actually mean a physical, outward meeting as the expression of closest fellowship? So some maintain, citing the following supposition as proof: God still had the place of his manifestation on earth at the Garden; there Enoch met with Him and walked with Him. But several valid objections rise at this point. Was Enoch, not a sinner also? If so, was not he, as well as all his fellow-sinners, to be kept from the garden by the cherubim and the swords of fire? Besides, was not the general

rule of Moses' day, applicable in this instance as well as in all others: "man shall not see me and live" (Ex 33:20)? This maxim was not a human opinion but spoken by God Himself. We are thus driven to take the expression, "to walk with God," figuratively, in the sense of inner communion, as living one's life in such a way that in faith one remains uninterruptedly conscious of the nearness of the almighty God and so walks as the thought of that presence determines. Life was lived to please God, so far as this was humanly possible. This involved, in complete Conformity with what the New Testament teaches, a life of prayer and of watchful use of the means of grace, that is, in this instance, holding fast and feeding upon the promise of victory through the Seed of the woman. To interpret "to walk with God" in this sense is further recommended by certain grammatical considerations. Certainly, the parallel expressions are to be taken figuratively and not literally: 17:1 cannot be taken in any other sense than this; De 13:5 (4) plainly refers to fidelity in following after Jehovah in the sense of the explanatory expressions following: "fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and -- serve Him and cleave unto Him." In other words, the type of walking with God which is still possible is the type that Enoch exemplified. Even the article ha'elohîm, i.e., "the true God," points in this direction. Any other type of communion with the true God is visionary and the dreamer's choice. The versions, finally, fully confirm this interpretation. For the Septuagint says: eu hoesthsen tw yew -- "he was well-pleasing to God." The Targum has: "He walked in the fear of Yahweh." See also Heb.11:5.One side of such walking with God is very fortunately stressed by Luther on good scriptural grounds over against the purely mystical and contemplative aspect of it that we might be inclined to overstress. Developing the thought expressed in (Jude 14,15), Luther rightly contends that Enoch's communion with God was coupled with aggressive testimony to the unbelievers of his generation, and, therefore, he is to be regarded as a man who manifested "great boldness in testifying for the Lord and His church against Satan's church and that of the Cainites." To this must be added another factor clearly contained in the text. Such communion with God went hand in hand with raising a family and begetting children: "Enoch walked with God and -- begat sons and daughters." Celibacy is not requisite for a holy life.When the statement occurs a second time (v.24), "and Enoch walked with God," it is for the purpose of binding it up closely with what follows: "and he was not, for God took him." These two so combine that their meaning is designed to be: the reason why God did this unusual thing in Enoch's case was because Enoch walked with God. The expression "he was not" ('ênénnû) means he was translated. See Hebrews 11:5. It could not mean: he died, because of the double preceding emphasis on his communion with God, and because "God took him" (laqach) involves the same word as that used in the translation of Elijah (2Ki 2: 3,5). In a chapter where every other life (except that of Noah and his sons for the present) closed with: "and he died," the omission of that phrase is too significant to allow for the conclusion that he did die.Standing thus halfway between Adam and the Flood, this translation of Enoch constitutes a most welcome testimony to the prospect of life eternal, both to the older generation as well as to all those who were to follow as his younger contemporaries. For a group of believing men, such as the Sethites were, would not have failed to see the purpose of his being taken away. Skinner must have ranked the spiritual capacity of godly men like these patriarchs very low to advance the claim: "it is hardly correct to speak of it (the use of "He took") as containing a presentment of the idea of immortality." It was the first definite indication of immortality offered in the Scripture when God took Enoch.Some take grave exception to the thought apparently involved in this translation of Enoch if it be claimed that this translation involves immediate glorification. This, they say, is impossible, because "the

first-fruits" of the resurrection must be Christ (1 Corinthians 15:20). Correct as is this claim in reference to Christ, it should be particularly noted that this involves only being the first-fruits in the resurrection. However, in Enoch's case glorification only is involved. Not having died, Enoch could not be resurrected. But since Enoch was of the Sethite line where faith in the Saviour to come prevailed, he having lived in such faith, after his removal shares the glory that is theirs who believed on the Saviour. He is glorified as believers in Christ are, and that, of course at once. They who here invent an intermediate state, a receptacle where the Old Testament saints abode till Christ came, are building up an unscriptural speculation. This modern view of Sheol is wrong and very mischievous. Such an interpretation runs afoul of the verb here used: God "took" him. What manner of taking would that be where the individual taken is left in Sheol to wait in a shadow existence for long centuries? Besides, the Bible teaches nothing about a Totenreich with various compartments. The total age of Enoch, 365 years, presents an accidental correspondence with the number of the days of the year. No further significance is to be attached to the fact.On the forms and the use of 'ênénnû see G. K.152 m. Though the term means "he is not," yet in connection with a past tense in the narrative it comes to mean: "he was not" (K. S.140 b).25-27. And Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years and begat Lamech. And Methuselah lived after his begetting Lamech seven hundred and eighty-two years and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died."Lamech" may mean "warrior or conqueror." Methuselah was that one of the patriarchs who lived the greatest number of years.28-31. And Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years and begat a son. And he called his name Noah, saying: This one will bring us comfort in the face of our work and (more particularly) in the face of the toil of our hands (arising) from the soil which Yahweh has cursed. And Lamech lived after his begetting Noah five hundred and ninety-five years and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years; and he died."Noah" means "rest." The birth of this son is recorded in such a way as at once to make it evident that he stands out in connection with a critical juncture in the history of the race. For, first of all, departing from the stereotyped expression used in the chapter, Moses says: "Lamech begat" -- not Noah -- but "a son" and called his name, etc. Then, in the second place, with a measure of formality he adds, "and he called his name," an expression not used since v.3. Thirdly, the reason for the giving of this name is mentioned: "He will bring us comfort." He is called Noach for yenach (ch) am. The author is not giving etymological derivatives. Noach as such comes from an entirely different word, viz. nûach, "to rest." But the two verbs nuach and nacham have a kind of assonance, they sound somewhat alike, and Lamech played upon this similarity in a perfectly permissible pun. The name Noach was to remind of the comfort this man would bring. By the spirit of prophecy Lamech, like other godly patriarchs, sensed that in an unusual way this one would bring comfort to the troubled race. In reality Noah did this by preserving the small godly remnant in the ark. This unusual form of the comfort Lamech may never have dreamed of. Yet his prophecy is a valid one. No doubt, in expressing it he had hoped for much more. His prophecy, however, may meet its highest fulfilment in the removal of the curse from the earth, which removal came after the Flood, 8:21 f.This comfort was to come in the face of (min, like 4:11, -- "over against," gegenueber -- K. W.) "our work," "and in particular (waw augmentativum, K. S.375d) in the face of the toil of our hands." Apparently, the misery of work in the sweat of the face as "toil of the hands" was beginning to weigh heavily upon men. Life in the externals was a ceaseless round of toil. Men longed for deliverance or at least for comfort under

the burden. They knew definitely the whole situation that had made human existence so wretched; they traced their wretchedness back to the curse pronounced upon the ground because of man (3:17). Here Lamech says of their misery that it is "(arising) from the soil which Yahweh has cursed." The particular emphasis on "which he has cursed" is secured by putting in the clause after the sentence seems to run to a conclusion (K. S.375 d). In reality, according to 9:8 ff., Noah does become the mediator of a new and definite relationship between God and mankind, a relationship guaranteed by a covenant with a particular sign, the bow in the heavens. In the face of all this it is not good to claim that Lamech prophesied but missed the mark, as even Luther suggests.On the other hand, the favourite modernistic interpretation of the comfort brought by Noah is both shallow and unscriptural. The wine, (9:20 ff.) which Noah discovered, was, it is claimed, the comfort of which Lamech prophesied. In the face of the much greater things that came from God through Noah, as indicated above, such an interpretation is quite trivial. Besides, also 9:20 ff. makes it more than doubtful whether the author regards wine as a great comfort of the human race, not to mention the many warnings against abuse of this divine gift recorded here and there in the Scriptures. Meek must have been trying to incorporate this misconception when, misconstruing and misplacing phrases, he arrives at the rendering: "This is the one, after the work and the labour of our hands, to bring us consolation from the very soil which God cursed."Interpreters misconstrue the passage and the spirit it breathes if they lay into it the idea that some personal, purely human achievement of Noah's is the ultimate source of the comfort that is to be brought to mankind. Prophecy does not thus glorify human prowess and capacity. The basic thought of the prophecy is that God has destined this son to be the channel or mediator of great comfort to the human race. The divine agency in the blessing is the big factor. 32. And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.At this point important developments in the history of the race appear, developments in which the three sons of Noah figure. Therefore, the line of descent has to supply more than one name. The Hebrew idiom uses the noun ("son of") for the adjective ("old"), see K. S.306h. Certain details that might satisfy our curiosity but are otherwise unimportant are not definitely decided by the brief statement of this verse; such as: Were other sons begotten of Noah before these three? (Most likely not!) or, Were these three triplets? (most likely not; for begat here has the looser meaning, "began to beget," as in 11:26).The meaning of these three names involves etymological difficulties. "Shem" may mean "renown." Ham, Hebrew cham, may be derived from the root chamam, "to be hot," and may thus involve a reference to the fact that most Hamites live in hot, southern countries. Therefore, perhaps, "Southlanders"; (K. W,). Its resemblance to the original Egyptian for Egypt is etymotogically doubtful (Buhl). "Japheth" might mean "beauty" (K. W,); hut compare 9:27.But this "History" (toledôth) involves more than the genealogical table of the Sethites: it includes 6:1-8.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSNot every man would venture to use this chapter as a text. We should hardly favour that method of treatment which picks out a few verses at random and uses them separately or jointly, like v.3, 24 and 29. But if it is borne in mind that the chapter tells how the race of godly men developed in the days before the Flood, We certainly have a unity in the text, and certain items of this development are true as long as the world stands. The factors that stand out call for a rearrangement in homiletical treatment. To give due prominence to the hope characteristic of such lives the truth expressed in v.29 should be given the strongest emphasis: Men of God had hope, hope to come of one born of woman; their life was not aimless; God-promised deliverance made life worth living. Then it may well be pointed out how such hope

influenced the lives of godly men: in Enoch's case this was particularly apparent; he lived a godly life and received a gracious reward. But the stern realities of life are also reckoned with by godly men: they know how sin has mutilated man -- now each man begets children "in his own' image" (v.3) no longer in God's image (v.1); now every man must reckon with the closing chapter that reads: "and he died." The longevity referred to in this chapter shows the high original estate from which we have fallen and to which we shall be renewed.

CHAPTER VI

(b) The Commingling of the Two Races (6:1-8) We have just emphasized the fact that this is the closing portion of this particular history. Since this appears as plainly as possible, if the headings of the parts of the book are accepted on their face value as natural marks of division, and if the literary unity of the book is adhered to, we should do foolishly to lose sight of the fact. Here now is the natural sequence of thought: after the Cainites were observed to be going in one definite direction in their development, and the Sethites, tool were seen to be going in an entirely different direction, and these two streams of mankind Were strictly keeping apart because they were so utterly divergent in character, now (ch.6) the two streams begin, to commingle, and as a result moral distinctions are obliterated and the Sethites, too, become so badly contaminated that the existing world order must be definitely terminated. With this natural sequence of thought growing out of the text and supported by a correct interpretation, criticism fails to see the obvious and introduces elements of thought entirely foreign to the connection and makes a mythical tale out of a simple and practical lesson, as we shall indicate presently. The best refutation of this erroneous view is first of all the unfolding of the natural meaning of the passage. 1, 2. And it came to pass when mankind began to multiply upon the face of the earth and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair and they took to themselves wives, whichever they liked best. In point of time, as will appear in connection with v.3, we are shortly before the birth of Noah's sons (5:32). Men have become quite numerous upon the face of the earth. No man will ever determine how many they were. But where mankind comes to be of great numbers, somehow the places where they congregate together thickly become the scenes of the development of evil on a greater scale. So here. However, when it is remarked that "daughters were born unto them," that certainly cannot mean to describe something new: daughters had been born right along. However, this fact is mentioned as having a bearing upon the situation about to be described. Mark well that the bringing forth of daughters is being considered as taking place throughout all "mankind" (ha'adham), for the lahem, "to them," refers to the collective singular "mankind." Now "the sons of God" are found looking indiscriminately at this group and observing only the fact that "fair" ones (tobhoth) were to be seen in the whole group. That is all that they observe. They ask or care nothing about anything else. Whether these fair ones are Sethite or Cainite means nothing to them. That is the sad moral indifference that the author emphasizes. But who are these "sons of God"? Without a shadow of doubt, the Sethites -- the ones just described in chapter five as having in their midst men who walked with God, like Enoch (v.22), men who looked to higher comfort in the midst of life's miseries, like Lamech (v.29), men who publicly worshipped God and confessed His name (4:26). Such men merit to be called the "sons of God" (benê elohîm), a title applied to true followers of God elsewhere in the Old Testament Scriptures. When the psalmist refers to such (Psalms 73:15) as "the generation of thy children," he uses the same word "sons," describing them as belonging to God. De 32:5 uses the same word "sons" ("children," A. V.) in reference to Israel. Hosea 1:10 is, if anything, a still stronger passage, saying specifically to Israel, "Ye are sons of the living God" (Heb. benê el chay). Psalms 80:17 also belongs here. Criticism resorts to a technicality at this point. If God said to me: "Thou art my Son,"

criticism's claim would be: "You have not been called God's son,' but my son,' " -- a mere technicality. So in the face of the passages we have just cited criticism claims the Scriptures do not use the expression "sons of God" for the godly, because "thy children" is used in three instances and in the fourth another name is used for God, 'el chay. We might word the case thus: strictly speaking, "sons of God" is a title applied to the godly; grammatically, the very expression "sons of God" does not happen to be used in reference to them in that very form. Over against this usage that we have cited criticism arrays another, the substance of which is: The title "sons of God" is used in reference to the angels. This claim cannot be denied; see Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 and Da 3:25; also benê elîm, "sons of the Mighty," Psalms 29:1; 89:7. But this claim becomes erroneous when it is thus worded: The title "sons of God" is used only in reference to the angels. But of these two uses of the title, which shall we choose in this instance? We have had no mention made of' angels thus far in Genesis. We have met with other sons of the true God, in fact, the whole preceding chapter, even 4:25-5:32, has been concerned with them. Who will, then, be referred to here? Answer, the Sethites, without a doubt. At this point criticism leads forth its strongest argument, saying that the contrast between "sons of God" and "daughters of men" demands that the former be divine and the latter human. We answer: Not at all; least of all in the face of the very natural approach we have just established, namely, that the sons of God of 4:25-5:32 are still under consideration. We have shown above how "daughters of men" refers indiscriminately to all "the daughters of mankind," which were unfortunately lumped together by the sons of God without regard to their classification, whether Sethite or Cainite. When God's children, lose sight of such basic distinctions and look about only for the pretty faces and the shapely forms, then, surely, degeneracy has set in. If the objection be raised, that in the preceding section the title "sons of God" had not been used in reference to the Sethites, we answer: It was reserved for use by Moses until this point to make the high standards that the Sethites should have observed in this matter all the more prominent. Or if it be objected: "sons of God" or "sons" is used of Israel as a people, not of individuals, this objection matters little. Here the Sethites are also being referred to as a separate group or people, and not as individuals. The reference to heathen legends about the promiscuous mingling of gods and men in mythological adventures, certainly can have no bearing upon our case. Such mythological tales about racy escapades on the part of the old gods would hardly be matter by which Biblical material is to be judged or with which it is to be compared. Critics, however, have waxed so bold in this instance that Procksch simply offers the superscription "The Marriages with Angels" (Die Engelehen), for this section. Besides, they are so sure that the section is of mythological, import that they claim the original account did not read "sons of God" but "gods," striking out "sons of." So Meek translates, "the gods noticed that the daughters of men were attractive; so they married those whom they liked best."Such an approach introduces the mythological element as well as polytheism into the Scriptures and makes the Bible a record of strange and fantastic tales and contradicts the passage Mt 22:30: "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven." For the expression used here (v.2), "they took to themselves wives" (wayyiqechû nashîm), is the standing expression for marital union. This verse does not refer to adulterous irregularities but to permanent union. Critics nowadays readily admit this, but usually wind up by wondering, not at their interpretation, which speaks of actual marital union with angels who took up a settled habitation on earth, but by wondering at the fact that J, as they say, should have written such strange tales, which they themselves do not believe possible. On this use of laqach cf. Ge 24:4; 21:21; 11:29;

12:19 etc.The closing words, "whichever they liked best," help to clinch our interpretation, for they indicate that the controlling factor was the chance fancy of the moment, rather than sound judgment which weighs the moral character and the suitability of the one chosen. Literally translated this expression would be: "from all whom they chose." The min here used is the "min of explanation," which does not mean selecting some from "all" but carries the force of "whichsoever" (K. S.83).Those who wish to find a New Testament reference to these angel marriages point to II Pet.2:4 and to Jude 6, but neither of these passages refer to anything other than the original fall of the angels, as Keil has adequately shown. The marriages of angels have to be injected into these New Testament passages. Besides, then there would be a twofold fall of angels: the original and this, the second.There is another harsh dissonance resulting from this strange critical construction as one tries to reason out the connection of v.3 with what precedes. For v.3, as we shall see at once, speaks of sharp restrictions laid upon man for his misdeeds. Here, then, would be the very queer sequence of thought: v.2, angels sin; v.3, men are punished. In vain the critics urge that, of course, the punishment of angels is presupposed but only that of man is mentioned. But if the angels really acted with the bold presumption the text indicates ("whichever they liked best they took"), then the women taken were practically innocent. Besides, what none of these commentators seems to have realized: if all mankind is punished as a result of what happened, these irregularities must have been quite common, well-nigh the rule, in fact. Is any critic ready to admit that? In a parallel case the evil angel has his punishment meted out first (3:14, 15); it is not simply taken for granted. Feeling all this, some critics charge the section with lacking logical progression of thought, failing to detect that the lack of logic lies in their erroneous interpretation. Procksch even charges J with creating intentional obscurities and blurring the connection of parts, an almost unbelievable course of procedure. But when critical hypotheses fail, it cannot be the critics who are wrong, but the original writers were guilty of absurdities.3. And Yahweh said: My spirit shall not judge among mankind forever, because they also are flesh. Yet shall their days be one hundred and twenty years.This verse is a veritable crux interpretum. The critics magnify the difficulty to the point where they render the verse: "My spirit shall not (in?) man forever; he is flesh." Our rendering above, which is in reality the substance of Luther's, except that Luther preferred a passive for the sake of better idiomatic German, we believe can be sustained by good arguments, makes good sense, and fits well into the context.In the first place, we have rendered the verb yadhôn "judge." In support of this rendering observe that Symmachus and Luther rendered it thus. Besides, the fact that dîn means "judge" cannot be questioned. But in how many instances verbs like dîn run parallel forms like dôn or dûn! K. W. admits this meaning. With the Hebrew meaning so readily available, it seems quite unnecessary to seek out Assyrian or Arabic parallels. Now the meaning that results is simple and most appropriate. A measure of the truth had been available for these antediluvians. This divinely revealed truth counted as God's Word for them. God's Word, according to the consistent and the uniform teaching of the Scriptures, is the means of grace. Through it God's Holy Spirit (rûchî) operates, instructing or also reproving and judging men. This work of His had gone on until this point, aiming to correct and to check the strong propensity toward evil during the days of progressive degeneration. In spite of all the Spirit's corrective efforts "mankind" ('adham) had persisted in abandoning the way of truth and life. Men had finally, as the one suggestive illustration showed, no longer cared about having their homes centres of godly instruction where divine truth prevailed, being taught by father and by mother, but instead chose any woman whatsoever, as the fancy of the moment moved them, to rear their

offspring. At that point God determines that He will let His Spirit no longer do His work of reproving and restraining (yadhôn), because man has degenerated. Man is no longer simply sinful, as he has been right along since the Fall; the race has also as a whole practically sunk to the level of being "flesh" (basar), just plain, ordinary, weak and sinful stock, abandoned to a life of sin. Man has forfeited all hope of further efforts of God's grace. So the expression: "because they also are flesh" fits into the picture. "Also" refers to something in addition to what had been in evidence till now, the ordinary sinful state prevalent since the Fall. This additional something is: they have degenerated to the point of being mere "flesh" -- the word having the ethical connotation as in the New Testament. See the same use in Ge 6:12,13 and Job 10:4. Of course, we are reading beshaggam (with short a) on good textual grounds (see Kittel), and as the Septuagint translators read: dia to einai autouv sacav. Unfortunately, they, like Luther, omitted the "also." We render beshaggam:" because that also."On first thought we seem to concur with B D B that the rendering of yadhon as "strive with" (A. V., A. R. V.). "is hardly justified." Yet, on second thought, is not the judging activity of the Spirit at the same time a striving with men to restrain them from their evil ways? The King James translators apparently were thinking of the same thing as Luther, and their rendering must be classed as quite satisfactory. We can well leave the welter of confusion and conjecture offered by criticism off at one side. It boots nothing of value.Entirely in harmony with our rendering is the concluding statement of the verse, which marks the setting of the time limit of divine grace. For these words, "yet shall their, days be one hundred and twenty years," are to be taken in the sense of the traditional interpretation: one last period of grace is fixed by God for the repentance of mankind. The previous word indicated (3a) that God might well have cut off all further opportunities of grace. This word (3b) shows that grace always does more than could be expected. Before disposing of the guilty ones a time of grace of no less than one hundred and twenty years is allowed for their repentance. This, use of "days" (v.3) is established by the use of the same word (v.4) "those days." Consequently, the modern interpretation that takes this word to mean that God here decreed that in the future the span of man's life was not to exceed one hundred twenty years is quite unfounded. This view is proved untenable by the fact that quite a few after the Flood lived in excess of this limit: Ge 11:11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25; 25:7; 35:28; 47:9. The evasions of the critics in meeting this argument need not be mentioned, being too palpable.On the use of the divine names notice the expression "sons of God" ('elohîm) v.2, because theirs is a general relation to God, not a specifically theocratic one (Lange). On the other hand, v.3 brings "Yahweh" because it offers a special display of God's mercy in providing for years of grace.We append, as worthy of note, the traditional Jewish interpretation which makes "the sons of God" of v.2 to be persons of rank an impossible thought -- and "the daughters of men" to be women of low rank -- equally unlikely.4. The Nephilim were in the earth in those days and also afterwards when the sons of God went in unto the daughters of men and they bore unto them. Their were the heroes, which in olden days were renowned men.Really quite a simple verse, unless one proceeds from the misinterpretation of the preceding verses and tries to link it up with the idea of angel marriages, a misconstruction prevalent since the days of the Septuagint translation. The basic rules of interpretation merely have to be observed: the presupposition, namely, that the Scriptures make good sense, develop their thoughts logically and naturally, and that simple grammatical rules still are in force. Says Skinner: "It was precisely this perspicuity of narration which the editor wishes to avoid." But why charge a Biblical writer with trying to write something not clear! Procksch assumes that the author J had quite a different original account,

which he doctored up but left in a "wrecked state" (truemmerhafte Gestalt), which, of course, rather perplexes us. So men speak when they cannot find their meaning in the text.Note now the simple fact that v.4 does not follow v.2. Note also that it does not attach itself by the expressive Hebrew "and" to what precedes. Verse 4 begins without a conjunction. It does not try to show what manner of persons the children of the misalliance of-v.2 were. Anybody can figure that thing out for himself. If fathers do not care to choose God-fearing wives to rear their children, the result will be that the children are not taught the fear of God, and so the godly ways of the patriarchs are abandoned. That's the result, nothing more. But v.4 speaks of another class of ungodly men of olden times, setting the noun "nephilim" first by way of emphasis to make the new more prominent. But who were the Nephilim? Apparently, a type of men who were the climax of all such who inspired fear, as the only other passage where the term is used indicates, Nu 13:33. For there the spies first call all Canaanites "men of stature," and then they mention that even "Nephilim," sons of Anak, were there. Consequently, we are driven to seek some meaning for the word which makes them awe-inspiring. Following the Hebrew root naphal is by far the simplest. One meaning of this verb is to "fall upon= attack" (B D B): see Jeremiah 48:32; Joshua 11:7; and without any preposition, Job 1:15. This verb could readily yield this noun in the sense of "attackers," "robbers," "bandits." So we have the thought: the descendants of the godly patriarchs abandoned their spiritual heritage (v.1, 2) so that God was moved to determine upon their destruction (v.3); and there were also violent attackers and robbers abroad in those days (v.4). There was a negative breakdown of some, positive aggressive wickedness of others. Such an interpretation makes good sense. Besides, the very clause that follows makes it clear that these Nephilim, whom Luther describes quite aptly as "tyrants," were on the earth already at the time when the Sethites commingled with the Cainites, but also that they continued after that sad confusion. The time clause, "when the sons of God went in," makes this sad confusion stand out as a major calamity, so important that one could actually reckon time from it. Then the text adds that these Nephilim were the "heroes" of antiquity, the men of renown (Heb. "men of the name"). They achieved a reputation the world over by their violence, but a reputation better deserving of the term notoriety. The world certainly did not in those days, even as it does not now, esteem godly men highly. Only the wicked were renowned or had a name (shem). The translation "giants" (A. V.) is most unfortunate. It originated with the Septuagint (gigantev). It does not follow from Nu 13:33, even if there the "attackers" should also happen to have been giants. For "sons of Anak" means "sons of the long-necked one," and this may refer to gigantic stature. The unfortunate thing about this mistranslation is that it directs attention away from the moral issue (wicked bandits) to a physical one (tall stature). Besides, then, with a show of propriety modern interpreters combine the idea of giants with the misinterpretation about angel marriages and claim that the giants were the result of this union. But, in reality, nothing of the sort is found in the text. It is the result of a clever combination or of a mistranslation. Meek renders: "There were giants in the earth who were born to the gods whenever they had intercourse with the daughters of men." This amounts to an unwarranted alteration of the text in the interest of a dogmatic preconception. Note well, too, that if there were a notice about giants inserted here it would not at all fit into the connection. Several critics are compelled to admit that they do not know why v.4 does not follow v.2. Certain older translators were nearer the truth than the Septuagint. Aquila, who like Symmachus wrote to correct the Greek version, rendered Nephilim epipiptontev =" they who fall upon." Symmachus, in a similar strain, biaioi =" powerful."The article before Nephilim is categorical (K. C.). Yabho'û,

imperfect, expresses continuance: "they kept going in" (K. S.157; G. K.107 e). Bô' is euphemistic. Hemah is a characteristic sudden change of subject (K. S.399 B).5. And Yahweh saw that the wickedness of mankind was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.The verses 5-8 represent the divine reaction to the wickedness of man. Therefore v.5 looks back directly upon what preceded. Two significant instances have told the whole story: the Sethites had grown indifferent to their heritage; the Cainites had developed high-handed violence. When Yahweh regards this, he sees that it constitutes "great wickedness." Aside from these outward manifestations, He discerns the inner trend of men's thoughts: they have put no restraint upon their natural inclinations, consequently their thoughts are only evil continually. It is true that the antediluvian generation is being described -- God is not here discovering the innate human depravity -- yet since the description shows man as simply having let himself go, this still must rank as a locus classicus for the natural depravity of the human heart, as Luther so staunchly contends. Yet the mode of expression is very suggestive: The heart is the place of the activity of man's thoughts, "the thought-workshop" (Denkwerkstaette, K. C.). These thoughts produce yétser, "formings," "imaginings," "thought combinations," Dickten und Trachten, (Luther). But what a sweeping condemnation: "only evil continually." A striking alliteration and assonance makes the statement unique and most expressive in Hebrew: raq ra'. This natural trend would have been checked, and among the growth of weeds would have sprung up plants delightful to God and to man, if men had accepted the judging and correcting work of God's Holy Spirit (v.3). But that work was being consistently refused.On the heart as primarily the place of thought, see Psalms 33:11; Pr 19:21; 1 Chronicles 29:18.6-8. And it repented Yahweh that He had made mankind upon the earth and it grieved Him at His heart. And Yahweh said: I will wipe out mankind which I have created from the face of the ground, from man to animals, to creepers, and to the birds of the heaven; for it repenteth me that I made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of Yahweh.When God's repentance is mentioned, it should be noted that we are using an inadequate human term for a perfect and entirely good divine action. Luther especially stresses that such expressions are found in the Scriptures so that we mortals with our feeble understanding might be helped to catch hold on divine truth according to the measure of our poor human ability. Procksch well defines this repentance on God's part not as a change of purpose but of feeling out of which a new course of action develops. Scriptures frequently use the phrase "God-repented" (see Ex 32:14; Jeremiah 18:7, 8; Jer 26: 3,13,19; Jonah 3:10; 1 Samuel 15:11); but .sometimes in the same breath repentance in the sense of alteration in God is denied (Nu 23, :1.9; 1 Samuel 15:29). This repentance is the proper divine reaction to man's sin. The parallel expression well defines it: "it grieved Him at His heart," Hebrew even stronger: "into His heart," 'el-libbo.7. The gravity of the situation is made apparent by the severity of the divine resolution: "I will wipe out mankind." Sin has become so predominant and crass that the extremest measures alone can cope with it. There can have been no prospect of the reform of the corrupt mass of mankind. The ease with which God's greatest works are done is revealed in the word "wipe out," which, by the way, contains a significant allusion to God's mode of procedure in this instance. Strange to say, this word is ascribed to Yahweh, the God of fidelity and grace; for the destruction of mankind at this time was for the purpose of making possible the development of the seed of the woman destined to crush the serpent's head. Yahweh's right thus to destroy the major part of mankind is indicated by the adjective clause: "which I have created." The Giver of life is the Supreme Lord over life and death. The thoroughness with which He is about to do His work is indicated by the enumeration of all

other forms of life that are to perish with man: "animals" (behemah, here including wild as well as domesticated animals, as in v.20; 7:23; 8:17), "creepers" and "birds of the heavens." Fish naturally are not mentioned because of the mode of the destruction in this instance. The universality of the judgment thus serves to impress upon man how serious the issues really are. Beasts and other creatures, which were originally created for man's sake, may well perish if a purpose salutary to man is served. 8. Evidence of the fact that it is Yahweh that does this work lies also in the preservation of Noah. In the midst of God's judgments His "grace" (chen) also shines forth. Though the word is often used of the favour one man enjoys in the sight of another, such favour, when it flows forth from God, is that unmerited, rich favour we are wont to call "grace." In spite of A. R. V. the richer connotation of "grace" (A. V.) should be preserved. This closing statement prepares a transition for the following story of the Flood.An instance of the purely mechanical method of procedure of the critics is given in their labelling the two expressions "which I created" and "from man to -- heavens" (v.7) as glosses because they are claimed to be in the style of P. Such criticism of style, purely arbitrary as it is, makes it impossible for J to enumerate the classes that must perish. P carries a monopoly on enumerations as well as on these particular words.IV. The History of Noah (6:9-9:29)If any measure of competence can be ascribed to the author, then there is no need of providing a heading for this section by the use of our own ingenuity, for Moses has inserted a very accurate and usable one: "the history (toledôth) of Noah." This is not the story of the Flood. It is Noah's story. As Keil has rightly pointed out, three elements of Noah's story are presented. First, an indication of Noah's piety (very brief); then, the story of his preservation; lastly, an account of God's covenant with Noah as the father of a new race. Everything has to do with Noah. No one can deny that such a treatment of the subject matter is perfectly permissible.The critics assign this portion of chapter six (v.9-22) to P. In fact, throughout the Flood story they claim to be able to separate the two documents P and J in a very clear-cut fashion and point to this unravelling as proof of the brilliance of their achievements. So Skinner claims: "The resolution of the compound narrative into its constituent elements in this case is justly reckoned amongst the most brilliant achievements of purely literary criticism." In fact, critics know the very pattern after which the compiler worked. They tell us that he "instead of excerpting the entire account from a single source, has interwoven it out of excerpts taken alternately from J and P, preserving in the process many duplicates, as well as leaving unaltered many striking differences of representation and phraseology." Such positive claims have unduly impressed many. They have struck terror into the hearts of those who believed otherwise. Yet there have perhaps never been such misleading and unfounded claims as just these in reference to so-called sources. Aside from some incidental refutation which may be made as we proceed, we shall offer a detailed examination of the critical position and its major arguments at the close of our treatment of chapter six.(a) Two verses cover the report concerning Noah's piety, v.9, 10. Yet v.9-12 may be regarded as forming the entire section, because v.11, 12 fit in the dark background to the bright picture of v.9 and 10.9. This is the history of Noah. Noah was a righteous-perfect man among his contemporaries. With God Noah did walk.Since so much depends in this instance on the personal character of Noah, nothing is more natural than to indicate very plainly just what manner of man he was. If out of all his contemporaries he alone with his family is saved, then he must have been most unusual. To stand one's ground and to remain uninfluenced by the attitude and conduct of all men to the contrary, gives indication of a strength of character almost without parallel in history. All the world said he was wrong in holding fast to his piety; he knew they were wrong and he was right. Few as the

words are that describe this character, they have unusual weight. First of all he was "righteous-perfect." By hyphenating these two adjectives we really do not intend to express a compound but rather to indicate that we have here two words that constitute a phrase or a double expression. The same combination appears in Job 12:4. There as well as here there is no conjunction connecting the two. Together, then, these two words constitute an expression that covers a state approximating perfection as nearly as man can. "Righteous" (tsaddîq) is a word commonly used in reference to men. It means that they conform to a standard. Since Noah conformed to the divine standard, he met with God's approval. However, the term is basically forensic. Therefore, though there be divine approval, that does not imply perfection on Noah's part. It merely implies that those things that God sought in man were present in Noah. Primarily, God desired man to believe Him and His promise of help through the seed of the woman. This basic requirement Noah met, and his conduct showed it. Because of such faith Noah is justified. The complementary expression is "perfect" (tamîm). Since the Hebrew root involves the idea of "complete," we are justified in concluding only that there was an all-sided life, well rounded out in all its parts, with no essential quality missing. This term, too, does not connote moral perfection. But both together describe a life of true faith and sincere consecration. It is not quite accurate to let "righteous" refer only to Noah's relation to the first table of the law; the word reaches farther. Nor is it quite correct to limit "perfect" to the second table. But rightness and completeness are stressed. They who see in the word "righteous" the idea of righteousness by faith interpret soundly, even though the fullest New Testament Connotation dare not yet be laid into the expression. The modifying phrase "among his contemporaries" involves a contrast. Noah stood out over against his contemporaries, for they lacked these qualities. Doroth, which we have rendered "contemporaries," is generally a very expressive term here. It does mean "generations" and pictures for us the successive generations that have come and gone during the five hundred years of Noah's life. Over against them all he stood out as "righteous-perfect."The deepest source of Noah's godliness is revealed in the words: "with God did Noah walk." The inversion, different from 5:22, puts "with God" first for emphasis. Though living among successive, mostly wicked generations, his walk was with God. Cf.5:22 for the very same expression. Personal communion with God was the taproot of this outstandingly good life. The marvel of this whole description is that it says so much about Noah in so very few words. One would expect a man to whom this description applies to stand firm in the face of a world gone to seed, and would also expect that God would make an exception in his case when He came to destroy the world.10. And Noah begat three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.The purpose of this verse is not usually discerned. True, 5:32 is almost identical. But whereas the first statement concerning Noah's three sons naturally served to round out the Sethite genealogy, here, by following directly upon the statement of Noah's piety, the object must be to remind the readers of the effect that that piety must have had on his sons. If a man like the one described in v.9 might well be spared by God, so might the sons who were deeply influenced by the father's example.11, 12. But the earth was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with violence; and God beheld the earth and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.Since the waw conversive ("and") introduces this verse, it binds it closely to the preceding. In this instance, however, a definite contrast is involved to the bright clear example of Noah. Therefore we translate the conjunction "but." Besides, we are here now definitely informed of the universality of the corruption of mankind. Outstanding examples of wickedness had been mentioned in the beginning of the chapter. In v.1-8 we were informed how

deep sin had penetrated. Now we are shown how far it had spread. Since a judgment of moral values lies before us, "earth" must be used by synecdoche for the "inhabitants of the earth." "Before God" means "in the judgment of God." Here is, therefore, not a merely pessimistic utterance of some disgruntled individual. The emphasis of the verb lies primarily on the fact that in God's esteem devastation had been wrought. Man had received the earth at God's hands and had sadly ruined his heritage. The second half of v.11 marks a climax: "the earth was filled with violence." Chamas is highhanded dealing; violating the rights of others. This term most correctly describes the form of moral corruption prevalent in the earth. Men's rights were being trampled upon. Nor were these cases isolated: the earth was filled with deeds of this sort. Chamas is accusative of the thing wherewith another is filled (K. S.112).12. The form and the nature of the opening statement of this verse remind very definitely by way of contrast with 1:31. As then a divine inspection resulted in a verdict of approval, now just as positively the fact that was revealed was that the earth was corrupt. The expressive "behold" points to the unexpected: it would hardly be believed that the earth would so soon and so completely have degenerated. The expression "all flesh" can here refer only to mankind because of the qualifying nature of the object "its way." "Way" is the course man is to follow. Only a moral being can corrupt its way. Therefore "all flesh" refers to the totality of mankind in so far as it is not submitting to the Spirit's guidance, as in 6:3.Critics have difficulties with these two verses. Ascribing them to P, they miss entirely in P an indication of where the world went wrong. Consequently, they try to make v.12 present the case as strongly as possible and draw in the beasts as well under those who had corrupted their way in "commencing to prey upon each other and to attack man." B D B is right when it refers the word "way" of v.12 to "moral action and character." Moral issues exclusively are under consideration here.The word "earth", is taken proleptically, and its clause really follows, as in 1:4 (K. S.414b.).Of course, the point of view of v.12 is purely anthropomorphic. Its purpose is not to state that now God first discovered that the earth had really grown quite corrupt. God had been thoroughly aware of. every increase of wickedness. But the verse does indicate that in the esteem of God, the perfect and righteous Judge, the measure of the world's iniquity was full.b) The second portion of Noah's story now follows in 6:13-8:22, telling how he was preserved in the universal destruction.13. And God said to Noah: The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I am about to destroy them together with the earth. In God's judgment the destruction of the world is determined. His purpose is here communicated to Noah. The 120 years of grace must have been concluded. The "end" (qets) is here used, of course, in the sense of "destruction." "All flesh" here, as in v.12, describes all mankind in so far as it has rejected the Spirit's guidance. "Before me" is used exactly as in v.11 in the sense of "according to my judgment." The whole statement cannot mean: "has come to my knowledge" (as Es 9: 11) but "has entered my purpose" (Skinner). Meek renders quite acceptably: "I have resolved on the extermination of all mortals," but, unfortunately, he introduces a tone of arbitrariness which is just the thing that is not involved in the phrase "before me."There come times in the events of this world when God's gracious dealings with men are definitely terminated. Such times come only when grace has been offered in richest measure. But when the end is resolved upon, there is no recall. Such a case is marked by the "end" that God here determines. His reason for His steps shows, this course to be entirely just: "the earth is filled with violence through them." "Through them" (mippenêhem) is really: "from their faces" or from before them. But that clearly means that the violence has gone out from them. The phrase could also be translated

"because of them." Man has no one to blame but himself. But this end is not coming on like a blind fate. God indicates His initiative in the work of destruction, in fact, vividly points to His participation by a "behold." Works of retribution are as much holy and good works and worthy of God as any other. The participle after hinneh indicates an act as imminent: "I am about to destroy" (K. S.237 g.). But in order to make the sweeping nature and the dread earnestness of this destruction most clearly apparent, it is His purpose to destroy men "together with the earth." Thus, when man is wiped away and his habitation with him, men realize more fully how serious the nature of their misdeeds is. The critics did not expect the phrase "with the earth" and so subject it to severe criticism. It makes too good sense to call for criticism.The suffix in mippenêhem refers back to the collective basar.14, 15. Make thyself an ark of gopher-wood; make the ark with cells; and smear it with pitch within and without. And this is how thou shalt make it: three hundred cubits is to be the length of the ark, fifty cubits its width, and thirty cubits its height.The means by which God will destroy mankind and the earth has not yet been revealed to Noah. For the present only the device by which Noah is to be saved is revealed to him, but the nature of the device is such that it is comparatively easy for Noah to draw conclusions as to the impending catastrophe, which will be mentioned in v.17. This entire revelation to Noah proceeds in a very orderly fashion. He is first given the essential directions about the ark. It is called tebhah. Since the same word is used only in reference to Moses' ark of bulrushes besides, it appears quite likely to be akin to an Egyptian word, teb (t), although it will not do to be too positive about such things, as this word may be carried over from the original language of mankind. No one knows what type of tree is meant by the name "gopher." It may contain the root of the Greek word "cyprus." The translators have been puzzled by it from days of old. The Greek rendered it "square," the Latin "smoothed," etc. The word for "cells" (qinnîm) is used also for "nests." Consequently, such rooms are meant as may suit the needs of various beasts. Since rooms on shipboard are "cabins," the word may also be rendered thus. But as the description proceeds, we discover that it is rather inaccurate to speak of a ship. This was not a ship but a huge floating box with dimensions quite nearly proportionate to those of a ship. This vessel was not intended for sailing or navigating of any sort. It was designed to float. It is rendered watertight by a generous coating inside and out with "pitch" (kópher). The Assyrian word for "pitch" kuprun, as well as the Arabic parallel guarantee this meaning. From this noun, perhaps, the verb kaphar is derived, yielding the expression here used "to pitch with pitch." The definite article with kópher is the article of conformity (der Zugehoerigkeit -- K. C.). "Cells" is a kind of accusative of product: "make it cells" (G. K.117 ii.; K. S.327 w.).15. Reckoning the cubit at eighteen inches, we have the following dimensions: length, 300 cubits -- 450 feet; width, fifty cubits -- seventy-five feet; height, thirty cubits -- forty-five feet.The introductory zeh illustrates the neuter use of the demonstratives (K. S.45).Efforts to find an allegorical meaning in the ark such as that it represents Christ's body, that is the church, and that its one door represents Baptism are perhaps best described by the adjectives Luther employs in reference to them when he labels them as "harmless" and "not so very skilful." No one can deny the propriety of the thought, as long as it is used only as an illustration and not offered as a deeper meaning of the text as such. 16. An opening for light shalt thou make for the ark and to a cubit shalt thou make it complete toward the top; the door of the ark thou shalt put in its side; with lower, second, and third stories thou shalt make it.This verse concludes the description as to how the ark is to be made. A tsóhar is to be "toward the top." Since the word for "noonday" comes from this root, the meaning "an opening for light" (Lichtoeffnung) is the more appropriate, not roof. It seems just a bit too obvious to specify

that a "roof" should be built, and then to suggest that it is to be "toward the top." This direction would border on the ridiculous. But an "opening for light" certainly was a necessity. This means more than a window. It means an opening of a cubit from the top or "toward the top." (milma'lah) to be made entirely around the structure. This is implied in the verb from "make it complete" (tekhallénah) which, being in the Piel stem, signifies, as we might say, "run it completely around" toward the top. Of course, certain details are not mentioned in this connection. We shall never know whether other openings, aside from "the window" (Ge 8:6), were provided. We shall never be sure whether the eaves projected out sufficiently over the "opening for light" to guard against the rain. But persons who were capable of constructing so vast a structure may well be credited with the requisite intelligence to provide for such details. We are at least informed that light and ventilation were taken care of and may dismiss all minor questions as irrelevant. The author selects a few significant factors and at the hand of these lets us form a general conception. Though no attempt at completeness is made, such as a set of full specifications for a building to be erected by a contractor would provide, we realize that such a thing cannot lie in the purpose of the author. The situation by no means calls for criticisms such as: "The details here are very confused and mostly obscure" (Skinner).Besides, it is quite clear what Moses means when he says: "the door of the ark shalt thou put in its side." Again it matters little for present purposes whether this door was in the first or second story. But we know that a door was provided. We translate "the door," since the definite noun "the ark" makes the noun in the construct state definite. The article here signifies the customary or usual door that you might expect. The last major direction provides for three "stories." "Decks" would be a good word if this were a ship. The Hebrew happens to be unusually brief but not obscure, saying: "with lower, seconds and thirds thou shalt make it."For those inclined to be too critical it may yet be added that surely God's direction to Noah may have been far more detailed. Any writer recording the story may abbreviate at any point and give merely the substance, if the details be no longer relevant to his purpose.A Dutchman, Peter Janson, in 1609-21 made a novel experiment in building a vessel thus proportioned and thus satisfying himself both of its seaworthiness as well of its relatively high storage capacity. But a bit of reflection might have satisfied almost any man of the seaworthiness of such a box. Furthermore, the enormity of the project harmonizes well with other huge enterprises carried through by men of antiquity and argues well for the high intelligence and the wonderful capabilities of antediluvian man -- a fact, which clashes rather roughly with the conceptions of evolution.Dagesh forte omitted in l of milma'lah; see G. K.20 m.There follows in very good order first the definite revelation of the coming of a universal flood (v.17), but for Noah's comfort it is at once said that he and his family are to be spared (v.18). Then the beings that are to be housed in the ark during the time of the Flood are listed (v.19, 20), and' Noah is bidden also to provide food for all that are to be in the ark (21). Noah's compliance with all these demands is recorded as an apt close for this section (v.22).17. For behold, I for my part am about to bring the Flood, waters, upon the earth to destroy all flesh, that has in it the breath of life, from under heaven; everything in the earth shall expire.The initial "and" is explanatory, therefore "for" (G. K.158 a.). The expressed personal pronoun "I" provides a contrast with the closing word of v.16, "thou shalt make," "but I," etc. (K. S.360 e.). The particularly noteworthy fact here announced (therefore "behold") is that which would almost have passed belief: a universal flood is about to be brought by Him. The pronoun with the participle expresses something as impending (G. K.116 p). The word for "flood," mabbûl, does not seem to be derived from any Hebrew root but to be allied with the Assyrian nabâlu, "to destroy." Therefore

the author inserted an appositional mayîm, "waters," to indicate at once what manner of destruction was meant. Mabbûl occurs only in the Flood story and in Psalms 29:10 and is the technical expression for this particular Flood. Here the expression "all flesh" must refer to man and beast because of the modifying clause, "that has in it the breath of life." Yet, according to 7:22, even here the obvious restriction has to be made of creatures living on the dry land. Aquatic animals do not perish because of waters of a flood. Rûach, which in other passages also means "breath," is here described as "the breath of life" because this breath is the essential condition of life. The expression is not identical with 2:7 (nishmath chayyim) but practically of the same meaning. In order to emphasize that "all flesh" is actually to be taken in its broadest sense, by way of repetition of the thought, the clause is appended: "everything in the earth shall expire." The disagreement in case of 'anî (nominative) and hinnî, (accusative) is not disturbing (K. S.343 a).18. And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons and thy wife and thy sons' wives with thee.The "covenant." (berith) is somewhat puzzling from one point of view. Does the term refer to a particular guaranty of preservation in the impending Flood, or does it refer to some covenant previously made with Noah but not mentioned here; or does it refer to the covenant whose details are to be made known 9:9 ff.? The first possibility is not very likely, because nothing more of the covenant is mentioned in this connection, and it would, indeed, seem strange that a covenant be made without specific mention of its terms, or at least just as strange if one covenant be made one year and a new one about a few years later. God's covenants are never thus multiplied. The second possibility has still less to recommend it. Why should some mysterious previous covenant be implied, and why should no distinct mention of it have been made? But the third possibility has much to support it. God promises that He will make a covenant with Noah. Nothing is said of the making of this covenant at this time, for other issues clamour for more immediate attention. But Noah is made aware of the fact that he shall live to experience the making of a covenant with God. Since such a covenant is actually made after the Flood (9:9 ff.), the simplest conclusion is: That is the covenant that God referred to when these words were spoken. Since its terms are there fully revealed, we need not infer with Luther that the covenant referred to the promised seed. The promise of the fact that such a Flood is never to take place again has, no doubt, in the providence of God direct bearing upon the preparation for the victory of the seed of the woman.So, then, Noah has the prospect before him of yet being honoured to experience the establishment of a covenant. The usual expression for entering upon a covenant (karath) is not here used but the verb heqîm, "to set up," (used also in Ge 17:19, 21; Ex 6:4), which must mean "make" not "keep," for the covenant is not yet made.Now Noah receives instruction that it is only he and his immediate family who are to be privileged to enter the ark. The word is very specific. Noah is to know very exactly how many are to share in this privilege. Besides, God, the Almighty Judge, is the only one competent to decide so important a matter. To impress this fact duly upon Noah this detailed enumeration "thou and thy sons and thy wife and thy sons' wives" is found again in 7:13 and in 8:16. However, 8:18 merely repeats the same words in order to emphasize that so specific a command was carried out to the letter. This is the simple explanation as to why these very words recur several times. The claim that this is one of the linguistic peculiarities of P is beside the point. Compare on the admission of the critics, however, 8:1. Then 7:1, usually assigned to J, says nothing different, and so even on the ground of style the differentiation between sources fades out.19, 20. Of all living things, of all flesh, two of each thou shalt bring into the ark to keep them alive with thee; male and female shall they be. Of the birds

after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of all creeping things after their kind, two of each shall come to thee, to be kept alive.In this very orderly set of directions for Noah there now comes a specification of what creatures and how many of each are to be brought into the ark. "Living things" only (chay) are to be considered. For the preservation of plant life divine providence will take care. In apposition with "living things" stands "of all flesh," an expression which must here refer to animals, as the sequel shows. "Flesh" still means that which is weak and perishable, and so implies that particular care must be taken in its preservation: it cannot provide for itself in such an emergency. Criticism cannot see why here only "two of each" are mentioned, whereas in 7:2, in the case of clean beasts, seven of each are to be taken. Criticism falls back upon its favorite mechanical explanation: different sources, allowing, of course, that J and P actually disagreed on this point. The simple explanation is this: here in chapter six summary directions are being given. The rule is to be: two of each. When these general directions are amplified in regard to the clean beast just before the Flood occurs (7:1 ff.), that certainly does not clash with the first specifications; it merely amplifies the original directions. On the question of how all these creatures could be secured, the verbs used offer an excellent solution. The nineteenth verse says "thou shalt bring" (tabhî' -- Hifil=" cause to come in"); v.20 says: "they shall come" (yabhó'û -- Kal, active) as in 7:9, 15. Two thoughts are here combined. Each sets forth one side of the truth. On the one hand, the creatures come voluntarily, as even the wildest of beasts have been known to seek the nearness of man when calamities impend. The creatures, rendered docile by the apprehension they felt of Coming danger, are then without difficulty brought into the ark by Noah. Consequently, all thoughts about elaborate trapping expeditions may readily be dismissed. The difficulty Noah is said to have had on this score is thus readily seen to have been quite negligible. The explanatory clause, "male and female shall they be," quite naturally looks to the mating and propagating of the various species. On the article before chay see G. K.35 f. 20. To leave nothing for Noah to guess at the classes to be considered are enumerated: "birds, animals, creeping things." "Animals" (behemah) employs the Hebrew original in a broader sense than 1:24, where it means "cattle" and excludes wild animals. But this broader use of the term is not uncommon nor inconsistent with the root meaning of the word. Of these major classes the various species (mîn) are to be brought in.This raises the difficult question: "How could room for such a diversified lot of creatures be found in this one ark?" No one happens to know how widely diversified the species were at the time the Flood occurred. Since no one can prove anything on this question either pro or con, the question may well be left to rest. Untenable claims have been made by those who seek to invalidate Scripture testimony but without proof. This happens to be a point on which no data may ever be available. Why question the possibility or the consistency of this matter in an account where everything else is so simple and consistent? Had we actually seen how this matter was adjusted, we might marvel at the stupidity of our question.The last infinitive Hifil, lehachayôth, is used absolutely without an object in the sense of "for the preservation of life," literally: "to cause to live."21. And do thou for thy part take for thyself from all manner of eatable things, which are wont to be eaten, and store it by thee, to serve as food for thee and for them.Sustenance is not going to be provided miraculously. Noah must see to that, as an emphatic pronominal "thou" points out to him. Kol in this instance must have its common meaning: "all manner of." Ma'akhal refers rather to that which is edible than simply to "food." The imperfect ye'akhel implies the idea of the customary: "which are wont to be eaten" (G. K.107 g). A big additional task is thus laid upon Noah. One must marvel at the completeness and the plainness of the divine directions for Noah, as well as at their

compact brevity.The problem of providing food for so many creatures for somewhat more than a year is simplified by the very proper consideration that beasts are very shrewd about adapting their food supply to their needs. When they have no physical exercise, like brooding hens, they cut down promptly on the amount of food consumed. Likewise during the time of hibernating. A kind of winter sleep may providentially have taken possession of all inmates of the ark, materially cutting down their needs and reducing them to a very small minimum.Again one must marvel at the excellent divine wisdom, which laid the care of the inmates of the ark upon man and thus provided ample activity for man, guarding him against morbid and dismal brooding over the fate of mankind, which might have resulted from a state of inaction and proved very trying, if not dangerous, to man.22. And Noah did so; exactly as God commanded him, so he did.This part of the narrative closes with the report that Noah did as he was bidden, in fact, carried the divine orders out to the letter. We should have expected that on Noah's part. A man who walked with God would be expected to take such an attitude. The enormity of the task did not overwhelm him. The dismal nature of the impending catastrophe did not rouse undue questionings. Noah obeyed orders as Hebrews 11:7 rightly says: "by faith."It is usually assumed that during all this time Noah preached to his generation. Correctly so, inasmuch as 2 Peter 2:5 terms him "a preacher of righteousness." Even if his words had not been many, the building of the ark as such was thundering testimony to a godless age, as Hebrews also says (11:7): "through which (building of the ark) he condemned the world."Criticism, as usual, detracts from the major issues by inapropos remarks, in this case on the pleonastic, "He did so -- so he did." For it does happen that this very form of statement recurs, as K. C. has observed, thirteen times and always in passages ascribed to P (See Ex 7:6, 12; 39:32, 42; Nu 1:54 etc.). For a moment it almost seems as though for once we had discovered an actual stylistic peculiarity: always in P passages. Besides, thirteen times seems a heavy array of evidence. However, the problem is quite simple. Wherever detailed formal directions are given, such a passage is on that score already assigned to P. How natural for a man like Moses to have a peculiarity of style, which leads him, each time he makes a list of detailed divine orders to be executed by man, to indicate that godly men did as they were bidden and to use a set formula, characteristically his own, for this purpose. Nothing here at all in conflict with the idea of Mosaic authorship. Such human traits as fixed word patterns for analogous situations are not suppressed by the Spirit of inspiration. Moses too had such habits of writing, without a doubt.Since we are on the subject of literary criticism, let us go a step farther and refute some of the major contentions on which criticism bases its much vaunted distinction of sources, which is so greatly stressed especially in connection with the Flood story. On the matter of the use of the divine names in this story observe how much is to be said in support of our position. The whole critical world, of course, cries these arguments of ours down as futile. But note the very good sense that pervades the whole situation when these basic facts are kept in mind: when God's gracious dealings with Noah and with mankind are to be considered, then the name Yahweh is used; but when God is thought of as the Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth, whose particular province it is to judge men and to determine their fate, this God whom men should reverently fear is called Elohîm.We have just demonstrated the propriety of the use of Yahweh for 6:1-8. By the way, "God" in 6:5 (A. V.) is a mistake. The Hebrew reads "Yahweh."But in 6:9-22 Elohîm is used throughout. Is it not appropriate to speak of Elohîm at this point? He, great and awe-inspiring in His being, lets a man like Noah walk with Him (v.9). In the sight of Him, the Judge, the earth is corrupt (v.11). He, in His sovereign right, determines to destroy (v.13). What He who has authority to command thus

ordains (v.22), Noah feels obliged to carry out.Chapter 7:1-7 records how graciously God deals with Noah to preserve his life; therefore "Yahweh," (v.1, 5). In v.9 appears "Elohîm" because the obedience of the creature world to its Sovereign Ruler is under consideration. So also in v.16a. But 16b brings "Yahweh" because this was a kindly deed on the Lord's part.God's sovereign control is under consideration in 8:1; therefore "Elohîm": the Almighty is about to terminate this vast catastrophe. This same great God ordains (v.15) what things Noah must do. But Noah is considering God's gracious Providence when (v.20) he brings his grateful sacrifice to "Yahweh." "Yahweh" regards this sacrifice (v.21).The common response of the critics to such an interpretation of the divine names leaves the strength of our argument unimpaired. They usually contend that if we dwell on the meaning involved in these names of the deity, one name could be substituted for the other and the whole would still make very good sense. We do not deny that, but we do claim that there is a definite viewpoint from which the author approached the individual divine acts, and this view point is reflected in his choice of the various possible names. And we further claim that the particular divine name under consideration can be shown to make very good sense and to be eminently reasonable in every case. Moses used the divine names according to the actual meaning, and the result is a point of view in regard to individual divine acts which is most instructive. Deeper thought, not a mechanical use of one only known name, lies behind the choice of divine names.But the claim that the two major documents involved can be so clearly distinguished that the individual vocabulary of each can be discerned, seems in the eyes of many to carry convincing weight. But upon closer examination it too collapses and shows forth most startling weaknesses. We shall trace down the so called distinctive features of vocabulary as Skinner lists them.1. J is said to use the expression ish we'ishto (7:2) "man and his wife," whereas P uses zakhkar ûneqebhah ("male and female") 6:19; 7:9, 16. But on the difficult matter of style who would venture to pronounce a single use of an expression (7:2) as indicative of a linguistic peculiarity? When we take that particular verse in hand, we shall show why in that connection the somewhat unusual expression was well motivated.2. Again, the following so-called stylistic peculiarities are referred to: J used machah ("wipe out") in 6:7; 7:4, 23; P uses shachath and hishchîth ("go to ruin" and "ruin") 6:13, 17; 9:11, 15. This, however, represents nothing more than a natural variation of expression by one and the same author.6:7 describes God's resolve and the ease with which it is to be carried out.6:13, 17 are used in God's conversation with Noah, first this particular verb (hishchîth) in the announcement of the destruction; then follows the announcement of that destruction by a flood. The circumstances demand the use of the same word.7:4 machah comes at the very beginning of the Flood and again is descriptive of the ease with which God will do the work. But what appears as the resolve of God, first mentioned in 6:7 before the ark is built and in 7:4 just before the Flood begins, is most naturally referred to by the same verb in 7:23 when it is to be reported that God actually did what He had resolved to do. In 9:11 and 15, the water being mentioned, it is but natural that a verb be employed which records the destructive effect of the water (shachath) and be repeated for emphasis. All this can quite readily be accounted for on the supposition that there is but one author.3. J used mûth ("die") in 7:22 whereas P is said to use gawa' ("expire") in 6:17; 7:21. Note that 6:17 says that the creatures will expire, but 7:21 gives the fulfilment of the threat: they did expire. Since 7:22 after 7:21 distinctly aims to make the preceding expression more emphatic and general, it provides a synonymous subject and a synonymous predicate. This situation is thus easily accounted for as proceeding from the pen of one author. Besides, if 7:22 is the only passage available for J, is that one example proof of a linguistic

peculiarity? 4. Critics call kol hayqûm ("all existence") 7:4, 23, a mark of J, whereas P is said to prefer the expression kol basar ("all flesh") 6:12, 13; 7:21. Yet in 6:12 and 13 a very specific thing is under consideration: man, who is flesh, is corrupt; therefore, man, who is flesh, shall perish.7:4 tells of God's resolve to destroy all that lives, all existence (yeqûm).7:23 reports how this resolve is carried out. But since 7:21, 22 and 23 summarize the great extent of the destruction by the use of every possible synonym, noun and verb, it need not surprise us to find kol basar here again. Again the expressions employed are readily accounted for as the work of one author.5. J is said to use qal ("be light") 8:8, 11 but P, shûbh ("return") 8:3 and chaser ("fail") 8:5. Between 8:3 and 8:5 the critics create an artificial distinction. Since 8:3 uses a different verb ("returned") to express more fully the thought of the subsiding of the waters, whereas 8:5 uses "decreased," on the strength of the supposition that one author would not do thus, 8:3 is assigned to J. But by the time the narrative reaches the point of 8:3 Noah is neither concerned about whether the waters are "returning" (shûbh) or whether they are "decreased" (chaser). He knows both these things are so. He wants to know whether they are very low, i. e., whether they "were abated" (qal). So he sends forth the dove, and when she returns with an olive leaf, he knows they were abated (qal). Why cannot one author write thus?6. Again J's charabh ("be dry") 8:13 b is said to be distinct from P's yabhash ("be dry") 8:14. One single use of a verb is supposed to constitute a proved stylistic peculiarity. The only evidence on which 8:13 b is assigned to J is because the verb is different. Note well the procedure. First it is assigned to J because it is a different verb. Then after assigning it to J, the critic uses the verb thus assigned as proof that J uses a different vocabulary than P. We simply call this an argument in a circle.7. Again J: nishmath chayyîm ("breath of life") 7:22 vs. P: rûach chayyîm ("spirit of life") 6:17. In the first place 7:22, 23 are assigned to J because they repeat with amplifications what 7:21 (P) said. An author apparently dare never amplify and use synonymous expressions. But why cannot an author in 6:17 speak of the perishing of everything wherein is "the spirit of life" and then later in amplifying the expression say: "the breath of the spirit of life" (7:22)? The appearance of the phrase rûach chayyîm in both expressions argues just as stoutly for one author.8. J: lechayyoth (7:3) vs. lehachayoth (6:19, 20). Both verbs mean "to keep alive." The first is Piel, the second Hifil. In 6:19, 20 all manner of creatures are to be kept alive. In 7:3 seed is to be preserved or kept alive. Since the expression changes, why should not the author also vary the stem from a Hifil to a Piel to express the shade of difference involved? For one author to do thus is most natural.9. J: kol bêthekha ("all thy house") 7:1 vs. a specific enumeration of P in 6:18; 7: (7), 13; 8:16, 18. This argument, collapses as soon as one discovers that 7:7 is really found in a passage usually assigned to J. Consequently, J gives a specific enumeration as well as P.To all this add another very strange fact. The difficulties of the critics are not all solved by the mere assumption that two practically complete Flood stories were fused into one, R, the Redactor, is credited with a certain measure of independent activity in discharging his fusion duties. Sometimes portions of the one or the other document are omitted when a confusing or disturbing repetition would result. So portions of J are said to be omitted in favour of the fuller account of P, for without this assumption J would appear to have had no record of the building of the ark, a very serious shortcoming. Here is Strack's statement of the case: "Since J must very evidently have had a complete Flood story, R must have stricken out what J said in order to avoid disturbing repetitions." But a Redactor who so carefully avoids disturbing repetitions lets manifest contradictions stand. So, as almost all critics admit after their separation of the sources is complete, according to J the Flood lasted forty days (some say: sixty-one), but according to P 150

days. Again, P speaks of two animals of every kind; J of seven of the clean beasts.Not only is there a flaw in the critical constructions put upon the so-called sources; the whole setup is scientifically and critically absurd and impossible. The above represents only a partial refutation indicating what lines have been followed and what more could be said. Rupprecht and Moeller have covered the ground in a more exhaustive manner.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSWe suggest the following three sections in this chapter as best suited to separate treatment. First the section v.1-8 which constitutes a unit in itself. This may be treated from the broader point of view, resulting from the general connection, and then some such topic as "The Ripening of the Flower of Sin" would be in order. Again, it would be very much in order to treat these verses from the point of view that they record how the two branches of the human race at this point merged into one another, due to the inconsiderate marriages of the "sons of God." That suggests some such subject as "Mixed Marriages." Then, there is the section v.9-12, which treats primarily of Noah's piety. Noah does rank exceptionally high for piety, and from this point of view his character deserves to be studied. In the third place, we have the group of verses v.13-22 constituting a unit. Everything centres about the Ark, of course. Yet to use "the Ark" as a subject would be altogether too superficial. If God's kindness in devising such a means of escape is considered, a preacher may operate with a theme such as: "The Ark -- a Testimony of Divine Grace." Hebrews 11:7 suggests very appropriately the theme -- "Noah's Faith." Appropriate as the thought is that the Ark symbolizes the Christian church, is such treatment of the passage not too purely that which falls under the censure of being allegorizing? Perhaps the section v, 13 -- 7:5 had best be used as a unit, for 7:1-5 alone in less suitable for use as a text.

CHAPTER VII

Entrance of Noah Into the Ark; The Coming of the Flood Even though we set a caption for this chapter, we are still considering the History of Noah (6:9), and more particularly the second part of it which treats of his preservation. In point of time this chapter sets in seven days before the Flood. The building of the ark is finished. The supplies are stored. The living cargo alone remains to be housed. 1. And Yahweh said unto Noah: Enter into the ark, thou and all thy house, for thee have I seen to be righteous before me in this generation. Of God's mode of speaking to Noah we know nothing. Noah knew that God spoke. In a way the reader might argue that all that was needed at this point of the narrative was the direct command to enter the ark because the Flood was about to come. Yet such cold logical reasoning overlooks the human factor, namely, how a detailed statement with personal reassurance was an imperative necessity for a man who had to stand practically alone over against the generation of his day. What reassurance for Noah to know that he was not acting on his own initiative or on the strength of some supposition that now the time had come actually to enter the ark. Since 6:18 had definitely listed those who were to be permitted by God to share this haven of refuge, it is sufficient here to use the summary expression for them, "all thy house." A check-up on chapter five will show that none of the Sethite line outlived the Flood year. Consequently, we need not assume that a single one who was a true Sethite perished in the Flood. Nor can we in any way prove that this last communication made to Noah concerning the coming of the Flood in seven days, made sufficient of an impression on his contemporaries to induce at least some to turn to repentance, even though entrance into the ark was denied them. Mt 24:38 seems to eliminate such a possibility. When Noah's righteousness (see on 6:9) is referred to as a reason for the sparing both of himself and of his house, the case is hardly covered by the reflection that the "members (of the family) are saved for the righteousness of its head." There is an element of that in it all. The blessing that may grow out of the godly conduct of a consecrated individual may, indeed, redound to the good of others who are associated with him and be much greater, than what these persons would have received apart from their associations with such an individual. See how Israel is blessed both for Abraham's and for David's sake. However, prominent as such blessings are, we have every reason to assume that the father's influence affected the personal attitude of the members of his household to Yahweh, so that of their own volition they chose to walk in the godly patriarch's footsteps. Yet had Noah not stood firm, they themselves might soon have wavered. Therefore Yahweh ascribes righteousness to Noah alone in this his generation. Note how the forensic idea definitely appears in the word tsaddiq in this connection. Nor is the conclusion right that the sole approval of Noah involved the positive disapproval of all others (Lange). A double accusative follows the verb "see" (K. S.327 s). 2, 3. Of all clean animals take to thyself seven of each, a male and his mate; but of all animals which are not clean, two each, a male and his mate; also of the birds of the heavens, seven each, male and female, to preserve seed alive upon the face of all the earth. In 6:19 a general direction had been given to Noah to the effect that two of every kind of beasts were to be taken into the ark. There was then no occasion for giving all details. Now that the entrance into the ark is imminent, these last details are added. In spite of the simple naturalness of this explanation which meets, all needs and

adequately solves the problem, critics, for the most part not even mentioning this obvious solution, keep referring to the two accounts J and P and the discrepancies between them. No doubt, from the earliest days the natural explanation advanced above has readily occurred to the simplest Bible reader, and for him no difficulty existed. Here we are suddenly confronted with the notion of unclean and clean animals. There is no indication in Scripture as to how this distinction arose. The Mosaic law sanctions and defines it. But we are left to our own devices for an explanation as to how it originated. Since the Mosaic law under this head sanctioned what apparently had long been in existence, there is no ground for tracing the origin of the distinction to a divine ordinance. The more satisfactory explanation is that which claims that in an earlier age, when man's insight was less blurred by being absorbed in purely worldly matters, it became quite apparent to man that certain forms of animal life were in reality rather striking pictures of sin and its uncleanness. So a natural abhorrence against such creatures arose, and it was thought to be good pedagogic training for a man to remember such a distinction and to draw practical conclusions from it in the use of beasts particularly for food. Whether this practical application of the idea in reference to foods was made already in the days before the Flood cannot be determined. But the distinction as such is referred to as current and well known. The Hebrew expression "take seven seven" means "seven each" (K. S.85; 316 b; G. K.134 q). Hebrew parallels support this explanation. In any case, it would be a most clumsy method of trying to say "fourteen." Three pairs and one supernumerary make the "seven." As has often been suggested, the supernumerary beast was the one Noah could conveniently offer for sacrifice after the termination of the Flood. In v.3 the idea of "the birds of the heavens" must, of course, be supplemented by the adjective "clean," according to the principle laid down in v.2. The birds are separately mentioned so that Noah might not be left to-his own devices in fixing the limits of what v.2 included. The expression found twice in v.2, "a male and his mate," is rather unusual from our point of view in that a literal translation would read in reference to these clean beasts, "a man and his wife." The expression is the same as that used in Ge 2:25 in reference to Adam and Eve. However, the strangeness of the expression disappears as soon as we notice that both terms "man" and "wife" have a greater latitude of meaning by far in Hebrew. So "wife" may be used in reference to all manner of beasts to express the distributive and reciprocal idea, "each" (B D B 61, a). If, then, here the expression takes the place of "male and female," which is actually used of the clean birds in v.3, no particular significance is to be attached to it. Of two available expressions the one involving the greater dignity ("man and wife") is twice used in reference to clean beasts. The object of gathering all these clean beasts together in the ark is said to be "to preserve seed alive." The expression "seed" (zéra') is here used quite appropriately, because these creatures naturally come under the point of view of such from which all others are again to spring. At the same time the thought is expressed that these apparently few creatures will under divine providence be adequate again to cover "the face of all the earth." There is a promise latent in this expression of purpose.The criticism that calls this distinction of clean and unclean on the part of the writer "a proof of the naïvité of his religious conceptions" is proof that the author of the criticism has not apprehended the deeper scriptural truth involved.4. For yet seven days and I am going to make it rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights and I will blot out all existence which I have made from upon the face of the earth.There is nothing vague about this last direction which is imparted to Noah. God speaks with authority as one who has absolute and perfect control of all issues involved. Noah will have seven days in which to complete his preparations. Then there will break forth a rain whose exact duration divine providence has fixed

and foreknows, a rain of forty days and nights. The number "forty" cannot be merely accidental. According to the scriptural use of numbers forty regularly describes a period of trial terminating in the victory of good and the overthrow of evil; see Nu 14:33; Ex 24:18; 1 Kings 19:8; Jonah 3:4; Mt 4:2; Ac 1:3. Since the rule of evil has in this case become well-nigh universal, God determines to "wipe out all existence" (kol yeyûm), that is, everything that stands up (allen Bestand). In the adjective clause "which I have made" lies both a sorrow at the thought that His own creatures should have degenerated thus, as well as the assertion of His right to destroy thus. What He has made, He may destroy. Again the descriptive word "wipe out" is met. The participle mamtïr expresses duration: I am going to cause rain for a long time. The le before "days" is the le temporal (K. S.331 f).5. And Noah did just as the Lord commanded him.One of the remarkable features of this Flood story is its entirely objective character. Noah's subjective feelings or reactions are not even indicated by a single word. It is as though human emotions were but trivial things in the face of the vastness of the disaster that befalls the earth. Enough to know the implicit obedience of this man of God. He received orders. He obeyed them to the letter. Kekhol, "according to all" must equal "just as." The sum of what he did is reported in v.7-9, But before that is reported, it is thought essential to stress his complete obedience.6. And Noah was six hundred years old when the Flood came, waters upon the earth.The entrance into the ark is about to be reported. This certainly constitutes an important juncture in Noah's life. This was practically the moment when the rest of mankind ceased to be, and when Noah virtually became the sole head of the race. At important junctures such as these authors love to pause for reflections. One common reflection of biographers in particular is to mention the age of the hero at the time of an outstanding event. Moses here quite naturally does the same thing in reference to Noah. This fact, which is so simple that it lies on the very surface, is not observed by criticism. For a simple obvious fact a devious and complicated theory is substituted. Because P is supposed to supply exact data, this verse is assigned to him, and this is supported by the claim that v.5 is really continued by v.7 (Dillmann, etc.). However, v.5 in a summary way. reported Noah's obedience and so closed the paragraph. Now v.6 marks the beginning, as above shown, of a new era, as it were, and offers an exact date for this era.As in 6:17, the word mabbûl, "catastrophe," is modified by the apposition "water" to show what kind of a catastrophe this was. Hayah does not here mean "to be" but goes back to the original meaning "to come to pass." The Hebrew idiom expressing age is covered by the very flexible ben ("son"), "a son of six hundred years." The number 600 has nothing whatever to do with the Babylonian ner, or period of that length. The correspondence is purely accidental. The two coordinated clauses, "Noah was six hundred years old" and "and the Flood came, etc.," are to be combined as in our translation: "and" is the equivalent of "when." K. S.362 n makes an artificial separation of the two clauses in the interest of the source theory.7-9. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him came into the ark from the face of the waters of the Flood. Of all clean beasts and of all beasts which were not clean and of the birds and of everything that creepeth upon the ground, two by two came unto Noah to the ark, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah.The enumeration of those who entered the ark is not a purely formal repetition of 6:18. A summary like 7:1 might have been in order ("all thy house"), but this simple repetition makes the fact very prominent that the original provision (6:18) had been meant literally and that no additional features were to be added, as actually, however, was the case in reference to the beasts, where first all are mentioned and the fact that they shall enter two by two (6:19), and then the modification of this order in reference to the clean beasts appears (7:2, 3). Strange to say,

there actually was not one single person outside of the family of Noah whom divine grace could save. The expression "from the face of the waters of the Flood" is the equivalent of our statement "to escape the waters," etc. (Meek). In this instance the readiness of the beasts, to come in is stressed; ba'û -- "they came" v.9. Again, since by far the majority of the beasts naturally belonged in the category of the unclean, the provisions just reported in reference to the clean may be taken for granted. The report, therefore, merely contains what held true in regard to all: they came in "two by two." Such a statement is said to be made a parte potiori, i. e., according to the portion that predominates. Besides, this cannot be said to clash with v.2 and 3 because two of all clean beasts certainly did go in. The "creepers" (romes) are added at this point in order to show how broad Noah conceived the term "all beasts" to be. This is quite logical, because creepers certainly could not keep alive in a Flood such as this.One outstanding instance of the lengths to which criticism ventures to go is supplied by the reconstruction of original documents which, it is claimed, can be restored by the skill of the critic. J's narrative is said originally to have run thus in sequence of verses: 10, 7, 16 b, 12, 17 b, 22, 23. Even aside from all the flaws that we have pointed out as inherent in the critical assumption, it requires a faith far greater than the faith in verbal inspiration to accept contentions such as these.In v.10 the Creator's authority is the dominant viewpoint; therefore Elohîm is used.10, 11. And it came to pass after the seven days that the waters of the Flood came upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of the life of Noah, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that very day all the fountains of the great deep were broken open, and the windows of the heavens were opened.Since "seven days" were mentioned in v.4, these must elapse before the Flood can come. So, apparently, the expression "at the seven of the days," with le temporal, is best taken in the sense: "after the seven days," than "on the seventh day." Luther and A. V. also agree to this. The Hebrew with its preference for co-ordination of clauses says: "and the waters came" after "it came to pass." We naturally would say after such a beginning: "that the waters came." See K. S.370a; G. K.164 a. Besides, the second clause is not introduced by the verb because the noun "waters" is the emphatic thing.11. Now the date is fixed more exactly as befits the importance of the event. In the memory of the survivors it was a day never to be forgotten. As above indicated, it was the six hundredth year of Noah's life. The saints of the Lord, whom He hides before the storm breaks (Isaiah 26:20), are so important in His eyes that time is reckoned according to their life. But as far as the year itself is concerned, it was the seventeenth day of the second month. But does the author mean the ordinary civil or agricultural year, which takes its beginning with fall when the agricultural tasks begin anew; or has he the ecclesiatical year in mind which began with April? From Ex 12:2; 13:4 it appears that this ecclesiastical year first came into being with the Exodus. Besides, the heavy rain mentioned v.12 as géshem applies primarily to the autumn rains. All this makes the month corresponding roughly to our October the more likely.The source of the waters was twofold. Though it was indicated above (v.4) that the source of the waters of the Flood would be what would normally be expected, namely the rain from above, which was in reality the chief source, now the auxiliary source is mentioned and put first in order, because it was the thing that attracted notice first because of its unusual character. This auxiliary source is "the fountains of the great deep." The "great deep" must be subterranean water of which there is still much and of which there may have been more in early days. It seems to be an established fact that "outbursts of subterranean water are a frequent accompaniment of seismic disturbances in the alluvial districts of great rivers." Tehôm is similarly used for subterranean waters in Ge 49:25 and De 33:13. Consequently there must have been vast

upheavals on every hand, for these fountains of the great deep "were broken open" (nibhqe'û -- from baqa'," to cleave"). To make plain the fact that the heavens poured down torrential rains, the figurative expression is used: "the windows of the heavens were opened," an expression still employed because of its aptness. As little as we go on record by the use of this expression as believing that there are actual windows in the heaven, so little need such a conception, pressed out of the literal understanding of figurative language, be attributed to Biblical writers. As in connection with 1:7 the idea of a kind of sidereal ocean had to be rejected as a purely fanciful notion of commentators, so here.However, at this point note should be taken of the tremendous geological possibilities that lie behind the breaking open of the fountains of the great deep. The vastness of these eruptions must be in proportion to the actual depth of the Flood. For as the Flood was of astounding power and magnitude, so must have been each of the causes mentioned, the upper and the lower waters. Such eruptions from subterranean sources must have caused a rush of waters upon the earth comparable to the highest tidal wave. Such waves in turn must have been capable of producing effects of almost incalculable magnitude. So, then, the effects caused by the waters of the great deep (1:2), as they surged about on the earth in process of formation, together with the effects brought about by this great Flood, seem to us an entirely adequate explanation for geological formations of every kind, as they are now to be observed. On the peculiar repetition of shanah ("year") in v.11 see K. S.337i and G. K.134o. K. S. renders the phrase literally: "In the year (which coincides with) the six hundredth year," making it an appositional genitive. To prevent too long an accumulation of construct relationships the substitute of the dative with le is used before "the life of Noah" (K. S.281 f).12. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.To remind at once of the tremendous rainfall that resulted the duration of the fall is added to the idea of the torrential downpour. This verse, therefore, does not break the thought-connection, except for critics, who are operating with the double source idea and so fail to see the legitimate value of a repetition. In fact, in point of thought v.12 may be considered as so closely attached to v.11 as to be separated from it only by a comma. After v.4 had promised that a forty days' rain would come, the writer is under obligation to report the fulfilment, a thing which may be done as readily here as anywhere. Besides, the author for the present uses the expression in this connection only to impress us with the amount of the resultant water. In v.17 the similar statement aims to lead us to the end of this period.13-16. On this very day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, together with the wife of Noah and the wives of his sons with them came into the ark. They and every sort of wild beast according to its kind, and every sort of domestic animal according to its kind, and every sort of creeper creeping upon the earth according to its kind, and every sort of bird according to its kind, everything with feathers and wings; of every sort of flesh which had in it the breath of life two by two came unto Noah into the ark. And those that came -- male and female of all sorts of flesh came, just as God had commanded him. And Yahweh closed the door after him.With a solemn repetition, characteristic of all epic poetry of days of old, this solemn epic aims to produce upon the reader's imagination the effect of the tremendous numbers that had to be housed in the ark and what a scene it presented as they were being brought in during the course of that last fateful week. The attentive reader catches all this, and the effect is well-nigh overpowering, but the critic sees only idle repetition and two original sources, assigning this portion to P. The solemnity of the event calls for such a solemn rehearsal of names as we find in v.13. Incidentally, the phrase "on this very day" indicates the fearlessness of faith manifest in these godly men.There was no timid fleeing to the

refuge of the ark before the Flood actually set in. The word we have rendered "very" is the Hebrew 'étsem ("bone"); by a natural idiom in the bone of a thing is in the very thing itself. "Three" is feminine by attraction with a feminine noun; the masculine would be the normal form (K. S.312 a; 349 a; G. K.97 c). Ba', the perfect "came," points to the moment when their entering was an accomplished fact: "had come" is a permissible rendering.14. Kol, in this and the next two verses, regularly signifies not "all," for not "all beasts," etc., entered, but rather "of every sort." Chayyah (collective) "wild beasts" are here mentioned for the first time as entering the ark. Previously the generic word "animals" (behemah) included them. Here now behemah must mean the "domestic animals," as in chapter one. We have rendered rémes "creeper," as in v.8. In 1:24 we had rendered the same word "reptiles," pointing out the relative inadequacy of either translation. In any case, land-creepers or reptiles only are meant here, because no provision needed to be made for the various forms of aquatic creatures.After the general expression, "every sort of bird according to its kind," comes an apposition which in Hebrew reads: "every little bird of every wing," or even better: "every sort of little bird of every sort of wing." Meek has found a very happy rendering for the phrase by the expression: "everything with feathers and wings." That is practically what is meant. Insects are manifestly included under this head.15. This verse generalizes very broadly: those that had "the breath of life" in them "came" to Noah. Again their voluntary approach, seeking refuge from an impending calamity whose nearness was sensed, is emphasized. Even their appearing in pairs seems to have been providentially arranged. When critics draw the phrase "on this very" day down through v.14 and 15 and make the author say that Noah's family as well as all beasts entered in one day, and then speak of the man J, supposedly the author of the section, as here "furnishing an example of his love of the marvellous," we may well dispose of the matter by calling it an example of critical captiousness.16. This verse really presents an anacoluthon because of the absolute nominative which stands first: habba'îm, "those that came." Then "male and female" step in to become the regular subject of ba'û, "they came in." However, the anacoluthon makes very smooth reading and not only presents no difficulty but stresses with particular clearness the voluntary approach of those whom Noah was bidden to gather. So a solution presented itself in very simple fashion to what must at first have appeared to Noah as an insuperable difficulty. God, the awe-inspiring Ruler of all, Elohîm, laid all these commandments upon Noah by virtue of His supreme authority. In the same breath, with skilful use of the proper divine name, the author asserts that it was Yahweh, the always gracious and faithful, who "closed the door after him," so guarding him against possible assaults of the wicked, as well as preventing him from attempting to show ill-timed mercy to last minute penitents.17. And the Flood came upon the earth forty days, and the waters mounted and lifted up the ark and it went along high above the earth,Since v.24 is about to speak of the prevailing of the Flood for 150 days, it would place this verse needlessly at variance with this later statement to make it read: "the Flood was upon the earth forty days," (A. V.). Rather, the original meaning of hayah prevails here: "it became" or, as we rendered, it "came." This is the first statement in reference to the increase of the waters, and it asserts that forty days the waters were in process of rising -- as, long as the rain continued its heavy downpour. Naturally "the waters mounted" (rabbah -- "grew great"). It was not long before sufficient water was displaced to "lift up" (nasa') the ark. So it "went high" (rûm -- "be high") above the earth.Now follows what rhetoric might call an account abounding in tautologies. But these are not idle, verbose repetitions. As Delitzsch well puts it: "These tautologies paint the dreadful monotony of the endless. and vast expanse of the waters which covered the earth." This must,

therefore, be described as a very effective adaptation of style to subject matter, as the reverent Bible reader has always felt it to be, and as the child in its day already sensed when it listened to the telling narrative.18-20. The waters grew mighty and mounted greatly over the earth and the ark floated along upon the face of the waters. But the waters grew extremely mighty upon the earth, and all the high mountains which are under all the heavens were covered. Fifteen cubits and upwards did the waters grow mighty so that the mountains were covered.The first verb gabhar recurs in each of these three verses. Its root meaning is "to be strong." Here it could be rendered "prevail" (A. V.); Luther: ueberhand nehmen. Our own rendering "grew mighty" merely retains the basic meaning but is not to be preferred to "prevail." Our reason for rendering thus is that thus one shade of meaning is at least not lost sight of, namely that these mighty waters did actually prove themselves "mighty." What power behind raging, surging waters! On the one hand, how God's power in keeping the ark amid such dangers stands out the more distinctly! On the other hand, what opportunity for working vast geologic changes lie dormant in these "mighty" waters! The native force of gabhar is enhanced by one me'odh, "exceedingly" in v.18 and by the doubling of the same adverb -- a Hebrew superlative -- in v.19. When will geologists begin to notice these basic facts? It will be noticed that we are letting me'odh of v.18 modify two verbs; for in the light of v.19 it may well be construed thus. Rabhah, the second verb, means "to become much." Of necessity, under the circumstances the ark could not remain stationary. Therefore, the next verb, halakh, it "went," that is to say, it "floated" upon the face of the waters.19. A measure of the waters is now made by comparison with the only available standard for such waters -- the mountains. They are said to have been "covered." Not a few merely but "all the high mountains under all the heavens." One of these expressions alone would almost necessitate the impression that the author intends to convey the idea of the absolute universality of the Flood, e. g., "all the high mountains." Yet since "all" is known to be used in a relative sense, the writer removes all possible ambiguity by adding the phrase "under all the heavens." A double "all" (kol) cannot allow for so relative a sense. It almost constitutes a Hebrew superlative. So we believe that the text disposes of the question of the universality of the Flood.By way of objection to this interpretation those who believe in a limited flood, which extended perhaps as far as mankind may have penetrated at that time, urge the fact that kol is used in a relative sense, as is clearly the case in passages such as Ge 41:57; Ex 9:25; 10:15; De 2:25; 1 Kings 10:24. However, we still insist that this fact could overthrow a single kol, never a double kol, as our verse has it.If in this connection the fact be urged that the fifteen cubits -- half the height of the ark -- mentioned v.20 as the distance which the waters rose above the mountains, must represent roughly the draught of the ark, or the depth to which it sank into the waters, and must have been calculated according to the height of Mt. Ararat upon which the ark finally rested, we can accept this interpretation as reasonable. But the objection continues: Mt. Ararat (or Mt. Masts) has an altitude of 16,916 feet, whereas peaks in the Himalayas rise about 29,000, and others, too, surpass Mt. Ararat; how can the fact that Mt. Ararat was submerged point to the submersion of these peaks.? We hold that the solution lies in this that those few peaks that rise above Mt. Ararat were unknown both to the people of the days of the Flood as well as to the contemporaries of Moses. All the mountains, they knew of were covered. In any case, as Keri indicates, such mountain peaks in relation to the whole earth would amount to no more than a few pinpoints on a globe, and are disregarded because of the limited horizon of the ancients. For here is a consideration that weighs very strongly in this connection: a flood of more than 16,000 feet, that is to say, of more than three miles in depth could not be confined to any

portion of the earth but must necessarily spread itself out over the entire earth's surface. The counterclaim that such a mass of water would have wrought the complete destruction of the earth by its tremendous weight is offset by the fact that in proportion to the earth as a whole such a Flood would mean no more than a profuse sweat on the human body.However, other considerations are urged against the universality of the Flood, such as the physical impossibility of transporting certain animals which are distinctive for the country of Australia, such as the kangaroo, and having them cross vast oceans and lands to find Noah and then to return by an equally difficult route to their remote habitation after the Flood. By way of answer we point to two difficulties which lie in the way of maintaining this argument consistently. The one, there is absolutely no way of telling how the various continents were formed and shaped in days of old and whether they were more intimately connected with one another prior to the Flood and immediately thereafter. To assume that Australia lay isolated in days of old as it does now is merely an assumption. The other consideration is that we cannot even tell how the fauna of Australia came to take foothold there in any case. The same argument that would not allow creatures to find their way to Australia after the Flood apparently would not allow creatures to find their way there in any case unless these creatures be autochthonous.But still it is maintained that when the Scriptures refer to the Flood they speak only of the universal destruction of mankind and not of its universal extent. The passages employed are Isaiah 54:9; Mt 24:39; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6 and the apocryphal passage Wis 10:4. However, if these passages be scanned closely, it will be seen that in none of them is there occasion to refer to other than the human beings as objects of destruction. But silence on the subject of the destruction of the rest of the physical world is by no means proof that the physical world was not included as a whole. Besides, no one actually knows to what extent men had spread abroad upon the face of the earth. The general assumption still seems to be that in seventeen centuries men had gotten but little beyond the region of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and this when the known longevity of at least some men gave the human race opportunity for more rapid expansion. Men may have colonized the Western Hemisphere before the Flood, for all we know.21-23. All flesh that moved upon the earth expired, including birds and domestic animals and wild beasts and all swarms that swarmed upon the earth, as well as all mankind. Everything that had the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils, of everything that was on the dry land died. And He blotted out everything that existed upon the face of the ground, from man to beast and creeping thing and to the bird of the heavens, and they were wiped out from the earth. And there was left only Noah and those that were with him in the ark.The words used in v.21 and 22 are chosen as reminders of God's threat spoken in 6:17. For there God spoke of "all flesh," of its "expiring," of "the spirit of life." So the phraseology aims to chronicle the literal fulfilment of what God had foretold. Besides, wherever terms of classification reminiscent of the Creation Story are used, the similarity of terms is designed and by no means accidental. As these broad class terms (domestic animals, wild animals, reptiles, birds) cover all that God created, except, of course, the fish, so the Flood is to be portrayed as a disaster equally broad in its scope, affecting all animal life that was created, with the exception of what was in the ark. "Flesh" (basar) here refers to all forms of life as perishable. Ramas, usually rendered "to creep," must here bear the broader meaning "to move," as in 1:21 and 8:19. Verse 21 comes to a climax in the assertion that "all mankind" also perished.22. This verse dwells upon the fact that "all that had the breath of the spirit of life died," because the waters of the Flood naturally stifled the breath of all being. Still, the expression used, though it includes mankind is not the same as that used in 2:7 in reference to mankind only, where

God is said to have breathed into man's nostrils "the breath of life," nishmath chayyim. Here in v.22 the expression used is "the breath of the spirit of life," not the distinctive breath that animates man but the breath by which the Spirit of life, God's Holy Spirit, animated living beings. A fine distinction of terms is observed. At the same time it is clearly pointed out that all created life retains its life only by the animating, sustaining power of God's Spirit. The frequent recurrence of the word "all" emphasizes the completeness of the destructive work of the Flood.The be of v.21 is called the Beth sphaerae, that is to say, the be that marks the sphere within which things were done, and it is the equivalent of a partitive genitive (K. S.279 a). Our translation renders it: "including" (Meek). Criticism, unwilling often to penetrate into the meaning of unusual terms, renders the strange verdict on the expression "the breath of the spirit of life" that it "is an unexampled combination arising from a confusion of a phrase of J nishmath chayyîm with one of P rûach chayyîm" (Skinner). This amounts to the statement: if the author or redactor had known his Hebrew as the critic does, he would not have written thus. 23. As the Hebrew text stands, and it need not be corrected, it suddenly introduces the great Author of this catastrophe without specific mention of Him by any name, merely as "He." Therefore wayyímach may well be read as apopopated Kal imperfect, as the Masoretes intended it to be. Yeqûm (from qûm) signifies all that "has existence," or literally, "all that stands up" (Bestand, K. W.). With one more solemn, if not intentionally dreary, repetition of the classes that perished this part of the account closes, exempting specifically Noah and those with him in the ark from the universal destruction.24. And the waters prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.To impress the reader, in a measure at least, with the great length of time during which the waters maintained their maximum height, the writer lets the statement concerning the 150 days conclude this portion of the Flood story. What a dreary and monotonous, if not dreadful, sight to behold nothing other than the blank expanse of water for so great a length of time! From the idea of gabhar, "be mighty," "conquer," we derive the thought at this point that the conquering, dominating force over all the earth was the mighty mass of water. Since the verb gabhar is used (v.18) of the time before the waters reached their maximum height and not only to mark this maximum, we feel sure that the 150 days must include the forty days of rain mentioned v.12.A flaw in the critical method is apparent in reference to v.22 and 23. Formal statistical enumerations are a characteristic mark of P. Then according to all tokens especially v.23, like v.14 and v.21, ought to be assigned to P. Instead it is given to J. Reason? Otherwise J would have no statement to the effect that all creatures were destroyed. All we can say in reference to such a mode of dealing with sources is that it is a clever manipulation; but it should not be called scientific procedure.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIn connection with the preceding chapter we already pointed out that the first five verses of this chapter fit in best with the third section of chapter six. It seems to us that the rest of this chapter, namely v.6-24, should again be used as a unit. Whatever treatment of these verses one may use, the thought of judgment must predominate, a judgment so solemn and awful that perhaps no other Scripture is quite as strong from this point of view. We suggest as themes: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall be also reap," or still more pointed: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." Then one may take as starting-point the thought of 2 Peter 3:5-7 and treat the Flood as a type of the Final Judgment, a thought also suggested by the Saviour's Word: "As were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man" (Mt 24:37).

CHAPTER VIII

The Abatement of the Flood; Noah's Exit from the Ark The Flood story proceeds with a simple narration utterly devoid of all extraneous matter and of all ornamentation -- a type of epic simplicity which in itself is a guarantee of absolute veracity and historical fidelity. 1-3a. And God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and domestic animals which were with him in the ark, and God caused a wind to pass over the earth and the waters abated. Also the fountains of the deep were stopped and the windows of the heavens; and the pouring rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters subsided from upon the earth more and more. Behind the working of nature, according to the Scriptures, stands God. In perfect harmony with this principle the subsiding of the Flood is attributed to God's remembering Noah. In this expressive sense "remember" (zakhar) is often used (Ge 9:15, 16; Ex 2:24; 6:15; Ge 30:22; 1 Samuel 1:11), implying a "remembering with kindness, granting requests, protecting, delivering" (B D B). It would never occur to one familiar with Hebrew to draw the conclusion from this statement that for a time God had forgotten Noah. Nor is the expression so distinctly a characteristic of the portions assigned to P, as Strack intimates, for its use is also attributed to E (Ge 30:22) to JE (Ex 32:13) or to H (Le 26:42). This activity, though often ascribed to Yahweh, is here attributed to Elohim, for, as the sequel goes on to show, "wild and domestic animals" are also remembered, and God's work under this head is in reality analogous to His creative work, for it involves the preservation and the multiplying of all manner of life upon the earth. "Elohim" more appropriately describes God in His creative and sustaining capacity. So, again, we have here not a stereotyped use of divine names but rather a discriminating use according to their basic meaning. Incidentally, there is a tender touch in the account that describes the Almighty God as having concern for all His creatures (cf. Psalms 147:9 and Jonah 4:11). As God employed natural agencies, operating with unusual potency, to bring about the Flood, so similar agencies are brought into use to remove the Flood waters. However, since it was necessary on the one hand to have the power of these agencies increased or accentuated to produce results as vast as those here recorded, it follows without further specific statement that the causes at work to remove the waters will have been more highly potentialized. Procksch, therefore, has no need of making the criticism: "that the wind should have made the whole earth dry in about five months is a very childlike conception." The least bit of readiness to interpret the verse in harmony with all the facts recorded would have checked his uncalled-for criticism. Besides, as we are at once told, other agencies co-operated to secure the desired result. But, we are sure, as an element of the miraculous entered into the matter of the coming of the Flood, so a similar element contributed to its abatement. So eager is the writer to draw the result achieved to our attention that he at once begins to speak of the fact that "the waters abated." 2. Then he proceeds to fit into place the other auxiliary agencies: (a) "the fountains of the deep were stopped" and (b) "the windows of the heavens."Since 7:11 had told us of the opening of these sources of water, the author owes us a statement as to whether these continued open. But since the closing of these two cannot subtract from the waters but merely prevents further increase, the mention of these two is brought in as an afterthought, even as is the third contributory agency, the "pouring rain" (géshem) mentioned previously 7:12. These three

together, then, may be regarded as causes contributing only negatively to the abatement of the waters. The critics, bent on discerning various documents and a measure of conflict between these documents, fail to discern the simple analysis of the relation of v.1 and 2 and claim to have a clear indication of various sources that were not sufficiently harmonized at this point. In fact, the critical analysis assigns to J (lb?) 2b, 3 a, (4b?) 6-12, 13b. To P: 1, 2a, 3b-5, 13a.14. Criticism claims the possible original sequence in J to have been: 6a, 2b, lb, 3a, 4. The opening verb yissakherû, "were stopped," is quite naturally masculine since the first subject "fountains" is masculine, even though a feminine follows ("windows"). See K. S.349 m. 3. The fact that the waters subsided with marked rapidity and not as an ordinary wind could make them do, is indicated by a strong form of expression in the Hebrew which our rendering ("more and more") reproduces very imperfectly. The double infinitive absolute (halôkh washôbh) appended to the finite verb would yield a connection which might be rendered: "they subsided going and returning," which amounts to: "they subsided with a very pronounced fall." See G. K.113 r on these absolute infinitives. Strack misses the force of the double infinitive when he renders it allmaehlich -- "gradually." Meek does better, but has too weak an expression in "steadily." 3b, 4. The waters declined after the expiration of one hundred and fifty days, so that the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month. Comparing 7:24, we discern that the one hundred and fifty days here mentioned are the same here and there. The total length of time that the waters dominated the earth without suffering abatement is here, under consideration, About the first thing to happen when the abatement began must have been the grounding of the ark (wattßnach -- "and she came to rest"). It could well have been on the first day of the abatement because, according to 7:20 a drop of only fifteen cubits was necessary, and, surely, the waters must have fallen more rapidly than that. But if we assume that the first day of abatement brought with it the grounding of the ark, we must assume that the highest peak of the entire vicinity is the one under consideration, according to 7:20. The only difficulty encountered by this assumption is that this highest peak, Masis, commonly called Ararat, is the most inaccessible of all, and the problem of bringing all the animals down from this height must have been not inconsiderable, yet within the realm of the possible. Divine providence, of course, displays itself gloriously in all that befalls Noah and the ark -- in the mere fact that the ark came to rest on terra firma; but primarily also in the fact that so huge a structure came to rest on an even keel, as it were, where a pronounced tilt in the course of its settling might have resulted in the perishing of all. However, some confusion has grown out of the customary interpretation put upon the expression "the mountains of Ararat." This is usually interpreted as though it read "upon Mount Ararat." However, the Hebrew has "mountains" (harey), the plural of indefiniteness as in Jude 12:7, where naturally the translation runs: "in one of the cities of Gilead" but the original has "in the cities of Gilead," (cf. K. S.265 c). Likewise, in Biblical usage Ararat is a country; see 2 Kings 19:37 -- Isaiah 37:38; Jeremiah 51:27. He that feels he cannot accept the idea that the ark landed on the magnificent peak Masis, may take the other traditional view, offered by the Targum, that it was the "Kardu mountains," i. e., the mountains in Kurdistan, southwest of Lake Van, "commanding a view of the Mesopotamian plain." The island of Ceylon, as some hold, cannot even be considered. But whichever of the two views offered above one may accept, in either case a providential factor can clearly be observed in this location. For it marks the spot from which the human race was to spread abroad. From several points of view this location is central. Access to the Mesopotamian plain is easy. Asia Minor presents itself on the other hand. Syria, Arabia and Africa lie conveniently

to the south and southwest. Asia is accessible to the north and northeast. Europe is approachable through Asia Minor; India through Mesopotamia. Here is the scriptural centre from which the nations went abroad over the face of the earth. On the short "a," in the Kal of yachserû (v.3) see G. K.63f. On the form wattßnach (v.4), G. K.72t.5, 6. And the waters remained, decreasing continually, until the tenth month, and in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the mountain tops came into view. And it came to pass after forty (more) days Noah opened the window that he had made in the ark.Even as expressions were multiplied in chapter seven to give an impression of the marvellous increase of, the waters until the waters prevailed over all, so expressions are multiplied to help us grasp the magnitude and the rapidity of the decrease. The abatement of the waters may not be classed as merely normal, brought about by ordinary processes of evaporation. The expression here used is: "the waters remained, decreasing continually." The hayû cannot have the two following absolute infinitives joined with it and be treated as mere auxiliary, thus: "they were decreasing." Absolute infinitives are not used thus, nor is the verb hayah (cf. K. S.402 b). Hayak must here have a meaning like "exist" or "remain." But as "the waters remained," the decrease went on rapidly: halôkh wechasôr literally: "going and decreasing" -- an emphatic combination.The chronology of the Flood is complete for all practical purposes. The major items discovered by the occupants of the ark are listed. So on the first day of the tenth month "the mountain tops came into view," literally: "the heads of the mountain were seen." We prefer not to render "were seen," for that might imply that they were visible before but just did not happen to be seen, which certainly was not what the writer meant.6. Forty days after the appearance of the mountain peaks "Noah opened the window that he had made in the ark." We can conjecture little that is satisfactory about the nature, size, and location of this window. The name challôn must be from the root challal meaning "to pierce." It must have been cut in the side wall. It must have been of such a kind that it could be opened. We wonder chiefly at the fact that Noah did not remove it sooner. Our lack of knowledge of details makes it impossible to furnish an answer. We prefer to render as above, making the clause "which he had made" clearly modify the noun "window," as without doubt it is designed to, even though it follows the word ark in Hebrew. There would, however, be no point in asserting here that Noah had made the ark. A. V. is ambiguous.7-12. And he sent forth a raven, which went flying back and forth until the waters were dried up from upon the earth. Then he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters had abated from upon the face of the ground. But the dove found no resting-place, for the sole of her foot, and so she returned to him to the ark, for water was upon the surface of all the earth, and he put out his hand and took her and brought her to him into the ark. Then he waited again another seven days and again sent forth a dove from the ark; and the dove came back to him at evening, and, lo, there was a fresh olive leaf in her beak. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. Then he waited again another seven days and sent forth a dove, but she did not again return to him.The open window must have been of a kind that did not afford a very wide view. In fact, Noah was unable to determine to what extent the waters had abated. The only solution for the difficulty occurring to us is the possibility of a window high under the eaves, but the eaves projecting rather far so that a bit of ground, perhaps a nearby ledge of the mountain, was all that could be seen, and this ledge prevented the view into the valley or out into the plain. So Noah, thoroughly conversant with the ways and habits of birds, uses them for securing additional information. First he sends forth a raven -- the article ha'orebh is the generic article (K. S.300 a); we say "a raven." Should the bird fail to return -- for the impulse to get free from the ark may have

stirred strongly in all occupants -- Noah knows the bird can subsist; for, being a scavenger bird, it will find carcases here and there. Its failure to return tells him that at least there is no more a blank waste of water, and that the waters have subsided materially. One can hardly conceive how painful the suspense in the ark was growing at this time. The actions of the raven are described as: be "went flying back and forth," literally: "he went forth, going forth and coming back." This might mean that he occasionally perched on the ark, but how could Noah have known that? More likely it means, since yatsa' is used with the absolute infinitive, that it merely flew back and forth. The occupants of the ark may have heard its cawing, now on one side, now on another. Since this bird is not particular as to where it perches, the slimy surface available here or there will not have repelled it.8. Another bird is chosen for a similar purpose to convey further information. For the dove (yônah with generic article, as in v.7) is a more cleanly bird, which will not alight in places that are not clean. That seven days had elapsed since the sending of the raven appears from the use of the words "again" and "another" in v.10. That such comparatively long periods elapsed between successive sendings shows that, in the face of all natural desire to be informed as to how far the abatement had progressed, Noah had possessed his soul in patience, the patience of faith. When this cleanly bird "found no resting-place for the sole of her foot," she returned to Noah before evening, strong-winged bird though she was. This conveyed the information to Noah that water was still upon the surface of all the earth. With the insertion of details, for it was a memorable deed and indicative of the kindly relationship existing between this man of God and the lesser creature, the narrative tells us how "he put out his hand and took her and brought her to him into the ark." Above, the dove (v.8) had been sent forth me'ittô, "from with him," a phrase not used in reference to the raven, apparently because the tame friendly dove stood closer to him than the raven. Now the dove is said to return "to him." These are niceties about the narrative which commentators scarcely seem to notice. The verb for "he put out his hand" is shalach in the Piel. It is the same verb in the Hebrew idiom "to send forth" (v.7), where Meek renders, very appropriately, "release." 10. Each venture at sending forth a bird has yielded some definite information. The dove is still the most suitable messenger to send forth. Whether the article before the word now designates the same dove that was sent first or is still the generic article is somewhat difficult to determine. We incline to the opinion that it points to the same dove. But that the intervals of time are in each case seven days suggests, on the one hand, that in antediluvian days time was apparently reckoned by weeks. On the other, there seems great likelihood that so godly a man as Noah will on each occasion have accompanied the sending forth of the bird by prayer. But that does not yet warrant the conclusion of T. Lewis that this necessitates that the days involved were "days held sacred for prayers and religious rest," that is to say, antediluvian Sabbaths. But that Noah waits no longer than seven days in each instance indicates that he was also aware of the exceptionally rapid decline of the waters. He expected that seven days might materially alter the situation.11. In this case he was correct in his anticipation. The dove stayed away all day. She had found rest for the sole of her foot, for she would hardly remain on the wing for an entire day. She might perhaps have stayed away but for the urge to return to those of her kind and for something she was driven to do by the guidance of God to give Noah a further token of life returning to the earth. Doves are not considerate birds who bring men tokens of the state of affairs upon the earth. That this dove brought a leaf in its beak is to be attributed alone to an impulse divinely directed. The "fresh olive leaf" may be used by synecdoche for a small twig, although that is not essential. A single leaf could be identified and would serve its purpose. "Fresh" (taraph) indicates that it had just been

plucked, and was not an old one swimming in the waters. So, being fresh, it pointed to an olive tree then in foliage. Though these trees will grow in water, yet they are found only below certain levels. So Noah could conjecture about how far the water level must at least have gone down into the valleys. Whatever could lead Procksch to claim because of the olive leaf that "we again have a Palestinian landscape before us" is more than appears to our understanding. Olive trees are found in many oriental countries and also, according to the authority of ancient writers, in the land of Armenia. The touch added to the narrative by the phrase "at evening" is suggestive. Just as the hope for the return of the dove has about died down, the bird puts in its appearance.12. Each time the experiment yielded, some result. It practically was a barometer for those immured in the ark; a barometer indicating the fall of the waters, It was therefore worthy to be repeated once more. The dove's failure to return testifies eloquently to the practically complete subsidence of the waters.On v.7-12 note the following grammatical facts. Verse 7 yebhosheth is an irregular segolate infinitive used as object of the preposition 'adh (K. S.228). In v.9 the negative lo' creeping in between the "and" and the verb results in the abandoning of the use of the imperfect with waw conversive. "Another," 'aeherîm, may refer to the idea of doubling as well as to the idea of "different." (K. S.315 p).13, 14. And it came to pass by the first day of the first month of the six hundred and first year of Noah's life that the waters were dried up from off the earth; so Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked abroad and, lo, the face of the ground was dry. But by the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was dry.As much as is needed of a Flood chronology, relatively complete, is given in this account. Here are the last items of it. By the time the first day of the year comes about, this being now the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, it is quite in order to take stock again as to how things stand. It could practically be said that the earth was dry. This new juncture in the narrative is introduced, as so often in Hebrew, by a wayhi, "and it came to pass." Noah, who had been extremely cautious to do nothing that might in the least conflict with the divine purpose, now felt that circumstances permitted the removal of the roof of the ark, here called "covering," mikhseh from kasah, "to cover." The fact that the tabernacle had a covering of skin, which is also designated by this word, should not induce interpreters to conclude that the ark had a covering of skin -- altogether too frail a substance to withstand the downpour of rain that this vast structure was exposed to. When the covering was removed, Noah discerned that at least the surface, i. e, "face," of the ground was dry -- a fact so significant after its being long covered by waters as to warrant its being stressed by the emphatic "lo." But, of course, ordinary common sense told Noah that after a Flood that had continued so long and wrought such vast upheavals the ground could not yet be dry enough to allow the occupants of the ark to leave. Instead of an object clause after "he saw" we find a hinneh ("behold") clause (K. S.361 g). On the Hifil form wayyßsar see G. K.72t. 14. Now the statement follows that the earth itself as a whole (ha'ßrets) actually was dry by the twenty-seventh day of the second month. A comparison with 7:11 nets the result that the total duration of the Flood was one year and ten days, at least that was the length of time that Noah was confined in the ark.Among the various difficulties encountered by the critics after they have the account separated into parts according to the sources J and E, are some that can with difficulty be accounted for even by the explanation that they are the work of the so-called Redactor. So on v.13 they confess to be puzzled as to why J should not in his account have had a statement to the effect that the ark grounded. Apparently, according to J Noah leaves the ark without its ever having settled on terra firma! The definite findings of criticism apparently are far from being as satisfactory and as unimpeachable as the critics would have us believe.15-17. And

God spake to Noah saying: Go forth from the ark, thou and thy wife and thy sons and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every animal of all flesh that is with thee including birds and cattle and all creeping things that move upon the earth, and let them spread abroad on the earth and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth.Throughout this whole account Noah appears as a man who walked with God. He did not venture to do things according to his own thinking. He entered the ark when he was bidden; he left it when God told him to. The future of the whole race was tied up with what he did, and he knew it. If now this speaking (v.15) is ascribed to Elohîm -- God, and not to Yahweh, the point of view of the writer is very plain. The things that God ordains are like a new creation after the devastation of the Flood. As then the basic command went out, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (1:22), so now (v.17). As God, the Almighty Creator, who is to be feared, is the one to whom such basic creative activity is ascribed, so now. We see no reason for the different order in which the persons in the ark are listed v.15: Noah and his wife first, then the sons and their wives, where previously 6:18 and 7:7 the sequence was: Noah, sons, his wife, their wives -- no reason, we say, except such natural variation in relating things as all authors employ. A weakness of the critical position: on this point 6:18 and 7:7 are identical; yet 6:18 is ascribed to P and 7:7 to J.17. The opening word kol-ha(ch)chayyah, of course, is the broadest term, "every animal." The "beth of enumeration" that follows we have rendered "including." God gives specific and detailed orders so as to prevent misunderstanding. Besides, all creatures are not simply to be liberated to trot forth from the ark in wild confusion, which confusion might have resulted in the death of the weaker-creatures. They are to be "brought forth." (The suggestion of the Masoretes that the regular Hifil imperative hôtse' we read haytse' is not quite clear.) Then, as for the first creatures that God created, the basic ordinance is given: "Be fruitful and multiply upon the earth." Contrasting this word again with 1:22, we notice that "fill the earth" is not a part of it. This seems to point to the fact that creatures originally multiplied to the point where they were more numerous -- schools of fish, droves of wild beasts -- as also seems to be indicated by the vast quantities of fish and trilobites that are found imbedded as fossil remains in many such deposits, as well as by the huge number of mammoths and ivory tusks found in North Siberian deposits.18, 19. And Noah went forth, also his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Also all the animals, every creeping thing and every bird, in fact, everything that moveth upon the earth went forth from the ark according to their species.With great circumstantiality all details are faithfully recorded, because every step is of great importance to the future of the race and of all creatures. It must be admitted that such a mode of presentation sets forth the record of these events with fine dignity. Again, merely to speak of a different source, blurs this fine point. Cf. the remarks on v.15.19. In spite of the dignified precision, of his statements the writer is not coldly stereotyped in his expressions. The same ground is covered as in v.17 but with expressions slightly different. Here the participle rômes bears the general meaning found already in 1:28 and in 7:21. The added phrase "according to their species," though modifying the verb "went forth," is not to be pressed too closely, as though in the narrower sense it described the very manner of going forth, as though they went forth strictly only by species. We rather believe that what is meant is to remind us that the great variety of species all went forth intact. None had been lost. God's purpose to save them all by the ark had been successful. The le before "species" is the le normae (K. S.332 q).20. And Noah built an altar to Yahweh, and he took of all clean cattle and of all clean birds and offered a burnt offering upon the altar. Taking only the expressions of v.21, some regard the purpose of this sacrifice to be only propitiation. In view of the whole preceding situation and the natural feeling of

gratitude that must have possessed the heart of any one, or any group, that find they alone have been spared in a universal catastrophe, we find the ruling out of the idea of thanksgiving in connection with this sacrifice to be preposterous. The purposes of thanksgiving and of propitiation blend in this sacrifice. It is, indeed, the first altar of which the Scriptures tell. That Gen.4 does not mention an altar may signify nothing: the sons may have been using their father's altar, and so none needed to be built. To deduce from this first mention of an altar that prior to the Flood altars to raise up offerings to heaven were not thought of because God's presence was still manifest in the Garden, as the place of revelation, is building up too much conjecture on the mere silence of Scripture. We do not know whether the Garden continued to be God's place of manifestation after the Fall. We do not know whether altars originated now or in Adam's time. Mizbéach strictly means "the place of slaughter." This altar is raised to Yahweh, because Noah is mindful of the gracious fidelity which God in the person of Yahweh so mercifully displayed. This is in added argument for the fact that the offering was one of thanksgiving. The expression "he took of" could here very well be rendered: "he took one of" -- as K. C. actually renders it; cf.3:6. Under the circumstances the seventh one (7:8) of the original seven, the unmated one, could best serve the purpose. If the definition of what was clean or unclean corresponded roughly to what the Mosaic law defined later, as we have every reason to believe, cf. Lev.11 and Deut.14, this must have been a generous sacrifice and in proportion to the number of creatures extant the most liberal sacrifice ever offered. But, of a certainty, never was there a man who had greater occasion to render hearty thanks to God. Wayyß'al (G. K.72 t), "and he offered," from 'alah, "to go up," in the Hifil must mean, "to cause to go up." The object to be supplied in thought is not the beast which is brought up upon the altar but the smoke of the sacrifice, as the use of the verb 'alah in Jude 20:40; Jeremiah 48:15 and Am 4:10 indicates. Consequently, the derived noun 'olah signifies "a burnt offering going up in smoke" (K. C.).The true piety of the man Noah would be expected to give some true token as in this sacrifice. This sacrifice presents one of the most solemn scenes of all history: round about, the earth which is rapidly rejuvenating; the background, the most awful catastrophe in the annals of mankind; above, the true and faithful Yahweh, who is man's only Hope.21. When Yahweh smelled the tranquillizing odour, He said within His heart: Never again will I curse the ground for man's sake, because the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; never again will I smite all living things as I have done.The Hifil wayyßrach is explained G. K.72t. Nîchôach comes from the root nûach, "to rest." It, therefore, means "restful," "soothing." Though we have used the synonym "tranquillizing" above (B D B), it appears to us as a bit too strong. "Pleasant" should cover the case: angenehm (K. W.). He viewed the sentiments behind the sacrifice with satisfaction. For in addition to the thoughts expressed above, that namely the burnt offering set forth the idea of gratitude and of propitiation, it must be borne in mind that the chief thought behind an 'olah was to typify the idea of complete self-consecration, even as the offering in its entirety ascended to God in the fire. "Within his heart" is a more expressive way of stating the reflexive, "to himself," cf.24:45. The substance of what He said is revealed more fully in the following chapter. For the present the Spirit of revelation makes it known that this resolve was made by God as an answer to the prayer embodied in the sacrifice. Here again in this sacrifice or prayer the word was fulfilled, where it is written: "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." Such blessings for the race were secured by the prayers of godly Noah.First Yahweh promises in mercy, as His name indicates, that there is never to be a recurrence of the Flood. This is described in the words: "Never again will I curse." Spoken directly after the Flood, this statement must refer to the Flood as

in a sense a divine curse. The fact that the account has not hitherto called the Flood a "curse" does not alter the situation. Nothing worse ever befell the earth. To think of the curse of 3:17 as removed at this point lies entirely outside of the connection. Besides, we should have difficulty in determining wherein the post-diluvian earth actually possesses an advantage over the ante-diluvian. The reason advanced for sparing the earth is much like that given in 6:5 for destroying the earth. The difference, that this verse says "from his youth," is little different from that of 6:5 "only evil continually." That can hardly be the point here (contra Keil). Rather, man's iniquity may at one time be ample cause for destroying the earth. That catastrophic destruction may be done with such emphasis as to constitute a lesson for all times. From that point onward man's total depravity, which is also his pitiable weakness, may also serve as good ground for not repeating the punishment. The seeming contradiction, which already puzzled the fathers, solves itself by the simple fact that one and the same truth may, according to varying circumstances, be regarded from different viewpoints. Of course, here again in its earliest pages the Bible gives indubitable proof of the natural depravity of the human heart. "Youth" (ne'urîm) is the Hebrew plural expressing a state or condition. We feel that the Hebrew expression, "I will not add again to curse," is covered quite adequately by our idiom: "Never again will I curse." The second statement substitutes "smite" (nakhah) or "strike" for curse. All such visitations are strokes from the hand of the Almighty. This blessed promise amply demonstrates the Yahweh character of God. 22. As long as the earth shall stand, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.With the initial promise of v.21 God ties up several more, all in the spirit of the first and displaying in generous measure the same grace that prompted the first. The first takes away the dread fear of a recurrence of the great tragedy. But for that promise man, seeing the evidences of the Flood round about, would long have lived in continual apprehension of a repetition of it. There are other regular features of life on this earth that man can also depend upon as recurring as long as the earth stands, the knowledge of which will impart a stability to life and make for peace of mind more than almost any other temporal gift can. The regular variation of times and seasons here promised is not to be regarded as merely natural, fixed by nature's ordinance, but as an outgrowth of God's specific promise. The first phrase runs thus, according to the Hebrew: "still all the days of the earth." Our rendering or A. V. makes idiomatic English. The basic guarantee covers the regular alternation of "Seedtime and harvest." Zéra'(" seed") must hear mean "seedtime" as the contrast with "harvest" indicates. Then are mentioned those two elements which primarily contribute to the proper maturing of the grain, "cold and heat." These two, by their regular alternation, delightfully relieve one another and make life more bearable. Then are mentioned those two periods in which cold and heat specifically reign, namely "summer and winter." Over against these seasons again stand those smaller divisions of time, "day and night," which in the very nature of man's constitution are essential to his well-being. So, then, everything between the wide limits of food and sleep and all that makes both possible is fixed by unalterable divine ordinance. However, the opening word implies, since these things continue all the days the earth stands, that the earth is not eternal. It would lead into fruitless speculation to attempt to determine whether this word indicates a radical change of seasons or climate upon the earth after the Flood. If it be argued that "cold and heat" implies something new, for before the Flood a tropical or semi-tropical climate prevailed upon the whole earth, we must admit that we cannot determine what is new and what not among the four pairs mentioned.On wacham (long "a" with the conjunction) see G. K.104g.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSAttractive as some portions of this

chapter are in themselves, like v.6-12, and of perennial interest for children, yet we do not believe that they lend themselves to separate homiletical treatment. Perhaps it is best to take a larger portion like v.1-19 and to treat it under a general heading like "God's Faithfulness." They that concentrate on smaller sections may find themselves running into an unseemly trifling or an unwarranted allegorizing. Separate from this first section is the last part of the chapter, either v.20-22 or 19b-22. Different viewpoints may prevail in the treatment of this last portion. Either we lay the emphasis on "Noah's sacrifice" of gratitude and reconsecration and let the last two verses constitute the divine reaction to Noah's attitude; or else we may stress such a thing as "God's Promise that there shall never again be a Flood" and all the auxiliary promises that go with it. Then Noah's sacrifice will still be a motivating cause of this promise.

CHAPTER IX

(a) The Basic Ordinances Governing the Postdiluvian World (v.1-7) Certain things follow as a direct sequel to the Flood. Our chapter supplies the needed facts. First, basic ordinances are set forth by God. These ordinances are more nearly adapted to the altered conditions that prevail since the Flood, or at least they govern situations that are the outgrowth of sin and definitely require regulation. None of the regulations that follow is temporary or ever to be abrogated as long as the present world era continues. 1. And God blessed Noah and his sons and he said to them: Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. The previous chapter closed with a word whereby a fixed sequence of times and seasons was guaranteed for the time of the duration of the world. Now a blessing is laid upon man to make such work to prosper as he shall undertake to do within the times and seasons appointed. First comes what God gives to man (v.1-3); then follows what God asks of man (v.4-6). Mercy again takes precedence over justice, even as in Ge 3:15. When God "blesses," He not merely wishes well but imparts good. This blessing is imparted by God, Elohîm, inasmuch as it involves His relation to the creature world in His capacity as its Ruler and Sustainer, as in chapter one. It is imparted to the father and his sons, inasmuch as they are the representative heads of the human family. Of course, womankind thus shares in this blessing. The substance of the blessing is the word spoken: "Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth." In part, like the original creation blessing (Ge 1:28) it involves a gift, namely the gift of fruitfulness, That man cannot impart to himself. The second term, "multiply," involves both a gift, viz., the capacity for multiplying, as well as a duty. All things being equal, man is under obligation to propagate his kind. Coupled with this is the divine command to "fill the earth." Mankind is not to concentrate in some few spots but is to spread out so that the earth presents no unoccupied and uncultivated areas. But since, this is a part of the blessings, it involves the imparting of such gifts as man needs for the successful carrying out also of this duty. It has been remarked that after the Flood the marching orders under which mankind is advancing no longer include the original "subdue" the earth. For this the explanation seems to be that fallen man no longer has the capacity for subduing the world adequately and well. Sin has marred his makeup. But here men have suggested that the rest of the truth is that the perfect man, Christ Jesus, is He for whom so high a prerogative is now reserved (cf Ephesians 1:22; Hebrews 2:8, 9). Luther rightly dwells on the fact that all these words of God bring encouragement to man in one way or another; for after the Flood the great grief of the survivors at the sad lot of their contemporaries tended to weigh too heavily on their souls. That man might now have assurance of success in his enterprises and so work joyfully God speaks kindly encouragement. 2. The fear of you and thee terror of you shall be upon all the beasts of the earth and upon all the birds of the heavens. All of what creeps upon the ground and all the fish of the sea, into your hand is it given, The difference between the tenor of this verse and the beautiful harmony of the original creation is immediately apparent. Now "fear" and "terror" dominate all creatures. "Terror" is the stronger of the two words. "Dread" (A. V.) is hardly, strong enough. The pronominal suffixes are like objective genitives (K. S.37; 336 a). The same two words occur in De 11:25. There was really need of some such regulation. The beasts, by their great numbers, as well as because of their more rapid propagation, and in many instances also because of their superior

strength would soon have gotten the upper hand over man and exterminated him. God, therefore, makes a natural "fear;" even a "terror," to dwell in their hearts. Even the birds, at least the stronger among them, need such restraint. "Cattle" are not mentioned, for by nature the domesticated animals stand sufficiently under the control of man. Distinct from this is the second thought that mankind shall have control of all the smaller forms of animal life as well as of the fish to do with them as may seem good to it. For the expression "to be given in anyone's hand" signifies to be delivered into absolute control to be dealt with as the other may determine. Cf. the use of the phrase in Le 26:25 and De 19:12. The beth before kol denotes the sphere and really introduces the double subject of the verb. The Septuagint translators were only making an unnecessary attempt at improvement when they added to the first half of the verse the third object "upon all the cattle" (Kit.). "Cattle" are not to flee from man. The truth of the fulfilment of this word lies in the fact that wild beasts consistently shun the haunts of men, except when driven by hunger. No matter how strong they may be, they dread man's presence, yes, are for the most part actually filled with "terror" at the approach of man. 3; 4. Everything that moves and is alive may be food for you. As I once gave you every green plant, so now I have given you everything. Only flesh with its life, that is its blood, ye shall not eat. Now man's power over the animal world is enlarged in another direction: animal diet is made permissible. If men before the Flood ever ate the meat of beasts, they did so without divine sanction. The reason for man's receiving this permission can only be surmised. Some claim that man's strength, waning more perceptibly after the Flood, required more solid nutriment. That is not impossible. For the full impact of the deteriorating effects of sin became progressively more apparent as time went on. Others hold that among the tokens of God's goodness there was also this, that He enlarged the scope of man's diet in order to show man His varied and manifold mercy. In any case, if a "thing" moves (rémes in the broader sense) and is "alive," man may eat it. Of course, the manifest thing need not here be said: if the creature in question does not appeal to him, he may refrain from eating it. Consequently, no distinction is here to be made between clean or unclean. For such distinctions are largely relative. What one man or one group abhors, may be freely eaten by others. All such details need not be incorporated in a broad statement of permission such as this. Here is appended a distinct reference to the previous permission in reference to vegetable diet (Ge 1:29, 30). The first phrase "as the green plant" is really a contracted clause, which we have, therefore, expanded into a clause. The pronoun hû, which here serves as a copula, occupies a position between subject and predicate adjective (cf. also G. K.138b). The concluding kol, though without an article, still has the sign of the definite object, because, in the nature of the case, it may be regarded as in itself definite (K. S.288 e). 4. One restriction is attached to this broad permission. This restriction, however, has to do only with the manner of eating animal food: it may not be eaten "with its life, that is its blood." The word for life is here néphesh, elsewhere commonly rendered "soul," see B D B 659, No.1. The rendering "life" is, however, more common. The be here used is the "beth comitative," the flesh accompanied by its "life." In apposition with "its life" stands "its blood." (K. S.402 s). The deeper issue involved becomes apparent when we notice the scriptural truth that life or the soul resides in the blood (Le 17:11). The blood is, therefore, deserving of very considerate treatment. Not exactly that the blood must be poured out, and the soul thus restored to its Maker before man eats the flesh. That view is never recorded in Scripture; although it is stated that the blood must first be drained (Le 7:27; 17:10, 14). Nor is there danger that the eating or the drinking of blood lets the beast's soul find entrance into man's soul, and that so man would become more brutish. Such commingling of souls

is indicated by nothing. Our explanation briefly advanced above covers this aspect of the case, viz., because even a beast's soul is a thing divinely created, the medium in which it lives and has its being is almost indentical with it and should be respectfully treated, not devoured. Besides, Keil no doubt is correct when he claims these restrictions are given in view of the ordinances that are later to govern the use of blood in sacrifices. This provision, then, of Noah's time prepares for the sacrificial use of blood, and that which is to be sacred in sacrifice, in fact, is the heart and essence of the sacrifice, should hardly be employed that a man may glut his appetite with it. In fact, it is not an overstatement of the case to remark that ultimately this restriction is made in view of the sanctity of the blood of our Great High Priest, who is both priest and sacrifice. Apparently, this prohibition demands primarily that all blood be properly drained from animals slain for food. Naturally, this provision would rule out all such cruel practices as those of the Abyssinians, who gouge out portions of meat from the shanks of living animals, fill up the cavity with dung, and then eat the warm bloody meat. Such brutality, however, will hardly have been reflected upon as the common likelihood. Luther erroneously reflects only this thought in his translation.5. But also for your blood, as being related to your souls, I shall demand an account; from every beast I shall demand it; also from man, that is from one another, will I demand the soul of man.As now one restriction is promulgated in reference to the blood of beasts, so another more essential one must be established in reference to the blood of man. The more frequent killing of beasts is not to beget a general indifference to the shedding of any and every blood, including man's. Where man's blood is shed ruthlessly, without warrant and authority, there God Himself shall demand an account. He may do this by prompting human agents to punish the evildoer, or He may achieve His ends by ultimately exacting vengeance upon the murderer who has not been brought to the bar of justice by man. Though darash primarily means "seek" or "require," this latter thought is "often joined with the collative thought of avenging"'(B D B). Therefore we render: "demand an account." The explanatory phrase is in the spirit of v.4, when it says: "as being related to your souls," lenaphshotekhem. The introductory le signifies a dative of relation. Blood as such could hardly claim such importance. But since this blood stands related to souls, vengeance must be exacted for it. Blood, souls, life rank even higher in importance than man is inclined to grant. Furthermore, it is not indicated in what way God shall demand an account of every beast. The publishing of this word is to induce man to act. If a beast, having been made for man's sake, should in some way or other kill man, men should avenge this grievous irregularity by putting the beast to death. Ex 21:28 furnishes an example under this head. Vilmar points out how in times of old men, especially certain Germanic tribes, rightly felt the enormity of the calamity of having a man slain by a beast. We seem largely to have lost this point of view. This same consideration, namely that the beast exists solely for man's sake, is reflected also in words such as Ge 3:14 and Le 20:15 f.There is a measure of difficulty about translating the second half of this verse, especially the phrase miyyadh îsh achiw, literally, "from the hand of a man his brother." The phrase is the equivalent of the reciprocal pronoun "from one another." At the same time it goes a bit farther than the mere reciprocal pronoun, in actually pronouncing a man every other man's brother.6. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man, shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man.This verse attaches itself directly to the preceding, particularly to that part which says: "from man will I demand the soul of man." This verse now shows how God does this demanding: He lets man be the avenger. As Luther already very clearly saw, by this word government is instituted, this basic institution for the welfare of man. For if man receives power

over other men's lives under certain circumstances, then by virtue of having received power over the highest good that man has, power over the lesser things is naturally included, such as power over property to the extent of being able to exact taxes, over our persons to the extent of being able to demand various types of work and service, as need may arise. Government, then, being grounded on this word, is not by human contract, or by surrender of certain powers, or by encroachment of priestcraft. It is a divine institution. Besides, this power of life and of death is bestowed upon man only in an official capacity, insofar as the governmental power is centred in him. It has remained, for the shortsightedness of our day to claim that this verse is in conflict with the basic word of the Decalogue, "Thou shalt not kill." In reality, the Decalogue lays down principles of personal morality; this word, however, lays down principles of official conduct. Of course, it is rightly claimed that in the last analysis no man has a right to take life, unless he be properly authorized by God to do so. But the reasonableness of the word as a whole is immediately apparent. Man's life is so valuable a thing, or, in other words, his blood is so valuable a thing, since man is made in God's image. He that kills a man destroys God's image and lays profane hands on that which is divine. The crime is so great that such a one actually forfeits his own right to life. There is a just retaliation about having life paid for life. No man can question the justice of the price demanded. Besides, we surely would not catch the purpose of the word if we were to take the imperfect yishshaphek as merely permissive or suggestive; it must be rendered as a strict imperative. Consequently, capital punishment is divinely ordained. For the proper safeguarding of the human race this basic ordinance is laid down. When lawgivers attempt to tamper with this regulation, they are trying to be wiser than the Divine Lawgiver and overthrow the pillars of safety that He Himself provided for the welfare of mankind. It is true that this fundamental ordinance does not specify details as to how it is to be carried out, except that the work is to be done "by man" (be'adham, the preposition being a beth instrumentalis, K. S.106). In other words, the ordinance is made elastic enough to cover all conditions. When at first no formally constituted government is at hand to be the agent, then individuals will be authorized to act. Under certain circumstances, on the frontiers of civilization, such a situation may arise even at this late date. Later on when governments came into being, they were the logical agency to act. Strictly speaking, K. C. is correct when he claims that the custom of blood revenge (Blutrache) is not ordained in the Scriptures. For blood revenge, unfortunately, substitutes revenge for the purposes of fair justice, and frequently it degenerated into the most cruel of feuds. When, therefore, the Scriptures do speak of blood revenge, it is merely for the purpose of mitigating its cruelty, Ex 21:13; De 4:41; 19:2-10; Nu 35:6. However, words like De 19:12 are in entire harmony with our passage.The article with 'adham is generic.7. But as for you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it.Though this seems practically like a repetition of v.1, in this connection it is more. It sets off strongly by contrast with v.6 that man is not only not to be slain, but that it very definitely is the Lord's purpose to have man be fruitful and multiply and have numerous offspring in the earth, for shirtsû literally means: "swarm ye." It must be regarded as a basic ordinance actually binding upon man for all time as long as the earth shall stand, to multiply upon the earth.That a contrast with v.6 is actually intended in the above verse is indicated by the emphatic personal pronoun, 'attem, which we have rendered, "as for you" (K. S.17).(b) The Covenant of the Rainbow (v.8-17)As the section v.1-7 abounded in tokens of God's mercy toward the family of Noah, so our section (v.8-17) gives an added token by way of a visible external proof and guarantee.8-10. And God spake unto Noah and unto his sons with him as follows: As for me, I

shall carry out my covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature which is with you, birds, domestic animals, and wild animals of the earth that are with you, as many as go forth from the ark of all the wild animals of the earth.Since this is a merciful act, it might have been ascribed to Yahweh. The author with equal propriety prefers to have it regarded as the work of the mighty Creator (Elohîm), for it establishes permanent future conditions for all God's creatures. Again Noah and his sons in their representative capacity are addressed. The covenant which was promised Ge 6:18 before the Flood, here goes into effect. A covenant (berîth) is the most solemn and binding form of divine promise, given for man's double assurance and because of man's carnal weakness, but quite unnecessary when God's part of the agreement is concerned. Therefore, such covenants are not to be put on a parallel with human covenants in which two contracting parties meet on the same level and make mutual pledges. Divine covenants emanate from God -- therefore the emphatic initial 'anî, "as for me" -- He makes them, He fixes the terms, and the conditions, He in sovereign freedom binds Himself. The emphatic 'anî is completely misunderstood when it is set in contrast with the "you" (attem) of v.7, for this pronoun belongs into a different situation that deals with basic ordinances. Yet in the very nature of the case a contrast is implied in such covenants. Here the verb used for the setting up of the covenant is not karath, which signifies strictly the entering upon a covenant, but. the Hifil heqîm, "to cause to stand," used like Le 26:9; De 8:18, in the sense of "keeping" or "carrying out." For when Ge 6:18 promised a covenant as future, this word reckons with the covenant as practically existent and concerns itself merely with "carrying into effect" (B D B) its provisions.Consequently, the discussion runs quite beside the point when it asks whether v.1-7 are preliminary to this section in the sense of laying down the terms to which man must obligate himself in order to meet his part of the covenant. The section v.1-7 does lay down basic ordinances with such finality that Noah and his sons most naturally accepted them. But these divine regulations stand quite apart from what attitude man might take in reference to them. Therefore nothing is reported about the attitude taken by man. Procksch, in the fashion characteristic of critics when they purpose to correct what to them seems a very unreliable text, sets the section v.8-17 first and lets v.1-7 follow though not even a single other critic has ventured upon such a step. Such efforts confirm critics in the erroneous thoughts they read into the text.Now, with marked fullness of expression, the ones whom the present covenant includes are listed. This fullness of expression is to be accounted for, as Luther above all others rightly contends by the fact that Noah and those with him must have "lived in great trembling, fear and sorrow, and so it was absolutely necessary to repeat and reimpress continually-one set form of speech." So, then, the beneficiaries under this covenant are the eight persons then living ("you") and their "descendants" after them (here the Biblical term "seed" is used) as well as all "living creatures," which may as yet quite properly be said to be "with" Noah, because either they had just come forth from the ark and were in the immediate, vicinity, or else they were still in process of coming forth. Even the subdivisions under the head of the term "living creatures" are mentioned being introduced by a beth of enumeration, (beth sphaerae), which we have covered in the translation by a simple apposition. The reason for such detail is to make the divine concern for even the least of the creatures strongly apparent to Noah. "The wild animals," chayath ha'ßrets, are for that matter even mentioned twice (v.10) for the same reason, for they of all beings might seem to need divine favour least. Though the min in mikkol is a min partitive, there can be no objection to translating it, as many do: "as many as," for the partitive idea here actually merges into the appositional. A peculiar difficulty arises in v.10 for those who hold that the Flood

was partial and not universal. They must support the strange supposition that God made a covenant with those creatures only which went forth from the ark. Others that never entered the ark must do without the benefits of such a covenant.The participle yotse'ey is here treated rather as a noun and so stands in the construct state. In v.18 the same participle is regarded more as a verb and is construed with a prepositional phrase to express the same idea (K. S.241 d, 336 f). Lekhol is used instead of the construct relationship, because a noun has crept in between yotse'ey and kol (K. S.281 g).11. And I shall carry out my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be destroyed by the waters of the flood; and never again shall there be a flood to lay waste the earth.Summing up all classes of living beings by the expression "all flesh," the promise reassures man that the preservation of all these shall be made as a result of God's covenant. All flesh shall never again "be destroyed," yikkareth, i. e., "cut off" from life, neither shall a flood "lay waste" shachcheth, i. e., "ruin" the earth. Floods on a smaller scale may destroy much flesh; a universal flood shall never occur. It seems the article before mabbûl ("flood") in the first case has not been sufficiently considered. Its use signifies first that this particular flood which has just about receded is not going to cut off all flesh again. The second use of the word without the article signifies that not any such flood will ever recur (mabbûl -- "a flood").12, 13. And God said: This is the sign of the covenant which I am establishing between myself and you and every living creature which is with you for all future generations: I have put my bow in the clouds and it shall serve for a covenant sign between me and the earth.The connection does not so much aim to express strict sequence of acts in the expression wayyó mer, but rather is used in the frequent rather loose sense "further." Surely, man must have been much disturbed and greatly in need of assurance, if, in addition to a promise of future safety, which promise was guaranteed by a covenant, God gave a visible outward sign to make assurance doubly sure. Since God was in reality just then establishing this covenant, the durative participe is used nothen, i. e., "I am in process of giving." The verb nathan for establishing a covenant occurs also in Ge 17:2 and Nu 25:12. The ones involved in this covenant are again distinctly named: on the one side God, on the other, man and every living creature, God dwells with emphasis on the fact that He is good even to the animal world. But, in reality, the animals are preserved for man's sake, as the expression "with you" indicates. That the covenant is to hold as long as the earth stands is indicated by the expression "to generations of eternity,"ledhoroth ôlam. Of course, 'ôlam signifies the hidden future, so "to all future generations" is a good rendering.13. With emphasis this verse sets the word qashtî, "my bow," first in the verse. Literally, the verse says God "has given" (nathßtti) his bow in the cloud. The perfect most likely is the perfect of solemn assurance or promise, like that found in Ge 1:29; 4:14, 23; yet cf. G, K.106 i, m, n. Now in itself this determines nothing on the question of the previous existence of the rainbow, for the perfect might mean, "I have just given," as well as, "I gave long ago." Still we hold that the preponderance of evidence points to the fact that the rainbow in the clouds now first came into being. For, though it is possible that a phenomenon which existed previously might now serve a new purpose, still the effect would be comparatively weak, and the effectiveness of the sign would be much impaired. It would be a case much like that where two by mutual agreement arrive at the conclusion to let something serve as a reminder. But how much more effective would be a sign that appears for the first time, especially so solemn and awe-inspiring a sign as the rainbow with its ethereal beauty and vast span! There would, furthermore, be a splendid propriety to have a promise, which brings into being a relationship which did not exist before, attested by a sign which did not exist before. As the sign by its newness is a token of God's vast power, so the covenant,

though promising a new situation, will be effective by the same vast power. It might be that the same physical laws prevailed on earth prior to this time, so that light falling on a spray of water against a dark background produced a miniature rainbow. But the text says: "My bow do I give in the clouds," ('anon, "cloud" used collectively). It is not impossible that with the Flood came altered atmospheric and cloud conditions, for geologic evidence points to an earlier age when a climate uniformly tropical prevailed also in the arctic region.So now when the marvellous and beautiful rainbow puts in its appearance, all believers in revelation recall with joy its higher significance as outlined in this chapter. Delitzsch has perhaps interpreted the deeper propriety of the various elements involved more adequately than any other interpreter. He writes: "As it (the rainbow) shines forth against a dark background which but shortly before flashed with lightnings, it symbolizes the victory of bright, gentle love over the darkly luminous wrath; growing as it does out of the interaction of sun and dark clouds, it symbolizes the readiness of the heavenly to interpenetrate the earthly; extending from heaven to earth, it proclaims peace between God and man; reaching, as it does, beyond the range of vision, it declares that God's covenant of grace is all-embracing." Our fathers did well to teach their children to pray at least the Lord's Prayer whenever the rainbow appeared. We may also dismiss as utterly ungrounded and entirely worthless the notion that the sign in reality stands for Yahweh's warbow, which He used to shoot His lightnings but now hangs up in the clouds as no longer destined for such cruel purposes. Legends of India, Arabia and Greece, which the critics are wont to draw upon at this point, certainly, do not prove that such opinions were also held by Israel in days of old. Certainly, the passages adduced do not apply except by injecting the desired opinion: see Habakkuk 3:9-11 and Psalms 7:13. When critics then themselves admit that no traces of this peculiar interpretation of the bow are any longer discernible in Hebrew literature (Procksch), how can they venture to prove that these traces once were discernible? But this much is true: "The bow in the hands of man was an instrument of battle, the bow bent by the hand of God has become a symbol of peace" (Wordsworth, cited by Whitelaw).14-16. And it shall come to pass whenever I mass together clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, then will I remember my covenant terms which stand between me and you and every living soul of all flesh, and there shall never again be waters of a flood to lay waste all flesh. And the bow shall stand in the clouds and I shall see it to remember the everlasting covenant terms between God and all living creatures of all flesh which are upon the earth.One may disregard the situation and man's need of definite assurance and regard the whole promise as exceedingly verbose; or else one may rightly claim, with Delitzsch, that these words are like blows of the hammer, which make the whole more firm and impress it more deeply.After an infinitive governed by a preposition ("in my clouding together clouds" -- cognate object after Piel infinitive with suffiX) the construction proceeds with a converted perfect to complete the protasis ("and the bow appears in the clouds"); v.15 follows with the apodosis. Cf. G. K.52 d and 117 r; also 114 r; also K. S.413 a.15. God's remembering is not to be thought of as over against the possibility of forgetting, as would be the case with man; but rather as a divine activity whereby His "covenant terms" (berîth here by metonomy signifying "covenant terms" rather than "covenant," K. C.) will be vividly before Him, and man may take joy from the fact that God thus thinks upon what He promised. The ones for whose good the covenant was made are again listed in terms used previously. Hammßyin lemabbûl furnishes an example of the use of le in place of the construct relationship. That yikyeh before mßyim is singular is due to the fact that the verb frequently begins with the masculine singular when the number of the subject is not yet

determined (K. S.348 b).16, The combination berîth ô1am without the article literally would yield the translation "to remember an everlasting Covenant," which is the equivalent of: "to remember that there is an everlasting covenant."When God speaks and says the covenant is "between God and," etc., this is merely a more formal type of expression appropriate for a covenant.17. And God said to Noah: This is the sign of the covenant which I shall carry out between me and all flesh which is upon the earth.With this formal summary statement God's pronouncement closes. God could hardly have done more for man than to set forth with such simplicity and emphasis promises calculated to rouse new courage in the heart of the few survivors. Critics speak of material compounded laboriously from various sources. The devout mind sees God's adaptation to man's special need.(c) The Future of the Races of Mankind Foretold (v.18-29)The episode that follows serves only as an occasion for the patriarchal prediction that follows. It has so little importance comparatively that it would certainly be an ill-balanced judgment to give to this portion the heading, "Noah the Vinegrower."18, 19. The sons of Noah that came forth from the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from them were spread abroad all the inhabitants of the earth.Since now the sons of Noah are going to be dealt with, especially in chapter ten, as the founders of the three great branches of the human family, they are formally mentioned, and their going forth from the ark is connected with their names, inasmuch as their going forth was really epoch-making and an actual new departure made by these notable three branches. There can hardly be any doubt about it that these are mentioned in the order of their age, Shem being the oldest. For the same order is observed each time that all three are mentioned; see Ge 5:32; 6:10; 7:13; 9:18; 10:1; 1 Chronicles 1:4. This fact must be borne in mind for the understanding of v.24. Preparatory to the tale about to be related the fact is inserted that Ham was the father of Canaan. That is not a statement that is to be ascribed, here and v.22, to some later redactional activity, but a fact absolutely essential to the understanding of the whole episode. Only previous misconception of the facts of the case would deny this. 19. Nor should the opening of this verse be regarded as superfluous, or merely as a somewhat verbose statement. One might well suppose that Noah had begotten more sons after the Flood, for he was yet to live more than 300 years (v.28). So this statement, that "these three were the sons of Noah," disposes satisfactorily of that matter; and the concluding :statement prepares for the elaborate table of the nations given in chapter ten.In v.18 the participle yotse'îm, appearing in a connection which has reference to the past, must represent an adjective clause in the past tense, "who went forth" (K. S.237 a; 411 a). In v.19 naphetsa is best derived from a Kal naphats, used in a passive sense (See K. W.).20, 21. Now Noah began as farmer to plant a vineyard. And he drank some of the wine and became drunk and he uncovered himself in the midst of the tent.We have advanced quite a time from the Flood; at least, Noah's son Ham already has children, and even his youngest Canaan (see Ge 10:6) is born already. Several decades may well have passed. Men have begun to rehabilitate themselves. Noah apparently took to agriculture at once, even as we already found the second man Cain engaged in this pursuit (4:2). The notion that mankind took a long time to advance to the point of becoming agriculturalists does not agree with the Biblical evidence. Nor is our contention invalidated by the article in 'ish, ha'adhamah, which does not need to be translated "the farmer" and so drive us to the translation: "Now Noah was the first farmer to plant a vineyard" (Meek). For Noah as a proper noun may impart of its definiteness to the noun in apposition with it (K. S.333 z); or we may have the generic or categorical article (K. C.). Besides, it would seem strange indeed if the uses of wine were now first

being discovered by man, whose earliest works, wherever we find them, give, evidence of great, ability. Besides in the case of Noah's being the first winegrower, Noah's drunkenness is entirely excusable; and yet the nature of this record seems to imply guilt on Noah's part. Consequently, we are rather led to the conclusion that Noah began to cultivate a plant of whose cultivation, and uses he had previously known, Nor should we regard wine as a gift of God, given to refresh, the soul (nephesh) of man, even as animal food was to help invigorate man's body (Vilmar). Such thoughts are pure surmises. Yachel is a converted Hifil of chalal. "He began and planted" -- "He began to plant," (K. S.369 m).21. The having of grapes led to the making of wine. The having of wine leads to the drinking of it. In all this, taken by itself, there is no wrong. We have every reason to believe, however, that Noah was not ignorant of the potency of the drink he had prepared. But he neglected caution. He who maintained his ground over against a wicked and godless world, neglecting watchfulness and prayer in a time of comparative safety, fell prey to a comparatively simple temptation, which should have been easy to meet. It is not the young and untried Noah who sins. It is the seasoned man of God, ripe in experience, who is here brought low. The sober tone of the detailed narrative points strongly to Noah's guilt. Noah drinks to excess and actually "becomes drunk" (shakhar). The heat of wine leads the aged patriarch involuntarily to thrust back his garment, wherewith he had been covered or had from force of habit covered himself as he lay down in his tent. Yithgal as Hithpael should be rendered as a reflexive, "he uncovered himself." "He was uncovered" (A. V.) substitutes the actual result for this.Criticism quite fails to recognize the unimpeachable impartiality of the Scriptures, which record the faults as well as the virtues of God's saints. So criticism calls this quite a different "cycle of tradition'." than that which told about "the blameless patriarch, who is the hero of the Flood." Besides, in its attempt to create variations and contradictions criticism makes Noah's sons in our account appear as minors still dwelling in the tent with their father -- of which the text surely reveals nothing; whereas in P they are already married. Such an approach leads men to abandon a safe and easy road and to become mired in the morass of fruitless speculation.Min ("from") before "wine" is one of the Hebrew modes of expressing the indefinite pronoun "some" (K. S.81).22. And Ham, the father of Canaan, looked at the nakedness of his father and told his two brethren outside.For the right understanding of what follows we are again reminded, as in v.18, that Ham is the father of Canaan. At the same time, the repetition of the statement in this connection seems to point more definitely to a kinship of mind between the two. The trait of inclination to the unclean is shared by father and son alike, in fact, it even appears that the trait manifested by the father has reached a higher measure of intensity in the son. But as far as Ham himself is concerned, the expression wayyar is not a mere harmless and accidental "and he saw," but "he looked at" (B D B) or "he gazed with satisfaction." What ordinary filial reverence should have restrained is given free rein. The unclean imagination feeds itself by gazing. But at the same time a measure of departure from the faith is also revealed by Ham. That the son should have treated with such levity a father eminent for true piety, the one man whom God spared in the destruction of the world, indicates that this son no longer esteemed such true godliness as he ought to have done. Similarly, wayyaggedh is not a mere "and he told," though we know of no other way of translating it. The circumstances suggest that it means: "and he told with delight." No object need be expressed grammatically either in Hebrew or in English. In a modified sense this event may be named a second fall into sin, or the fall of the postdiluvians, yet with this proviso that, of course, since Adam's fall all men were born sinners. But the event does most assuredly show how soon the salutary warnings conveyed by the Flood were forgotten,

and mankind began to incline toward a downward course. 23. And Shem and Japheth took the robe and laid it upon the shoulder of both of them and they, walking, backward, covered the nakedness of their father, their faces being turned backward so as not to see their father's nakedness.The conduct of these two brethren stands forth in strong contrast to that of Ham. They were men of pure mind and wholly given to the religion of their father. They are truly grieved at what befell their father -- not amused. They seek promptly to veil their father's weakness with the mantle of charity. They promptly take "the robe," (hassimlah), the robe that was pushed back and so had very likely fallen off his couch to the ground. For in days of old the robe worn through the day was a man's covering by night (Ex 22:26, 27). See K. S.299 b rather than G. K.126 r. This robe they take upon the shoulders of them both, and then, "walking backward they covered the nakedness of their father." To all this, practically clear enough in itself, is added the very explicit statement that "their faces were turned backward, so as not to see their father's nakedness." This was all, no doubt, done before Ham's eyes. No words are recorded as having been spoken by these two, apparently for the reason that none were spoken. The excess of restraint thus self-imposed spoke quite loudly for itself. If Ham could feel a rebuke, he would feel it sufficiently if no words were spoken, in fact, the finer tact of the two brothers discerns that a spoken rebuke often rouses opposition. So with silent sorrow they go about their task.Wayyiqqach begins as singular, though a double subject follows, since the masculine singular frequently begins a statement when number and gender of the subject are as yet undetermined (K. S.349 u). The author does not aim to distinguish Shem as the prime factor in this act (contra Hengstenberg).24. And Noah awoke from his wine-stupor and learned what his younger son had done to him.Yßyin, of course is the word for "wine," but in a connection such as this it must mean the stupor, or state of drunkenness caused by wine (metonomy). Wayyeda' usually would mean "and he knew," but here it implies "knowing as a result of inquiry," i. e., "he learned," or "found out." Something struck the man as unusual at his awakening -- perhaps the manner in which the robe was placed upon him. Surely, no one will have volunteered information. Certainly, the verb can hardly indicate that he perceived by prophetic inspiration. Ham is here called "his younger son." True, the adjective with the article may indicate the superlative. But such is not necessarily the case; cf.1:16 haggadhol -- "the greater," and haqqaton -- "the lesser." Besides, on that score, according to 10:21, Japheth would then be "the oldest" (haggadhol), and the customary order (cf. our comments on v.18): Shem, Ham, Japheth would be entirely meaningless, and a reasonable explanation for this sequence, would be impossible. Yet some, who insist on making this verse offer a superlative, make Ge 10:21 offer only a comparative (Meek). Apparently, critical commentators take delight in making Scripture seem to contradict Scripture.25. And he said: Cursed is Canaan; servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.Altogether too much emphasis has been placed upon the idea of the curse at this point. Meek represents one-sidedness when he provides the caption "The Curse of Canaan" for v.18-28. In this section the curse is the subordinate element. Besides, without trying to eliminate the idea of the curse, for it manifestly lies in the text, all who associate personal resentment or any form of ill will with this utterance of Noah, do the godly man a gross injustice. Furthermore, to hold that this word broods like a dark and inescapable fate over the future of a race, is to hold to a very grievous misunderstanding. True, the feelings of a good man have been outraged. Equally true, he gives vent to righteous indignation. But, for the most part, being a man who has the Holy Spirit, he speaks, a word of prophecy. This prophetic word is to serve as a guide for the human race as well as for a solemn warning for all

times to come. Blessings and curses of parents may be more than idle words, but a parent who stands in the fear of God would hardly venture to lay grievous disabilities upon great portions of the human race, nor would God grant their wish if they attempted it. Being so accurate a delineation of the future of the three branches of the human family as we shall find this word to be, it approves itself to the thinking man as a truly prophetic utterance.Much serious misunderstanding has grown out of a refusal to take this word at its actual face value, especially the word "Canaan." Ham is not cursed, no matter how freely proslavery men may have employed this text. Canaan is the fourth son of Ham (Ge 10:6) and so may roughly be said to represent one fourth of the Hamitic race. He alone is under consideration here. The rest of the Hamitic stock, apparently, does not come under consideration because it is neither directly blessed nor cursed. Its influence on the development of the rest of the human race is practically nil and, therefore, need not be mentioned here. Now the descendants of Canaan, according to Ge 10:15-20, are the peoples that afterward dwelt in Phoenicia and in the so-called land of Canaan, Palestine. That they became races accursed in their moral impurity is apparent from passages such as Ge 15:16; 19:5; Le 18, 20; De 12:31. In Abraham's day the measure of their iniquity was already almost full. By the time of the entrance of Israel into Canaan under Joshua the Canaanites, collectively also called Amorites, were ripe for divine judgment through Israel, His scourge. Sodom left its name for the unnatural vice its inhabitants practiced. The Phoenicians and the colony of Carthage surprised the Romans by the depth of their depravity. Verily cursed was Canaan! But how about the justice of this development of history? From our point of view most of the difficulties are already cleared away. We render "Cursed is Canaan" not "be" (A. V.); and "servant of servants shall he be," not in an optative sense may he be. The evil trait, displayed by Ham in this story, had, no doubt, been discerned by Noah as marking Canaan, the son, more distinctly. Canaan's whole race will display it more than any of the races of the earth. To foretell that involves no injustice. The son is not punished for the iniquity of the father. His own unfortunate moral depravity, which he himself developes and retains, is foretold. Therefore, such unfortunate explanations as: Ham, Noah's youngest son, is punished in his own youngest son, are rendered quite unnecessary. For this explanation is wrong already from its first assertion that Ham is the youngest son of Noah.Of course, "servant of servants" is a Hebrew superlative, implying something like "lowest of slaves." In reality, Carthage became slave to Rome, and what was left of Canaan became slave to Israel. Therefore "brethren" is here used in its broadest sense.26. He also said: Blessed be Yahweh the God of Shem and Canaan be his servant,Looking upon the oldest son next, Noah is moved to a lively statement of praise of Yahweh because of the magnitude of the blessings that He will bestow upon Shem. Mark well, it is Yahweh who is called Shem's God. This implies that the Eternal Unchangeable One is fulfilling promises of mercy to Shem. Only in relation to Shem does God manifest His Yahweh qualities. But what are these great blessings that move Noah to break out in benedictions? Shall we answer in general terms, the blessings of religion as offered by Shem; or, the knowledge of the One God which Shem transmitted to the world? Why be so vague when more definite facts are available? The answers just given will suit all those whose conception of history and religion is evolutionistic. But then Shem's heritage is largely the achievement of his own religious genius, and then Shem ought rather to have been praised, not Yahweh. However, if a promise of definite victory through the seed of the woman is the substance of Gospel as man knows it, it seems almost impossible at this important juncture to have so weightly an utterance as this, which is to guide humankind for some time to come, fail to tie itself up with the Protevangel

and fail to tell from which branch of the human family "the seed of the woman" in particular is to be expected. Modern commentators can still learn from Luther on this verse, for he says: "Noah here speaks not of bodily or temporal blessing but of the blessing through the future promised seed, which blessing he recognizes to be so great and rich that words cannot fully express it nor do justice to it." But Luther, too, recognizes that such a hope, though seen to be so marvellous as to stir a man to praise, is for the present but dimly apprehended. Men could not discern such truths as yet with the New Testament clearness.Canaan's relation to Shem is specifically defined as a dismal echo of v.25 running into v.26. Lamô, though usually plural, "to them," must here be taken as a singular, even as is the case in Isaiah 44:15. Therefore, a literal rendering would be: "and let Canaan be servant to him." Note that we have rendered wîhî "and let be." This does not overthrow our conception of the whole word of Noah because it is optative ("let") rather than pure future. The word is still prophetic rather than damnatory. Indeed, we should not venture to claim that Noah could not wish personally that these things might actually come to pass. The prophecy foretells what God will bring to pass. Why should not a godly man wish that God's will be done? Noah himself could discern that a position of servitude might serve a wholesome pedagogic purpose of restraint upon lascivious Canaan. Therefore, he might well wish that this befall Canaan for his own good.27. May God grant ample territory to Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant.There is a manifold propriety about the words of this blessing. Canaan, kenß'an, has analogy with the root kana'," to be humbled." Ham, as interpreters have remarked, not too ready to submit to his own father, seems to have expected ready submission from his son and named him accordingly. In any case, Canaan finds his lot to be humiliation. So Shem means "name" also in the sense of "fame." Shem has the most prominent fame among the brethren. Similarly, Japheth is in the blessing by an equally apt paronomasia, associated with the analogous root pathah, "be open"; Hifil imperfect jussive yapht, "cause to be open" -- "grant ample territory." It is foretold and hoped for that Japheth will be what his name implies. For, in reality, his descendants, the Indo-Europeans or Aryans, do spread out over vast stretches of territory from India across all Europe and of a later date over the Western Hemisphere. With surprising accuracy this feature of his history is foretold. But since Shem is the central figure, both of the brothers are shown in their relation to him, which is here said to be: Japheth is to "dwell in the tents of Shem." Such a sudden change of subject is not unusual in Hebrew (K. S.399 B). To try to make God the subject would render Japheth even more richly blessed than Shem, a situation which would have called for a "blessed" upon Japheth's lot rather than upon Shem's. "To dwell in the tents of one" implies friendly sharing of his hospitality and so of his blessings. It cannot mean "displace" or "conquer," for that would conflict with the pure blessedness pronounced upon Shem. But the fulfilment bears out what this means. The Japhethites have now very largely come in to share Shem's blessings, for as Gentiles they have been grafted on the good olive tree. Shem's spiritual heritage is ours. Abraham is become our father in faith and we are his true children. The same sombre echo closes this verse: "May Canaan be his servant." 28, 29. After the Flood Noah lived three hundred and fifty years, so that all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.With an appropriate summary, cast after the pattern of chapter five, the total age of Noah is recorded, so that we are enabled to compare his age with the rest of the antediluvian patriarchs. To our surprise we find that he lived twenty years more than Adam. On the other hand, a bit of computation based on chapter eleven will reveal that thus Noah lived quite far into the life of Abraham. So the "history of Noah," which began with Ge 6:9, appropriately closes with the length

of Noah's life and with his death.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIn this chapter v.1-7 constitute a distinct unit. Each preacher may word the theme as he sees fit; but in the last analysis it will have to concern itself with "The Basic Divine Provisions Governing the World since the Flood." These provisions are still in force and are living issues, with the exception that where v.4 prepared the mind of men to realize the importance of blood, particularly in the matter of sacrifices, now at least this verse helps us to recall the supreme importance of the blood atonement, a truth sadly neglected and but little understood. Then w.8-17 are seen to deal quite naturally with "God's Covenant of the Rainbow." Lastly, the section v.20-27 concerns itself with the "Development of the Three Branches of our Race." The emphasis lies on Noah's drunkenness only in an incidental way, in so far namely, as it illustrates the propriety of Canaan's "curse." This section affords an excellent opportunity to preach Christ the Saviour who even, in these early days stirred the hearts of godly men to deep-felt praise; for faith has always been faith in the Christ.

CHAPTER X

IV. The History of the Sons of Noah Quite naturally we ask after the story of the Flood, "How did the human race develop?" It is not the purpose of the author of Genesis to trace out this development. But there may be important facts in this connection that should be transmitted to the human race, facts that have not been preserved elsewhere and that form a part of the revealed truth which God deigns essential for man's well-being. These facts will be covered very briefly in chapters ten and eleven (in part). Then we shall be ready to proceed with the history of the chosen people. First, then, we are to be shown what peoples or races came from the three sons of Noah. It would seem quite natural that before the earth again became densely populated men still preserved an accurate tradition of how the various races had derived their ancestry from the three sons of Noah. Since this "Table of Nations" is inserted just prior to the story of Abraham, it seems most reasonable to conclude that the table represents the state of the nations of that time. This assumption has far more in favour of it than have the suggestions of the critics who first divide the chapter into two parts, assigned to P and J respectively, and then with great hesitation, or else with unwarranted confidence, assign to P some time like the eighth century or the time of Solomon (eleventh century B. C.), and to J, about the seventh century. When the eighth century is suggested, it is because Cimmerians (Gomer) then first appeared south of the Caucasus and so came to notice. Solomon's time is suggested because certain Semitic tribes of Arabia would not appear to have been met with by Israel before this king's trade ventures were undertaken. Or again, the mention of certain of the nations of the Table by later writers like Jeremiah and Ezekiel is treated as an indication of the time of the composition of this document. Behind all such late dates lies the assumption that Israel (or Moses) could not have a valid tradition about any people, except such a people had recently forged to the forefront, or unless Israel had established definite contact with them. It may be of interest to submit a sample of critical dissection: Verses 1-7, 20, 22, 23, 31, 32 are assigned to P (Procksch); J receives 8 b-19, 21, 25, 26, 27-30; the rest are glosses. Apart from all this the list is severely criticized for not being more complete; for actually asserting that the three sons of Noah were the fathers of all races; for actually assuming that whole nations sprang from one forefather -- a course of development for which, it is asserted, no parallel is historically known; and, lastly, for advancing certain claims which are not supported by any other historical documents. However, each of these criticisms could rather constitute a distinct merit of this Table. So its incompleteness. For it transmits no more than its author or its time actually knew. Such fidelity in transmission of tradition, as Herder already indicated, is the mark of veracity. Then, where Noah's three sons are classed as the only fathers of the race and by implication, of course, Noah as the one father, that preserves for us the knowledge of the unity of the human race, as Israel alone of all nations had preserved this most essential truth. Whatever narrowness may have marked the later Israel, the Israelites of olden times had a distinct consciousness of the unity of the race. No nation had such a universalistic point of view. All nations had lost the sense of the solidarity of the human race except Israel. But as for the third objection, it must simply be noted that where other nations had largely lost the record of their beginnings, Israel had preserved its own record as well as those of others. When, then, one

ancestor is assigned to a people, that fact need not exclude the gradual assimilation of other ethnic groups or tribes. But on the fourth objection we can only say that critics should prove grateful for this additional information derived from Israel's sacred writings. None of the additional information offered has ever been disproved, and, besides, secular writers are not at once rejected if they happen to stand alone in a claim that they make. Consequently, we must regard this document as a true and reliable testimony to the unity of the human race as well as of the development of the race from the three sons of Noah, and must be thankful for this indication of the breadth of view and universalistic standpoint of the Scriptures. At certain points in the Table it will be impossible for us to determine whether the actual ancestor's name is preserved or only the name of. the tribe (cf. v.16, Jebusite, Amorite, Girgashite, etc.) or the name of the people (cf. v.13, Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, etc., all plural nouns). But even the tribal or national name may be derived from the actual ancestor. But if names. like Sheba appear v.7 under Ham's descendants as well as v.28 under Shem's descendants, then we must allow either for two persons of the same name, or else for the possibility of intermarriage, whereby two different racial groups blended. Cf. also Havilah v.7 and Havilah v.28. It would seem most reasonable to expect that the possibility of identifying all these peoples must needs be very slight. Nevertheless, since Samuel Borchart (1681) and Knobel (1850) made extensive investigations on the subject, a fair measure of certainty attaches to the study of the subject: Inscriptions on monuments have contributed substantiation. The claim that these names are eponymous, that is to say, that fabled ancestors are assigned to various nations, as Rome was wont to consider Romulus and Remus its founders -- this claim, we say, is merely an attempt to measure the sound tradition of Israel by the legends of classical nations. As a sound testimony to the unity of the human race and as a strong bulwark against foolish racial prejudice, this chapter serves a most excellent purpose. No nation of antiquity has anything to offer that presents an actual parallel to this Table of Nations. Babylonian and Egyptian lists that seem to parallel this are merely a record of nations conquered in war. Consequently, the spirit that prompted the making of such lists is the very opposite of the spirit that the Biblical list breathes. 1. This is the history of the sons of Noah -- Shem, Ham and Japheth -- and (in fact) sons were born unto them (only) after the Flood. On the word for "history" (toledôth) see Ge 2:4. It is quite proper to call this tenth chapter plus the first part of the eleventh (v.1-9)"the history" of the sons of Noah, inasmuch, as in brief form this account tells at least how these sons of Noah in their progeny spread abroad upon the face of the earth. History condensed is still history. The names of the three sons of Noah are again appended so that we may be sure that only these three actually were the sons of Noah also after the Flood. For the possibility of the birth of other sons of Noah after the Flood might occur to us. This concise way of putting the matter indicates that none were born to Noah after the Flood. However, on the other hand, to the sons of Noah children were born only after the Flood. This fact may seem strange, but it was apparently so ordered by Providence. This is the meaning of the last clause, and therefore we have inserted an interpretative "only." The "and" connecting the two halves, of the verse is one of the many instances where it bears the meaning "and in fact" (und zwar). (a) The Sons of Japheth (v.2-5)2. The sons of Japheth: Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras.We shall identify these various nations briefly without going into lengthy detail, for commentaries offer a fair measure of unanimity, especially since monumental inscriptions serve to confirm the historical character of many of the earlier names in the list. For details on identification Skinner presents much valuable material. Most reliable is Koenig (K. C.).Now the Japhethites are

the ones we are wont to identify with the Indo-Europeans. Just how the table of the Japhethites arranges itself is made apparent by the following outline.(See figure 00359)At once it becomes apparent, as a comparison with the outlines for Shem and for Ham will suggest, that the author seems to know least about Japheth, or else there was no more about Japheth to report. This latter possibility is not so very remote. It is well known how certain families just keep subdividing to a certain point. So no further divisions are reported for Magog, Madai, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. Three descendants of Gomer are listed and four of Javan."Gomer" is identified with the Cimmerians of the Greeks (kimmerioi). They came from the Caucasus into Asia Minor settling south of the Black Sea. In the reign of Sargon they are mentioned as Gimirrai."Magog," according to Josephus, represents the ancient Scythian hordes, found originally southeast of the Black Sea. Perhaps they are the Massagetes who defeated Cyrus. Ezekiel mentions them Ezekiel 38:2; 39:6."Madai" are the Medes, found southeast of Magog and southwest of the Caspian Sea. This name appears rather frequently in the Scriptures, as any concordance will indicate. The Assyrian has Madai too."Javan," distinctly related to the Greek iwuan, are the Ionians, which name, after Alexander the Great, was applied to all Greeks. It is found repeatedly in the Old Testament, being translated "Javan" in the parallel passage of 1 Chronicles 1:5,7, as also in Isaiah 66:19; Ezekiel 27:13, 19, but translated as "Greece" or "Greecia" in Da 3:21; 10:20; 11:2; Zechariah 9:13; and Joel 3:6 (plural). Western Asia Minor is the original seat of Javan."Tubal" is to be assigned to the eastern part of Asia Minor. The Assyrians knew this nation as Tabal. They are the old Tibarenians. In the Scriptures they are almost regularly associated with Meshech; cf. Ezekiel 27:13; 32:26; 38:2, 3; 39:1. In Isaiah 66:19 with Javan."Meshech" are known to Herodotus as hooci. They dwelt at the southwestern corner of the Black Sea. The Assyrians knew them as Muskâya or coupled them on the monuments with Tubal, thus: Tabali and Muski (in Sargon's inscription)."Tiras" seems to refer to Pelasgians of the Aegean Sea, a pirate nation known as torohnoi, who terrorized the whole neighbourhood. They might be identified with the later E-trus-cans of Italy.Now, indeed, these are all names of individuals, who are to be regarded as founders of the various nationalities bearing their names.3. And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah."Ashkenaz" might be identified with Ascanius, the name of a sea in Bithynia. Assyriologists point the name Asguza, people who settled near Lake Urumia. In any case, Jewish tradition identifies this name with the Germans, for whom (or for the German Jews) it is used to this day. Perhaps more truth inheres in this tradition than men are wont to admit. From their old seat in Asia Minor these Indo-Europeans may have migrated to Germany, a thought found even in Luther."Riphath," most likely, refers to the Paphlagonians who dwelt by the river Rhebas (rhbav). Others would place them farther west near the Bosphorus. "Togarmah" is identified by Delitzsch with Tilgarimmu in Cappadocia.4. And the sons of Javan: Ellshah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim.If Javan be the Ionians, then these are all kin to the Greeks. "Elishah" should then be referred to the district Elis. Many reject this; but "modern opinion is greatly divided." Alasia on Cyprus, referred to in the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, seems most satisfactory to some."Tarshish" must be the old city of Tartessus in southern Spain. The name occurs frequently in the Scriptures. Tarsus in Cilicia seems an ill-founded suggestion."Kittim" is a plural noun referring to those who dwelt on the east coast of Cyprus. This name, too, is found rather frequently in the Scriptures; cf. Nu 24:24; Jeremiah 2:10; Ezekiel 27:6 etc."Dodanim" is another plural noun. Perhaps the ancient seat of the oracle at Dodona gives us a clue to the locality, which we should then seek in northern Greece. It hardly seems that "Rodanim" (1 Chronicles 1:7) needs to be considered, for the marginal Keri

there too suggests "Dodanim."So the Japhethites are seen to be spread abroad over a well-defined area extending from Spain to Media and pretty much in one straight line from east to west. The enumeration, however, does not proceed in geographical sequence, apparently for the reason that the descendants are listed according to their age.5. It is of these that the islands of the nations were populated according to their countries, every man with his own language, according to their class among the nations. This summarizing verse recalls what portion of the world was really held in possession by the Japhethites. As we said above immediately preceding v.5, that the territory "from Spain (through Asia Minor) to Media" is involved, so the author says the same thing in the terminology of his day, For "the islands of the nations" are really the Mediterranean coast line ('iyyey -- Gestade, K. W.) including the Black Sea coast line, one broad strip from west to east. To complete this picture the author recalls for us how these Japhethites each had their country and separate language, and were still dwelling in tribal divisions or clans in the midst of their particular nation. Consequently, the be before the last word is rather to be taken in its usual sense "in" rather than as a "be of norm" as K. S. would make of it (332 r). The emphasis of the initial me'élleh is best retained by a rendering like: "It is of these," etc.(b) The Sons of Ham (6-20)The following diagram shows at a glance how this list subdivides itself.(See figure 363)6. And the sons of Ham: Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan."Cush," whose various subdivisions are recorded in v.7, represents the land of Ethiopia to the south of Egypt, but at the same time the Cushites are found extending eastward into Arabia. However, it seems rather to correspond primarily to the present-day Nubia, (Procksch, Jeremias) which lies north of the country of Ethiopia, as we now know it. Yet in days of old Cush extended indefinitely to the south. Just because we happen to know (2 Kings 19:9; Isaiah 37:9) that the Ethiopians under Tirhakah (about 759 B. C.) clashed with Sennacherib and so definitely came to the notice of the Israelites, that does not exclude earlier knowledge of a people so prominent in antiquity and again offers no clue to a late date of the Table of Nations. The Tell-el-Amarna Tablets call the land Kashi."Mizraim" definitely is Egypt. The dual form is due to the division of that country into Upper and Lower Egypt. The name may not be of Egyptian origin, but about its meaning there is no doubt."Put" is commonly identified with the country known to the ancients as Punt, lying in East Africa (Somaliland) and extending over into southern Arabia. It was famous for its incense. Another land is chosen by some commentators (Keil, Skinner), who think of Libya on the northern coast of Africa, west of Egypt."Canaan" is, of course, the land of Canaan. The son is the same one referred to in 9:22, 25.7. And the sons of Cush: Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca. And the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan.These must all be Ethiopian tribes."Seba" would seem to have been the land around the ancient city of Meroë, in upper Egypt on the Nile, for this city is known to Josephus as eaba poliv, the city of Saba."Havilah," as a name, means "sandland." It would seem to cover certain Arabic tribes, some of Hamitic extraction, some of Semitic (v.29), located near "Seba.""Sabtah" must also be an Ethiopic group, though it is usually identified with the city in Arabia called Sabbatha, famous in days of old for its sixty temples and its trade in incense."Raamah" seems to be a tribe of Sabaeans in southwest Arabia."Sabteca" represents that branch of the Ethiopians which lay farthest to the east, namely, east of the Persian gulf, where Samuthake (eamuyach) lay, a name which bears resemblance to Sabteca."Sheba," descended from Raamah and thus representing the third generation from Ham, is also mentioned because the kingdom of Sheba was particularly famous; and the land does happen to be referred to rather frequently in the Bible. Southwestern Arabia must again be meant. Incense was also an outstanding product of this

land."Dedan" is sought in different parts of Arabia, northwest, southeast, southwest. The last seems most likely.8, 9. Cush begat Nimrod; he was the first tyrant upon earth. He was a mighty hunter in the sight of Yahweh; wherefore it is said: A mighty hunter in the sight of Yahweh as Nimrod was.Here the type of presentation that has prevailed through the chapter to this point is abandoned and a digression is made by the author. Since the first half of the verse already allows itself a different mode of speech than the preceding (yaladh -- "beget"), this half-verse is promptly stamped as interpolation, the assumption being that no author could have had the least of flexibility of style. For like reasons many hold that with v.8 b the material must be assigned to J.In any case, we have here a set of facts about the origin of the Babylonian empire, facts found nowhere else among the records of antiquity. The strangest part about the whole account is that Babylonia and Assyria originated with men of Hamitic descent. When the Bible stands alone in reporting, a matter of history, the prevailing tendency is to discredit the Biblical statement. Yet in many other instances statements from other sources are accepted as satisfactory upon the testimony of a single witness. Why discriminate thus against the Scriptures?The course that our interpretation of these two verses takes will be determined very largely by the meaning of the word "Nimrod." For the meaning of the verbform nimrodh, without a doubt, is "let us revolt." Now the other words employed are, if left by themselves, either good or evil in their connotation, depending on the connection in which they appear. Gibbor may mean "hero" or "tyrant." "Hunter" (gibbor tsßyidh) may be a harmless hunter of the fields, or he may be one who hunts men to enslave them. The phrase, "in the sight of Yahweh," in itself expresses neither approval nor disapproval. But each of these terms acquires a bad sense in the light of the name "Nimrod." The tendency of this Cushite must have been to rise up against, and to attempt to overthrow, all existing order. In fact, he must have used this motto so frequently in exhorting others to rebellion, that finally it was applied to him as a name descriptive of the basic trait of his character. If this be so, then gibbor must be rendered "tyrant," or "despot" -- a use of the word found also Psalms 52:1, 3; and Psalms 120:4, for which passages K. W. justly claims the meaning Gewaltmensch. So this inciter to revolt (Nimrod) came to be the first tyrant upon the earth, oppressing others and using them for the furtherance of his own interests. Now what follows might, perhaps, by itself be taken to refer to hunting in the customary sense, were it not for the phrase "in the sight of Yahweh." For a very questionable meaning results if this phrase (liphne Yahweh) be rendered "in the estimation of Yahweh," nach dem Urteile Yahwehs (K. C. and others). For such a rendering would in a measure constitute a kind of superlative (K. S.309 1), but a superlative that bears the meaning that even Yahweh was impressed by this hunter's prowess and achievements -- a thought that strikes us as involving a rather trivial conception of God. For man's little hunting exploits are hardly sufficient to rouse the wonder and admiration of the Almighty. Besides, in this case the name of Yahweh is used, i. e., the God of mercy and covenant. So the meaning, claimed also by B D B for this passage: "in the sight of (estimation)" will have to be abandoned and the other, offered by B D B under (c) or (d) will have to be applied here: either "in the full (mental) view of" as in Ge 6:13 and La 1:22, or "openly before" as in 1 Samuel 12:2 or in Ge 17:1. Our objection above applies also to 2Kings 5:1, which refers only to man's esteem. What the phrase then means in this connection is that the gross violation of men's rights, that this mighty hunter of men became guilty of, did not elude the watchful eye of Him, who in mercy regards the welfare of men, Yahweh, but the fact was openly before Him, even if He did not at once proceed to take vengeance upon the despot. So the expression "mighty hunter" does not refer to exploits in bagging game. In fact, since gibbor in v.8

means "tyrant" (Meek correctly: "despot"), gibbor tsßyidh of v.9 should be rendered as "a tyrant or despot of hunt," which plainly indicates that men and not beasts were hunted.Consequently, also the proverbial expression (cf.1 Samuel 19:24; 10:12; Ge 22:14 etc.) that arose at this time when, apparently, others too began to engage in the sport of hunting men in order to tyrannize or enslave them, must be taken in the same sense.The critical attempts to find Babylonian parallels for Nimrod are a bit amusing. It is admitted by the extreme critics, on the one hand, that "a perfectly convincing Assyriological prototype of the figure of Nimrod has not as yet been discovered." On the other hand, Jeremias is so sure that one ought to exist in the person of Gilgamesch, that he even invents a Babylonian name for him that the Babylonians could have used, nâmir-uddu, i. e., "shining light." What an absurd scientific method -- manufacturing the desired evidence! Procksch veers into astral myths and makes Nimrod out to be a constellation, Orion -- mirable dictu!10-12. The beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, and Erech and Akkad and Calneh in the land of Shinar. From that region he went forth to Assyria and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-ir, and Calah and Resen, between Nineveh and Calah -- this is that great city.Here is the real story of the founding of empires, for that matter, of the first empires: Having the type of character that we find described in v.8, 9 in the person of Nimrod, we must needs regard both Babylon and Assyria as exponents of the spirit of this world. This attitude over against Babylon is the attitude of the Scriptures in prophetic utterances (cf. Isa 13, also Isa 47) as well as in the book of Revelation (Re 18:21). These early kingdoms or empires are, therefore, not to be regarded as useful institutions, guaranteeing law and order in a troubled world, but rather as the achievements of a lawless fellow who taught men to revolt against duly constituted authority.His first undertaking in this direction is Babylon. Our chief difficulty is to determine the correct relation of this account to the account of the origin of the name Babylon ("confusion"), as set down Ge 11:1-9. Our impression of the matter is this: since v.11 distinctly says, "he built Nineveh," but v.10 does not ascribe the building of Babylon to him, it may well be that Nimrod merely took over the existing city Babel and made it the beginning of his kingdom; then joined the other cities to this mother city. So, in reality, chapter eleven would antedate this portion of chapter ten. If it be claimed that the Babylonian name Bâbilu means "gate of God," we need not deny that the Babylonians may have built this more acceptable name upon the one that the Bible offers as connected with the confusion of tongues. Yet, for all that, the truth of the Biblical account on this matter may be regarded as unimpaired.Now Erech lies southeast of Babylon, a distance of slightly more than one hundred miles. Akkad lies in Northbabylon; Calneh somewhere in the neighbourhood, but cuneiform inscriptions do not seem to have identified it. So these four cities in the land of Shinar mark a kind of initial empire. For such cities in days of old regularly had each its own king and therefore counted as so many separate kingdoms. "Shinar" is Babylon, perhaps allied to Shumir (Sumerians).Now A. V. renders v.11: "Out of that land went forth Asshur and builded Nineveh." Though this translation is grammatically possible, it fails to do justice to what is implied in v.10, which speaks of the beginning of his kingdom as though it were leading up to the next step of his empire building, which now v.11 offers. Our rendering of v.11, then, presupposes that "Asshur" lacks the ending (ah) which usually indicates place to which, but is also frequently omitted. It shows Nimrod's second venture in empire building and avoids bringing in a mysterious "Asshur" of whom the Scripture has nothing more to tell. The nucleus of this second undertaking was "Nineveh," known in cuneiform inscriptions as Ninaa or Ninua, and situated on the upper Tigris opposite the present Mosul. This city, we remark again, was actually founded by Nimrod: he "built" it. But similarly as in the case of

Babylon there are sister or daughter cities that make a complex of cities around which the kingdom grows. Of these "Rehoboth-ir" is mentioned first. There is the possibility that this name is used to designate a suburb or suburbs of Nineveh, since the name signifies "broad places of the city"; then it might be the Assyrian rêbit Ninâ The next city of this aggregation is "Calah," identified in cuneiform writing as Kalchu, which lay near the confluence of the Tigris and the upper Zab. Then there is "Resen," which according to the text lay between Nineveh and Calah. The author's concluding remark, written by him, no doubt, after Nineveh was already known as a metropolis of no mean proportion, runs thus: "This is that great city." Of course, this refers to Nineveh and shows what component parts went to make it such an outstanding city or city state. This concluding statement fits in so very naturally here, that there is no valid reason for calling these last three words a gloss. With these words the interesting bit of information about this famous Cushite or Ethiopian closes. A valuable bit of information as to the origin of the kingdoms of the world is thus supplied. 13, 14. And Mizraim begat the Ludim and the Anamim and the Lehabim and the Naphtuchim; and the Pathrusim and the Casluchim (from whom went out the Philistines) and the Kaphtorim.Now Mizraim, as pointed out above in v.6, is Egypt. Consequently, a statement like: "Egypt begat the Ludim," etc., must mean: "from the Egyptians sprang the Ludim," etc. These nations, then, kin to the Egyptians, may have played a more or less important part in days of old but can now in some instances scarcely be identified. The "Ludim" may have dwelt near Egypt, west of the Nile delta. The "Anamim" are usually thought of as having occupied an oasis west of Egypt. The "Lehabim" do seem to bear a name akin to that of the old Libyans, west of Egypt on the north coast of Africa.For "Naphtuchim" two explanations are given, which, however, arrive at the same result. It is claimed that naptah in Egyptian means "the people of Ptah," who was revered in Memphis and vicinity (Ebers). But Brugsch takes the Egyptian word p-to-(e)m- hitj, which means North-Egypt (cf. K. W. and BDB).But the "Pathrusim" must have inhabited South or Upper Egypt, for pe-te-res means "south land" (BDB).14. The "Casluchim" present difficulties. Some claim: "not identified." However, the suggestion that their land is to be sought near Mons Casius, east of the delta of the Nile, is not out of harmony with what preceded.Special difficulty seems to grow out of the fact that the "Philistines" are now said to have gone out from the Casluchim. For Am 9:7 informs us that the Philistines hail from Caphtor, that is to say, from the island of Crete. However, the remark of Amos need not rule out the claim of our passage. Most likely, Amos lays down the major fact: Crete is primarily the original home of the Philistines. For that matter, since according to our explanation the Casluchim are found just a bit farther along the coast of the Mediterranean, namely toward the southwest, they may originally even have come from Crete. Being near to the Egyptians, they may have assimilated enough of the Egyptian mode of life and intermarried with Egyptians sufficiently to deserve to be classed among the nations allied to the Egyptians. Then, however, their parallel affinity to those Cretans settled in the land of Philistia may have impelled them to "go out" from thence and settle in Philistia. If Moses reports this, the event naturally took place before his time. Nor is this assumption at all in conflict with the claim raised by a number of scholars, namely that both Casluchim and Philistines are a deposit resulting from swarms of "maritime nations" (Seevoelker, K. W.) that overran the eastern end of the Mediterranean and even Egypt in the twelfth century B. C. In fact, successive waves of these nations swooping down from Asia Minor to Crete and beyond are quite reasonably the greatest likelihood. Even more such surging waves may have come than history knows of. That would, then, also help account for the fact that the Philistines after disastrous defeats by Israel keep bobbing up always surprisingly

strong. Moses seems to have a complete line of information on all these events involved in the early history of the nations. He also knows that Caphtor (Crete) is chiefly the home of the Philistines and he knows whom they displaced in Canaan: The Avvim (De 2:23). Criticism places too much confidence in its own precarious reconstruction of history and too little confidence in the Biblical records, when it remarks, that this assumption of J that already in Abraham's time (Ge 21:32) the Philistines are in the land "is, of course, an anachronism, since they first came there in the twelfth century" (Procksch).15-19. And Canaan begat Sidon, his first-born, and Heth and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite. And afterward were the families (tribes) of the Canaanites scattered abroad, so that the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and over toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiyim, even unto Lasha.Now the Canaanites are treated, because Moses knew that Israel's associations with these people were destined to be many (cf. Ge 15:16; 46:4 etc.), and Israel must also definitely know who were Canaanites and who not, because of Israel's duty to drive them out of the land of Canaan (De 20:17 and parallels). Statements like the first need not be pressed, where Moses says "Canaan begat Sidon." This may mean that there actually was a son by that name, or that the Sidonites are descended from one of the descendants of Canaan. In this instance the issue is settled by the fact that "Sidon" is described as the "first-born." That clinches the fact that he was an individual and makes it most likely that "Heth," too, was an individual. However, in the list that follows we shall never be able to determine whether names like "Jebusite" involve an ancestor with the actual name of Jebus."Sidon" appears as the great Phoenician city of later date. Joshua 11:8; 19:28 it is still "great Zidon" (or "Sidon"). Later Tyre, twenty miles to the south, distinctly overshadows Sidon. "Heth" is the father of the famous Hittites, who first appear around Hebron in Abraham's time, but the greater number of whom seem to have concentrated around the Orontes River and thence extended over toward the Euphrates, holding the famous city Carchemish. This is the nation whose existence was doubted, though claimed apparently only by the Bible. More recent discoveries have proved not only that the nation existed but that it was a formidable one.The "Jebusite" (singular, collective, as throughout the rest of the list, K. S.256e) centred about Jerusalem.The "Amorite" dwelled mostly in the mountains, especially around the Lebanon range. The Assyrians called them Amurri. They are so prominent at the time of the Conquest that oftentimes all Canaanites are simply called Amorites (cf. Ex 3:8; 3:17, 13:5 etc.).The "Girgashite" -- not definitely located in Canaan. The "Hivite" mostly in the central portion. The "Arkite" may have dwelt in Arke to the north, Tell Arka, north of Tripolis, which again lay north of Sidon. The "Sinite" should, no doubt, be placed near the Arkites. The "Arvadite" belongs apparently in the vicinity of the island city Aradus, also north of Tripolis. Likewise the "Zemarite" may have a remnant of its name in Tsumra, north of Tripolis. "Hamathite," without a doubt, must be identified with the ancient and well-known Hamath on the Orontes River; Assyrian: Emû.18 b. While we have thus far seen the original Canaanite tribes and approximately their place of settlement, which was mostly along the coast, we are now informed that they spread out or "were spread abroad" (BDB), naphótsû, Nifal from pûts. These original "families" or "clans" (mispechôth) now do not seem to have maintained their strength to the north. For the so-called "territory of the Canaanites" extended only from Sidon southward in the direction of the famous stronghold "Gerar," but not entirely toward Gerar but only to Gaza. For "toward Gerar" the Hebrew has an idiom with impersonal use of the second person, namely "as thou goest toward Gerar," (bo'akhah, Kal participle: "thou going," K.

S.324 b; 402 a; G. K.144 h). The suffix of this participle appears written plene. But toward the east and south the Canaanite territory extended in the direction of the cities to the southern end of the Dead Sea; "Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiyim." The last two of these are not identified but are merely associated with the overthrow of the whole group in their destruction."Lasha" may be on the west shore of the Dead Sea, Jerome, at least, placed it at Callirhoë, on the east of the Dead Sea, the site of the later famous "Baths of Herod."20. These are the sons of Ham according to their clans and languages in their countries among the nations.See v.5 above. This summarizing verse for the Hamites, differing slightly from v.5 in its arrangement of terms, is essentially the same as that verse. The original stock to which the parts belonged ("clans") as well as "the languages" were the principles determining the division.(c) The Sons of Shem (v.21-31)21. Children were born also to Shem, the father of all the sons of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth.According to his custom Moses disposes first of all the matters less relevant to his purpose. His book from this point forward is concerned almost exclusively with Shemites, therefore they must come last in the Table. At once, however, we are also informed of the fact that for the writer the most prominent branch of the Shemites are "the sons of Eber," that is to say, the Hebrews. Yet Hebrews must be regarded as a much broader term than Israelites. For "Eber" as a term primarily means "across" or "the region across the Euphrates River," for it was from this place that Eber himself came (thence his name), even though later such as the Edomites and Ishmaelites bore this name. The term, as we believe Koenig rightly contends (K. W. p.312), is not identical with the term "Chabiri" mentioned in the Tell-el-Amarna tablets and found making incursions from the south into Canaan in the pre-Israelite days. Besides, though Shem's descendants are mentioned last, we are not on that account to suppose that Shem was the youngest son of Noah. Therefore we read that he was "the elder brother of Japheth." Japheth is mentioned by way of comparison because Shem really had more affinity with Japheth than with Ham.Shem's descendants are to be graphed as follows:See figure 376)22-24. The sons of Shem: Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram. And the sons of Aram: Uz and Hul and Gerber and Mash. And Arpachshad begat Shelah, and Shelah begat Eber."Elam" is the country east of the Tigris River. The Assyrians speak of it as Elamtu meaning "highland." Its ancient capital was Shushan."Asshur," used in the Bible sometimes for the personal ancestor, sometimes for the people, sometimes for the land, is Assyria, called Asshur by the old Assyrians themselves. The land originally lay east of the Tigris at the Upper Zab."Arpachshad" is usually regarded as referring to the country Arrapachitis on the Upper Zab northeast from Nineveh; Assyrian Arbacha. "Lud" may refer to the Lydians in Asia Minor, of whom Herodotus already reports that they counted themselves to have sprung from Nineveh, a Semite City. Procksch merely makes an untenable statement when he says that for the Lydians in Asia Minor "Semitic origin is simply out of the question.""Aram" represents the later Aramaeans who dwelt northeast of Palestine. They are in the Bible usually referred to by the name "Syrians." K. C. points out that none of the divisions which later became known as being Aramaeans are listed here, such as: Aramdammeseq, Aram-Soba, Aram-beth-rechob, Aram-ma-acha. We should consider this fact an indication of the great age of this table.23. Under the persons (or lands, or peoples) derived from Aram are listed:"Uz," concerning which name we know practically only that it represents a division of Aramaeans. Concerning "Gether" and "Hul" the situation is the same. "Mash" might, be Mons Masius, "north of Nisibis (between Armenia and Mesopotamia)."Then the line of Arpachshad is traced through several successive generations apparently: "Shelah," of whom we know nothing, "Eber," discussed above on v.21. Eber has two sons. The first is Peleg,

the second Joktan.25. And unto Eber there were born two sons, the name of the one was Peleg -- for in his time the earth was divided -- and the name of his brother, Joktan.A verse such as this makes it highly probable that in the lists of the various descendants, that we have had thus far, the names used actually were the names of individual persons. For here Peleg and Joktan are distinctly called "sons," and one is said to be the "brother" of the other. "Peleg" means "division," for he lived at the time when the earth was divided (niphlegah) and the name given to the man is in memory of this event. The event referred to in chapter eleven must be the one under consideration -- the Confusion of Tongues. Nothing more is told about Peleg. He may have been the father of a people, he may not. However, "Joktan" was the father of numerous offspring, all of whom appear to be founders of Arabic tribes, especially those of Yemen. Aside from this fact very little is known concerning the tribe names about to be given in v.26-29.26-29. And Joktan begat Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah; and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah; and Obal and Abimael and Sheba; and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan."Almodad" is some south-Arabic people. The "al" may represent the Hebrew "el," i. e., God. So the name may mean Modad is God. "Sheleph" belongs into the same neighbourhood. "Hazarmaveth" seems to be a form derived from Hadramant, which lies in southeastern. Arabia, a region from which myrrh used to be exported. "Jerah" again may be another name for the moon, and so the name of a tribe that worshipped the moon-god.27. "Hadoram" must have represented some other group in Arabia, toward the south. "Uzal" is claimed to have been an old name of the capital city of, the district Yemen. Since "Diklah" is allied to the Arabic name for a date-palm, this name may refer to a tribe that dwelt in a region where date-palms abounded.28. About "Obal" and "Abimael" we know nothing except that they must belong somewhere in Arabia. "Sheba," as to form, is identical with the Sheba of v.7. Since we there located it in southwestern Arabia, though involving a Hamite group, we must admit the suitability of this location for a Semitic tribe. In some manner that we cannot now determine there must have been a blending of the Hamitic and the Semitic in this people.29. "Ophir," then, would seem to belong, as do all these other sons of Shem, into southern Arabia, not in India, as is commonly conjectured, nor in East Africa. "Havilah," mentioned in v.7 also, must present a situation analogous to that of Sheba -- a blending of the Hamitic and the Semitic element. "Jobab," not located, is the last member of the group. Since thirteen descendants of one man is a surprisingly large number, the verse closes by reassuring us that these all actually were descended from Joktan.30. The section inhabited by them extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar, to the eastern mountains.The Hebrew expression literally runs thus: "And their dwellings were from Mesha as thou goest to Sephar." In present-day English that must mean something like what our rendering presents. On "as thou goest" see v.19. Though both "Mesha" and "Sephar" must lie in southern Arabia, we know too little about their location to be able to understand the bearing of the verse.31. These are the sons of Shem according to their clans and languages in their lands according to their nations.In substance this verse agrees with v.20.32. These are the tribes of the sons of Noah according to their branches among their various nationalities. From these were the nations of the earth spread abroad after the flood.This final summary binds together the three main branches (tôledôth) of the human race. Apparently, the last statement leaves us under the impression that all the nations of the earth spreading abroad after the Flood came from this stock. How such racial groups as the Mongolians or Chinese or North American Indians and the like fit into this picture has not yet been discerned. Some count exactly seventy descendants of Noah in this list (Delitzsch). Others arrive at a total of sixty-eight.

Koenig counts seventy-one. To insist on the symbolical number seventy is hardly warranted. HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIt may very well be questioned whether a man should ever preach on a chapter such as this. It could be expounded in adult Bible class study, and even then a summary view of the whole chapter and its purpose might meet all needs. Perhaps the section v.8-11 could be used on occasion to set forth the story of the origin of the kingdoms of this world and their basic character. But such a sermon might have too little gospel content and be largely negative in character, showing what the kingdom of God is not.

CHAPTER XI

(d) The Confusion of Tongues (11:1-9) This is the last item to be reported under the head of the "History of the sons of Noah," which began Ge 10:1. When this item is disposed of, the general history of mankind will be concluded, and the author may begin to centre on the line of promise in Shem (Ge 11:10). That the author was intending right along to treat of this confusion of tongues appears from Ge 10:25, where in connection with Peleg it is mentioned that "in his days was the earth divided." If the author's brief history of all mankind is to be at least relatively complete, it must deal with all the major factors that help explain the present state of the world. Besides a knowledge of the origin of sin and its divisive effects in general; besides a knowledge of the first great judgment upon the earth -- the Flood; besides a summary account of the diffusion of the various nations after the Flood, we need, indeed, also some explanation of the great variety of different languages and dialects that are found in the world and how these languages originated. The story of their origin was known to Moses and was by him written down as an inspired and an instructive account, which finds no worthy parallel in the literature of earliest antiquity. It is now conceded that a cuneiform account of the confusion of tongues is not available. Jeremias claims to have demonstrated the error of the opinion that a parallel was available. A few rather late parallels are to be found, which Jeremias conveniently lists Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients, p.175 ff. These are found in the Sibylline oracles, a pseudepigraphic writing, whose earliest parts reach back only to the second century B. C., or again in Alexander Polyhistor, of the first century B. C.; also in writings of Moses of Chorene, an Armenian of the fifth century A. D., and lastly in the Ethiopic book of Jubilees, perhaps a still later work. Mankind does not pride itself on faithful remembrance of the things of its history that are less honourable. Scripture records all important events with strict impartiality. The time of this event is about one hundred years after the Flood, since Peleg (Ge 10:25) receives his name, which signifies "division," in memory of this event, and Peleg was born 1757 after the Creation, and so one hundred years after the Flood (1656). If it be thought that one hundred years is too short a time to allow for the increase of the human race to sufficient strength to be able to undertake a work of such magnitude, the computations of Keil have shown that the human race might have grown to a total of about 30,000 persons on the supposition that the families ordinarily had about eight children, a reasonable assumption for those times. Besides, it must be recalled that practically the whole human race participated in this project. If, then, the account as a whole shows the confusion of tongues to be the outgrowth of human presumption and disobedience, the practical lesson of the story must be primarily this, that the present resultant confusion that is upon us must serve as a constant reminder of the inclination of the human heart to arrogance and disobedience. The multiplicity of languages upon the face of the earth is a monument not to human ingenuity but to human sin. Naturally, this account of the confusion of tongues is not a second attempt to set forth, as criticism claims, what had already been covered in chapter ten. For the tenth chapter describes only the various racial groups into which the human family naturally divided itself. Our chapter shows how an unnatural dispersion was caused by human sin on the basis of distinct languages. Chapter ten describes progressive development; chapter eleven records a divine judgment. As usual, this historical account is libelled

by the critics as being "a mythical and legendary account." 1, 2. And all the inhabitants of the earth had one language and one and the same vocabulary. And it came to pass as they journeyed eastward that they discovered a broad plain in the land of Shinar and settled down there. If all the inhabitants of the postdiluvian world are, as the Scriptures teach, descended from Noah, they must, indeed, have used one and the same language. Of this very natural fact the writer makes us aware by dwelling besides upon the fact that the one "language" (saphah, literally: "lip") had not yet become differentiated into various dialects; for the word "lip" apparently emphasizes that the lips of all were shaped alike in uttering words. In addition, the very "words" (debharim) were of one sort 'achadhim, "one and the same" (B D B). We should say, all had "the same vocabulary." Debharim achadim cannot mean "few words" (Meek), as though we were here dealing with a crude type of primitive man. For though the plural 'achadhim does in some instances mean "few," that cannot be the case where 'echchad ("one") -- the singular of the same word -- appears in parallel use in the same sentence. In the early days after the Flood such a complete speech unity was, indeed, an indication of a deeper spiritual and cultural unity. But at the point where our chapter begins the inner unity was already a thing of the past. Ham and Canaan represent the strongest manifestation of a divergent spirit. The word "earth" must here by metonomy represent "the inhabitants of the earth." Wayhi is masculine, though ha'arets is feminine, since the sentence usually begins with the neutral Hebrew form, i. e., the masculine (G. K.145 d). 2. The region of Ararat (Ge 8:4) was the centre from which the human race began to spread abroad upon the earth, all fanciful claims to the contrary notwithstanding. From this cradle of the human race men "journeyed (nasa' -- lit. "to pull up stakes") eastward." Though miqqédem would seem to mean "from the east" and so apparently "westward," yet the usage of the term in Ge 2:8; 3:24; 12:8 and Ge 13:11 indicates that "eastward" must be the correct rendering. Since "eastward" includes southeastward, this interpretation is doubly established by the simple fact that Babylon (Shinar) lies southeast of Ararat. "Shinar," though including, perhaps, more than the land of Babylon (cf. on 10:10), is yet that extremely fertile land that the ancients praised so highly, attributing to it two hundred fold fertility and more. We can readily see what attracted them to this "broad plain" (biq'ah). For though this word is also rendered "valley," it signifies a broad plain rather than a narrow gorge, though both plain and gorge are bounded by mountains. So fertile a land invites men to "settle down" permanently (yashabh, originally only: "to sit down"). 3, 4. And they said, one to another: Come, let us make bricks and let us burn them well. And they used brick in place of stone and bitumen in place of mortar. And they said: Come, let us build for ourselves a city and especially a tower whose top shall reach to heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. Some time after having become established in the land of Shinar -- no one can say how long after -- they who constituted the human race resolved upon building a city and a tower. As many remains in this region show, such towers were regular adjuncts to the cities. They were called zikkurats and were temple-towers. Nothing indicates that the venture described in our chapter is a temple-tower. Besides, everything seems to indicate that this is the first tower ever attempted. It would, then, seem as though all these later towers, in spite of the divine judgment upon the first, are imitations of the first to an extent but at the same time they appear to constitute an attempt to deflect any possibility of divine punishment by consecrating them to the guardian divinity of the city.To make the scene as vivid as possible the writer takes us back to the first counsels that were held as the titanic project got under way. With great eagerness of spirit they encourage one another: note the "come" (Whitelaw: "come on")

in v.3 and again in v.4, Habhah, imperative, strong form, from yahabh, though second person, used with the hortative first person (K. S.355 g). First they encourage one another to the arduous task of making the bricks and laying them. One almost sees the originators of the plan start from their seats and mutually ("one to another") exhort one another to get under way. Nilbenah lebhenîm involves a cognate object, like the parallel Assyrian labânu libittu. The verbs have the hortative ending ah. "Let us burn well" uses the expression nisrephah lisrepha, "let us burn to a burning," which may be rendered as followed by a dative of product, or merely. by an adverbial phrase. In any case, it must mean: "burn well." Here, Moses inserts an explanatory statement before he lets us hear the rest of their purpose by dwelling upon the unique nature of the materials used -- unique for such as are in rocky Palestine with its innumerable stones. For the builders purpose to use their burnt brick in place of stone and bitumen for mortar. Abundant remains of similar structures display how very accurate the author is in his statement. For more substantial buildings not the sun-dried but the kiln-dried bricks were used, and bitumen sealed the joints. Such structures cohere very firmly to this present day. To a non-Babylonian such a mode of building would seem strange as well as particularly worthy of notice. This explains the insertion of the parenthesis. Critics fail to discern the propriety of this parenthesis at this point and to find evidence of divergent accounts. The strangest claim of the critics is that here in this simple and coherent narrative two original and divergent accounts, a city story and a tower story, were woven into one.4. The purpose of the first exhortation to burn bricks (v.3), of course, is that therewith structures might be reared. These structures are to be "a city and especially a tower." The original says "and a tower," but without a doubt, the major purpose was the tower, therefore we have here the so-called waw speciale -- "and in particular." The explanation of the builders as to the purpose of the tower reveals clearly the ungodly purpose that motivated the entire undertaking. In fact, several ungodly purposes are here intimately intertwined. First of all, in reference to the tower (mighdal) they say: "whose top shall reach to heaven." Now, indeed, in other uses of the phrase "to heaven" (cf. De 1:28; 9:1; Psalms 107:26) a hyperbole is plainly involved, yet, if we take into consideration the defiant spirit of the rest of the statement, we can hardly go wrong if we interpret the phrase as meant literally here. This already is an ungodly purpose. But we dare hardly make it involve a dethroning of God, because such a purpose, if harboured, would apparently have found expression at this point. Nor is there any sense in letting these builders appear as providing a safety measure against another Flood. For the word guaranteeing the non-recurrence of the Flood was, without a doubt, well known; and, in the second place, our verse gives full expression to their purpose. Besides, such fantastic reports about a tower which was actually raised to a height of nine miles and was then destroyed by a strong wind, deserve the sharp condemnation that Luther already bestowed on them. The preposition in bashshamßyim is the "Beth of contact," used with verbs of touching.The first part of the purpose expressed is: "let us make for ourselves a name." So, then, the statement: "let us make a tower whose top shall reach to heaven" is only auxiliary to this part, the making of a name. "Making a name" (na'aseh shem) signifies to acquire fame or a reputation. The passages claimed for the use of the word "name" for "monument" (cf.2 Samuel 8:13; Isaiah 55:13) hardly establish that meaning here. These builders are, for one thing, strenuously determined to achieve fame. No effort is to be spared. If stones are not available, they must be manufactured. Nothing shall deter these men, so greedy of enhancing the glory of their own name. This also is a part of their ungodly purpose. The major purpose of these defiant builders lies in the word which represents the climax of their endeavours: "lest we be scattered

abroad upon the face of the whole earth." This word breathes defiance of God. After the Flood God had bidden Noah (Ge 9:1) and his sons "to replenish the earth." This, of necessity, involved spreading abroad. These Babylonian builders were sensing that now, as their inner oneness of purpose was lost -- for they were no longer one in the fear of God -- they might sooner or later scatter after all. They preferred to remain a closely welded unit and to refuse to obey God's injunction. The tower was to provide the rallying point and to be at the same time a token of their oneness of purpose. So it, of necessity, becomes the symbol of defiance of God. From this historic incident it appears that later tales like those of the heaven-storming Titans originated. At the same time nothing could more flagrantly display how little of the unity of faith remained in humankind. Since God does not for them supply that which draws their hearts into a unity of purpose, so vain a thing as this inanimate, useless tower is to weld them into a unity. Such a concentrated spirit of opposition to God is sufficiently serious to call for divine intervention. It was the climax of the ungodly purpose involved in this entire venture.5. And Yahweh came down to see the city and particularly the tower which the children of men built.The anthropomorphic expression Yahweh "came down" (yaradh) is a vivid way of stating that God interposed. Where He had till now, as so often in the affairs of the children of men, simply allowed things to take their course, now He manifestly intervenes and takes the situation in hand. His judicial control and regulation is His coming down. Therefore the expression is not the same here as in Ex 19:20; 34:5; Nu 11:25; 12:5, where Yahweh actually descended in visible fashion to deal with men face to face. It is rather to be likened to similar instances like Ex 3:8; Nu 11:17, or, involving a different expression, Ge 17:22; 35:13. Crude conceptions of such coming down are rendered impossible by such passage of Scripture as 1 Kings 8:17; Ps 139; Pr 15:3. The Targum, as usual, paraphrases the expression: "Yahweh revealed Himself."The work had progressed very definitely at this time when God intervened, as the perfect form of the word banû indicates. For this cannot here mean "had completed," but merely: "had built to this point." Besides, the use of the verb "go down," here as well as in v.7, does not point to a twofold going down with a return to heaven intervening; or, as some would have, first a more remote approach, then a closer approach. The simplest solution of the problem is that offered by Strack: the typical style of Hebrew narrative is being followed, first a general statement, newspaper-heading-like, covers the case, then follow the details. Lir'oth -- infinitive of purpose (K. S.407a).6. And Yahweh said: Behold, the people are one and they all have one language, and this is merely the beginning of what they do, and now from nothing that they devise to do will they desist. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language so that one man will not be able to understand another's speech.God is spoken of as Yahweh because of the mercy He displays in preventing mankind from carrying out its pernicious purpose. The root of the trouble lies very largely in the fact that "the people" on the earth are but "one" and are bound together into a strong unity by "one language." This is to an extent an incongruity. Inner enmity is no longer a fact, why should outward unity be? It cannot but work harm to let this situation continue. As little as sinful man deserves a habitation like the garden of Eden, so little does a disunited human family deserve the unifying medium of one language. Though mankind have the one language, good cannot come from the possession of it. This is the very line of argument followed by the divine word, for God charges: "this is merely the beginning of what they do." As long as the medium of one language is theirs, just so long will they be able to carry through reasonable though ungodly projects that they may happen to take in hand. God discerns that similar undertakings will follow upon this one. "This is the beginning of their doing" means that

more will be undertaken after this first, enterprise. "From nothing that they devise to do will they desist." If, however, the only unity which they still possess is disturbed -- the unity of language -- then all such ungodly endeavours of the future will be cancelled. Hachchillam, Hifil infinitive with double reduplication, irregular, from Challal.So pitting His divine resolution against theirs in a hortatory habhah, calculated to offset that of mankind in v.3 and v.4, Yahweh determines "to go down," that is, actively to interfere in what He has winked at thus far, and to "confuse their language." The result of this is going to be what is expressed as the divine purpose, "so that one man will not be able to understand another's speech." Exactly how this was accomplished we cannot now determine. Whether, as some contend, the organ of hearing was wrought upon; or, as others claim, a modification of speech was involved; or whether, as still others believe, the inner character, of which speech is a reflex, was so modified that it expressed itself otherwise than heretofore, no man will ever be able to determine. Whether the effects were immediate or whether they began to appear gradually, even this we can scarcely guess at. Besides, not every last person was at once alienated from every other person. Enough to know that divine Wisdom determined upon this effective means of checking man's impudence and that this device was adequate for its purpose. The plural, "let us go down" (neredhah), is spoken out of the fulness of the character of God, who is called by the plural name 'Elohîm and who possesses unbounded resources and potentialities. Though not a direct reference to the Holy Trinity, the plural here involves that too. The same plural in Ge 1:26 and Ge 3:22.8, 9. So Yahweh scattered them abroad from thence all over the earth and they left off building the city. Wherefore its name is called Babel because there Yahweh made a babble of the languages of all the earth, and from thence Yahweh scattered them abroad all over the earth.With astounding ease God has wrought the confusion of His enemies and made them desist from their purpose. Not only that, they must even obey His command, "replenish the earth," though they certainly never intended to do so. Yet where that viewpoint naturally suggests itself, Moses regards the whole transaction rather as a demonstration of the mercy of God -- God defeated man's purpose so as to prevent man from injuring himself further -- as the use of the divine name Yahweh, three times in these two verses, suggests. The term "city" is used for the whole project, for, naturally, the tower was abandoned also -- a legitimate synecdoche.9. Since the verb balal means "to confuse" and from it the form balbel, contracted to Babel is derived, we have here the actual origin of the name of this famed city. Meek conveys the paronomasia involved very effectively by a rendering which we have followed above: "Called Babel because there Yahweh made a babble" Whatever other interpretation the Babylonians themselves may have put upon this name (cf.10:10 supra), this Biblical interpretation is the original and it remains valid. The play upon words which the Hebrew allows does not, however, now give warrant to deduce the claim, held by theologians ancient and modern, that Hebrew was the original language of mankind, for, as we have shown above, this same play upon words is reproducible just as effectively in English. The verb qara' presents a good illustration of the use of impersonal verbs, "one called" -- "men called," or, passive "is called," (K. S.324 c). Though men scatter because of their inability to co-operate, this result is very properly ascribed to Yahweh, "He scattered them abroad."Much interest centres on the question whether the ruins of the Tower of Babel are still extant. Two rival claimants for the distinction stand out: (a) the site of the ruins of the temple of Nebo at Borsippa usually called Birs Nimrûd and situated southwest of Babylon on the west bank of the Euphrates; here is a tower of seven stages, each stage of a different colour. Beginning at the top, the first is silver (for the moon), the second, dark blue (for

Mercury), the third, a whitish yellow (for Venus), the fourth, golden (for the sun), the fifth, rose red (for Mars) the sixth, brownish red (for Jupiter), the seventh, black (for Saturn). The ruins of the tower still tower fifty yards above the rest of the mass of ruins, (b) The second contestant for the honour is the place of the temple of Marduk in Babylon, called Esagil and having a tower called E-temen-an-ki. Though this last-mentioned tower has the advantage of being in the city, whereas the former is at some distance from it (about fifteen miles), yet it will be noted that the city and the tower are mentioned separately in v.4. Besides, the very significant fact is recorded by history that when Nebuchadnezzar (604-562 B. C.) determined to repair the Birs-Nimrud tower he provided it with a peak, which it had before apparently not possessed. Though the opinions of scholars are still quite sharply divided on this question, we cast our vote for the site of the Nebo tower at Borsippa. Yet we do not claim that the seven stages of the tower dedicated to the seven planets and so also to the seven major deities were at the time of the first building already appointed to these idols; because we do not believe that idolatry had developed to such an extent at that time. Nor have we any means of knowing how many stages of the tower had been completed at the time the work was interrupted. Nor do we know for a certainty that the Birs-Nimrud tower is actually the. Tower of Babel.V. The History of Shem (v.10-26)In Ge 9:26 the particular blessedness that Shem should enjoy is indicated. We showed that the statement involved Messianic import. Now the author traces out the line of Shem until he comes to that point where the chosen line begins to develop into one distinct people. There is a fine propriety about the above heading: Shem's history is primarily the story of his descendants.Moses is still following very consistently the plan carried through the entire book of Genesis: he disposes briefly of the less relevant (history of Shem) that he might treat at length the more essential (history of Terah).10, 11. This is the history (see on 2:4) of Shem. Shem was a hundred years old and begat Arpachshad two years after the Flood. And Shem lived, after he begat Arpachshad, five hundred years and begat sons and daughters. 12, 13. And Arpachshad lived thirty-five years and begat Shelah. And Arpachshad lived, after he begat Shelah, four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.14, 15. And Shelah lived thirty years and begat Eber. And Shelah lived, after he begat Eber, four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.16, 17. And Eber lived thirty-four years and begat Peleg. And Eber lived, after he begat Peleg, four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.18, 19. And Peleg lived thirty years and begat Reu. And Peleg lived, after he begat Reu, two hundred and nine years, and he begat sons and daughters.20, 21. And Reu lived thirty-two years and begat Serug. And Reu lived, after he begat Serug, two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.22, 23. And Serug lived thirty years and begat Nahor. And Serug lived, after he begat Nahor, two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.24, 25. And Nahor lived twenty-nine years and begat Terah. And Nahor lived, after he begat Terah, a hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.26. And Terah lived seventy years and begat Abraham and Nahor and Haran.On this history of Shem as a whole we must remark that it differs as to the pattern followed from chapter five in but one respect, namely in that it gives no separate statement of the total age of the individual, nor of the fact that he died. Equally apparent is the gradual decline of the span of human life: the first child is born earlier, and the rest of life is a shorter period.However, a few details demand attention. So in v.10 the one phrase that is added is only a variation from the strict pattern of regular form throughout the entire totedôth, viz., the phrase "two years after the Flood." To us the simplest explanation of this phrase lies in the fact that, according to Ge 10:22, Shem had two other sons before

Arpachshad, namely Elam and Asshur. If, then, these three children were born in rapid succession, it would not be a physical impossibility to have Arpachshad "begotten" two years after the Flood. Other explanations offered are not as simple as this one.We believe the following tabular representation will set forth the facts involved more clearly than any other mode of representation.Age at birth of first sone Year of birth Years after birth of first son Total age Year of death

Shem 100 1556 500 600 2156

Arpachshad 35 1658 403 438 2096

Shelah 30 1693 403 433 2126

Eber 84 1723 430 473 2187

Peleg 30 1757 209 239 1996

Reu 32 1787 207 239 2026

Serug 30 1819 200 230 2049

Nahor 29 1849 119 148 1997

Terah 70 1878 135 205 2083

Abraham 100 1948 75 175 2123

Isaac 60 2048 120 180 2228

Jacob 2108 130For convenience' sake we have appended three names for which the requisite information is not found in our chapter. A comparison yields the following interesting facts. Since Noah died 2006, he lived fifty-eight years after the birth of Abraham. Shem, for that matter, did not die till Jacob was forty-eight years old. Furthermore, Shem outlived even Abraham, as did also Eber. No doubt, there was a divine providence behind this matter of ages. Men like Noah and Shem were granted great length of life that, being historic personages and survivors of the Flood, they might by their very presence as well as by their testimony offer warning to their godless successors. For Luther, no doubt, argues correctly when he deduces from the activity of the godless in their ungodly projects, that the true children of God will on their part also have proved themselves active in upholding righteousness and in directing the Old Testament church. These godly patriarchs were the repositories of sound tradition and pillars and bulwarks of the truth over against the corruption wrought by error.We see at this point, too, how very few links there actually were in the chain of tradition from Adam to Abraham. For since Adam lived to the time of Methuselah (or Lamech), and Methuselah lived to the time of Shem, and Shem lived to the time of Jacob, the original truth which Adam possessed was transmitted through but three links of the chain till it came into Jacob's possession. When we consider besides how these men were ail renowed for their piety and their fidelity, we may readily concede that they must have watched over the preservation of truth with zealous care.Part of the ground of this genealogy, as far as Peleg, was covered by the preceding chapter. See Ge 10:25. One especially noteworthy fact in reference to Peleg is that with him the span of human life dropped to almost half of what it had been attaining to before. But Peleg happened to be the one in whose, time the confusion of

tongues took place (10:25).It is rather difficult to determine definitely just what some of the proper names of this list may mean. No doubt, after the analogy of "Peleg," they were names with a distinct meaning. Above, on Ge 10:22, we indicated that "Arpachshad" may be another name for a district northeast of Nineveh. So, likewise, the Assyrian name Sarûg may be identical with our "Serug." Sarûg is a district in Mesopotamia. From this it appears that these individuals in our list will in some cases at least have given their name to the district which they or their descendants occupied: "Eber" may mean "the man from across," i. e., the river Euphrates. Such meaning may quite naturally attach itself to man, and K. C., therefore, concludes too hastily that these names may not all refer properly to persons. "Terah" may mean a type of ibex, a mountain goat. But, on the other hand, K. C. very correctly points out that because of names like Terah we are not by any means, justified in concluding that a totemistic stage of religion was characteristic of men of this time. Somewhat like the history of Adam (Ge 5:32) this history of Shem concludes with the three sons of the last member of the list.VI. The History of Terah (11:27-25:11)27, 28. This is the history of Terah. Terah begat Abram and Nahor and Haran. And Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before Terah, his father, in the land of his birth, in Ur of Chaldees.It is a rather remarkable fact that this history of Terah, which deals but very briefly with Terah himself, covers the entire history of Abraham, so that no separate history of Abraham occurs in a book in which he may well be said to be the chief character. Perhaps the following suggestion might cover the case: Joshua 24:2 Terah, the father of Israel, is said to have served other gods beyond the River (Euphrates), yet Ge 11:31 Terah leaves Ur, a centre of idolatry, with Abraham. Perhaps this departure of his represents a break with idolatry, as Luther, too, supposes, a break, which was completely realized, in Abraham, so that Abraham can be said to complete the movement Terah began, that is to say, "the history of Terah."The three sons mentioned in v.26 are again listed in v.27, for this is a new "story" and here the fortunes of these, three are to be treated in detail. Haran is disposed of first because he dies after having begotten a son, Lot. This death occurs "before Terah," i. e., during Terah's lifetime. Apparently, this was the first instance where a man of the race of godly men died during his father's lifetime. No doubt, this death caused Terah great grief, but yet this obvious fact does not give us warrant to translate 'al-peney in the sense: "to the great grief of." Special mention is made of the fact that he died in Ur of Chaldees, because Terah and the rest of his family were soon going to leave Ur of Chaldees behind. But Ur was "the land of his birth." Consequently, Terah lived there before Haran was born.As to the location of Ur again two principal locations contend for pre-eminence. Some maintain that it must lie north or northwest of Haran. Others, and by far the majority, in a spot identified as Uru, 125 miles southeast of Babylon, south of the lower Euphrates, a spot where extensive excavations have been made, (cf. C. Leonard Wooley's "Ur of Chaldees") and where the worship of the moongod Sin prevailed. It is called in the original Ur Kasdîm. Now, as K. W. maintains, a phonetic law of the Babylonians would transmute the form Kasdîm into Kaldu, as also the LXX translate: caldaioi. These Chaldeans, at first merely a prominent tribe, later become the dominant group in Babylon (Hab.1:6). This Ur is also called Muqajjar at present, meaning "asphaltized." Some spell it Muqayyar.29, 30. Now Abram and Nahor married: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and of Yiscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no children."To take a wife" (laqach ishshah) is the technical Hebrew expression for getting married. The marriage as well as the wives of Abraham and Nahor are of importance for the rest of this history, therefore they are here formally reported. Abraham's wife bears the name "Sarai" (Heb. Saray -- with an old feminine

ending -- meaning "princess"), and she must, according to her name, have been a woman of a measure of social standing. She cannot be identical with the Yiscah mentioned in this verse, as Jewish commentators in particular have long contended, even though we may not be able to discover why this unknown Yiscah should have been introduced at this point. For Sarai, according to Ge 20:12, was indeed Abraham's sister, that is daughter of the same father but not of the same mother, and, therefore, really half-sister; but Yiscah's father was Haran. We dare not, however, judge relations such as these -- which would now be properly termed incestuous -- according to the standards of the present time. As long as it pleased God to let the human race descend from one pair, it must be conceded that for a time marriage between brothers and sisters was a necessity. It may well take quite a time before a sense of the impropriety of such a relation arose. Nahor marries Milcah, his niece, of whom we shall hear later. The Hebrew repeats the term "father" thus: "the father of Milcah and the father of Yiscah'" because of a tendency to avoid a succession of dependent nouns (K. S.276 a).30. Since Sarai's barrenness is to figure rather prominently in the succeeding events, attention is drawn to it emphatically at this point already, also by the parallel statement: "she had no children." The Hebrew idiom prefers the singular, where we use the plural; for the Hebrew says: "she had no child," waladh, unusual for yéledh. Other cases where special mention of barrenness is made are: Ge 16:2; 25:21; 29:31; Jude 13:2; 1 Samuel 1:5; 2:5.Abram may mean "the exalted father" or "the Exalted One is my father." The meaning of "Nahor" is obscure. "Haran" would seem to mean "mountaineer.""Sarai," according to its root, cannot be the same as Sharra and so related to Sharratu, the goddess of Charran, the wife of the moongod Sin. Such efforts to make historical personages indentical with mythological figures degrade Biblical history. 31, 32. Now Terah took his son, Abram, and his grandson, Lot, the son of Haran, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, the wife of his son Abram, and they went forth with them from Ur of Chaldees to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and settled down there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.In connection with v.27 we discussed the reason why Terah may have left Ur. We believe that what we said goes deeper into the case than does the supposition that this was a step in conformity with certain other movements of the time, as, for example, the going forth of the Phoenicians toward the sea. Not all of Terah's clan go with him. Nahor and Milcah stay behind, although they too are afterward found in Mesopotamia (Ge 24:10). Those mentioned as taken along by Terah are Abram, Sarai and Lot, his orphaned grandson. Why Canaan was definitely fixed upon as goal at the time of the departure from Ur cannot be determined. It may then already have counted as a land flowing with milk and honey. Apparently, the trip straight west across the desert would have been impossible with flocks and herds. So the first stage of the journey went northwest, to Mesopotamia to the city of Haran in Padan Aram, a distance of about 600 miles. Nor will we ever be able to determine why they all "settled down (yashabh -- originally, "to sit down") there." Did Terah feel that he was far enough removed from the pernicious influences of idolatry? Did the land as such appeal to him? In spite of what we said on v.27 above, it must be remarked that, according to Joshua 24:2, Terah served other gods "beyond the river." Haran lies beyond the river. Even if our original contention was correct, Terah apparently did not successfully carry through the break with idolatry, as it was practised in those lands. The Jewish tradition asserts that the original summons, like unto that found 12 :l ff., came to Terah in Ur; of Chaldees, but that Terah failed to obey it; Abraham; however, did offer the requisite obedience. We cannot help but feel in sympathy with this approach to the problem, as, we shall show especially at the beginning of chapter

twelve.'Artsah has the old ending ah locative to express place to which (K. S.380a). Yetse'û, "they went forth," has as its subject Terah and Abraham; "with them" means: Sarai and Lot.32. Terah's history closes with the statement of his age, 205 years. His death occurred, in Haran. A difficulty must be touched upon here. Ac 7:4, Stephen, in an inspired address (cf. Ac 6:10), tells us that Abraham left, "when his father was dead." Yet it appears that Terah lived sixty years after Abram's departure from Haran. For his total age was 205 years, and Abraham was born when Terah was seventy (v.26) and was seventy-five when he left Haran (12:4): 205-145 -- 60. How can Stephen say, Abram left "when his father was dead"? The question is a very difficult one. Luther once expressed the thought that he would be exceedingly grateful for a man sufficiently clever to offer the solution. One attempt at solution makes the statement of v.26 place Abram first because of his great importance, but claims that Nahor and Haran were both older -- or at least Nahor, for Abram's son marries Nahor's granddaughter. But this last reason is covered already by the mere fact that Abram's son was begotten very late and so would naturally be a contemporary with Rebecca, Nahor's grandchild. A second explanation takes the words of Ac 7:4: "his father was dead" in the spiritual sense. But all other such statements as well as the connection make this interpretation seem unlikely. Though allied to this last interpretation, the one that we suggest and favour takes the expression "was dead" in the sense "was dead to him." Because of Terah's adherence to idolatry he was as good as dead for Abram, and so Abram could leave him behind, sorry, indeed, for his father's lot but separated from him already as from one dead. Should none of these explanations satisfy, it should be borne in mind that similar perplexities are found in connection with problems in secular history, but difficulties do not necessarily spell error. We are simply too far removed from these events to be able to decipher how details dovetail together.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIn our judgment the only section that can be used to advantage as a text is that of v.1-9, which may appear under the familiar heading, "The Confusion of Tongues." A specific turn in another direction is given to the entire treatment if the theme takes on the form: "The Confusion wrought by Sin." A good point of departure in any case might be the legend preserved among the ancients concerning the heaven-storming Titans. The fable offered by the legend is merely a distorted form of the truth which the Bible account gives in these verses. One should not neglect to point out very definitely in this connection that the gift of Pentecost cancels the harm done by the sinful pride of man, for there the speaking in other tongues signifies that the Holy Spirit repairs by the one language of the Gospel the sad confusion wrought by sin.

CHAPTER XII

The Life of Abraham (12:1-25:11) Up to this point the universal history of mankind has been under consideration. Now the account narrows down to the history of the Kingdom of God. For if the mighty of this earth establish kingdoms. (cf. Ge 10:10), in a far more real sense does God Himself set up a kingdom, a kingdom which differs point for point from the kingdoms of this world but which is none the less real, in fact, is the only reality. History, as Moses now writes it, traces the development of this kingdom. In fact, the Ruler of the destinies of history so shapes history that it may serve to aid in the development of His kingdom. As far as the life of Abram, which now follows, is concerned, it is usually divided into about four different periods, each supposedly set off by the appearance of God to Abram, Now if the individual instances of the appearing of God to Abram be listed as well as the instances where the word of the Lord came unto Abram, it will be found that these experiences make a total of eight, or, counting the original word in Ur of Chaldees according to Ac 7:2, nine. But the distinction between the mere coming of the Word to Abram (Ge 12:1; 13:14; 21:12; 22:1) and the vision (Ge 15:1) or the appearance of the Lord (Ge 12:7; 17:1; 18:1), is largely artificial. Even when the word of the Lord came to Abram, the Lord may have appeared to Abram even where there is no specific mention made of His appearing. These separate instances of God's appearing to Abram are not said by the Scriptures to have been marks indicating new stages of development in Abram's life. The truth rather appears to have been this: when God's Word or His appearance to Abram became a necessity, then God manifested Himself. Such an appearance, then, does not necessarily mean that Abram had grown or developed to a certain point or was about to grow or to develop in a certain direction. We are, therefore, inclined to divide Abram's life into three parts: (a) his early life prior to the time of the first call in Ur of Chaldees -- concerning, which period we know absolutely nothing except that Abram took Sarai to wife; (b) the period lying between God's first promise of posterity and the actual birth of this seed, Isaac (Ge 12:1-21:7); (c) the events after the birth of Isaac (Ge 21:8-25:11). In connection with the question where the first call of God came to Abram there are a few things to be added to what has thus far been said in reference to Terah. Even though the account of Moses does not indicate the possibility of a call earlier than the one of Ge 12:1, yet the correct scriptural tradition knows of the coming of this first call in Ur of Chaldees. Ge 15:7 and Ne 9:7 might perhaps be so construed as to mean that Abram's leaving of Ur stood under God's special providence; but Ac 7:2 definitely asserts that God's first call to Abram came in Ur, "before he came to Haran." As our previous, explanation indicated, we believe that this call included Terah but did not succeed in weaning him from idolatry. Again, on the question whether Terah's household only or also Abram were involved in the "serving of other gods," of which Joshua 24:2 speaks, we cannot assert definitely just what Abram's position was. To us it seems most natural to assume that on Abram's part there had been only the incipient stages of idolatry, which were abandoned when God called him forth. Consequently, it would appear that this initial summons was merely by the mercy of Him that called and not upon the strength of the merits of the one who was called, as Luther also rightly contends. This faith, however, which God's grace engendered, proved to be a faith of such exemplary character that all that are of faith are classified as "sons of Abram" (Ga 3:7), and so

Abram truly becomes the father of all believers. Only when we regard this record of Abram's life as a record of a life of faith, do we justice to it, Unfortunately, much confusion has been introduced into the subject of the lives of the patriarchs by certain untenable theories on the basis of which far-reaching reconstructions have been attempted. We shall list the major of these theories and indicate briefly how they do violence to the available evidence. For a more thorough going presentation of the case we must refer to the works of Eduard Koenig, especially his Geschichte der alttestamentlichen Religion, and his Geschichte des Reiches Gottes, as well as to his Genesis Commentary. For this able scholar, has blasted these futile theories into the smallest of atoms by his devastating attack upon them. One more general mode of approach is that which roughly classifies all the historical material of Genesis as purely legendary. Dillmann gives a somewhat naive statement of the case when he says: "Nowadays, of course, everybody quite takes it for granted that all these tales about the fathers do not belong into the realm of strict history but into that of legend." Aside from the presumption which regards all the opponents of this view as nobodies, the assumption prevails that Israel must in all respects be like other nations. If other nations had tales from their early history which were purely legendary, so must Israel's record be. Aside from being a begging of the principle, critics of this stripe are ready to concede Israel's distinct superiority in the matter of religion. Why cannot the rest of the life of this people furnish material superior to that found in other nations? One of the most popular methods, of dealing with patriarchal history is to approach it on the basis of the so-called tribal theory (Stammtheorie). This theory assumes that the patriarchs were not actual historical characters but fictitious characters which are to serve to explain the origin of certain tribes. When Abram goes to Egypt, the tribe in reality went in its earlier days, etc. The patriarchs are eponymous characters to whom is ascribed what befell the tribe. The grain of truth involved in this theory is that, in reality, certain of the names mentioned in the Table of Nations, chapter ten, are tribal names and not names of persons. However, in such cases (Ge 10:13, 14, 16, 17, 18) tribal names are used ("Amorite, Girgashite," etc.), and no attempt is made to make them appear as individuals. The claim by which the tribal theory is chiefly supported is that ethnology has no instances on record where nations descended from an individual, as, for example, Israel from Abram. However, on this score the Biblical records happen to have preserved facts which ethnology no longer has available. But how a nation may descend from an individual is traced step for step in the Biblical record. Besides, the Genesis records in their detailed accounts bear too much of the stamp of records concerning characters of flesh and blood as we have it. Dillmann may make light of this fact and say: "We need nowadays no longer prove that the wealth of picturesque details of the narrative is not in itself a proof of the historicity of the things narrated but is, on the contrary, a characteristic mark of the legend." But though legends do usually abound in picturesque details, the things narrated in Genesis very evidently bear the stamp of sober truth. Christ and the apostles recognized the patriarchs as historical characters; cf. such remarks as John 8:56 and the almost two dozen references of Christ to Abraham alone. More farfetched than either of the two theories described thus far is the astral-myth theory. Briefly stated, it amounts to this: even as Greek mythology had certain tales by way of explanation of the origin of the signs of the zodiac, so did the Babylonians, and so, of necessity, must Israel. An illustration: Sarah's going down to Egypt as a sterile woman is the Israelitish way of stating the Babylonian myth of the descent of the goddess Ishtar into the underworld to receive the boon of fertility. Even though the story primarily tells of Abram's going to Egypt, and though Egypt has to be taken to signify the underworld -- a thing utterly without parallel

in the Scriptures -- and even though Sarai must be interpreted to be an adaptation of the name of the Babylonian goddess Sharratu, the wife of the moon god, in spite of all these forms of unwarranted treatment of the text, the adherents of this theory fail to see its folly. We cannot but label such a theory as an attempt to discredit Scripture. A fourth mode of misinterpreting the sacred narrative is the attempt to account for it on the basis of what we might term the Beduin-ideal theory. Briefly, this involves the notion that the writer or the writers of the patriarchal history were in reality setting forth the type of Beduin life as found in patriarchal times as an ideal for a later more civilized and more degenerate age. The writer is supposed to be enthusiastic for the Beduin type of life and to see in it the cure for the social ills of his time. So the Beduin religion is also set forth as an ideal of monotheistic religion. Incidentally, that utter simplicity supposed to be set forth by this type of life is hardly characteristic of the patriarchs, for already men like Abram are in possession of much goods and great wealth and are in a position to give rich gifts such as jewels to close friends or prospective wives. In reading, how Gunkel, an ardent advocate of the purely legendary or mythical theory, manipulates his theory, one is almost tempted to speak of still another theory, namely the theory which glorifies the clever pranks of the patriarchs. For in writing particularly of the devices employed by Jacob in taking advantage of Esau or of Laban, he writes as if the readers of these tales gloated over them as a humorous glorification of a crafty ancestor. On other occasions he writes with a pitying disdain of the very crude and elementary conceptions of the deity held by these early writers. Again the effort to deflate the conception of the Scriptures is manifest, and a Biblical book is reduced to the level of a collection of amusing anecdotes.Parallel with all these faulty theories runs the erroneous conception of the Patriarchal religion. Here again we may refer to prevalent theories. We shall do no more, however, than to list briefly the erroneous conceptions we are referring to. Prominent among these is the attitude which describes the early religion of Israel as totemism. This endeavours to prove that certain types of creatures were deemed sacred and were worshipped by certain tribes. Proof for this view is deduced, for example, in the case of Terah from the fact that his name may signify a type of mountain goat. The proof grows very top-heavy, when so elaborate a conclusion is built upon an accidental possibility.A second, equally grievous misconception is that which describes the religion of the patriarchs as ancestor worship. In proof of this mention is made, for example, of the fact that certain graves are mentioned, like that of Deborah, (Ge 35:8) in connection with which an "oak of weeping" is referred to, or where, it is asserted, sacrifices to the dead were made. Nowhere are the statements found, however, that would actually prove that the spirits of the dead were thought of as gods. The whole conception is as shallow and as unscientific as it can be.Then even fetishism has been attributed to the patriarchs. Israel's religion is supposed to give indications that holy hills were reverenced as a fetish; so, too, fountains, trees, and stones. Yet even the unlearned will be able to detect quite readily that, these strange reconstructions of the text must be read into the text in a manner which does violence to all sober and honest interpretation of the text. The thought lying behind all such attempts is, of course, this: since such lower levels of religion are seen on the part of many other nations, therefore they must be characteristic of Israel's religion in its earlier stages -- a faulty style of argument.1. The Call-of Abram and the Exodus from Haran (v.1-9)1. And Yahweh said unto Abram: Depart from thy country, from thy relatives and from thy father's house unto a land which I will show thee."Get thee out" (A. V.), though entirely correct, sounds too sharply imperative in the English of our day; for lekh-lekha is a mild "go for thyself," lekha being either a dative of interest or merely an ethical dative (K. S.35), its force being like the

English: "do go" or the German:" geh doch." This command is attributed to Yahweh, whose mercy controls all that he does in this connection in singling out an individual who is to become the ancestor of the Saviour's line. The extent of the sacrifice asked of Abram covers three items which draw an ever narrowing circle until the last makes the extent of the sacrifice most keenly felt. The "country" ('érets) which is to be left is, of course, the country which according to Ge 11:31 had become the new home of Terah's group. For this verse (v.1) attaches itself to the preceding situation by a waw "and." So 12:1 intends by this device to build up on Ge 11:31, 32. Consequently, the A. V. translation is not justified in rendering, "Now the Lord had said" -- a rendering made, no doubt, to harmonize with Ac 7:2. As the new country (Haran) still offered too many dangers to this man whom God's grace singled out, so also did his "relatives" (môlédheth), those who were tied to him by blood and were exerting a more subtle and powerful influence than the individual usually realizes. But strongest of all was the influence of his "father's house," and hardest, the sacrifice of breaking these dearest ties. Apparently, in both these latter terms a larger complex of persons is involved than those mentioned in 11:31. Under "relatives" we must, no doubt, include Nahor's household, which must have emigrated from Ur shortly after Terah's departure.Usually either too much or too little is put into the clause: "unto a land which I will show thee." Too little, if it be assumed that Abram did not even have an idea in what direction or toward what land he should go. For v.5 says "they went forth to go into the land of Canaan:" Besides, according to Ge 11:31 the destination of Terah was Canaan at the first. On the other hand, too much is presupposed if it be assumed that Abram actually knew that Canaan was to be his ultimate destination. The happy mean in this case, then, would be that Abram well knew that he should first bend his steps toward Canaan. But the land that God intended to show him was yet to be revealed. In other words, only after Abram had actually arrived in Canaan did God also reveal to him that Canaan was the land where he was to take up his dwelling permanently. So the whole issue still is very definitely one of faith. With a general knowledge of the direction in which he is to turn, this man still must venture out in faith in the providence of God, trusting that in God's own good time his ultimate goal would be made apparent to him. It is this exemplary faith which the author of Hebrews extols when he says (Ge 11:8): "By faith Abram, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." The last part of this statement may well be understood as being in harmony with our interpretation above: Abram knew the direction, but he did not know the specific inheritance.In the final 'ar'ekka the suffix is attached more closely by the use of a nun energicum (G. K.58 i)2. I will make of thee a great nation, And I will bless thee, And I will make thy name great, And be thou a blessing; And I will bless them that bless thee, And I will curse him that curseth thee.3. And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.For parallels see Ge 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14.We have arranged the various items of these two verses thus in order to make the constituent parts as readily apparent as possible. Much energy is expended in trying to determine how many parts constitute this blessing laid upon Abram. Some arrive at three parts, some at four, some at five. We feel that each is distinct by itself, and, therefore, the covenant number seven prevails here, even though there is no explicit covenant involved. In a sense, one element of v.1 might be drawn upon, viz., "the land I will show thee," as being still another promise of God, but these words are only indirectly a blessing. So, then, for the one act of sacrifice on Abram's part there is to be a sevenfold reward on Yahweh's.The first promise runs thus: "I will make of thee a great nation." The word for "nation" is gôy, usually used of the heathen nations, but here, as in Ge

35:11 and Ex 19:6, in reference to Israel, to signify that, as nations go, Israel shall be great. "Great nation," of course, implies more than great numbers. Since the greatness is of God's making, it involves, true greatness in every sense. If ever there was a great nation, it was Israel. The force of this word must naturally be reckoned over against the fact that at the time when it was spoken Abram had no son.The second promise runs thus: "I will bless thee." This statement, then, does not refer to the nation but to Abram alone. A man is blessed when due to the gracious working of God all goes well with him (cf. Ge 39:5); the things that he undertakes thrive; and true success crowns all his endeavours. This certainly is a promise that was realized in Abram's life.The third item: "I will make thy name great." Abram personally is to become famous. The various names that are given to Abram display a part of this fame. So he is called "the father of a multitude" (Ge 17:5), a prince of God (Ge 23:6); the man in God's confidence (Ge 18:17-19); a prophet (Ge 20:7); the servant of God (Psalms 105:6); and the friend of God (Ge 20:7). Even without such names he could still be famous. But this fame is not a personal achievement of his but a divinely wrought favour.The fourth: "And be thou a blessing." The form in which this item of the promise appears differs materially from that of all the rest. Instead of being an imperfect hortative, it" is the imperative, "and be thou" (wehyeh). Now it is true enough that an imperative may be joined to a hortative (K. S.364n), but it cannot be denied that this is "strange" (K. S.203) in this case. Merely to make this imperative just one more promise strips it too utterly of its peculiar character, as does A. V.: "and thou shalt be a blessing." The fact of the matter is that it, indeed, expresses something that God does: God is the One, who in the last analysis makes Abram to be a true blessing unto others. But at the same time, a moral responsibility of Abram's is involved: he should do his part that he may become a blessing to others. Consequently the imperative, "be thou a blessing. He personally should aim to live such a life that others are blessed by it.The fifth item: "I will bless them that bless thee." So intimately is God concerned in having men take the proper attitude toward this prophet and servant of His that whoever wishes Abram well, to him will God do good. For this difference between God's blessing (item 2 above) and man's blessing in the second half of this fifth item is that man's blessings are the wishing of good, God's blessings the impartation of good. Besides, it should be noted that divine grace presupposes that there will be many that wish Abram well; therefore mebharekhê'kha, plural, "thy blessers."The sixth item: "And I will curse him that curseth thee." The Hebrew uses two different verbs -- 'arar for God's judicial cursing and galal for man's injudicious or blasphemous cursing. Again divine grace presupposes that there will not be many that wish this friend of God ill: therefore meqallelkha, singular, "thy curser." The deeper reason behind all this is that Abram will be so closely identified with the good work of God, that to curse him comes to be almost the equivalent of cursing God. The seventh item: "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This word reaches back to the divided "families" (Ge 10:5, 20, 31) of the earth, divided by their sins, as well as to the curse of Ge 3:17 which is now to be replaced by a blessing. A blessing so great that its effect shall extend to "all the families of the earth" can be thought of only, in connection with the, promised Saviour. This word, therefore, is definitely Messianic and determines that the Messiah is to emerge from the line of Abram. Negative criticism, consciously or unconsciously bent on removing the Messianic element from the Old Testament, attempts to cancel the specifically Messianic thought of the passage by modifying the meaning of the verb "be blessed," nibhrekhû. This stem is Nifal and so passive. Now the claim is raised that the inherent idea of the Nifal is reflexive; therefore the Nifal should be rendered as a reflexive, as the parallel Hithpaels of Ge 22:18 and Ge 26:4 suggest. Besides, it is claimed, the

verb barakh has a passive in the Pual form which is extensively used. Yet the truth of the matter is that the passive of the Nifal stem should be adhered to as the normal thing, unless the passive sense actually is impossible. The Nifal is passive rather than reflexive. In the second place, a careful study of the Pual will reveal that it is used of blessings on the lower levels -- blessings on the house, the name, the inheritance, the person, the land, or the generation of the upright. Or when the verb is used in reference to "the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21), it refers to blessings that man bestows upon it -- human blessings, not divine. In our passage the case is different. Here the reference is to blessings divinely bestowed. Therefore a distinctive verb is sought. The Hithpaels of Ge 22:18 and Ge 26:4 merely add another aspect of the case, namely that men shall wish for themselves (reflexive) the blessing of the seed of Abram. These two passages, therefore, are not an interpretation of ours but merely a thought supplementary to this original promise. Besides, the usual interpretation given by critics to the fourth item ("be thou a blessing") would cover the last or seventh, and so instead of having a word that mounts to a climax, they have a weak repetition that is to no purpose. Even Procksch feels constrained to admit that "only in the idea of the Messiah does the depth of the thought (of this word) adequately display itself." The old conservative interpretation is well established in every way. It alone meets the needs of the case.The object meqallelkha is not placed first so much for emphasis as to make possible a chiastic arrangement of clauses.4. So Abram went forth as Yahweh told him, and Lot went forth with him; and Abram was seventy-five years old when he went forth from Haran.Abram's obedience rendered in faith is stressed primarily in this word: as he has been bidden to do, so he does; Yahweh's word must be fulfilled. Whether there was any struggle with the reluctant flesh or not, we are not told. The important thing is: Abram's faith yielded obedience. The pain of separation is eased in part by the coming along of Abram's nephew Lot. God's mercy is displayed in this fact, for He it was, no doubt, who disposed Lot's heart to desire to accompany Abram. There must have been something of a spiritual kinship between these two men, even if Lot afterwards proves far inferior to Abram. Important for our understanding the situation correctly is our knowledge of the age of Abram. For if he is seventy-five years old, he is even according to the standards of that time a middle-aged man. So decisive a step as his would hardly come so easily at his age as at an earlier period in his life. So the mention of Abram's age helps us to put a more correct estimate upon the heroic quality of this act of faith. Criticism claims that v.4 b as well as v.5 are traceable to a different source, namely to P, whereas the rest of the chapter dates from J. Luther, especially apt on discerning the character of faith, remarks on this act of Abram's: "Faith is a lively and powerful thing; it is not merely a drowsy and idle thought; nor does it float somewhere upon the heart as a duck upon the water, but it is like water warmed through and through by a good warm fire."Age is expressed in Hebrew by the idiom, "a child of so-and-so-many years" (G. K.128 o).5. And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew and all their acquisition which they had acquired and the persons that they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth to go to the land of Canaan, and (in due course of time) they arrived in the land of Canaan.Quite in conformity with the patriarchal mode of life, where the patriarch himself enjoys a rare measure of authority over the whole clan, the departure is attributed entirely to Abram: he took the persons and the goods. We have translated above, "acquisition which they had acquired," to indicate the cognate object which the Hebrew expresses rakhash rekhush. Rakhash really covers all movable possessions, Fahrhabe (K. W.). It is not a distinctive word of P; it is not an indication that a particular author is writing, but a word used when possessions have to be referred to. Here, in particular, it is becoming apparent that we are dealing

with a very rich man. He has not only chattels but also a great retinue. These persons the Hebrew refers to by the very general word "souls" (collective singular, néphesh), which is about the equivalent of "persons." The verb used with this word is 'asah, meaning originally "to make"; here "to get," as in Ge 31:1. These "persons" include not only the children born of this large retinue of servants but the many servants that had been acquired by purchase. Mark that the immediate and definite objective is "the land of Canaan," as indicated above. We have inserted parenthetically "in due course of time"' because such, largely obvious, phrases are for the most part taken for granted in Hebrew. English would have actually expressed this idea. In characteristic fashion Moses passes by all the details that might have been connected with this long journey. Nothing essential to the author's purpose occurred on the way.Though 'artsah ("to the land") has the old locative ending, this does not, prevent the attaching of the noun "Canaan" to produce the construct relationship (K. S.273).6, 7, And Abram passed through the land as far as the place Shechem to the terebinth of Moreh, and the Canaanites were in the land at that time. And Yahweh appeared unto Abram and said: To thy seed will I give this land. And he built an altar there unto Yahweh who had appeared unto him.This verse agrees well with our interpretation of v.1. Abram "passes through" the land without being definitely aware what part or how much of it is destined for him. The first place where a stop worthy of record is made is "the place Shechem." The thing that makes this place important is the fact that God there appears to Abram. The word "place" (maqôm) simply means "town" or "locality," a meaning of the word also with us. This meaning is both natural and in harmony with the established uses of the word. The technical meaning, adopted by some, "the holy place" or "the sanctuary" is not well established. Nor do passages like Ge 28:11; 35:7; De 12:13 establish this technical meaning. That such a use attaches to the Arabic maqâm is not sufficient ground for demanding a like Hebrew usage. Besides, in the nature of the case it seems, very unlikely that any of the Canaanite high places could have been centres of worship of Yahweh, the only true God. Besides, Abram, just called forth from idolatrous connections, may well be regarded as a man who for conscience' sake would have avoided the sites sacred to Canaanitish idols, lest he himself appear as an idolater. The same objection applies to Jacob in 28:11. "Shechem," as Skinner too points out, was important already in the Tell-Amarna period (1480-1460 B. C.) and may well have been a prominent city when Abram arrived there. Usually the cities which became prominent later were of importance already long before, as excavations revealing pre-Canaanite levels clearly prove. "Shechem," then, is not here used proleptically for "the site of the later Shechem." Its prominent position could well have made it one of the outstanding towns of this early date. The author does not only weave these references to certain towns into his narrative in order to lend to these places a measure of sanctity for later time (such a purpose, of course, is perfectly permissible); but he primarily records the event as an event, because it actually transpired and was of moment in the life of Abram.The historical importance of the event can in part be displayed by likening this appearance of Yahweh's to Abram to a gracious welcome and reception tendered by the Lord to Abram as he definitely arrives in the centre of the land destined for his descendants. At the same time the appearance of God to Abram is a reward for his fidelity in obeying the Lord's behest. Not everyone may be honoured by such divine favours.Besides, when God says: "I will give this land to thy seed," it is sufficiently apparent that Abram himself is not destined to receive it. So this is another one of the divine words calculated to exercise faith.But the generous character of the promise should be noted very particularly. Abram had merely been bidden to go to a land that God would show him. There was

in that word no intimation that Abram's seed would inherit that land. So God is seen actually to give more then He promised. After such a fashion does God keep His word.One more aspect of the case should be considered. For the development of God's purposes in the seed of Abram it is essential that a definite land be available within which this seed comes to its normal development. So the promise of the land as held in safekeeping by God for Abram's seed is not a capricious promise but one that ties up definitely with the needs of the case. From this point on it will be seen that every new promise fits into the development of God's purposes as into an organic whole which is going through a normal process of growth.However, two things more had been recorded before the appearance of God is mentioned. First, that at Shechem (which lay between Ebal and Gerizim, not quite at the site of the present Nablus) Abram encamped by an ancient landmark, "the terebinth of Moreh." 'Elôn without a doubt means a big tree and very likely the turpentine tree, or terebinth, rather than the oak. "Moreh" may be a proper name (e. g. A. V.). It may be that, since the word also means "teacher, instructor," some renowned person, apt at giving counsel to the people, had held forth under this tree. But all suppositions, such as that the words ought to be rendered "oracle-terebinth," or that we here have indications of an animistic religion on the part of the patriarchs, are guesses. It is just as possible that in days of old some worshipper of Yahweh had under this oak admonished and instructed the people. In the absence of anything definite our translation above has much to commend it. Then Moses records: "the Canaanites were in the land at that time." This is stated in preparation for the promise about to be given to Abram. For no one can fully realize the greatness of the thing promised to Abram until he remembers that the land promised to the posterity of Abram was already occupied by the Canaanites. But Abram's faith is not daunted by this seeming difficulty. Almost unanimously criticism makes this clause manifestly post-Mosaic. However, it does not require great ingenuity to understand that Moses could have written thus. Even Koenig fails to see clearly on this point. Note: the singular, "the Canaanite," used for a term usually found in the plural (K. S.256 e).7. God's brief word spoken on the occasion of this appearance is: "To thy seed will I give this land." Abram himself was to possess only a burial ground. Faith had to accept "things not seen." A word from God requires a response on the part of man. Abram felt himself impelled to give personal public testimony to God's mercy displayed in this appearance. So he built an altar. This statement is misconstrued by criticism in its attempt to find as many distinctions as possible between so-called sources. This passage, being ascribed to J, is said to mean that J never records instances of actual sacrifices by the patriarchs. That is the argument from silence, and it is inconclusive because the word for altar is mizbéach, meaning "a place for slaughter." The manifest intention of the author must be that "a place for slaughter" was made in order to slaughter a victim. Altars become altars when the victim is slain. A mere altar of stones, would have been a formalistic gesture on Abram's part -- a gesture like falling on one's knees to pray but omitting the prayer. The soul of the patriarchal religion was sacrifice. The critics find matters, which no one before their time dreamed of. The altar is said to be built "unto Yahweh" to emphasize the undeserved mercy of His promise.8. And he journeyed onward toward the hills to the east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east; and there he built an altar unto Yahweh and called upon the name of Yahweh.Still largely nomadic in his habits, upon his first arrival in the land Abram next pitched his tent near "Bethel," here so called proleptically, see Ge 28:19. Moses diligently records such well-authenticated events of Abram's life in order to awaken an anticipation for the land in the hearts of the Israelites who are journeying toward this land, as well as to let historic spots be vested with sacred memories after

Israel has come into possession of the land. "Ai" has the article, being derived from a common noun meaning "heap of stones." As the noun in usage becomes a proper noun, the article still clings to it. Again an altar is built and, of course, sacrifice made together with public invocation of Yahweh's name, an act which could hardly be performed without proclaiming the works and the character of Yahweh -- a fact which leads Luther to translate: "he preached concerning the name of the Lord." For a full discussion of this expression, which specifically means "to use the name of the Lord in worship" (B D B) see above on 4:26. The beth used in the expression is the Beth of interest (K. S.212 c). On wayyett see G. K.76 c.9. And Abram pulled up stakes and kept on moving toward the Negeb.Nasa' actually means "to pull up stakes," a natural expression in nomadic days. To convey the idea that this kept on for quite a while the absolute infinitive (nasôa') is joined to the finite verb, as well as the absolute infinitive of the verb "to go" (halôkh) which almost equals our adverb "continually." (K. S.329 v; G. K.113 u). The "Negeb" is the region of Palestine that lies south of Hebron. It is an arid region in parts of which isolated flocks may be tended, at least down as far south as Beersheba. It may have been less desiccated in patriarchal days. Often the word merely indicated the direction, south.2. The Trip to Egypt During a Famine (v.10-21)Now follows an episode that is less attractive. Abram does not appear to good advantage in it. With impartial truth Moses records what Abram did. If the account remains entirely objective without the addition of a subjective opinion or estimate of the ethical value of Abram's conduct, this can readily be seen to be offset by the fact that the narrative as such in its unvarnished truth so plainly sets forth the unworthy sentiments that animated the patriarch, that the sympathetic reader is almost made to blush for the thing done by the man of God. The charge of the critics is decidedly unfair when they say: "There is no suggestion that either the untruthfulness or the selfish cowardice of the request (of Abram) was severely reprobated by the ethical code to which the narrative appealed." Prochsch sees the situation more nearly as it actually is when he asserts: "It is quite impossible here not to notice the narrator's sarcasm," and adds that this step that Abram took "is most sharply condemned" by the writer. Comparing chapters twenty and twenty-six, we find two situations that constitute a close parallel to the one under consideration. Strange as such recurrences may strike us, it should be remembered that life often brings, us into situations that are practically duplicates of what transpired at an earlier date; and he that marvels that a patriarch sinned a second time after a definite rebuke, let him remember how often he himself may repeat a sin for which a stern admonition had been addressed to him.To say this must have been "a very popular story in ancient Israel" hardly does justice to the facts of the case. Why should Israel have deemed the failings of its patriarchs material for "popular" stories? The recording of three such instances is explicable only on the score of the strict impartiality of the author.10. Now there was a famine in the land and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was heavy in the !and.In Canaan famines have been periodic since times immemorial. They still recur. In addition to being practically a homeless stranger, Abram incurs the difficulty of subsisting with all his household and his flocks during days when men can make but a precarious livelihood. The account does not dwell upon the difficulties of the position. They who faithfully obey God's behests are not promptly rewarded by God in all things. Particular difficulties may arise as an outgrowth of their obedience.To go down to Egypt at such a time, to the granary of antiquity, is quite in conformity with what monumental inscriptions portray. There are found scenes depicting "the admission of Semites to the rich pastures of Egypt." The expression "to sojourn there" indicates that nothing more is intended than a temporary stay. To this day the Beduins are not grievously disturbed by

the necessity of departing for a time from their accustomed dwelling places when famine prevails. "Go down" (yaradh) is the proper verb for going from the mountains of Palestine to the lower levels of Egypt.11-13. And it came to pass when he was at the point of entering Egypt, he said unto Sarai, his wife: See, now, I know that thou art a woman of beautiful appearance, and it shall come to pass if any of the Egyptian men see thee, they will say, That is his wife; so they will slay me but spare thy life. Please say that thou art my sister, in order that it may go well with me for thy sake, and my life be spared because of thee.According to Ge 20:13 Abram and Sarai agreed to employ the deception here described whenever they got into a difficulty such as this. So v.11-13 must be regarded in the light of a reminder on Abram's part to live up to the standing agreement. This was done when they "were at the point of entering Egypt." The Hebrew idiom, however, states the case thus: "he drew near (hiqrîbh) to enter toward Egypt." The le before bô' makes the equivalent of a direct object of hiqrîbh, (K. S.399 n). Yadhß'ti is not to be rendered as a past, being a perfectum resultativum -- as a result of the full knowledge of the case that he has he now "knows" (present) (K. S.127). The next Hebrew idiom runs thus "a woman, beautiful in respect to appearance," mar'eh being an accusative of specification, known also as Temjiz accusative (K. S.336 h).12. Abram knows how little the rights of foreigners were respected in olden times. He also knows how beautiful women would be sought out when they came to a foreign land. He also understands that marriage was respected sufficiently that men felt they must dispose of the husband before they could take his wife. Egyptian parallels prove that men had no hesitation about committing murder in an effort to secure their object. There was nothing beside the point in the estimate that he makes of the situation except the morals of the patriarch. Though Ge 20:12 indicates that the literal truth was being told, there is yet the possibility of telling it with the intent to deceive; and so it becomes a lie. In addition, there is something cowardly and mean about expecting Sarai to encounter the hazards in order that Abram might avoid danger. The heroic is noticeably absent in this request.If the question arise: "How can Sarai be deemed beautiful enough at the age of sixty-five to allow for the complimentary terms here used (on her age cf. Ge 17:17 and Ge 12:4; she died at the age of 127, see Ge 23:1)?" it must be remembered that according to the limits of longevity of those times she was only middle-aged. Middle-aged women may have retained their beauty, especially if they have not borne many children. On Pharaoh's part the taking of a woman into his harem may be largely a political expedient to enhance his own influence. Hammitsrîm are not "all," but "any of the Egyptian men" (Procksch).13. The particle na' with the imperative gives a milder tone to the imperative, like our "please." Abram knows that if anyone takes Sarai on the supposition that she is Abram's sister, Abram as the honoured brother will be an object of respectful treatment. Fully aware of the fact that such a course may involve the sacrifice of Sarai's honour in order that he himself might fare well, he nevertheless asks Sarai to make the sacrifice. Abram never sank lower, as far as we know, than when he made this request. Sarai's acquiescence, however, seems to grow out of the idea that there actually is no other safe course to follow. She was as sadly deficient in faith as he himself on this occasion. Luther's laboured efforts to justify Abram's course do not meet with our approval. 14, 15. And it came to pass as Abram came to Egypt, Egyptian men saw the woman that she was exceedingly beautiful, Also the princes of Pharaoh saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.That Abram had not been dealing with a hypothetical case appears from the sequel. It is immediately apparent that at least the Hebrew women of this time -- as, of course, in later times also -- did not go about veiled. See v.12 for our rendering "Egyptian men." In their efforts to set

so-called sources at variance with one another as much as possible, the critics here freely accept that Sarai must have been beautiful but claim that this view of the case clashes with the divergent view of Ge 17:17. On the weaving together of chief and subordinate clauses ("the woman" really belongs into the subordinate clause) see K. S.414 b.15. "The princes of Pharaoh" are practically his "courtiers" (Meek). They seek to ingratiate themselves with Pharaoh by recommending this woman of exceptional beauty. On the form halallû see G. K.10g. Beth ("house") is used without a preposition or locative ending -- a common use (K. S.330 c). The more nearly absolute authority of the king of those times is indicated by the fact that whatsoever woman he desires is promptly brought to him.16. And he bestowed favours upon Abram for her sake, and he (Abram) possessed sheep and cattle and asses and menservants and maidservants and she-asses and camels.That the move of taking the supposed sister of Abram had also political implications appears from the fact that Pharaoh now grants favours to his new brother-in-law, as he begins to deem Abram. The somewhat colourless verb hêtibh, "to do well," is used to express the idea of "bestowing favours." When, then, the things are listed that Abram possessed, the sense of the passage cannot be that Pharaoh's gift included all these elements but rather that, partly as a result of Pharaoh's gift, Abram's wealth was made up of the constituent parts here listed. The order of these parts is somewhat puzzling: "menservants and maidservants" inserted before "she-asses and camels." However, this must have been the original order of the items in the text, for not only the Masoretic text but the Greek and the Syrian versions give this order. One possible explanation would be that the items are listed in the order of their acquisition. First Abram specialized in the acquisition of "sheep and cattle and asses." Then he recognized the need of more "servants" and proceeded to acquire more such. Lastly he branched out in the direction of "she-asses and camels." In this instance, too, textual alterations can offer nothing more than conjectures. Though it is commonly admitted that "camels" do not appear among the items specialized in by the Egyptians up to this time -- for they are not indicated on early monumental inscriptions -- yet nothing could prevent a man like Abram from bringing his own camels along, if he already possessed them. The verse does not say that Pharaoh gave all these gifts to Abram; it merely lists the totals of his possessions. Meek mistranslates when he renders: Abram "was the recipient of sheep," etc.17. And Yahweh laid heavy afflictions upon Pharaoh and upon his household because of Sarai, Abram's wife.It is very clear that all this is reported as an instance of God's undeserved favour bestowed upon Abram. Comparatively speaking, Pharaoh was in the right over against Abram, for Pharaoh had acted in good faith, and Abram had practised deception. Potentially, Pharaoh may have been as much in the wrong as Abram -- a thing usually overlooked -- for had Abram admitted that he was Sarai's husband, Pharaoh might have had him killed. In any case, Abram's lie does not make him a worthy recipient of divine mercy. But God's mercy outruns man's-merit, as the Pentateuch emphasizes with particular instances. Since Abram is the father of the seed of promise, Sarai, the mother, must be safeguarded. Man's sin almost defeats God's purpose, but God's mercy prevails. The Hebrew expression for "laying heavy afflictions" upon Pharaoh is "to strike with strokes" (nigga' negha'îm) G. K.117 q. What these afflictions were we shall never be able to determine; an analogy can be seen in Ge 20:18. Apparently they were intended to be of a kind that would prevent Pharaoh from approaching Sarai, for the Piel of nagha' is used "only of smiting with disease." Procksch, therefore, is far more specific than the evidence allows when he says: "sexual ailments of Pharaoh."18, 19. And Pharaoh called Abram and said: What is this that thou hast done to me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why didst thou say: She

is my sister? And so I took her to myself to wife. And now, there is thy wife; take her and go.Again, in this condensed account we have no means of determining exactly how Pharaoh became aware of the fact that Yahweh brought on his affliction for Sarai's sake. It may have been that he had something of the fear of God in his heart and felt that he must have done something to incur the affliction. He may then have consulted with Sarai and found out what the actual situation was. We shall give him the benefit of the doubt when he represents himself as entirely in the right and implies that Abram would have suffered no harm had he actually stepped up at once as Sarai's husband, It appears that Pharaoh gives the statement of the case that represents him in as favourable a light as possible. Yet he seems justified in his vexation, at least in part. The first clause has been well translated: "What a way for you to treat me!" (Meek). Yet a part of the protest seems overdone. When he inquires why Abram did this, he asks concerning a matter that he understood well enough as parallels from Egyptian sources indicate only too clearly. The rebuke that Abram deserves he receives at the hands of one who is not even a worshipper of Yahweh. It consists in a rather curt dismissal. The fact that Abram receives it in silence indicates that Abram was aware of his deserving to be rebuked; and so, by representing the case thus, the author indicates where the right and the wrong of the matter lay. 20. And Pharaoh appointed men over him and they escorted him away and his wife and all that he had.'Anashîm means "a number of men" (K. S.74). The business of this group was to serve as bodyguard and to escort Abram to the border (yeshallechû means "dismiss" in a milder sense, or "escort"). Pharaoh has been duly impressed. He would not venture to do Abram harm. The appointing of men of his own to guard the sojourner is a tacit admission to the effect that serious, danger really threatened. Besides, since God has made it plain that His favour rests upon Abram, Pharaoh feels that God might take vengeance upon him if he let evil befall Abram. Pharaoh recognized that he had been "reproved" by God (Psalms 105:14, 15). Since God never could administer undeserved reproof, this psalm passage proves that the construction we put upon Pharaoh's deed as involving a measure of guilt was not wrong.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThe first section offering itself for treatment in this chapter is v.1-9. Here the general theme of the Pentateuch may be treated, "the Greatness of God's Mercy,". for this thought certainly overtops every other in this pericope. Yet other approaches to this text are permissible. If the New Testament (Heb.1l:8-10) here makes an issue of the "Faith of Abraham," why could we not hold fast the same point of view? For that matter, one might centre attention on the Messianic thought, and in that event v.1-3 might constitute enough of a text, with a remarkable climax in the Messianic thought of 3b. In no case should this Messianic feature be submerged or treated but briefly. Then there remains the second unit section of the text v.10-20. To this different approaches are admissible. Again the theme of God's undeserved mercy may be put into the forefront. That would still have to be the case to an extent even if the theme were used: "The Frailty of God's Saints." Even a more general subject is permissible, such as, "The Unimpeachable Honesty of the Bible." If the last subject be used, it would be necessary to have the text furnish the one notable example. Other examples would be entitled to no more than very brief, passing notice.

CHAPTER XIII

3. Separation from Lot (v.1-18) We have only begun to penetrate into the life of Abram and into the depth of faith displayed by that life. The last incident, it is true, may have led to a less favourable estimate of his character. What immediately follows tends to give a more adequate measure of this, one of the rarest of characters in the Scriptures. Besides, there will be occasions when divine wisdom will deem it expedient to have a direct word from on high granted to Abram. The rich development of divine mercy that follows the steps of this venerable patriarch especially deserves to be traced through its progressive development. The separation from Lot is a necessity growing out of deeper reasons than those usually cited. Lot is an element that is not suited to be an integral part of the chosen people, as his later deterioration shows. Circumstances soon arise which make it eminently desirable to remove this unsuitable material as early as possible. Behind the outward separation ties a deeper motivation. At the same time, this incident has always served in the church as a typical case of how to deal in a practical way with the problem of incompatibility. If persons simply cannot get along together, nothing is gained by attempting to force the issue or by discussing the point till a solution is reached. Incompatibility is best dealt with by separation: let those that cannot agree get out of one another's way. To Ambrose is attributed the saying divide ut maneat amicitia, a procedure which does not merit the criticism, "a wretched but practicable rule" (Delitzsch). 1, 2. And Abram went up from Egypt toward the Negeb, he and his wife and all that he possessed, and Lot was with him. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold. "Went up" is the correct expression regularly used for going up from the land of Egypt which lay on a lower level than mountainous Palestine. Since his route was mostly northward, A. V. does not do well to render hannegbah "into the south." It should rather be "into the South-country" -- always so called from the standpoint of central Palestine -- or else "into the Negeb." See above 12:9. Now it is specially mentioned that "his wife" was with him, to recall to mind that through his folly he had almost lost her. Incidentally it is recalled that Lot had gone along, for Lot is about to figure in the following incident. 2. Besides, the great wealth of Abram is most conveniently mentioned here that we may at once visualize the patriarch as abounding in manifold possession. The Hebrew aptly says Kabhedh, "heavy," for rich. Critics fail to see the simple connection between v.1 and v.2 and place v.2 behind v.4. Miqneh means acquisition, but in the nomadic type of existence it came to mean primarily "cattle." Apparently, "gold and silver" in abundance were not among the common possessions of nomads like Abram. Consequently, separate mention is made of this form of wealth. A good bit of this latter form of wealth may have just been acquired in Egypt. However, to make Abram wealthy chiefly as the result of rich gifts from Pharaoh is hardly correct. God had abundantly blessed the man; and wealth as such is not an evil nor incompatible with holiness of life. The word for gold, zahabh, used, as Procksch points out also by Aramaeans and Arabians, is not the word employed by Canaanites and Babylonians, viz., charats (cf. crusoz). This would seem to point to different sources of the gold for these different groups. The article with "cattle, silver and gold" is the article used with familiar objects, like our English, "the weeds are growing all over our garden"; cf. G. K.126 m; K. S.297 a. 3, 4. So he went in stages from the Negeb to Bethel, to the place where his tent had been in the previous instance between Bethel and Ai, to the place

of the altar which he had formerly made there. And there Abram called upon the name of the Lord. This "going in stages" is a good description of the nomadic mode of travel: periodic stops are made that the flocks may not be overdriven (cf. Ge 33:13). Since Abram and Lot are traversing practically the same route as the one they followed down to Egypt, the expression lemassa'aw, meaning "by his stages," most likely indicates that he used practically the same stages that had been suitable on the downward journey. So also the Septuagint and the Vulgate. According to Ge 12:8 his tent had been pitched between Bethel and Ai "in the previous instance," battechilah -- "in the beginning." The word "place" (maqôm) means "the native sanctuary" as little here as in Ge 12:6. It was the place of Abram's altar not the place where Canaanite altars had marked a sanctuary, as 4a plainly says. The last clause is not to be rendered as a relative: "where Abram," etc., because the repetition of the subject Abram especially aims to emphasize that this clause is co-ordinate and states the important transaction at this spot: the public worship of the name of the Lord (cf. Ge 4:26 and Ge 12:8). Apparently, this worship was to Abram a matter of personal necessity as well as of public testimony. Of personal necessity, for he desired to express his penitence at his lapse from truth as well as his gratitude for the undeserved protection of himself and his wife by Yahweh. At the same time this public act proclaimed the honour of Yahweh, the true and faithful, to whom alone Abram ascribed his safe return. 5-7. Lot, also, who was going along with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. And the land was not able to support them so that they might have dwelt together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to dwell together. And so there was strife between the keepers of Abram's cattle and the keepers of Lot's cattle, and (besides) the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling in the land at that time. Nothing has thus far indicated that Lot also was a man of means. Apparently, he first acquired greater wealth after he was in Abram's company and the Lord was blessing them both. His wealth was hardly as extensive as Abram's; for "flocks and herds" are included under the "cattle" ascribed to Abram (v.2). That Abram had a great retinue of servants goes without saying. "Tents," like the parallel "houses," is no doubt used by metonomy for the people that dwelt in them. It would seem that Lot had made special efforts to accumulate "tents"; otherwise these would hardly have been mentioned separately. The participle holekh has the article because the noun which it modifies is a proper noun and so is definite (K. S.333 z).6. Naturally, since nomadic life demands ample pasturage, such large flocks put a heavy drain upon the natural resources along this line. In reality, "the land was not able to support them," (nasa' as in 36:7). so as actually to make it possible for them "to dwell together." La before the infinitive shébheth to express result. Yachdaw with a fossilized or at least indefinite (K. S.324 e). pronominal suffix. The verse closes with a palindromic result clause after result and cause had been stated previously -- a rather common construction, cf. Ge 3:19; 6:5; 7:22; 11:9. However, v.6 dare not be set over against v.5 with the claim that v.6 (ascribed to P) makes scant pasturage the ground of separation, whereas v.5 (ascribed to J) together with v.7 speaks of strife. For the critics are acting upon the assumption that in life one simple cause must underlie one simple result. Life is far more complex than to allow for such an inadequate approach. Nor do the words that Dillmann lists as marks of P (or A): "possessions," "support," "land of Canaan," "the cities of the oval," constitute a stylistic peculiarity. Such words grow out of the nature of the story that is being narrated.7. "Strife" between the respective shepherds is unavoidable when in many a case situations will arise as to whom priority belongs in reference to a certain pasturage. Strife had actually begun to break out between the shepherds. An additional fact (note our parenthetical "besides" in the translation) bore upon the case and must

be mentioned if an adequate picture of the situation is to be won, namely: "The Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling in the land at that time." Everyone might know that such was the case but might forget to reckon with it for the moment. For since both these groups also held parts of the land by virtue of long residence, Abram and Lot could only lay claim to the unoccupied areas. This additional statement does not, therefore, give indication of a time when Canaanites and Perizzites were no longer in the land, and does not, therefore, originate with a writer of a later date than Moses, as critics keep reiterating. Delitzsch, a critic, rightly classes the remark as "one necessary to give an adequate picture of the situation." Another thought lies involved in the statement about the original inhabitants: it was hardly a fitting situation to have the men who followed the true God falling into quarrels with one another in the sight of the idolatrous inhabitants of the land. The "Canaanites," apparently, dwelt largely in fortified cities. The "Perizzites," akin apparently to perazi, "the hamlet-dweller," lived more in the open country, and they may have been of the original inhabitants of Canaan, but were not of the stock of Ham (cf. Ge 10:15-18). They are also listed in Ge 34:30 and Jude 1:4, 5 together with the Canaanites, and were also of the nations to be dispossessed by Israel (Ge 15:20; Ex 3:17, and 17 times).8, 9. And Abram said to Lot: Please do not let strife arise between me and thee, between my shepherds and thy shepherds; for we are brethren. Is not all the land open before thee? Please part from me. If thou goest to the left, I will go to the right; and if thou goest to the right, I will go to the left.As Luther aptly remarks on the subject, after Abram had given an excellent demonstration of faith in the previous chapter, he now gives a good example of the type of works that faith produces. The true magnanimity of faith is here displayed. How readily Abram might have insisted on his rights: he was the elder; he had come to this country at God's behest, not Lot; to Abram's seed the land had been promised. With utter selflessness and in true faith, which knows that God cannot fail in the keeping of His promise, Abram takes the difficulty in hand. In the wisdom of faith he acts before the peace between him and Lot has been marred. In the courtesy of faith he speaks very kindly: note the double "please," (na') which softens even the kindly suggestions. With the tactfulness of faith he appeals to proper motives: "for we are brethren" (Heb. "we are men that are brethren" -- a noun used for an adjective: 'achchîm -- verbruedert, K. S.306r). "Brother" is used in the wider sense in this case, as Ge 24:27: Bethuel and Abram; and Ge 29:12: Jacob and Laban. Meek's rendering of the opening sentence is admirable: "There simply must be no quarrel between you and me."9. The question here, as aften, is the equivalent of a strong assertion. "Before thee" means "open before thee," though the Hebrew has only lephanêkha. The nifal hipparedh is here used reflexively: separate yourself -- "part." "Left" and "right" here apparently refer to the East and the West respectively, not to the North and the South (Targum). The choice lies wholly with Lot. He may take whatsoever he will. Hashshemo'l is a locative; 'eyminah is a Hifil denominated from yamîn, "right-hand." The same relation holds good for the last two forms, only in reverse order: yamîn being used as locative and 'ashme'îlah as Hifil. 10, 11. Then Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the Round of the Jordan that it was well-watered, every part of it, before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah; in fact, it was as the garden of Yahweh, or at least even as the land of Egypt, in the vicinity of Zoar. So Lot chose for himself the whole Round of the Jordan, and Lot departed eastward; and so they parted one from another.Lot prepares to make his choice and to this end "lifts up his eyes" that he might evaluate the surrounding country as it presented itself to the eye. We make Lot a moral degenerate when we say that he looked about "with a look of eager, lustful greed" (Whitelaw). Again, we judge him far too leniently when we call this "a work of righteousness, because he

walked in faith" (Luther). The truth lies between these two opinions. The gradual degeneracy of a relatively good character begins at this point. It is little to Lot's credit that he immediately takes full advantage of Abram's bighearted offer. Of course, since Canaan was still in reality "a land flowing with milk and honey," we are not confronted with the grievous evil of having only a very undesirable portion of the land left for Abram. Of two acceptable portions Lot takes the perhaps more acceptable. There is nothing mean about Lot's choice. Nevertheless, it is an act devoid of all finer impulses. The portion Lot chooses is called the kikkar of the Jordan. This term implies something round, here "a round district." It is not the whole basin of the Jordan from the Lake of Gennesareth to the Dead Sea but only that portion which extends from about Jericho down to and including the northern end of the Dead Sea to Zoar. So much only, according to the various uses, of the term kikkar where it appears in the Scriptures. In the vicinity of Bethel, at a spot a few minutes to the southeast of the village, is an eminence called Burg Beitin, of which it is said that it is undoubtedly "one of the greatest viewpoints of Palestine" from which, in fact, the Jordan valley and the northern end of the Dead Sea are distinctly to be seen. This region was "wellwatered" at that time and therefore both fertile and provided with ample pasturage.Now when Moses reminds us that this region was so attractive "before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah," he clearly implies that in his time the region was sadly altered. One question will perhaps never be determined at this point and that is how far the devastating effects of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah affected the rest of the Dead Sea region. Some hold that the Bible indicates that the entire Dead Sea is the result of that cataclysmic overthrow. We personally believe that indeed only the southern shallow end of the Dead Sea became covered with water as a result of the overthrow of these cities, as also Kyle's investigations seem to substantiate. But at the same time it appears that more or less of a blight settled upon the whole kikkar. For the author here goes on to describe that it once was as "the garden of Yahweh" by which he must mean the garden of Eden which was in a special sense Yahweh's handiwork. The comparison must have been suitable, else Moses would not have used it. It is true that, nevertheless, the simile is a bit strong. Consequently, it is toned down by a second simile that has a fine propriety about it from another point of view: "as the land of Egypt." To indicate that this second comparison steps to a lower level we inserted the explanatory words: "or at least as." The special propriety of this latter simile lies in this that the region is like Egypt in that a deeper lying river winds through a fertile plain enclosed by mountains on either side. The last phrase, "in the vicinity of Zoar," attaches itself not to "Egypt" but the word "well-watered," and so selects what may have been the most pleasant spot of the now blasted area. All the explanation offered is in place only on the supposition that a tremendous deterioration of the whole "round" has taken place, and this is exactly what the writer wishes to convey. Again critics fail to catch the import of the statement when they assert that "the last half of the verse seems greatly overloaded" (Skinner). "In the vicinity" (bo'akhah) in Hebrew literally -- "as thou goest."11. When Lot chooses for himself "the whole Round of the Jordan," he is planning in reference to his herds which will require ample pasturage. Consequently, he makes his choice by going "eastward." Mikkédem used as in Ge 11:2. So the separation between the two is complete. The heterogeneous element has been removed. Abram is alone, as providence at this time intended that he should be; cf. Isaiah 51:2; Ezekiel 33:24; Malachi 2:15.12, 13. And Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan whereas Lot dwelt in the cities of the Round, and pitched tent even as far as Sodom. And the men of Sodom were wicked and very sinful in the sight of Yahweh.To make it apparent that the separation, effected was very definite we are informed that Canaan proper was

Abram's habitation. Lot, on the other hand, (waw adversative) is found in the cities of the Round (kikkar practically a proper name, K. S.295g). Hengstenberg, no doubt, is correct when he makes the observation (Geschichte des alten Bundes) that Lot's successive deterioration of character is being described. Apparently, at the outset Lot turned to this region because the quiet tenor of a godly life in the company of Abram was not sufficiently attractive for him. He craved the diversions and the excitement offered by city life. So first he turns toward the Round; then he is found in "the cities of the Round"; then he even touches the city notorious for its wickedness, "Sodom." For when the explanatory phrase is added that Sodom's men were "wicked and very sinful in the sight of Yahweh," this is done not only in anticipation of the things to be found in chapter nineteen but chiefly in reference to Lot. If the moral character of these cities was so pronouncedly unsavoury, then a godly man should rather have shunned association with the inhabitants. We finally, however, find the man enrolled among the inhabitants of wicked Sodom. He may not have shared their sins; but, apparently, he was not so entirely averse to them as a godly man should be. The expression "very sinful" is made especially strong in Hebrew by the use of the noun for the adjective "sinners exceedingly." The additional phrase "in the sight of Yahweh" is more than a Hebrew superlative -- a view rejected by Luther on verse 10, "garden of Yahweh." As we indicated in connection with Ge 10:9, "before Yahweh" means "openly before," "in the full mental view of." Yahweh, the Faithful One, was not ignorant of the danger that threatened His own from the side of the ungodliness of these sinners. Naturally, then, of the two terms, "wicked and very sinful in the sight of Yahweh," the second one marks a decided advance upon the first. Not without reason the expression that ascribes to Sodom sinfulness that "cries out to heaven" quite properly grew out of descriptions such as those of our verse. Yahweh's faithfulness demands that He take cognizance of such extreme iniquity and rebuke it for the sake of His true children, lest they suffer harm. 14, 15. But Yahweh on His part said unto Abram after Lot had parted from him: Lift up now thine eyes and look about from the place where thou art to the north, to the south, to the east, and to the west; for all the land at which thou art looking, to thee will I give it and to thy seed for a long time."Yahweh on His part" (noun first, for emphasis) had not been unaware of what His friend had passed through. Abram had by Lot's separation been rendered still more alone. No doubt, the godly patriarch grieved over the necessary separation. But Abram himself had kept himself, without sin throughout this test, and this indeed pleased God, who loves to encourage His own in well doing and rewards them wherever circumstances allow such a course. Rationalistic work righteousness is reflected, in Dillmann's statement of the case: "Abram had through his magnanimous conduct made himself worthy of further favour." But God does love to reward with rewards of grace those who truly serve Him. That this act in this, instance is to be viewed from this point of view appears from the addition of the clause, "after Lot had parted from him."There is, indeed, a contrast between the lifting up of the eyes on Abram's part here and that of Lot v.10, where selfish interest motivated the act. Abram is to regard the land in every direction with the eyes of faith. From certain eminences of Palestine much of the land can actually be seen: Abram, however, is to regard it all not only a certain portion as his own. What he has seemingly lost by not having regard to his material advantage is more than offset by what God bestows upon him. In this case this principle holds good even in regard to material possessions. True, Abram becomes possessor only in his seed -- "to thy seed I will give it." But such possession is none the less real. Such possession is guaranteed by God as extending 'ahh ô1am, "for a long time." We have preferred to render this expression thus, because it actually implies nothing more than for an

indefinitely long season whose end cannot yet be determined, being derived from 'alam, "to be hidden." Under circumstances the expression may mean actual eternity. On the other hand, it may imply no more than for the rest of a man's lifetime (Ex 21:6). Now, surely, as commentators of all times have clearly pointed out, especially already Luther and Calvin, this promise to Abram is conditional, requiring faith. God cannot give rich promises of good which materialize even when men have cast off His Saviour. History is the best commentary on how this promise is meant. When the Jews definitely cast off Christ, they were definitely as a nation expelled from the land. All who fall back upon this promise as guaranteeing a restoration of Palestine to the Jews before the end of time have laid into it a meaning which the words simply do not convey. A very accurate rendering of 'adh ô1am is given by K. C., bis in dunkle Zukunft, "unto the dark future.""For all time" (Meek) is, of course, wrong. So is "forever" (A. V.). Luther's commentary is correct: "a long time."The participle ro'eh, "art looking," lends colour to the situation, indicating that as soon as Abram was bidden to look about, he proceeded to do so, and while he was looking, the promise was amplified.16, 17. And I shall make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man be able to count the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed be counted. Come, walk abroad in the land according to its length and breadth; for to thee I do give it.What a challenge to the faith of a childless old man! Yet, also, how rich a promise. Each new word spoken by God to Abram -- and this is now the third word -- marks some distinct advance upon the preceding. True, in its literal meaning the promise is a hyperbole, as are many other statements in the Scripture, but, of course, a perfectly legitimate form of emphatic statement. Dust of the earth simply cannot be counted. But no one would ever think of ascribing exaggeration to the statement because it bears its own restriction: "as the dust" insofar as dust cannot be counted.17. Abram is at once to give evidence of his faith in this rich and gracious promise by "walking abroad," literally hithhallekh -- "go for one's self." In cheerful faith and anticipation of the future possession of the land by his seed Abram is to roam about freely through the land, rejoicing in its many advantages. Qûm, "arise," is not to be taken literally, as addressed only to persons in a sitting posture. It has come to be practically only an interjection like "come," as is also indicated in part by the asyndeton. "Come, walk abroad." K. S. labels this a "conventional asyndeton" (357 1). The solemn repetition, after v.15, of the promise "to thee do I give it" (lekha ettenénnah) is quite in place, because the promise of God is all that faith has to cling to under the circumstances, and so these promises must stand out distinctly with emphasis.18. And Abram kept moving his tent along and came and dwelt by the terebinths of Mamre, which are in Hebron; and he built an altar there unto Yahweh. It seems that ye'ehal, "he tented," in this instance aims to show Abram's response to God's summons to go about through the land; therefore we have rendered: "he kept moving his tent along." Then, apparently, after the joyful inspection of the land was finished, he came to Hebron and made his more nearly permanent home there. For Hebron was the city near which the patriarchs particularly delighted to dwell. "Hebron" (chebhrôn) according to the root-meaning of the name seems to mean a place where a treaty or covenant was made (cf. the German Buenden in compounds of city names). Whether the city then occupied the site that present-day Hebron does may well be questioned; nor is there any trace left of "the terebinths of Mamre." On "terebinths" cf. Ge 12:6. "Mamre," apparently, was a noted man of that time; see Ge 14:13. This new permanent home is to be sanctified by an altar for sacrifices to Yahweh, and is to have in that altar a means of worship as well as a testimony to all men that Abram had nothing in common with the Canaanites and their idolatrous worship.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThis chapter also has two sections for

homiletical use. The first includes v.1-13. Since faith is the outstanding characteristic of Abraham, it would be quite proper to preach at this point on the subject of the "Magnanimity of Faith." If one should desire to dwell on the more practical angle of the case, even such a subject as the "Wisdom of the Separation" of friends could suggest a proper mode of approach. For the remaining verses (14-18) we suggest some such theme as "the Reward of Grace," because God is plainly rewarding Abraham for what he lost in his bighearted attitude toward Lot. Yet it is just as clear that this reward is utterly unmerited on Abraham's part. Consequently, the paradoxical phrase "reward of grace" applies here. Material rewards do loom up rather prominently in the Pentateuch. By way of explanation it should be remembered that on the Old Testament level many clear revelations that we now enjoy had not yet been received. Therefore visible tangible evidences of divine favour may be regarded as more of a necessity. Yet even on the New Testament level this subject is in place as the very clear parallel Mt 19:29 from the Saviour's own lips indicates. Whatever is done for Christ's sake meets with a suitable reward.

CHAPTER XIV

4. The Defeat of the Kings by Abram (14:1-24) We now see Abram in an entirely new capacity. He appears in contact with the kings of this world and in contrast with them to some extent. Indeed, in part his unselfishness is still further demonstrated. But at the same time we are shown how courageous true faith makes this man. As prominent a fact as any revealed by the chapter is how the man whom God has honoured by rare promises of mercy is a man who enjoys honer also among men: he moves at ease among kings, easily the equal of any of them. However, not one of these facts dare be stressed at the expense of the rest, as though any of them fully expressed the purpose of the chapter. Criticism misinterprets an honest record when it represents the whole narrative as a bit of fiction written in order to magnify the hero. Equally unfair is the approach which says since elsewhere matters of this sort are not narrated concerning Abram, therefore this cannot be true. Source criticism finds itself sorely beset by difficulties at this point, inasmuch as the customary sources usually assigned for Genesis fail to prove adequate for this chapter here are neither E, J, or P. About four terms are discovered that are usually assigned to P, but with that the similarity ceases. The very obvious fact concerning, the vocabulary of this chapter, namely, that it is somewhat different from other chapters merely because it deals with a different type of subject -- this obvious fact does not seem to occur to the critics. As a result much learning is expended on the questions: from what source are the facts narrated derived; are they oral tradition; do they come from some Canaanite or some Babylonian clay tablets; etc.? It cannot be denied that parenthetical explanations abound throughout the chapter: e. g., v.2, "the same is Zoar"; v.3, "the same is the Salt Sea"; v.7, "the same is Kadesh"; v.15, "which is on the left hand of Damascus"; v.17, "the same is the King's Vale." These are most readily accounted for on the score that the old names current at the time this event transpired in a number of instances required an explanation by the time when Moses wrote the account for his contemporaries. Before taking in hand the various proper names of the kings mentioned particularly in v.1, we wish to draw attention to a general fact in regard to all of them. The claims raised in regard to all of them range from one extreme to the other, Whereas some students leave the impression that just about each one of the four mentioned has been positively identified by Babylonian evidence of clay tablets or monuments; others just as decidedly seek to create the impression that not one has been or can be identified. In fact, for that matter they contend that the historical situation here described is quite out of harmony with what an accurate study of history reveals. As so often, the truth lies between the two extremes. Some of the kings in question may have been identified by other historical evidence; at least, the names involved are names quite possible for these lands and these times. In other words, what the chapter contains is in reality neither proved nor disproved by sound historical research, just as little as grounds exist for questioning the reliability of any item in the chapter. 1. And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar, and Arioch, king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and Tidal, king of Goyim. "Amraphel" first demands attention. It is customary to identify him with the famous Hammurabi. Yet it cannot be denied that the identification is far from convincing. The chief difficulty centres in the final "1," for the assumed Babylonian original has no equivalent for it. This is freely admitted by many (cf. Procksch and

Koenig). But the difficulty is disposed of by the assumption that some Jewish copyist must have made a mistake. But how unscientific: I seek to establish the identity of a certain name; the identity fails to become clear and convincing; therefore, I am not wrong but the name is. K. C. adopts the device of a longer form which he claims is once used for Hammurabi, viz., Chammurapi-ilu, that is, "Chammurapi is a God." But that is a complete sentence, not a name! Besides, Hammurabi, according to Michell's accurate computations, first ascended the throne in 2068 B. C.; whereas Chedorlaomer's famous expedition had occurred twenty years earlier in 2088 B. C. Now the Shinar over which he reigned was Babylon, as we noted on 10:10. Certainly "Arioch" is analogous to Eri-Aku, whom some identify with Rim-Sin, King of Larsa, which last name certainly resembles "Ellasar," an old Babylonian city a bit to the north of the lower Euphrates, a place now called Senkereh. At this point the identification is highly probable, for Rim-Sin actually came to the throne about 2098 B. C. In the case of "Chedorlaomer" everything again becomes highly problematic. For a Babylonian name like Kudur-Lathgumal, or as others construe it: Kudur-lagomar, is possible but has never been discovered. So the Babylonian source-material fails to prove adequate for identification. "Elam" is, of course, to the east of the middle Tigris and south of Assyria, corresponding roughly with the later Persia (cf. Ge 10:22). As far as "Tidal" is concerned, it may be that he is identical with Tudkhula who made an attack upon Babylon together with the Elamites. But the words following his name present difficulty: "Goyim"may simply mean "nations" (A. V.). In that event Tidal would have been the head of a more or less mixed group composed of various nationalities. There is the more remote possibility that "Goyim" is another way of writing Guti, a people on the Upper Zab. The noun "days" has a succession of nouns in the construct, relationship following; cf. K. S.276 b.2. They made war with Bera, king of Sodom, and Birsha, king of Gomorrah, Shinab, king of Admah, and Shemeber, king of Zeboyim; and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).It is true that there is a slight break in the construction at this point: strictly speaking, the four proper nouns, i. e., the names of the kings preceding, are not subjects of the verb "made" but genitives dependent on "days." But in reality these names stand out so prominently that they may without the slightest confusion be regarded as the subjects of the verb of v, 2. To call this "a faulty syntax which a good writer would have avoided" is unfair. Not one of these five kings has ever been identified. The Jewish interpretation of their names is entirely fanciful and unlikely, when it separates the first into be-ra', i. e., "in wickedness," and the second into be-resha', i.e., "in iniquity." On the strength of the unreasonableness of such an etymology critics jump to the conclusion that the names themselves are fictitious. By comparing parallel Arabic roots (cf. K. W.) it will be seen that the first name might mean "Victor," the second, "a sturdy man," the. third, "Sin (the moon god) is father," and Shemeber, "the name (of God) is mighty." Sodom and Gomorrah, as we indicated (13:10), apparently lay at the southern end or lagoon of what is now the Dead Sea. "Admah" and "Zeboyim" are mentioned, aside from this chapter, only in Deut.29:23 and Hos.11:8, where their overthrow together with Sodom and Gomorrah is implied, though their destruction is not reported in chapter nineteen. They must have been rather near the two more familiar cities, yet sufficiently distinct from them to allow for having a separate king. "Bela," or "Zoar," had best be placed at the southeast corner of the Dead Sea.Note the unconnected perfect 'asû after the introductory wayhi of v. I (K. S.370 b).3. All these allied themselves for an expedition to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).Though the construction of the sentence is somewhat loose and this verse might possibly refer to an act of the kings of v.2, it seems quite a bit more likely that as in v.2 the kings of v.1 were regarded as grammatical subjects, so in v.3 the same subjects are still under

consideration. These kings from the East "allied themselves (chabherû) for an expedition to (all covered by el in a pregnant construction) the valley of Siddim." The name of this valley may be allied with the noun sidh, "chalk," and so no reason exists for changing Siddim to Shedhîm, (Kittel) i. e., "evil spirits." The parenthetical remark "that is, the Salt Sea," does not commit the author of it, as commentators so frequently assert at this point, to the view that the entire Dead Sea is the result of the catastrophe reported in chapter nineteen. For, since the bottom of the northern two-thirds of the sea lies in some instances as much as 1,300 feet beneath the surface level, which in turn already lies 1,300 feet beneath the sea level, it seems most likely that this part of the lake was in existence from days of old. An author well aware of this, as Moses no doubt was, would then mean his remark in the sense: Valley of Siddim -- the southern end of the Salt Sea -- a synecdoche, the whole for the part.4-6. Twelve years they had remained subject to Chedorlaomer and in the thirteenth year they revolted; and in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer and the kings allied with him and smote the Rephaim at Ashteroth-Qarnayim and the Zuzim at Ham and the Emim in the plain of Qiryathayim; and the Horites in their mountains, namely those of Seir, as far as El Paran which is by the wilderness.A concise account is given as to how the war mentioned in v.2 originated, or rather, why Chedorlaomer and his confederates undertook the punitive expedition which gave rise to the chief episode of our chapter. Elamite and Babylonian domination of Palestine had been effective for twelve years. Chedorlaomer the Elamite was at the time in question sovereign also over Babylon, a fact with which historical records agree. For reasons not revealed at this point the five kings listed in v.2 decided to revolt. When the customary tribute as token of submission failed to be paid, Chedorlaomer decided that the rebels needed to be brought to time. This punitive step was feasible in the fourteenth year. Though it be said that "Chedorlaomer came," that does not of necessity involve personal participation. In the language of the monuments expeditions sent out at the king's behest are ascribed to him, at least if they are successful. At this point we may well note how it came to pass, perhaps, that no record of this expedition has come to us. Egyptian and Babylonian kings were not wont to have chronicles made of their defeats, and this expedition ended disastrously for Chedorlaomer. The kings of Shinar and Larsa must identify their cause with that of Chedorlaomer: he himself, no doubt, compelled them, as did also a community of interests. The cardinal numerals are used for the ordinals (G. K.134, o). 5b. Now the route, taken by these Mesopotamian forces is interesting. It reveals a wide sweep to the east and south and then around to the southwest; then northeast to the western side of the Dead Sea, and lastly the troops swarm down upon their final objective, the cities in the Vale of Siddim. All manner of fault has been found with this route taken by Chedorlaomer. Because the reason for it is not given in this brief account, the critics feel they may with impunity make light of any explanation that we may offer, as though it must needs be trivial. Again and again a very reasonable explanation has been suggested to them, only to be brushed aside. The simplest of all explanations is that the army coming from the east wanted to eliminate the possibility of an attack from the rear by unfriendly groups. These unfriendly groups were either unsubdued opponents or subjugated opponents known to be restive and inclined to side with other revolters. The author of our chapter is not under necessity of giving a full account of all that transpires and of the motives behind every act. For the building-up of the narrative, what is related is very effective. It shows the line being drawn closer and closer about Sodom and Gomorrah. We are made to sense the apprehension of the revolting cities; and they turn around from point to point as reports come pouring in about the defeat of the groups being attacked.The first ones subdued are "Rephaim,"

who are overcome at Ashteroth-Qarnayim. The only thing we are safe in saying about the Rephaim is that they belonged to the earlier level of inhabitants of the land. They are found on both sides of the Jordan. Since they are associated with other races that may have been of the giants, it is not impossible that they themselves were of gigantic stature. "Asteroth" seems to be the old capital of Bashan, of which ruins still remain under the name of Tell Aschtera, nearly twenty miles east of the Sea of Galilee. The name itself is that of the goddess Astarte, and Qarnayim means "of the two horns"; perhaps Astarte as goddess of the moon (whose crescent has two horns) may in this town have been known as "Astarte of the twin horns." At any event, there the first major victory was achieved.In regard to the "Zuzim" it seems best to accept the suggestion that this is merely another form of Zamzummim who are mentioned in De 2:20. The Ammonites dispossessed them, apparently, and so they would have dwelt to the south of the Rephaim. The Greek translators already were at a loss to identify them and so translated the term "strong peoples" eynh iscura. The scene of their defeat, "Ham," is not known. Since it lay in Ammonite territory, it could well have been Rabba of the Ammonites (cf. De 3:11), as Keil suggests; for this was apparently the capital city.The "Emim" also belonged to the aboriginal inhabitants of Canaan. Something unusual was associated with them apparently, for their name seems to signify "terrors" (B D B). They had formerly possessed the land of the Moabites (De 2:10,11). The scene of their defeat was in the plain of "Qiryathayim." The name of this town, being dual, perhaps signifies "double town." The modern Kurêyât about 1¼ miles southeast of Mt. Attarus and 6¾ miles north-northwest from Dibon seems to serve pretty well as identification. This would be a location about seven miles east and a bit to the north of the middle of the Dead Sea. These conquests of Chedorlaomer seem to mark almost a straight line to the south.From Qiryathayim the punitive expedition made somewhat of a circuit around the chief rebels and first proceeded to deal out punishment to the south, in fact, due south of the Dead Sea, in the land or the mountains of Seir, later Edom. Here dwelt the "Horites." This name means "cave-dwellers," it would seem (chor -- "hole"). This meaning may be regarded as almost established by the expression following, viz., "in their mountains." "As far as El Paran" is a concise expression which is best taken to mean that the pursuit after the vanquished Horites extended to this point. Some seek to identify this El Paran with Elath on the Gulf of Akaba. In that case 'eyl, which means "terebinth" or "large tree" generally, would seem to indicate that originally El or Elath was marked by a large grove of perhaps terebinths. But Paran is the name of the wilderness in the northern half of the Sinai peninsula, and so it would seem more likely that El Paran lay on its borders.7. And they returned and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and smote all the field of the Amalekites and also the Amorites that were dwelling in Hazazon Tamar.El Paran must have marked the farthest point reached, for after reaching it, the host "returned" in the direction of "Eh Mishpat." This spot is explained to be Kadesh. Now, without a doubt, Kadesh Barnea is meant, the famous stopping place of Israel during the wilderness wanderings. Hardly any scholars nowadays doubt that this must be what is now known as Ain Kadeis, a famous oasis. "En" (Hebrew: 'eyn -- 'Ain) -- "well." Originally this spot had been called "the Well of Judgment" (mishpat). It may, therefore, originally have been a sacred spot where judgment was sought or given, or where some famous seer had held forth. "Kadesh" means "holy." So the later name would indicate that some type of sanctuary had been found here. In any case, it was a prominent spot even in those days. Apparently, from this point the host proceeded to smite, an area that lay to the west, namely "the field of the Amalekites." Now the Amalekites are descended from Amalek, a grandson of Esau (Ge 36:12). Consequently there

could be none at Abram's time. Therefore the unusual expression is used, "the field (or plain) of the Amalekites" in the proleptic sense of "the field which later was occupied by the Amalekites." Moses could not be guilty of so crude an anachronism as to say that the Amalekites were smitten. However, he does not indicate what name this desert tribe bore. The last group attacked and vanquished are the "Amorites," who dwelt as far north as Lebanon but were scattered all through Palestine and were really the most prominent of the Canaanites. In Chedorlaomer's time they were established at "Hazazon Tamar." This name would mean "the sandy country of palms." According to 2 Chronicles 20:2 this was Engedi on the western shore of the Dead Sea, still a beautiful spot. This seems to have been the last foe that needed to be disposed of. Though the approach to Sodom is very difficult from this point, Sodom was next taken in hand, although it is not said that a direct approach was made to it from Engedi.8, 9. And there went forth the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboyim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar), and they drew up in battle array against them in the valley of Siddim, that is against Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and Tidal, king of Goyim, and Amraphel, king of Shinar, and Arioch, king of Ellasar -- four kings against five.Governed by the nearest subject, as so often in Hebrew, we have a singular verb yetse', though other subjects of the same verb follow. The style of narrative is a bit diffuse, as is often the case in epic poetry. That the kings of the Dead Sea region did not turn out sooner to encounter the foe of whose approach they had long been aware, indicates either lack of ability and enterprise, or lack of courage, or, perhaps, the illusory hope on their part that their enemies would not venture against them. It seems most in harmony with the facts of the case to argue that the debauched mode of life characteristic of this group had debased their courage so that they only took up arms when actually compelled to and then put up but a pitiable defense. That "they drew up in battle array in the valley of Siddim" seems to be a further indication that this portion, which is now the southern third of the Dead Sea, was in those days not yet inundated by the waters of this sea.The different order of the names of the attacking kings (or of their armies, perhaps, if the kings were not actually present in person) that appears in v.9 over against v.1, may have been occasioned by the relative importance of these kings at this point of the campaign. The dominant factor, no doubt, was Chedorlaomer; cf. also v.4 and 5. Next in order came Tidal.10. Now the valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and of Gomorrah fled some leaped into the pits, and the rest fled into the mountains.The Hebrew way of saying "full of bitumen pits" is: "pits, pits of bitumen." Repetition expresses abundance, plentitude, etc. (G. K.123 e; K. S.88). Now, indeed, yippelû shammah might mean: "they fell there" -- "perished." Strictly applied to the subjects expressed, namely the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, this would mean: they perished. However, this assumption would create a difficulty in v.17 where the king of Sodom is still alive. In any case, in v.17 a new king of Sodom could hardly be met with so soon, for opportunity for the choice of one had hardly been given. But the verb naphal may mean "to get down hastily" (cf. Ge 24:64). So we have the somewhat disgraceful situation of a number of defeated kings hastily crawling into bitumen pits, and their defeated army taking refuge in the mountains. The word "king" before "Sodom" and "Gomorrah"does not mean that one king governed both cities but is a concise way of saying "kings." "Some" has to be supplied before "leaped" because immediately a "rest" is spoken of (Meek).11, 12. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their foodstuffs and went away. They also captured Lot, Abram's brother's son, and his goods before they left, for he was living in Sodom.The victors, though not last mentioned, are naturally the subject of the verb "took." Hebrew rhetoric does not require to

have the subject specifically indicated to prevent ambiguity. In true marauder style the victors take along all that can feasibly be transported -- "all the goods," rekhush, a word supposed to belong to P's vocabulary. Since their own food supply has run low, they also replenish their stock by taking practically all that the people of these towns had laid up in store. Lot, of whom we last had heard that he was approaching Sodom more closely, now had actually taken up residence within its gates -- a very puzzling act. Somehow he was not in the army, or if he was, he was unfortunate enough to be taken captive, and at this point now we are shown how this event involved Abram, for he was "Abram's brother's son." This familiar fact is merely stated to recall how all this had its bearing upon Abram. The man who had been willing to cast in his lot with Abram's at the time of the latter's departure from Haran was now certainly exposed to as wretched a fate as could befall men in ancient times, that of a prisoner of war.13, 14. And a fugitive came and told Abram, the man from across the river, who was dwelling by the terebinths of Mamre, the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and Aner, who were bound by covenant to Abram. And Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive and he led forth his trained men, born in his own household, three hundred and eighteen of them and went in pursuit as far as Dan. Now follows the story of Abram's prompt action. A fugitive from the Sodomite catastrophe appears, "the fugitive" in Hebrew; generic article; this may cover any number of fugitives (K..S.300 a). He informs Abram regarding what transpired. In apposition with Abram stands in Hebrew the word "the Hebrew," which we have rendered, according to its meanings: "the man from across the river," i. e., the Euphrates, The term ultimately practically denotes nationality and is used in particular in contrast with other nationalities (cf. Ge 43:32; Ex 1:15; 2:11; 21:2; De 15:12; 1 Samuel 13:3). The contrast is here with the Amorites who are about to be named. Abram still is where the close of the previous chapter left him; and this fact should be mentioned that we may understand that Abram was readily accessible and in a position to inaugurate immediate pursuit. So, too, the brothers, or perhaps kinsmen, of Mamre are also mentioned here, Eshcol and Aner, who are to be referred to before the incident is entirely concluded. For these men were "bound by a covenant" to Abram, an expression for which the Hebrew uses the terms "masters of a covenant" -- ba'aley berîth -- ba'al being used in that familiar, broad sense of merely expressing some type of relation, (K. S.306 g).Strange to say, criticism is surprised that three men should be mentioned here, who bear names identical with place names, and says, "it is hard to believe" that this should be the case (Procksch). However, that difficulty is easily removed. A frequent identity of personal names and place names is found. An equal difficulty to many seems to be the writer's failure to mention here that Mamre, Eshcol and Aner at once took. part in the expedition about to be inaugurated. But is not that already definitely implied in the mention of the fact that these men were "bound by covenant to Abram"?As soon as Abram hears of the capture of "his kinsman" (Hebrew: "brother" -- the broader use of the word), he takes measures to rescue him. The inconsiderate treatment of Abram by Lot is not counted against the captive. The dangers and difficulties are not allowed to stand in the way of brotherly duty. Courageous as he is, Abram recognizes that a resolute surprise attack, wisely timed, may offset the lack of numbers. Though, of course, we encounter Abram here engaged in war, it is most evident that he was not venturing abroad for honer's sake or to achieve some personal advantage. The safety of others led him on this unselfish undertaking. Luther mentions, by way of contrast, the exploits of Alexander and Scipio. We translate the hapax legomenon chanîkh as "trained men" -- practically the same as A. V. and A. R. V. These were all of them servants "born in his own household" and therefore more apt to be dependable under all circumstances. We are amazed at

the number of them -- 318. This points to a body of servants easily numbering a thousand and gives us some idea of the size of the flocks as well as of the influence of the man. The hardy courage that urged him to "go in pursuit" calls forth our admiration; for, besides, Abram was no longer young.Almost without exception commentators locate "Dan" at the site of Dan Laish, about ten miles almost due north of Lake Merom, that is the town frequently referred to in the expression "from Dan even unto Beersheba." This town, as all know, first received the name Dan in the days of the Judges; see Jude 18:7, 29. The use of the term at this point would then clearly be post-Mosaic and evidence of authorship of the book later than the time of the Judges. Critics are so ready to accept this view that by almost universal consent they ignore the other possible location of Dan so entirely as though it were not even worthy of consideration. For another Dan in Gilead (see De 34:1), mentioned apparently in 2 Samuel 24:6 as "Dan Jaan," excellently meets the needs of the case, for that matter even better than does Dan Laish. For Dan Jaan must lie, according to De 34:1, on the northern edge of Gilead and therefore about east, perhaps fifteen or twenty miles from the southern end of the Dead Sea, and therefore along the route that an army retreating to Babylon and Elam would be most likely to take in approaching Damascus. Dan Laish lies too far north and presents difficulties for men in flight, who would hardly turn toward Damascus in flight because of intervening rivers. Consequently, we have here no post-Mosaic terms and everything conforms excellently with the idea of Mosaic authorship.15, 16. And he divided his forces and made an assault upon them by night, he and his servants, and he defeated them and he pursued them as far as Hobah which lies to the north of Damascus; and he brought back all the goods and also Lot, his kinsman, and his goods did he bring back, as well as the wives and the soldiers.A pregnant construction opens the verse: "he divided himself upon" -- "he divided his forces and made an assault upon." The fact that he comes "by night" (adverbial accusative, K. S.331 b) shows that Abram recognized the need of some very strong strategy like a surprise attack. One can visualize the manner in which the victorious army returning back home lay scattered about, secure in the thought of having none to attack them, flushed with victory and, perhaps, with drink; no sentinels posted; nothing farther from the thoughts of all than the idea of an attack. Other instances of dividing forces for an attack are recorded in Jude 7 :16; 1 Samuel 11:11; 13:17; Job 1:17. Apparently the statement "he and his servants" indicates that Abram personally participated in the assault and did not merely direct the strategy. Many instances are on record, also in the Scriptures, how oriental armies were thrown into a wild rout by some such device as the one employed here. Though, of course, in point of numbers Abram's force must have been far inferior to that of the confederate kings, we create a badly distorted picture of the situation if we claim (with Dillmann) that Abram encountered only such scattered bands as trailed behind. For how, then; could he have retrieved all the people of Sodom merely to mention this one outstanding fact. Unusual as it may seem, the whole army was routed. God was permitting Abram to meet with success in his bold venture. To make the defeat as effective as possible and to guard against a return attack, the assailants pressed their pursuit rather far, as we are expressly told, going even as far as "Hobah," north of Damascus. A fountain by this name was identified by Wetzstein about eighty miles northeast of Damascus. Of course, the expression missemo'l, "to the left," means "to the north of," because the Hebrew gets his bearings by facing the "east" qédhem -- "before" -- "east". Damméseq is the ancient city of Damascus, known also later from the Amarna tablets as Dimaski. 16. That Abram did a very thorough and effective piece of work in an effort to rehabilitate the poor people of Sodom appears from all that he recaptured. For one thing, he brought back all

the goods, which were, indeed, a necessity for the Sodomites. Fortunately, "Lot, his kinsman," had suffered no harm and could be freed as well as his goods restored. Then since "women" were the special objects of capture, it lay in Abram's purpose to liberate these unfortunates. Lastly he set free and brought back also ha'am, literally, "the people." But this expression signifies the "people bearing arms" (B D B), as appears from passages such as 1 Samuel 11:11; 1 Kings 20:10.; sometimes they are called by the fuller title 'am hammilchamah, "people of war," (Joshua 8:1, 3; 10:7; 11:7). So here it is better not to translate "rest of the people" (Strack, Meek) but "the soldiers," (K. W, , Mannschaft).Let this yet be said in justification of Abram's step. Without a doubt, the four kings of the East cannot with any show of right lay claim to the control of the five kings of the Valley of Siddim. Abram was, therefore, championing the cause of those who had been unjustly oppressed.17. And the king of Sodom went forth to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley) after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him.Now Abram is a hero and a public benefactor. It appears that those were doing him honer who previously had scarcely deigned to notice him. "The king of Sodom," whom we last saw taking precipitate refuge in the bitumen pits, now again has come forth and desires to acknowledge publicly the inestimable benefit that Abram has bestowed upon him. Critics again attempt to invalidate the story by stating that this verse conflicts with verse 10, claiming that there the king of Sodom died, here he is resurrected. In all fairness they ought to offer to their readers the simple explanation given above, that v.10 may mean they hastily hid in the pits. The canons of criticism employed by critics are often so sharp that no writings, not even their own, could pass muster in the face of them. A positive identification of "the Valley of Shaveh" is no longer possible, though, no doubt, the explanation "the King's Valley" marked it definitely for the early readers. The name itself indicates that it was a "level" valley. The name "King's Valley" seems to come from the fact that kings, especially Melchizedek met with Abram there on this historic occasion. As a rule, expositors seek this valley northeast of Jerusalem, in the valley of the Kidron. Nor is it improbable that the king of Sodom should encounter Abram so far from the south end of the Salt See. Circumstances would have made it eminently proper for the king of Sodom to express his gratitude by coming quite a distance to meet Abram.The infinitive shûbhó preceded by "after" ('acharey) is the equivalent of an adverbial clause of time (K. S.401 c). On hakkôth see G. K.76 c.18. And Melchizedek, the king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was a priest of El Elyon.Another prominent personage appeared at this juncture, Melchizedek. To make the fact of his coming forth specially emphatic, this verse does not, as usual, place the verb first, but the subject, Melchizedek, a deft touch of emphasis which can hardly be produced in translation, being something like: "Even Melchizedek came forth." In view of the explanation of Ge 7:2 the meaning of the name is fully established: "king of righteousness." All other attempts at interpretation such as, "My king is righteousness" (K. C.), or "My king is Tsedheq"(B D B et al.) are to be rejected, especially where the latter understands Tsedheq to be some native god. The ending î of Melchî is to be regarded as merely conjunctive, not possessive, first person (contra K. S..272 a). Since this man is a priest of 'El'Elyon, i. e., "God Most High," and this is a name of Yahweh, found indeed only in Psalms 78:35 but in many similar combinations quite frequently, we are compelled to regard this venerable king-priest as a worshipper and publicly an adherent of the true religion of Yahweh as handed down from the sounder tradition of the times of the Flood. That this was the actual course of development of religions, and that monotheism definitely preceded polytheism may now be regarded as fully demonstrated by works such as Samuel Zwemer's The Origin of

Religion. However, "Salem" is merely a shortened form of "Jerusalem," the Urusalim of the Amarna tablets; the same short form appears in Psalms 76:2. What further confirms this identification is the fact that proper names are frequently used in an abbreviated form in the Scriptures. Besides, Abram is regarded as having practically returned from the expedition: Jerusalem is not so far from Hebron. The identification of Salem with other sites, as near Scythopolis, almost up at the Sea of Galilee, is, therefore, not very satisfactory.Melchizedek "brings forth bread and wine." He does this as one who wants to be seen to offer his support to such good men, who do such laudable things as Abram had just done. He recognizes that a generous offer of rations for the troops was at this time the prime physical necessity. Nothing more should be sought in this act of Melchizedek's. He expresses his friendship and perhaps his religious kinship with Abram by offering the most common form of meat and drink, "bread and wine." Attempts to find here a type of the Holy Sacrament have been consistently and rightly rejected by Protestant commentators after the example of Luther. All they who, following a Jewish tradition, attempt to identify Melchizedek with Shem, the son of Noah, who, it is true, was still living at this time, must do so on the strength of the merest supposition, for no scriptural evidence points in this direction. All that can be said in favour of this interpretation is that it makes the figure of the priest-king more glamorous. Of true value is that which the author of Hebrews sees in Melchizedek that, inasmuch as he combines in himself two offices which were not even combined in the commonwealth of Israel, namely those of priest and king, he is a type of Christ of a higher order even than Aaron (Hebrews 7:11 ff.).But what of the striking parallel to Hebrews 7:3 offered by the formula repeated several times in the Amarna letters by the king of Jerusalem writing to the Pharaoh, Amenophis IV, where he says: "Neither my father nor my mother set me in this place; the mighty arm of the king established me in my father's house," (vs. "without father, without mother," Hebrews 7:3)? Viewed soberly, the parallel is striking but quite superficial and in the last analysis purely accidental. The words written in the Amarna tablets are merely diplomatic flattery: he owes his position, he claims, entirely to his Egyptian overlord not to heredity from father and mother. The author of Hebrews sees in the fact that father and mother of this mysterious king of old are not mentioned a parallel to Christ's spiritual position: He owes nothing in this exalted priesthood to father or mother. Here is a case where archaeology, though offering an accidental word parallel, in reality contributes nothing to the case under consideration.The dative le after "priest" necessitates rendering "a priest" and forbids "the priest" (K. S.280 l); correct, iereuv tou ueou (LXX).19, 20. And he blessed him, saying: Blessed be Abram of El Elyon, the Creator of heaven and earth, And blessed be El Elyon, who has delivered thine enemies into thy hands. Thereupon he gave him a tithe of all.As one who as priest ranks above Abram, Melchizedek bestows a blessing; for "the less is blessed of the greater" (Hebrews 7:7). The le before the divine name does not mean "to" but "of" or "by" (K. S.104; B D B 5d, sub le). The priest defines who he considers El Elyon to be, namely, "the Creator of heaven and earth" -- a strictly monotheistic conception and entirely correct. Though we only assume that Melchizedek came into possession of the truth concerning God by way of the tradition that still prevailed pure and true in a few instances at this late date after the Flood, there is nothing that conflicts with such an assumption except an evolution theory of history, which at this point, as so often, conflicts with facts. The verb for "Creator" (for "Creator" is a participle) is not the customary bara', as the usual Hebrew tradition knows it, but the less common qanah -- a further indication that Melchizedek had a religious background different from Abram's. In fact, it would seem that Melchizedek is not in possession of as full a measure of the truth as is Abram; for,

apparently, Melchizedek does not know God as Yahweh, though the correctness of the conception "God Most High" cannot be denied. "Heaven and, earth" stand without an article -- poetic style (K. S.292 a).20. Melchizedek's blessing is in every way what it should be: it ascribes the glory to God and lets Abram appear merely as what he is, an instrument God deigned to use -- so the second half of the blessing. The first half had represented Abram as standing in need of the blessing of El Elyon and therefore bestowed that blessing from the hands of the Omnipotent Creator. As Luther beautifully points out in this connection, this comprehensive blessing is quite exhaustive and gives a true and adequate presentation of truth, in fact, since it contains so much of truth, Luther calls it eine sehr lange Predigt, and actually believes that Melchizedek set forth the substance of what is here stated in a much more detailed fashion. There can be no doubt about it that whether long or short this blessing was a clear-cut confession of him who gave it and a strong testimony to the truth, given at a solemn moment under memorable circumstances also in the ears of an ungodly and unbelieving group of neighbours. No doubt, on Moses part the object of recording so memorable a piece of history connected with one of the major cities of the blessed land, was to impress the people with the glorious record that truth had had in the earliest day in some of these venerable cities.The "tithe" given by Abram is, no doubt, rendered to Melchizedek in his capacity as priest and for the sanctuary at Salem. By this act Abram expressed his gratitude to God, Who alone had prospered his venture. Strictly speaking, ma'aser should be rendered merely "a tenth part," for it was not identical with the tenth part or tithe which the Mosaic law required.21-24. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram: Give me the people and take the goods for yourself. But Abram said to the king of Sodom: I have lifted up my hand to Yahweh, El Elyon, the Creator of heaven and earth, not to take anything of all that belongs to thee, from a thread to a shoestring, lest thou shouldest say, It is I who made Abram rich. Quite apart from me (let this matter be settled). Only what the young men have eaten (will I accept). But as for the portion of the men who accompanied me, Aner, Eshcol and Mamre, let them take their own portion. A second king now addresses Abram, apparently at the same spot, "the King's Vale," this king, however, thinks in entirely different terms, in terms of things purely material. As king he naturally expects to have his people restored to him. He recognizes, however, how enormously he is indebted to Abram and seeks to give expression to his sense of indebtedness by asking Abram to take all the goods recaptured, ie., rekhush, "the movable chattels," such as precious garments, all gold and silver, weapons, cattle. No one can deny that Abram could have kept these as his due. The king of Sodom is ready to give his full sanction to such an act. Abram, however, cannot do such a thing. He is not covetous, the thought of the acquisition of wealth never entered into the undertaking of the expedition. But another weightier consideration enters into the case: Abram desires to stand out clearly as a man who prospers only because of God's blessing. Hitherto this status of his had been unmistakably clear; Abram had never sought wealth, nor resorted to questionable methods of getting it; nor had anyone contributed to his wealth. Least of all could Abram accept a generous bestowal from a man of the calibre of the king of Sodom, a purely sensual materialist and idolater. The acceptance of the gift would have impugned Abram's spiritual standing. Consequently, Abram summarily rejects the proposal. Firmness but not "proud and almost disdainful magnanimity" characterizes this action. So far-reaching are the spiritual consequences which Abram sees involved in this step that he had already taken an oath by "lifting up his hand to Yahweh" (cf. for the same formula of oath Ex 6:8; Nu 14:30; De 32:40; Ezekiel 20:23; Daniel 12:7) No doubt, Abram knew the king of Sodom to be just such a character who would afterward distort the facts of

the case in such a fashion as to claim: "I made Abram rich."By calling Yahweh by the name employed by Melchizedek (v.19), "El Elyon, the Creator of heaven and earth," Abram bears testimony to the fact that his God and Melchizedek's are one and the same person, even though, in reality, Melchizedek's conception of Him may be less deep. 'Im introduces a negative oath. (K. S.391b; G. K.149c). By the way, this is the first oath recorded in the Bible.23. Abram makes his point in the refusal emphatic by the statement that he would not even take "a thread or a shoestring." We might have said "a piece of string" for the first item. The second, strictly speaking, is a sandal thong. We before 'adh strengthens the form (K. S.376 c.).24. The initial bil'adhay, means literally, "not up to me." We believe this meaning may be retained (as K. C. suggests) in an ellipsis, "Quite apart from me," that is to say, "Leave me out of the adjustments to be made on the question of goods."Frankly, we cannot understand why men should ever have claimed that "an earlier writer would perhaps not have understood this scruple." This claim merely injects the claim of gradual evolutionistic growth of spiritual apprehension. Was Abram so far above his time that even a sympathetic recorder of the things he did could not appreciate the finer traits in his character? Equally strange to us is the attempt to make contradictions where everything harmonizes, by claiming that Abram who disclaimed a right to the spoils for himself could not possibly have bestowed a tenth on Melchizedek. The least bit of effort to understand would show that a religious tenth reveals the same spirit as the refusal for personal use.One natural exception must be made: Something of that which was taken from the vanquished enemy had to be used to feed the deliverers. Abram wanted it understood that he felt justified in having appropriated this much. His confederates, Aner, Eshcol and Mamre, were, of course, not to be bound by his own conscientious scruples. These men were at liberty to make whatever adjustment they desired with the king of Sodom.So closes this chapter that throws a delightful sidelight on Abram's character, more particularly on the faith of the patriarch; for it was a faith that made Abram both courageous and extremely considerate for the honer of Yahweh. It was a faith utterly selfless.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThe entire chapter is a unit text. Surely, v.1,12 could hardly be used alone; for who would care to preach about campaigns, as the kings of this earth conduct them? Even v.1-16 would be unsatisfactory, for some of the finest things essential to the proper understanding of Abraham's victory would be passed by. In any case, the remaining portion v.17-24 would also hardly constitute a unit that is satisfactory in itself. The major point in our approach to this chapter would suggest a theme such as "The Dignity of the Father of Believers." Very proper also would be the theme "The Courage of Faith," if one desires to carry through consistently the idea that Abram is above all else a man of faith. Could v.18-20 be used for a sermon on "Melchizedek -- a Type of Christ"? Why not? The letter to the Hebrews would in that case suggest the points of view that must predominate. Yet Hebrews points only to the material found in this pericope. Consequently v.18-20 gives occasion for a good sermon on "Christ -- our Priest King."

CHAPTER XV

5. God's Covenant with Abram (15: 1-21) In a very particular sense this is a monumental chapter, monumental in the testimony that it bears to saving truth. It is for this reason that Paul alludes to a word from this chapter when he establishes the truth concerning salvation (Rom.4:3; Gal.3:6). It is nothing short of amazing to find in the patriarchal age so clear-cut an answer to the question: How can a man be justified in the sight of God? The way of salvation was one and the same in the old covenant as well as in the new. At the same time, this chapter demonstrates in particular, how God's treatment of Abram moved along from step to step in conformity with the patriarch's needs. As new problems arose, a new course of procedure was inaugurated by God. The more severely Abram's faith was put to the test during the period of waiting for the son who was to be born, the more substantial became the support that God offered to Abram's faith. If hitherto numerous offspring had been assured, and a land promised in which his seed might multiply, now the assurance is given that Abram's own seed and not that of another should be his heir, and the promise is established in a covenant. At the same time we find in this chapter as positive a type of evidence as anyone might desire of the high level and the distinct character of the patriarchal religion. Even when men accept the separation of the Pentateuch into various sources (a thing we definitely reject as unscientific), even these sources give indication of very accurate transmission of the facts of early history. The Hebrews had a keen sense for preserving tradition reliably. This accurate tradition of theirs also indicates very definitely that Israel's religion did not first originate with the literary prophets. Nor did it first take its beginning with Moses and the exodus from Egypt. But, as this chapter very clearly indicates, Israel's religion appeared in the patriarchs as a religion essentially the same as it is found to be in the eighth century, yet in the matter of details sufficiently different to allow for our classifying it as the patriarchal stage of Israel's religion; and having as its heart and core faith in a faithful God. This revelation of God to Abram is the fifth granted to the patriarch. At the very outset we must remark that no one is now in a position to tell just how God manifested Himself to men in visions; but such revelations of God must have come with an emphatic distinctness to men, so that the recipient could not be in doubt whether or not God was actually speaking. 1. After these things the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, thus: Be not afraid, Abram; I am thy shield, thy exceeding great reward. The accurate report of what transpired in Abram's life indicates that in point of time this vision came after the defeat of the kings. The particular word used for "vision" (machazeh) is not a common one, being found besides only in Num.24:4, 16 and Ezek.13:7. It is used with the article because the type of vision accompanying divine revelation is implied (the article with things customary -- K. S.299 b). But since the chapter presents a unit, one part naturally attaching itself to the other, the statement at the head, that this revelation came in a vision, covers the entire chapter. The denial of this simple fact works confusion. Such a denial grows out of a restriction of the idea of a "vision," as though as soon as some form of action takes place, the vision must be terminated. The truth of the matter is that the ecstatic state which renders the mind receptive to divine revelation may allow for "seeing" (machazeh, from chazah, "to see") God speak and for seeing one's self do various things and God, too, do things as well as speak, "Visions," like dreams, allow for a wide latitude of

experiences for him that has them, though the vision and the dream are by no means identical. Standing at the opening of the chapter, the term "vision" is designed to cover the entire complex experience that follows. A major difficulty is encountered in determining why Abram was addressed: "Fear not." What caused Abram's fears? Looking backward, as might be suggested by the phrase "after these things," we might prefer to hold that Abram feared retribution at the hand of the Eastern kings after the surprise defeat he had inflicted upon them, So the Jewish commentators largely believed. This view seems to meet additional support in the rest of the divine communication: "I am thy shield." Now, it cannot be denied that Abram was human enough to be visited by a measure of trepidation at the thought of another punitive expedition from the East. But the rest of the chapter shows beyond the possibility of doubt that such a fear is by no means under consideration, but the fear of remaining childless is what Abram and the Lord alone refer to. Over against that danger God promises that He Himself is the perfectly adequate safeguard and the only reward that Abram needs. From thoughts of what is deemed humanly possible Abram should centre all hope in God alone as a God adequate for every need. Since, then, the Lord emphatically points to Himself, we see at once that the second half of the statement must be rendered as we have translated above: "(I am) thy exceeding great reward," and not after the fashion of the Greek translators, who made of this a second clause: "thy reward is very great." For, as Whitelaw rightly suggests, this rendering "fails to give prominence to the thought that the patriarch's reward was to be the all-sufficient Jehovah Himself." With this agrees the emphatic position of 'anokhî:" It is I who am the shield," etc. Harbeh, though an absolute infinitive, is, as frequently, used adverbially. 2, 3. And Abram said: Lord Yahweh, what couldest Thou give me, seeing I am going on childless, and the prospective heir of my house is the Damascene, Eliezer? Abram also said: See, to me Thou hast not given offspring; and, look, one belonging to my household will inherit my goods. Holding these two responses of Abram together and noting that each is separately introduced by "and Abram said," we gain the impression that Abram spoke twice before God answered. Apparently, this was exactly the way this event transpired. Before God applies, the new comfort that He is about to administer to Abram, He gives Abram full opportunity to give vent to the thoughts that oppress him, in order that the divine comfort may operate the more effectively.Abram's first mild complaint, expressing what has long burdened his soul and caused fear (v.1b), begins: "Lord Yahweh," i. e., 'adhonay yahweh. 'Adhonay signifies Allherr, ie., "Lord of all"; coupled with Yahweh, it represents a very respectful and reverent address and shows Abram as one who was by no means doubtful of God's omnipotence. But, at the same time, Abram voices the natural misgivings of the limited human understanding when he says: maht-titten-lî. This should not be rendered: "What wilt thou give me?" God had not just concluded promising him anything. But rather: "What couldest thou give me?" For, to tell the truth, Abram does not see what God could give. Abram was "going on" through life. (holekh not here in the sense of "perish") "childless" ('arîrî -- "stripped," ie., of children). What we have rendered as "prospective heir" is a typically Hebrew expression: "son of possession" (ben-mésheq), i. e., the one who will possess. The rest of the statement is also unusual: "is Damascus Eliezer." (Eli'ezer -- "God is help"). Apparently, Eliezer was from Damascus. By metonomy, Abram says, "my heir is Damascus, i. e., Eliezer." This says no more than that Eliezer seems to have hailed from this ancient city. To make the statement imply that he would ultimately take all of Abram's goods back to that city certainly stretches the point.It seems that out of this harmless reference to Eliezer's connection with Damascus has grown the entirely unfounded legend about Abram's residence in Damascus and his being king of

that city. Luther misreads ben-mésheq and gives Eliezer a son. In this verse 'adhonay appears for the first time in Genesis; it is rarely coupled with Yahweh.3. This verse presents Abram's misgivings more strongly; note the vivid double interjection hen and hinneh, "see" and "look." These give to the statement the tone of an implied plea -- not of impatience or of unbelief but of eager request. "One belonging to my household" is again a typical Hebrew expression with the broad use of the word "son"; for it runs thus: ben bethî, "son of my house." What we have rendered "will inherit my goods" literally -- "he will be heir to me," er wird reich beerben. Tragic as all this is for Abram, the situation reflected speaks well for the status of servants in Abram's day and household. After the master's children the children of the headservant were counted as heirs.A practical point may be considered here. Abram had in the previous chapter acquitted himself nobly and sought no selfish advantage. Such are not always or promptly rewarded by God. There may come seeming neglect or indifference on God's part after a man has served Him unselfishly. So must the true love of God's own be put to the test.Note: Here the participle takes the object not as a pronominal suffix but with the sign of the accusative, yoresh othî, K. S.240 b, also a common construction.4, 5. And, lo, the word of Yahweh came unto him thus: This man shall not be thine heir, but one born of thine own body, he shall be thine heir. And He led him forth outside and He said: Look, now, at the heavens and count the stars, if thou canst count them. Then He said to him: So numerous shall thy offspring be.With the same statement as furnished in v.1 for the communication of a divine revelation God's answer to Abram is introduced. A "lo" (hinneh) accompanies the introductory remark, because a divine word is always a very noteworthy event. Yahweh, who displays mercy also in what He promises in this case, and who also clearly foresees the course events will take, informs him that Eliezer will not be heir to Abram, but a direct descendant of his own. Mimme'êkha means "from thy belly," euphemistically for the generative organs. From this point onward Abram is enabled to see clearly that when God speaks of Abram's offspring, He means the term very literally. Besides, hû' resumes the subject emphatically: "that very one shall be heir" (K. S.340 a).5. To make the fact as such doubly impressive Yahweh brings Abram outside, that is to say, in the vision, and bids him gaze upon the stars and count them. "So" (koh, which usually points backward) therefore "so numerous" shall Abram's "offspring" (Heb. zéra' -- "seed") be. The uncounted multitude is the point of the comparison. The point made by the comparison would come home to the patriarch with all the greater emphasis under the Oriental skies where tim stars gleam far more distinctly and so appear more numerous. The fact that present day astronomers happen to chart the heavens, listing all stars and counting them, detracts nothing from the force of the comparison as it was originally made by God for Abram, who would never have thought of attempting to count all. The same comparison is used in Ge 22:17; 26:4 and Ex 32:13. Dods departs from the point at issue by letting God's control of the stars, His calling them by name and so proving Himself a God who "has designs of infinite sweep and comprehension," be the point of the comparison, whereas Yahweh had distinctly referred to their being countless, as the point at issue. If one compares Ge 13:16 ("dust of the earth") with this promise, one notices that at least in one point a distinct advance is marked and that may be allowed for here. The comparison now stresses not only numbers, but a noble sort of multitude will God bring into being.The na' after habbet gives a kindly tone to the imperative (K. S.355 b). On koh as retrospective see K. S.332 b.6. And he believed in Yahweh, and He counted it to him for righteousness.The biggest word in the chapter, one of the greatest in the Old Testament! Here is the first instance of the use of the word "believe" in the Scriptures. He'emîn, Hifil of 'aman, "to

confirm" and "support," means "trust," "believe," implying fiducia rather than assensus. It is construed with be, as here, or with le. The form is unusual, perfect with waw, not as one would expect, imperfect with waw conversive. Apparently, by this device the author would indicate that the permanence of this attitude is to be stressed: not only: Abram believed just this once. but: Abram proved constant in his faith, er bewaehrte sich als Glaeubiger (K. S.367 i). Kittel's correction wayya'amîn blurs the fine distinction.But at once we are moved to ask in what way can it be detected that Abram did believe and what indication have we that his faith was counted to him for righteousness? The first answer must be that this grand truth was revealed to the author, Moses, by the Spirit of inspiration; for of himself no man would ever have discovered such a possibility. But on the other hand, such revelations are never made in the abstract: they grow out of situations that clearly demonstrate them. So here, particularly from what follows, when God asks Abram to carry out certain orders and Abram unhesitatingly obeys; this attitude displays his faith. Again, the response of God to Abram's implicit obedience shows that Abram met with God's favour: he was justified; his faith had been counted to him for righteousness.Perhaps the most marvellous thing about this word is the clearness with which it rules out all efforts and attainments of man as contributory factors in the justification. Work righteousness is completely eliminated, a fact which again human reason might never have discerned but for divine exposition as granted to inspired men (Ro 4; Ga 3). But the only factor that counts in this transaction is faith, and even faith only in so far as it grasps God's promise, not faith as an achievement of man.The expression "and He counted it to him for righteousness" involves a purely forensic act. "Righteousness," well defined (K. W.) as "normalcy in reference to the obligations of an individual," is the equivalent of measuring up to the demands of God. What God demands and expects of a sinful mortal is faith. He that has faith measures up to God's requirements, is declared to have manifested the normal attitude pleasing to God; against such a one God has no wrath or displeasure. He counts him innocent; He gives him a verdict of "Not guilty." Meek seems to stand entirely on the basis of work righteousness when he renders: He "counted it to his credit." Such translations, modern enough in expression, are unsatisfactory and wrong.Now the question arises, Is Abram's faith different from the justifying faith of the New Testament believer? We answer unhesitatingly and emphatically, No. The very issue in this chapter has been Abram's seed. But Abram cannot as a spiritual man have thought of this seed only as numerous descendants; for already in Ge 12:3 b that seed had been shown as involving the one who would bring salvation to mankind ("all families of the earth blessed"). How could Abram have overlooked or undervalued this chief item? The remark of Hunnius (quoted by Delitzsch) certainly is correct: sub innumerabili illa posteritate latebat Christus. Abram believed that God would send this Saviour for his own good as well as for the whole world. Naturally, however, such faith may not possess full understanding of the details of the redemptive work and the atoning sacrifice. Yet in essence it is trust in the Saviour sent by God.To this must be added the question raised by Luther whether Abram had been justified by faith before this time, or whether only at this point his faith began to be counted to him for righteousness. Naturally, the answer has to be that Abram was justified by faith as soon as this faith began to manifest itself, which must have been years before this time. But why first record the justification here? We feel our answer must take the same form as Luther's, who points out that justification by faith is first indicated in the Scriptures in a connection where the Saviour is definitely involved, in order that none might venture to dissociate justification from Him.Note the rapid change of subject in the short compound sentence -- a common observation in Hebrew (K. S.399b). The feminine suffix on

the verb "count" represents the neuter "it" (K. S.12; G. K.112 q).7. And He said to Him: I am Yahweh who brought thee forth from Ur of the Chaldees to give thee this land for a possession. The "vision" is not concluded. It has further revelation of import to Abram. To this purpose God goes on to remind Abram first of all that He is the one who called him forth from Ur of the Chaldees (cf. Ge 11:28). This reminder recalls the whole of God's plan in reference to Abram and his descendants, which plan took its beginning with the Exodus from Ur. Abram is now to be shown what things must yet transpire before God will bring this plan to a complete realization. Critics find this self-introduction of Yahweh to be natural only at the commencement of an "interview" and here "difficult to reconcile with the assumption or the unity of the narrative."8. And he said: Lord Yahweh, whereby shall I know that I shall possess it?Again the same reverent address as in v.2 in token of his faith in God's ability to perform what He promises. But this faith seeks legitimate tokens; it is anxious to have still fuller assurance. So Abram asks, not in a spirit of doubt but with the purpose to be more solidly established in its conviction. We find Gideon's prayer analogous (Jude 6:17 ff.), or the question of the Virgin Mary (Lu 1:34). "Whereby" -- bammah -- "by what."9, 10. And He said to him: Take me a three year old heifer, a three year old she-goat, a three year old ram and a turtledove and a young pigeon. And he took him all these and he cut them in two and he put them in order each part over against its corresponding part, but the birds he did not cut in two.A covenant is to be established. God condescends to let it be made after the fashion of covenants made in those days, particularly among the Chaldeans. K. C. points to the historical evidence of the use of the same ceremony when the North Syrian Mati'lu is put under obligation to Aschschurnirari. The covenanting parties would pass between the halves of the beasts, and this may have implied that a similar lot, viz., being killed, was to befall their own cattle in the event of their violating the covenant. But a modification of the procedure is involved in this case: neither do both parties pass between the halves, nor is the threat implied.The proceeding, therefore, is not a sacrifice, even though animals that are at a later date ordained for sacrifice are employed. The requirement of creatures three years old has no further significance than that they are to be of full strength and beauty. Meshullésheth, a pual feminine participle, does not mean "three" of each (Targum) but three years old. No particular significance attaches to the number of creatures used. For the count of them is difficult in any case. They seem to be five; yet, if the halves are laid over against one another and the turtledove over against the young pigeon, four pairs appear on the scene. We cannot even be sure of this arrangement of the birds. The animals used are simply those that are most suitable for sacrifice among the domesticated animals, as also the Mosaic law provided that these only were suitable for sacrifice.It should also be noted that without receiving specific directions Abram understands what the Lord intends and proceeds on his own accord to cut up the victims into parts. It is also very much in place to observe that on the level of the practices of patriarchal religion the mode of procedure is quite different from the mode of offering sacrifices as prescribed by the book of Leviticus. For there Moses prescribes burning of sacrifices with fire (Le 1). Yet regarding the points of contact, between both modes note also the practice of not cutting up the smaller birds (Le 1:17). But again: Abram did not offer a sacrifice in this instance.The article is used with tsippor (here collective) because the birds have been previously mentioned ("the article of relative familiarity," K. S.298b). The datives "take me" (lî) and "he took him" (lô) are datives of interest merging into ethical datives. The final bathar does not appear with waw conversive as imperfect because the object intruded for emphasis after the conjunction (K. S.368 t).The various acts of Abram here recorded must be regarded, according to v.1, as having

transpired in the course of the "vision." What, do we know about visions that allows us to claim such acts cannot be part of a vision?11, 12. The birds of prey came down upon the carcases, but Abram drove them away. And the sun was about to go down, and a deep sleep fell upon Abram and, lo, terror and great darkness was falling upon him.Wherever carcases are, birds of prey promptly congregate -- here 'ayit, used collectively. Since these victims have thus been prepared for the solemnization of a sacred covenant, Abram drives off the foul birds that might pollute them. This is but natural. To suggest that Abram regarded the appearance of birds of prey as an ill omen, just because certain Arabic tribes still suppose the mere sight of buzzards to be an ill omen, is a purely gratuitous assumption attributing to one nation what is characteristic of another. Israel's legitimate religion, whether on the patriarchal, Mosaic, or prophetic level, never acknowledges omens or superstitions. The article with 'ayit is the categorical article, (K. S.300 a). The further meaning of this feature of the vision will be touched upon below.12. As far as the vision itself is concerned, it transpires in such a fashion that in the course of it Abram sees the sun at the point of setting, about as a man might dream he sees the sun setting. Such a dream or vision might occur morning, noon or night, Attempts to compute the length of time over which the experience extended by the expressions used such as "the sun was about to go down," would lead to an unnaturally long lapse of time. The setting of the sun in the vision prepares for the falling of darkness upon him. But first of all comes a "deep sleep" (tardemah) which is as little a "trance" here as it was in Ge 2:21 (which see). The "terror and the great darkness" that fall upon him are the terror which the ancestor experiences in the vision at the revelation of the sufferings which his descendants must endure. In the vision he feels these things in anticipation, even before the revelation is imparted to him that his descendants are destined to this particular form of misery. Perhaps the relation of 'êmah chashekhah gedholah (without conjunction), would be expressed best by a rendering like: "terror and an awful gloom." The difference between the verb naphelah and the particle nopheleth should be noted: the deep sleep fell, ie., quickly as a single act, but the terror and awful gloom kept falling, or settling upon him and were still enfolding him more fully when the rest of the revelation came (K. S.237 e explains a bit differently).Wayhi (masculine) begins the sentence, as often when the gender of the subject to follow has not yet been revealed; this does not, however, make hashshémesh masculine (K. S.345 c). Note wayhi le -- "was about to" (K. S.234; G. K.114h, i). The "deep sleep" (v.12) is not in conflict with the "vision" (v.1) as though the one term were the Elohist's way of putting it, the other the Yahwist's (e. g. Procksch). The "deep sleep" takes place within the "vision."13-16. And He said to Abram: Thou shalt know of a surety that thy descendants shall be sojourners in a land which is not theirs, where they shall be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. But I in turn will judge that nation to whom they are enslaved, and afterwards they shall go forth with great possessions. But thou on thy part shalt go unto thy fathers in peace and shalt be buried at a ripe old age. And the fourth generation shall return here; for the guilt of the Amorites is not yet complete.Now comes the revelation in words apart from the symbolic act, which here is made to represent the same facts, but it can only be understood after the revelation thus offered by word and by symbol makes the fact involved doubly impressive; and, surely, there was need of unusual emphasis, for this word was largely to furnish the much needed light during the dark ages of the period here described.The knowledge provided for Abram is of a very definite and positive sort: "thou shalt know of a surety," Hebrew: "knowing thou shalt know," verb plus its absolute infinitive (G. K.113, o). Zéra' -- "seed," "descendants." The ger, "sojourner," is one whose stay in certain territory is only temporary. We could translate: "a

temporary resident." Nothing for the present indicates that the land involved is Egypt. Perhaps this is not revealed lest Abram's descendants conceive an undue prejudice against this land. This first part of the revelation involves nothing grievous. Abram himself, for that matter, was a sojourner in the land of Canaan when he received this revelation. The next two terms, however, cover the unpleasant side of the experience: "they (Israel) shall serve them" (Egyptians), which we have rendered for purposes of easier construction: "where they shall be enslaved." Then, with a quick, change of person: "they" now -- Egyptians -- "they (Egyptians) shall oppress them." This is the hardest part which Israel will have to endure. The whole experience of being sojourner, being enslaved, and being oppressed shall involve "four hundred years." To make the whole sojourn one continuous oppression is completely at variance with the facts. In fact, computing according to the life of Moses, we should be nearest the truth if we allot the last century to the oppression.The four hundred years mentioned are, of course, a round number, which is given more exactly in Ex 12:40, as 430 years. Michell's computations agree with these figures, making the year of Jacob's going down into Egypt to be 1879 B. C. and the year of the Exodus 1449. Since this latter year, or perhaps 1447 B. C., is now quite commonly accepted, we may let these dates stand as sufficiently exact for all practical purposes. How Moses arrives at the computation 430 in Ex 12:40 need not here concern us. Other instances of exact predictions in numbers of years are found in Jeremiah 25:11; 29:20, in reference to seventy years; and Isaiah 16:14, for a matter of three years.Note: lo' lahem is a relative clause with the customary relative omitted (G. K.115 e). 14. The participle dan, according to the context, points to the future: "I will judge." "Judging" here implies "punishing." Here it is also revealed at once that Israel shall not be the poorer for its experience. By way of compensation for the affliction suffered the nation shall "go forth with great possessions." Rekhûsh is again used for "possessions" because they are movable. The choice of the word, here too, is not a mark of P but the natural term to use, for Israel was not to be rich in real estate but in rekhûsh. Criticism fails to discover such simple proprieties. Beth of accompaniment with rekhûsh (K. S.402 s).So in v.13, 14 a great basic principle, applying to God's people, has been revealed: they must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God (Ac 14:22), even as did the Captain of their salvation (Lu 24:26); but, on the other hand, God will often offset their losses and reimburse them so that their needs will be marvellously supplied. At the same time a correct conception of God as the Judge of the nations is clearly reflected at this point. Even in the patriarchal age a clear conception, correct in all its parts, prevailed in reference to Yahweh.15. Since the natural question must arise in the patriarch's mind, whether the things predicted will begin to come to pass during his lifetime, God assures him that such shall not be the case. An emphatic "thou" ('attah) reinforces the subject: "thou on thy part:" The expression "go unto thy fathers" must involve more than having his own dead body laid beside the dead bodies of the fathers. So we find here a clear testimony to belief in an eternal life in the patriarchal age. Coupled with this revelation from God is the assurance of a decent burial at a ripe old age, a thing desired especially in Israel and, for that matter, among most of the nations of antiquity. On the question of "going to thy fathers" Whitelaw rightly remarks that it must involve more than burial, because Abram's ancestors were not entombed in Canaan, where his own sepulchre was (Ge 25:9).16. Some regard dôr rebhî'î as an accusative of condition: "as fourth generation" they shall return. It seems even simpler to us to make it the plain subject: "the fourth generation" shall return. Since four generations cover more than four hundred years, we see that the word reckons a hundred years to a generation, according to the computation prevalent at the time of speaking. Such a

computation, according to chapter eleven, is not out of place, especially if one considers that Abram himself lived to the age of 175 years.Another factor enters into these computations and readjustments -- "the guilt of the Amorites." All the inhabitants of Canaan are referred to by the term "Amorites," the most important family of the Canaanites (see on Ge 10:16). The term is similarly used in Ge 48:22; Nu 13:29; 21:21, etc.; De 1:7, 19. These aboriginal inhabitants of Canaan had heaped up a measure of "guilt" ('awon) by this time. The measure was not yet "complete" (shalem), that is, they were nearing the point where divine tolerance could bear with them no longer, but they had not yet arrived at this point. God's foreknowledge discerned that in a few more centuries these wicked nations would have forfeited their right to live, and then He would replace them in the land of Canaan by the Israelites. Passages bearing on the iniquity of the Canaanites are Le 18:24; 20:22; De 18:9 ff. So God will allow the children of Israel to be absent from the land while the Canaanites continue in their evil ways. When He can bear with the Canaanites no longer, He will have another nation ready wherewith to replace them. Thus far we have encountered no direct evidence of Canaanite iniquity but shall soon see the startling examples offered by Sodom.17, 18a. And it came to pass when the sun had set and dense darkness prevailed, that, lo, a smoking firepot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram,In the vision in the sequence of events the sun finally sets; it was on the verge of doing so v.12. The quick change of the Orient from daylight to intense darkness ('alatah) follows. This darkness makes the next phenomenon, which is one of fire, all the more distinct by contrast. What Abram sees is of a character to occasion surprise ("lo" -- hinneh), for it is first of all a tannûr, a portable clay oven, a couple of feet high, more or less like an inverted bowl, with a hole on the upper side for draft purposes. This "firepot" has the fire within it kindled and flaming out of the top of the oven like a "torch" (lappîdh). This firepot plus the flaming torch above pass in between the pieces that Abram had made of the animals that he had been commanded to take.18 a. All this would be worse than puzzling if it were not for the fact that the much needed explanation at once, as so often, follows: "on this day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram." This "smoking firepot and flaming torch" represented Yahweh passing between the halves of the victims and so concluding the covenant. Nor is this mode of designating Yahweh's presence unsuitable or inappropriate. He who at Horeb appeared in the burning bush (Ex 3:2-6) and on Mount Sinai in a consuming fire (Ex 19:18) and throughout the time of the wilderness wanderings in a pillar of fire (Ex 13:21), now appears as a fire, only the guise of it was the most frequent form in which fire appeared to the nomads of that day, the portable "firepot." So men of Abram's type and age were wont usually to behold fire. Now the whole typical, representation is clear to us: the divided beasts represent Israel; the birds of prey who would have devoured them are the oppressing nation; Abram drives these birds away, that is, the blessing of God laid upon the nation for its great ancestor's sake drives away all harm; the fire passing hostility of the world; the consequent sufferings of the church; and the ultimate triumph of God's own. For this purpose v.12-16 might suffice. But sound Bible knowledge can be built up by the use of fuller texts, and so we recommend the longer portion, v.12-21.

CHAPTER XVI

6. The Birth of Ishmael (16:1-16) The period of waiting appointed for Abram is not yet at an end. The fact that the promise of God does not become a reality leads Abram and his wife to take recourse to human ingenuity. God, however, wants it to be clearly understood that the child involved is in every sense to be a child of promise. Yahweh's grace will give him, man can contribute nothing. The experience of this chapter makes this fact most clearly apparent to Abram and to Sarai. When in days of old reverence for the venerable patriarchs led commentators to make attempts completely to exonerate these holy men of God from all guilt or blame in connection with an episode such as this, the present day lack of reverence for the Word and for the worthy men of antiquity results in expositions that impute the cheapest of motives to the characters involved and that evaluate their individual deeds at as low a value as possible. The truth does not really lie between these two extremes, for a prophetic word (Malachi 2:1.5) ascribes a good motive to Abram for his share in this case: he sought the seed promised of God. There is no reason for excluding Sarai from having a share in such a good motive. Consequently, we shall be justified in our approach to the problem involved to aim to put the best construction on everything, and by so doing we shall not lay ourselves open to the charge of unseemly partiality. Calvin's summary of the case is quite commendable: "The faith of both was defective; not, indeed, with regard to the substance of the promise, but with regard to the method in which they proceeded." Luther's attitude is the same. 1, 2. Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children, but she had an Egyptian maid, whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram: Behold, now, the Lord has prevented me from having children; suppose you marry my maid; perhaps our household would be built through her. And Abram approved of Sarai's suggestion. As is evident from v.16, Abram had been in the land about ten years. If we consider the advanced age of both Abram and Sarai, they had surely waited a long time. The Hebrew uses the verb without an object in stating the case: "She did not bear for him" (lo' yaledhah lô). To Sarai the thought comes that perhaps customary devices may be resorted to. Women of standing like Sarai had their personal maids, who were their own in a special sense. They were the personal property of the wife and were appointed specially to wait upon her. The maid under consideration here happened to be an Egyptian, having been acquired, no doubt, during the brief stay in Egypt (Ge 12:10 ff.) The custom of those days allowed in a case of this sort that the wife give her maid to her husband as a secondary wife in the hope that the new union would be blessed with offspring, which offspring would then promptly be claimed and adopted by the mistress. No stigma attached to the position of the maid: she was a wife, though not, indeed, of the same social standing as the first wife. For Sarai to take such a step certainly involved self denial, even a kind of self-effacement. It was this rather noble mode of procedure on Sarai's part that may in part have blinded the patriarch's eyes so that he failed to discern the actual issues involved. Then, also, if we consider the chief servant, Eliezer, and the excellent faith he later displays, we may well suppose that the chief maid may well have been a woman who was indeed imbued with the faith that reigned in the household and may modestly have been desirous of having a part in the achievement of the high purpose to which this household was destined. Yet, in spite of all that may be said by way of extenuating the fault of the

parties involved, it was still a double fault and sin. First, it clashed with the true conception of monogamous marriage, which alone is acceptable with God. Secondly, it involved the employment of human devices seemingly to bolster up a divine purpose which was in any case destined to be achieved as God had originally ordained. In so far the fault involved was unbelief. "Hagar," from the root "to flee," stamps her as "the fugitive," apparently because of the later event when she fled from her mistress. This later name, then must have replaced a former one now unknown. How keenly barrenness was felt to be a curse and how highly offspring were prized as a manifestation of divine favour, appears from a comparison of the following passages: Ge 19:31; 31:1; 23 with Ge 21:6; 24:60; Ex 23:26; De 7:14. 2. Correctly Sarai ascribes her failure to bear children to Yahweh's not having given them to her. Literally translated, the Hebrew says: "Yahweh hath shut me up, or restrained me, (A. V.) from bearing," the min with lédheth here constituting the equivalent of a negative clause of result (K. S.406n; G. K.119x). Bo-na' el, "Go, pray, unto," etc., is a euphemism, to which the na' imparts a certain mildness of suggestion, which Meek has cleverly reproduced in colloquial English: "Suppose you marry." A very distinct Hebrew idiom lies at the basis of what we have rendered: "perhaps my household would be built through her"; for the Hebrew says: "perhaps I may be built up through her." The verb 'ibbaneh, from banah, "build," rests on the root ben, "son." "To be built up," therefore, is the same idea as "to have children" or "build up a family," (Meek). 'Ibbaneh is potential (K. S.186). The min of agent (K. S.107) appears in mimménnah. When Abram "hearkens" (shama') to his wife's "voice" (qôl), he "approves of Sarai's suggestion." No doubt, the patriarch was impressed by Sarai's utter selflessness. 3. So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, her Egyptian maid, after ten years of Abram's dwelling in the land of Canaan, and gave her in marriage to Abram, her husband. The somewhat more circumstantial style of the verse is manifestly a device for making it the more apparent what it cost Sarai to take such a step; for she was "Abram's wife," and Hagar was only "her Egyptian maid"; and, for all that, Abram was still "her husband." Besides, to indicate that these, good people had really waited quite patiently, at this point the author indicates how long Abram had dwelt in Canaan -- a full ten years. So the particular character of the verse on purely literary grounds appears to be quite readily accounted for. However, according to the critics, who seem to lack appreciation for all niceties of a good and flexible style, every instance where the style grows more circumstantial is supposed to mark the insertion of a portion from P. The infinitive shébheth here functions as a noun in the construct state (K. S.229 f.). Lô le'ishshah, "to him for wife," is a condensed purpose clause (K. S.407 d). It must be quite apparent that "to give as wife" must mean "to give in marriage." Here was no concubinage but a formal marital union, though Hagar was but the second wife.4. And he went in unto Hagar and she conceived. When she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was lightly esteemed in her eyes.The plan works out, apparently according to schedule. Bo' el, "to go in unto," is a delicate euphemism.Now at this point the evils of polygamy begin to rear their ugly head. It is always bound to be the fruitful mother of envy, jealousy, and strife. The baser elements in man are unleashed by it. Each of the three characters now appears to disadvantage. Yet we are not compelled now to suppose that such extremes resulted as Jamieson suggests -- "bursts of temper, or blows." The fine praise that Peter bestows upon Sarai (1 Peter 3:6) hardly allows us to think of her as degenerating into a shrew. When it is remarked of Hagar that "her mistress was lightly esteemed in her eyes," that need involve nothing more than that she thought that God had bestowed upon her what He had denied Sarai, and so she thought herself superior to her mistress and showed her disdain in certain ways. This attitude was bound to pain Sarai, who was, no doubt,

a woman of high position, while Hagar was only an Egyptian slave.5. Then Sarai said to Abram: The wrong done to me is your fault. I gave my maid into your arms, and when she saw that she had conceived, I became lightly esteemed in her eyes. May Yahweh judge between me and thee.Now Sarai's judgment becomes impaired by the bitter feelings roused in her. Hagar's wrong leads Sarai to do further wrong. Sin grows more involved. Sarai blames Abram for doing what she had in reality suggested. At least, so it seems. Luther attempts to avoid so crude a charge on her part by supposing that she rather charges Abram with showing certain preferences and honours to Hagar and so becoming the cause of her arrogance. Then her charge would be correct: "The wrong done to me is your fault." But the explanation that follows does not interpret the wrong thus. So we shall do better to call hers an unreasonable charge growing out of her wounded pride. Our translation here corresponds with the Greek rendering, adicoumai ec sou. Chamasi, "my wrong," must mean "the wrong done to me," the pronominal suffix being an objective genitive (K. S.37). To supply the verb "may it be" results in an idle repetition; for afterward she says: "Yahweh judge between me and thee." So instead of making the clause voluntative ("may"), we make it indicative: "My wrong is on thee" -- "The wrong done me is your fault." The statement: "May Yahweh judge between me and thee," is rightly explained (K. W.) "to decide the controversy at issue between two parties."The injustice of the charge made by Sarai might well have roused Abram to a heated reply. Indeed, with excellent self-control he replies moderately (v.6).In the last word of the verse the second yodh is redundant.6. But Abram said to Sarai: See, thy maid is in thy power; do to her what pleases thee. So Sarai humbled her, and she fled from her.Some charge Abram at this point with being "strangely unchivalrous" (Procksch). He is not suggesting cruelty to Sarai nor condoning it. He is merely suggesting the natural solution of the problem. In reality, Sarai is still Hagar's mistress. That relation has not really been cancelled. Abram suggests that she use her right as mistress. He does, however, not suggest the use of cruelty or injustice. It is not really said that Sarai did what is unjustifiable. Nor should it be forgotten that Hagar had begun to do wrong and required correction. Apparently also, according to the custom of the times, Abram had no jurisdiction over Hagar directly, for she was esteemed Sarai's maid. The Hebrew idiom "do what is good in thine eyes" is our: "do what pleases thee."Here, we believe, Sarai is usually wronged. Of the various meanings of 'innah the more severe are chosen, like "deal hardly with" (A. V.), or "treated cruelly" (Meek). Luther may well be followed: wollte sie demuetigen -- "wanted to humble her." When the problem is thus approached, Sarai is merely regarded as having taken steps to bring Hagar to realize that she had begun to be somewhat presumptuous, such as making her to live with the servants and perform more menial tasks. But, of course, we must allow for sinful excesses also on her part. Sarai may not have proceeded with due tact and consideration, in suggesting such a course Abram may too have failed to counsel due caution. Every actor in this domestic drama may have given evidence of shortcomings in one way or another. Hagar, on her part, being somewhat self-willed and independent, refused to accept correction and "fled from her."7. But the Angel of the Lord found her by the spring of water in the wilderness, by the fountain on the road to Shur.A singular honour is conferred upon Hagar by the appearance of the Angel of the Lord. This would seem to lend added weight to our contention that Hagar was a woman of godly disposition, and one who may have given evidence of such a disposition by prayer to the God of Abram, made at the time of her present difficulty. Luther's suggestion may also be approved of, when he suggests that after Hagar's flight Abram and Sarai made prayer to God in behalf of the fugitive. The Hebrew text says he found her "by the spring," not "a spring." This is

best understood as the article applied to the customary, (der Connexitaet, K. S.299 b), that is, the spring where travellers on the way to Shur were wont to stop. "Shur" is regarded by many as meaning "wall," a meaning quite possible according to the Aramaic. In that event it may be the name of a line of fortresses erected by the Egyptian king, perhaps at the Isthmus of Suez, to keep out Asiatic invaders. In that case Hagar quite naturally was on the way back to her home country, Egypt. Having come to this well, she had come far enough away from Abram's home, which may at this time have been at Hebron, to allow for the settling of her thoughts and feelings, and she may already have begun to view the situation a bit more soberly and justly than she did at the time when she first resolved upon flight. So the Angel's approach appears to be well timed. But the angel of the Lord (mal'akh Yahweh), who was He? We believe Hengstenberg and Keil demonstrated adequately both that He was divine and that He is to be regarded as a kind of pre-incarnation of the Messiah -- using the term "pre-incarnation" as indeed open to criticism if pressed too closely. For our passage His identity with Yahweh is fully established by v.13. For the present we offer Whitelaw's five arguments (condensed) for this position. The Angel of the Lord is not a created being but the Divine Being Himself; for1. He explicitly identifies Himself with Yahweh on various occasions.2. Those to whom He makes His presence known recognize Him as divine.3. The Biblical writers call Him Yahweh.4. The doctrine here implied of a plurality of persons in the Godhead is in complete accordance with earlier foreshadowing.5. The organic unity of Scripture would be broken if it could be proved that the central point in the Old Testament revelation was a creature angel, while that of the New is the incarnation of the God Man.K. C. attempts to dispose of all such arguments by the too simple explanation that an ambassador most readily makes a transition into the words of the one who commissioned him. Granting that such a thing might be done by ordinary human ambassadors -- a thing of which we personally are still very doubtful -- we feel that the Almighty stands too far above the creature, even an angel, to allow for such a piece of presumption on the part of His representatives. If Exod.3:6 be examined, as one of the passages bearing upon the case, one could hardly venture to say that such a transition from one person to another takes place. The claim to being none other than Yahweh Himself is too distinct.The attempted translation "an angel of the Lord" is rightly rejected by K. S.304 e. This Angel of the Lord is in a class by Himself and distinctly recognized as a superior being by the writers of the Old Testament books.8. And He said: Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence hast thou come and whither art thou going? And she said: Away from Sarai, my mistress, I am (now) fleeing.In what form or under what guise Hagar saw Him who now addressed her we are not told. It is most likely that to her it seemed most like an angel. His mode of address is calculated to rouse an awareness in Hagar's mind that her flight has not altered her position or her duty, nor has her state of pregnancy caused any such alteration: Hagar is still "Sarai's maid." So the Angel of the Lord still esteems her. The question following does not have the purpose of eliciting information but again addresses itself to the conscience of the fugitive. From a spiritually favoured home she is setting out in flight to a very uncertain future. Apparently, the mode of address succeeds in producing the desired state of mind: Hagar acknowledges that she is fleeing from her "mistress." By the use of that title for Sarai Hagar admits that the original relation is not cancelled. The pronoun with the participle ('anokhî borßchath) describes a progressive act: "I am (now) fleeing."9, 10. And the Angel of Yahweh said unto her: Return to thy mistress and submit thyself under her hands. Besides, the Angel of Yahweh said unto her: I will greatly multiply thy descendants so that they cannot be counted for multitude.Before Hagar does anything else she should correct the existing

wrong of her life, her self-willed departure from her regular place in life. She must return to her mistress; for Sarai still is mistress, even upon Hagar's express admission (v.8). No man should rashly abandon his place in life unless he have a distinct indication from the Lord to do so. Hith'annî need not here be rendered by so strong a verb as "humble oneself." Plain, dutiful submission in the fulfilment of her duties is sufficient for Hagar. Nor would Sarai, after this experience with the Angel became known, have asked any more. Therefore render: "submit thyself." Our idiom might substitute "under her authority" for "under her hands." We have retained the Hebrew idiom, because it cannot be misunderstood.10. Three times consecutive verses (v.9, 10, 11) begin, "And the Angel of Yahweh said unto her." In fact, three distinct facts are revealed to Hagar. So after the first word we do well to translate "Again," or "besides," or "furthermore," "He said," etc. Criticism does not understand the simple reason for the unusual repetition, which aims only to make each of the three words stand out separately, and claims that such repetition is a proof of interpolation and so discards v.9, 10.The second revelation now made to Hagar by the omniscient Angel is that of countless offspring. The Hebrew absolute infinitive functions here: "multiplying I will multiply" -- "I will greatly multiply." So it comes to pass that two vast nations, the Jews and the Ishmaelites, are descended from Abraham. No further spiritual advantage is attached to the advantage of numbers.11, 12. Besides, the Angel of Yahweh said to her: Behold thou art with child and wilt bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Ishmael (God hears), for Yahweh hath heard thy distress. And he will be a wild ass of a man. His hand shall be against every man and every man's hand against him, and he will dwell over against all his brethren. Now the revelation of the Angel of Yahweh concerns itself specifically with the son that is to be born to Hagar. The child to be born God knows to be a son, and He ordains that this child shall bear a name that shall always be a reminder to him as well as to his mother that God in a very signal way gave ear to the cry of this woman in her distress. For yishma'e'l means "God hears." When God ordains this name, He makes provision for keeping mother and son close to Himself. There is a divine pedagogy behind this name. Besides, when God says that He hears, the inference is almost unavoidable that the mother had cried unto Yahweh in her distress. The words used might allow for the thought that her "distress" ('onyekh) had constituted a plea for mercy with God, for we read, "Yahweh hath heard thy distress," not thy prayer. However, by metonomy "distress" may signify "cry of distress." At the same time, God would hardly have honoured with His personal appearance a woman who did not even know how to call upon Him in the day of trouble.NB. Yoladht is a mixed form, half perfect, half participle, used as future after hinneh; see G. K.94 f. Harah with the same word is a participle pointing to the present -- (K. S.237f.). In h'innakh the suffix is an object.12. In this interview, in which Hagar is highly honoured by receiving such extensive revelation, the less complimentary revelation concerning her son is not made with the idea of humiliating the mother, but, most likely, that in her training of her son she may take proper steps to curb the wild and lawless elements of his nature. The first fact communicated to her concerning his nature is that he will be by disposition a pére' adham, "a wild ass of a man," the second noun in the construct relationship with the first (K. S.337-c). A similar construction appears Pr 15:20, "a fool of a man" -- "a foolish man." The unrestrained love of liberty on the part of these wild desert animals is further depicted, Job 39:5-8. Ishmael's descendants, the Arabs, roving over the wide expanses of the desert lands adjacent to Bible lands, are still characterized by this trait. In addition, he cannot be said to be distinguished for amiability and love of peace. He personally shall be the aggressor against all others (hakkol with the article of totality, K. S.301 a), and as a result

"every man's hand shall be against him." This idiom, of course, conveys the idea of being continually at loggerheads with others. Even in the matter of a dwellingplace, this antagonistic spirit, brooking no restraint or interference, shall express itself in his dwelling "over against all his brethren." 'Al-peney may signify "to the east of." But here, apparently, more than mere direction is involved, for the phrase means "upon the face of" or "against the face of," and that plainly involves hostility, as it does Job 1:11. Apparently, the fellow himself as well as his descendants will not be of a peaceable disposition. We should say, he will carry a chip on his shoulder and have his finger on the trigger.13. And she called the name of Yahweh who spoke unto her, Thou art El Roi (a God of seeing); for she said: Have I indeed here been permitted to look after Him who sees me?Such a rare experience as Hagar here had calls for a response, first for an immediate reaction, then for the reaction of obedience. The immediate reaction is recorded here. Since the full revelation that is ours was not yet available in early days, each new revelation of God's character and being was memorialized in a new name or by some remark that epitomized the experience. So here Hagar very aptly invents the name for Yahweh -- 'El Ro'î, "a God of seeing," -- a God "who sees" (B D B). For "see" may also mean "consider," "have regard to," "concern oneself about," sich kuemmern um (K. W.), as is indicated by Ge 39:23; Ex 4:31; 1 Kings 12:16; Isaiah 5:12, etc. Hitherto Hagar's position had been growing increasingly difficult. Yahweh had done nothing to relieve her when she cried unto Him: She thought she had been abandoned. Now comes not only hope but a glorious revelation of the future and a personal appearance of the Angel of the Lord. Now she knows that Yahweh cares, He looks after her, He is "a God who sees." This is more intimately expressed as a prayer in a direct address to Him: "Thou art El Roi." She herself offers the explanation for this appropriate name, in that she says in a question that reflects the astonishment that is still strong upon her: "Have I indeed here been permitted to look after Him who sees me?" Literally this statement begins, "Have I indeed here seen?" But that expresses surprise at such a rare privilege. Hagar well knew that God's manifestations had been very rare in the history of the human race. That she had thus been honoured is recognized as a rare privilege. Therefore, "have I indeed seen?" must certainly mean: "have I indeed here been permitted to see?" as K. C. happily suggests. But really ra'îthî acharey is not so much "see" as "look after," as we have translated. For no mortal to whom God appeared ventured to look directly into or upon the glorious countenance of the Lord. Even Moses in answer to his special request could not venture to take such a step (Ex 33:23). So here very tersely Hagar described what happened in her case. When Yahweh appeared, she indeed conversed with Him; but only as He departed did she "look after Him." So at least she appears to have understood that no sinful mortal can see God's countenance directly and live (see Ex 33:20). So she did not even attempt so rash a thing. But to her God now is a God "who sees me," i. e., "cares for me." Therefore we construe the final ro'î as participle active ro'eh with object suffix, "my seer" -- "who sees me." If it were to be taken as a pausal form of the ro'î (with short "o" -- the noun "seeing") found in the middle of the verse, the accent would have to stand on the penult, as Job 33:21 indicates. Consequently we feel constrained to abandon the views of Hengstenberg (in his "Christology") and of Keil (ad loc.) which render: "Have I also seen here after seeing" in the sense: "Am I still alive and able to see after having looked upon God?" Keil, usually very conservative about textual changes, adadmits that he must shift the accent of the last word in order to translate thus. However, at best, Hagar would have chosen a very involved way of expressing her thought, as for example Procksch's treatment of the case indicates. For in an effort to make the text say this, he makes three major insertions in the text -- with the license of

the critic -- and then secures this rendering: "Thou art a God whom one can see and live. For she said: Have I really been able to see God and stay alive after seeing Him?" It takes almost too many insertions to secure this thought. Besides, the text ought to read thus. But it does not. Hagar's problem is not so much the more theological one concerning the possibility of seeing God and surviving but the more practical one: Does God see me? does God really care?Some press the halom ("here") unduly. It merely makes the statement of the case more vivid by recalling the scene of the experience -- "here." When drawn to the beginning of a statement as here, such adverbs are used in a more general sense, not usually with emphasis (cf. K. S.339t). So the statement refuses to yield the sense, quite foreign to the whole connection, that Hagar is chiefly surprised that God appeared to her here and not at the place of Abram's dwellingplace, as though God had already been appearing there to her and to many others. No, she is surprised that he appears at all.Ro'î, the final word, is a participle treated primarily as noun, object of "after" (K. S.241 a).14. Therefore the well came to be called Beer-lahai-roi (a well of the Living One who seeth me). Behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.Previously called a "spring" (v.7), it is here called a "well," because, perhaps, the water did spring forth but was walled in in a well more or less deep.The experience of Hagar became known, and, in memory of what she had said, the well came to bear a name indicative of this experience -- "it was called" -- gara' impersonal: "one called," man nannte. This slight difference appears in the name of the well: God is called "the Living One." Quite properly so, because the fact that He has regard for the needs of those who call upon Him, stamps Him as truly a Living God and not a dead conception. He "seeth me" is used exactly as in v.13. Similar forms of the divine name appear in Joshua 3:10; Ho 1:10; Psalms 42:2; 84:2; 2 Kings 19:4, 16, For those living at Moses' time the well is located more definitely. The "Behold" is another way of saying: "See" (if you wish to locate it) it is, etc. "Kadesh" is the site usually designated Kadesh Barnea, forty miles due south and a bit to the west of Beersheba. "Bered" has -never been located. Skinner believes the well must be 'Ain-Muweilih, "a caravan station about twelve miles to the west of Kadesh." A hû'(" it is") is omitted in the statement as self-evident.15, 16. And Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of the son whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. And Abram was a man eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.Hagar's return to Abram's dwellingplace in obedience to the specific command of the Angel was so self-evident that it is not specially mentioned. The author appears to feel that men will understand that a good woman of Hagar's disposition would never think of doing otherwise than returning under such circumstances. Abram is strictly obedient to the divine injunction and gives the assigned name. His giving of the name implies the formal acknowledgment of the son as his own, and this could hardly have been taken care of by Sarai, and consequently it cannot be a mark of a particular author's way of stating the case (as though in J the mother gave the name cf. v.11 and in P the father v.15). In v.11 the mother is commissioned because she alone is present; in v.15 the father carries out the commission because he acknowledges his son. These are plain facts not stylistic peculiarities.16. Quite appropriately we are told how old Abram was when Ishmael was born. Had the writer not told us, we might justly have charged him with failure to satisfy our justifiable inquiry. Again the customary claim that a verse like 16 must belong to P, because it conveys an exact formal statement statistical in character, must yield to the needs of the case, which indicate that such a statement is almost essential to the completeness of the narrative.Observe the idiomatic use of ben to express age: "a son of eighty-six years." Also, the repetition of the word "year" with compound numbers, like "eighty-six." In the last word of the verse

the pronoun is displaced by the less common noun (K. S.4).On the chapter as a whole it may yet briefly be observed that the critical analysis wavers, revealing how the results of criticism are far from "assured." Skinner makes J the author of all except vv.1 a, 3, 15, 16, which are given to P; vv.8, 9 are interpolated. Koenig gives vv.1-15 to J and only v.16 to P. Procksch reconstructs: 20:1; then chapter 16; then 25:18; though he, too, assigns vv.1 a, 3, 15, and 16 to P. Strack is uncertain about v.1 a. Many, in order to uphold their theory, call the whole chapter another version of Hagar's expulsion (Ge 21:18 ff.)HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThe big themes of Genesis should be employed as copiously as possible. They are God's mercy and man's faith. So in the case of this chapter the tendency to dwell upon the frailty and the human failings should recede into the background. Not that Abram's and Sarai's weakness should be made light of. But these failings of God's frail children merely offer the background against which God's mercy is displayed the more gloriously. In this particular instance that aspect of the case which receives strongest emphasis is the "Strength of God's Covenant" Grievous as the patriarch's sin is, and though it might appear as though it might annul God's gracious promises, yet that covenant survives and God even deals graciously with the person involved more indirectly -- with Hagar, and that, for Abraham's sake, with whom He has made a covenant. Points of view such as these should predominate. Then there will be less danger of falling into a trivial mode of treatment of these portions of the sacred narrative.

CHAPTER XVII

7. The Covenant Sealed by New Names and Circumcision (17:1-27) The basic fact to be observed for a proper approach to this chapter is that the covenant referred to is not a new one. For Ge 15:18 reports the establishment of the covenant, whose essential provisions are the same as those here outlined. Consequently this chapter marks an advance in this direction that the things previously guaranteed are now foretold as finally coming to pass: the one covenant promises certain blessings, the other the realization of these blessings when their appointed time has come. Criticism confuses issues by claiming that our chapter gives P's account of the covenant which was covered by J's account in the somewhat different fashion in chapter 15. Consequently it need not be wondered at that the critical approach continually magnifies incidental differences and tries to set these two chapters at variance with one another. Furthermore, the distinct importance of our chapter is readily discerned. A man who has long been obliged to wait in unwavering faith certainly requires clear promises of God upon which to build such faith. For faith must have a foundation. Here these promises, covering the essentials of numerous posterity and possession of the land, and involving by implication the Messianic features found in v.12, now specify Sarai as the mother who is to bear the son, and also establish a covenant sign. Immediately before the birth of the son of promise these distinct features are, of course, most in place. Aside from this, to have all these promises featured as parts of the covenant seals everything for the faith of Abram which is now under necessity of hoping and believing against all hope. 1, 2. When Abram was a man of ninety-nine years, Yahweh appeared to Abram and said: I am El Shadday; walk before me and be thou perfect. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. If we are to understand rightly the things about to be reported, it is essential to know at what juncture of Abram's life they took place, that is to say, how old Abram was. This very natural consideration calls for the statement of Abram's age at this point. Consequently, to begin to note here the precise style of P who is supposed to love exact statistical information is a misreading of a very simple and natural statement. The Hebrew idiom "a son of" (ben) for "a man of" appears here. The dative construction "to Abram" here is not the customary le but el (K. S., p.263, Note 1). The divine name 'El Shadday here demands attention. "God Almighty," or "Almighty God," (A. V.), is a very satisfactory translation. So other versions: Luther -- der allmaechtige Gott; Vulgate -- usually, omnipotens. It would appear that this name Shadday comes from the root shadad, which may mean, "deal violently," but would in reference to God signify "to display power." This derivation is so natural and the sense so satisfactory that efforts to lay inferior and unworthy meanings into this divine name should not have been made. Very unsatisfactory, is the evidence which would impress the meaning of "hurler of lightnings," "mountain god," "demon," or "thunder god" upon the title; and behind such efforts lies the attempt to degrade the patriarchal religion to the level of contemporary heathen religions. But neither can we lend our approval to the queer Jewish etymology of the name, which makes sh -- "who," and day -- "sufficiently"; therefore "the self-sufficient," cf. the Septuagint rendering icanov. The name is common in Job, where the Greek translators usually render it pantocratwr, "the Almighty." To the critics the use of this name is a sure index of the style of P. But quite apart from the fact that the argument in a circle functions

in the proof -- first these passages are because of the name assigned to P, then the name is again extracted from the passages as proof of P's use of it -- of the six passages thus assigned to P one is admitted to be touched up by a redactor (Ge 43:14); and besides, the first verse, of our chapter bears the name "Yahweh," which also is then conveniently assigned to another redactor, and lastly, the name appears also in Nu 24:4, 16, assigned to JE. Of far more importance is the remark by Delitzsch which indicates the propriety of the use of this name here: he claims that El Shadday designates "the God who compels nature to do what is contrary to itself and subdues it to bow and minister to grace." So in the last analysis it should not be regarded as a stylistic peculiarity or as a favourite divine name regularly used by some one author, but as the most appropriate divine name for the circumstances under consideration at this point. It is Yahweh, according to the text, who says: "I am El Shadday" -- not P. Abram is by no means to desist from the type of life which wholeheartedly aims to please God. Though he has been obliged to wait long and patiently for the Lord, conscientious conduct is still the most manifest characteristic of him who is called a true servant of His. Therefore says Yahweh: "Walk before me and be thou perfect." The one command demands a God-conscious life of the best type; the other, faithful observance of all duties. The one is sound mysticism; the other, conscientious conduct. The one is the soul of true religion; the other, the practice of it. "Walk before me" is a very expressive description of how a believer realizes the very real presence of God. "Perfect" (tamim), of course, involves not complete moral perfection; but since it involves the idea of "complete" and "sound," it implies that no vital feature of a godly life is absent. Such a demand does not ask Abram to make himself fit to receive divine blessings, but it does warn him against doing those things whereby he renders himself unfit. 2. God's covenant was seen to have been established by God already Ge 15:18. Consequently, nathan berîth cannot here mean "to set up a covenant," but rather to put into force, or to make operative, the one that is in force. It is in this sense that we used the hardly adequate rendering "I will establish." God is simply assuring Abram that the time has now come to let the promised things begin to take place. That must mean for Abram: a son will be born. That, too, is exactly what lies in the divine promise: "I will multiply thee exceedingly." God speaks in terms of the ultimate results. Abram for the present thinks primarily in terms of the immediate realization. Bim'odh me'odh constitutes, as usual in such repetitions, a kind of superlative (K. S.318 f.). Strack has a translation that covers the idea involved very acceptably from one point of view: "I will let my promise made to thee become a reality." 3. And Abram fell upon his face, and God continued to speak to him and said:Abram's response to the gracious divine promise is humble adoration, which leads him who recognizes how unworthy he is to receive such a promise to fall face downward to the ground. Since this displays the proper attitude on Abram's part, God goes on to address him.From this point onward through the chapter the divine name 'Elohîm is used, the Creator-God. Yahweh (v.1) marked the divine manifestation about to be reported as a token of gracious favour. 'El Shadday emphasized that God was about to display His power in making nature subservient to grace. 'Elohîm covers the idea adequately from this point onward, for the Creator is about to do a creative work in enabling Sarai to bring forth.4, 5. As for me, behold my covenant with thee stands, and thou shalt become a father of a multitude of nations. So thy name shall no longer be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; because as a father of a multitude of nations have I appointed thee.The emphatic "I" ('anî) at the beginning of the verse introduces significantly what God purposes to do and stands in contrast with the obligations Abram is to meet, which are preceded by a prominent emphatic "thou" ('attah) v.9. The pronoun of v.4

which is thus made emphatic by an independent pronominal form is the possessive attached to berîthî, "my covenant," (K. S.341 g). The initial statement lacks a verb: "my covenant with thee," necessitating that some verb like "stands" be supplied in translating. As previously remarked, the covenant of chapter 15 is regarded as unassailable. The promise of v.2 which still only guaranteed numerous offspring is now elucidated as involving "a multitude of nations." To be the ancestor of one prominent nation would be a gracious prospect. To become the ancestor of a multitude of nations is almost without precedent, except in the case of Noah's sons. As a matter of fact the Ishmaelites and the sons of Ketura, as well as all Israelites acknowledge him as father. Besides, he becomes "heir of the world" (Ro 4:13) by virtue of all true believers of all nations, who through faith become his children.5. In token of this new fact Abram's name is changed by God. Many question this fact in spite of the plain statement here recorded and reckon the account nothing more than an attempt to explain how men changed Abram's name. But the integrity of a writer like Moses dare not be questioned; for he is nowhere found inventing episodes such as this one. It may not be a strict etymology, for the second half, raham, could hardly be' derived from hamôn, "multitude." Consequently the criticisms of Procksch, who calls the efforts "clumsy," or of Dillmann, who labels it "hardly an etymology" are untenable. The simple facts seem to be these: the altered name is to appear as one but little different from the original. However, raham, "multitude," is very close to ram, "exalted," but since the root is not in use in Hebrew but only in Arabic (ruhdm) but apparently was understood in Hebrew, it suggests itself as usable; only its equivalent must be given in a truly Hebrew word "multitude" -- hamôn. The attempts to extract other meanings from the name, which the text adequately explains, must therefore be dismissed as hypercritical. So, too, the explanation that the inserted h really only represents the long vowel within the word -- a practice nowhere met with in Hebrew.The sign or the accusative 'eth before the virtual subject shimkha is to be explained by the fact that in adopting the passive verb the retained object practically becomes the subject (K. S.109). The conjunction waw before hayah is adversative (K. S.360 b; cf. Ge 42:10).6. And I will make thee exceedingly, prolific, and make nations of thee and kings shall come forth from thee.The promise of v.4 is unfolded as to the further honours it embraces. Again critics lose this feature by trying to describe the legal style of P, of which this is only a further example. V.4 had only assured "a multitude of nations." This promise could be construed to mean small nations. Our verse now construes it to mean very populous nations; for "I will make thee exceedingly prolific." Hiphréthî strictly means "I will make fruitful," but our idiom prefers "prolific" (Meek). Between the two new features of the promise stands "I will make nations of thee," the original promise whose possibilities are being unfolded. The second new feature mentioned is: "Kings shall come forth from thee." The future nations descended from Abraham are to produce out of their own midst their own competent heads worthy of the name of "Kings."Note both an accusative and a dative (really factative) object after nathan (K. S.327 t).7. And I shall uphold my covenant between me and between thee and thy seed after thee for generations to come as a covenant reaching into the hidden future, to be God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.This verse dwells more specifically on the covenant proper. The verb qûm, here used in the Hifil, may mean "make a covenant," or "uphold a covenant," depending on the connection. Here the latter must be meant. But the new thing unfolded is that the covenant is to continue in force graciously also for his descendants "for generations" -- literally "for their generations" -- as a berîth ôlam. Though this expression is usually translated "an everlasting covenant" (A. V.), really the force of 'ôlam carries no farther than ."into the hidden future" (bis in dunkle Zukunft, K. C.). It may

on occasion actually signify eternity. At times it does not reach beyond the limits of a lifetime. The vital soul of the covenant is also specifically mentioned: He will "be God" (le'lohîm -- "for God") to Abraham and to his descendants, that means He will fulfil those obligations to which He pledges Himself by becoming party to a covenant. All that one might rightly expect of God will be realized. God can really promise no more than that He will be God to men. Here critics make the most valiant attempt to make this so-called covenant of P radically different from the covenants mentioned elsewhere. For in the passages relating to covenants according to P, as they say, Ex 6:7; 29:45; Le 11:45, as well as in our passage, the statement, "I will be their God," is not matched by another which says: "they shall be my people." So "a reciprocal act of choice on man's part" is not an "essential feature of the relation." However, the passages cited above as well as those listed together with them attributed to ph, like Le 22:33; 25:38; 26:12, 45; Nu 15:41, though they do not contain the very words referred to, still always stress the equivalent, namely, walking in a manner worthy of God. The only thing missing is the set form of words. How hard and futile are the labours of critics to set part against part in Holy Writ.Note the plural suffix "to their generations" referring back to the collective singular seed (K. S.346 p).8. And I will give to thee and to thy seed after thee the land of thy sojournings, namely the entire land of Canaan for a possession in the hidden future, and I will be God to them.The land had been promised to Abraham and his descendants before this; see Ge 12:7 and Ge 15:18. In the almost twenty-five years that had elapsed hitherto no trace of the fulfilment of this promise was discernible. Consequently it was quite in order to renew this promise too in an all-embracing covenant. To make the statement as broad as possible the promise is added that this possession of the land is to be for long years to come. But the future is not to resolve itself into any such thing as mere outward possessions, even though it be of a good land. So the promise definitely adds that in these long years to come God will be God to Abraham's seed.Our translation of 'ôlam in this verse and the preceding as "in (or into) the hidden future" provides whatever corrective may be needed for the extravagant opinion that Canaan is to be the inalienable possession of Israel, perhaps even into the Millennium. Long endurance of this possession is guaranteed by this expression but not eternal possession.The plural meghurîm, "sojournings," is one of the plurals of extent common with nouns picturing various conditions (K. S.261 a). "Possession of the hidden future" for "future possession" is a characteristic example of the use of nouns for adjectives (K. S.306 a).9, 10. And God said unto Abraham: But as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy descendants after thee throughout their generations. This is the covenant-sign which ye shall observe between me and yourselves and (between) thy descendants after thee: all of your males shall be circumcised:Abraham gets a clear outline of his obligations which the covenant imposes upon' him and his descendants for all times to come: "thou shalt keep my covenant." This general statement implies quite a bit. It imposes the broad duty upon Abraham and all his descendants to live in a manner befitting those who are bound by God's covenant. All this is really so self-evident that for the present no further specifications are required. Besides, v.1 had very clearly covered these obligations in the word: "Walk before me and be thou perfect."10. But a new feature is appended to the covenant, which is so distinctly a part of it that at first the statement merely runs thus: "This is the covenant" (berth). However, since the thing demanded as being the covenant immediately follows, and is circumcision, the word "covenant" must here be used by metonomy for "covenant-sign," or "covenantcondition" (K. C.). This "covenant-sign" is laid as a duty upon Abraham and upon his offspring. The commandment as such is the Nifal absolute infinitive

himmôl, for infinitives may be used as imperatives when they stand unconnected as here. Cf. Exod.12:48. The further specification "all males" is not self-evident; for, in the first place, it allows for no exceptions, and, in the second place, it exempts all females, for circumcision of females in ancient times as well as at the present is a regular custom among some races or tribes.It cannot be denied that such a custom distinctly appointed for so holy a purpose is apt to strike us as exceedingly strange. Nor can such purely utilitarian considerations as a sanitary expedient appeal to us as having been the primary purpose behind the rite. A deeper meaning must be sought. The two chief considerations that require investigation here are: first, the rite as such represents a putting away of evil, a kind of purification, in fact, more specifically it points to the necessity of the purification of life at its very source. It is not a sacrament efficacious in supplying the needed grace and the desired effect. But it suggests in a type or symbol what obligations are laid upon those who stand in covenant relation, with God, namely primarily to put away the foreskin of their hearts (Jeremiah 4:4), to circumcise the heart and "be no longer stiffnecked" (De 10:16), an effect which, strictly speaking, only the Lord's grace can achieve, in man (De 30:6), which, therefore, man in seeking to accomplish must seek from the Lord. Secondly, this rite is tied up closely with the Messianic hope. For if it indicates the purification of life at its source, it in the last analysis points forward to Him through whom all such purification is to be achieved, who is Himself also to be born by a woman, but is to be He in whom for the first time that which circumcision prefigures will be actually realized. Here it should be remembered that this rite, even as it is not a sacrament, so, too, is not a divinely ordained instrumentality for initiation into the people of God, at least not for a native Israelite. He was a member of the people of God by virtue of birth. By circumcision he was made aware of his covenant obligations and received a perpetual badge or reminder of these obligations. That circumcision foreshadows baptism is, of course, undeniable.11-13. Namely, ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and this shall be for a sign of a covenant between me and you. Namely, when a child is eight days old, then shall all males be circumcised for all generations to come: as well the children born in the house as also those bought for money of any foreigner whatsoever, who does not happen to be of your race. Invariably ye shall circumcise these (slave children) born in your house or bought for money; and so my covenant shall be in your flesh for a covenant enduring into the far distant future.These necessary explanations how the rite of circumcision is to be put into practice fit together far more smoothly than a cursory reading of the original text or even of our familiar version seems to indicate. For the initial "and" of v.11 and v.12 really is a "namely," the German und zwar (K. C.). Consequently, the things implied in the initial statement (v.10) are being unfolded. Yet how could a rite of this sort be inaugurated at all in a satisfactory manner without clear directions (a) as to what manner of operation it was to be (v.11); or (b) as to at what age it was to be administered (v.12 a); or (c) as to who falls under its provisions, whether only the direct descendants of Abraham or also the slaves of the household (v.12 b); or (d) as to the absolute or relative necessity of this rite for all those enumerated (v.13). To impose the rite and leave all these problems open would merely have caused grievous perplexity to those entrusted with the duty of circumcision. Consequently, all such critical remarks as "the legal style of this section is so pronounced that it reads like a stray leaf from the book of Leviticus," are just another case where the nature of the circumstances that call for just such a presentation is confused with the problem of style. The question of various authors (J, E, and P) does not enter in at this point. No matter who the author is, the case in question calls for this kind of presentation of the necessary details.So then, first of all, since a mark in the flesh

might be cut into various parts of the body, the divine command specifies what man's thoughts might well have deemed improbable, that this cutting was to be "in the flesh" -- euphemism -- of their foreskin. Such a peritomh will then certainly be "a sign of a covenant" between God and a member of the covenant people. So little does the unsanctified mind appreciate the issues involved, that in the eyes of the Gentiles circumcision was merely an occasion for ridicule of the Jews.The converted Kal perfect attaches itself naturally to an infinitive absolute used as an imperative (K. S.367 t). The sign of the accusative 'eth here stands not with a definite object but with an accusative of specification (besar). The subject of hayah has to be supplied ad sensum from the preceding, and so we have inserted a "this," or we could have supplied the subject "circumcision."12. In so important, a rite it is not to be left to man's discretion when it is to be administered. "Eight days" is the proper age. Apparently, as the law regards the young cattle as beginning their independent existence with their eighth day (see Ex 22:30), so a child may be viewed from the same angle. That rule is to hold good "for all generations to come," literally: "according to your generations," a phrase which makes poor English. Such specific regulations, which divine wisdom stoops to give, must have satisfied those to whom the administration of the rite was entrusted. They knew step for step how to regulate its application.Besides, had even Abraham been left to his own devices, he might well have been puzzled as to whether he might regard the slave children as candidates for this rite. Again, the added question might have arisen, whether here a distinction was to be made between children born of slaves who belonged to the household at the time of the birth of the children (on these children the master had special claim -- Ex 21:2-6) and those children, on the other hand, who had been born of slave parents before these parents passed into control of the Hebrew master. In the case of Abraham's very large household such cases would be numerous. God Himself proves His estimate of the importance of the rite by regulating these details.It certainly is passing strange to find critics referring to this solemn and sacred rite which God ordained as a "taboo" -- "the taboo of the household required the circumcision" of the purchased slave child (Procksch). Taboos are superstitious practices; here is one of the most solemn divine institutions of the Old Testament. But now the further question: "Were such circumcised slaves and slave children by this rite incorporated into the chosen race?" We believe that the answer must be, "Yes." Israel certainly never had a separate slave class, who were deemed inferior beings and mere chattels. What then became of the slaves that originally were part of the household establishment and went down into Egypt at Jacob's time? The answer seems to be: "They were naturally absorbed by the Israelites and blended with the Israelite stock, adopting the Israelite religion." So with all its necessary exclusiveness Israel was at the same time broader in its attitude than many assume. But there certainly could be little hesitation about letting circumcised slaves be merged with the chosen race.The final hû' stands in a somewhat unusual position after the subject and the predicate.13. The injunction is made exceptionally strong by the absolute infinitive, joined with its corresponding verb: "circumcising you shall circumcise" -- "You shall invariably circumcise." A final emphatic summary serves to strengthen the impression of the importance of the rite ordained.14. The uncircumcised male, one who shall not be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, such a person shall be cut from his people; he has broken my covenant.The eventuality has yet to be dealt with, what to do with the one who might refuse to receive this badge of the covenant relation. The penalty demanded is severe: "such a person (literally: "this soul") shall be cut off from his people" ('ammêha -- seine Volksgenossen). The mooted question just how this penalty is to be defined is settled most satisfactorily, in view of

passages where practically the same expression occurs -- Ex 12:15, 19; Le 7:20, 21, 25; 17:9, 10 -- as allowing for two possibilities. In some instances, where neglect of the important divine ordinance was marked by a spirit of rebellious defiance, the proper authorities were expected to take the offender in hand, and after a just trial, which might establish his stubborn contempt, to put away such iniquity from Israel. On the other hand, there were cases of less flagrant neglect, which due to modifying circumstances might not call for interference on the part of the authorities; and yet the offender was not to regard his offense lightly. The thing threatened for such a case then appeared to be that God Himself would take it in hand and "cut off" such a person, according to tradition "by an early death before such a one had begotten offspring" (Delitzsch).On hephar (with a) see G. K.67v. The asyndeton of the last clause marks the writer's (or speaker's) indignation. In wenikhretha the converted perfect follows after a nominative absolute (K. S.367, 8).15, 16. Then God said unto Abraham: As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt no longer call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I shall bless her and shall also give thee a son from her, and as a result of my blessing she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall spring from her.No specific word from God had hitherto indicated that Sarai was actually to bring forth the long promised son. This word is now spoken. On the strength of the implications of monogamous marriage this fact had actually been presupposed, excepting, of course, the possibility that Sarai should have died before Abraham had such a son. In anticipation of this event Sarai is given a new name, Sarah, which bears no different meaning from her former name but marks an added dignity nevertheless because of the circumstances involved. "Sarah" means "princess," or the "princely one." Without a special divine blessing it would, of course, have been a physical impossibility for Sarah to bring forth this son. Consequently, this potent blessing of God is twice referred to: once in connection with this son, then in relation to the "kings of peoples" that shall in the course of time spring from this son. But she who thus becomes the mother of kings certainly merits the name "Princess." The meaning that some attach to the name, when they say it signifies "the Contender" (Kaempferin, Luther), is less appropriate and natural.Nathßtti is a promissory perfect, as in v.20. The kî of v.15 is adversative as usual after a negative.To catch the full scope of the last part of this promise it should be carefully weighed that Sarah herself is to become "a mother of nations." The original has only "she shall be unto nations," which, however, A. V. already felt free to render: "she shall be a mother of nations." This promise cannot have the Ishmaelites or the sons of Ketura (Ge 25:2 ff) in mind: they are not of Sarah. The Israelites descended from her, however, are only one nation: Consequently "the posterity of Abraham embraces the spiritual posterity also, i. e., all nations who are grafted ec pistewv Ibraam into the seed of Abraham (Ro 4:11, 12, 16, 17). So Abraham becomes heir of the world' (Ro 4:13) through the spiritual Israel" (Keil).17. Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed, and he said to himself: Shall a child be born to a man a hundred years old? or shall Sarah -- shall a woman of ninety years bring forth a child? From what follows it becomes very clear that Abraham's attitude in no wise lays him open to blame. Nothing is indicative of doubt or misgivings in his reply. Consequently, when he falls upon his face, this is an act of worshipful adoration. Also his laughter is the laughter of joy and surprise. A host of glad feelings is called forth in him at this precious promise. So, too, the questions express no doubt but happy wonder. For saying "to himself" the Hebrew uses the more expressive belibbô, "in his heart." That he who is a hundred years old should have a son does indicate that he realizes that he has not lost his vitality; for afterward he becomes father of a number of children (Ge 25:2 ff.). But that he at the age of a hundred years should have a son out of a hitherto childless union is, indeed, quite

remarkable. His strong joy over Sarah's good fortune finds expression in the double interrogative particle ('im and ha) in the resumption of the question thus: "Shall Sarah -- shall a woman," etc. Whereas we say, "a woman of ninety years," the Hebrew says, "a daughter of ninety," etc, employing the word bath, for this and many other such relationships.18. And Abraham said unto God: Would that Ishmael might live before Thee!This plea means: Would that Ishmael might live in thy favour! This plea is not a substitute suggestion for what God offered in v. Ge 17: 16. God's answer v.19 and 20 Ge 17: 19, 20 makes such an interpretation impossible. Not a substitute suggestion but an additional plea Abraham offers. When he observes that God's new promise passes by Ishmael completely, he seeks a favour from God for him, that he too might have God's good will directed toward him.19, 20. And God said, Most assuredly Sarah thy wife shall bring forth a son for thee and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him as a covenant for the hidden future for his seed after him. Also in reference to Ishmael have I heard thee: behold, I shall bless him and make him fruitful and shall make him grow exceedingly numerous; twelve princes shall his line produce, and I appoint him to be a great nation.The good approach of A. V. and Luther is here lost by the A. R. V., which renders the initial 'abhal. "Nay but." So also B D B, but as a result of a false exegesis. Since nothing in Abraham's remark suggests a substitute suggestion, God has nothing to reject. He confirms what Abraham's joyful faith accepted: "Most assuredly Sarah shall bring forth a son," and appoints a name for this son, commemorative of the father's joy, "Isaac," Hebrew: yits- chaq -- "he laughs," or more appropriately "glad," "happy," Koenig: heiter, froehlich. He is, besides, definitely indicated as the one with whom God's covenant is to be established after Abraham: he carries on the line of promise in a special relation to God. Yolédheth reaches distinctly into the future in this case: she "will be bringing forth."20. Now God's response to the plea for Ishmael. He has accepted the plea and agrees to answer it: "I have heard thee." Le introduces a dative of reference' "as for Ishmael." Since all depends on God's blessing as to whether a man has any future, God agrees to bestow His blessing, which will appear in a fourfold form. First, He purposes to make Ishmael "fruitful," the same word that we rendered "prolific," (Ge 17:6) Secondly, this will result in his being "exceedingly numerous." Thirdly, he specifically predicts that in the course of the history of the nation "twelve princes'" shall successively appear. The faithful historian records the fulfilment of this promise Ge 25:12-16. Some nations might have called such rulers "kings." Ishmaelites preferred the title "princes." Fourthly -- and this is practically the inevitable result of all that preceded -- they shall become "a great nation." Certainly, God gave a very generous response to Abraham's petition in Ishmael's behalf. Spiritual prerogatives are not included, inasmuch as this nation had no capacity nor destiny in this field.Berßkhti is a promissory perfect (K. S.131). Shenêm appears as a constant irregular form, a Keri perpetuum (G. K.97 d).21. But my covenant I establish with Isaac whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.This word is as explicit as it can be in ruling out Ishmael from the prospect of continuing in the covenant. The emphatic position of the word "my covenant" necessitates regarding the statement as adversative. Ishmael, a child brought into the world according to human devices, is not of grace as is the covenant. But Isaac is a child purely of grace. With him the covenant may be coupled. Besides, the lapse of only one more year is appointed before the fulfilment of the promise appears.22. And He finished speaking with him and God went up from Abraham.The interview is definitely terminated by God. Whether now Abraham saw Him who appeared to Him actually ascend upward, or whether the correct statement that God ascended upward from the earth is merely made by the author Moses as a

more highly descriptive way of telling of God's departure, matters little. God's abode is higher than the earth, and the Scriptures consistently describe it as being thus: therefore -- "God went up." When Meek translares wayyß'al as a pale "he left," that is a typical modernistic translation which levels off what is distinctive in revelation as found in the Scriptures. On killah la see G. K.114 m. 23. Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and those servants that had been born in his house as well as those that had been purchased for money -- every male in Abraham's household -- and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin on that very day, just as God had told him to do.The excellent obedience of the faith of Abraham prompts him to carry out the divine injunction in regard to circumcision immediately. Now there are at least two ways of reporting such an act of faith. Either a summary statement to this effect may be made, or else a detailed statement repeating portion for portion the salient features of the command. The author prefers the latter mode, dwelling with loving attention upon every detail, as, no doubt, Abraham himself did while carrying out what had been enjoined upon him. This mode of representation may be regarded as quite effective, at least in the esteem of those who enter into the spirit of the account sympathetically. But, strange to say, such a representation earns for the author a bit of adverse criticism on the part of modern scholars, who even speak of the "pedantic and redundant circumstantiality of narration" here displayed.So also Ishmael's circumcision is by such regarded as an inconsistency; for "the rite is a sign of the covenant, from which Ishmael is excluded." Why manufacture baseless charges? All men can see that Ishmael is excluded merely from being the one whose descendants shall personally carry on the line of promise from which the Deliverer will ultimately come. He is by no means to be excluded from sharing in the blessings that are to spring from that promised Deliverer, neither he himself, nor even the servants of the household. He is to consider himself a candidate for a share in these blessings. Circumcision constitutes an invitation for him and the others circumcised to regard themselves such candidates. He and they may afterward reject such spiritual opportunities, even though they continue the custom of circumcision. The loss, then, in such an event is their own fault. The initial circumcision threw open the door of gracious invitation.The conscientious obedience of Abraham is reflected most strongly in the statement that he did all this "on that very day" -- a thing God had not even demanded in so many words.24, 25. And Abraham was a man of ninetynine years when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin; whereas Ishmael, his son, was a lad of thirteen years when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.The event is of sufficient importance to have the age of the chief characters brought to our attention, though v.1 had already reported Abraham's age. The thought conveyed by the emphatic repetition of this fact suggests very prominently again Abraham's faith: the man who had waited so long for the son of promise had not as a result of long waiting grown weak in the faith, so that God's words are now, perhaps, regarded somewhat lightly. Rather, in perfect trust Abraham yields implicit obedience to every word, no matter how strange it may seem to human reason. "Man of" and "lad of" are one expression in Hebrew: ben.It has been observed that the Arab descendants of Ishmael still choose the age of about thirteen for the circumcising of their children. Such a practice could well base itself on the recollection of their ancestor's age at the time of his circumcision. However, to let the notice, here given count merely as a statement "based on the knowledge of this custom" in just one more attempt to label Biblical statements as manufactured rather than historical.26, 27. On this very day Abraham and Ishmael, his son, were circumcised, as well as all the men of his household, those born in the house and those purchased for money from foreigners, who were circumcised with him.This is the closing statement in the elaborate detailed

account of what because of its importance deserved and required to be recorded with minute exactitude. This is not an account of a man (P) whose style is circumstantial and pedantic. This account comes from Moses who suits his style to the needs of the case with a fine sense of propriety.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIt seems to us that only the portions v.1-8 and v.15-21 are suitable for use as texts, and perhaps these two had better serve as one text. The sections concerning circumcision are not adapted to use in a sermon. The other portions speak emphatically of the greatness of God's mercy toward Abraham, which includes unusual blessings for Sarah as well as for Hagar. Care should be taken in treating all such portions of Abraham's story to indicate how each new divine word marks a distinct advance upon the preceding words. The details of what the covenant implies are here the matter under particular consideration.

CHAPTER XVIII

8. The Manifestation of Yahweh at Mamre (18:1-33) The time of the birth of the promised son has drawn very near and may definitely be revealed. Besides, Sarah, whose share in the experience should be more than a purely natural and physical one, needs to be so directed that her faith may enable her to take her part in a manner truly worthy of the event. In addition, the faith of Abraham is to be given an opportunity to express its unselfishness, that a clear revelation of the nature of the faith of a true saint of God may be offered. When God manifests Himself to Abraham at Mamre, the first two of these issues are disposed of in connection with His promise concerning the early birth of the son, and the third, in connection with the revelation of His purpose to take the case of wicked Sodom in hand. Criticism feels that the entire chapter should be assigned to J. One argument in support of the contention is the use of the divine name Yahweh. However, the suitability of this name for this chapter and the next is immediately apparent. It is Yahweh, the faithful covenant God, who is concerned about the matter of having the child of promise come in due season to believing parents. But at the same time, it is a part of the faithful care of Yahweh for the covenant people that leads Him to resort to acts of retributive and punitive justice in order to clear the path for the normal development of His people. Some critics still prefer to follow Wellhausen's lead in making v. Ge 18:17-19, 22, 23-33 editorial insertions. Dillmann, however, claims that neither language, nor material arguments justify such a contention. Any man reading along naturally will see that the verdicts which decree that certain verses are later insertions are highly subjective opinions, which no amount of learning can prove. If the story of the visit of the Almighty with Abraham is seen to have striking parallels in heathen mythology, we naturally explain this coincidence by the simple observation that the truth of this experience penetrated far into other nations and there indication of their authority by making the inquiry. Besides, their coming is concerned vitally with a most remarkable experience that is about to befall Sarah. Then, too, Sarah's faith needs to be raised to the proper level to do justice to the experience. Abraham must have sensed the note of authority in what the speakers said. Still this statement must be correct: "they said." Either all spoke or else they displayed such interest in the question that it was as thought all had spoken. Now Sarah was where wives were usually found when guests were outside the tent -- in the tent. The "behold" in this case amounts to little more than, "Inside the tent there"(Meek). Without circumlocution the visitor, the outstanding one among the three, assumes sole control of the conversation and delivers the promise He has come to give. This promise conveys the definite assurance, "Sarah shall have a son." The time for this event is fixed -- "after a year." For ka'eth chayyah -- "according to this time when it revives" -- "when this time of the year returns" -- "after a year." This is still a satisfactory translation and one that is quite unforced. "According to the time of a pregnant woman" is hardly to be extracted from the passage. "So ich lebe," (Luther), i. e., "as I live," is still more impossible. Then, also, the word definitely indicates that God alone will bring this miracle to pass: "I will certainly return," i. e., it shall not come to pass of itself but through my intervention. Since this returning of the Lord is nowhere recorded, it appears most suitable to regard the event as such as the manner in which God came to Abraham and to Sarah. The article in ka'eth is the article of familiar things, Artikel der Connexitaet (K. S.387

e): "As the familiar time revives." Now Sarah did not merely "hear" this (A. V.) as she stood behind the door, for skomß'ath is feminine participle, "she was hearing," i. e., "she was listening." Nor could Yahweh see her or any trace of her, for "this door was behind Him." This is plainly stated here so that what He next says may be seen to be the evidence of His omniscience not of His observation. The points over 'elayw in v.9 have not been explained satisfactorily. 11, 12. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well along in years, and it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself and said: After I have become worn out, have I enjoyed sexual delight and my lord too is an old man? The seemingly insurmountable physical obstacle in the way of the fulfilment of this divine promise is now drawn to our attention. Capacity for procreation and conception was extinct. Sarah's case at least must have seemed irremediable. The woman's periods had ceased with the so-called change of life and with them the capacity to conceive. The promise seems laughable to the carnal thoughts of Sarah, and she actually laughs "to herself," i. e., "within her midst" -- Hebrew idiom for the reflexive pronoun. In a question without an interrogative particle Sarah expresses her wonder at the thought: she is worn out, so is Abraham. Viewing the matter from the angle of a thing already accomplished, though she does not believe that it will transpire, she says: "Have I enjoyed sexual delight?" The matter is not put very delicately by Sarah.1 Peter 3:6 rightly deduces from her address ("lord") that she respected her husband. This laughter on Sarah's part was the laughter of incredulity and so a form of unbelief. It bore no trace of scoffing. Jamieson ought not to have spoken of a "silent sneer." 13-15. And Yahweh said unto Abraham: Why then did Sarah laugh saying: Shall I really bear a child seeing I have grown old? Is anything too difficult for Yahweh? At the appointed time after a year I will return to thee and Sarah shall have a son. But Sarah denied, saying: I did not laugh -- for she was afraid. But He said: No, but thou didst laugh. Here the chief of the visitors displays His character by revealing His omniscience. He is therefore very appropriately called "Yahweh" at this point, the author taking up the clue which he offered in v.1. He addresses the rebuke to Abraham, for there would have been a mild impropriety about calling out to the woman in the other compartment of the tent. Yahweh specifically tells Sarah through this address to Abraham what she did. Imagine the astounding nature of this revelation to Sarah: her secret thoughts have been correctly read; the very motive she had referred to, namely that she had grown old, is also displayed to her. This attitude is rebuked by Yahweh as being the equivalent of saying that something is "too difficult for Yahweh." Such an opinion, of course, is patent unbelief. Yippale' does originally signify, "to be wonderful." Here it must bear the derived meaning "too difficult." The preposition min following the verb makes a comparative whose original form would have been: "anything more difficult than Yahweh could perform." As it now stands, miyyahweh is the equivalent of a negative result clause (K. S.406 l; cf. also 308 b; G: K.133 c; 102 m). Dabhar here is the equivalent of an indefinite pronoun: "thing" -- "anything." (K. S.80 c). We still cannot fathom how anyone should ever have ventured to say, "As the narrative stands, the sentence does not imply identity between the speaker and Yahweh" (Skinner). Verse 14 alone might have left the question open, but v.13 had identified the speaker beforehand.Yahweh simply reiterates His promise. Above (v.10) the time within which the son was to be born had been appointed; and so it is now referred to as "the appointed time" (mô'edh), and the limit of a year is repeated -- "when this time revives" -- "after a year," as in v.10 above.15. In fear at so remarkable a visitor Sarah attempts self-defense, which under the circumstances can take only one form -- a lie, a downright lie: "I did not laugh." The brief reply of the Almighty stamps her defense as unworthy of further consideration. She is rebuked and

dismissed with an authoritative: "No, but thou didst lie." The usual negative lo' here amounts to "no." The kî is adversative, "but."The second half of the chapter begins at this point -- what transpired near Mamre after the guests had been escorted along the road for a short distance.16. And the men rose up from thence and directed their gaze in the direction of Sodom and Abraham went with them to escort them (for a part of the way).The first part of their mission being disposed of, the "men ('anashîm) arise" from the meal and make preparations to depart from that place (mish-sham). The Hebrew expression is very concise: "they rose up from thence." They give indication of being on the way to Sodom, because they direct their gaze in the direction of "Sodom." Originally in the Hifil shaqaph means "to look out and down," also with 'al peney, i. e., "upon the faces of." This is a very appropriate verb in this instance, because from the region of Hebron one would "look out and down" toward Sodom. The sincere courtesy of Abraham prompts him besides to "escort them" -- shallecham -- "to send them along."Tradition has it that he went several miles (ca. three) to a place called by Jerome Caphar Barucha, but now known as Janum or Beni Naim, at which point the Dead Sea comes into view and perhaps also the site of Sodom. The expression 'al-peney can hardly mean "toward the plain of" (Keil). It means "toward" or "in the direction of."17-19. And Yahweh said: Am I going to hide from Abraham what I purpose to do, seeing that Abraham is surely going to become a great and strong nation, and in him all the nations of the earth are going, to be blessed? For I acknowledge him to be my intimate friend to the end that he may enjoin upon his children and his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh to do what is just and right, in order that Yahweh may bring upon Abraham that which he promised him.It seems best to assume that this soliloquy of Yahweh was spoken softly yet audibly. It was truly a soliloquy. It was just as certainly intended for Abraham's ears. Here, certainly, in a most definite sense Abraham is treated as a trusted friend and initiated into the counsels of God. From a passage such as this can grow the Scriptural designation of Abraham as "friend of God"; cf. Isaiah 41:8; 2 Chronicles 20:7; Ja 2:23. Even the Arabs know and use this title of Abraham. It would be unseemly to explain this revelation on the score that since Abraham is heir to this land, God will do nothing involving one of the cities without informing Abraham of His purpose. The words here spoken indicate a twofold reason for making the revelation. First, Abraham is Yahweh's intimate friend. Secondly, this notable destruction, which is about to transpire, should be faithfully transmitted to Abraham's posterity as a warning example for all times to come. The second of these reasons is the major; the-first is auxiliary to the second.Of course, Yahweh's deliberations about making this revelation to Abraham are not recorded to convey the impression that Yahweh was momentarily in a quandary, but to give us an insight into Yahweh's reasons for making this revelation and also to reveal drastically the intimacy of the relation between God and His saints. The participle mekhasseh, "am I hiding?" must mean: "Am I going to hide?" The following participle is distinctly future progressive, i. e., 'oseh -- "what I purpose to do." Yahweh makes His revelation in conformity with Abraham's destiny, which is "to become a great and strong nation" and to have "all the nations of the earth blessed in him." This unmistakably refers to the Messianic blessing to be realized in the seed of Abraham. On nibhrekhû -- "be blessed" -- see Ge 12:3; it does not mean "feel blessed" (Strack).19. The yadha' here regularly comes in for its share of discussion. The root does primarily mean "know." But a bare "know" will hardly meet the needs of the case here. This fact has driven some to the extreme position of rendering "I have chosen" (Strack). But allusion to the Scriptures Ho 13:5; Am 3:2; Psalms 1:6 will hardly establish such a use. In cases such as these the meaning prevails "to acknowledge one as an intimate friend" -- als

guten Bekannten anerkennen (K. W.). "To enter into personal relations with" (Skinner) amounts to about the same thing.Now God did thus acknowledge Abraham as His intimate friend, not for Abraham's sake only but, as He specifically says, that what is thus conveyed to him might be passed on to posterity. In fact, it was to be delivered as a solemn injunction (yetsawweh -- "he may enjoin") to his own children as well as to the entire household. For though no specific ordinance is involved, nevertheless, the dreadful fate of wicked Sodom is in itself a solemn reminder to shun Sodom's wicked ways and "to keep the way of Yahweh." The expression "way of Yahweh" (dérekh yahweh) requires "Yahweh" to be construed as a subjective genitive: "the way which Yahweh desires." This is further defined as involving "to do what is just (tsedhaqah) and right" (mishpat). Procksch nicely distinguishes between these two terms, making the former signify inner, the latter outer righteousness. So Yahweh describes a salutary effect as going out from the correct knowledge of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their iniquity. The blasted site and the true story of how divine justice blasted it constituted a lasting memorial of solemn import to Israel. To give heed to this divine lesson was essential, for only then would Yahweh "bring upon Abraham that which He promised him." Though Yahweh speaks, He says "that Yahweh may bring," referring to Himself by His proper title to make the assurance more solemn (K. S.5). Weshamerû -- "and they shall keep" -- here must be construed as a consecutive final clause, "that they may keep" or "to keep."It will be observed that neither here nor in v. Ge 18: 20, 21 does God directly say that He will destroy these wicked cities. But from what He does say and from what Abraham knew about them, it was possible for Abraham to arrive at but one conclusion and that was: Yahweh is come to destroy these cities.20, 21. And Yahweh said: The outcry over Sodom and Gomorrah -- surely it is great, and their sin -- surely it is exceedingly grievous. I am going down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the cry over it which has come unto me; and if not, I will know.This is all that Yahweh reveals about His purpose. There is an "outcry (forward for emphasis) over Sodom and Gomorrah" (objective genitive). Kî does mean "that." Here the thought implied is: "it is a fact that." That certainly allows for the meaning "surely." Then we have two very emphatic statements about the extreme wickedness of the cities. When sins are said to cry out to heaven, that surely is a drastic way of saying that they call for divine interference. On kî see K. S.351 c.21. "I am going down" in this case involves a mere descent from the higher spot where these words were spoken to the low-lying cities. In reality only the two angels (Ge 19:1) go directly to the city. The statements of the verse in no wise imply that God's omniscience is curtailed and that so He is under necessity of securing information as men might. God chooses this mode of procedure to make apparent the fact that He, as Just Judge of all the earth, does nothing without first being in full possession of all facts. The subsequent experience of the angels in Sodom displays the moral state of Sodom far more effectually than could many an explanation besides. God practically claims that the facts of the case have come up before Him already. But He does nothing until facts warrant interference. "The cry over it" is again an objective genitive (K. S.37). 'Er'eh as imperfect takes the place of the voluntative (G. K.75 1). Kalah, a noun, "completion," here appears to be used as an adverbial accusative, "altogether."22. And the men turned from thence and went toward Sodom, but Abraham was still standing before Yahweh.Here already those who specifically count as men ('anashîm) or later more specifically as angels (Ge 19:1) separate themselves from the group, and the one remaining behind is described very plainly as Yahweh. In the light of this clear analysis of the case we reject all statements that claim: "In what way the narrator conceived that Yahweh was present in the three men, we can hardly tell"

(Skinner). An opportunity is to be given to Abraham for a free unforced expression of his broader sympathies. Intercession, if it is to have any value, surely must come unsolicited. But Abraham will emerge from the test with a rare revelation of his deep unselfishness. 23-25. And Abraham drew near and said: Wilt Thou indeed snatch away the righteous, with the wicked? Perchance there may be fifty righteous men within the city. Wilt Thou indeed snatch away and not grant pardon to the place for the sake of the fifty righteous which are in the midst of it? Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to kill the righteous man together with the wicked, and so righteous and wicked be treated alike; far be it from Thee; shall not the Judge of all the earth deal righteously?Abraham, well informed as to Sodom's extreme wickedness, has no doubt what God must purpose to do. So he "draws near." Though in specific connections this expression (naghash) means prayer, in this case it describes only the act preparatory to prayer, for it does not even say: he drew near to God.The boldness of faith betrayed by this intercession may well astound us. It surely is not based on the assumption that God might deal unjustly. Nor would it ever have occurred to Abraham that he himself might be more compassionate than Yahweh. But Abraham recognized that there was a possibility of the perishing of righteous men in this impending catastrophe, even his own relatives also. Much as he hopes that Lot and his family might be rescued, he is not so narrow or selfish as to think only of these. One might almost say that with a heart kindled by the love that God imparts to faith Abraham ventures to plead the case of God's love over against God's righteousness. We may never know how these attributes of God are reconciled to one another, except in so far as they blend in Christ. But the boldness of this act of faith is acceptable with God inasmuch as it is really born out of God's heart. This attitude is the "importunity" Christ refers to in the parable of Lu 11:8.But who would "righteous men" -- tsaddiqîm -- be in this instance? We should say, such who have made the proper use of the truth they have, whether it be much or little, and have let it have its work on their heart, yielding to it not by their own powers but under the influence of this truth. On the level of the truth on which they stand they would have dealt fairly and honestly. Apparently for the whole complex of five cities the sum "fifty" is assigned. "Place" (maqôm) above apparently means as much as region.When the opening question is addressed to God: "Wilt thou snatch away (saphah -- 'cut off,' break off') the righteous with the wicked?" Abraham, no doubt, recalls that in major calamities this sometimes happens. But whatever may be pleaded for the righteous, that plea he wishes to make. So his prayer constitutes a kind of wrestling with God. A man who has himself received mercy seeks to secure mercy for others.Another fact appears in this connection, namely, that the ungodly are frequently spared for the sake of the righteous, though, of course, there is a limit to what they may thus achieve for others.In v.23 the singular tsaddiq is a case of the use of a singular noun in place of the more regular plural (K. S.256 d). In v.24 saphah is used without an object, though it is a transitive verb usually appearing with an object (K. S.209 b). The article with tsaddiqîm is occasioned by the earlier use of the word; these "righteous" are relatively familiar (relative Bekanntheit, K. S.298 b).25) Most amazing is the free address of faith at this point. Yet, though it strikes a responsive chord in every heart, hardly anyone would be capable of venturing to address God thus. Behind it lies absolute confidence in God's fairness. Besides, that grand and correct conception of God that was characteristic of the patriarchs appears very definitely here. God is far from being a tribal God; He is "the Judge of all the earth." The critics have failed to evaluate this fact properly.Chalilah, really a noun, an adverbial accusative here, ad profanum, we can render only by some such phrase as "far be it." With Wehayah the construction passes over from the infinitive to the use of the finite verb (G. K.114 r; K. S.413 a; 367 u).26. And

Yahweh said: If I find in Sodom fifty righteous men within the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.Yahweh cannot be displeased with what Abraham said. He grants Abraham's petition. Everything for the present is cast into the anthropomorphic mold of thought. God knows how many righteous are in the city. It will not be requisite for Him first to make an extended investigation. We still believe that "Sodom" is mentioned by synecdoche for all the places to be destroyed. The two separate phrases "in Sodom" and "within the city" simply hold apart what we usually would combine in the phrase "with the city of Sodom" (Meek). The apodosis is introduced emphatically by waw ("and") (K. S.415 v). The word for "guilt" ('awôn) usually used after nasa', in the phrase "to pardon the guilt" is here missing.27, 28. And Abraham answered and said: Behold, now, I have begun to speak unto Adonay (the Lord) and I but dust and ashes. Perhaps five may be wanting of the fifty righteous; wilt thou destroy all the city on account of the five? And He said: I will not destroy it if I find there forty and five. Abraham speaks with a due sense, of his unworthiness and is fully aware of the boldness of his act. He recognizes that God is 'Adonay, Lord of all, and that he on his part is but "dust and ashes" -- "dust in origin, ashes in the end." Respectfully Abraham also substitutes the majestic title 'Adonay for the familiar "Thou." Also very cautiously he drops but "five" from the first stipulated "fifty." Interceding love is ingenious: surely, the lack of five could hardly constitute a ground for destroying the city. God acknowledges the validity of the plea. Yachserûn has the old ending ûn for û (G. K.47 m).29-32. And he again proceeded to speak to Him and said: Perhaps there will be found there forty? And He replied: Not will I do it for the sake of the forty. And he said: I pray, let not Adonay be angry if I speak -- perhaps there will be found there thirty. And He replied: Not will I do it if I find thirty there. And he said: Behold, now, I have begun to speak unto Adonay, perhaps there will be found there twenty. And He replied: I will not destroy it, for the sake of the twenty. And he said: I pray, let not Adonay be angry if I speak only this once -- perhaps there will be found there ten. And He replied: I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten.Before our astounded gaze are unfolded the details of a plea that stands without parallel in the annals of history. Never mortal prayed as this mortal. At the same time the writer relates the story with consummate skill, letting the tension grow with each successive plea. Never does Abraham wax presumptuous. Well aware of his unworthiness, he pleads his case carefully. But with the wisdom born of faith he discerns that by asking more than his last plea did he would no longer be pleading according to the will of God. Besides, any lower number would have degraded a worthy intercession into a narrow plea for one's relatives only.30. Yi'char, masculine, is used for the neuter. In happß'am the article is used with the old demonstrative force, or (according to K. S.299 a) it is the Artikel der Connexitaet. Wa'adhabberah is the emphatic cohortative, "would that I might," called also the yaqtul gravatum (K. S.198 b).33. And Yahweh went away after He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.The scene closes abruptly: Yahweh goes away (wayyélekh), and Abraham returns home. There is no need of saying where Yahweh went. Everyone knows that. Also in Abraham's case a very general expression is used: "to his place." This brief closing remark serves to mark a lull in the action of the story. Some calamity is impending, and the thread of the narrative is about to resume with the unfinished part.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSA chapter with a wealth of human interest for the preacher! Two distinct episodes stand out: v.1-15 and v.16-33. In treating the former several points of view are permissible. The more general thought of "God's Loving-kindness toward His Children" may come to the forefront when we observe the paternal friendly approach of the Lord. When the faith-difficulty of Sarah is taken in hand, then the point of view of v.14 may predominate,

suggesting the theme: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Then there is the further possibility of regarding what we see of Abraham as a manifestation of faith from still a different angle. Then we might treat of the "True Courtesy of True Faith" -- a subject which we personally regard as by no means trivial. The second half of the chapter, v.16-33, can be treated under heads such as "The Boldness of Faith," or "Intercessory Prayer at its Best." We also deem that approach appropriate which views this portion from the point of view of "Ye are my Friends." Then v.19 suggests still another approach along the line: "The Memory of God's Judgment is to be Kept Alive."

CHAPTER XIX

Guilt and Destruction of Sodom -- Sequel: Lot's Degeneracy (19:1-38) Though strictly speaking this chapter is not a portion of the history of the chosen people, yet it relates an occurrence that was to teach the chosen people a lesson for all times to come; for the site of this calamity was upon the borders of the land of promise. Besides, the chapter shows how even a pottion of the relatives of Abraham undergoes a rather rapid deterioration. From another point of view this chapter is not an independent one but marks the sequel to the preceding. The facts of the previous chapter lead inevitably to this one, and so both are usually treated together under one caption. There is hardly a more horrible account anywhere on the pages of Holy Writ. Both the degeneracy here described as well as the catastrophic overthrow of the cities involved are calculated to startle by their lurid and gruesome details. Luther confessed that he could not read the chapter without a feeling of deep revulsion (es geht mir durch mein ganzes Herz). Nor should we overlook the fact that the destruction of Sodom is a type of the final overthrow of the wicked and impenitent in the final judgment, as well as of the deliverance of the righteous. Conditions such as are depicted here may be expected to repeat themselves in increasing measure before the end of time. 1, 2. And the two angels came to Sodom at evening time, as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom; and when Lot noticed them, he arose to meet them, and bowed with his face to the ground. And he said: Behold now, sirs, turn aside, I pray, unto the house of your servant, and spend the night, and wash your feet, and ye shall arise early and be on your way. And they said: No, for we shall pass the night in the broad place (of the city). A. V. translates erroneously: "there came two angels" -- omitting the definite article. The Hebrew must be rendered: "The two angels came." They are the same two who in Ge 18:22 turned away and went toward Sodom. Criticism for some unknown reason erases "angels" and substitutes "men." The text merely grows more specific at this point. Those who first appeared merely as "men" are now clearly revealed to be angels. If they arrived "at evening time," having left Hebron perhaps early in the afternoon, they had covered a distance of at least thirty-five miles in six hours, that is to say, in about half the time it would have taken men. The article with "evening" is the article of customary things -- Artikel der Con- nexitaet -- (K. S.299 b); that is, the evening that must follow after the day which is under consideration. The "gate" of the city where Lot is at the time is the common resort of all men, especially of the elders of a city. There legal matters are adjudicated, transactions closed, bargains made, and affairs discussed. Lot's presence here will hardly be accounted for on the assumption that he was on the lookout for guests in order to afford his hospitality an opportunity to welcome chance strangers. Strangers cannot have been so common in those days. Rather, Lot's presence in the gate constitutes a reproach to the otherwise good and "righteous" man (2 Peter 2:8). After having first moved down into the Plain of Sodom (Ge 13:11), he presently chose Sodom itself as his dwelling place (Ge 13:12); and now finally he has arrived at the point where the activities, the bustle and stir are looked upon with a more or less tolerant interest. This much cannot be denied in reference to Lot, that when the approach of the strangers was noticed by him, he promptly advances to them with a gracious invitation. He is not ignorant of the danger that threatens chance visitors in such a town. He arises to meet them and bows with the customary respectful oriental salutation, bowing with his

face to the ground. 'Appßyim is an adverbial accusative of manner (K. S.402 h). The same type of excellent courtesy observed in Abraham still marks the nephew. With urgency, ("behold now" -- "turn aside, I pray"), he presses his invitation. With humility he designates himself as their "servant." With anxiety for their welfare -- for he knows what men in the open must face -- and, perhaps, consciously at no small risk to himself he makes his invitation as attractive as possible ("wash your feet," "spend the night"). "Arise early" (shakham) originally meant "to raise the burden to the shoulder," perhaps from nomadic customs of getting underway with the caravans at daybreak. The angels refuse, but not because they wished to make a test of Lot's sincerity; for the spirit of the invitation must have been immediately apparent. The reason rather seems to have been, as Luther already suggests, that persons truly humble are very modest and unassuming. Since the angels come in the guise of simple, modest persons, it behooves them to manifest corresponding qualities. Yet what they do serves to display rather prominently the basic difference between this one man, Lot, and the rest of the people of his city. The purpose stated by the angels -- "we shall pass the night in the broad place" -- was not so unusual. The climate permitted such a course: wrapped in their robe, travellers frequently spend the night lying on the street. "The broad place" (rechôbh) is an enlarged area just within the city gate, serving as a market place and for the concourse of all manner of people. Usually it is little more than the widening out of the street that connects with the gate. Lo'," not," is used as "No," (K. S.352 f). Note the dagesh forte conjunctive in the "1." 3. But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside after him and entered into his house; and he made a feast for them and baked unleavened bread, and they did eat. Lot's hospitality is no mere oriental gesture; it is entirely sincere. So he adds entreaty to his invitation, without doubt because he knows these men to be good men, and knows the danger that awaits them. Lot's address 'adhonay, which we rendered "sirs," is, according to our interpretation of Ge 18:3, the same as that used by Abraham. We, therefore, consider that at first both Abraham and Lot considered their visitors to be merely good and worthy men. The conclusion drawn by many at this point, that Lot lacked the deeper discernment of Abraham, is without warrant. Perhaps mishteh, which usually means "feast," should here be kept in the primary meaning "drink," because unleavened bread is mentioned after. However, then Lot's hospitality would have been somewhat niggardly -- a cup of wine and bread. For though Lot is a citydweller, he still, no doubt, was owner of the large herds that had been his when he separated from Abraham. Consequently, the supposition that he was living in reduced circumstances hardly seems warranted.4, 5. Before they retired, the men of the city, men of Sodom that they were, surrounded the house, young men and old, all the folk without exception, and they cried out to Lot, saying to him: Where are the men who have come to you this night? Bring them forth to us that we may have intercourse with them.So eager are the people of Sodom to be about their unholy practices that they are already assembled and ready for mischief before Lot's guests have retired. The expression, "men of Sodom," is no gloss (Kit., etc.), but it rather seems to have been a proverbial designation for outstanding exponents of the vice of sodomy, even while the city yet stood. Therefore we have rendered it "men of Sodom that they were." The horrible proportions to which the vice had grown is indicated, first, by the fact that "young men and old" (Hebrew: "from young to old"), put in their appearance. The fires of unnatural lust burned unabated even in the aged. To make this point unmistakably clear two further modifying phrases are added: the apposition, "all the people," and the phrase, "without exception." This latter expression (miqqatseh) is better understood to mean "without end" (K. W.), i. e., "without exception," the min being a min separationis, and not "from the

end," i. e., from the utmost limits of the city; for such cities were but small. Secondly, the enormity of the prevalent vice was indicated by the fact that the sacred duty of hospitality was so completely replaced by the eagerness to practice vile lust that even strangers would be sacrificed to wholesale abuse-a treatment most likely to terminate in death. The events of this evening display a shocking depravity. The facts of the case are now apparent to all the world whether these people "have done altogether according to the cry" which had come unto the Lord. The euphemism, "that we may know them" (nedhe'ah), is not born out of delicacy, for they shout forth their libidinous desires aloud in the streets of the city, cf. Isaiah 3:9; Jude 19:22. The article with "night" is of the same type as that used in v.1 with "evening," and it could here as there be rendered as demonstrative; here: "this night." Nedhe'ah is cohortative (K. S.198 b) and really stronger than our translation can readily reproduce, viz., "O that we might know." Note also how the imperative is followed by the cohortative in the last two verbs (K. S.364n; G. K.108 d). The particle terem (v.4), as usual, is followed by the imperfect (G. K.107 c).6-8. And Lot went out of the doorway and shut the door after him, and said: I pray you, my brethren, do not act so wickedly. See, I have two daughters, who have never had intercourse with a man; let me, I pray you, bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only as far as these men are concerned, do not do anything to them. For therefore have they come under the protection of my roof.Lot is not devoid of courage. He himself faces the mob after he has shut the door behind him for the safeguarding of his guests.7. He uses a kindly address, which can hardly be entirely sincere, "brethren." Perhaps, however, it would be better to describe his attitude as meek tolerance.8. The kindest interpretation of Lot's willingness to sacrifice his daughters to the depraved lusts of these evildoers stresses that it was done with the intent of guarding his guests. To that certainly must be added the fact that under the circumstances Lot was labouring under a certain confusion. But Delitzsch's summary still covers the truth, when he describes Lot's mistake as being an attempt to avoid sin by sin. In days of old, when an exaggerated emphasis on hospitality prevailed, we might have understood how such a sacrifice could be made by a father. But in our day we cannot but feel the strongest aversion to so unpaternal an attitude. Luther's attempts to vindicate Lot's character are quite unconvincing: for Lot could hardly have anticipated with a certain shrewdness that the Sodomites were so bent on this particular form of vileness as to refuse any substitutes. In fact, their refusal to accept Lot's substitute argues for an intensity of evil purpose that surpasses all comprehension. Note the enclitic na', intensifying or adding vividness to a jussive in v.7 and to a hortative in v.8 (K. S.355 b), . Dabhar takes the place of the indefinite pronoun, "anything." "For on that account" here, as in 18:5, is best rendered by the old A. V. translation "for therefore." The substitute "inasmuch as" says far less; cf. the remarks on Ge 18:5. Ha'el for ha'elleh is found eight times in the Pentateuch.9. And they said: You just come here! And they went on to say: This one fellow came in here merely to sojourn and he has been playing the part of the judge all this while! Now we will deal worse with you than with them. And they pressed hard upon the man, Lot, and they drew near to break down the door.Gash hale'ah does not mean, "Stand back" (A. V., etc.), for naghash means the opposite, "draw near." Luther is correct: Komm hierher. B D B, which tries to make it mean "approach thither, i. e., move away," does an unwarranted thing. We believe the force of the expression to be quite adequately covered by our colloquial, "You just come here!" The article before 'e(ch)chadh again has demonstrative force: the expression is somewhat derogatory: "this one fellow." By the expression yishpot (with absolute infinitive) used with waw conversive the expression is made to refer to the past, not to the future: "he will needs be judge"

(A. V.) or "now he would make himself judge" (Meek). The Sodomites are complaining of what the man has been doing, right along: "he has been playing the part of the judge all this while." This shows Lot at his best: he had been Lot the Censor. He had been wont to reprove them for their iniquitous ways. Till now they tolerated it, because they felt that through Abraham they had been delivered for Lot's sake (Ge 14:13 ff.). Now in their exasperation they threaten to deal worse with Lot than with his guests. In fact, they intend to harm him as well as them, for they "draw near to break down the door."The second wayyó'mer at the beginning of the verse needs merely be rendered "and they went on to say" and all difficulties are removed (K. S.368 c). On gesh as a form see G. K.66 b; of course, it is an imperative from naghash.10, 11. And the men stretched forth their hands and drew Lot in to them into the house, and closed the door. But the men that were outside the door of the house, they smote with blindness, young and old, so that they wore themselves out trying to find the door.The angels are here described as "men," because till now they have done or said nothing to indicate their higher character. Consequently Lot's conduct toward them appears to best advantage, for it could not have been motivated by the knowledge that they were angels. Apparently, the door could not be opened from without. Consequently the angels had to open it if Lot was to gain the safety afforded by his house. His hospitality here receives a full and adequate recompense.11. "The blindness" (article expressing the idea: that well-know affliction, article of familiar objects, Artikel der absoluten Bekanntheit, K. S.297 b), which comes as punishment and restraint upon these evildoers, is not blindness in the usual sense. It involves a specific delusion (cf.2 Kings 6:18): they can see, but they cannot discover the door. Therefore Keil calls it a "mental blindness," adding that it is "a punishment for their utter moral blindness." For in all such punitive measures of God a deeper propriety is always discernible in reference to the very form of punishment that befalls one. By this act the heavenly character and the power of Lot's guests are made apparent to him. For he must presently have discovered what these heavenly messengers had done.The provisions made for the deliverance of Lot and the members of his immediate relationship are now to be described.12, 13. Then the men said unto Lot: Whom hast thou here besides? a son-in-law or thy sons or thy daughters, or anyone else who belongs to thee in the city, Bring such a one out from the place, For we are about to destroy this place, because great is the outcry over them before the face of Yahweh; and Yahweh has sent us to destroy it.The account still continues to describe Lot's visitors as "men," for, apparently, their appearance continued as it had from the first. They indicate to Lot that he will be privileged to forewarn any such as may be of his relationship, who may be spared for Lot's sake. Apparently, the ungodly owe more to the godly in this respect than is usually conceded. The enumeration of persons who might be approached begins with "son-in-law." Apparently that is as remote a connection as will be allowed. But then the obvious ones are also mentioned: "thy sons or thy daughters or anyone else that belongs" to Lot. Chathan, therefore, does not need to be deleted, or its position altered, nor need it be supplied with a suffix. Note: we have translated mî as interrogative, "who," because the indefinite sense "anyone" does not seem sufficiently established (K. S.72). Lot's wife is not enumerated as one to be rescued, because that is too obvious. 13. By the summons of v.12 Lot's mind has been prepared for the announcement of the impending disaster. So the angels with great kindliness temper the appalling announcement. But when their announcement is made, there is no ambiguity about it: the place is to be destroyed; they themselves are to be the agents of this destruction; the cause that makes this destruction imperative is therefore that the outcry over the inhabitants of the city has reached the point where

Yahweh Himself must interfere, in fact, He is the one who has directly commissioned these His agents. Note the participle to describe an impending action (mashchitîm). The suffix am (outcry -- theirs) though plural has the noun "place" (maqôm) as its antecedent, a kind of collective (K. S.346 f).14. And Lot went out and spoke to his sonsin-law who had married his daughters, and he said: Rise, go forth from this place; for Yahweh is about to destroy the city. But in the eyes of his sons-in-law he was as one who jests.The mob having dispersed round about his house, Lot felt that the marvellous protection afforded him a short time before would guarantee his safety on this new mission of mercy. The young men addressed are called "sons-in-law," not by anticipation but because they were such in fact. The participle loqechey should, therefore, not be taken in the less likely sense of "who were about to take." The fact that Lot's daughters are not separately mentioned as having been appealed to and warned by their father is explained as being too self-evident to require mention, even as Lot's wife is not mentioned in v.12 Ge 19:12. These daughters must, therefore, be regarded as having fully adopted the attitude of their unbelieving husbands. Lot makes his summons urgent: "Rise, go forth" -- effective asyndeton. He states the impending danger concisely, and, so, urgently. The sons-in-law regard the matter as a huge joke. They are types of all such as have had all sense of justice and of judgment erased by growing callous in sin. The nearer the judgment comes, the less will men believe it to be impending.The account tells nothing of the anxiety in which the inmates of Lot's house spent the night, nor of the heavy forebodings that must have weighted down their minds.15, 16. When dawn appeared, the angels urged Lot, saying: Up, take thy wife and thy two daughters that are with thee, lest thou be swept away in the punishment of the city. But he lingered; so the men took him, his wife, and his two daughters by the hand, because Yahweh was sparing him; and they brought them forth and set them outside the city.Lot, though a saint, is a specimen of weak godliness. He lacks the decision and the wholehearted obedience of Abraham. The thought of sacrificing house and home and all his goods makes departure difficult. Yet in the last analysis what are material possessions in an hour of such impending disaster? Lot, who should have acted promptly upon having merely received information, must be exhorted and finally taken by the hand and led forth. In v.15 the two visitors are called "angels," in v.16 "men." Both appellations apply, one covering what they in reality are, the other how they actually appear. Bechemlath is the infinitive of chamal, here expressing cause (K. S.403a). Hannimtsa'ôth -- "the ones found" -- Nifal participle, could hardly be used with propriety if some of Lot's daughters did not happen to be found in the house at the moment. This is one of the major arguments for interpreting loqe-chey v. (Ge 19:14) as referring to the past and not to the future.17. And it came to pass when they had brought them forth outside the city that one of them said: Flee for your life; do not look behind you; and do not stop in all this Round (of the Jordan); to the mountains take your flight lest you be swept away.Very specific instructions are given to the fugitives at this point. One in particular gives the commandments to be observed, therefore wayyo'mer, singular, with indefinite subject (K. S.324 d). Again the suggestion of the early versions to make the verb a plural is quite unnecessary. Consequently also, the singular is no indication that the Lord is speaking through the angel. Lot's delay has made unbending haste a necessity. Nephesh, usually "soul," is used in the sense of life, as often, especially in the expression "flee for your life." The command not to "look behind them" is primarily for the purpose of demonstrating the necessity of utmost haste. The third behest forbids stopping anywhere in the so-called Round (kikkar) of the Jordan, sometimes rendered "the Plain of the Jordan" (see Ge 13:10). Difficult though it will make the flight, they must take their course "to the

mountains" -- the fourth direction -- lest they be swept away. Because the command not to look around is met with in heathen legends (cf. Orpheus and Eurydice), that fact does not yet make every command of that sort in Israelitish history a part of a legendary account. We ourselves may on occasion bid another not to look around without being on our part involved in some legendary transaction. 18-20. And Lot said to them: O no, sirs! See, I pray, thy servant has found favour in your sight, and thou hast displayed great kindness toward me in sparing my life, and I, for my part, am not able to flee to the mountains, lest evil overtake me and I die; look, here is this town near at hand to flee thither -- and it is but a tiny place -- let me flee to it, pray; (is it not but a tiny place?) that I may escape alive.Here is a somewhat presumptuous plea by a weak and timid man. He does not seem to realize his extremity, nor to value sufficiently the undeserved favour bestowed upon him. He bargains for further consideration. One is almost tempted to expect that the angels would have given him an impatient and curt refusal. The change of number in the pronouns used ("thy," "your," "thou") seems to spring from Lot's trepidation: sometimes he addresses both; at times he directs his words to the one who had spoken last. Lot bases his plea on the favour that has been bestowed on him. He reinforces it by a plea of physical inability to reach the mountains. He claims the evil from which God is delivering him will overtake him nevertheless -- not a very commendable attitude. Finally, he makes the smallness of the place that he has in mind a plea for sparing it, in case he flees thither. It almost taxes the reader's patience to bear with this long-winded plea at a moment of such extreme danger. Lot appreciated but little what was being done for him. The 'adhonay of v.18 is a pausal form with qamets instead of pathach and is not to be read as "Lord," for nothing indicates that Lot had recognized the Lord in these angels. In fact, the Lord had not come down with them to Sodom. On the form 'ûkhal see G. K.69 r. The suffix object on tidhbaqßni (v.19) takes the place of a prepositional object (K. S.22). In v.20 the question introduced by "ha interrogative," takes the place of an adverbial clause of cause (K. S.373 f). The nifal 'immaletah has "i" under the prefix (cf. G. K.51 p). The "and" clause, wattechi, is final (G. K.109 f.).21, 22. And he said to him: Behold, I have accepted thee also in regard to this matter not to overthrow the town of which thou hast spoken. Flee there quickly, for I can do nothing until thou hast come there. Therefore the name of the place is called Zoar ("tiny place").The stress of circumstances does not allow time for argument and counter argument: Lot's request is granted in a spirit of remarkable patience and longsuffering. The small town is exempted from the calamity to which it had been destined. The angel speaks with a measure of authority which has been granted him as Yahweh's agent. On the other hand, it is apparent that he is under certain restrictions: he can do nothing until Lot is safe. Zo'ar, the resultant name, builds on the root of the word for "tiny place" (mits'ar) which Lot uses twice. Maher is used as an equivalent of the adverb "quickly" (G. K.120 g).Now follows an account of one of the most horrifying events of all history.23-25. As the sun rose upon the earth, Lot came to Zoar, and Yahweh rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah sulphur and fire from Yahweh from the heavens; and He overthrew those cities and the entire Round and all the inhabitants of the cities and all that sprang forth from the ground.The catastrophes wrought by God are fully under His control. This one is not unleashed until Lot has safely reached Zoar. But by that time the sun is fully risen. Although only Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned, we learn from De 29:23; cf. Ho 11:8, that Admah and Zeboiim were involved as well. By adding Zoar to the group we have the so-called Five Cities, i. e., Pentapolis; cf. Ge 14:2, 9. Of course, Zoar was spared.The means causing the destruction are said to be "sulphur and fire" which Yahweh brought down so plentifully upon these places that He is said to have rained" them

upon Sodom and Gomorrah. On this point the account is very concise. Whatever attempt is made to discover more nearly the details of what transpired, such an attempt must stay strictly within the limits of the textual statements. Nothing points directly to a volcanic eruption; nor do lava remains happen to be found in the immediate vicinity (K. C.). Nor does the expression "overthrew" necessarily point to an earthquake. The "fire" which rained down from heaven may have been lightning. The "sulphur" may have been miraculously wrought and so have rained down together with the lightnings, although there is the other possibility that a huge explosion of highly inflammable materials, including sulphur, deposited in the ground (cf. the "bitumen pits" of Ge 14:10) may have cast these materials, especially the sulphur, high into the air so that they rained upon these cities, causing a vast conflagration. Besides, it seems quite likely that after these combustible materials once took fire, the very site of the cities was literally burnt away to quite a depth, and so the waters of the northern part of the Dead Sea filled in the burnt-out area. For it is a well-known fact that the southern end of the Dead Sea hardly exceeds a depth of twelve feet and usually runs much less, i. e., three or four feet. In fact, at certain points it is by no means difficult to wade across the lake. On the other hand, the northern portion reaches a maximum depth of 1300 feet. To assume, then, that the entire lake is the result of this "overthrow," as some have, hardly seems reasonable or in conformity with the Biblical account. A conflagration that would have burnt out the ground to a depth of 1,300 feet cannot be conceived. An earthquake, causing so deep and so broad a fissure in the earth's crust, would at least have called for the use of the term "earthquake" in this connection, for, apparently, in violence it would have surpassed all earthquakes of which man has a record. Equally difficult would be the assumption that the Jordan once flowed through this delightful valley of the Pentapolis and poured its water into the Elanitic Gulf. The most significant term used to describe what God did is He "overthrew" (haphakh). The noun derived from this verb root (mahpekhah) comes to be the standing designation of the catastrophe in the Scriptures; cf. De 29:23; Am 4:11; Jeremiah 49:18; Jeremiah 50:40; Isaiah 13:19. Only that which stands up can be "overthrown." Consequently the verb connotes something of the idea of proud men and institutions being brought low by the Lord who "throws down the mighty from their seats" and lays iniquity prostrate.But what construction shall we put upon the statement, "Yahweh rained -- from Yahweh from the heavens"? We consider Meek's translation an evasion of the difficulty by alteration of the text, when he renders: "The Lord rained -- from the sky." Kit., instead of striking out "from Yahweh,"deletes "from the heavens." However, there is much truth in the claim that the name of God or Yahweh is often used in solemn or emphatic utterances in place of the pronoun that would normally be expected. K. C. lists the instances of this sort that have been met with in Genesis up to this point: Ge 1:27, 28; 5:1; 8:21; 9:16; 11:9; 12:8; 18:17; 19:13, etc. But that would hardly apply in this case, for our passage would hardly come under the list of those where "the divine name is used instead of the pronoun." For how could Moses have written: "Yahweh rained from Himself"? Yet the statement is certainly meant to be emphatic, but not merely emphatic in the sense in which Keil, following Calvin's interpretation, suggests. For both hold that the statement is worded thus to indicate that this was not rain and lightning operating according to "the wonted course of nature" (non usitato naturae ordine Deus pluerit), but that it might be stated quite emphatically that more than the ordinary causes of nature were at work. We believe that the mere expression, "God, or Yahweh, rained from heaven," would have served very adequately to convey such an emphatic statement. But in this instance Yahweh was present in and with His angels whom He had delegated to this task and who acted under

specific divine mandate. He who had the day before been visibly present with them, was now invisibly with them. When His agents acted, He acted. Consequently we believe that the view which the church held on this problem from days of old is still the simplest and the best: Pluit Deus filius a Deo patre -- "God the Son brought down the rain from God the Father," as the Council of Sirmium worded the statement. To devaluate the statement of the text to mean less necessitates a similar process of devaluation of a number of other texts like Ge 1:26, and only by such a process can the claim be supported that there are no indications of the doctrine of the Trinity in Genesis. We believe the combined weight of these passages, including Ge 1:1, 2, makes the conclusion inevitable that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is in a measure revealed in the Old Testament, and especially in Genesis. Why should not so fundamental a doctrine be made manifest from the beginning? We may see more of this truth than did the Old Testament saints, but the Church has through the ages always held one and the same truth. Luther says: "This expression indicates two persons in the Godhead."That more than the destruction of all living beings in the whole affected area is meant is indicated by the added object: "and all that sprang forth from the ground," i. e., tsémach ha'adhamah, or "that which sprouted from the ground." We need hardly go so far as to assume that the more or less combustible soil burned out to a depth of several feet. Perhaps only the low lying sites of the cities were entirely burned, and then, as seems particularly proved by Kyle's investigation of the site, as the water level of the lake rose, the area covered by the conflagration was slowly inundated.26. And Lot's wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.According to the words employed Lot's wife must already at the time of her looking have been "behind him." This indicates that she was not making as determined efforts to escape as were the others. No one can determine whether "longing, pity, or curiosity" (Delitzsch) impelled her to disregard the very plain divine injunction. Evidently her heart was in the city. She appreciated but little what the delivering angels had done for her. Almost escaped, she allowed her vigilance to relax. So she became a warning example to all who do not make a clear-cut break with the life of wickedness, as Jesus remarkable warning designates her (Lu 17:32). God's punishment overtook her on the spot, apparently through the agents already operative in the destruction. For she may well have been overtaken by the poisonous fumes and the fiery destruction raining down from heaven hard upon the heels of the fugitives. Rather too drastic a use of the imagination is made when the destructive agent is labelled "lava" (Jamieson), or "huge waves of the Salt Sea" (Procksch). But once overcome, there she lay, apparently not reached by the fire but salt-encrusted by the vapours of the Salt Sea. Lot and his daughters could not have seen this at the time, for to look back would have involved them in the same destruction. Their love for the one lost will, no doubt, have driven them after the havoc of the overthrow had subsided to visit the spot, and there they will have found "the pillar of salt." For the words wattehî ("and she became") in no wise in themselves demand an instantaneous conversion into such a pillar. Whatever salt formations have since been described as Lot's wife from the time of the apocryphal book of Wisdom (Wis 10:7: "the pillar of salt -- a memorial of the unbelieving soul") to this day must be regarded as purely fictitious. But in the days shortly after the catastrophe the saltencrusted, crudely pillar-like remains of the unhappy woman were to be seen. 27, 28. And Abraham rose early and went to the place where he had stood before Yahweh, and looked out upon Sodom and Gomorrah and upon all the land of the (Jordan) Round, and he saw, and, lo, the smoke from the land went up as the smoke of a smelting furnace.So sure had Abraham become of the imminence of a catastrophic overthrow of the wicked cities that he felt impelled upon rising to go back to the

place where he had "stood before Yahweh" on the preceding day, for from it a panoramic view of the whole region could be obtained. The eye beheld vast volumes of smoke rising from all the region. The expression here used qîtor ha'ßrets, "smoke of the earth," seems to suggest more definitely that the very ground burned. Our rendering above ("smoke from the land") is perhaps, therefore, less correct. To our suggestions above under this head (v. Ge 19:25) we would add another, namely, the possibility that also petroleum deposits near the surface may have been ignited to cause an enormous conflagration. The comparison employed to make the picture more vivid is "as the smoke of a smelting furnace." Kibhshan is by some rendered "kiln," however K. W. appears to offer the more suitable suggestion Schmetzofen. So also Buhl.The article "the morning" is the "article of the customary" -- the morning that marks the next day. The article with "smelting furnace" is the article used in comparisons (G. K.126, o).29. And it came to pass when God overthrew the cities of the (Jordan) Round that God remembered Abraham and conducted Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.The "overthrow" is a mighty act of judgment in which God displays powers which lead men to fear Him; therefore "Elohim" and not "Yahweh.", Even when the merciful act of deliverance is recorded, where, without a doubt, "Yahweh" could have been used, Moses uses "Elohim," because Lot no doubt felt primarily fear at the great catastrophe which was unleashing itself. But the primary thought of the verse is: God remembered Lot for Abraham's sake. Abraham's prayer, though denied in the form in which it was offered, is, nevertheless, heard insofar as Lot's preservation is concerned. Lot, consequently, was not delivered for his own sake but for Abraham's. "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." The blessings that go forth from one true-hearted servant of God are incalculable.30. And Lot, together with his two daughters, went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar; and he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.Lot abandons Zoar as a residence because he fears to dwell there longer. This fear may be interpreted as arising from the fact that he as a fugitive from a city destroyed for its wickedness may have been viewed with suspicion by the people of Zoar. But Zoar, a city originally destined for a like destruction, will hardly have had scruples about the moral integrity of a man like Lot. Besides, it would be just as logical to conclude that the Zoarites might have respected him as a special favourite of the Deity. Therefore, the other explanation is much to be preferred which claims that Zoar was dreaded by Lot because he feared it too might ultimately be overthrown. Such an attitude on Lot's part argues for want of faith. God had answered his petition to have it spared. But Lot is a weak saint. He may, indeed, have seen unabated wickedness in Zoar after "the overthrow" and may have become alarmed at the sight of it. Even that would not excuse his fear. For "a cave" the Hebrew has "the cave," i. e., the cave that was to be expected in a mountainous region where caves abound -- the article of "relative familiarity"(K. S.299 b). The le before shebheth is the le relationis, taking the place of an accusative after "fear."31, 32. And the first-born said to the younger: Our father is old, and there is no one in the land to marry us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drunk with wine, and lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father.We here see the sorry spectacle of people of good antecedents badly contaminated by continued contact with persons of vicious habits. Lot's daughters stoop to incest, it is true, not because of vile passions, but because they face the disgrace of dying without issue. When they claim that there "is no one in all the land to marry" (Hebrew: "to come in unto") them, as daughters everywhere else are married, that remark is dictated by the impatience of unbelief. Had they waited a while longer, a husband might have been

found. The scheme devised to offset the deficiency is one worthy of the depraved Sodomites, who had cast all sense of decency aside. Tse'îrah ("little one") in this connection gains the force of a comparative "the younger." Lekhah is really the feminine imperative, second person, here used with the first person as a mere expletive (K. S.344 g). "To give to drink," (or, "to make drunk") naturally may take a double object (K. S.327 m).33. And they made their father drunk with wine that night, and the first-born went in and lay with her father, and he was not aware that she lay down or that she rose up. It surely is an indication of moral decay when a man lets himself be made inebriate so readily by his daughters. One may attribute grief over the recent catastrophe and over the loss of his wife to Lot and so seek to account for his readiness to take a kind of consolation from the cup offered him, but the moral responsibility cannot be cancelled by such considerations. We may even be inclined to believe that by this time the once "righteous" man (2 Peter 2:7) had lapsed from grace. Charity, however, suggests to hold judgment in suspense, because we hear nothing more of Lot after this sad event. Stranger still seems the statement that Lot "knew not" (lo' yadha') of it. However, the appended limitation, "of her lying down and her rising up," seems to remove all difficulties, and so suggests our translation, "was not aware that she lay down," etc. The unusual point over the last word is apparently an indication that the Masoretes considered the statement a strange one. Things done in a drunken stupor may well be regarded as done with badly blurred consciousness, nor do they leave a distinct imprint on the memory. The article before hû' is perhaps left off to prevent cacophony (G. K.126 y).34, 35. And it came to pass on the next day that the first-born said to the younger: Behold, I lay with my father last night. Let us make him drunk with wine also tonight; then do thou go in and lie with him. So we shall preserve offspring from our father. So they again made their father drunk that night; and the younger daughter arose and lay with him, and he was not aware that she lay down or that she rose up.Keil's formulation of Lot's part in the transaction covers the case; he says: Lot was "not entirely unconscious, yet -- , without clearly knowing what he was doing." The measure of culpability of Lot is, of course, far less than it would have been but for this circumstance. Yet this is a revolting scene and a tragic one.36-38. So both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. And the first-born bare a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of the present-day Moabites. And the younger daughter, she too bore a son and called his name Benammi. He is the father of the present-day Ammonites.Again and again critics label this whole story the outgrowth of a mean prejudice on the part of Israel against these two neighbouring nations, a hostile fabrication and an attempt to heap disgrace upon them. Yet passages like De 2:9 surely indicate that Israel always maintained a friendly spirit toward these brother nations, especially toward the Moabites. David's history also may serve as an antidote against such slanders. We have here an objective account of an actual historical occurrence. Nor is there any occasion for describing these etymologies as "forced" or unnatural. These are not strict etymologies but accounts of names that actually reflected the truth involved.Mô'abh apparently means the same as me'abh, i. e., "from the father." For though, indeed, mo, derived from mayim or mê, may mean "water," as a euphemism for "seed," such a derivation seems almost too blunt. So the name Benammi, "son of my people," contains a veiled allusion to the father's paternity; the child is the son of her nearest relative. From this name the term Ammonites arose in the course of time. We believe that Meek has rendered the expression of the A. V. "unto this day" very acceptably as "present-day." It is to be prefixed to the nationalities in question.The chapter as a whole is nowadays regularly assigned to J, with the exception of v. Ge 19: 29, in which Elohim is found, and which therefore is ascribed to P. But v.29

is so essential for the purpose of tying up this chapter with the preceding, showing what bearing Abraham's intercession really had upon the fortunes of Lot, that it is unthinkable that another author should have supplied what practically flows out of the connection of the two chapters and almost constitutes their very soul. We showed above how appropriate the divine name Elohim is at this point. Besides, claims to the effect that "the tautological circumstantiality of the priestly writer" are clearly to be discerned here (K. C.) fall to earth as soon as we discern that the formal character of the verse is occasioned by the fact that this verse constitutes a formal conclusion of the incident just narrated. Such conclusions are inclined naturally to adopt a somewhat more formal style.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSNot every part of this chapter is suited for homiletical use. It seems to us that v.1-11 contains several elements that would require explanation and yet cannot be explained without a measure of impropriety. And if there be a difference of opinion under this head, certainly all must agree that v.30-38, though it certainly serves a good purpose under several heads, cannot be a text for a sermon. That leaves v.12-22 first of all -- a section that may be regarded as exemplifying the Longsuffering Mercy of God, or any similar formulation that demonstrates effectively how much concerned God is for His own, though they may but little deserve His mercy. Here is an unusual case of a judgment which is plainly designed for depraved sinners. To have a godly man perish in the overthrow of such could create the wrong impression. Consequently, God makes a singular exception of the man Lot. Yet, undoubtedly, it is mercy that is here operative. Then there is the section v.23-29, which, on the one hand, demonstrates the severity of God's judgments, on the other, the fact that the weak may be spared for the sake of the godly -- also a vital truth of the Scriptures to be found frequently in the books of Kings where Israel is again and again spared for David's sake.

CHAPTER XX

10. Abraham and Sarah at Gerar Abraham needs to be tried and purified still more before the promise can be realized. He is also to receive still further demonstrations of divine favour. However, the difficulty in which he finds himself is occasioned by Abraham himself. On the very eve of the fulfilment of the long-hoped-for promise, Abraham, largely through his own sins, imperils the precious hope. So once again, as so often in Genesis, the sovereign mercy of God is made to stand forth as supreme, that no flesh may glory before God. It would be foolish to deny the similarity of this episode with those other episodes recorded in Ge 12:10 ff. and Ge 26:1 ff. It is equally foolish to claim the identity of the incidents on the ground that they merely represent three different forms of the original event, forms assumed while being transmitted by tradition. Critics seem to forget that life just happens to be so strange a thing that certain incidents may repeat themselves in the course of one life, or that the lives of children often constitute a strange parallel to those of their parents. Besides, there certainly are striking differences between this account and that of Ge 12:10 ff. as well as striking points of similarity. Note the following six points of difference: two different places are involved, Egypt and Philistia; two different monarchs of quite different character; one, idolatrous, the other, one who fears the true God; different circumstances prevail, a famine on the one hand, nomadic migration on the other; different modes of revelation are employed -- the one king surmises the truth, the other receives revelation in a dream; the patriarch's reaction to the accusation is quite different in the two instances involved -- in the first, silence; then in the second instance, a free explanation before a king of sufficient spiritual discernment; lastly, the conclusions of the two episodes are radically different from one another -- in the first instance, dismissal from the land; in the second, an invitation to stay in the land. We are compelled, therefore, to reverse the critical verdict: "it is impossible to doubt that the two are variants of the same tradition." We have here two distinct, though similar, events. If we remember besides that about twenty years had elapsed between the two incidents (cf. Ge 12:4 with Ge 17:1), we can well understand how the memory of the first had paled upon the consciousness of the patriarch. Abraham should not have been so forgetful, but even the patriarchs were frail mortals and poor sinners. In any event, why should a nation perpetuate several forms of an incident that reflects no honour whatsoever upon its first father? 1. And Abraham journeyed from thence to the land of the South Country (Negeb) and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur; he also sojourned in Gerar. We last met Abraham near Hebron, living amid the terebinths of Mamre (Ge 18:1). He "journeys" (literally: "pulls up") to go from thence toward the region called the Negeb, or the South Country; cf. Ge 12:9. There his dwelling place -- always shifting because he is a nomad -- is in the broad stretch between Kadesh, i. e., Kadesh Barnea (see Ge 14:7) and Shur (see on Ge 16:7). From this region he penetrated northwest some forty or fifty miles till he finally also took up his residence in Gerar, the site now known as Umm Jerar, perhaps ten miles south of Gaza on the Wadi Sheriah. Here criticism again seeks to discredit the account by seeking to identify the two successive steps in the patriarch's journeyings, as though the writer had said that Abraham went to the region between Kadesh and Shur and there dwelt in Gerar, though Gerar is not there. We have made the successive steps involved more distinct by translating wayyßghor not "and he

sojourned" but "he also sojourned." It is even possible that most of Abraham's herds and flocks may have been scattered over this region of the South Country while he was taking up temporary residence (gûr) in Gerar. On wayyßghor cf. G. K.72 t. 2. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister; and Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent and took Sarah. The deception of Ge 12:13 is renewed. It is as little pardonable here as there. The expression amar el must here mean "to say of" someone (K. S.327 g). When Abimelech takes Sarah, that implies, not as the phrase sometimes means, to take in marriage, but only, to take into his harem. The silence of the verse, in that it does not call the king of Gerar, the king of the Philistines, cannot be pressed to the point where it means that the writer holds that he was not king of the Philistines, or even that the Philistines were not yet in the land in those days. Yet by this unfounded claim this passage (attributed to E) is made to clash with Ge 26:1 (attributed to J), and E is claimed to be the more accurate and J is claimed to be in error. "Abimelech" means "my father is king," or "Melech is father." 3. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him: Behold, thou art going to die, because of the woman whom thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. There must have been something about Abimelech that set him above the level of the idolatrous Canaanites dwelling in the land, for God deigns to reveal Himself to this man. As we proceed, we observe that Abimelech apparently feared God. Luther reckons him among the believers of his day. Yet Abimelech must have had but a limited knowledge of God, for He that appeared to him is here described only as the Deity, 'elohîm not Ha'elohîm, "the true God." The mode of revelation employed is the "dream" (chalöm), a mode employed for those standing on a lower level of revelation. When critics claim all such passages dealing with dreams for E, like Ge 28:12; Ge 31:11,24; Ge 37:5, then Nu 12:6 must also be considered which belongs to J. Besides, Ge 21:12, 14; Ge 22:1 ff., and Ge 46:2, all cited by Skinner, are only assumed to involve dreams. Consequently, such a claim has no solid foundation. The article with layelah is the categorical article. The Deity informs the king that he has done a deed worthy of death: "thou art going to die," meth, the participle, must point to the future in this connection. This guilty deed of Abimelech is that he has taken a woman who already is a man's wife (be'ulath ba'al -- "lorded over by a lord," i. e., "governed by a husband"). To take men's wives from them for one's self is a deed involving great guilt. This pronouncement of God's meets Abimelech on the level on which he stands. It expects of him to understand and to honour the sanctity of the marriage bond. It does not make an issue of another act of Abimelech's, where he adds eligible women to his harem, as though a king had the right to multiply wives to himself. Yet God's silence does not mean approval. The difficulty arising in this connection as to the reason for Abimelech's taking Sarah is increased if one supposes that the king's reason was that he was infatuated with Sarah's beauty. For even when allowance is made for the greater length of the span of life of these days, yet Sarah, being ninety years old (Ge 17:17), would have been so far past middleage as to have lost her charm. A kind of rejuvenation in connection with the impending birth of a son could have made no appreciable difference. Since the text ascribes no reason, we are just as much at liberty to choose the other alternative, namely that the king by marriage sought to create an alliance with this influential nomad and so increase his following. Critics, as usual, reject the second suggestion and adopt the first because of the difficulties which it creates, which seem to make this version of the story of Ge 12:10 appear less credible.4, 5. But Abimelech had not approached her, and so he said: Lord, wilt thou slay even a righteous people? Did he not say unto me, She is my sister? And she, even she herself said to me, He is my brother. In the integrity of my heart and the innocency of my hands

have I done this.The verb qarabh must here be a pluperfect "had approached" (K. S.117). Abimelech has extenuating circumstances to point to and so prefixes this plea to his defense, "Wilt thou slay even a righteous people?" First of all, he seems to know that the Deity is not a tribal god but has power over all individuals and all nations alike. Secondly, he has full confidence in God's justice: God does not punish indiscriminately. When, however, the king speaks of the slaying of the "people," it must be because he recognizes that king and people here constitute a unity in that the people carried out the king's command willingly and so share in the guilt. Alarmed as he is, the king uses a hyperbole in speaking of those to be punished as "a people." He hardly means to refer to more than those who are directly involved in one way or another. The meaning, for goy adopted by some, namely "a person" or "one" cannot be substantiated. The question introduced by the interrogative ha here requires a negative answer (K. S.353 f).The tacit assumption of Abimelech, that it was, of course, perfectly proper for him to increase the number of women in his harem, or even, for that matter, to have a harem, again is not touched. It may well be that the king still lived in an age that was not yet ready to learn the truth in regard to this matter. At any event, only that part of the issue which directly concerned Abraham is taken in hand by God.Both of the parties concerned had given Abimelech the assurance that Sarah was Abraham's sister. The answers quoted by Abimelech put the emphatic word first; he said: "My sister she"; she said: "My brother he." Under these circumstances Abimelech might well claim that the inner motive was unimpeachable ("integrity of heart") and the outward deed entirely proper ("innocency of hands"). In the latter expression the word for "hand," kaph, signifies "the palm of the hand," consequently, not even hidden uncleanness within the hand, -- therefore complete innocency. Throughout the king gives the impression of being an entirely worthy and upright character, a man who truly feared God.6,7. And God said unto him in a dream: I too know that in the innocency of thy heart thou hast done this; and I prevented thee, even I, from sinning against Me; on that account I did not suffer thee to touch her. Now therefore, restore the wife of the man, for he is a prophet, that he may intercede in thy behalf that thou mayest live. But if thou dost not restore her, know that thou shalt most assuredly die, as well as all that belong to thee.Whatever the nature of a revelation by means of a dream may be, it surely allows for an interchange of thoughts -- questions and answers, remarks and responses. He that replies is here called by a more specific name than that of v.3 Ge 20:3: not 'Elohîm butHa'elohîm -- "the true God." The advance in thought is, that the king first recognized the Deity, but the Deity is the only true God. Between these two designations stands Abimelech's address "Lord" 'adhonay (v.4 Ge 20:4). As such Abimelech had specifically acknowledged Him; that is what He was accounted by Abimelech to be -- Lord of all. Such fine discrimination in the use of the divine names shows beyond a doubt that they are all used according to the specific meaning that underlies each.Now it appears how the announcement of v.3 Ge 20:3 was meant -- "thou art going to die." God was not predicting an inexorable doom but was declaring what Abimelech in reality had merited and what would of necessity follow if Abimelech failed to give heed to the divine injunction. God recognizes the comparative innocence of the king. In fact, He Himself had so regulated the course of events that Abimelech had been prevented from approaching the mother of the promised seed: some sickness had incapacitated all of his household (Ge 20:18). The sickness referred to was an event that was entirely providential for this very purpose. These verses are supposed to exhibit "a vacillation." They are said to be "the first faint protest of the moral sense against the hereditary mechanical notion of guilt." Writers who say such things (like Skinner) first impute their misconceptions to the Biblical

author and then they censure him. In the first place, no Scriptures, not even the earliest, teach a "mechanical notion of guilt." But there is hereditary sin, for which the sinners involved are also guilty. In the case before us the rule holds good: sin is sin and involves guilt, even when the perpetrator may have sinned in ignorance. Such ignorance does constitute an extenuating circumstance. God acknowledges that here. Our story is not a protest against anything. It records facts in conformity with all the rest of revealed truth. On chatô', infinitive construct, see G. K.75 qq; on neghoa' G. K.66 b.7. The irregularity of which Abimelech is guilty must like all sins be adjusted at once, if such adjustment lies within the power of the one who has sinned. In this instance the offense is aggravated by the nature of the person against whom it is committed: Abraham is "a prophet," a nabhî'. This term is here to be taken in its usual and only meaning -- nabhî' from the root found in the Arabic, nßba'a, signifies "the speaker," in the active not the passive sense, i. e., not "the inspired one." Yet "speaker" in the eminent sense of speaking in behalf and in the name of the Deity is definitely the meaning implied (see K. W.). Though we observe no instances in Abraham's life, where he functions specifically as the organ of revelation, who delivers particular messages in the name of Yahweh, yet he had the truth in his possession and, no doubt, spoke it freely and so functioned as speaker in God's service. To press the meaning of the word down to the level where it means only a "man of God, whose person and property are inviolable" is a procedure warranted by no Scripture, and so merely an attempt to deflate terms.Now the work of prophets has also in a special sense always, been to intercede for others (cf. De 9:20; 1 Samuel 7:5; 1 Samuel 12:19,23; Jeremiah 7:16). This function Abraham will in this instance, employ in Abimelech's behalf, that he may live. Both clauses introduced by "and" are in this instance final: "and he shall intercede" -- "that he may intercede"; "and live" (imperative) -- "that you may live." Efficacious intercessory prayer was practised from the earliest times. On the other hand, failure to adjust the wrong done will bring with it certain death both of the king and of all who belong to him. These latter persons are included, no doubt, because if the king persists in his wrong course, they that belong to him will have abetted and supported him in his position and so will be almost as guilty as he.Surely, the word of the psalm in reference to this event covers the case, where God is represented as saying: "Touch not mine anointed ones, and do my prophets no harm" (Psalms 105:15). Charges of partiality on God's part are quite out of place. He who has mercy for all may surely exercise particular care over those who have served Him with unusual fidelity, especially if they be persons whom He is reserving for special purposes, like Sarah. That such protection is entirely unmerited goes without saying, for His saints too were fallible human beings, as our story demonstrates only too clearly. Since this is the correct Biblical approach to the problem, we must reject the attitude of Procksch, who tries to make an "adventure" out of this experience of Sarah and would have us believe that the purpose of the narrator is to show how high Sarah ranked in her day, namely, as a princess worthy to be taken into a royal harem; and so the whole episode is construed as a kind of glorification of Sarah.8. So Abimelech arose early in the morning and called all his servants and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were much frightened.Abimelech gives evidence of prompt obedience. It required a measure of humility to tell these things to his servants; but the servants had also been involved in the misdeed, even as they would have shared the punishment if the evil had not been adjusted. The servants have their master's attitude of respect and reverence for God, which here at the news of the danger they had incurred made them to be much afraid.9, 10. Then Abimelech called Abraham and said unto him: What hast thou done to us? And wherein have I sinned against thee that thou shouldest bring a

great sin upon me and upon my kingdom? Thou hast done to me things that should not be done. Ablmelech also said to Abraham: What didst thou meet with that led thee to do this thing?When Abimelech called Abraham, that must be understood in the sense that he had him summoned, even as v.2 Ge 20:2 he did not go personally and take Sarah. By this time, apparently, the situation described v.18 Ge 20: 18 had developed fully, and everyone may now after the lapse of several days have been aware of grievous irregularities and of an unusual affliction that had befallen the court and its retainers. The blame for all this Abimelech lays at Abraham's door: "What hast thou done to us?" Besides, the king claims that the wrong was done quite unprovoked and that it amounted to this that Abraham had made innocent persons, even the king practically and his people, to do a great sin. The man who is in a particular sense a friend of God must suffer himself to be rebuked by one who actually stands far below on the scale of spiritual opportunity and advancement. Abraham must be told what should not have been done. The imperfect ye'sû, "is done," readily passes into the meaning "should be done," on the supposition that men usually will be found doing what they should (K. S.181). 10. Apparently Abraham feels his guilt and says nothing. So Abimelech proceeds to ask what it was that led Abraham to do this thing. The expression mah ra'îtha, literally, "what didst thou see?" must be meant in some such sense as, "what hast thou encountered?" (B D B). Meek secures a vivid translation but departs entirely from the basic idea when he renders, "What possessed thee?"11-13. And Abraham said: (I did it) because I thought in no case is there any fear of God in this place; so they will slay me for my wife's sake. Also for a fact she is my sister, the daughter of my father, however, not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. And so, when God made me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her: This is thy kindness that thou show me: in every place to which we come, say of me: He is my brother.Abraham's three excuses are listed in these verses. Abraham lays no special emphasis, upon them. He attempts no exculpation. He simply seems to have placed confidence in Abimelech and to have told him exactly what motivated his course of procedure. In the first place, he was afraid that the fear of God had been lost here as practically everywhere else in Canaan. With the respect for God gone, men would hardly respect the rights of their fellow-men. Abraham mentions this first, for he gathered from the king's words that Abimelech still stands in the fear of God. So this part of the excuse practically amounts to an apology. His words begin elliptically with kî, which implies the suppression of some initial statement like: I did it, "because," etc.12. The second excuse indicates that Abraham was really not speaking a verbal untruth when he declared Sarah to be his sister; she was his half-sister. On the earlier levels of the development of the human race such closer relationships of those married were often necessary and so not abhorred as they came to be later. The Mosaic law would not allow such connections; see Le 18:9,11; Le 20:17; De 27:22. Whom Terah had first married or perhaps married after he had married Abraham's mother, we cannot determine. The particle 'akh, "also," in connections such as these must mean "however."13. The third excuse or explanation reveals a preconcerted arrangement agreed upon already when Abraham's wanderings first began: for all situations such as these this evasion was to be resorted to by both. This is not commendable, but it is the truth. These things had not been revealed to Pharaoh (Ge 12:18,20), no doubt because Abraham felt no kinship with Pharaoh, nor did he have the confidence toward Pharaoh that leads to such revelations.The plural hith'û with the subject 'elohîm is an entirely inoffensive Hebrew construction, where a plural of extent (cf. K. S.259 c, d) is coupled with a plural verb or a plural adjective (cf. K. S.260 b) without impairing the singular character of the object involved. De 5:23 may also serve as

a parallel, where the plural form of the adjective is coupled with a singular noun which is plural in form. The other explanation that Abraham is adapting himself to the polytheistic standpoint of the king would apparently involve on Abraham's part practically a denial of his own monotheistic standpoint. Note also the loose way in which wayhî attaches v.13 to v.12: "and it came to pass when God made me to wander," where wayhî functions in so secondary a fashion that we ventured to translate it merely: "and so when," etc. (cf. G. K.111 g).There is no complaint involved in Abraham's use of the verb He "caused me to wander." This is a mere statement of fact. He knew that his lot was to be that of a sojourner. He accepted that lot with open eyes. He is here merely referring to a situation that he himself accepts and which he will reveal to men of kindred mind.14, 15. And Abimelech took sheep and oxen and men servants and maid servants and gave them to Abraham; he also restored to him Sarah his wife. Abimelech also said: My country is at thy disposal; dwell, where it pleaseth thee.In addition to restoring Sarah, Abimelech gives tokens of goodwill in the form of generous presents of the type that a nomad could well use. Besides, he gives ample proof of a friendly disposition by inviting Abraham to settle down wherever he pleases. From passages like Ge 26:18 we gather that Abraham stayed sufficiently long in the neighbourhood to necessitate his digging wells. The offer was made in good faith and accepted in good faith. The expression "at thy disposal" reads in Hebrew "before thine eyes"; and the expression, "where it pleases thee" reads, "in that which is good in thine eyes."16. And unto Sarah he said: Behold, I have given a thousand shekels of silver to thy brother. This will be for thee a covering of the eyes in reference to all those who are with thee; and in all respects thou art justified.Abimelech is not said in v.14 Ge 20:14 to have given Abraham any silver; but here he refers to his gift as something that has been made. Consequently, the thousand shekels of silver may be the value of the gift just confessed and not an additional gift. Considering that thirty pieces was the normal price of a slave, it would seem that he considered what he had bestowed in v.14 a princely gift. Now in reference to Sarah this gift is to serve the purpose of a kesûth, "a covering of the eyes." Of the half dozen different interpretations offered for this expression the most fitting seems to be "the one that reckons with the embarrassment that might be caused Sarah when the news of what transpired becomes known and those of her own household cast scornful and embarrassing glances upon Sarah, because she did what made her ridiculous. The effect of this generous gift will be to give a token of the high esteem in which Abimelech nevertheless holds this man and wife. In view of this gift the patriarch's retinue will feel the occasion for amused looks has fallen away, and so the gift will serve as a very effectual veil ('covering of the eyes') might in warding off the scoffing glance." The concluding statement confirms this interpretation: "in all respects thou art justified." The idea of covering the eyes of the household of Sarah by covering the faces of all by veils seems less appropriate than to have one woman shield her face against curious glances by dropping her veil. The supposition that the veil is to shield the king against Sarah's angry or vengeful glances (Vilmar), is hardly suitable. References to a veil or headdress of coins worn by married women and to be secured by the use of this generous gift are still less in place.The last word nokha'chath is best regarded as Nifal participle feminine in pause; it gets its person from the preceding "thou" and "thine." Of course, the common segolate participle feminine is involved (K. S.367 5). Then the words immediately preceding we'eth kol are an accusative of relation (K. S.288k and 341o) "in respect to all things" or "in all respects." Luther's translation of the participle can hardly be supported: und das war ihre Strafe -- "and that was her punishment" -- for this was a gift and not a punishment.17, 18. And Abraham interceded with God, and God

healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they could bear children. For Yahweh had completely closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech on account of Sarah, Abraham's wife.Abraham does what God had ascribed to him as a prophetic function and privilege (v.7) Ge 20:7, and as a result of his intercession the disability laid upon the king's entire household is healed. The very fact that this disability is described as something that was healed (rapha') suggests that it should be classed as a sickness. This disability could hardly mean that pregnant mothers were prevented from bringing forth their offspring, as some interpret, but rather that conception, particularly the coitus, was rendered impossible. For so v.18 Ge 20:18 is to be understood. This was Yahweh's mode of rendering the mother of the promised seed safe. Note the fine propriety of the use of the term "Yahweh" here: the faithful covenant God in mercy watches over the mother of the child of the covenant. Criticism resorts to the common expedient of calling v.18 an addition from J, or a redactor's gloss, and tries to make v.18 appear out of harmony with v.17, where in reality it is the essential complement; for v.17 requires an explanation.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIf the customary theme is used for this chapter -- the mercy of the Lord, a theme which has thus far appeared with many different variations, then certainly here an opportunity offers itself to show conclusively that mercy is not bestowed according to merit; for here is a case where the total absence of merit stands forth prominently. If the case in hand is to be approached from the moral angle, then it is seen to offer an illustration how even with God's best saints susceptibility to certain sins is not overcome by a single effort. These men of God, too, had their besetting sins and prevailing weaknesses. The repetition of the fall of Abraham under very similar circumstances, instead of constituting grounds for criticism should rather be regarded as a touch entirely true to life.

CHAPTER XXI

11. Birth of Isaac and Expulsion of Ishmael (v.1-21) The long-deferred hope of the son of promise is finally fulfilled, but it is shortly followed by a grievous disappointment in another direction. This double experience demonstrates that, as God's dealings nurtured faith, so, on the other hand, less pleasant experiences kept the sojourner from feeling too much at home in a world that is not to be the final goal of our hopes. 1, 2. And Yahweh visited Sarah as He had said, and Yahweh dealt with her as He had spoken. So Sarah conceived and bore unto Abraham a son in his old age at the set time which Yahweh had designated. With a solemn reiteration, indicative of the solemn joy occasioned by God's keeping of the longdeferred promise, the author records this event. It would hardly have been seemly merely to make a simple unemphatic statement of the fulfilment. Criticism fails to discern this and speaks of doublets within v.1 and v.6. The characteristic Hebrew idiom here employs the paqadh, "to attend to" or "to visit." God's drawing near to one, whether in mercy or in severity, is described by the term; and it always involves that some token of His attitude is distinctly in evidence after His visitation. A similar use in a good sense appears in Ge 50:24, 25 and in Ex 13:19. Here the verb practically implies that God comes and leaves the son. More appropriately, however, this act is attributed to "Yahweh," for the merciful God here kept His covenant promise. For emphasis, to recall forcibly that His Yahweh-character was involved, the subject "Yahweh" is repeated before "dealt." Meek's "dealt with" for "visited" is very flat and colourless. 2. What v. l reports in a general statement v.2 reports in specific form: the aged woman actually "conceived"; she actually "bore a son" to her husband, Abraham had actually arrived at the time of "old age." "To old age" is here a temporal phrase (K. S.286c). The plural noun for "old age," zeqûnîm, a plural of condition, reflects the various conditions involved in that particular time of life. To convey the thought that everything was being done in strict conformity with the very specific promise, the statement is also added that this all transpired "at the set time which Yahweh had designated." The promise involved is found Ge 17:16, 21. 3-5. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised Isaac, his son, as a lad of eight days, just as the Lord commanded him. And Abraham himself was a man of a hundred years when his son Isaac was born unto him. The Lord had appointed the name for this child, Ge 17:17-19. There the joyous laughter of faith on Abraham's part was the direct cause for the choice of the name. At the same time, as far as Sarah was concerned, her laughter of unbelief (Ge 18:12) would be recalled to her by this name. For Isaac -- yitschaq -- he laughs, Kal imperfect of tsachaq. At the same time the rejoicing in gratitude on Sarah's part (v.6) brings in a new fulfilment of the possibilities latent in the name. The name even reflects, as Sarah there indicates, the holy joy of all who sympathize with Sarah's unexpected good fortune. The possibilities thus reflected by the name are manifold and even in the remarkable propriety of the name an additional indication of the control of divine providence over all that was connected with this young life. Note as parallel the case of Esau, whose name Edom -- red, because of 1 his appearance at birth (Ge 25:25); 2 because of the ominous red pottage (Ge 25:30); 3 because, as travellers have remarked, the soil and the mountains of Edom also have a peculiar reddish tinge in certain parts, as the paronomasia of Isaiah 63:1 also indicates, from another point of view (cf.

Rand and McNally's, Bible Atlas, p.45). Criticism refuses to see such providential control of even the details of man's life and seeks devious rationalistic explanations for this simple fact. The unusual arrangement of v.3 which holds the name Isaac in suspense till the close of the sentence yields a peculiar emphasis on this name. Apparently, the form hannôl'ßdh (with short a) is intended to be read as a participle and not as nifal perfect with the article (K. S.52). 4. The commandment of circumcision laid down very precisely in Ge 17:12 as a divine ordinance is fulfilled by Abraham to the letter. Benô is an accusative of condition (K. S.332 k) "as a lad of," etc. 5. Though we are by no means ignorant of Abraham's age at the time of Isaac's birth (Ge 17:1), yet to avoid all misunderstanding and to recall how entirely God's mercy was operative in the birth of this son, specific mention is again made of Abraham's age. The word "Abraham," by standing first in the sentence, gains an emphasis by contrast, which we aimed to reproduce by "Abraham himself." The sign of the accusative stands with "Isaac" as a retained object after a passive verb. 6, 7. And Sarah said: God hath prepared laughter for me; all that hear of it will laugh with me. She also said: Who ever said in reference to Abraham, Sarah given suck to children; for I have born a son unto him in his old age. The word tsechoq may, of course, mean "laughing stock," as it undoubtedly does Ezekiel 23:32. But an experience such as Sarah's would not render her ridiculous, least of all in the Orient. She herself would have the reproach of a lifetime removed and would consider this a piece of rare good fortune. Therefore the word really stands first for emphasis: "laughter hath God prepared for me." Likewise, all who hear what befalls her will laugh, rejoicing with her. The expression laugh "to me" (lî) is caught by the German zulachen; the English "laugh with me" is nearly correct. In faith Sarah attributes her good fortune to a merciful act of "God." "Yahweh" might properly have been used here from one point of view; but that viewpoint was covered by v.1 Ge 21:1. Here the Creator's power in rejuvenating an aged mother is best indicated by "Elohim." 7. The second watto'mer, opening this verse like v.6, is, of course, meant in the sense of "she also said." The modal use of the perfect millel:" Who would have said" (A. V.) is grammatically quite possible (cf. G. K.106 p). However, the ordinary perfect yields equally good sense: "who (ever) said," and is just as apt an expression of surprise at the unexpected good fortune of Sarah. Likewise, the next perfect hênîqah need not be taken as modal. There would be a certain unnaturalness about reporting such an event to the father, who would naturally know of it before others could report it. Consequently, the le before "Abraham" is not "to" but "in reference to" (Strack). The ordinary joy of any mother here gains added importance and a kind of sanctity because of the unusually momentous issues connected with this child. For that reason these relatively less important utterances are recorded one by one. When God fulfils promises, his saints experience a rare joy. The le before zequnaw is again temporal, as in v.2. Banîm is a generic plural like that used in 1 Samuel 17:43: "comest with staves," as Luther also already pointed out (K. S.264 c).8. And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham prepared a great feast on the day when Isaac was weaned.At least something of the growth and development of this child of old age would be recorded. In this case there is nothing phenomenal for the present. The weaning becomes the occasion for a "great feast." We are made to feel that to Abraham everything connected with Isaac is important. It may well be that such a custom prevailed more or less universally in days of old. In Abraham's case, of course, such a feast was an occasion for being joyful in the Lord. Besides, a custom of the Orient needs to be remembered here: children were weaned as late as in their third year (2Ma 7:27, 28). Higgamel is an infinitive used as an equivalent of a relative clause modifying "day." "Isaac" has the sign of the direct object -- a case of the

retained object with a passive verb.Perhaps v.9 Ge 21:8 does not directly attach to v.8, even though most commentators do connect the two. Yet nothing actually indicates that what Ishmael does is directly to be associated with the festivities of this day. If the connection were as close as is usually assumed, then Hengstenberg's remarks would be particularly apropos. For he claims: "Isaac, the object of holy laughter, was made the butt of unholy wit or profane sport. He (Ishmael) did not laugh (tsachaq) but he made fun (metsachcheq). The little helpless Isaac a father of nations! Unbelief, envy, pride of carnal superiority, were the causes of his conduct. Because he did not understand the sentiment, Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?' it seemed to him absurd to link so great a thing to one so small," (quoted by Keil). In any case, this explanation still covers the case. But v.8 could as well close a paragraph covering v.1-8 as begin a new paragraph v.8-21 (A. R. V.).In this connection Luther raises the question: "Why is it not reported that Abraham made a feast on the occasion of the more important event, the circumcision of Isaac?" In answer we suggest that silence does not argue for the absence of such a feast; for not everything could be reported in the Scriptures. The greater likelihood is that Abraham followed the custom prevalent in his time: at the time of weaning a feast would be prepared; for the event of circumcision no custom was as yet established.9. Now Sarah observed that the son of the Egyptian woman Hagar, whom she had born to Abraham, was (always) mocking.Everything in this verse hinges on the translation of metsach (ch) eq, which we have rendered, "was (always) mocking" -- the "always" to cover the frequentative participle. They have only a show of reason who translate the word "playing," in that they claim that for the bad sense "mock," the piel of the verb, should be construed with a be, as in Ge 39:14, 17. However, the following arguments support our contention: 1. the absolute use of the verb without be is here conditioned by the circumstances. The writer did not want to say that he mocked Isaac, because, apparently, Ishmael mocked the prospects of Isaac and his spiritual destiny, in fact, just adopted a mocking attitude over against everything involved in Isaac's future.2. The piel stem is never used in a good and harmless sense, except when construed with 'eth ("with"), Ge 26:8.3. To translate, as many do, "he was playing"(Meek), certainly imputes to Sarah the cheapest kind of jealousy, quite unworthy of this woman of faith.4. The paivonta of the Septuagint may also mean "give way to hilarity" (Thayer), and when men give way to hilarity, they seldom stay within the boundaries of the purely harmless.5. But lastly, the interpretation of the New Testament is overwhelmingly in favour of at least the sense "mocked," for Ga 4:29 says: "As he that was born after the flesh persecuted ediwceu him that was born after the spirit." This word of St. Paul's can be based on no other passage than this. It interprets what Ishmael did to have been even more than a mild mocking. It stamps this attitude, besides, as descriptive of the constant attitude of the carnalminded over against the spiritually minded. One may brush the New Testament inspired interpretation of the event aside, as criticism does; but all who let the chief norm of exegesis be, "Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture," find the case covered by Ga 4:29. Consequently, we are quite right in interpreting Sarah's act ("Sarah observed," as we have rendered wattére', literally, "and she saw") as one based on sober observation and reflection. Sarah had actually discerned the true nature of Ishmael sooner and more correctly than Abraham. In harmony with this interpretation is also the designation of Ishmael, not by his proper name but as "the son of the Egyptian woman Hagar." The unsympathetic trait or racial antipathy comes to the surface. Criticism here, too, fails to penetrate so deeply into the choice of terms and errs in concocting theories about the smelting together of different source material, one of which sources had lost the proper name of Hagar's son. In this connection, fitting in very well with our

interpretation, the frequentative participle indicates a thing that Sarah had observed quite regularly in Ishmael's attitude toward Isaac -- "always mocking." Besides, such a course of conduct indicated not only spiritual incapacity and inability to appreciate spiritual values but also a spirit entirely out of sympathy with the best treasures known to the household of Abraham, the hope of the coming Saviour.10. And she said to Abraham: Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac.Because of the antipathy to spiritual treasures displayed by Ishmael, as indicated above, Sarah concludes that a radical cure of the evil should be taken in hand. The evil threatening is so grievous, and the damage it ultimately might do so alarming, that nothing short of expulsion of the Egyptian maid and her son can be deemed an adequate solution. True, Sarah refers only to the matter of sharing in the inheritance; but she evidently means this in the sense of sharing in the entire inheritance, which consists in spiritual as well as in physical assets. Else Ga 4:30 would hardly have deemed her words worthy of quoting with approval. In conformity with this thought she designates Hagar as "this maid" and Ishmael merely as "her son," terms which indicate the lack of sympathetic understanding on the part of these two.Of course, a superficial examination of the situation may lead to an interpretation which sees merely human rivalry involved and ascribes to Sarah a kind of vindictive cruelty. Such an approach makes it impossible to account satisfactorily for God's concurring in Sarah's verdict. A mediating position is not tenable, as when Delitzsch says that in this demand of Sarah's "justifiable disapproval is mingled with proud disdain."11. And this demand was very displeasing to Abraham because of his son.It must be observed that Abraham's disapproval is according to this statement based on his affection for his son, not on the higher considerations. The lad, whom Abraham had loved in a very special way as the child of his old age till Isaac came, was still very dear to him. Our interpretation, then, drives us to assume that Abraham's insight into the deeper issues of the case was in this instance blurred by the very strong affection he felt for Ishmael. The Hebrew idiom here says: "the thing was very bad in the eyes of Abraham." The masculine yera' is naturally to be taken as a neuter, "it was evil." On the form, Kal imperfect of ra'a', cf. G. K.67 p.12, 13. And God said to Abraham: Let it not be displeasing to thee as far as the son and maid are concerned. In all that Sarah hath said to thee, give heed to her voice, for after Isaac shall thy descendants be called. But also, as far as the son of the maid is concerned, I will make of him a nation, for he is thy seed.This divine communication is said to come from "God" not from Yahweh, for covenant issues in reference to Isaac are not touched upon so much as providential issues in reference to one who stood outside of Yahweh's covenant. Neither are we told in what manner the divine revelation came to Abraham. But as is always the case when God speaks to men they are definitely aware that it is He, and they know what He says. God reveals to Abraham that Sarah's demand is to be followed. Abraham's disapproval is to be dropped -- "let it not be displeasing to thee." The entire demand of Sarah is to be carried out. Strack may claim that Sarah's motive is not sanctioned by God's word, but this claim merely grows out of the unwillingness to believe that Sarah was capable of having right motives in the matter. God's reason for sanctioning Sarah's demand is: "after Isaac shall thy descendants (or seed) be called." The true descendants of Abraham -- true as being of the same mind and faith as Abraham -- shall be found in the line of Isaac. The truth of this statement is patent. Ishmael's line quickly lost all spiritual kinship, with Abraham. All that Abraham regarded as of highest moment, they cast off. Since, then, Ishmael potentially is a foreign element among the offspring of Abraham, he must be removed. That being God's reason for Ishmael's and Hagar's dismissal, why could it not also have been Sarah's?13. Reassurance in reference to the

human aspect of the case is offered to Abraham by a promise which offers much more than that Ishmael should not perish. For the promise looks into the distant future and assures Abraham that for Abraham's sake ("for he is thy seed") God will make him to expand into a nation. Consequently, Abraham need have no misgivings as to whether the son will survive or not. This gracious reassurance makes obedience easier for Abraham. Criticism, following its usual unsatisfactory methods, here, at least in some explanations, tangles up the situation badly in claiming that this portion seems an insert from E in an attempt to secure a motive for Ishmael's dismissal, but calls the attempt "abortive" (Procksch), was nicht allzu gut geglueckt ist. Such sallies at the reliability of the Word, though poorly substantiated, are yet extremely harmful. The initial we is adversative (K. S.360 b).14. And Abraham arose early in the morning and took bread and a water-skin, and gave them to Hagar, put them on her shoulder, and (gave her) the lad, and sent her away. And she went forth and strayed about in the wilderness of Beersheba.Prompt obedience of faith on Abraham's part! Yet how hard it must have been for the natural feelings of the human heart! Luther, of all commentators, seems to display this aspect of the case best. The exiles are provided with provisions and water in the customary skin-bottle (chémeth) of the Orient. Men have asked, why did Abraham not provide, better for Hagar and Ishmael and give money to them also? That may not have been recorded, being regarded as quite self-evident. The bread and the water are mentioned as the elements that must be noted to prepare for what follows. Surely, the concern that leads Abraham to supply these immediate necessities and even to lay them on Hagar's shoulder, will hardly have suffered him to omit further provisions for their welfare.At this point, anxious to prove that the account, being a patchwork of unreconciled discrepancies, or else to set the author (E) at variance with the author assumed for Ge 16:16 (J), modernists are wont to claim that the text plainly assumes that Ishmael is a mere toddling infant, who was also laid upon Hagar's shoulder to be borne by her. Some rearrange the text in the interest of their view, like Meek, who renders: "taking some bread and a skin of water, he gave them to Hagar, along with her son, and putting them on her shoulder," etc. The Hebrew order is as we have translated above. These words may be so construed as to make the words "and the lad" to be the object of "put." But they may with equal grammatical propriety be construed so that "and the lad" is the object of the preceding verb "gave"; so A. R. V.; A. V. ambiguous. An added consideration is the fact that women did not usually carry lads several years old on their "shoulder" but let them straddle the hip. Besides, the critics, who are practically unanimous on this point, would hardly believe that some author, perhaps the so-called E, would have himself believed that Ishmael and Isaac were both of the same age, or Ishmael perhaps even, as this view of the case might suggest, a bit younger than Isaac. Distorted tradition could hardly have grown blurred on so important a fact as the priority of the birth of Ishmael.The mother goes forth; and whereas in the previous instance of her flight she had not lost her way, now, where both she and her son are involved, the tumult of emotion seems to have risen higher and caused her to miss the way, so that "she strayed about in the wilderness." This wilderness is here proleptically designated as that of Beersheba, although according to v.31 Ge 21:31, apparently, this name was first bestowed upon the well and the region later.Sam is an instance of asyndeton (for "and put") used epexegetically: "he gave" -- (namely) "he put" (K. S.370 m).15, 16. And the water of the skin-bottle was spent, and she cast the lad under one of the bushes, and she went and seated herself opposite him making the distance about that of a bowshot, for she said: I cannot look upon the death of the lad. So she sat over against him and lifted up her voice and wept.Having lost her way,

she was inadequately supplied with water. One can imagine how carefully they portioned out the last swallows from the skin-bottle. Finally the lad, though (according to Ge 16:16 combined with Ge 21:8) easily seventeen years old, yet finds his unseasoned strength wavering before that of his mother -- a situation not at all uncommon, for the lusty strength of youth often lacks seasoning and so falls short in point of endurance. For a time the mother supports the son, but her fast-failing strength cannot long bear to be doubly taxed. She finds one of the bushes of the desert. Scant shade such as may be offered is often sought out by those wandering in the desert when they need protection against the sun's rays (cf.1 Kings 19:4). The mother desires to ease what appear to be the dying hours of the lad's life. She drops him hastily in exhaustion, an act for which the Hebrew uses the expressive tashlekh, "she cast," or "threw" him. A parallel New Testament usage is found Mt 15:30 ("they cast down them i. e., the sick, at His feet").' Another parallel is Ge 24:64: "cast down" for "alighted quickly." In view of all this it appears quite readily how poorly the argument is grounded which insists that Ishmael is regarded as a little child whom the mother has actually been carrying. Here is another instance where with almost complete unanimity the critics dismiss a substantial argument with a shrug, without actually attempting to meet it squarely. 16. With fine skill the author delineates how painfully the mother's love is torn by her son's distress. She must stay within sight. Yet she cannot witness his slow death. At the distance of a bowshot (literally, "according to the shooters of the bow") she hovers near. Her agonized cry rings out: "I cannot look upon the death of the lad." 'Al-'er'eh, literally, "let me not look," practically equals a potential, "I cannot look." There she sits and lifts up her voice in lamentation.The dative lah is a dative of interest, yet difficult to translate (K. S.35). Harcheq is an absolute infinitive used adverbially, something like "at a distance" (cf. G. K.113 h; K. S.221 and 402 c).17, 18. And God heard the voice of the lad and the Angel of God called unto Hagar from heaven, saying to her: What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God has hearkened unto the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, raise up the lad and support him well, for I will make him a great nation.All this gracious interest in the lost wayfarers is ascribed to God or to the Angel of God, because it still lies entirely in the field not covered by Yah, weh's covenant. Nothing indicates that Hagar saw any manifestation of God. Yet there is likelihood that she saw the Angel of God, because He is the one through whom God specifically manifests Himself, the same one who in Ge 16:7 under the name of Angel of Yahweh had previously appeared to Hagar. The difference in name does not bespeak a difference in person. Yet it should not be overlooked that the Angel of God in this case spoke unto her "from heaven." Since now such speaking may be regarded as a manifestation, we must at least admit that this may have been merely an audible manifestation and not a visible one. The thing that moved God to take pity was "the voice of the lad." Though it had not been said heretofore that the lad had cried out in distress, does that not go without saying? The Septuagint secures a mechanical harmony at this point by making v.16 Ge 21:16 close with this idea -- quite an unnecessary emendation.By the question, "What aileth thee?" (literally: "What to thee?") the Angel recalls to Hagar that she had no cause for alarm, for she was forgetting what had been promised to her in Ge 16:10 ff. She is bidden to drop her fears, for God, merciful and kind, had also heard the cry of the lad as he lay in his great distress. "Where he is" refers to the lad's pitiful condition and not to God in heaven (K. C.). For if the clause were to refer to God, it would hardly be immediately after the noun "lad" (na'ar).18. In this case qû'mî must mean "arise" and not merely "come," for Hagar had actually seated herself (v.16 Ge 21:16), and the remaining imperatives prescribe the successive steps to be taken. The asyndeton "arise, raise" lends urgency to the

command. The divine directions are so specific ("raise up the lad and support him well") because the distraught mother in the utter bewilderment of her agony needed clear directions how to proceed. The final statement ("I will make him a great nation") recalls the previous promise (Ge 16:10 ff.) and encourages the mother to build her faith on it. "Hold him in thy hand" (A. V.) is not in place, for the Hebrew says (literally): "Make strong thy hand on him."19. And God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled the skinbottle with water and gave the lad to drink.How much is actually implied in the statement, "God opened her eyes," is well covered by Whitelaw's comment: "Not necessarily by miraculous operation, perhaps simply by providentially guiding her search for water." Add to this the necessary observation that such wells in the wilderness were usually covered over to prevent excessive evaporation but were then usually marked by some sign to help travellers locate them, and the whole situation is quite readily understood. The mother fills the skin-bottle and from it administers reviving draughts to her son. With this colourful touch the incident as such closes. A brief statement follows (Ge 21:20,21) furnishing proof for the fulfilment of the promises God had made in reference to Ishmael.20, 21. And God was with the lad and he grew up, and lived in the wilderness and became an archer, a bowman. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother, got him a wife from the land of Egypt."God was with the lad" implies that the promises made to Ishmael by God were being fulfilled: God's providence watched over him as he grew up. Luther extracts too much from the expression when he makes of Ishmael "a clever and learned preacher, who establishes a church among the heathen." There is likelihood that Ishmael, who (Ge 21:17) had called upon God in prayer, and Hagar, who also had learned to believe in the true God while in Abraham's household, were both persons who stood in the faith all their days and, no doubt, sought to communicate this saving knowledge to their descendants. The disposition described in Ge 16:10 displays itself in Ishmael's choice of a habitation -- "in the wilderness." The distinguishing mark in the line of the young man's accomplishments was his skill in the use of the bow. Two terms cover this: the more general robheh, "shooter," the more specific qashshath, "a bowman." The second definitely limits the shooting or casting by describing the weapon involved. The German covers it well, ein Schuetze, ein Bogenschuetze (K. C.). 21. Whatever else we need to know is covered by the statement concerning the particular wilderness in which he moved about, viz., "the wilderness of Paran," the eastern part of the great wilderness et-tih on the Sinai peninsula, and by the statement concerning his marriage. His Egyptian mother procures for him an Egyptian wife. In this respect she does not display the wisdom used by Abraham in choosing, as he did, a god-fearing wife for his son.Speculations about Hagar's ultimate return with Ishmael to Abraham's household shortly after this dismissal are poorly substantiated. The account as worded points to a permanent separation. In fact, there was need of having this group separated from Abraham's family -- they were a group with a different spirit. Jewish attempts to identify Hagar with Ketura (Ge 25:1) are utterly without grounds.12. Abraham's Covenant with Abimelech at Beersheba (v.22-34)This little incident shows forth clearly how influential and prominent a personage Abraham had become under Yahweh's blessing: neighbouring kings were concerned about retaining his goodwill; he ranked on a par with the mighty men of his day. Besides, this groundwork of the story is essential to a proper understanding of Isaac's experiences with the Philistines, As usual, Abraham stands out as a man acting in harmony with his faith.22, 23. It came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the captain of his army, said to Abraham: God is with thee in all that thou doest. Now, therefore, swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me or with my kith and

kin; but according to the kindness that I have shown to thee, do thou deal with me and with the land in which thou sojournest.The writer takes for granted that his readers know that Abimelech is, as v.32 Ge 21:32 shows, king of the Philistines. Phicol accompanies him to show the importance of the occasion. "Phicol" may, if it be a Hebrew word, mean "mouth of all," and so the captain of the army may have occupied a post as representative of the people. God's favour to Abraham is so manifest that heathen men can recognize it. In a spirit that has much to commend it but may yet be largely the outgrowth of good governmental policy, Abimelech seeks to secure permanently the amicable relations now existing between his own people and Abraham's. The oath still has binding power and is highly respected. An oath-bound covenant with Abraham is what Abimelech desires: "swear thou wilt not deal falsely with me." The oath is to include future generations, nînî and nekhdî, an alliterative pair of terms meaning literally, "my offspring and my descendant," and found always as a pair (Job 18:19; Isaiah 14:22). We reproduced this combination less literally by a kindred phrase "kith and kin." Abimelech claims always to have shown "kindness" -- chés'edh (hardly "loyalty," K. W.) to Abraham and expects like treatment for himself and his land.24-26. And Abraham said: I will swear. And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had taken away by force. But Abimelech said: I knew not who had done this thing; and, furthermore, thou didst not tell me; and besides I had not heard of it before today.Since, on the face of it the account seems to be inconsistent, men critically minded speak of unreconciled sources and pronounce verdicts such as, "This unreserved consent (cf. v.24) is inconsistent with the expostulation of v.26" (Skinner). However, the explanation of the difficulty lies so near the surface. When asked whether he is ready to make a covenant in the interest of an amicable relationship, he promptly assents. But if such a covenant is not to be deflected from its purpose and soon to become ineffective, obstacles that might arise later had better be removed at once. Such an obstacle is the taking away by force from Abraham of one of the wells which he had dug. However, had Abraham raised his objection first, before he expressed his assent, he would have created the impression he sought to avoid, namely that he seemed somewhat reluctant about taking steps to guarantee peace. Besides, there is no grammatical difficulty in the way of construing v.25 thus. For the conjunction is not a waw conversive, necessitating the translation, "And as often as Abraham took Abimelech to task about the wells -- Abimelech would answer" -- a translation which throws the whole account into confusion. Here is an instance where the waw with a perfect merely expresses "a digression or an epexegesis," as K. S. (370 l) rightly contends and proves by many parallels; cf. Ge 38:5, Nu 10:17 ff., etc. Meek and others, as a result of this unnecessary translation, see themselves compelled to reconstructions such as rearranging the sequence of verses as follows to secure consecutive thought: Ge 21:24, 27, 31, 25, 26, 28, 29 -- an unnecessary juggling with a good text.26. But Abimelech has a strong defense whereby he proves that he is being accused unjustly: "I knew not who had done this thing." By this he means: he neither knew who did it, nor that it had been done. Neither had Abraham complained, nor had any other person carried the knowledge of the irregularity to him. This seemingly puts Abraham partly in the wrong; he should have had confidence enough in Abimelech to complain before this day. In any case, it becomes clear that the two men are both of such a character that a covenant entered into by both will be conscientiously kept. Though no statement to this effect is inserted, nevertheless it goes without saying that Abimelech at once returned the well in question to Abraham.27-30. And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them unto Abimelech; and they two made a covenant, Abraham (namely) set seven ewe lambs apart by themselves, And Abimelech

said unto Abraham: What mean these seven ewe lambs that thou hast set by themselves? And he said: The seven ewe lambs thou shalt take of my hand in order that this may be a witness for me that I have digged this well.The key to the understanding of what is narrated in these verses lies in the right understanding of v.27b and its relation to v.28. For v.27b reports in advance the whole transaction, as does Isaiah 7:1 b. The details follow. We secure proper coherence by introducing v.28 by a "namely," as we have done. The relation of the creatures mentioned in v.27 ("sheep and oxen") to those mentioned in v.28 ("seven ewe lambs") then appears to be this: the "sheep" of v.27 include the "ewe lambs" of v.28. This difference in the use of these creatures, apparently, must be established: those mentioned in v.27, apart from the ewe lambs, are to be used to be slaughtered to establish the covenant; cf. Ge 15:9-11 and our remarks on this passage. Then the ewe lambs constitute a special friendly gift, not usually made in connection with covenants; for Abimelech asks (v.29): "What mean these?" Abraham's explanation is that this gift shall serve as "witness" (feminine, 'edhah, German: Zeugin), that he has digged the well. The ki (1) of v.30 merely introduced the direct discourse, the ki explicative (K. S.374 b).31. Hence the place was called Beersheba (well of the seven), for there these two men took an oath (beseventhed themselves).The play on words involved is not caught in English without some explanation like that of the parentheses employed above. For it so happens that the root for "swearing" and the root for "seven" are identical in Hebrew, shabha', a fact nicely explained by Luther, who says in this connection, sie haben beide geschworen, und, dass ich also rede, besiebent ("beseventh"). What the deeper Unity of these two ideas is we are at present unable to discern. But Be'er-shebha' does not mean "well of the oath," for shebha' is never found in the sense of shebhu'ah ("oath"). Still the paronomasia appears in the original. The verb qara' is impersonal, which is conveniently rendered by a passive. So the famous well got its name. K. W. translates Sieben-brunnen; more acceptable than K. C., "Well of the oath." K. W. also indicates that men have discovered five wells at this point and indications of two others. This agrees but poorly with the findings of other travellers who were able to locate but one, or at most, two. Robinson found but two, one twelve and a half feet in diameter, a second five feet in diameter (Thomson, The Land and the Book, p.297).32, 33. So they made a covenant in Beersheba, and Abimelech and Phicol, the captain of his army, arose and returned to the land of the Philistines. And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and called there upon Yahweh, the Everlasting God.The visitors return to their country, but Abraham gives further acknowledgment of his indebtedness to Yahweh for all the favours he enjoys. A memorial tree, not a "grove" (A. V.), but rather a "tamarisk," as the Arabic parallel root suggests, a tree resembling the cypress. Besides, Abraham acknowledged the Lord in public worship; on qara' beshem Yahweh see our remarks on Ge 4:26. The new name by which Yahweh is here designated, 'El ôlam, "the Everlasting God," shows the new aspect of God's being that had become apparent to Abraham as a result of his recent experiences with God. It may be well to compare that in Ge 14:22 'El Elyon and in Ge 17:1 'El Shadday had already appeared. The tamarisk with its firm and durable wood was a fitting emblem of the Everlasting God. Why some make a fetish of this tree, or others say that the tree was only "believed to have been planted by Abraham," is beyond our power to explain.34. And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days.More and more Abraham sees, as Isaac also later did, that the southern extremity of the land is best suited to his sojournings. This verse does not clash with v.32 where Abimelech, leaving Abraham, returns to "the land of the Philistines." For as Keil remarks, "the discrepancy is easily reconciled on the supposition that at that time the land of the Philistines had

no fixed boundary, at all events, toward the desert."HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThree sections make up this chapter. The first comprises the verses 1-7. It would seem proper to treat these verses under the subject "A Gracious Divine Visitation," building on the Biblical fact that the occurrences of our everyday life are more frequently than we admit instances of God's drawing near, that is of divine visitations. The next section v.8-21 may well be approached from the angle suggested by Ro 9:7. This would furnish a theme like "The Election of Grace," only, of course, with this caution, that the election involved is not an election to salvation but an election to prominence in the kingdom of God. The last portion v.22-34 turns mostly about the idea of friendliness with the ungodly and may even be treated under that head. For Abraham is not unduly reluctant about being on terms of sincere friendship with those who know not the Lord, though, of course, such are not his intimate associates.

CHAPTER XXII

13. The Sacrifice of Isaac (22:1-19) With this chapter we reach the climax of the faith life of Abraham -- the supreme test and the supreme victory. This test of necessity had to come. The inner need of it becomes apparent when we weigh carefully how much love Abraham would naturally bestow upon his son Isaac. For Isaac was the son of his old age -- long waited for and fervently welcomed. He was of a lovable, kindly disposition. He was the object of remarkable promises made by God. With him was linked up a fullness of promises tending to the salvation of mankind. But strong love on the part of man, even if such a love be good and natural, is apt in the course of time to crowd aside the higher love of God. Abraham was in extreme danger of coming by slow degrees and in a manner hardly observed by himself to the point where he would have loved his son more than his God. This problem must be faced and worked through. The love of God must consciously be set first. The love of his own son must consciously be relegated to its own proper place, not diminished but directed and purified. This test, which makes Abraham face this issue and settle it, is here described as a "tempting." By this approach we see quite readily that the expression: "God tempted Abraham" is meant in a good sense and can, therefore, well be rendered by the expression which requires less explanation: "God put Abraham to the test." God brings Abraham into a position where he must face the issue and think it through. God does not do this in order to bring him to fall, even though the possibility of a fall may not be excluded. Nor does the temptation aim to bring to light hidden sins, even though in this case the possibility of falling into a very grievous sin is discovered as lying very near. The temptation does not aim to uncover the evil in a saint of God but rather to make apparent what good God has wrought in this faithful believer. Another question that had best be disposed of in advance is the one: "How could God demand a human sacrifice, when He is on principle unalterably opposed to such a practice?". The answer must be given as follows: What God actually wanted Abraham to give was the spiritual sacrifice of his son. Naturally, God is concerned about the giving up of the son, a thing which is done by the heart; for without that even a bloody sacrifice upon an altar is worthless. But then the problem arises, Why did God ask for the spiritual sacrifice in the form of a material sacrifice? Apparently, this question voices a common protest but is itself partly the outgrowth of a misunderstanding and is so worded as to mislead. God asked for one thing only: the spiritual surrender, the giving back to Him of this great gift which He had granted to Abraham. The terms employed by the Lord are taken from material sacririces and, apparently, at this stage of the religious development of the race were the only terms available. God foresaw that a partial misunderstanding would result on Abraham's part. This misunderstanding was unavoidable, would not impair the trial that was being made, and could finally be corrected when it was about to lead to very grievous harm. In the very nature of the case a very great perplexity must have arisen in Abraham's mind. The demand of God at this point seemed to be a flat contradiction of all the gracious promises ever given heretofore, and it may well have seemed to originate with none other than the devil himself. Yet herein the patriarch's faith proved itself a true faith, that he leaned in full trust upon his God that all must eventuate to the glory of God and to the eternal good of His children. So reason was taken captive under the rule of faith, and the test was successfully met.

There is no conflict between this interpretation of ours and the fact of the text where Abraham is bidden to go to the land of Moriah for the purpose of this sacrifice. For, in the first place, on the surface everything is transacted in terms of a material sacrifice. But, primarily, in the second place, even for thinking through and carrying out so fundamental a problem it is desirable to cut loose from customary settings and surroundings and there from the perspective that distance also lends to such matters to reach a satisfactory conclusion. If it still be protested that the expression "to bring or offer a burnt offering" is the regular expression for a bloody sacrifice upon a material altar, then it should also be borne, in mind that such a sacrifice always demanded the spiritual sacrifice that it typified. Why, then, could not this essential thing stand in the forefront in this case? 1, 2. And it came to pass after these things that God put Abraham to the test and said unto him: Abraham! and he said: Here am I! And He said: Take now thy son, thine only one, whom thou hast grown to love, even Isaac, and go for thyself to the land of Moriah, and offer him up there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I shall indicate to thee. The expression, "and it came to pass," is a loose mode of attaching what is to follow to the preceding event when no emphasis is to be placed upon the closer connection of time or events (G. K.111 g). All preceding events ("after these things") practically lead up to the one now to be related. Other instances of God's putting to the test in mercy are found, e. g., Ex 15:25; 20:20; 16:4; De 8:2,16; 13:3,4. He that conducts the trial is "God," Ha'elohîm, not the Deity in general but the one true personal God. This work is very fittingly ascribed to Him, inasmuch as Abraham's personal relation to Him is under scrutiny. Besides, as Keil well points out, the trial originated with God not with the devil, not in Abraham's own thoughts as a result of his reflections upon the child sacrifices of the Canaanites or upon the question whether he loved the true God as much as they seemed to revere their idols in being ready to offer their own flesh and blood as sacrifices. We have no means of knowing exactly how this divine manifestation came to Abraham. Most likely it was in a vision by night. For dreams were employed in the case of those who stood farther removed from God. Besides, morning follows directly (v.3). We are sure that this prophet of God (Ge 20:7) was able to discern clearly when he was receiving a divine communication and when not. Consequently, there is no doubt about the validity of the revelation. The double "Abraham" of the Septuagint is unnatural; the tenser emotion first comes v.11. 2. The successive terms descriptive of the son who is to be sacrificed are employed; not to make the sacrifice harder but to recall to Abraham's mind how much he has "grown to love" him. For 'ahßbhta, the perfect, is a perfectum resultativum, describing that the father has grown to love the son and now stands deep in that love (K. S.127). The successive terms are (1) "thy son," (2) "thine only one," (3) "whom thou hast grown to love," (4) his name "Isaac" the epitome of the great joy that came with this son. Taking his son, Abraham is to "go for himself." The dative lekha here used, a dative of interest, rules out the idea of others sharing in the test: Abraham must fight this problem through alone. Luther and others may not be far from the truth when they suggest that the patriarch told nothing of his purpose to Sarah. The place to which Abraham is directed to go is called by the general name "land of Moriah," which could better be rendered "region of Moriah" (B D B) as the word 'érets is also used in Ge 19:28 and Joshua 11:3, K. W.-Gegend yon Moriah. No doubt, the word "Moriah" is here used by anticipation, ie., proleptically, in view of the event here recorded, which only afterwards gave the region this name. Inclined to find fault without warrant, many commentators have all kinds of flaws to pick with this expression. II Chron.3:1 informs us that "Moriah" was the name of the mountain or hill upon which Solomon built the Temple. Why cannot a region get its name from some prominent feature in it?

God Himself will have used some other designation of the region, a designation which conveyed to Abraham the very same thought that Moses conveyed to his readers by this term. This unwarranted criticism centers on the term "Moriah" (Moriyyah), claiming for the most part a corrupt text or a misunderstanding on the part of some inexpert writer or redactor -- a device frequently resorted to to remove some undesirable or inconvenient feature from the text. The term may well mean "the place of the appearance of Yahweh" (die Erscheinungsstaette Yahwehs -- K. W.), the letter 'aleph, which would mark the word as built on the root ra'ah, having been assimilated, (as is done not infrequently) for mor'iyyah. The prefix mem often indicates place, the suffix yah is contracted for "of Yahweh." The numerous textual changes suggested are quite unnecessary. ("Moreh" 12 :.6; or mar'eh, or ha'emorî -- "of the Amorites," as if the Amorites had dwelt in any one place and not scattered abroad in the land). The root of all these objections is the fact that the critics find it hard to believe that divine providence should have marked the same spot twice by events far removed from one another in point of time yet covered by the same name. We, on our part, see an excellent propriety about having the site of the Temple marked doubly as "the place of the appearance of Yahweh" in Abraham's time as well as from the time of the erection of the Temple onward. Such instances of divine providence prove truth to be stranger than fiction. The command, "offer him up there for a burntoffering," has been discussed in the introductory remarks to the chapter. However, this must yet be added, the "burnt-offering," ('olah), is the type of sacrifice best suited for this purpose; because it typifies complete surrender to God. The term is derived from the root 'alah, signifying "to go up," i. e., in the smoke of the sacrifice. Therefore, the son given to Abraham is to be given back to Yahweh without reservations of any sort. That the sacrifice is to take place upon one of the mountains which Yahweh would "indicate" ('amar, "say," in the sense of "command," or "designate") to him, is stated only here. There is no special statement showing that God later indicated which mountain was to be used for this purpose. Nor is such a special statement necessary at this point; in fact, it is lost sight of under the strain of the stronger emotions that prevail in the climax of the narrative. Here we had best take note of the fact that no mention whatsoever is made of Abraham's personal reaction to this command from God. In purest epic style the action alone is recorded not the emotions of the actors. Note now how entirely unfair is the criticism of those who continually aim to press down to the lowest possible level their estimate of patriarchal religion as well as of all Israelitish religion. Because Abraham expresses no revulsion at the thought of sacrificing his son, critics draw conclusions such as to phrase it very cautiously -- "The writer does not say that Abraham took exception to this awful sacririce" (Knobel quoted by Dillmann). Procksch is much bolder, speaking of "human sacrifice, the demand of which gives no offense to Abraham, and which therefore agrees with this earlier religious level." Now strict logic would demand that since nothing is said of the pain which tore the father's heart, therefore on this level of the development of the human race fathers felt no such tender emotions for their own flesh and blood. On this point, not governed by preconceived evolutionistic notions, the critics draw no such conclusions but are unanimous in speaking of the terrible struggle that arose in Abraham's heart. Such widely different conclusions, reached by the use of the argument from silence, are inconsistent. The second refutes the first.So great a faith as Abraham's could not have allowed any room for such grievous misconceptions as the notion that human sacrifice should be offered by men. For the passages in the Pentateuch which forbid human sacrifices (cf. Le 18:21; 20:2 ff; De 12:31; 18:10) either list such a practice among the vilest of deeds of which mankind is capable or else specifically stamp it as an "abomination" of the most degrading sort.

Dods distorts the issue when he remarks: "Abraham was familiar with the idea that the most exalted form of religious worship was the sacrifice of the first-born"; or when he offers conclusions such as: "Abraham's conscience did not clash with God's command." There is no instance whatever to show that in the earlier history of the people of God human sacrifice was ever resorted to. Jephthah's case (Jude 11) does not belong here and positively does not involve the bloody sacrifice of his daughter. Very late in the degeneracy of the kingdom Ahaz first attempted this horrible practice (2 Kings 16:3), a thing there mentioned as a foreign abomination. Hiel's story (1 Kings 16:34) does not tell of human sacrifice but of sons lost by divine punishment.3. And Abraham arose early the next morning, and girded his ass, and took his two servants with him, and Isaac, his son; and cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and arose and went to the place which God had indicated to him.The article with "morning," being the article used for that which is self-evident (K. S.299 a), is the equivalent of our "the next morning." Abraham's prompt and absolute obedience is here described. Here his faith looms up as positively heroic: God's behests are not to be questioned but executed. The various steps in the process are described from this point forward with a minuteness that makes the scene inexpressibly vivid. The ass is "girded" (chabhash) rather than saddled, for the beast must have been taken along to carry the rather sizeable load of wood sufficient to make a fire adequate for a burnt-offering. Two servants are taken to care for the beast and its burden as well as for the necessary supplies. They are "his two servants," i. e., those who specially wait upon their master, even as Balaam has two such (Nu 22:22) or Sarah had Hagar (Ge 16:3). The expression used would have been different if it was to have meant "two of his servants" (K. S.304 a). No doubt, Abraham let the servants cut the requisite wood, though the common mode of expression is here used: "he cut" or "clave." Here already every preparatory step taken by the father was a painful one. The expression "he arose and went" is the Hebrew idiom for our "he started out.""The place which God had indicated to him," an expression which bridges over from the initial command (v.2) and implies that when Abraham arrived, the very place of the sacrifice had been revealed to him. This does not conflict with our claims immediately preceding v.1.Here we may add that Samaritan tradition claims that Moriah is the region of Shechem. However, the distance from Be'er-shebha' to Shechem is too great for a three days' journey to allow time for a sacrifice after arrival. Even Jerusalem is about fifty miles distant; Shechem almost eighty. Forced marches with alternate riding on the ass are out of the question for an ass that bore the wood and for an old man perhaps 120 years old.4, 5. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place in the distance. And Abraham said to his servants: Stay here with the ass. I and the lad will go up yonder that we may worship, and then we shall return to you.Maqôm here hardly means "sacred place," unless, perhaps, by anticipatory use, for nothing indicates that a sanctuary had been on the spot previously. The account is in conformity with fact: the temple hill did not stand out so prominently as to be discernible at a great distance. Therefore merachôq just means "in the distance" in a moderate sense. Here the verb with waw conversive follows a mere adverbial expression, which in sense, however, is the equivalent of an adverbial clause (K. S.366 1). 5. The two servants of Abraham could hardly have understood what is to follow, so Abraham leaves them far enough away as not to be able to witness the impending sacrifice. The act about to follow is rightly designated by Abraham as "worship" -- the imperfect used as a voluntative (G. K.75 1). His concluding remark is a statement of faith: "we shall return." Hebrews 11:19 interprets this remark: "accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead." All God's promises received in the past gave him warrant for

reaching such a conclusion. To label this word a "dissimulation" or "a somewhat confused utterance" or a mere "hopeful wish," does not do justice to its character. Knobel (quoted by Dillmann), goes to the limit of uncharitable exegesis when he claims this is "an untrue statement like Ge 12:13, and Ge 20:12."6. And Abraham took the wood for the sacrifice and laid it upon Isaac, his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they two went along together.The details still continue, in fact, they are multiplied, to let us feel how each successive step was an added agony for the much tried father. In the sturdy strength of youth Isaac is well able to bear the load of wood up the hill. He may by this time have arrived at the age of some eighteen to twenty years. The aged Abraham, his strength cut by his soul agony, could hardly have carried this burden. With the resoluteness of faith he bears the two means of destruction: a container, like a censer, filled with live coals, and the fatal knife. The narrative gives free play to our imagination as it pictures father and son proceeding step for step up the hill. Isaac cannot but sense that some unwonted burden depresses his father past anything that the son had ever observed in the father before. This attitude on the father's part causes some restraint between the two, and a strange perplexity falls upon Isaac.7, 8. And Isaac said unto Abraham, his father: My father! And he replied: What is it, my son? And he went on: Here are fire and faggots, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering? And Abraham said: God will provide a lamb for Himself for a burnt-offering, my son. And they two went along together.The splendid confidence existing between father and son cannot under these circumstances allow the father to divulge to the son the unspeakably heavy duty which seems imperative; nor does it prevent the son from asking about the seemingly very apparent omission -- the sacrificial victim. The very address, "My father," must almost have been felt like a kind of knifethrust by the father. The reply, which literally runs: "Behold me, my son," or "Here am I," (A. V.), appears far too stilted by such a rendering, for it means no more than a kindly: "What is it?" as the Septuagint well renders ti estin tecnon, or the colloquial "Yes, my son" (Meek). The very thing that Abraham cannot utter is the matter about which Isaac asks: "Where is the lamb?" The question had to come even in the face of the unusual constraint that prevailed.8. The father's love devises an answer which is a marvellous compound of considerate love and anticipative faith. He spares Isaac undue pain and leaves the issues entirely with God, where in his own heart he left them throughout the journey. In the light of what follows Abraham's answer is well-nigh prophetic: "God will provide." It marks the high point of the chapter, the one thing about God's dealings with His own that here receives emphatic statement. The verb used, ra'ah, usually means "see" -- here "look out for," or "provide," or "choose," as in Ge 41:33; De 12:13; 33:21; 1 Samuel 16:1, 17. The iteration, "and they two went along together," here proves very effective (cf. v.6). The lô "for him" -- reflexive "for Himself" (G. K.135 i; K. S.27).9. And they came to the place which God had indicated to him, and there Abraham built the altar, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.With a straightforward simplicity the successive steps leading immediately toward the climax are recorded. The tension of the narrative grows. One feels how each successive step grew more difficult for the heavy-hearted father. One observes with wonder the strength of his faith which will not suffer him to waver.We remarked above that nothing shows when God "indicated" to him that this was the particular "hill" chosen for the sacrifice. Abraham himself built "the altar" -- the article signifies that the altar requisite for such a sacrifice is meant. The wood is arranged -- 'arakh, the regular word for setting the wood or the sacrifice in order upon the altar, yet it is not a highly technical term. So much for the impersonal elements utilized. Now, O marvel of marvels, he actually binds his own son! Isaac's submission to

this act is best explained as an act of confidence in his father, a confidence built upon a complete understanding and a deep love which knew that the father could wish his son no harm. Therefore, even as it is not said that Abraham achieved the complete submission of faith, but the whole story is convincing evidence that he did; so in Isaac's case the same submission, only more passive in character, is also present. That Isaac suffered himself to be bound is an act of supreme faith in God and of full confidence in his father. Usually too little consideration is given to Isaac's heroism, which, if it were not for the more marvellous faith heroism of his father, could justly be classed as among the mightiest acts of faith. 10-12. And Abraham reached forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son, when the Angel of Yahweh called to him from the heavens, saying: Abraham, Abraham! And he said: Here am I. And He said: Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do anything to him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son, from Me.God knew that the hand that had the courage to pick up the knife would not have hesitated to perform the sacrifice. He knew that in Abraham's heart the necessary surrender had been made: Abraham would suffer nothing to stand between him and his God. God was Abraham's dearest treasure; God's will, his chief concern. Though the external sacrifice was not the object God sought, yet He allowed the situation to develop to this point, to furnish full evidence that the inner spiritual sacrifice was actually achieved. In this connection it must be considered, how often, especially in the matter of surrender or self-surrender, a point which falls short of the total surrender necessary, is often mistaken by a man for complete surrender itself. In this case there were to be no halfway measures.11. He who speaks to Abraham is here designated as "the Angel of Yahweh." As Ge 16:7-11 and Ge 21:17, 18 already indicated, this person is divine and specifically the one who later assumed the form of man. In our passage His divine character is indicated by the words that close v.12: "thou hast not withheld thy only son from Me." That one can be God and yet so distinct from Him in one sense as to be able to say, "I know that thou fearest God," is to be explained on the ground of the distinction of divine persons. In this case there is no need of His appearing on earth, because, as it seems, the emphasis in His revelation lies upon the fact that God in high heaven, the Supreme Ruler, who is justified in asking such a sacrifice as He did of Abraham, is satisfied with what Abraham has done. The double call, "Abraham, Abraham," gives proof of its urgency: Abraham is to be restrained on the spot; A remarkable indication of the fine spirit of complete submission to God's every call and purpose lies in Abraham's reply, "Here am I," still more concise in the original hinnéni, "Here I." Parallels to the double call in this verse are found in Ge 46:2; Ex 3:4; 1 Samuel 3:10; Ac 9:4.12. In full conformity with His original purpose God restrains Abraham from carrying through the sacrifice. We may here yet take issue with an explanation that is a favourite with many, but, we hold, quite unsatisfactory. We refer to the explanation which represents God as merely pretending to be harsh in His demand and that for pedagogical reasons, but then after His purpose has been attained displaying His wonted loving-kindness. God cannot be guilty of pretense. He is not like parents who make themselves appear as though they cared little for their children but ultimately show their true attitude. Although this approach to the difficulty stands under the sanction of Luther's approval, we feel it to be strained and impossible.Abraham is to do Isaac no harm whatsoever -- (me'ûmah, "anything," has an old accusative ending ah, but is also used as a nominative). God Himself draws the conclusion as to what Abraham's act means: "I know that thou fearest God." The acme of true fear, i. e., reverence, of God consists in complete subjection to His sovereign will. Abraham's subjection was made without reservations. He had, indeed, feared God before; now he advances to the full

measure of devotion, even as in the New Testament it is often said of believing disciples, "They believed on Him" when a new level of faith was reached. Here the mode of expression, besides, is quite emphatic: "that a fearer of God thou," the normal use of the participle for emphasis, yere' elohîm (K. S.241 i), and so the participle appears in the construct state. When God says, "Now I know" (yadhßti), that does not imply that at this earlier stage of development, though God's omniscience was granted, yet in cases where human freedom was involved, it was not always understood that God's knowing could cover them also (K. C.). Here yadhßti is used in the sense of "know by experience," and so we have here not even an anthropomorphism.It matters little how we construe the last clause beginning with w lo'. This may be regarded as a causal clause introduced by w (G. K.158a), as our rendering, following A. V., has done: "seeing thou," etc., or else the copulative idea of w may be retained, and the clause marks a climax or a kind of result clause "and (therefore) thou hast not withheld," etc. (K. C.).13. And Abraham looked up, and there was a ram behind him, its horns caught in a bush; and Abraham went and took the ram and sacrificed it for a burnt-offering in place of his son.Providentially Abraham is led to look up at this moment, and he discovers a ram, which because of the intense preoccupation and mental struggle that absorbed Abraham's being before, had not been noticed. Perhaps, too, the beast had been quite enfeebled by a long struggle and had held still till now. Renewed efforts to liberate itself may just at this moment have attracted Abraham's attention, There is nothing so very marvellous about this as in fairy tales where the necessary feature always pops up (Procksch). Abraham's intense relief at being prevented from sacrificing his son seeks expression in a definite act of gratitude, which most logically finds expression in a sacrifice. A devout mind cannot but regard the ram as providentially provided. Words would not suffice to describe with what entirely different emotions the ram is offered in place of the "only son." It seems easiest to construe ne'echäz, with long "a," as a participle. 14. And Abraham called the name of that place Yahweh yir'eh; wherefore men say to this day: In the mount of Yahweh provision is made.The fact that this verse says "that place" and not "this place" indicates that after Abraham had come away from the mountain and his thoughts on this experience had crystallized he thus briefly caught the meaning of it all in a kind of epitome: he had said to Isaac as they went up the mountain side, "Yahweh will provide"; Yahweh certainly had provided in a manner that most clearly displayed divine providence. The event was so unusual, and the character involved so prominent, and the formulation of the importance of the whole experience so much to the point that in Moses' day, as he wrote this account, he had heard from trustworthy witnesses that a kind of proverbial saying had perpetuated the thought of this significant name in that part of the country. Men were still wont to speak of that hill as "the mount of Yahweh" and to recount the substance of the experience in the words: "In the hill of Yahweh provision is made." This was as much as to say: When men come to a particular test that God imposes, God helps them in His gracious providence according to their needs. Of course, the divine name "Yahweh" is here most appropriately used because God's covenant faithfulness is most emphatically involved in the sparing of Isaac.But the question remains: Is this translation of yera'eh warranted? Does this mean: "provision is made"? Shall we go back to the A. V., "it shall be seen"? Shall we repoint the word to make a Kal instead of a Nifal? Shall we attempt textual changes? Nothing of the sort. We have a good text. We have a sound tradition represented by the vowel points. The only real difficulty is whether the passive had not better be translated as a simple "it shall be seen." In support of this contention it is strongly claimed that the Nifal of the verb ra'ah must mean "appear" (Keil). However, the whole issue in this narrative has consistently

turned on the question, not whether Yahweh would "appear" but whether He would "provide." If, then, in such a connection the passive of ra'ah is used, it definitely gains the meaning: "it is provided," or more idiomatically: "provision is made" (so also Meek). All this is so simple and so natural that we must reject as a weak evasion the verdict of Skinner: "The words behar Yahweh yera'eh yield no sense appropriate to the context." Gunkel attempts an emendation claiming that the name of the sanctuary should be Yeru'el. I believe that Luther's commentary gives ground for interpreting his translation in the sense we have given above, when he renders: Auf dem Berge da der Herr siehet, i. e., ersieht. Cf. also K. S.160 b. Strack is guilty of the most incoherent jump in thought when he claims that the phrase "to this day" or "in this day" refers to the time of David and to the event of the Angel's appearing at the threshing floor of Araunah (2Sa 24).15-18. And the Angel of Yahweh called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and He said: By myself have I sworn, oracle of Yahweh, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, I will most abundantly bless thee, and most abundantly multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies; and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by thy descendants, because thou didst hearken unto My voice.At this point it is a good thing to remind oneself of Whitelaw's quotation from Oehler, that this is a chapter "which is joined together like cast iron." For since at this point the divine name Ha'elohîm is abandoned and Yahweh appears, criticism must attempt to make the different sources stand out prominently over against one another, and so the claim is raised that the preceding section (from E) closed definitely with v.14 Ge 22:14 and had come to a natural close. Then an effort is made to make the verses 15-18 Ge 22:15-18 appear as a manifestly later addition which is practically foisted upon the preceding narrative. For this purpose the word shenith is even pressed as though it could not have been used in the original account-which is tantamount to saying: God cannot speak a "second time" to a man in the course of one narrative. However, since covenant promises are being made by a merciful God, God is naturally here designated as appearing in His capacity as Yahweh. Since in manifestations it is regularly "the Angel of Yahweh" who functions, these words are appropriately ascribed to Him. Besides, severe exception is taken to the use of the phrase "oracle of Yahweh" (ne'um yahweh) as though its use in a word from Yahweh were entirely inadmissible. True, the phrase as such appears only once more in the Pentateuch, viz. Nu 14:28. Yet in Ge 18:14 God also refers to Himself in the third person, and if in later prophetic usage the expression ne'um yahweh comes to be very common, it may well be that this usage builds upon our passage. As for the reasonableness of having a special assurance together with reaffirmation of the former promises given to Abraham in answer to his meeting the supreme test, no one can deny that the occasion practically calls for a divine utterance in a life where every important juncture was marked by significant utterances. Besides, it is quite appropriate that the Lord's last word to Abraham should be an outstanding one embracing the substance of all those that had preceded. 16. The outstanding feature about this word is the new and entirely unique element of the divine oath: God swore by Himself. No other instance of God's oath by Himself appears in the Scriptures, except when the oath is mentioned where God swears that Israel because of its disobedience shall not enter into the land of promise (Nu 14:28), or when it is said that the Lord sware to give the Promised Land to Israel. Yet it may be safely said, we believe, that these latter oaths are implied in this first one. Yet it remains as a remarkable fact that God, who is truth, swore by Himself; not, however, as though it were necessary but in order to give all possible assurance to man. Here the

oath of God in particular stands in recognition of Abraham's supreme act of obedience. God delights in rewarding faithful service: Abraham did not withhold his best; God will bestow His best.We must note in this connection a correct observation that Luther makes. He points out that the Scriptures speak of God's having sworn to David that He would establish his seed forever (Psalms 89:3; Psalms 132:11, etc). Yet we have no record of such an oath in the Scriptures. Luther argues that since the oath to Abraham involved the gift of the Messiah, if David is assured that the Messiah is to come from his line, then the oath of Abraham transfers itself to David. We believe this exposition to be correct.In the perfect nishbß'ti the action reaches over from the past to the present: in the past the decision was reached, now it is expressed. The kî following merely introduces direct discourse and is repeated at the beginning of v.17 Ge 22:17.17. The former blessings are repeated in most emphatic fashion, including everything promised since Ge 12:1. The verbs, reinforced by the absolute infinitive in this case, are the equivalent of the verb idea plus a "most abundantly." Richest blessings, most remarkable increase are promised. To the blessing of the descendants like "the stars of heaven" (Ge 15:5) is added the new and more emphatic one of "the sand which is upon the seashore." The success of his descendants when they encounter enemies is indicated by the statement that they "shall possess the gate of their enemies." Since the gate was the keypoint in the question of control of a city, "to possess the gate" was the equivalent of gaining control of or capturing a city. This statement, however, does not guarantee that Israel shall conquer the world by aggression but merely shows what the outcome will be when Israel is assailed. Neither does the statement include spiritual conquest. That is covered by the next verse. Nor dare we forget that in reality this promise to Abraham's seed is conditioned by obedience. Only they who continue in the faith of Abraham and so are his true children may look to the possession of these things. Let it be observed that weyirash is not a converted perfect, as might have been expected, but an unconverted imperfect, a construction which makes the act stand out more distinctly over against the preceding (K. S.370 s).18. This verse does not contain the same promise that is found in Ge 12:3, for hithbarakhû does not mean "be blessed." Yet for all that the thought of 12:3 is implied, and the statement is without a doubt Messianic. Hithbarakhû is of the Hithpael stem, therefore reflexive: "they shall bless themselves." That means that when "all the nations of the earth" discern how great the blessing is that Israel enjoys, namely in the Messiah, then everyone "shall bless himself by thy descendants," i. e., he shall invoke upon himself the blessings that Abraham's children have in the Christ. That "all the nations of the earth" shall do this indicates the universal appeal that the Messiah has for all men and also indicates that He is to be a Messiah capable of bestowing blessings upon all. When the statement concludes with the words that God so richly blesses Abraham, "because thou didst hearken unto my voice," that does not mean that the blessing is an earned reward but rather a reward of grace.19. And Abraham returned to his servants and they arose and went together to Beersheba, and Abraham made his home in Beersheba.So the narrative concludes, telling how the group that had come from Beersheba returned thither and how Abraham "dwelt" there (A. V.), yeshebh being used, of course, in the sense of "made his home" there (Meek).This remarkable event, historical and complete in itself in reference to Abraham, has prophetic import. Under God's providence this event becomes a type of the sacrifice on Calvary. The starting point for this consideration may well be the simple fact that God does not expect man to do for Him what He is not ready to do for man. Abraham and all men are expected to give up their dearest possession to God. God on His part gives up His dear Son. In Abraham's case the type is all the more to the point because Isaac is an

only son, even as Christ is the Only Begotten. Nor is it merely a case of pious ingenuity when we discover a parallel between these two. Ro 8:32 sanctions this approach in a word that reads like an allusion to this chapter: "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all ..." A proper exposition of this passage must, therefore, point to this type that is involved as necessarily belonging to the exposition. In the homiletical use of the passage at least two approaches are possible: either one centres attention on Abraham and his faith life and allows the type to be brought in incidentally, or where one desires to use the text as a foundation for the treatment of the subject of God's giving up of His Son for us, the various typical elements of the text are successively used, and everything centres about the true sacrifice of Christ. Abraham and Isaac merely appear incidentally by way of illustration. 14. Nahor's Descendants (Rebekah) (22:20-24)20. And it came to pass after these things that someone reported to Abraham: Behold, Milcah, too, has born children to Nahor, thy brother.The distance from Mesopotamia to southern Palestine was so great that practically all contact between these two brothers, Abraham and Nahor, had been lost. Now "someone reported" (yuggadh -- "it was told") to Abraham, perhaps, a chance traveller in a caravan train. The individual in question was fully informed and was able to give to Abraham the exact names of the children. These names were faithfully noted and are here presented chiefly because in the list of them Rebekah is to be found, concerning whose identity we shall soon need information. The "too" (gam) used with Milcah signifies that just as Abraham's wife had born him legitimate offspring in the son of promise, so Abraham's brother's wife had also given him offspring.21-24. Uz, his first-born and Buz, his brother, and Kemuel, the father of Aram; and Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Yidlaph, and Bethuel (and Bethuel begat Rebekah). These eight did Milcah bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she also bare sons, Tebah, and Gaham, and Tahash, Maacah.The remarkable coincidences that are here met with are that Nahor's case presents a strange parallel to that of Abraham as well as to that of Jacob. To Abraham's, in that Nahor has a wife and a concubine. To Jacob's, in that there are twelve sons. Critics, as we quite readily understand, see in this double coincidence proof of the legendary character of the account. Others again create artificial difficulty by claiming that at this time the third generation could not yet be reported in Nahor's line (Rebekah and Aram) when only the second is found in Abraham's. But it should not be forgotten that Isaac was born so very late as practically to place him parallel to the third generation.Another difficulty is created by the assumption that since Jacob's twelve sons became the heads of twelve tribes, therefore these twelve sons of Nahor must be counted as tribes. The analogy is farfetched. The tribal theory in reference to these early ancestors has several fallacies. We must here even reckon with the possibility that perhaps not one of these twelve sons ever originated a tribe. So, of course, we cannot tell if, for example, the land of Uz, mentioned Job 1:1, is to be thought of as the land where the descendants of Uz, the son of Nahor, dwelt or not; or whether Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, is a descendant of the Buz here mentioned or not. Even more problematic, then, becomes the question where these sons of Nahor lived.Aram, the son of Kemuel, presents a problem in that Ge 10:22 Aram is mentioned as one of the sons of Shem, and in that connection, without a doubt, as the founder of the tribe or people of the Aramaeans. However, the Aram in our chapter is hardly to be regarded as the founder of a nation; and if he were, then Keil's suggestion can relieve the difficulty. For a comparison of 2 Kings 8:29 with 2 Chronicles 22:5 indicates that Arammim is another mode of writing Rammim. In case, then, that the Aram in question actually is the father of a tribe, he would be the father of the Rammim rather than of the Arammim. If he is an individual,

Aram would be another form of the name Ram.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSHomiletical Suggestions are embodied in the above comments.

CHAPTER XXIII

15. Death and Burial of Sarah (23:1-20) After the climax of the preceding chapter the events of the life of Abraham taper off gradually toward the conclusion. A few matters that must yet be reported in order appropriately to close this significant life are presented. The seemingly unimportant event of this chapter, an event that could have been reported far more briefly, is recorded at greater length because it is an act of faith, in fact, a rather outstanding act. 1, 2. And Sarah became 127 years old; that was the length of her life. And Sarah died in Kitjath-arba, (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to bewail Sarah and to weep for her. We believe we have rendered quite idiomatically and correctly the first verse of this chapter, which, rendered more literally, would run as follows: "And was the life of Sarah 127 years, the years of the life of Sarah." It is true that the statement is somewhat detailed, but it represents a rather common mode of speech, about like the statement: she became so old, and that was all. Some try to doctor up the text, either by an addition or by an omission; but all such efforts grow out of an unwillingness to believe that men of old spoke and wrote much as we do. It so happens that Sarah is the only woman whose age and death are reported in the Scriptures, as commentators have observed from days of old. This cannot be without design. She is the mother of all believers, according to 1 Peter 3:6, and so deserving of some such distinction. Chayyîm, the customary plural, expresses the multitude of aspects under which life appears. 2. Sarah's death takes place at Kirjath-arba. Though in Ge 22:19 Abraham had taken up his residence at Beersheba, yet since that time perhaps twenty years had elapsed. For Sarah, being 127 years old at death, lived 37 years after Isaac's birth (cf. Ge 17:17 and Ge 21:5). If, then, Isaac had been nearly twenty years old at the time of the sacrifice upon Mt. Moriah (cf. Ge 22:6), almost twenty years had passed since that time, During those years Abraham may have left Beersheba repeatedly and come to Hebron, his earlier place of residence (Ge 13:18; 14:13). "Kirjath-arba" is identified by the more common name "Hebron." The problem involved in the use of these two names seems to be covered by the following approach: according to Nu 13:22 the original name of this ancient city appears to have been Hebron. At the time Moses is writing, apparently, Arba, one of the Enakim, had taken .possession of the city and called it "the city of Arba" (Kirjath-arba); cf. Joshua 14:15; 15:13; 21:11. According to these last mentioned passages the name Kirjath-arba was prevalent at the time of the conquest under Joshua, but the propriety of restoring the more ancient name, which apparently had never been forgotten by Israel, seemed to appeal to all. So also Moses here inserts the old familiar name to identify the city by the name it had borne in Abraham's time, "Hebron." Now Hebron, Hebrew: chebhr'n, from chabhar, may mean: "city of treaty." Since "Arba" was above shown to have been an Enak prince, it is a proper name and cannot mean "four," as the Hebrew word otherwise could. The following phrase "in the land of Canaan" is not superfluous; for it recalls, that in Canaan, the land of promise, the mother of the children of Abraham died. (Cf. also Ge 23:19). Whatever Abraham may have been doing at the time of her death, he "came," when the news reached him, "to bewail Sarah and to weep for her." Such an expression as "he came" could hardly have been used if he had been present at the time of her decease. Not only was bewailing (saphadh, -- "to beat one's breast," "to lament") and weeping (bakhah) the

customary oriental mode of expressing grief, it was also the natural expression of a deep and sincere sorrow on Abraham's part. True and loving husband that he was, he felt his loss very keenly. Such demonstrations of grief are as natural and as proper to the Oriental as is our greater measure of restraint to us. It was usually indulged in before the dead body of the person who was being bewailed. "Bewail" involves audible expression of one's grief. 3, 4. And Abraham arose from beside his dead and spoke to the children of Heth, saying: I am a stranger and sojourner among you; give me a grave for my own property among you and let me bury my dead out of my sight. Much as he loved his good wife, the patriarch did not sorrow above measure; also, because burial within one day's time after death was the rule in this land, he had to address himself to the task of securing a grave. The "children of Heth" or the Hittites are in possession of the city and its surrounding territory; they must be consulted. In the Orient any transaction is preceded by an exchange of compliments. In a measure this is the case in this instance, however, apparently there is no idle courtesy or shallow, insincere flattery on the part of Abraham at all, and on the part of the man Ephron very little, if at all. The Hittites themselves speak as sincerely as Abraham does. Throughout the whole scene Abraham demeans himself with fine tact and courtesy and the utmost of sincerity but without obsequiousness. 4. Abraham begins by outlining briefly his position among his neighbours: he is "a stranger and sojourner." The "stranger" (ger) is a foreigner in a strange land possessing no property and having no fixed habitation. The "sojourner," as we translate for want of a better term (tôshabh, from yashabh, "to sit," almost -- "squatter") has a permanent dwelling but no property in the form of land. Abraham can class himself as both of these, for he sometimes settles down, sometimes wanders about as a nomad. His reference to his status recalls especially the fact that he does not as yet possess any land in this country. He asks "for a grave for his own property," literally: "possession of a grave." The grave, of course, is a burial place large enough to hold the remains of the family. He desires to have this grave in the very midst of these men ("among you"). There he hopes to bury his dead (meth, common gender, since in the face of death male or female is no issue). To bury out of sight is simply a more expressive way of describing burial. 'Eqberah is a hortative imperfect.The thought involved in this verse in the use of the terms "stranger and sojourner" carries deeper implications, as is shown by the interpretation given by the author of Hebrews 11:13-16: If these men, such as Abraham and Jacob (Ge 47:9) spoke of their pilgrim state on earth, even while thinking of the land of promise, which did they regard as their true home? The "better country, that is a heavenly" (Hebrews 11:16). This valid interpretation offered by the New Testament shows us that it is not wise to put too low an estimate upon the spiritual content of the words of the men of God of the Old Covenant. For the true faith which they possessed gave them deep insight and wisdom of utterance.5, 6. And the children of Heth answered Abraham and said: Please listen to us, sir. Thou art a prince of God among us. Bury thy dead in the choicest of our sepulchres. Not a one of us would withhold his sepulchre from thee from burying thy dead.A slight change of pointing is involved in our translation, without alteration of the text. The last word of v.5 lô, "to him," seems to make good sense in the phrase, "saying to him." However, strange to say, the word "saying" (le'mor) is never followed by a le. Le 11:1 comes nearest to being a parallel but uses the preposition el. By pointing lô as lû ("please") and joining it with the following verse we remove the difficulty. At the close of v.14 Ge 23:14 the same situation is found.One can hardly say that the Hittites appear reluctant to let Abraham acquire even this small bit of ground. They prove themselves very courteous and, it would seem speak in all sincerity. For they give Abraham to understand that he needs to acquire

no property, for they will all put their family sepulchres at his disposal, even "the choicest" of them. They explain why they are ready to grant so much by saying that Abraham has come to be ranked among them as "a prince of God." By this they mean that he is a "prince" (nasî'), a man of high station whom God has raised on high and upon whom tokens of divine favour have manifestly been bestowed, but who himself also stands in a relation of reverent obedience to God. Note how these heathen men use the word 'elohîm, "God," not Yahweh. They know the divinity only in a general way. Besides, they could not use the expression nesî' yahweh, for that would mean "the prince of Yahweh" -- which is not what they mean to say. Merely to class nesî" elohîm as a kind of superlative (K. S.309 l) is rather shallow.Here we may also yet dispose of the problem whether the Hittites could have dwelt as far south as Hebron. Some have claimed that the habitat of this people must be sought from the Orontes eastward, but that it cannot have run as far as southern Palestine. K. C. quoting from Sayce shows why such a claim as that of v.3 and 5 is perfectly in place. The three arguments advanced are 1. that also Ezechiel traces the descent of Jerusalem from a Hittite mother (Ge 16:3); 2. the country of the Hittites was promised to the descendants of Abraham (Ge 15:19-21); 3. the testimony of the Tell-elAmarna letters agrees to this in that the sons of a Hittite prince by name of Arzawia dwell to the south of the land and take part in an expedition against Jerusalem.7-9. And Abraham arose and bowed to the people of the land, to the children of Herb, and he spoke with them saying: If it be agreeable to you that my dead be buried out of my sight, then hear me and intercede for me with Ephron, the son of Zohar, that he give me the cave of Machpelah, which belongs to him, which is at the end of his field; for the full price let him give it to me in the midst of you for a grave which is my own property.7. Abraham is a man of fine courtesy, and so he acknowledges the gracious compliment the Hittites paid him by designating him as a prince of God and by offering him the use of the finest of their sepulchres. His acknowledgment consists of rising and bowing. The regular inhabitants of the land are called "the people of the land" -- an expression which does not bear the bad sense that it acquired later in Nehemiah's time, when it applied to the heathen inhabitants ('am ha'arets). We do Abraham wrong if we let either his actions or his words be thought of as insincere. His Canaanite contemporaries might use these same forms as idle gestures; not he, "the prince of God." 8. The Hebrew original has the expression "if it be with your souls," where "souls" may mean "inner purpose." This means, of course, "if it be agreeable to you." Abraham argues: if you are satisfied to let me use your sepulchres, you will not be averse to selling me a plot of ground as my own property. But in the Orient intermediaries are employed in all manner of business. So here the people assembled in the gate are to present Abraham's case to Ephron, whose the particular plot is that Abraham desires, and whom Abraham may not even have known personally. Now Machpelah, according to v. Ge 23:17; 49:30; 50:13, must have been a portion of ground upon which the cave Abraham desired, was located. The shorter expression, therefore, is "cave of Machpelah." Though makhpelah from kaphal may mean "double" diploun -- Septuagint, yet here it cannot mean "the double cave" but the bipartite tract sought by Abraham comprising a portion of ground and a cave. This being "at the end of his field" will readily lend itself to purchase without necessitating the breaking up of Ephron's property.9. Abraham wants no favours. He is ready to pay "the full price," Hebrew: "full silver" (késeth male'). Abraham desires to make the purchase one that is fully attested by the presence of an adequate number of witnesses, therefore "in the midst of you" let him give it. We have again rendered the expression "for the possession of a burial place" in better English as "a grave which is my own property." Note wejitten has no waw conversive and so

makes the action stand out more distinctly (K. S.364 1). The be before keseph is beth of price. The mere fact that an Assyrian expression like "full silver" happens to have been discovered does not, however, yet give warrant to draw far-reaching conclusions from this correspondence as to the time of our incident, whether this Assyrian expression be found in the time of later Assyrian kings or in the time of Hammurabi. Such threads are too slender for hanging proofs on them.10, 11. Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the children of Heth; so Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, at least of all those who were wont to come to the gate of his city, saying: No, my dear sir, do thou listen to me. This field I give thee, and the cave which is in it, that I give to thee in the eyes of the children of my people; to thee do I give it to bury thy dead.The Ephron that Abraham had referred to happens to be present in the city-gate where all such transactions were wont to be made and where the men of the town continually congregate. Consequently, there is no need of the functions of a mediator, and so he speaks for himself. Yoshebh, the participle, does not want to indicate that Ephron dwelt in this region (A. V.), but since yashabh primarily means "to sit," that he was at that very moment sitting with the townspeople there assembled (A. R. V.). This interpretation makes the statement fit so much the more closely into the thought-connection, which goes on to say that he replied to Abraham's proposal. That the whole transaction was carried on "in the hearing of the Hittites" marks it as an official piece of business, fully attested and put on record. The phrase lekhol serves as an apposition to the preceding genitive, limiting it to those of the Hittites "who were wont to come (ba'ey, participle expressing customary action) to the gate of his city." Whoever happened to be present at a given time when a case like Abraham's was being disposed of, these persons constituted a kind of court and jury as well as witnesses. The translation "even of all that went in at the gate" (A. V.) does not fit in this case, though the verb bô' could mean "go in," because not all these could be present so that this case could have been transacted in their "hearing." Consequently, the le before kol gets a kind of restrictive sense -- "at least." The expression "his city" in reference to Ephron does not give warrant to class him as the ruler of the city, for any man can call his home town his town. On lekhol see K. S.280 e. The nounal force of the participle ba'ey definitely preponderates in this case, as the construct state also indicates (K. S.241d).11. The initial lo' is used like our "No," and it is not to be altered to lû, which requires a different consonant: 'Adhonî is respectful address like "sir" or "my dear sir." The perfect nathßttî, called the "perfect of instant action" (Skinner), is used to express the certainty of an act in a treaty or agreement; the deed is to be regarded as good as done. Abraham should consider the field and the cave as already given to him. However, we are afraid, judging at least by what all Oriental travellers report under this head, that this remarkable liberality was an empty gesture. 0rientals offer you as a gift whatever you admire; they do not expect that you will take it. Such an offer from God-fearing Abraham, however, would, no doubt, have been sincere. Even in case Abraham's sincerity had begotten a like sincerity in Ephron, it would, nevertheless, have been rather improper for Abraham to accept the generous offer, because in that case Abraham would really have been ready to receive from a heathen man what in reality he had already received from a higher hand, though primarily for his descendants. To receive from man what had been given by God would have called in question whether God's gift was true and valid. 12, 13. And Abraham bowed before the people of the land and said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land: If thou wouldest only, I pray thee, hear me. I am paying the price of the field; accept it of me, and let me bury my dead there.Many of these fine acts of courtesy ascribed to Abraham were, no doubt, dictated by custom. So his bowing before the people of the land was

in acknowledgment of the fine offer Ephron, one of their number, had made. Luther especially remarks what fine manners also a good man of God may have and recommends laying aside all boorish clumsiness.13. At the beginning of this statement some claim to have found an anacoluthon "expressing the polite embarrassment of the speaker." We hardly can accept the suggestion. The particle 'im with an imperfect gives an optative force (K. S.355 x); the lû increases the force of this optative; the 'akh equals "only." Abraham is not hemming and hawing for very courtesy. Another perfect of instant action follows: "I am giving or paying" -- which translation seems to catch the force of this perfect better than: "I will give" (A. V.). Abraham is more intent upon concluding an honest purchase and burying his dead honourably than upon anything else. So he pleads to have the gift accepted that he may perform the burial.14, 15. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying: If thou wouldest listen to me, O sir, a piece of ground worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and thee? Bury thy dead.As at the end of v.5 Ge 23:5 we deemed it advisable to take the final word and point it to read lû, the optative particle, and read it with the following verb, so here.15. With customary oriental politeness Ephron does not ask to be paid for his "piece of ground" ('e'rets); he merely suggests its probable worth but adds at the same time that such a sum is a mere trifle for men such as they are. It is true, 400 silver shekels, about [USD]260, is not a big sum for a rich man. Nevertheless, if money had twenty times the present purchasing value in those days, as some claim, a sum of [USD]5,000 for an acre or two is not a mere trifle. Apparently, Ephron is doing what Orientals regularly do: first they offer to give freely, not expecting their offer to be accepted; then they claim to fix a modest price, which is really quite exorbitant (cf. Delitzsch's examples), but which by common consent is really only to serve as a starting point for the bargaining proceedings that are to follow, and in which Orientals engage with the keenest delight.16. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the money he had named in the hearing of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current with the merchant.To us this looks like an instance where the nobler spirit of the God-fearing man stands out favourably by contrast with the conventional behaviour of the heathen man. Abraham is above such a thing as haggling or driving a shrewd bargain over a burial lot: such bargaining is unworthy of a godly man at all times and is the outgrowth of an unseemly love of money. Under such circumstances Abraham would rather accept the offer, let Ephron take advantage of him and so demonstrate that he stands on higher ground than do his neighbours. To the astonishment of all Abraham pays the full sum, pays it out by weighing (shaqal), inasmuch as coined money was not yet in circulation in those days. Besides, to take advantage of the seller in no sense, Abraham uses the higher standard "silver current with the merchant," i. e., accepted on every hand as full value. Socher is the itinerant merchant or peddler. 'Abher in reference to money means to be in current use.17, 18. So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah over against Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it and all the trees that were in the field within the entire confines of the field, was assured to Abraham as his purchased property in the sight of the children of Heth, that is, of all those who were wont to come to the gate of his city.So the transaction was concluded. This record of it gives the details of the contract as they were outlined at the time. Ancient contract tablets present a close parallel to this case. Field, cave, trees are all involved in the purchase. Apparently, everyone present at the transaction knew exactly which field was involved and what its boundaries were; and so there was no need of a detailed description of the boundaries. Incidentally, we are here informed also what it was that prompted Abraham's desire for this particular piece of ground: it lay "over against Mamre," therefore directly within sight

of Mamre and contiguous to it. Abraham wanted a place of burial as near as possible to his place of residence, which since Ge 14:13 apparently had always been the terebinths of Mamre, when Abraham was dwelling in the vicinity of Hebron. Wayyßqom, from qûm, "stand," here bears the less usual meaning of "being assured to" or of "passing into the possession of" anyone; auf das Konto jemandes eingetragen werden (K. W.).18. The le before "Abraham" connects with the first word of v.17, making "to Abraham" a dative of interest. The bekhol is of practically the same force as the lekhol of v.10 Ge 23:10 above, which see. The words following are identical with the words of v.10. The strong emphasis on the fact that this had been a public sale closed according to the approved fashion of that day, shows that the whole matter was one of unusual importance in Abraham's eyes, both for himself and in reference to the future. For Abraham in faith desired that his wife's and his own remains might rest in the land that had been promised to him and his descendants after him. He wanted his descendants to know that he had believed the divine promise. The presence of his sepulchre, among them would in later years be mute but eloquent testimony to them all that Abraham was sure of the validity of God's promises. Consequently, the purpose of the whole narrative is not to show that by this initial purchase of one piece of ground Abraham secured a kind of hold or perhaps an option on the whole, as some contend. Abraham's title to the land rested entirely on God's promise given in a clear word and not on such devices as sale and purchase and legal formality. 19, 20. Thereafter then Abraham buried Sarah, his wife, in the cave of the field of Machpelah, over against Mamre, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan. And the field and the cave which was in it were assured to Abraham as a grave which was his own property bought of the children of Heth.The burial is reported with a certain fulsomeness of expression characteristic of the Scriptures in recording notable events. The cave is mentioned, as well as its location in the field of Machpelah, as well as the fact that Machpelah faced Mamre. To this is added the parenthetical statement that Mamre is Hebron and the reminder that this was "in the land of Canaan," a phrase which has the same force here as in v.2 Ge 23:2. The statement that Mamre is Hebron appears to be made in the sense that Mamre is a part of Hebron.20. At a time when the children of Israel were on their way to take possession of the land, Moses did well to remind them how in faith their forefather had secured at least "a grave which was his own property," and thus to arouse in them the desire to finish the work of taking into full possession what had so long ago been promised to them.A few more problems need to be touched upon. One is the critical problem. Practically unanimous is the verdict of criticism that the priestly writer (P) is the author of the chapter. We take up the question because we believe it furnishes a rather clear illustration of the shallowness of the critical method. Strack supports the contention of P's authorship by three arguments. The first is the use of the divine name "Elohim," supposed to be a mark of P Ge 23:6. But, as we showed above, if the sense of the divine names means anything, the term Elohim in the above connection was unavoidable to express the thought of the Hittites; and so the use of the word is not a stylistic criterion. Secondly, he claims the language is that of P. This argument builds on the claim which criticism believes so very well established: that the P sections all have a fullness of detail like legal documents and a certain repetitiousness. However, the same thing may be claimed for the following chapter (24) which is by common consent ascribed to J. Of course, chapter 24 has no legal terminology, because it does not report a legal transaction as does chapter 23. In the third place, Strack claims that later portions from P refer back to this event repeatedly, and so it is supposed to be P's exclusive subject matter. The passages cited are Ge 25:9; 49:29; 50:13. Looking at these passages, we find that they appear to

be ascribed to P (each being a brief section in the midst of material from a so-called different source) because originally chapter 23 dealing with the same event is ascribed to P. Consequently we have a perfect argument in a circle. Three passages are ascribed to P because they seem to build on a P passage, chapter 23. On the other hand, chapter 23 is from P because of these three passages. So weak and inconsequential is the textual critical argument.Another problem is created by Ac 7:16, which ascribes Abraham's purchase of a tomb to a place at Shechem and names the seller as "the sons of Hamor in Shechem." This seeming confusion is not to be described as an error of Stephen's or Luke's, the writer of the Acts. Apparently, two separate events are under consideration. Abraham must have purchased two burial sites, one in Shechem, one in Hebron. Only the second purchase is mentioned in Genesis. The record of the first purchase, apparently, survived only in Jewish tradition. Another solution of the difficulty, though a less likely one, is that at an early date a copyist wrote "Abraham" for "Jacob" in Acts (Ac 7:16) and the error was not discovered until it had come into almost all manuscripts.As to the identity of the cave of Machpelah the question seems far from settled. It is true that many agree that the present site of the mosque in Hebron, which is built over a cave into which a few Christians of more recent time have been permitted to look, is the very spot where the cave of Machpelah must have been situated. The name of this mosque is Haram, and it lies within the present city of Hebron. Others feel that the original Hebron must have lain a mile or so west from the present site, at a spot known as er Rumeidy, near which are several fine old tombs. Should excavators secure permission to explore both these sites thoroughly, the dispute might be settled.As a matter of historical interest we record the fact that in Machpelah's cave Abraham himself was later buried (Ge 25:9), also Isaac (Ge 35:27,29), also Rebekah and Lea (Ge 49:31), and lastly also Jacob (Ge 50:13). The Jewish interpretation which makes Kirjath-arba mean "city of four" in the sense that four patriarchs lie buried there -- Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob -- is, of course, pure guess as far as the burial place of Adam is concerned.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIt hardly seems feasible to break up this chapter into portions. Abraham's faith is again in evidence; and so we suggest some such subject as "A Testimony of Faith in the Face of a Loss by Death." This ought to prove a very practical text if treated from this point of view, for it gives occasion to emphasize that in the face of such losses faith should especially give testimony of its strength and its character.

CHAPTER XXIV

16. Isaac's Marriage (24:1-67) A delightful chapter, charmingly written with much of detail, not because of its romantic character but because in it is recorded an act of faith which transfigures the ordinary experiences of life. The patriarch Abraham, believing the promises of Yahweh concerning the progeny to spring from his son, (namely a great nation and a great Redeemer), makes provision for the marriage of this son. This provision, however, is made in such a fashion that Abraham's full confidence in the validity of these promises is clearly displayed. The marriage of Isaac can hardly be said to have come late in his life, though he was forty years of age at the time (Ge 25:20), inasmuch as the natural span of life at this time was about as long as it is now. The need of taking steps along this line had been suggested by Sarah's death and by the fact that Abraham, now 140 years old, felt the desirability of attending to this duty while he was still well and able to do so. The father's sole initiative in this direction and the entire passivity of Isaac on the occasion are to be accounted for by the fact that, first, it was primarily the function of parents to provide for the marriage of their children in those days; and, in the second place, Isaac was by character and disposition much inclined to be passive and unaggressive. Nothing points to the possibility that Abraham's death was imminent at the time he makes these arrangements. In fact, it would be a very queer style of writing which could overlook such a situation if it had actually obtained; especially since v.1 would have presented a logical place for a statement conveying such a fact. This simple narrative with its natural flow and progression has fallen into the hands of a criticism intent upon doing damage to the Scriptures wherever it seems possible to do so and upon making a display of its ingenuity. Here criticism claims to be able to detect two strands of narrative woven into one, two strands which happen to diverge continually. Apparently, he who wove the two together either did not observe their divergence, or else put the two together regardless of whether they harmonized or not. The so-called divergences will be examined at a few points to show the untenable nature of the critical claims. Any unprejudiced person can readily see that the so-called divergences are merely two sides of one and the same story, supplementing without contradiction. The critical efforts tend to read a foregone conclusion into the evidence on the strength of unproven and unconvincing evidence. 1. Abraham was old and well stricken in age, and Yahweh had blessed Abraham in all things. Abraham's being old is referred to in connection with his choice of a wife for Isaac because his age reminds him of the need of delaying in this important matter no longer. The second statement "well stricken in age" (Hebrew: "advanced in days," as in Ge 18:11) must in contrast to the first emphasize that the infirmities of old age were coming to be more in evidence. The reference to God's blessings which Abraham had abundantly enjoyed in this connection seems to indicate that there were no troubles so engaging the thoughts of Abraham as to make him forget this important duty. Besides, it indicates that Abraham was financially well able to provide for his son's marriage. But primarily, since it records the fulfilment of 12:2, it seems to suggest that, since one part of this great promise (Ge 12:2, 3) had been fulfilled very manifestly, Abraham felt the necessity of making provision that no part of the things promised be delayed or interfered with, as it well might be if the son be not properly provided with a wife. "Yahweh" is referred to as the author of the blessing and throughout the chapter because the work

of the gracious God of the covenant is primarily under consideration in this connection. 2-4. And Abraham said unto his servant, the eldest of his house, who had control over all that Abraham had: Put, now, thy hand under my thigh, that I may cause thee to swear by Yahweh, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth, that thou wilt not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in the midst of whom I dwell, but that thou wilt go to my country and unto my relationship and take a wife for my son Isaac. It seems very strange that the account does not identify this servant. It may have been Eliezer of whom we last heard about sixty years ago (Ge 15:12). Still it seems a rather rare case that one servant should be in another man's employ for such a length of time. In fact, it would seem that Eliezer must have been in Abraham's employ more than twenty years to arrive at a position of such influence as he held according to 15:12. That would necessitate by the time of this chapter eighty consecutive years of service! "Eldest" (zaqen) often refers to rank rather than to age (cf. Ge 50:7; Isaiah 3:2; B D B says the term is used more than a hundred times as a technical term in reference to persons "having authority"). This individual had the complete management of Abraham's household in hand: hammoshel -- "the one ruling" all Abraham had. In any case, he must have been a tried and true servant. The gesture that is to accompany the oath under which this servant is put by Abraham is: "Put, now, thy hand under my thigh." The "now" (na') gives a touch of mildness to the imperative. The "thigh" (yarekh) or "loins" is here indeed regarded as "the seat of the procreative powers" (B D B), and by metonomy it takes into consideration all the descendants of one. Note passages such as Ge 46:26 ("all the souls that came out of his loins"); Ex 1:5; Jude 8:30. Consequently, this form of oath has particular regard to the descendants and is taken in reference to them. But we cannot stop short with this correct statement. For when we consider how eagerly believers from the time of Adam looked forward to a Saviour that was to be born, and also how Abraham (Ge 12:3) knew and believed that from his own line such a Saviour was to follow, we cannot but accept the orthodox view held by church fathers from days of old that this oath was administered in view of the Saviour to come from Abraham's line. The whole course of procedure builds upon this prominent fact. This same form of oath is found besides only in Ge 47:29. Consequently, we do not find here a remnant of some old custom now no longer understood, nor is this a remnant of some phallic cult, nor was this an oath by the membrum virile, for the hand was placed under the thigh, nor are the present-day analogies referred to by commentators as still obtaining among Arabs and Egyptians a good illustration or parallel. Here was a godly oath by a godly man taken and administered in the light of his greatest hope, the coming Saviour. "Yahweh," as the covenant God, is most appropriately referred to as the one by whom the servant is to swear. The descriptive apposition "the God of the heavens and the God of the earth" reminds him that swears of Yahweh's omnipotence and omnipresence and so serves as an excellent indication of the exalted conception of God prevailing among the patriarchs. 3. The waw introducing the first verb is final: that I may cause, as also in v.14 Ge 24:14 and v.51 Ge 24:51. The thing so momentous as to require this solemn oath is that the servant shall not "take a wife"for Isaac "from the daughters of the Canaanites,"among whom Abraham was living. No doubt, material advantage would have lain on the side of a marital union with an influential Canaanite, to give Isaac a foothold in the land, powerful connections and social standing. Abraham's purpose, however, in abhorring such a union will not only have been a desire to perpetuate pure Semitic stock, for the Canaanites were Hamites. Such a purpose was incidentally involved, for certain types of pure Semitic stock were, no doubt, the depositories of a godly tradition. But the patriarch's chief concern was to find a wife

for Isaac who with him knew and believed in Yahweh and so would share with her husband a common faith and so allow for the deepest of all harmonies in the home, spiritual harmony. For again, only in a home where true spiritual harmony prevailed would the spiritual heritage of Abraham be jealously guarded and faithfully transmitted to coming generations. Besides, the Canaanite stock, which was already deteriorating (Ge 9:25; 19:5, 32) and which was destined to be destroyed ultimately by Abraham's descendants could hardly be found worthy for this exalted purpose. Abraham, then, details this task of finding the proper wife for his son to a servant for two reasons. His own advanced age made such a rigorous journey impracticable and, besides, all such transactions, in the Orient were arranged, through intermediaries (cf. Ge 23:8). 4. The initial kî is adversative (K. S.372e; B D B 474a). Abraham regards the place of his last residence, Mesopotamia, as his "country" ('artsî); there is his "relationship." He is sure that some suitable wife will there be available if anywhere. 5. And the servant said to him: Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land, shall I then go so far as to bring thy son back to the land from which thou camest?The servant sees the issues and difficulties clearly. Not to be able to find a suitable person at all for Isaac seems entirely out of the question. There is likelihood that a woman will be available who meets the spiritual qualifications. Socially Abraham's position makes his son a very suitable suitor. The very real difficulty that may arise would be if the woman were unwilling to break all ties of home and friendship, make a far journey and establish entirely new connections. To find so courageous a woman would indeed be rare. So in the other event what course should be followed? Is the need so great in the case of the woman's unwillingness as to allow the servant to make the proposition that his master's son would be ready to journey back to Abraham's early home? The servant must be sure of his ground in advance. The absolute infinitive added to the verb "bringing back shall I bring back" is, we feel, covered quite well by our free rendering above: "shall I go so far as to bring back?" On the form of the interrogative he see G. K.100 n.6-8. And Abraham said to him: Take heed not to bring my son back there again. Yahweh, the God of the heavens, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my relationship, and who spoke to me and promised me under oath, To thy seed will I give this land, He will send His Angel before thy face and thou shalt get a wife for my son there. But if the woman be not willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be absolved of this my oath. Only, as far as my son is concerned, do not take him back there.The servant's alternative is out of the question. Abraham strongly forbids it: "Take heed not to bring my son back there again." The Hebrew has, "take heed to thyself (lekha) lest thou bring" -- pen with the imperfect, a negative final clause.7. Abraham rightly concludes that Yahweh cannot desire a return to Mesopotamia, for He it was that brought Abraham forth. Besides, the land to be given to Isaac is the very land in which Abraham now lives. That land dare not now be forsaken. God spoke plainly to Abraham (Ge 12:7; 13:15) that this land should belong to his descendants. He even "promised under oath" (nishba' -- merely "to swear") "to thy seed will I give this land" (Ge 15:17 f). He is the "God of the heavens" who has great resources at His command. "His Angel" has been wont to appear and succor God's own (Ge 16:7), and He is divine (see exposition of chapter 16). lie will prosper the servant's journey, going before his face to remove difficulties. Since a wife is essential to the securing of descendants, Abraham is sure that Yahweh will provide.8. To set his servant's mind at ease Abraham declares him absolved of this oath in case the woman be unwilling to accompany him. With solemn repetition Abraham forbids taking his son back to Mesopotamia. The zo'th after shebhu'athî has no article because of the suffix (G. K.126 y; K. S.334 y). "My oath" means not "the oath rendered to me" but "the oath

administered by me" (K. S.37); cf. also v.3 Ge 24:3 and Joshua 2:17, 20. The initial waw naturally is adversative -- "but."9. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham, his master, and he swore concerning this matter.After the issues are clear to both parties, the oath is given as it was demanded. The "master" relationship is emphasized on Abraham's part, because the servant recognized that this relation increased his obligation in the matter. This was not a case of friend pleasing friend but of servant obeying his master 'adhonaw -- a plural of respect -- (Herrschaftsplural, G. K.124 g i). The final 'al dabhar hazzeh may also be rendered "on the basis of this thing" (B D B) or "thus" -- solches -- Luther.10, 11. So the servant took ten of his master's camels and set out, and all sorts of his master's valuables were in his possession; and he arose and set out for Aram Naharaim, for the city of Nahor. And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at evening time, at the time when the women came forth to draw water.Ten camels are still regarded as a proper number for such a caravan Thomson, The Land and the Book, p.261 ff. Besides "the servant" not "slave" -- Meek has "all sorts of kol as in Ge 2:9; 4:22; Le 19:23 valuables" -- so Meek well translates tûbh. The camels bear him and his attendants as well as the necessary presents and will serve to convey the expected wife and her attendants as well. That the verb "set out," wayyélekh, should be repeated is quite natural and not an indication of two separate sources. The first "set out" reports in a summary way -- so common in Hebrew, the second resumes after a few details have been inserted. Of the several Arams mentioned in the Scriptures this is the one "of the two rivers" naharayim which are not the Euphrates and the Tigris, for Aram did not extend to the Tigris, but the Euphrates and the Chaboras. Aram is a construct state in a proper name K. S.280 h. Nahor's city is Haran Ge 27:43; 28:10. 11. The uneventful journey is skipped, and we are introduced in the colourful narrative to the scene witnessed upon the arrival at the outskirts of Haran. "Kneel" for camels is entirely proper, as it exactly describes how camels are brought down to rest. The customary well is located outside the city. Sho'abhoth, feminine participle, "drawers" of water, are the women whose regular duty it was to draw water, especially at evening. 'E'rebh has no article, as is frequently the case in expressions more or less stereotyped K. S.294f. Tse'th, infinitive from yatsa', is the equivalent of a relative clause K. S.400 b.12-14. And he said: O Yahweh, God of my master Abraham, let it befall before me this day and show kindness unto my master Abraham. See, I have taken my stand, by the fountain of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming forth to draw water; so let it come to pass that the girl, to whom I shall say, Let down, I pray, thy pitcher that I may drink and she shall say, Drink, and I will water thy camels also, her thou hast adjudged for thy servant, for Isaac, and by this I shall discover that Thou hast showed kindness to my master.This good servant has imbibed much of the spirit and the faith of his master Abraham. It is a problem sufficient to tax the finest ingenuity to the utmost without arriving at sure results. In a prayer of childlike faith the servant commits the issues to his Lord. The fact that he addresses Yahweh as the "God of my master" does not signify that Yahweh is not his own God but only Abraham's, but rather that he, the servant, first learned to know Him as the Yahweh who stood related to Abraham. Only a faith that knows God as Yahweh and trust like Abraham's would venture to submit such a prayer. Luther here raises the question whether it be permissible to prescribe to the Lord what He is to do in answer to our prayer and answers that this servant did not prescribe to God what to do, but that the spirit of his whole prayer is merely one of earnest desire: Oh, that it -- would please thee, dear Lord; to let so and so happen! Haqreh "cause (it) to happen" -- the indefinite unexpressed subject "it" in this case being the finding of the proper wife. Luther supplies

as object "Thou" or "Thyself" thus: "cause Thyself to meet me," begegne mir, which is hardly admissible. A.V. renders very acceptably: "send me good speed." His prayer is quite unselfish, having regard only for his "master Abraham," whom he apparently respects and loves very much.13. The servant outlines the situation, not as though he would inform the good Lord but merely to provide a basis upon which his prayer is to build up. Nitstsabh is not so much "I am standing" as "I have taken my stand" -- a statement expressive of the purpose behind his being there. Yotse'oth indicates that the daughters of the men of the city were already "coming out," (cf.1 Samuel 9:11).14. After what preceded the wehayah will not be: and it shall come to pass, but rather optative: "let it come to pass" (A. V.). The condition imposed is unusually apt. Readiness to serve embodies a number of other virtues: cheerfulness, courtesy, unselfishness, readiness to work. The amount of service required in this case would demand the prerequisite of good health and strength. For camels are notorious for their capacity to absorb water. The servant's stipulation was not for an ordinary favour easily bestowed. The girl measuring up to this requirement would certainly be very distinctly marked from all others by virtue of this accomplishment. Such a prayer demands a very strong faith in the providence of God, a certainty that the greater as well as the smaller happenings of life are very definitely controlled by the Lord's hand. The feminine suffix in bah covers the whole case as just outlined and serves as a neuter "by this" or "thereby" (Skinner). Hokhachta is really a bit stronger than "appoint" (A. V.); "adjudge" is better; Keil: "point out as right."15, 16. And it came to pass before he had finished speaking, that, behold, there came forth Rebekah, who had been born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, wife of Nahor, the brother of Abraham, and her pitcher was on her shoulder, and the girl very beautiful in appearance, a virgin, and no man had known her, and she went down to the spring and filled her pitcher and came up again.That the servant's prayer was not spoken audibly is so evident under the circumstances that the Greek translators made bold to add to the word "speaking" the phrase "in his mind." There is something startling about the promptness with which the answer to his prayer comes: before he is done praying Rebekah is on the scene. The Hebrew "behold" appropriately expresses this. The Hebrew térem, "not yet" or "before" usually stands with the imperfect; here we have a rare case with the perfect (K. S.387 r; G. K.152 r). Rebekah was identified already Ge 22:23. Here, since emphasis lies upon the fact that one of the relationship of Abraham was required, this relationship is again traced down. Since Isaac is of the first generation from Abraham and Rebekah of the second generation from Abraham's brother, the relationship between Isaac and Rebekah is one that is termed second-cousinship. In anticipation of what she is about to do we are informed that "her pitcher was upon her shoulder." Even this touch of the narrative is claimed to be entirely accurate by some who have observed that around Mesopotamia pitchers are carried on the shoulder, whereas in Egypt and elsewhere they are borne upon the head. In this verse hinneh with the participle cannot refer, as so often, to the future because of the connection. 16. In addition to meeting the qualifications of the servant's prayer this girl has a few superadded gifts which he had failed to include in his specifications. First, she is very beautiful. Secondly, she is a "virgin," bethûlah, a term indicative of her age and her station, not, however as the Talmud rightly observes (Delitzsch), in itself necessarily indicative of virginal purity, for that is covered by the following statement. The critical point of the narrative draws near as the separate steps of her course are recalled for us: she goes down, she fills her pitcher, she comes up (for fountains or springs were usually approached by a staircase). In eager anticipation the servant has watched the girl.17-20. And the servant ran to meet her and he said: Please, let me drink a bit of water from thy pitcher.

And she said: Drink, kind sir. And she quickly lowered her pitcher upon her hand and gave him a drink. And she finished letting him drink and then said: Also for thy camels I will draw water until they finish drinking. And she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough and again ran to the well to draw water. So she drew water for all his camels.In his eagerness to make the prescribed test to which everything now points the servant "ran" to meet her -- a hyperbole, of course, implying no more than his eagerness in approaching. His request is quite courteous: the "please" and "a bit" stamp it as entirely modest.18. Her reply at first covers only the minor first half of what the servant had stipulated. In fact, in any case, it would have been unnatural for her to offer to give his camels to drink also before he had finished drinking. Nevertheless, the tension of the narrative is increased by this delay. Rebekah's reply also is courteous and modest, too, being couched in few words. Travellers claim to have witnessed the same procedure many a time, but none tell of the second offer which Rebekah made. Temah (h) er is, as usual, used practically as an adverb -- "quickly" (cf. G. K.120 d).19. Koenig (K. C.) rightly contends for the retaining of tekhal as an independent rather than a subordinate clause, for it rightly stresses that Rebekah patiently waited until the man had drunk his fill: "she finished letting him drink." Then comes the statement upon which everything hinged. Emphatically it places the "camels" first in a very informal statement, just as people are wont to speak in everyday life. With impetuous goodness of heart she promises to give the camels all they may require. Surely this is "hospitality without grudging" -- a fine and rare virtue.20. The pitcher, which is still almost full, is promptly emptied into the trough, and the girl with a fine spirit of kindly service hastens to draw the rest of the needed water. On the verb in apocopated form watte'ar from arah see G. K.75 bb.21-25. But the man was gazing at her by himself, silently observing whether Yahweh had prospered his enterprise or not. And it came to pass, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden ring a half shekel in weight and two bracelets ten shekels of gold in weight for her wrists, and gave them to her; and he said: Whose daughter art thou, tell me, please? Is there room for us to spend the night in thy father's house? And she said to him: The daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, am I, whom she bore to Nahor. She further said to him: Besides we have both straw and fodder aplenty, also room to spend the night.The fulfilment which the servant encounters seems in excess of what any man could have hoped for. He must note carefully whether there is any mistake; besides, he cannot yet be sure whether this girl will prove to be of Abraham's relationship. So for the present he was "gazing at her by himself" mishta'eh, Hithpael participle, durative, from the verb sha'ah a "by-form" of sha'ah. The time for speech has not yet come; so he is "silently observing," literally: "being silent to know whether." True faith uses caution to avoid the possibility of self-deception. The participle mishta'eh is in the construct state, before a preposition. The interrogative before hitslîach has short "a" (G. K.100 m).22. A generous soul like this servant rewards unsought favours. The pregnant construction "he took upon" -- "he took and put upon." Otherwise, as A. V. renders, he seems to take and dangle these presents before Rebekah without actually giving them to her. True, according to v.47 Ge 24:47, the nézem was a nose ring; cf. also Isaiah 3:21; Ezekiel 16:12; Pr 11:22. But since this verse (22) omits mentioning that the servant put the nose ring upon her nose; it seems to be the most likely explanation that he merely gave it to her. For a strange man after a few moments of acquaintance to venture to try such familiarity as affixing jewelry seems a bit out of place. Consequently we believe v.47 to be a looser statement of the case: the servant ascribes to himself what really Rebekah carried out. However, for those days such jewels apparently were the most appropriate. Their weight indicates that they were gifts worthy of the

master and of the occasion. The cue to the béqa' or "half shekel" is given Ex 38:26. 23. Now the all-important and for this case crucial question: "Whose daughter art thou?" "Tell me, please," indicates the urgency felt by the faithful servant. However, not to give to the question too personal a note, in case the girl might yet after all prove to be unrelated to Abraham, he adds what for these circumstances is the most natural inquiry. "Is there room for us to spend the night in thy father's house?" Beth is an adverbial accusative -- "in the house." (K. S.330 k).24. In speaking to a stranger it will hardly suffice to give a very brief identification. So Rebekah mentions her father, her father's mother and her grandfather. If the stranger had not heard of one, he might have heard of one of the others. The emotions of the servant would be difficult to describe as the hoped-for answer, which he might almost have deemed impossible, actually fell from the girl's lips.25. Another wattó'mer, like the one beginning v.24, is not merely "and she said" but "she further said." As the question was double, the answer was double. The answer, however, is broken up into two separate parts, perhaps because the questioner may for a moment have displayed an almost startled surprise at discovering the girl's identity, enough of a surprise for a moment to interrupt her answer. The final lalûn is an infinitive used as an attributive clause modifying "place" (maqôm), which we have rendered "room" in this connection and so retained the infinitive: "room to spend the night" for "place where we may spend the night." K. S.400 c.26, 27. Then the man bowed down and worshipped Yahweh, and said: Blessed be Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, who hath not withdrawn his kindness and truth from my master; as for me, Yahweh has led me in the way to the house of my master's relatives.True, the outcome of the enterprise as granted to this man in answer to his prayer was as marvellous a display of divine providence, perhaps, as ever a mortal witnessed. Such mercy called for acknowledgment. But he that will make his acknowledgment as freely and as openly as does this man is both a devout and a courageous soul. It is true, Rebekah may have been the only stranger present. But this confession of the man together with the public praise he here offers is in every sense most appropriate.27. What a fine way of stating that the established course, that God has without exception followed in the treatment of Abraham, was always marked by divine "kindness" (chésedh) and divine "truth" or dependability ('emeth)! What happened here at the well was merely one more token of God's consistent mercies. Only a man in fullest spiritual sympathy with the spiritual heritage of Abraham's household could have stated the case so properly. Thinking of himself ('anokhî, nominative absolute G. K.143 b. c.) and his part in the transaction, he says that it is Yahweh who has directed his "way to the house of his master's relatives." 'Achchim, "brothers," is here used in the common looser meaning of "relatives." Therefore this last clause, with emphatic pronoun first, really conveys the emphasis to the two pronominal suffixes involved: "Right to the house of the relatives of my master, Yahweh has led me this way" (as K. C. well translates). The article before "way" has demonstrative force.28-31. And the girl ran and reported to her mother's house what had happened. Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban, and Laban ran out to the man to the well. Namely, as soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and as he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, Thus the man said to me, he went to the man; and, lo, he was still standing by the camels by the side of the well. And he said: Come in, thou blessed of Yahweh, why shouldst thou stand outside, seeing that I have gotten ready the house and a place for the camels?Naturally, such unusual experiences as Rebekah had had on this memorable evening had to be told at home, and the stranger's request had to be made known. What, however, had lent wings to the girl's return was the startling news, conveyed incidentally by the

servant's prayer, that here was a delegate from Abraham, their own relative in Canaan. The daughter's course naturally tends to the mother when such startling news is to be communicated. Besides, the women had their separate compartments, as we gather also from Ge 31:33f. -- a separate tent. In any case, where bigamy was growing to be quite common, the bond uniting to the mother would be felt to be stronger than the bond uniting to the father; cf, v.50 Ge 31:50; chapter Ge 34; 2 Samuel 13:22; Jude 21:22; Le 19:3; 21:2. All these things do not, however, point to anything like the existence of a matriarchate.29. Now the brother of Rebekah, Laban, figured prominently in the proceedings. Therefore the things he does are here reported, and in a preliminary way it is stated at once that "he ran out to the man to the well." This is a common characteristic of Hebrew narrative that it reports a certain result first, then the details that led up to this result, without a "namely" as we have done above. Now nothing in this account of Laban's doings reflects adversely upon his character. The greed of this man is displayed only in the later chapters. Yet in the light of what these chapters reveal we may well suppose that what the following verse tells is to be thought of in connection which his grasping disposition. But for the things reported in following chapters one might almost suppose that Laban actually was a genial, generous host. 30. The gifts given to Rebekah were no trifles; they were enough to impress anyone who saw them. Whatever else might be in the offing, the man who dispensed such gifts was not to be ignored. Besides, apparently Laban understood also that this man represented his own relative, Abraham. After our explanation of v.30 it will be seen that the verb "he went to the man" is not an indication of a duplicate expression derived from a different source after v.29 had already said that "he ran out to the man." By way of making the account picturesque the writer tells us that the servant was "still standing" -- we have inserted the "still" in order to express more distinctly the idea of the durative participle 'omedh. The opening wayhî is the common mode of expressing a rather loose connection with the preceding (G. K.111 g). The expression "he stood by" in Hebrew reads "he stood over," because the camels were crouched down Strack.31. Laban has gathered from Rebekah's words that Yahweh is still Abraham's and the servant's God. Laban himself may or may not still have believed in Yahweh. Later developments show that he very likely did not. Nevertheless, even from the polytheistic point of view it would be quite natural to acknowledge that the God whom one served had blessed him. Since Yahweh is a proper noun, its definiteness conveys itself to the preceding construct case; therefore thou, the blessed one of Yahweh, a vocative with the article K. S.290 e. In this connection Yahweh is an active object with a passive verb, barûkh (K. S.336 n). It seems a bit more appropriate to translate the imperfect ta'amodh as a potential (why should you stand) rather than as a present ("why standest thou")? Panah ("turn") here means "to clear away," "to get ready." The invitation is put quite graciously and leaves nothing to be desired.32, 33. So the man came to the house, and he unharnessed the camels and provided straw and fodder for the camels and water for the washing of his feet and of the feet of the men who were with him. And food was set before him that he might eat, but he said: I will not eat until 1 have delivered my message. And he said: Say on.Everything proceeds as the customs of the time dictate. Chapter 18 already suggested that one of the courtesies of the times was to provide for a man's comfort as a guest and to serve him in every way also with food and drink before the business that may have brought the guest is looked into, and even then the initiative is taken by the guest. There is no need of altering the first verb to a Hifil: "he brought the man to the house" (wayyabhe') merely because thereafter Laban is the subject. Subjects change very readily in Hebrew. Yepattach (subject: Laban) means only to "free" or "ungird" or "unharness"

(Meek), not "unsaddle," because the saddle is not removed from camels when they are warm from driving. The beasts must always be provided for before the men. Then the necessary footwashing (Ge 18:4) follows.33. The Keri here seems preferable on the first verb, making it a Hofal passive: (literally) "and it was set before his face to eat." So urgent is the business in hand that in the servant's esteem the customary formalities are to be waived. He takes his commission so seriously that he cannot eat until he has delivered his message and ascertained whether the girl or young woman will actually follow him. The words "delivered my message" actually run thus: "spoken my words."34-41. And he said: I am a servant of Abraham. And Yahweh blessed my master richly and he has become great; He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and maid servants, and camels and asses. And Sarah, my master's wife, bore a son to my master after she had grown old, and he has given to him all he has. And my master bound me by an oath: Thou shalt not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I am dwelling. But thou shalt go to my father's house and to my family to take a wife for my son. And I said to my master: Perhaps the woman will not follow. And he said to me: Yahweh before whose face I have walked will send His angel along with thee and He will prosper thy way and thou wilt get a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house. Then shalt thou be absolved of my oath, if thou come to my family and they do not give her to thee, then thou shalt be absolved of my oath.Practically all this ground has already been covered by our exposition. Certain types of narrative, especially the epic, are wont to use far more frequent repetitions than do the Scriptures. A few things are new.34. In a connection such as this 'ébhedh' Abhraham must mean "a servant of Abraham" and not "the servant" -- for Abraham had many servants (A. V. also inaccurate); cf. K. S.362 g.35, 36. For one who represents his master and his master's son in a marriage proposition it is essential that he make an accurate and complete statement of his master's standing and of his master's son's financial prospects. So a condensed account of Abraham's growth in wealth and cattle is given. But even in this matter the servant has caught his master's spirit and does not attribute the good fortune of his master to anything other than to Yahweh's blessing. The unusual story of Isaac's birth belongs into the picture, else the hearers cannot know how the son of one brother should be a candidate in marriage for the granddaughter of another brother. Besides, the incidental importance of Isaac's financial standing receives just the proper amount of emphasis when it is indicated that he is the sole heir to his father's wealth. No unseemly importance is attached to this fact to make it out a major motive to bring to the favourable attention of Rebekah's family. Ziquah is Kal infinitive (G. K.45 d). 37. On v.37 cf. v.3 above Ge 24:37,3. On v.38 cf. v.4. Onv.39, v.5 Ge 24:39,5. On v.40 cf. v.7 Ge 24:40,7.41. After yitténû ("they will give") the object "her" has to be supplied. Or the difficulty may be removed by translating: "if they refuse you" (Meek). Instead of the word for "oath" used in v.8 Ge 24:8 we here find the synonym 'alah, which originally means "curse."42-48. And I came this day unto the fountain and I said: Yahweh, God of my master Abraham, if thou art indeed prospering the way which I am going, behold, I have taken my stand by the fountain of water, and let it come to pass that the girl that cometh forth to draw water, to whom I shall say: Let me drink a bit of water, please, from thy pitcher, and she shall say to me: Drink, and I will draw water for thy camels also, she shall be the woman whom Yahweh has adjudged for my master's son. I had not yet finished speaking in my heart, when, lo, Rebekah was coming forth, with her pitcher upon her shoulder, and went down to the spring to draw water, and I said to her: Please, give me a drink, and she quickly let down her pitcher from her shoulder and said: Drink, and also thy camels I will give to drink. So I drank, and she gave my camels to drink

also. Then I asked her, saying: Whose daughter art thou? and she said: The daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore to him. And I put the ring upon her nose and the bracelets upon her wrists; and I bowed down and worshipped Yahweh, and I blessed Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, who led me in the right way to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son.These verses run so close a parallel to v.11-27 Ge 24:11-27 that there is no need of further comment. The more important variations of expression have already been discussed at one point or another. "Brother" in v.48 Ge 24:48 is, of course, used as previously for relative. "Right way" is perhaps better translated "sure way," B D B, Weg der Zuverlaessigkeit (K. C.). V.43 offers the first instance of a transition from the participle to the finite verb (K. C.).49. And now if ye are showing kindness and truth to my master, tell me, and if not, tell me, that I may turn one way or another.All the facts that bear upon the case have been presented by Abraham's servant in a true, simple, and straightforward fashion. Rebekah's family can come to a decision. The hand of Yahweh must be as plain to them as it was to the servant and, apparently, to Rebekah. To grant the servant's request -- which, by the way, he does not even formulate but lets the facts speak for themselves -- is from one point of view "kindness" (chésedh) which Abraham will appreciate, and from another point of view "truth" ('emeth) or "faithfulness," for where the hand of the Lord is displayed by such clear tokens of divine providence, man is true neither to God nor to himself if he does not accept such guidance. The English idiom may prefer the rendering: "deal kindly and truly" (A.V.). Again, what A. V. has rendered, "that I may turn to the right hand or to the left," appears in more idiomatic present-day form when Meek translates: "that I may turn one way or another." This, then, does not mean: that I may seek a bride elsewhere.50, 51. Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said: That is the Lord's doing; we could not say anything at all. There is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her be the wife of thy master's son as Yahweh has indicated.Laban, the brother, as well as Bethuel, the father, are the two with whom according to custom the right of decision in such a case was lodged. Apparently, the full brother had as much of a voice in the matter as the father, for Laban is here mentioned first. The usual construction is found: verb singular at first: wayya'an; then plural' wayyo'merû, when the two subjects have appeared. Their answer is emphatic: "From Yahweh went forth the matter," which we would be inclined to express: "That is the Lord's doing"; Luther still better: Das kommt vom Herrn. The next clause is twisted quite out of shape when the Hebrew idiom, which A. V. retains: "We cannot speak unto thee bad or good," is taken to mean: "We dare not answer you adversely or favourably" (Meek and many others). For at once they answer favourably in the next words: "Take her and go." The difficulty is very readily solved when it is remembered that "good or bad" is one of the well-known cases where the two extremes are chosen to cover the entire area of the concepts involved. So here the statement comes to mean: "we could not say anything at all," in the sense: God has done the speaking; there is nothing more to be said (cf. K. S.92 b for other such expressions). Procksch, after misconstruing, prefers to conclude that the text contradicts itself, merely to gain support for his idea of two parallel documents. He says: The first part of the verse "distinctly expresses approval, whereas 50 b leaves everything doubtful."51. Whereas we say: "There is Rebekah," the Hebrew idiom says: "Rebekah is before thee" (A. V.). The family of the girl sees the leadings of providence as manifestly as the servant. To them it is a case where "Yahweh has indicated" (dibber -- "he spoke") what is to be clone. 52-54. And it came to pass that, when the servant of Abraham heard their answer that he worshipped Yahweh bowing down to the earth. And the servant brought forth articles of silver and articles of gold and garments and gave them to

Rebekah and costly articles he gave to her brother and her mother. Then they ate and drank, he and the men that were with him, and stayed there overnight. In the morning they arose and he said: Let me go back to my master.This is certainly an instance of fine piety and bold confession on the servant's part; to acknowledge Yahweh's hand in the matter by immediate worship in deepest reverence as soon as he receives his verdict. So Abraham would have done. To have servants such as this reflects great credit on their masters.53. A kind of dowry or wedding present was regularly bestowed by a bridegroom when an agreement of marriage had been reached. Such a gift gave proof of his financial competence. In this instance there is first of all a gift to the bride, then a gift to those who gave her in marriage. There is no purchase involved here; merely a tangible way of bestowing tokens and pledges of goodwill. We can hardly tell now whether from this better custom there was derived the inferior custom of the purchase of a wife or not. Nothing in the Scriptures indicates that the Hebrews were wont to purchase their wives. A dowry (móhar) was regularly given. Since kelî has a wide variety of meanings: "article, utensil, vessel," we had better not here limit it to "jewels" (A. V.) or "vessels" (A. V. m) but take the broader term "articles," which includes both and more besides. "Garments," too, are found in the Scriptures as commonly used for gifts. There is no reason for doubting that the gifts will have been of the richest sort to correspond to Abraham's financial standing. Like gifts, in value, here called "costly articles," are given to the brother and the mother. Mighdanoth, also translated: "choice things," will hardly mean "spices" (Luther) here, although some such might have been included for the mother. The brother's right in the transaction is conceded by the gift; the father's gift may be thought of as included in the mother's. To this day a man visiting for a few days at a friend's house may express his gratitude by a gift to the wife of his friend.54. Finally, when the business in hand was settled, food and drink claim their right. "Tarried all night" as a rendering of lûn is rather formal. We should say "they stayed overnight," hardly "retired for the night," because the verb covers more than the initial retiring. Knowing his master's anxiety to hear of the outcome of these betrothal proceedings, the servant is anxious to be on his way at once and asks for permission to return that very morning. Shillach means to "dismiss" or "let go"; "send me away" (A. V.) is too strong an expression. They who operate with the idea that the servant was executing a deathbed commission say that his anxiety to return was dictated by the hope of still finding his master alive. Why, then, does the narrative never say one word about Abraham's impending death?55-58. And her brother and mother said: Let the girl stay with us a few days or even ten; after that let her go. But he said to them: Do not delay me, since Yahweh has prospered my enterprise; dismiss me and let me go to my master. And they said: Let us call the girl and let us ask her decision. And they called Rebekah and said to her: Wilt thou go with this man? And she said: I will go.Naturally such a proposal to leave that very day is all too sudden. Mother and brother wish to see a few days granted to grow accustomed to the thought of separation. To call this "reluctance to part with Rebekah an indication of refined feeling" is quite unnecessary. That injects the evolutionistic concept, making it appear that this group had barely risen above the level of selling off marriageable daughters like so much merchandise. Of course, the finer human emotions and attachment prevailed in a group that had departed but little (in some cases, perhaps, not at all) from the fear of Yahweh. Nothing is more natural than such reluctance, except on the part of the crudest savages. "A period of ten days," 'asôr, is the most the family dares to suggest, not a "month" as the Samaritan Pentateuch reads.56. The servant knows that protracted parting will make the parting harder. Besides, since Yahweh's hand in the matter was so clearly manifest, why

delay in carrying out the will of Yahweh? This is his chief argument. He desires to leave at once, of course, with their permission ("dismiss me"). The we before Yahweh is causal: "since." K. S. should not oppose this construction.57. Ordinarily, perhaps, the girls were not consulted as to their wishes. But it is equally possible that in better families, like that of Bethuel, there was no thought of arranging marriages obnoxious to the bride. In this case everything is so much out of the ordinary that the family feels that the daughter should be consulted. If Rebekah be willing to go at once, that should settle the case. In niqra' the final long syllable with 'aleph takes the place of the usual ah hortative. 58. "Wilt thou go?" here must mean "go at once." So, apparently, Rebekah was not so far removed from the scene of the transactions as not to know what was being done. She understands that the question turns entirely on the matter of immediate departure and answers with a simple, resolute: "I will go." Courage, decision, and faith are reflected in her attitude. She is a wife who will amply supplement whatever deficiencies in the line of aggressiveness and activity her husband may have.59, 60. So they dismissed Rebekah, their sister, and her nurse and the servant of Abraham and his men. And they blessed Rebekah and said to her:Our sister, mayest thou grow to thousands often thousandsAnd may thy descendants possess the gates oftheir foes.The case is settled; the caravan must be gotten ready. With Rebekah must go her nurse, both, no doubt, being much attached to one another. Of the nurse we shall hear again Ge 35:8, in which passage we are also informed that her name was Deborah. Meniqah is Hifil participle from yanaq.60. The blessing spoken by the relationship they call her "sister" upon Rebekah is cast in a kind of poetic form with "parallelism of members." It may have been customary to bestow some such blessing upon brides. This blessing is recorded because it happened to meet with such literal fulfilment in the chosen family into which Rebekah was incorporated. Its substance is numerous offspring ("thousands of ten thousands") and victory in the conflict with foes ("possess gates of foes"), on "possess gates of enemies" cf. notes on Ge 22:17. "Foes" literally: "haters" (sone'îm). In weyîrash the usual converted Perfect is avoided, we being used with the imperfect to make the act stand out as distinct from what preceded (K. S.370 s).61. And Rebekah and her maids started off and rode on the camels and followed the man; and the servant took Rebekah and went.Two groups are pictured as flowing together into one: Rebekah and "her maids," who will naturally be sent along with her, a lady of good rank and station -- they constitute the one group and mount "the camels," apparently those that the servant had brought along; the other group is headed by the servant. Both points of view here presented are very natural. On the one hand, Rebekah and her maids may be said to "follow" the servant, who actually has the leadership of the group. On the other hand, the servant may very appropriately be said to have taken (yiqqach -- "he took") Rebekah. Critics cannot see how natural all this is and speak of the two sources (J and E) here woven together. Nor can they conceive of one writer's being able to set forth both points of view. In fact, they see embodied in this harmonious statement a double contradiction. Yet men can also quite readily see that if v.59 Ge 24:59 speaks of "the nurse" as nearest to Rebekah, at that point the customary retinue of "maids" may be taken for granted. Here where the departure is graphically portrayed, the nurse may be included in the whole retinue that Rebekah brings along as "maids."62, 63. And Isaac was coming back from having gone to Beer-lahai-roi, for he dwelt in the land of the Negeb (the South). And Isaac went forth to meditate in the field at eventide, and he lifted up his eyes and looked and, lo, camels were coming.The textual problem: the third word mibbô' is said to be "impossible" in this connection: "he came from coming." We still believe the construction makes sense, as Delitzsch defends it. Merely to have said: "Isaac came from

Beer-lahai-roi" would have created the impression that this was his residence at the time. Our construction says that he had just gone to this spot of the manifestation of the providence of God and was returning in order to be at home if the servant were to appear. Consequently, in this connection the first ba', which we construe as a participle, must be "he was coming back"and the second after a min temporal must mean "after having gone." The explanatory clause, "for he dwelt in the Negeb," is essential that we may know that Isaac kept to the Negeb, or South Country. To change mibbô' to mebô"' entrance" (K. C.) does not seem to make good sense; what may the "entrance" to that spot have been? The change to midhbar, "wilderness," made by the Greek already, seems unnecessary.Having just returned from this sacred spot, Isaac went forth at eventide (literally, "at the turning of evening") into the field "to meditate." Sûach, we feel, can so definitely be shown to mean "meditate" (A. V.) that the uncertainty of the Greek translators ought not disturb us. For the verb surely has that meaning in passages such as Psalms 77:13; 105:2; Psalms 119:15, 23 etc. Jerome also rendered ad meditandum. Though the verb may mean "to lament," yet it would hardly seem possible that about three years after his mother's death the man should still indulge in such an ample effusion of grief, even if he had been closely attached to his mother. On the "three years" cf. Ge 21:5; 23:1; Ge 25:20. If the Targum translates "to pray," that is simply a correct inference as to the type of meditation involved. Therefore Luther's zu beten is not to be condemned, though it is not literally exact. Changes of the text to shût, "walk about," and the like are not within the province of exact science. We feel the whole debate over the passage again grows out of an attempt to create the impression that the Hebrew text is a very unreliable article. We gather now from this notice that this is a fine indication of the piety of the man Isaac. While his servant is absent on business vital to himself, Isaac at home stimulates devotion and engages in earnest prayer. Now we see why the servant's enterprise was so visibly prospered by the good Lord. While engaged in this pious exercise, Isaac lifts up his eyes and sees camels approaching without being able to discern at first whose they might be.64-66. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes and saw Isaac, and she hurriedly dismounted from the camel. And she said to the servant: Who is that man walking in the field to meet us? And the servant said: It is my master. And she took her veil and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things he had done.They say that to this day when in the Near East a woman riding meets a man, courtesy demands that she dismount. Rebekah does the courteous thing. Although naphal means "to fall," we can readily see how a hurried dismounting, can be described by that term; cf.2 Kings 5:21; 1 Samuel 25:23. Luther's rendering: sie fiel yom Kamel presupposes that the reader will discern how it is meant. Rebekah seems to surmise that very likely her future husband would be the person most readily found abroad under these circumstances. Consequently her question. The infinitive "to meet" is not to be taken too literally; it usually means "coming toward us" or "over against us." It does not necessarily imply that Isaac had gone out to meet the approaching caravan. The tsai'îph is really much larger than a veil and is used to wrap around face and body. The covering in this instance is a sign of modesty and respect. Rebekah may be courageous, but she is not marked by an unseemly boldness. Lazeh ("this") is used besides only in Ge 37:19.66. The nature of things that had befallen the servant was such that Isaac needs must know them if he is to understand what manner of woman Rebekah is; why the servant returns so soon; and how remarkably Yahweh had heard the prayer of all concerned. The things require immediate telling. No doubt Rebekah stood by while they were being recounted, recognizing the need of an immediate report by the old servant.67. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent and married Rebekah and she

became his wife and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.Isaac shows good courtesy in at once conducting his wife-to-be to a tent. He shows fine tact in taking her to a woman's tent. He honours his future wife by at once assigning to her the vacant tent of Sarah. Critics intent upon casting doubt upon the text assert that "a grammatical impossibility" (Procksch) confronts us here, a noun in the construct state with the article. Yet K. S.303 a-g has collected a large number of parallel instances: Ge 31:13; Ex 9:18; Ex 28:39 etc., etc. Still the phrase is cited in proof of the contention that two sources have been imperfectly welded together. "Married" is what is meant by the Hebrew expression: "he took her to wife." After Rebekah had become his wife, love grew up between them, for this may well be the case after marriage as well as before, especially where the union is sanctioned by heaven. In the course of time Isaac is completely comforted over the loss of his mother. Apparently he, the late-born son, and his mother had been close to one another. Still this does not support the textual changes of v.63 Ge 24:63 nor the interpretation of the verb sûach as meaning "to mourn." For, we repeat, a three years' lamentation would be an indication of a morbid state of which we observe nothing in Isaac. The expression "after his mother" is condensed for "after his mother's death."HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIn this chapter everything centres about the subject "Marriage." It hardly seems feasible to use the chapter as a unit because of its length. The sections that do lend themselves to use are, first of all, v.1-9 Ge 24:1-9, which gives an instance of the very practical and necessary truth that Godliness is the Chief Ingredient in a Proper Marriage. For certainly that is Abraham's major concern in the choice of his son's wife. The next section, verse 10-27 Ge 24:10-27, could be treated independently as an instance of Effectual Fervent Prayer; yet it would be essential even then to indicate that this prayer was made in anticipation of marriage and for the purpose of securing divine guidance in the choice involved. The next verses, v.28-49 Ge 24:28-49, are practically a repetition of the substance of the chapter to this point and so are unsuitable for separate homiletical use. However, in order to maintain the high spiritual level of the chapter, the next portion, v.50-60 Ge 24:50-60, should concern itself with a subject like Rebekah's Resolute Faith, for that is actually what the section aims to display. The last portion, v.61-67 Ge 24:61-67, could be treated under the head of Proper Preparation for Marriage; for that is what is uppermost in Isaac's mind, and his conduct is exemplary under this head.

CHAPTER XXV

17. Abraham's Second Marriage and Death (25:1-11) In this portion Abraham's life record is brought to a close. To round out the story properly requires an account of his second marriage together with a list of his children by this marriage. For the promise Ge 17:4 had given him the assurance that he was to be the "father of a multitude of nations." The facts recorded thus far hardly furnish the background for a "multitude of nations" to be descended from him. At the same time, if there be other descendants of Abraham, who, failing to hold fast the promise of a Saviour to come, lapse into heathenish ways, it is important also to know of them that we might see that even Abraham's descendants are just another heathen group, if they fail to keep faith in God's promises. Yet, though Abraham's death is also reported in this connection, it is not to be forgotten that Abraham lived to the fifteenth year of the life of Jacob and Esau. 1. And Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. We encounter the usual idiom: "he added and took" -- he again took (G. K.120 d). The wife's name is "Keturah," which K. W. interprets: in Weihrauchduft gehuellt ("wrapped in clouds of incense smoke"). This wife is listed in v.6 as having been only on the level of a "concubine," so also 1 Chronicles 1:32. That raises the much discussed question whether Abraham had her as a concubine already during Sarah's lifetime. We may dismiss as utterly without foundation and most unlikely the Jewish notion that "Keturah" is merely another name for Hagar, who was later taken back by Abraham. But whereas notable commentators are ready to concede that Keturah may have been taken during Sarah's lifetime, yet that would seem to conflict rather seriously with Abraham's pronounced monogamistic leanings; for he took Hagar only as a last resort to realize God's promise. The claim that in the event of his taking Keturah after Sarah's death some of the six sons must have been dismissed at the too early age of about twenty-five years, should not be regarded too seriously. Though ordinarily sons may have been married at the age of forty and established for themselves, that is merely a rather broad inference drawn from the exceptional case of Isaac. Ro 4:19 ("his own body now as good as dead") is not to be taken too literally. Apparently, the rejuvenation which the patriarch experienced, enabling him to be father to Isaac, was of more than merely the most transitory kind. Luther rightly argues that Abraham saw that he was to beget more children in order to fulfil the promise of Ge 17:4 and so in faith he proceeded to enter upon another marriage. Consequently, no blame of any sort attaches to the patriarch for this step: "he was not guilty of levity, nor of intemperate lust," or of any other shortcoming in this case. If he does not allow quite the same rank to Keturah, it still is a regular marriage. But Abraham must surely have felt that the rank of the mother of the child of promise was to be regarded as higher than that of any second wife. So even this distinction is a necessary one. The coordinate clause "and her name Keturah" is the equivalent of a relative clause "whose name," etc. (K. S.361 a, 369 m). 2-4. And she bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim. And the sons of Midian: Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. Parallel to this runs the passage 1 Chronicles 1:32, 33. The following outline presents at a glance how far the descent is traced. (See figure 690) To argue at once, that because descendants of some sons are not

indicated, the author's information was fragmentary, is less likely to cover the facts of the case than that some of these sons, like Zimran and Medan, simply were not founders of further tribes or nations. Jokshan, however, has through Dedan descendants who become the fathers of races through three generations. Brief as the table of Keturah's descendants is, it furnishes foundation for proof of the fact that a multitude of nations descended from Abraham. These, now, who are here listed are the fathers of Arab tribes who leave southern Palestine and migrate to the east, the southeast and the south. Apparently, in so doing they met with and absorbed, as Arab tradition also asserts, certain native Arab tribes. But, apparently, the element thus infused into the Arab tribes became the dominant factor and gave the name to the tribe. Since very great uncertainty surrounds the identity of the individual groups or nations, we shall content ourselves with indicating briefly what seems the most reasonable identification we have been able to find. "Zimran," perhaps identical with Zambran in western Arabia on the coast west of Mecca. "Jokshan" apparently not yet identified satisfactorily."Medan," five days' journey south of Aila (Elath) which lies at the head of the Gulf of Akabah, located on the eastern shore of the Gulf."Midian" was a tribe which according to the Scriptures was scattered rather widely in northwestern Arabia, on the eastern portion of the peninsula of Sinai and even east of Palestine near Moab; cf. Ge 36:35; 37:28; Ex 3:11; 18:1; Nu 25:17; Joshua 13:21; Jude 6:1 ff. So it need not surprise us that five subdivisions of this tribe should be mentioned (v.4). "Ishbak" has not been identified. "Shuah" is somewhere in the Syro-Arabian desert mentioned as Sûhu by Assyrians and Babylonians.3. "Sheba," cf. Ge 10:7, belongs down into southwestern Arabia. "Dedan" apparently must be sought in the same region Dedan's descendants are not reported under the name of individuals but, as the plural ending (im) indicates, as peoples. For "Asshurim" we could correctly say "the Assurites," etc., "the Letushites," "the Leummites." Though the term "Asshurim" might as such refer to the Assyrians, the greater likelihood is that a north-Arabian desert tribe is meant. Since Nabataean names of persons, or Sabaean like these last three have been found in inscriptions, we shall class these last three as northArabian.4. Isaiah 60:6 would merely indicate that "Ephah" may have been Midian's most distinguished son. "Epher" -- not located. "Hanoch" reminds of Hanâkia three days' journey north of Medina. It has been pointed out that these three names Epha, Epher and Hanoch, are found also among the children of Israel and incidentally just among those tribes that lay nearest to Midian -- Judah, Manasseh, Reuben. "Abida" and "Eldaah" had best be classed merely as Arab tribes not identified.There is no reason for adopting the common attitude of our day that these are fictitious ancestral names invented by these tribes at a later date. Though nations frequently invented such fictions, that fact does not stamp our account as fictitious.5, 6. And Abraham gave all he had to Isaac. But to the sons of Abraham's concubines, Abraham gave gifts and sent them away from Isaac his son during his own lifetime, eastward to Kedem (East Country).With wise forethought Abraham makes disposition of his property "during his lifetime" (on 'ôdénû see G. K.100, o). The establishment as a whole goes to Isaac. The others are given adequate presents to enable each to make a proper beginning in life. This would involve about so much of cattle and goods as would constitute a reasonable nucleus to make possible a fair ranch. If all except Isaac are called "sons of Abraham's concubines," we have shown above in what sense this is meant in reference to Keturah. "Abraham's" is expressed by a clause, "which to Abraham," in order to avoid a succession of construct relationships (K. S.282e). In addition to giving gifts to the other children Abraham dismisses them so that the separation is made by his authority. They are said to have gone "eastward" (qedhemah) which is here used roughly to

include north-eastward and south-eastward. Or else, if it were actually meant in the strict sense, then at first all did go eastward but in succeeding generations spread farther to the north and the south. All this involves the supposition that our attempted identification and location of the names v.2-4 was at least relatively correct. The original expression used to indicate this direction taken by the descendants is: he sent them away "eastward to the East-Country," which we have ventured to translate "eastward to Kedem," because "Kedem" is at times used almost like a proper noun. It also appears quite readily that those who were sent away were not children of the second, and the third generation here listed but only his actual sons. The historian (Moses) adds the later names as a result of his knowledge of how the original tribes divided or subdivided. After his original dismissal Ishmael may have returned home, at least for a time.7-10. The whole length of Abraham's life was one hundred and seventy-five years. And Abraham expired and died at a good age, an old man and having had his fill (of days), and he was gathered to his people. And his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar, the Hittite, which was over against Mamre, the field which Abraham bought from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried with Sarah, his wife.In concluding so memorable a life, whose details have been given at such length, it is but natural that the writer use a measure of fulness of expression. Besides we are familiar since Ge 5:5 with the fulsome Hebrew expression: "the days of the years of the life which he lived," which we have made free to translate: "The whole length of the life." As is customary in compound numerals, the item counted -- here "years" -- is repeated in Hebrew (K. S.314 e).8. Here we still have the somewhat fuller style of expression "he expired and died" (gawa' and mûth). Of course, since all this more formal and elaborate expression is ascribed to the mythical P, one need not marvel to find the other uses of the phrase declared to be marks of the style of P -- "all P" says B D B -- although there are only two other passages where the double expression occurs (Ge 25:17; 35:29). It must appear at a glance that this is mere "reasoning in a circle." The first word (gawa') pictures the act of drawing one's last breath; the second (mûth), the general act of dying. By Abraham's time apparently the span of life had been so much curtailed that 175 years deserve to be described as a "good age." Zaqen is the most common designation of an old man, but it involves primarily the idea of dignity or rank growing out of riper experience (see remarks on Ge 24:2). The next word sabhé'a we have rendered "having had his fill (of days)" -- in one word: "sated." This does not mean "disgusted with life" or "tired of life," as some are wont to construe Luther's rendering: lebenssatt. The term has a good meaning; it implies that all wants and all expectations have been satisfied. What Ge 15:15 promised was fully realized.The last expression used is particularly noteworthy: he was gathered to his people. This cannot mean: buried with his relatives or ancestors, for we know that none of his kin except his wife lay buried at Machpelah. Apparently, the expression is then equivalent to the one used Ge 15:15, "to go to one's fathers." Those who have gone on before in death are regarded as a people still existing. This is a clear testimony to the belief in a life after death on the part of the earliest patriarch. Though no specific revelation on the subject seems to have been given to these patriarchs, faith in the Almighty God drew its own proper conclusions as to whether God would ultimately let his children perish, and its conclusion was correct: He cannot. This passage confirms that conclusion. If Scripture is to be explained by Scripture, then Hebrews 11:13-16 offers the fullest confirmation of our interpretation. Therefore the prevalent expositions which aim to deny the possibility of faith in a life after death on the part of the patriarchs will all have to be discarded. They may assert: "The popular conception of Sheol as a vast aggregate of graves in the underworld enabled the

language to be applied to men who (like Abraham) were buried far from their ancestors" (Skinner), but this "popular conception" is invented to cover a case like this. Such rationalizing explanations fail to do justice to the natural meaning of words. Luther saw the implications of these words very clearly: "If now there is another people' apart from those among whom we live, there must be a resurrection from the dead." K. C. points out that the passage cannot mean "to be laid in the family sepulchre," because it is used in cases where only one ancestor lay in the tomb (1 Kings 11:43; 22:40) or none at all (De 31:16; 1 Kings 2:10; 16:28; 2 Kings 21:18). Of course, when one's "people" are thought of as having gone on before, they are thought of as assembled in the Sheol, which in this connection can mean only the "afterworld" or the "hereafter." Nothing in this passage or in other instances of the use of the expression (cf. Ge 25:17; 35:29; Ge 49:29,33; Nu 20:24; 27:13; 31:2; De 32:50) indicates that the existence in the hereafter is regarded as dull, shadowy or unreal. Since practically in each case men of outstanding godliness are involved, it would even seem strange if such were the ultimate issue of a godly life. True, the New Testament fullness of revelation is not yet found in the Old. But the common assertion that the Pentateuch knows nothing of a life hereafter and of the resurrection from the dead is merely a preconceived error. True, we shall have to resort in part to reasoning like that employed by Christ Mt 22:31-33, but in reasoning thus we follow a very reliable precedent.9. Apparently there is no alienation between Isaac and Ishmael at this time any more. Either the death of Abraham had helped to bring the two sons together, or else (K. C.) Isaac had succeeded in effecting a reconciliation and an understanding (cf. Ge 24:62) before his marriage to Rebekah. In any case, both are at one in arranging for the burial of their father. There can be no doubt in their mind where the father had wished to be buried (cf. ch. Ge 23). Recalling all the transactions that gave Abraham this burial plot at Machpelah, the writer makes a rather detailed reference to the purchase of the cave and its location.11. And it came to pass after the death of Abraham that God blessed Isaac his son, and Isaac took up his dwelling at Beer-lahai-roi,We see that attention is about to centre on a new character in the narrative. This verse might be regarded as a kind of transitional paragraph. It is true that after the general plan of Genesis the matters of lesser importance must be disposed of first, and so before the formal heading v.19 Ge 25:19 there must be a brief treatment of the descendants of Ishmael; but a few verses (Ge 25:12-18) suffice for this purpose. Outstanding about Isaac from the outset was the fact that God's blessing was resting upon him. Everyone could discern that fact after brief observation. Besides, we need to know that Isaac's more or less permanent dwellingplace was the scene of the Angel's appearance to Hagar, Beer-lahai-roi. This place apparently had a strong attraction for Isaac cf. (Ge 24:62). The blessings received by Isaac are attributed to Elohim not to Yahweh, because here only such blessings are thought of as the Creator-God, Elohim, is wont to grant to those who serve Him faithfully. Isaac also received other blessings. These are not being reflected upon for the present. 7. History (Toledoth) of Ishmael (Ge 25:12-18)With the distinctive heading employed ten times in the book of Genesis this section is introduced and clearly marked as a new section. As a section it may be rather brief. But the alien elements, the portions that have only incidental connection with the development of God's kingdom, these are always disposed of quite briefly. The Bible retains the memory of such groups but it allots to them their proper place. What is not a part of the people of God, unfortunately, is unimportant.12-17. This is the history of Ishmael, the son of Abraham whom Hagar the Egyptian slave girl of Sarah bore to Abraham. These are the names of the sons of Ishmael named according to their generations: the first-born of Ishmael Nebaioth; and Kedar and Abdeel and

Mibsam, and Mishma and Dumah and Massa; Hadad and Temah, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. These, they are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names according to their settlements and encampments, twelve princes according to their nations. And this is the length of Ishmael's life, a hundred and thirty-seven years, and he expired and died and was gathered unto his people.The more formal style and precise phraseology are the chief reason for assigning this whole section (v. Ge 25:12-18) to the so-called P. But is not style bound to assume some such form when a concise report is being made? We still consider the man Moses capable of varying his style according to thee matter. When condensed reports were to be offered, he lapsed into this precise formal tone. On v.12-18 compare 1 Chronicles 1:28-31.12. That Ishmael's story or "history" (see Ge 2:4) is given at all is really due to the fact that Ishmael is "the son of Abraham." But when the added explanation is given, "whom Hagar, the Egyptian slave girl bore to Abraham," the story of chapter 16 together with the promises of Ge 21:18 are called to mind. So we observe that this account, brief as it is, aims to furnish proof for the fulfilment of God's promises in reference to this first-born son of Abraham. Ishmael did develop into a "great nation."13-15. As above v. Ge 2-4 so here the identification and the location of these twelve princes descended from Ishmael offer difficulties. We shall briefly catalogue a few possibilities along this line. There is no valid ground for departing from the plain meaning of the text. These twelve were actually direct descendants of Ishmael, perhaps all twelve actual sons, for the first is distinctly marked as "first-born." "Assumed eponymous ancestors" is critical conjecture.Apparently, generally speaking, the Ishmaelites for the most part occupied a territory somewhat more to the east and south of the Sons of Keturah. Skinner assigns to them the region "intermediate between the Arabian Cushites on the south; the Edomites, Moabites, etc., on the west; and the Aramaeans on the north -- The Syro-Arabian desert north of Gebel Shammar" (which lies almost in the centre, or north-centre of Arabia)."Nebaioth" are now usually identified with the Nabayâti of the inscriptions of Asshurbanipal. Yet K. W. still retains the old identification with the Nabataeans, who after the Exile made Petra in Edom their stronghold and capital. Pliny also speaks of Nabataei and Cedrei ("Kedar"). According to Isaiah 60:7 they were rich in flocks. North Arabia will, for the most part, have been their home."Kedar" -- cf. above. The cuneiform inscriptions offer the parallel Qidri. These Ishmaelites were renowned as archers (cf. Isaiah 21:16; Jeremiah 49:28 ff.). Psalms 120:5 alludes to them as the remotest of strangers."Abdeel" sounds so much like the Idibi'il or Idiba'il of the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III that we may regard this as a satisfactory identification. North-arabian."Mibsam" -- unidentified.14. "Mishma" -- unidentified. "Dumah" lies in Northern Arabia also and may be identical with Dumath al-Jandal, seven days' journey southeast of Damascus. Of course, throughout this section, when we take the personal name and treat it as a place name, we imply that the original personal name came to be identified with a certain locality and so became a geographical term. The "Dumah" of Isa.21:11 may be the same as this. "Massa" perhaps lay also in Northern Arabia. It may be identical with the Masa of the Assyrian inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser.15. "Hadad" -- unidentified. "Tema" again seems to be four days' journey south of Dumah, now called Taimâ'u, or Teyma. About "Jetur" we know from 1 Chronicles 1:31 that it was an Arab tribe with which Reuben engaged in conflict in the days of the conquest. Strabo speaks of Itouraioi te xai Arabev. The New Testament "Ituraea" Lu 3:1 seems to be derived from it. "Naphish"- unidentified. "Kedemah" -- likewise.16. Now appears our justification for the remark on v.14 that personal names and place names are treated as identical because the place derived its name from the particular prince who settled there: "these are their names according to their settlements and encampments." It is

somewhat difficult for us to see where the difference between "settlements" (chatserîm) and "encampments" (tîrôth) lies. K. C. makes the former more protective -- (schirmendes Zeltlager) and the latter distinctly made up of tents (Zeltlager). Skinner takes the former to mean "villages," the latter "a circular encampment of a nomadic tribe." But the main point at issue is that proof be furnished that the promise of Ge 17:20 concerning the "twelve princes" was fulfilled. The beth sphaerae or "beth of enumeration" occurs in "according to their settlements" (K. S.402s). 17. Ishmael, though according to Ge 16:12 a somewhat wild and independent character, does not come near Abraham's age, dying at the age of 137 years. He, too, was gathered unto his people, whether these now in Sheol were the lost or the saved. There is the possibility that a man such as he, a man, who was the object of a divine word of promise, Ge 16:11, 12; Ge 17:20 and who had grown up under the influence of a godly man like Abraham, may have retained faith in God all his days. The expression 16 :12 ("wild ass") implies no moral stigma.18. They had their dwelling place (in the region) from Havilah unto Shur, which lies east of Egypt in the direction of Assyria. He settled to the east of all his brethren.According to the prominent geographical terms of that day a summary is given of the territory inhabited by Ishmael -- wayyishkenû -- "and they dwelt" -- "they had their dwelling place in the region," etc. In Ge 10:7 we assigned to "Havilah" the sandy regions east of Egypt. "Shur" lay somewhere nearer the Egyptian border (cf. Ge 16:7). The expression alpeney here appears to have the common (see B D B, 818 b) meaning "to the east of." "Assyria" ('ashshûr) here would appear to be the well-known eastern country and not some scarcely known tribe of the immediate vicinity, for general directions are being given. Naphal, "to fall," here means to "settle down," though no parallels can be cited. To render "he died in the presence of all his brethren" (A. V.) has no point. Luther, who translates er fiel in his commentary, later abandoned this rendering for "he opposed" -- er legte sich wider alle seine Brueder. But "he abode" (A. R. V.) or "he settled" (above) is more in harmony with the context.8. History of Isaac (Ge 25:19-35:29)Again a new "history," toledoth, (see Ge 2:4). Though a more or less passive character, Isaac's life dominates the earlier stages of Jacob's life, so much so that though much more is told about Jacob up to Ge 35:29, yet Isaac must have been the dominating influence of Jacob's life to that point.1) Birth and Early History of the Twin Brothers (Ge 25:19-34)19, 20. This is the history of Isaac, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac. And Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramaean of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban, the Aramaean.The opening statement cannot be translated the following are the descendant (Meek and others). See Ge 2:4. Since the new history is beginning, the relationships are recapitulated in a rather formal fashion. This accounts for having the author recall that Isaac was Abraham's son. This is also done because immediately a strange parallel between the case of Abraham and that of Isaac is to be touched upon.20. The events of the preceding chapter are here summarized and the additional notice is given that Isaac was forty years old when he "married" (Hebrew: "took to wife") Rebekah. The patriarchs practised fine self-restraint and were not unduly hasty about getting married.21. And Isaac interceded with Yahweh in behalf of his wife, for she was childless; and Yahweh granted his entreaty and Rebekah his wife conceived.As Luther has pointed out, Isaac is the only patriarch till now whose intercession is recorded, and he accounts for the exception by the fact that this prayer was of unusual moment, being concerned with the promised Seed. The verb athar means "to pray," the Arabic parallel signifying another form of devout exercise, "to sacrifice." The idea of particular urgency does not lie in the verb, as older commentators suggest. The preposition used with this verb lenókhach means "over against" in the

sense that in thought his wife stood over against him as the object of his prayers. We should naturally translate "for" or "in behalf of." It is remarkable, indeed, that for a second time the wife of one who perpetuates the line of promise should be barren. However, it is to be made as apparent as possible that divine grace and not human endeavour or achievement is operative in these matters. For that reason, too, the faithful gracious God "Yahweh" is entreated, not Elohim. The same verb is used as before but now in the passive, in the sense of "He -- suffered Himself to be entreated" or He "granted his entreaty" using an active construction. The lô with the passive expresses the agent (K. S.102 a). It indicates a high value put upon motherhood and a proper estimate of the greatness of the gift of children when prayer to Yahweh is resorted to in order to obtain offspring. In this case, without a doubt, the thought of the Messiah to come was involved on Isaac's and on Rebekah's part. Conception or the absence of conception is more directly due to the omnipotent power of the Creator than men are wont to believe. Procksch presses the Arabic parallel beyond what Hebrew usage allows for when he makes the verb athar signify "to sacrifice" and then construes lenôkhach to mean that Rebekah was present before Isaac during the sacrifice.22. And the children jostled one another within her, and she said: If it be so, for what then am I (destined)? And she went to inquire of Yahweh. Rebekah was pregnant with twins without being aware of it. The children, as little able to agree now as later in life, "jostle one another" (Meek). Yithrotsatsû, Hithpael of the verb ratsats, "to crush," can hardly have so violent a meaning as "crush" or "thrust or strike" (BDB). Even "struggled" (A. V.) is a bit strong. Luther's stiessen sich -- "jostled," as Meek renders it. The mother is alarmed, for she feels more than mere movements of the foetus. The unusual movements seem portents of unusual things. Yet she knows that pregnancy came as a gracious answer to prayer. "If (now) it be so" that these alarming movements within her accompany her pregnancy, then this must mean something for her too. She wonders what: "for what then am I (destined)?" By supplying this "destined" (as K. C.) we give a simple, natural meaning to the question: "for what then I?" Of course, we then resolve lammah into its component parts -- "for what" rather than to use the other common meaning "why" (A. V.). The divine answer given reveals to her to what she is destined: to bring forth two nations. This solution of this difficult passage should prove quite satisfactory, inasmuch as the other more acceptable of the many suggestions offered: "wherefore do I live?" (A. R. V.; Targum) has to supply the chief idea "live." Besides, it is hardly thinkable that movement of the foetus should at once cause Rebekah to despair of life.We have no means of determining how and where Rebekah "inquired" (darash -- "to seek or enquire") of Yahweh. Perhaps it was at some sanctuary where Abraham had been wont to worship. To speak of her as resorting to an "oracle" imports heathenish notions into the Hebrew text. Luther supposes that she will have consulted Shem. The answer may have come in a dream or vision (cf. Ge 15:1).Genesis 25:2323.And Yahweh said unto her:Two nations are in thy womb,Two peoples shall be separated from thybowels;One people shall be stronger than theother,And the elder shall serve the younger.A significant word revealing the destiny of nations. Since it has to do with the fulfilment of covenant promises, it is ascribed to Yahweh. It is somewhat mysterious as to import, but only until the fulfilment becomes apparent. In reality each of the four clauses is clear-cut in its meaning. We claim a certain mysteriousness only in the sense that at first hearing it seems somewhat difficult. But that characteristic is no doubt inherent in these words to challenge further reflection. The first thought is: Rebekah is to be a mother of twins who will be the ancestors of two nations. She had through her husband asked for a child; she now inquired as to what her destiny in the matter of these children should be. Rebekah finds that Yahweh is rich

exceeding abundantly above what we ask and think. She sought to be a mother of a child; she becomes a mother of two nations.The second part of the promise is pregnant in its brevity: two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels means, of course, that two children shall come forth and shall develop into two distinct nations who shall be separate from one another (K. S.213 c). Yipparedhû carries the emphasis in the sense that these two nations shall have nothing in common. They shall "separate" because they are so radically different and shall remain apart for ever. To make "peoples" by metonomy stand for "ancestors" (K. C.) is not necessary.The third advance in thought reveals that one of the two shall exceed the other in strength: one strong nation, one weaker nation.Lastly, it appears that the reverse of what would have been anticipated will be the case: "the elder shall serve the younger." Now it is true, the Hebrew reads: "great shall serve small." But, since clearly the two sons are under discussion, it is not to be supposed that of two sons one will always be "great," consequently the matter of age only is here under consideration. Besides, tsa'îr usually means "young." Consequently, the only feasible translation will have to be: "the elder shall serve the younger." Ordinarily pre-eminence would seem to be associated with the first-born. Here we are clearly told that this rule is to be reversed.The whole divine oracle is cast into poetic form. The clauses are parallel in structure 1 with 2 and 3 with 4. Le'om ("people") is a poetic word. The absence of the article is characteristic of poetic arrangement. Whether the substance of this utterance was originally cast into this very form or not is difficult to determine. The likelihood is that the word is recorded just as it was transmitted to Rebekah, form and substance dating from the Lord Himself.Nor should it be overlooked that this significant word lays down more than a particular ruling applicable in this one instance. Paul's use of it (Ro 9:12) indicates that at the same time the concluding statement ("the elder shall serve the younger") offers a general principle holding good for all times in the kingdom of God. For in this kingdom, first of all, every natural advantage of the carnal man is of no account in God's sight in the matter of salvation. The power and the claims of the natural man have to yield precedence to God's choice and election by grace. In the second place, a moral principle is also involved: whatever excellence man may possess, it is all to be put to the service of the fellow-man, the strong serving the weak. This further application of the word does not, therefore, assign a double meaning to it. Rather, the general principle and its specific application blend into one in this instance. Though we claim that the somewhat mysterious character of the word challenges deeper thought on the part of the recipients of it, we hold just as definitely to the contention that it was clearly understood by them from the very outset. God's primary purpose in giving revelation to men is that the revelation might reveal. Prayerful meditation upon this significant divine utterance established its meaning and its purpose very definitely for all involved. We even venture to say that this word became one of the guiding stars of this patriarchal family. Nor can there be any doubt that what Rebekah clearly understood will have been imparted without hesitation to Isaac. Such divine words in their very nature were intended to be common property of the family involved. Secretiveness about the matter will have been unthinkable. Consequently, as the two sons came to years of discretion, this word will have been communicated to them. This, of course, makes our problem all the more difficult when we come to explain how Isaac could afterward have attempted to ignore this word in the matter of blessing Esau. But we see absolutely no reason why Rebekah should have withheld this revelation from the rest of the family. Nor do we believe that so definite a word could have been misunderstood.24-26. When the time for her delivery came, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first one came forth red, all over like a hairy garment, and they

called his name Esau (Hairy). Next his brother came forth and his hand was holding Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob (Heeler). And Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.What had been revealed previously by a word from Yahweh now becomes manifest in the hour of birth: there are "twins in her womb." The form tômim ("twins") is a shorter spelling for te'omim.25. The first-born is adhmonî -- "red" or "reddish-brown." Besides he is entirely covered with hair so as to resemble a "garment of hair" -- 'addéreth se'ar. In se'ar there seems to be involved an allusion to the land of Seir where Esau later took up his dwelling. So also adhmonî forms the basis for the name "Edom," for which more particular cause is found expressed in v. Ge 25:30. In any case, we have a record here of a child that seems unusually rough and rugged -- a sturdy healthy child abounding in animal strength. I fail to see in this a humorous allusion to Esau's appearance as being like that of a little hairy goat (Gunkel). Such explanations aim to make the Scriptures ridiculous. However, this very remarkable feature about the child's appearance is sufficient to give a name to the child. "Esau" does mean "hairy," as the Arabic parallels indicate. It may be objected that this matter of appearance is too trivial to account for the actual giving of a name. But men familiar with the Orient find this to be a characteristic scene, quite likely to have occurred.26. The significant thing about the second twin is that his hand was holding Esau's heel. Now commentators have disputed much about the possibility of such a thing. It is not, however, said that he already held the heel while both were in the mother's womb. For, in any case, who could have seen that the younger brother did thus? Here it is said that he did so as he came forth. Ho 12:3 says: "In the womb he took his brother by the heel." Both statements can be reconciled on the supposition that as the first was born and before the umbilical cord was cut, the second reached forth his hand, perhaps while the first was still emerging, and laid hold on his brother's heel. Surely, that was very irregular, since an hour usually elapses between the birth of twins. But cases have been known, on the one hand, where the interval became as much as three days between the birth of twins. So, on the other hand, the case is thinkable where one twin follows immediately upon the heels of the other. That case, again, is so significant that it may well furnish occasion for the giving of the name. For ya'aqobh is derived from the root aqebh ("heel"). Consequently, though we translate the name "Heeler," we mean it in the sense of "Heel-gripper" (Meek), and that naturally leads to the other interpretation given to the name by Esau himself (Ge 27:36). Consequently there is no ground for claiming that this is a shortened form of "Jacob-el," just because this latter name appears as the name of a place in a list of Thotmes III and again as a personal name on a Babylonian contract tablet of Hammurabi's time. Such a claim grows out of the attempt to reduce things Israelitish to the Babylonian or the Egyptian level. Rather, here is a unique name of unique origin. From the concluding remark we learn that these parents had waited twenty years for children; cf. v. Ge 25:20. No need of a textual change in the last clause, for belédheth can well refer to the father: "in (his) begetting them"; compare any lexicon on this use of the word -- B D B says it occurs twenty-two times.How inconclusive Scriptural evidence is for the critic appears from remarks such as: "The question whether Jacob was originally a tribe, a deity, or an individual man thus remains unsettled by etymology" (Skinner) -- as though the remaining evidence aside from the etymological were weak. 27, 28. And the boys grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter, a man living in the open country, but Jacob was a man of peaceful habits, as a tent dweller. And Isaac loved Esau, for game pleased him. But Rebekah loved Jacob.The disparity between the two lads became increasingly apparent as they grew up. Esau develops into a "skilful hunter," literally: "knowing hunting." The parallel expression, "man of the field" ('ish

sadheh) cannot mean that he followed agricultural pursuits (ein Ackermann, Luther), but rather the opposite: he was a man who disdained agriculture and was a "man of the open country," i. e., a man roving about everywhere. Examining this description a bit more closely, we notice that he turned his attention not to what would naturally have been his calling but that he loved excitement, activity, change and freedom. Consequently, he grew up to be an undisciplined character. Besides, as the fathers were wont to remark, the continual pursuit of a life of hunting makes characters harsh and cruel. The pursuits of it has no ennobling effects when it becomes an obsession. Apparently, the word tam in reference to Jacob aims to describe the very opposite traits. Though tam signifies "complete," "perfect," here it means: adequately filling the requirements of his calling, not roving about but "a man of peaceful habits," as we have rendered above. Luther's fromm may cover that, for it does not refer to a pious disposition only. "A plain man" (A. V.) is beside the point; "quiet" (A. R. V.) is better. So, too, "dwelling in tents" (A. V.) misses the point. Why mention at all where he dwelt? Traits are being discussed. Yosebh ohalîm means: as a man dwelling in tents is wont to be, here then: a typical nomad. That thought is to the point; for being destined to live a nomadic life, he gave himself to the pursuits typical to his class. He was intent upon filling well the place in life prepared for him.28. Strange to say, Isaac loved Esau. The reason assigned is: "game pleased him" -- literally, "(was) in his mouth," bephîw. It would hardly have gotten into his mouth if he did not like it; consequently our translation. Luther has about the same: ass gern von seinem Weidwerk. So A. V. is meant. This cannot be the only thing that bound these two characters closely together. In itself this fact suggests a character unduly given to the things that tickle the palate. But besides, the more passive Isaac finds himself attracted to the more active and bold Esau just because he himself lacks these qualities. Whereas Rebekah understands and loves the diligent and dutiful Jacob better. Rebekah had spiritual ambitions, in a good sense. They prompted her originally to cast in her lot with Isaac. Jacob had a kindred spirit. This kinship was the bond uniting the two. Luther's remarks cover the rest of the case: "Just as mothers are wont to love the sons who are of a more quiet and friendly disposition rather than those who are wild and bold, so fathers love those sons who are a bit more lively and bold." No inferior ground is adduced in referring to Rebekah's love for Jacob. Still, on the whole, a measure of partiality was involved on the part of both parents. We take this verse to imply a rebuke for both parties.29, 30. And Jacob boiled pottage and Esau came from the field faint with hunger, and Esau said to Jacob: Let me swallow, please, some of that red stuff there, for I am faint with hunger. (That is why he is called Edom -- Red).A characteristic prosaic incident is here recorded, an incident fraught with far-reaching consequences, as certain almost trifling occurrences sometimes come to be of greatest moment. -- The first expression used -- Jacob "seethed a seething," yßzedh nazîdh. The expression is quite vague for the present. Later it develops that the "seething" was lentils, a savory dish. Esau returns from his customary pursuits out in the open field. On this occasion he seems unusually famished. Ayeph actually means only "faint," or "weary." In this case the faintness which results from hunger; consequently: "faint with hunger." With the ravenous appetite resulting from outdoor activity Esau can hardly restrain himself. His words are expressive of his uncontrolled hunger. He asks not merely with a mild "feed me" (A. V.) or an equally mild "let me taste" but hal'îtenî, "let me swallow," almost, "let me gulp." Besides, his haste does not allow him even to try to name the pottage under preparation; he just designates it: "of the red, that red." Just as we should say: "some of that red stuff there," (so also Meek). Incidentally, this significant incident, gave occasion also for calling him "Edom" -- for

adhom was "the red." Now this second etymological explanation within the same chapter for the name Edom does not conflict with the first (v. Ge 25:25). It only shows that by a peculiar guidance of Providence two events occurred that gave rise to the name, or, better still, the original name was doubly confirmed by this particular experience. By the way, the repetition of adhom above was not for emphasis (K. S.309 m) but an indication of impatience. 31-33. And Jacob said: Sell me thy birthright first. And Esau said: Behold, I for my part am going to meet death; of what use is the birthright to me? And Jacob said: Give me an oath on this first, and he gave him an oath. So he sold his birthright to Jacob.At this point the interpretations usually run afoul of an old misconception: they assume that Jacob gives evidence of crafty duplicity, that Jacob is all wrong and Esau all right, although the account closes (34 b) Ge 25:34 with a criticism of Esau. Behind this misunderstanding lies a second one, formulated best perhaps in the naive claim of Dods: "The character of Jacob is easily understood." Fact of the matter is, Jacob's character is one of the hardest to understand; it is complicated, it has many folds and convolutions. But in this particular incident the Scriptural point of view must be maintained: Esau was primarily to blame.Another explanation must be inserted here. Jacob was really a spiritually minded man with appreciation of spiritual values and with distinct spiritual ambitions. Especially in the matter of carrying on the line of promise from which the Saviour would come did Jacob have ambitions. The aspirations apparently, however, were begotten by the divine word of promise (v.23 Ge 25:23). Yahweh had destined Jacob to pre-eminence. Jacob gladly accepted the choice and aspired to attain to the treasure promised. His eagerness was commendable. His choice of means in arriving at the desired end was not always above reproach. He felt he had to help the good Lord along occasionally. He was not fully confident of God's methods for arriving at the goal. He felt the need of occasionally inserting a bit of assistance of his own. Such an attitude was one of mistrust: confidence in human ingenuity rather than in divine dependability -- in one word -- unbelief. But his spiritual aggressiveness was by no means to be despised, nor was it wrong.Approaching this incident with these facts in mind we seem compelled to assume one thing in order to understand Jacob's request. It appears, namely, that the subject of the birthright bekhorah -- "firstbornness," "primogeniture," then the right of the first, ie., "birthright." had been under consideration between the brothers on a previous occasion. It would also seem that Esau had made some derogatory remark about its value, or had even spoken about his own readiness to part with the privilege. Otherwise we can hardly believe that Jacob would have made this special request without further motivation, or that Esau would have consented to the bargain without more ado. This, indeed, puts Jacob into a more favourable light, but so does our text (v.34 Ge 25:34). Indeed, there is left on Jacob's part a measure of shrewd calculation in so timing his request that he catches Esau at a disadvantage, a form of cunning which we must condemn without reservation. Yet the act does not call for such strong criticism as: he was "ruthlessly taking advantage of his brother, watching and waiting till he was sure of his victim" (Dods).Besides, to clarify issues we had better notice that the material advantages of the birthright were not under consideration by Jacob, whatever these advantages may at Jacob's time have been. According to the Mosaic law of a later date the right of the first-born involved a double portion of the father's inheritance (De 21:17) and a kind of supremacy over one's brethren and his father's house (Ge 27:29). But observe how obviously humble Jacob appears after his return from Mesopotamia, yielding the pre-eminence to Esau in all things. Mikhrah ("sell") is an emphatic imperative (G. K.48 i). The expression kayyôm, literally: "as the day," "according to the day," comes to mean "at once," "first of all" (B D B) as in v.33, 1

Samuel 2:16; 1 Kings 1:51.32. Esau's answer seems a bit puzzling in its first part: "Behold, I for my part am going to meet death." Can he really mean: "I am at the point to die" (A. V.) from hunger? Shall we, then, subscribe to the interpretation of Dods: "Who does not feel contempt for the great strong man declaring he will die if he is required to wait five minutes till his own supper is prepared?" Esau is hardly such a big baby. Sturdy hunter that he was, he must have been somewhat inured to privations. Or does he then mean: "I shall die sooner or later anyhow"? That's rather a flat notion in this connection. So we conclude that anokhî hôlekh lamûth, with the emphatic pronoun first, means: "I, for my part," in my dangerous calling, "am going to meet death" rather soon anyhow; so "of what use is the birthright to me?" This latter statement now actually displays Esau's real sentiments: he has no appreciation of, or desire for, spiritual advantages or values. He despises the intangible spiritual entity as altogether too nebulous. In this sense he was a profane person (Heb.12:16). His was a coarse, entirely unspiritual nature. What if there was a chosen line from which a Saviour would ultimately spring? To be associated with that ideal prospect was not worth aspiring after, thought he. 33. Jacob is so eager to obtain this advantage that he wants more than a hasty word, that might be regretted on the morrow, to bind the bargain. To give proof of his eagerness and to let Esau give proof of his sincerity in the matter, Jacob asks: "Give me an oath on this first." The solemnity of the added oath does not deter Esau; he promptly gives the oath.34. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank and arose and went his way. So Esau despised his birthright.Well-pleased with his bargain, Jacob gives "bread," which is really presupposed for a meal, together with the pottage of adhashîm ("lentils"). Wellpleased with his bargain, Esau eats, drinks, rises and goes away. There is something carnal about the attitude of Esau, so carnal as to rouse a feeling of contempt. The severe condemnation of this statement, he "despised his birthright," as well as that of the letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 12:16): "a profane person" bebhlov puts the emphasis where it belongs. Now we can understand why God had not chosen Esau to carry on the line of the Messiah. Total spiritual incapacity was characteristic of this man. He could hardly serve as guardian of mankind's dearest hope. On wayyesht see G. K.75 q o.On the whole transaction Luther draws attention to a basic fact that should not be overlooked: this was not a valid purchase, because Jacob was attempting to purchase what was already his. With equal correctness it might be said that Esau was attempting to sell what was not his. Consequently, Bishop Hall's remark (Jamieson) was only partly true when he said: "There was never any meal, except the forbidden fruit, so dear bought as this broth of Jacob."HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSMost of the matter of this chapter is not directly adapted to homiletical use. For the list of Abraham's children by Keturah and the disposition made of his property are not readily adaptable to sermonic purposes. One would hardy care to use v.5, 6 Ge 25:5,6 for the purpose of enforcing the desirability of making proper division of one's property. The theme is hardly big enough for a Gospel preacher, good as it may be on occasion to offer solid instruction on this head incidentally, where the sub- ject that is being treated may allow for such instruction. Also the subject matter of v. Ge 25:19-26 is not suitable for use in the pulpit for obvious reasons. If one needs would treat a subject like that of v. Ge 25:23 -- "the elder shall serve the younger" -- and the broad principle that is involved, it would be better to use Ro 9:12 or as much of the chapter in Romans as is deemed suitable. The last part of the chapter v. Ge 25:27-34 seems to us to come under a head such as Spiritual Aggressiveness, or even, The Right Goal but the Wrong Way. In any case, it should specially be borne in mind that the one censured by the text is Esau not Jacob.

CHAPTER XXVI

2. Various Scenes from Isaac's Life (chapter 26) The incidents recorded in this chapter are the only ones in which Isaac figures as chief character. Immediately thereafter other persons stand out more prominently. This is in keeping with the character of Isaac. He is not the prominent, aggressive figure that Abraham is. Isaac, himself a great man in his own right, is quite overshadowed by the towering figure of Abraham. True Isaac is a quiet and unassuming man, patient and submissive in his contact with others. But to infer from this that he is unworthy of the patriarchal position would be wrong. He is a man of strong faith. But it is not given to all men to occupy equally prominent positions in the kingdom of God. The distinct advance made in Abraham's day is carefully guarded by Isaac. Isaac lives in the fulness of truth revealed to Abraham. Spiritually he is a true son of his father. It has well been said that the experience of Moriah put its stamp upon Isaac and taught him that in patiently submitting to the Lord's will one shall see the Lord's salvation. The pronounced parallel between events in Isaac's life and those of Abraham's can only disturb those who are too shortsighted to see that similar characters under similar circumstances in a given age are very likely to have similar experiences. A bit less of theorizing about such situations and a bit more of observation of real life will furnish a multitude of parallels equally startling. (a) Sojourn in Philistaea (v.1-11) 1. And there came a famine in the land, other than the first famine that was in the days of Abraham; and Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, to Gerar. The writer, conscious of the similarity of Isaac's situation to that of Abraham's, is at pains to remind us that this could not be the famine of Abraham's time, and that we, therefore, have an entirely new case to deal with. In fact, a bit of computation reminds us that a full century had passed since that time. The second half of the verse is best construed as giving in characteristic Hebrew fashion the whole event in a summary fashion: Isaac went to Gerar. The details, beginning back in point of time before he actually started out, follow, beginning at verse 2. The Abimelech here mentioned can hardly be the Abimelech of chapter 20, who ruled Philistaea eighty years before. The common assumption that Abimelech was a standing designation of all Philistine kings, like Pharaoh for the Egyptian, finds definite support in the heading of Ps 34, where Abimelech is used as a title for the man who 1 Samuel 21:10-15 appears as Achish. "Gerar" appears to be identical with Umm-Jerar, about ten miles south of Gaza. 2-5. And Yahweh appeared to him and said: Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land I tell thee of; sojourn in this land and I will be with thee and I will bless thee. For to thee and to thy descendants do I give all these lands. And I will fulfill my oath which I swore to Abraham, thy Father, and I will multiply thy descendants as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to thy descendants all these lands, and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves in thy seed; because that Abraham hearkened to my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. The situation is sufficiently important to call for divine intervention. God appears to Isaac as well as to Abraham; but only twice to Isaac: here and v. Ge 26:24. He appears in the capacity of "Yahweh," because His graciousness as the covenant God watching over the covenant people is displayed. According to our interpretation of v. Ge 26:1 this word was spoken before. Isaac set out from southern Palestine. Isaac may actually have contemplated a temporary sojourn in Egypt. This is denied him.

Divine providence alone can determine whether what is permissible in one case is advisable in another. The statement, "dwell in the land I tell thee of," means, "in whatever land I may designate from time to time." There Isaac is to sojourn, and in every case he will be sure of the attendance of the divine presence as well as of the divine blessing. The blessings spoken upon Abraham are here being definitely renewed for Isaac in all their fulness with certain modifications of expression. The correspondence part for part with these earlier promises is too obvious to require to be pointed out: descendants, a land for these descendants, God's blessing upon them in that land. If incidentally the one land is now thought of in terms of the constituent parts: "all these lands," the difference in expression is merely nominal. Ha'el, the shortened form for ha'elleh, is one of the peculiarities of the Pentateuch. All such gifts as are here promised are based upon that basic oath spoken to Abraham (Ge 22:16 f.) which is important enough to be alluded to again. 4. The promise of numerous offspring is as much in place for Isaac as for Abraham, for in Isaac's case, too, the chosen family had not yet displayed numerical strength. The second half of the verse brings the distinctly Messianic element in the promise. For there is but one thing sufficiently important to challenge the strongest interest of "all the nations of the earth" and that is the Messianic blessing. Here, however, a slightly different point of view obtains. In Ge 12:3 the simple passive (Nifal) had been used, "be blessed." Here the reflexive (Hithpael) appears, "bless oneself." Naturally the latter is not radically different from the former, nor does it cancel the idea of the former. The passive speaks of objective blessings. The reflexive shows the subjective reaction: nations shall "bless themselves," i. e., wish themselves the blessings conferred through Abraham's seed, the Messiah in particular. Heretofore we have been translating zéra'(" seed") as collective: "descendants" (also v.3), but here we definitely believe that the One great Descendant is primarily under consideration, "the Seed," the Christ. We also hold that in the light of Ge 3:15 (see explanation there) men like Isaac will have interpreted this word as referring specifically to One -- a fact denied almost universally in our day but yet true. 5. Though, indeed, this promise originally given to Abraham was a promise of pure grace, without any merit or worthiness on his part, yet God's mercy deigned to note with delight the one thing that Abraham did, which kept him from making himself unworthy of the divine promises: Abraham obeyed every divine injunction. Therefore, these manifold blessings, Isaac is told, come upon him for Abraham his father's sake, or rather, because of Abraham's faithful obedience. Remarkable is the scope of divine blessings that are mediated through faithful Abraham. In order to make prominent the thought that Abraham conscientiously did all that God asked, the various forms of divine commandments are enumerated; sometimes, of course, a divine word would fall under several of these categories. They are a "charge" or "observance" if they are to be observed mishméreth from shamar, ("observe"). They are "commandments" (mitswôth) when regarded from the angle of having been divinely commanded. They are "statutes" (chuqqôth) when thought of as immutable, and "laws" (torôth) insofar as they involve divine instruction or teaching. Under these headings would come the "commandment" to leave home (ch. Ge 12), the "statute" of circumcision, the instruction to sacrifice Isaac, or to do any other particular thing such as (Ge 15:8) to sacrifice, or (Ge 13:17, 18) to walk through the land, as well as all other individual acts as they are implied in his attitude toward Yahweh, his faithful God. By the use of these terms Moses, who purposes to use them all very frequently in his later books, indicates that "laws, commandments, charges, and statutes" are nothing new but were involved already in patriarchal religion. Criticism, of course, unable to appreciate such valuable and suggestive thoughts, or thinking Moses, at least, incapable of having them, here decrees that these words

come from another source, for though J wrote the chapter, J, according to the lists they have compiled, does not have these words in his vocabulary, and so the device, so frequently resorted to, is employed here of claiming to discern traces of a late hand, a redactor. 6, 7. And Isaac dwelt in Gerar; and when the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said: She is my sister, for he was afraid to say: She is my wife lest the men of the place slay me because of Rebekah, for she was beautiful to look at. Isaac, constituted much like his father, finding himself in a situation identical with the one in which his father has figured, does exactly as his father. The very strange thing about this action is that it is as wrong here as there, if not more wrong, For Isaac must have known how the matter turned out in the case of his father. But then, for that matter, sin is never logical.Criticism, with almost complete unanimity we know of only Koenig as an exception calls this a later (Isaac) version of the original (Abraham) legend, or else calls chapter 26 the original and chapter 20 derivative. Yet the differences, aside from the very plain statements of the text to the same effect, point to two different situations: here a famine, there none; here Rebekah is not molested, there Abimelech took Sarah; here accidental discovery, there divine intervention; here no royal gift, there rich recompense. Of course, criticism usually points to Ge 12:10 ff. as being merely another form of the same incident. Yet at least one aspect of the critical approach can be refuted completely on purely critical grounds. For, as K. C. observes, it is unthinkable that J, to whom chapter 12 as well as chapter 26 are attributed, should have preserved two versions of one and the same incident.8-10. And it came to pass after quite a number of days had passed, that Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out of his window, and, behold, Isaac was caressing Rebekah, his wife. And Abimelech summoned Isaac and said: Look here, she certainly is thy wife, and how is it that thou saidst: She is my sister? And Isaac said to him: (I did it) because I said: that I might not die on her account. And Abimelech said: What, now, hast thou done to us? Quite easily some of the people might have lain with thy wife, and so thou wouldest have brought guilt upon us.The situation comes to a climax after quite a number of days had passed (literally, "the days had grown long for him"), when Abimelech, looking out of a "window," (one of the small latticed openings looking beyond the confines of the court), happened to see Isaac, who dearly loved his wife (Ge 24:25), "caressing" her (metsach (ch) eq -- "fondling," "sporting." A.V.), a course of procedure not followed with sisters. Though the term "sister" is sometimes used loosely, even the relative truth involved by such use would in Isaac's mouth have been employed in order to deceive, and would thus certainly have been an untruth.9. The wayyiqra' can hardly here mean: he called out to him from the window (Procksch), by which boorish behaviour on the king's part a lifelike touch is supposed to be secured. Rather, he formally "summoned" Isaac. The king's mode of stating the case implies suspicions that he has held right along: "Look (here), she certainly is thy wife," a shade of thought caught by Meek when he renders: "So she really is your wife." Taken to task for his lie, Isaac weakly admits that he had been afraid: men might have put him to death on her account. Amûth ("die") is here really used in the sense of "lose my life." The kî is best explained as "because," and so it involves an ellipsis ("I did it").10. Abimelech administers a well-deserved rebuke. The memory of what happened to his grandfather may perhaps have still been fresh at court. Kim'at could mean "almost," but that would imply what the text otherwise does not indicate, that some individual had been on the verge of approaching her. So "easily" (A. V.) is more in place. This Abimelech also has a measure of the fear of God still left in his heart, for he knows that adultery involves "guilt." However, obversely, by the argument from silence we dare not infer, as some do, that the king considered carnal intercourse with a maiden as entirely right. For it

appears far more likely that a man who seeks to avoid guilt on the part of himself and his people will not have stood on so low a level morally, and will have referred to "guilt," asham, in the sense of "great guilt." After kim'at the perfect always is used (K. S.175). Hebe'tha with e (G. K.76h). Mah-zo'th could mean "what is this?" perhaps "why?" but most likely the demonstrative is used for a mild emphasis: "what, now?"11. And Abimelech gave orders to all his people, saying: He that toucheth this man or his wife shall without fail be put to death.The king is a man who desires to have righteousness strictly upheld among his people, so he gives orders to all his people, apparently by some public proclamation. Hebrew: "this man and his wife" means "this man or his wife" (K. S.375f). The same result is arrived at by construing the thought thus: "he that toucheth this man and he that toucheth his wife." In mûth yûmath the Hofal of the verb is strengthened by the Kal absolute infinitive, by which construction the verbal idea is made more positive not intensified; therefore: "shall be put to death without fail."(b) His Prosperity (v.12-17)12-14. And Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped that year a hundred fold; and so Yahweh blessed him. And the man prospered and kept right on and prospered until he was exceedingly prosperous. And his property consisted of flocks and herds and many servants; and the Philistines were envious of him. If Abraham cultivated fields at all, he did not do sufficient of such work to make it important enough to record. Isaac ventured into agriculture to such an extent as to allow us to classify him as a kind of seminomad. Consequently, though following for the most part in Abraham's footsteps, Isaac must, nevertheless, be credited with a measure of initiative. He also dug new wells (v. Ge 26:19 ff.). For "reaped" the Hebrew text has "found" (matsa'), involving the idea of coming into the field and discovering how rich the crop really is. She'arîm means "measures," here most properly a hundred measures -- "a hundred fold." Such remarkable fertility was sometimes found in days of old and is claimed for the Hauran, east of the Jordan, to this day. Here, however, a rich harvest is a token of divine favour. Therefore the "and he blessed" (waybhßrekh) is meant in the sense "and so Yahweh blessed" (K. S.369 g). Though such a material blessing could most properly have been ascribed to Elohim, here the ascribing of it to Yahweh involves that He was blessing him because Isaac stood in covenant relation with Him.13. In terms and construction reminiscent of Ge 7:18, 19 the increase of Isaac's prosperity is here described. Gadhel, "be great," can hardly here be used of achievement or renown, and so we have rendered it "prospered." The Hebrew idiom for "he kept growing richer and richer" is: "he went forward, going on, and became prosperous." Halokh, absolute infinitive (G. K.113 u).14. Since Abraham already was very rich (Ge 13:2; 14:23) and the bulk of his property had gone to Isaac, such an increase as this in Isaac's wealth must have brought his possessions up to a startling total. However, his wealth was that of the nomad only, "flocks, herds, servants." The Hebrew designates the first two as "possession of flock" and "possession of cattle." Apparently, he had abstained from raising camels and asses. However, a requisite number of servants also belonged to his establishment -- "many servants" -- 'abuddah, abstract "service" (Dienerschaft) for concrete "servants." A problem resulted from this unusual prosperity: the Philistines grew envious. This is here added to explain the clash with the Philistines on the subject of wells, which is about to be touched upon.15-17. Now all the wells which the servants of his father had dug in the days of Abraham, his father, these the Philistines stopped and filled with dirt. And Abimelech said to Isaac: Go away from us, for thou art altogether too powerful for us. So Isaac went away and pitched tent in the valley of Gerar and settled down there.Envy on the Philistines' part turns to spite. The wells so essential to the herds of nomads, wells that dated back to Abraham's time, and may for half a century or more have been recognized as the peculiar

property of Abraham's family because he himself had had them dug, these the Philistines now begin to fill with dirt ('aphar) and so stop them up. Such a loss is very painful, for it shuts off the prime necessity of physical life. So the result of the envy of the Philistines is described. Criticism quite commonly insists that v.15 is a later insertion. Critics would have preferred v.16 as the continuation of v. Ge 26:14. But what strange reasoning! Before the final result is related, we have the summons to depart. Why cannot another intermediate stage be recorded, namely, instead of 1. envy 2. summons, 1. envy, 2. spite 3. summons. In this latter case 2., 3. make a good sequence, for when the Philistines have done Isaac wrong, the king according to a common psychological procedure blames Isaac, asserting he has become too powerful. "Wells" -- a nominative absolute (K. S.341 c).16. Numerically Isaac's household was so strong as to constitute a threat to the safety of the Philistines, had Isaac been minded to use his power selfishly. The king's summons is a combination of flattery ("thou art altogether too powerful for us") and of an ungracious attitude ("go away from us").17. Isaac is a pacifist in the best sense of the word. Power is safe in his hands. He shows no inclination to abuse it. Secure in his strength but mindful primarily of his responsibilities to his God, he yields to pressure and moves farther up the valley, i. e., southeast from Gerar, and there pitches his tent with the intent of staying there permanently (he "settled down" -- yeshebh -- "sat down"). On yichan from chanah see G. K.75 r.(c) Strife over Wells (v.18-22)18-20. Then Isaac let the wells of water be reopened which had first been dug in the days of Abraham, his father, and which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham, and he gave them the names which his father had already given them. Then Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found a well of running water. But the herdsmen of Gerar strove with Isaac's herdsmen, saying: Ours is this water. So he called the name of the well Esek (Contention), because they contended with him.It may seem like an account of prosy trifles to have such petty strife recorded in the Scriptures, but against the background of these trivialities the character of a man like Isaac is displayed to advantage. Trivialities serve to reveal true nobility of character when a man rises above them. To understand the situation correctly for criticism again believes v.18 to be a later insertion we must note that though Isaac had departed partly because of stopped-up wells (v. Ge 26:15), yet Isaac's herds and flocks were spread over a great territory, and, apparently, very many wells had been stopped up all along the valley of Gerar. So abandoning those wells nearer Gerar, which had been one immediate source of contention, Isaac feels justified in reopening those wells at a distance from Gerar which Abraham had dug. The Hebrew construction: "and he returned and dug" -- he "reopened." However, since the patriarch merely took steps to have this done, we may render: "he let the wells be reopened." The statement that they were wells that Abraham had first dug is not superfluous after v.15 but clearly establishes Isaac's claims to these wells. To indicate, further, his right to these wells and to indicate his respect for what his father did, Isaac in every case revives the original names of these wells. On shûbh used adverbially for "again" see G. K.120 d; K. S.332 v; 369q. In waysattemûm ("and they stopped") the converted imperfect takes the place of the relative construction with asher, which had preceded (K. S.366 c).19. This verse, of course, refers to additional digging operations carried on by Isaac's servants. Apparently, because of the rapid increase of Isaac's wealth there was need of additional wells. But the Philistines kept close watch. What could not be claimed by right of possession from Abraham's time was contested, especially in this case where "running water" (Hebrew idiom: "living water," mayim chayyîm) was found.20. The strife arises only among the herdsmen, the initiative, apparently, being taken by those of Gerar, who are mentioned first and whose assertive claim is mentioned:

"Ours (emphatic) is this (demonstrative use of the article) water." No doubt, the distance from Gerar was sufficient to establish Isaac's claim to the well, otherwise this fair-minded man would never have sanctioned the digging. Isaac's policy is in keeping with the word, "Blessed are the meek." He leaves a memorial of the pettiness of the strife behind by calling the well Esek -- "Contention" -- the Quarrel Well. Perhaps a mild and tolerant humour lies in the name. Yet after all, what a fine testimonial to a great man's broad-mindedness and readiness to sacrifice, lest the baser passions in men be roused by quarrelling.21, 22. Then they digged another well and there was strife also over it. So he called its name Sitnah (Hostility). So he moved away and dug still another well, about which there was no strife. So he called its name Rehoboth (Plenty of room), saying: For now Yahweh has given us room and we shall be fruitful in the land.A second attempt at a new well meets with the same result. In this case the opposition seems to have been even more spiteful, for the stronger name "Sitnah" (Hostility) is left behind for the well. But everyone must recognize that it is magnanimity and not cowardice on Isaac's part when he yields, because Isaac had ample manpower at his command.22. Isaac goes as far as possible in the interest of peace: he even "moved away." By this time his generous example seems to have shamed the opposition. No doubt, too, the site of the latest, well is still farther removed from territory which Gerar may rightfully claim. The resultant peace Isaac in true gratitude ascribes to Yahweh, tokens of whose favour he has been meeting with continually. The name "Rehoboth" is to convey this reminder. Rechobhôth means "wide places" and signifies in reference to the well more than "room" (Meek), rather "plenty of room." "Be fruitful" (parah) can hardly be referred to good crops -- "we shall be fruitful" -- but rather to numerical growth as in Ge 1:28. Isaac is thinking of v. Ge 26:4.(d) The Appearance of Yahweh (v.23-25)23-25. From there he went up to Beersheba, and Yahweh appeared to him that night, saying: I am the God of Abraham, thy father; be not afraid, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and make thy descendants numerous for the sake of Abraham, my servant. And he built an altar there and called upon the name of Yahweh and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants digged a well.23. Though Beersheba is said to lie lower than Gerar, yet the general expression for approaching any part of Palestine from the southwest is to "go up" ('alah).24. "Yahweh" appears to Isaac, for covenant issues are under consideration. Isaac has behaved in a manner calling forth divine approval. Besides, Isaac's faith needs to be strengthened in the matter of the realization of the covenant promise. For one part of this promise is: numerous descendants. Isaac has been thinking along this line (see the close of v. Ge 26:22). He shall have to walk by faith very largely as did Abraham. That this faith might be well established he is informed that God will surely bring this promise to pass. So we see that the situation is sufficiently important to call for the appearance of Yahweh, the second and last that is granted to Isaac. The substance of Yahweh's promise is: Fear not as to the realization of the promises given thee, for I am with thee, I the God of Abraham, thy father, who never failed to make good what I promised to him; I guarantee to make thy descendants (Hebrew "seed") numerous, for the sake of Abraham, my servant. It is here only in Genesis that the title "my servant" is applied to Abraham. By it another aspect of Abraham's relation to the Lord is covered: he stood in God's service all his days and faithfully did His will. 25. A place marked by a divine appearance is a sacred spot where Yahweh is to be worshipped in a particular sense. So, following the good example of his father, Isaac builds an altar, where, of course, he offers sacrifice -- a thing so obvious that it is not even mentioned -- and engages in public worship in the course of which God's character and His works are extolled, for this is involved in "calling upon the name of Yahweh" (see notes on Ge 4:26).

Because of Yahweh's manifestation such a spot becomes dear to Isaac, and he pitches his tent there, and since a relatively permanent residence is involved, he has servants dig a well here too. Karah, the verb for "dig" here used, differs from chaphar used earlier in the chapter, in that the former simply means "to dig," whereas the latter involves the idea of "search." Both may imply the successful completion of the digging operations.(e) Covenant with the Philistines (v.26-33)This passage presents a close parallel to Ge 21:22 ff. which covers a similar case in Abraham's day. But why should the thought be so repulsive that in Isaac's day the situations that had previously prevailed in Abraham's time were duplicated? Have the critics never noticed from their study of history how certain problems and situations are perennial in certain regions?26, 27. And Abimelech came to him from Gerar together with Ahuzzath, his friend, and Phicol, the captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them: Why have ye come to me, seeing that ye on your part hate me and have driven me away from you?As "Abimelech" is the standing title of the Philistine kings (see on v. Ge 26:1), so "Phicol" seems to have been the standing title for the captain of the army. The additional personage involved in this instance is the king's friend "Ahuzzath" (on the Philistine ending of the name cf. Goliath). The agreement to be entered into is to be more than a private diplomatic arrangement. Isaac discerns the purpose of their coming before they speak and points out a certain inconsistency manifest in their attitude: first they drive him out, then they follow after him to make a treaty of amity and good will. Besides, his manner of stating the case testifies to his innocence in the matter: "ye on your part hate me." The emphatic personal pronoun ('attem) indicates by an implied contrast that the ill will is entirely on their side; he on his part never bore them ill will, in fact, does not now. The Philistines had deserved this rebuke. Shillach here is stronger than "send away" (A. V.); they had actually "driven" him away. In v. Ge 26:29 the meaning "dismiss" is the one implied by the Philistines.28, 29. And they said: We plainly see that Yahweh is with thee, so we said: Let, we pray, an oath be between us -- between us and you, and let us make a covenant with thee, that thou wilt do us no hurt, even as we have not touched thee, and even as we have done only good to thee, and have let thee go in peace -- thee, now the blessed of Yahweh.Through their whole speech this one idea shines forth: we are impressed with Yahweh's blessings which continually go with thee. The Philistines refer to this at the beginning and at the close of their plea. They do not think it safe to be on bad terms with one who so manifestly stands in Yahweh's favour. That the name "Yahweh" should be used by Philistines need not surprise us. They naturally do not know Him as the one who is what this name involves. They simply take the heathen attitude: each nation serves its own God; we have heard that Isaac serves Yahweh; it must be Yahweh who has blessed His faithful follower. The "oath" ('alah) here is a "curse-oath," a lower conception than is involved in shebhû'ah. Since, indeed, the king and his captain may have been quite innocent in the matter of the trouble over the wells, they give the most favourable statement of their side of the case and with a certain diplomatic glibness claim for themselves that they always gave evidence of the best of fair play. Isaac, the meek, will not broach a fruitless argument on the subject and answers the idle claim with a significant silence. The absolute infinitive (v.28) ra'ô (G. K.113 n) conveys some such idea as "plainly." The jussive (tehî) is followed by the cohortative nikhrethah (K. S.364 g). Ta'aseh (v.29) has tsere because it is not indicative (K. S.183 c, G. K.75hh).30, 31. And he made a feast for them and they ate and drank. And they arose early in the morning and gave the oath one to another, and Isaac let them go, and they went from him in peace.The customary thing in making covenants, apparently, was a covenant-feast in token of goodwill. Isaac omits nothing that makes for a friendly relationship. The Philistines may be

diplomats rather than friends. The oaths are exchanged early the next morning before departure. Here shillach is not meant as "drove away" or "dismissed" -- both of which would conflict with Isaac's irenic treatment of his potential allies; therefore, "let them go" (Meek). At their departure the best of goodwill. ("peace") prevails as a result of Isaac's discriminate handling of the case. In the expression "one to another" îsh, singular, does not strictly harmonize with the preceding plural verb but makes the two parties to the covenant individually more prominent (K. S.348 w), 32, 33. And it happened that day that Isaac's servants came and told him concerning the well that they had dug, and they said to him: We have found water. And he called it Shibah (oath); therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day.A coincidence, manifestly providential, marks that covenant day. After the departure of the noble guests Isaac's servants reported that the well on which they had been working had actually yielded water. Isaac regards this as a token of divine favour and gives a name to the well that is reminiscent of the oath of that date "Shibah." The difficulty about shibh'ah is that the word as such usually means "seven." Now it is true that there seems to be some deeper connection between the Hebrew roots "seven" and "swear." But here the matter is simplified if we give different vowel points to the consonants of the text, namely shebhu'ah, which is the regular word for "oath." Then all difficulty is removed. A slight difference, however, arises in connection with Ge 21:31, where the meaning "well of seven" seems to prevail. But both points of view seem justified: there were originally "seven" wells; the place was the scene of an "oath." One account emphasizes the former; the other, the latter idea. For that matter, Isaac may well have remembered the name given to the place in Abraham's time and may have welcomed the opportunity for establishing that name. The expression "unto this day" simply carries us up to the writer's time and is, of course, very appropriate coming from the pen of Moses.(f) Esau's Hittite Wives (v.34, 35)34, 35. When Esau was forty years old he married Judith, the daughter of Beeri, the Hittite, and Basemath, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite; and they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.Esau's incapacity for spiritual values is further illustrated by this step. He is not concerned about conserving the spiritual heritage of the family. Wives, two of them, unfortunately, of the Hittite stock which gave evidence of Canaanite contamination, were married (Hebrew: "he took to wife"). Yehûdhith is a form that is quite possible without attempting to derive it from Judah; it may come from the name of the town Jehûd (Joshua 19:45) which lay in the confines of the territory later inhabited by Dan.35. "Grief of mind" (morath rûach -- "bitterness of spirit") resulted from this marriage. The corrupt heathenish way of these wives will have been the source of this grief.As to the location of the sites of Isaac's wells, "Rehoboth" might well be er-Rheibe, some twenty miles southwest of Beersheba. Robinson claimed to have found a spot Wadi Shutain, or Schutnet, which might be "Sitnah." Beersheba will, no doubt, be Bires-seba in a wadi of the same name.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSOn v. Ge 26:1-11 compare the remarks on chapter 12 that refer to the similar event in the life of Abraham. For the remainder of the chapter we see the several episodes as excellent illustrations of certain Scriptures that furnish the dominant thought for each episode. So v. Ge 12-17 illustrates beautifully the truth: "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich" (Pr 10:22). The section v. Ge 26:18-25 furnishes a clear case of what is involved in the word (Ro 12:18) "as the present she is bold enough and so thoroughly convinced of the justice of the cause which she espouses as to be ready to assume any curse that may grow out of an eventual discovery. Qillathekha, "thy curse," involves a kind of eventual use of the possessive pronoun in the sense of "any curse intended for thee." Strack cites a parallel use in the expression "mine iniquity" Psalms 18:23, used in the sense of: "the iniquity into which I might have

fallen." The boldness of Rebekah's reply appears reflected in its elliptical form: "Upon me thy curse." While she devises a solution of the difficulty, Jacob is to "give heed to her voice and go and get" for her. Her firm command gains in curtness when the verb "get" (qach) is used without an object. In English we have supplied a "them" (referring to the kids) in order to avoid unseemly harshness of expression.14-17. And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made tasty things as his father loved them. And Rebekah took the garments of Esau, her elder son, the choice ones, which were with her in the house and she clad Jacob, her younger son, in them. And she put the skins of the goats upon his hands and upon the smooth part of the neck. And she gave the tasty things and the bread which she had made into the hand of Jacob, her son.Jacob's chief difficulty was removed, He had been more afraid of detection than of duplicity. His mother, however, proved more resolute than he in carrying through the plan. Jacob provides the materials, Rebekah prepares them. After more than ninety years of married life she must have known pretty well what "his father loved."15. Every eventuality has been considered: the sense of sight is out of the question. By the sense of hearing Isaac may be brought to have misgivings. The sense of taste will be appealed to by cunningly devised dishes. The sense of smell will point definitely to Esau if Jacob wears "the garments" of the elder, the "choice" ones (chamudhoth, feminine to agree with the feminine construction of the word bégedh which is also found). These are not by anything in the text indicated to have been priestly garments, as the Jews surmised. They are simply the better ones that men, especially men of means reserve for special occasions. But these, too, had been worn by their owner roving through the fields and woods and so had acquired an attractive odour all their own, which the father may have come to associate more and more with the presence of Esau in the room, especially as the father's eyes grew more and more dim. Undue conclusions should not be drawn from the fact that the mother had these garments "with her in the house." This does not take us back in point of time to the days before Esau had married but is quite adequately covered by the assumption that Esau after his marriage still dwelt in the same house with his parents. Criticism here tries to prove the text guilty of incongruity. "House" (bßyith) points to the fact that a more substantial dwelling may have been in use by the family just at this time; yet, bearing in mind the avowed nomadic character of life in patriarchal days, "house" may simply be used in the sense of our "home," a use found perhaps also in Ge 33:17. 16. Now the difficulty arising from possible detection by the father's sense of touch, Jacob's chief difficulty (v. Ge 27:11), is met. The skins, still very soft and pliable and readily moulded to any surface, and besides of a much finer quality than the skins of young goats as we know them, are applied to the hands and the neck. Yadh will in this case cover more than the mere "hand," for since garments were for the most part sleeveless, the whole forearm might protrude and is therefore enveloped in goatskin. All these additional precautions might well have been disposed of while the meat was roasting. No unseemly jokes about the hairy Esau are attempted by this account, rough like a goatskin.17. The scene grows vividly dramatic as the "tasty things" prepared are put into Jacob's hands and he prepares to enter the father's room. "Bread" is mentioned because the thin loaves were broken into pieces, by the use of which meat and other viands were conveniently taken in hand without soiling the fingers, the thin bread being folded around the meat.At this point criticism assumes too much by claiming that Gunkel has proved that the "garments" are mentioned by J, the "goatskins" by E. Such contentions cannot be proved; they are subjective opinions which are unconvincing but which seem to impress the unlearned and the unwary because they are advanced by learned writers.18-20. And he came in to his father and he

said: My father. And he said: Here am I. Who art thou, my son? And Jacob said to his father: I am Esau, thy first-born. I have done as thou didst bid me. Arise, now, take thy seat and eat, I pray, of my game in order that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said to his son: How is it, then, that thou didst find so very quickly? And he said: Yahweh, thy God, did bring it before me.Perhaps a trace of suspicion may be detected in Isaac's first question: "Who art thou, my son?" He expects Esau; he seems to have heard Jacob's voice, though Jacob certainly will have been trying to imitate Esau's voice and mode of speech.19. Jacob recognizes that hesitation or curt responses will arouse further suspicion and prove fatal to his enterprise, and so somewhat volubly he talks right on. He claims to be the first-born, to have carried out all instructions, and now he summons his father to "arise" from his bed and "take his seat" (shebhah -- lengthened imperative -- for shebh -- "to sit down") and to eat. The double cohortative lends an urgency to his words, that make it appear that he is eager to receive the blessing. When Jacob calls the kid's meat "game," Whitelaw observes that this is the "third lie" in his words.20. One surprising factor surely requires explanation: how did Esau find what he sought so very quickly? The boldness of Jacob's explanation certainly disposed of the question very effectively, but it is at the same time almost the most flagrant instance of abuse of the divine name recorded anywhere in the Scriptures. This is "lying and deceiving by God's name." By making the utterance doubly solemn, "Yahweh, thy God," the hypocritical pretense is made the more odious. Jacob's tricky device is decked out as an outstanding instance of divine providence: "Yahweh did bring it (hiqrah -- cause to meet) before me." Kî merely introduces the direct discourse and is not to be translated.21-23. And Isaac said to Jacob: Come near, please, and let me feel of thee, my son, whether thou indeed be Esau, my son, or not. And Jacob came near to Isaac, his father, and he felt of him and said: The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he did not discover him, for his hands were like Esau, his brother's, hands, hairy -- and so he blessed him.But the father's doubt still persists. For the blind man the sense of touch must help to remedy the loss of sight. So Jacob is asked to step up that Isaac might feel of him. How correct had been Jacob's suspicion that he might be detected on this score. Luther, who entered quite successfully into the tenseness of this situation, said that had he been Jacob under scrutiny as here narrated, he would have dropped the dish and run away.22. Though with trepidation, no doubt, Jacob steps up for closer examination. One sees the old father reach for his son with groping hand and feel of his hands and arms. Jacob will certainly have used all possible caution to prevent the father's hands from touching those parts where the kidskin was bound in place. The father's utterance reflects his perplexity: "The voice is the voice of Jacob," etc. The voice, by the way, is the only count on which misgivings arise.23. Those who have not noticed the similarity of voice and manner of speech on the part of sons of one and the same family will think it strange that Isaac allowed the sense of touch and of smell to overrule the objections of the ear. But those who have observed this similarity will not. Isaac may well have recalled on how many occasions he had mistaken the one for the other on the strength of this similarity in speech. So "he did not discover him," -- nakhar, Hifil, implies "recognizing" or "discovering" on the basis of a close scrutiny. The sum of Isaac's conclusion then is "his hands were like Esau, his brother's hands, hairy." That is to say: the voice has its variations and modulations, and so Esau may sometimes sound like Jacob, but, surely, a man cannot change his skin from rough to smooth or vice versa. When now the conclusion of the verse says, "and so he blessed him," this is simply one more of the many instances where, according to the Hebrew style of narrative, the result is reported first and the details are given afterwards. At this point Isaac's mind is practically made up

to proceed and to bless this one. For a moment the critics, who claim to have at this point clear evidence of the weaving together of two separate accounts, seem to occupy a strong position when they claim that according to E the blessing is bestowed at this point, whereas according to J another question follows, then the eating and the drinking, then the kiss, finally the blessing. However, all these artificial constructions discredit Scripture, in this case by letting the final account as we have it contain a confused version of events and so be unsatisfactory and devoid of even the simple merit of clearness and correctness. Besides, here again as practically always the critics diverge quite radically from one another in their analysis of the original sources. The account as it reads then means: at this point Isaac addressed himself to the task of blessing his son. But when v. Ge 27:24 again records a question of doubt from Isaac's lips, we are introduced to a situation we can readily understand. In spite of the resolution to go on with the blessing Isaac is assailed by new misgivings. So, then, Isaac's vacillation is effectively brought to our notice by this style of the narrative. 24-27 a. And he said: Art thou really my son Esau? and he said: I am. And he said: Bring it near to me that I may eat of the game, my son, in order that my soul may bless thee. So he brought it to him and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank. And Isaac, his father, said to him: Come here, now, and kiss me, my son. And he came near and kissed him, and he smelled the smell of his garments and he blessed him, saying:We have just shown how the first question indicates new misgivings on Isaac's and a new lie on Jacob's part. But Jacob's answer is so positive, and, surely, Isaac was accustomed to truthfulness on the part of his sons. Jacob's persistence in his wrong course is to be accounted for, first, by the fact that he firmly believed in the justice of his cause, and then, secondly, by the fact that his mother so staunchly supported him in the enterprise. There may have been on the part of both of these an erroneous conception of the validity of a wrong blessing. For just as the curse causeless falls to the ground (Pr 26:2), so the blessing granted in disobedience would have been futile.25. The ending ah on the imperative and the imperfect make the hortative form help to express how Isaac is strengthening himself in his resolution to go through with the undertaking. When Isaac is said to have drunk wine at this point, the critics in a number of instances are greatly perturbed. They had not known that the patriarchs drank wine at this early date, consequently the text must be in error. Certainly a non sequitur.26. The kiss appears here for the first time as the token of true love and deep affection. Isaac asks for this token from his son. The treachery of the act cannot be condoned on Jacob's part on any score: the token of the true love is debased to a means of deception. The Old Testament parallel (2 Samuel 20:9) as well as that of the New Testament (Mt 26:49 and parallels) comes to one's mind involuntarily. The emphatic imperatives with ah ("do come here and do kiss me") show how strongly Isaac enters heart and soul into his task. "My son" here implies: "my favourite."27a. Here Rebekah's clever foresight is further vindicated as having coped with the situation. The smell of Esau's garments recalls vividly to the father the daily pursuits of his son and gives the immediate ground for the blessing to be uttered. This smell seems to have kindled Isaac's imagination.27 b-29Behold, the smell of my son is as thesmell of a field which Yahweh has blessed,May the true God give thee of the dew ofheaven and of the fertile places of theearth, and much of grain and wine.Let peoples serve thee, and nations bow downto thee.Be master over thy brethren, and may thymother's son bow down to thee.Cursed be they that curse thee, and blessed bethey that bless thee.Isaac's blessing is poetic, being, in an exalted strain of noble feeling. On the formal side this poetic character is marked by parallelism and the use of poetic words like re'eh for hinneh and hawah for hayah.Starting with a reminiscence of the odoriferous herbs whose smell

clings to Esau's garments, Isaac rightly interprets this smell as a token of things blessed by Yahweh. The sweet smell of the fields is, in reality, a reminder of the good Lord who displays His goodness by many an attractive grace. Since, then, God's grace is under consideration, He is rightly spoken of as "Yahweh," at least at first. Besides, the use of this name suggests that Isaac may originally have intended to bestow upon Esau the full covenant blessing. But the change to ha'elohîm (v. Ge 27:28), "the true God," seems to indicate that the patriarch's purpose wavered in the midst of the blessing, and so he bestowed little more than a material blessing. Of course, the expression ha'elohîm would more naturally cover the case of blessings like dew and fertile soil. These two would result in the total of good crops. For the heavy Palestinian dews almost make up for the lack of rain during the dry season. Such "dew of heaven" is heaven's gift; whereas shemannîm are not merely "fat things" but fat "fertile places." "Dew" and"'fertile places" as a cause should yield the result of "grain" and "new wine," the essentials of food and of drink. So much for the blessings relative to daily bread.29. Now for the political blessings that involve relations to others and the question of rule and superiority. "Peoples" and "nations" can hardly be distinguished as to their relative import. To have such "serve" and "bow down" to one implies a position of rule and authority, not the position of a servile nation. In particular, the relation to the brother now comes under consideration. When Isaac says: "be master over thy brethren" he means to let Esau's descendants dominate Jacob's; and so he was by these words trying to annul and invalidate God's original verdict in reference to the relationship of these children (Ge 25:23). Certainly, then, from this point of view the word was bold and presumptuous, even a defiance of the Almighty. "Brethren" and "sons," used in the plural, do not involve an incongruity. The father is looking forward to those who shall yet spring from both. In reference to Jacob they will be "brethren" in so far as they are descended from Esau. In reference to Rebekah all Esau's descendants are "sons." The closing line is an echo of Ge 12:3 a, not of 3b. This is very significant. In Ge 12:3 b is found the essence of the Messianic element in Abraham's blessing. This Isaac does not dare to bestow upon his favourite. That is too sacred an element to be tampered with. In Ge 28:4 he finally bestows it upon Jacob intentionally. Still the blessing: "Cursed be they that curse thee, and blessed be they that bless thee" is a very substantial one. It fends off harm and bestows tokens of goodwill. The unusual sequence of plural and singular conveys a shade of meaning about as follows: "Thy cursers, may each one of them be cursed; they blessers, may each one of them be blessed," (K. S.348 t to a). On the whole, who would not covet such a blessing? Bestowed by a godly father upon a godly and a deserving son in accordance with the will and purpose of God, it surely would constitute a precious heritage.30, 31. And it came to pass when Isaac had finished blessing Jacob and Jacob had yet just about gone out from the presence of Isaac, his father, that Esau, his brother, came in from the field. And he too prepared some tasty things and came in to his father, and said to his father: May my father arise and may he eat of the game of his son in order that thy soul may bless me.The akh ("yet" or "only") marks how very nearly Jacob was detected. He had just about closed the door, divested himself of the borrowed garments and the kidskin disguise, when his brother appears on the scene.31. Quite unsuspecting he prepares what he has caught and in due course of time steps into his father's presence, using practically the same words Jacob had used. For one thing, that shows at least how carefully Jacob had planned his deception; he knew about what Esau would say when stepping into his father's presence. The jussives yaqûm and yo'khal are, it would seem, a bit more "deferential" ("may he rise and may he eat") than Jacob's imperative ("arise, take thy seat and eat"). But then Jacob

acted under greater strain, which may, indeed, have been reflected in an attempt at bolder utterance. From all this no conclusion may legitimately be drawn as to which of the sons actually reverenced his father the more. In all likelihood it was Jacob.32-35. And Isaac his father said unto him: Who art thou? And he said I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau. And Isaac trembled most excessively and said: Who, then, is he who caught game, and brought it to me, and I ate of it all before thou camest in, and I have blessed him? Yea, blessed shall he be. When' Esau heard the words of his father Isaac, he gave vent to an exceedingly loud and bitter outcry and said to his father: Bless me, me too, my father! And he said: Thy brother entered in treacherously and took thy blessing.One can hear with what startled emphasis the cry breaks from Isaac's lips, mî'attah, "who thou?" So, too, one can feel the surprise expressed in the tone of Esau's answer, as much as to say: "Why should you be surprised that I am come with my tasty things, seeing you made me prepare them for the blessing?"33. What Esau witnessed immediately after he had given his answer was enough to startle any man. The Hebrew employs three devices to convey the desired emphasis, piling one upon the other: the cognate object, the modifying adjective, the adverbial phrase, "lie trembled a trembling, a great, unto excesss." Our rendering: "he trembled most excessively" is still too weak. What a pitiful sight to. see the venerable patriarch under the stress of so violent an emotion. It is almost unbelievable that one brother should thus have impersonated the other to secure the blessing designed for the other and that he should have done it so successfully. The pained perplexity stands out in the father's question: "Who, then, is he who caught game," etc.? But by the time the question has been formulated the problem has been solved. The vague "who is he?" has narrowed down to the one and only possibility that could be involved in this case. Isaac knows it was Jacob. Isaac sees how God's providence checked him in his unwise and wicked enterprise. From this point onward there is no longer any unclearness as to what God wanted in reference to the two sons. Therefore the brief but conclusive, "yea, blessed shall he be." But his trembling was caused by seeing the hand of God in what had transpired.34. Esau's conduct in the case does not impress us favourably. His unmanly tears are quite unworthy of him. His "exceedingly loud and bitter outcry" is further evidence of lack of self-control. He who never aspired after higher things now wants this blessing as though his future hopes depended all and only on the paternal blessing. We cannot help but feel that a superstitious overvaluation of the blessing is involved. In fact, he now wants, as though it were his own, that which he had wilfully resigned under oath. The right to the blessing which Esau now desires was lost long ago. In fact, up to this point there was a double conspiracy afoot. Isaac and Esau, though not admitting that it was so, were conspiring to deflect to Esau a blessing both knew he had forfeited, in fact, was never destined to have. But at the same time Rebekah and Jacob were consciously conspiring to obtain what God had destined for Jacob and what Jacob had also secured from Esau. The pronoun in the nominative (gam anî) stands in apposition with the objective (G. K.135 e).35. The father refused to be moved. He admits Jacob's treachery (mirmah, primarily "deceit"), but he knows the case cannot be altered. Esau "found no place for repentance" (Hebrews 12:17) in the sense of the more correct rendering: "he found no place for a change of mind (in his father)" (A. R. V.). Perhaps Isaac too now saw for the first time that in reality Esau did not stand on the level of the ideals of the patriarchs. Isaac's refusal to alter the blessing is not to be explained by calling upon the idea of something like a fetish character of the blessing. The true patriarchal religion was not encumbered by such trash. Nor are we to claim that the blessing "works in purely objective fashion and cannot be retracted, and so we have here a fate-tragedy of antiquity" (Procksch). The

true patriarchal religion nowhere gives indications of a belief in fate. 36-38. And he said: Is he not rightly called Jacob, for he has twice overreached me: my birthright he took and, lo, now he has also gotten my blessing. And he said: Hast thou not laid a blessing aside for me? Isaac answered and said to Esau: Behold, I have made him thy master and all his brethren I have made his servants; with grain and wine have I supplied him, and as for thee, what shall I now do for thee, my son? And Esau said unto his father: Hast thou only one blessing, my father? Bless me, me too, my father! And he lifted up his voice and wept.The thought expressed with so much bitterness by Esau becomes entirely clear when we remember that "Jacob" practically means "Overreacher" -- he is rightly called "Overreacher" because he has twice "overreached" me. A strange but emphatic paronomasia is also involved in the second part of his bitter outbreak: first he took my bekhorah (birthright), now he takes my berakhah (blessing). Though there is truth in what Esau says, he does not do well to play the part of injured innocence. His birthright he sold right cheerfully, and was far more at fault in the selling of it than Jacob in the buying. The blessing, on the other hand, had been destined for Jacob by God long ago, and Esau knew it. The verb atsßlta very distinctly means "lay aside" and so "reserve" (A. V.).37. A blessing in the sense in which Esau wants it cannot be bestowed, for that would require the cancellation of the blessing just bestowed. Jacob's blessing Isaac cannot revoke because he clearly sees that God so disposed of events that Isaac finally did what God had originally appointed. This startling instance of God's overruling providence fills Isaac's thoughts completely. He is not like a man who has run out of ammunition and so has nothing more to say. This is not the spirit of his answer but rather the thought: we cannot alter Jacob's blessing for it has God's sanction: "I have made him your master and all his brethren I have made his servants." Material wants have also been provided for. Really, what is there left for Esau? Daghan and tîrôsh are adverbial accusatives, "with grain and wine" (G. K.117 ff).38. Poor Esau's grief is pathetic, a startling case of seeking a good thing too late. The blessing of the father seems to be the one thing of the whole spiritual heritage that has impressed Esau. Unfortunately, it is not the chief thing.39, 40. And Isaac, his father, answered and said unto him:Behold, away from the fertile places of theearth shall thy dwelling beAnd away from the dew of heaven from above.By the sword shalt thou liveAnd thy brother thou shalt serve.And it shall come to pass when thou shalt shakethyselfThou shalt tear off the yoke from the neck.At this point prophetic utterance came upon Isaac and he foretold what the distinctive lot and fortunes of his son Esau would be. It is not said that he blessed him, for this is not a blessing but a prophecy. Nor could it rightly be called a curse. But the inferior lot of Esau is made very apparent by this word. Misunderstanding has arisen from the fact that in point of form both blessings use the preposition "from" (min), especially in the two phrases "from the dew" and "from the fertile places." If the min of source (B D B p.579 b) be assumed for both cases (so Luther and A. V.), then we are confronted by the impossible situation that, whereas Isaac had insisted that Jacob's blessing must stand, distinct from what Esau may attain to, in the end Isaac reverses his decision and gives Esau a blessing almost as good as Jacob's, and so Esau would have lost little, only the pre-eminence. Consequently, modern commentators, positive and negative, are practically unanimous in construing the preposition in the case that applies to Esau as a "min separative" (B D B p.578 a): "away from the fertile places -- away from the dew." With this interpretation agrees the predominant impression conveyed by the land of Edom. In spite of fertile spots it is mostly very bleak, rocky and barren, allowing scant opportunities of cultivation, especially the western part, of which travellers have claimed that they have seen no region to equal it for barrenness.40. To "live by the sword" (this use of al in De 8:3)

implies violence and continual conflict. But yet for all that he is to be in continual subjection to his brother. Attempts at liberation from this yoke shall be many. In fact, whenever he "shall shake himself,", then will he. succeed in "tearing off the yoke from the neck," but he could not keep shaking himself forever. These words describe attempted freedom rather than achieved freedom. So from David's time onward Edom was kept subject to Israel. Though rebelling frequently, they were always being subjugated again, until finally John Hyrcanus (126 B. C.) completely subdued them and compelled them to accept circumcision. The rather common interpretation of this statement, that it implied that ultimately Edom would "have dominion" (A. V., also Luther) is based upon a misunderstanding of the verb rûdh. In any case, the rule of Herod the Edomite over Israel can hardly be called the dominion of Edom, the nation, over Israel, for Edom had ceased to be a nation by this time, and, in any case, Herod's rule did not involve Edom's rule. Herod ruled alone as an individual. However, the meaning of rûdh, "to shake," or "to shake thyself," or, as Keil puts it, "to shake, namely the yoke," is pretty well established. So this becomes the one part of Isaac's word in which some success is promised to Esau. His people shall at least occasionally be rid of Israel's yoke. In so far, then, this statement involved an interruption in Jacob's blessing. For Jacob's wrong in deceiving his father the blessing bestowed was to be curtailed in part. After all this examination of what Isaac did the verdict of Hebrews 11:20 may still seem a bit strange: "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come." But this word will be felt to be entirely true if we but bear in mind that the erring saint had been corrected by God in the midst of his attempt to transfer the blessing. He had accepted the correction and repented, and so in the end what he did was an act of faith after all. Both words told "concerning things to come" and were spoken in faith and in the strength of God's Spirit.The ethics of the case should be scrutinized a bit more closely. That Jacob was in part at fault has not been denied. That Esau was far more at fault has been pointed out. This contrast is usually overlooked. Jacob is criticized quite roundly, and the greater sinner, Esau, is pitied and represented as quite within his rights. That the whole is a most regrettable domestic tangle cannot be denied, and, as is usually the case in such tangles, every member involved bore his share of the guilt. But if it be overlooked that Jacob's aspirations were high and good and in every sense commendable and besides based on a sure promise of God, a distorted view of the case must result.They that insist on distorting the incident claim that the account practically indicates that Jacob was rewarded with a blessing for his treachery. The following facts should be held over against such a claim to show how just retribution is visited upon Jacob for his treachery: 1. Rebekah and Jacob apparently never saw one another again after the separation that grew out of this deceit -- an experience painful for both; 2. Jacob, deceiver of his father, was more cruelly deceived by his own sons in the case of the sale of Joseph and the torn coat of many colours; 3. from having been a man of means and influence Jacob is demoted to a position of hard rigorous service for twenty years.41. And Esau harboured enmity against Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father had blessed him, and Esau said in his heart: The days of mourning for my father are not far off; then will I kill my brother Jacob.Good-natured, easy-going Esau is changed in his attitude toward Jacob. Bitter enmity takes up residence in his heart. All his thinking still seems to centre about the lost blessing. This confirms our interpretation of v. Ge 27:39, 40, because if Esau had construed these words as a substantial blessing, he could hardly have cherished animosity. But one thing restrains Esau: he does not want to cause his aged father further grief. He does, however, believe that his father will not live long. This is the meaning of the word: "the days of mourning for my father are not far off." He expects to wait till his

father is dead; then will he kill Jacob. Esau does not mean: I will kill my brother, and in that sense days when my father must mourn are coming upon him. But it is strange that he who so readily parted with the birthright now so firmly resolves to commit murder, even fratricide. Ebhel abhî is "mourning for my father" not "of my father" -- therefore objective genitive like Am 8:10; Jeremiah 6:26. The expression "said in his heart" means "to himself" or "in his own circle," because v. Ge 27:42 Rebekah hears the report of it.42-45. And the words of Esau, her elder son, were told to Rebekah, and she sent and called Jacob, her younger son, and said unto him: See, Esau, thy brother, is about to take vengeance upon thee by killing thee. Now, my son, give heed to my instruction: up, flee thou to Laban, my brother, to Haran, and live with him for a while until the fury of thy brother turn away, until thy brother's anger turn away from thee and he forget that which thou hast done to him. Then will I send and get thee from thence. Why should I be bereft of both of you in one day?Esau's intention somehow comes to the ear of one who is friendly disposed toward Rebekah, perhaps one of the feminine members of the establishment. With her customary alacrity of decision Rebekah acts and calls Jacob in order to dismiss him at once. The participle mithnach (ch) em from nacham, "to comfort," could be rendered "comforteth himself" (A. V.) or "eases himself" (B D B) but very likely the comfort that one of Esau's mind administers to himself is vengeance. The participle then expresses the durative "is planning vengeance" or "is about to take vengeance." Then the infinitive must be rendered "by killing thee" -- a kind of gerundive use.43. Rebekah's attempt to make her warnings emphatic show how sure she is of the need of immediate action: now, my son, give heed to my instruction. Flight to Laban to Haran offers sure asylum.44. Her desires colour her thoughts. She hopes it may be only "for awhile," yamîm achadhîm -- "a few days." Men of Esau's disposition often let their native, good-naturedness dissipate their "fury" (chamah -- from yacham -- "burning" "hot anger").45. The repetition of the thought -- until thy brother's anger turn away from thee -- shows how eagerly her thoughts hope that this may come to pass. This parting must have been hard for both. So Rebekah tries to make herself believe that it will be but for a short time and Esau will "forget that which thou hast done to him." Her thoughts run to what she regards as perhaps an early prospect: I will send and get thee from thence. When Rebekah expresses the thought of the possibility of being bereft of both her sons in one day, she means at one time. Of course, she refers to the possibility of Esau's slaying Jacob. Then at once someone would take it upon himself to play the part of the "avenger of blood" and so slay Esau, perhaps very shortly thereafter. 4) Jacob's Dismissal from Home and His First Vision (27:46-28:22)The Jewish custom of choosing a more or less weighty utterance to be the initial word of a new chapter led to the addition of v. Ge 27:46 to chapter 27, in order that Ge 28:1 might make a seemly beginning. Yet, without a doubt, v.46 has to do with the matter of Jacob's dismissal from home. K. C. penetrates a bit more deeply into the essence of the situation when he gives as a title for this section, "The Beginning of the Exile and of the Training (Erziehung) of Jacob." But the second half of this title is defective, for Jacob's "training" did not begin at this point, though at this point it becomes more intensive.For once let an analysis of the critical contentions be made on the section Ge 27:46-28:9, which is with great unanimity ascribed to P.The argument seems quite imposing when we are told that the following terms, which are said to be characteristic of P, are found in the passage: el Shadday ("God Almighty") v. Ge 27:3, 'elohîm ("God") v. Ge 27:4; ha'arammî ("the Aramaean, or the Syrian") verse Ge 27:5; paddan aram v. Ge 27:2, 5, 6, 7; 'érets meghurîm ("land of sojournings") v. Ge 27:4; benôth kena'an ("daughters of Canaan") v. Ge 27:1, 6, 8; qehal ammîm. ("company of peoples") v. Ge 27:3. But note how very flimsy all this becomes

on closer investigation.Take 'el Shadday. This term does occur besides inGe 17:1; 35:11; 48:3; Ex 6:3. But in Ge 17:1 "God Almighty" appears to Abraham and assures him of His strength to carry out His promise. This is not a stylistic peculiarity; this is a designation God employed to describe Himself. Similar is the situation in Ge 35:11 where Jacob is addressed, where God's comfort will mean so much more to Jacob if it is couched in terms long familiar from Abraham's time. Why then in Ge 48:3, where Jacob blesses Joseph's sons, should he not use the very terms God used for Him? And most particularly Ex 3, where God reappears after a long interval to Moses, why should He not employ names familiar from patriarchal times to describe Himself? This use of a specific divine name here is not a peculiarity of style on the part of one author. This name most appropriately grows out of a given situation. It is used also Ge 43:14, which some critics assign to a priestly redactor and not to P. There, surely, is little convincing proof in the use of this term.On the use of 'Elohîm (v.4) little can here be said; we shall dwell on the propriety of the term later in this connection.The word ha'arammî ("the Syrian") v.5 is supposed to belong to the vocabulary of P. It appears twice in Ge 25:20. But why not in a formal beginning of a new section as Ge 25:19 ff. use fuller titles, "Bethuel, the Syrian," "Laban, the Syrian"? Aside from our passage, Ge 28:5, appear the two instances of its use Ge 31:20, 24, which, however, Strack ascribes to E. Surely, nothing like proof for a peculiarity of style has been offered.Paddan aram is next. True, it appears in Ge 48:7; 25:20; Ge 28:2, 5-7; 31:18; 33:18; 35:9, 26; 46:15. This point is supposed to build up on the divergent use found in J, who in Ge 24:10 used for Syria the name Aram Naharaim. Note the invalidity of trying to prove J's style by a single instance. We know too little about the use of these names to build arguments on them. But the inconclusive methods employed to make the argument appear impressive come to light when we notice that in Ge 31:18; 33:18 critics label just this one verse in a supposedly different source as belonging to P merely on the strength of the appearance in it of the word "Paddan Aram." After it is first consigned to a supposed P, it is quoted as a P passage to prove that P uses the word -- a perfect argument in a circle. The same use is made of Ge 25:20, where v.19 and 20 are alone ascribed to P. Since now the likelihood is that "Paddan Aram" was the usual designation of the country, what else could P say? This is not a peculiarity of style on his part.Now 'érets meghurîm, used Ge 17:8; 28:4; 36:7; 37:1. First of all, the nature of God's remarks requires that it be emphasized both in the case of Abraham (Ge 17:8) and of Jacob (Ge 28:4) that for the present they are dwelling in a "land of sojournings." Two passages of such a character do not suffice as evidence to build up a peculiarity of style. Critics admit that they are not sure to which source Ge 36:7 is to be ascribed. But on the strength of the first two passages cited above they claim Ge 37:1 for P, ascribing, however, only v.1 and 2 to P. If this is to be called "proof," we do not know what the word "proof" means.The case of the critics keeps growing flimsier. The use of the term benôth kena'an ("daughters of Canaan") borders on unmeaning proof. In the passage we are studying the expression occurs three times, in v. Ge 27:1, 6, 8. Of these three v.6 quotes v.1 and v.8 is a direct reference to the two preceding. Then, as far as peculiarities of style are concerned, there is really only one passage before us in chapter 28. Now the only other instance of the use of the expression is Ge 36:2, whose authorship is doubtful (Strack). What now? On the strength of one passage, then, this expression is said to be a part of the vocabulary of P. Could any procedure be more unscientific?The case of qehal ammîm is about as flimsy. The only instances of its use are Ge 28:3; 48:4. Can that suffice as an argument for assigning both passages to P, or even for claiming the expression as peculiarly P's? So shallow are the critical contentions.46. And Rebekah said to Isaac: I am disgusted with life because of the

daughters of Heth. If Jacob is going to take a wife of the daughters of Heth like these, of the daughters of the land, what's the use of living?First of all this verse throws a side light on Ge 26:34, indicating how great the bitterness of heart caused to Esau's parents by the unbelieving, ungodly Hittite wives really was. Qßtstî -- "I abhor," "I am disgusted with." However, Rebekah's complaint is preparatory to having Jacob sent away before Esau does him harm. What Rebekah says is true: her vexation over these daughters-in-law is excessive, but Rebekah uses this situation as an indirect argument to move Isaac to send Jacob to Mesopotamia. Should Esau, then, hear what Isaac had done, respect for his father would certainly check him from laying hands upon his brother, who would merely have done what his father had bidden him do. The verse thus furnishes a good illustration of the methods employed, perhaps more or less commonly, on Rebekah's part in dealing with Isaac. Sending Jacob to Mesopotamia to get a wife was a splendid idea. Inducing Isaac to take steps in that direction by her complaints about Esau's wives was not the most frank procedure in achieving her purpose, but it secured the desired result.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThis chapter, at least the major part of it, is so much a unit (v. Ge 27:1-40) that it would not do to take portions of it; for these would be but fragment texts. Yet, without a doubt, forty verses are too long a text. Too many elements in it cannot receive adequate treatment. Yet, if one should determine to use it, he should primarily emphasize the inadequacy of a faith that builds on human ingenuity. It would still seem that the text as a whole is sufficiently well known through Sunday school instruction so as not to require specific homiletic treatment. The remaining portion of the chapter, v. Ge 27:41-45, furnishes an illustration of the bitter fruit of duplicity. Yet, if it were desired as a text, it might justly be questioned whether it does not rather tend toward a so-called morality-sermon rather than to broader and bigger themes of the Scriptures.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1, 2. And Isaac called Jacob and blessed him; and he laid commandment upon him and said to him: Not shalt thou take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Up, go to Paddan-aram, to the home of Bethuel, thy mother's father, and take a wife to thyself from the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother. We cannot help but feel that, had Rebekah told Isaac of Esau's murderous plans, Isaac would, or at least could, have taken a hand in restraining Esau. For reasons best known to herself Rebekah does nothing of the sort. Her words of Ge 27:46 have the desired result. She had agreed (Ge 27:13) that any eventual curse resulting in the case of miscarriage of her plans might light upon her. For the same reason she feels the responsibility for keeping Jacob safe from Esau's wrath. Jacob is called, though, indeed, Isaac should have taken care of the matter of Jacob's marriage without solicitation by his wife. The expression "and blessed him" is here used in the summary way common in Hebrew narrative, giving the entire story beforehand, then following with the details: cf. Ge 21:27; 24:29 b; Ge 27:33 b. Why a separate act of blessing really is yet necessary after the formal blessing, of the preceding chapter, will appear when we examine v. Ge 28:4. Of the words that Isaac speaks, v. lb and v.2 may be regarded as a preliminary condition that ought to be met by the recipient of the weighty blessing of v. Ge 28:3,4. However, the matter of avoiding one kind of wife and choosing another is not merely suggested as helpful counsel. The full patriarchal authority is employed: "and he laid commandment upon him." On this question Isaac felt as Abraham had. There is even the possibility that Isaac may have learned of the part Rebekah played in the preceding chapter. Yet he felt that a woman of Rebekah's type, in spite of what minor failings she may have displayed here or there, was infinitely superior by reason of her faith. 2. Isaac does not delegate some old reliable servant to go to secure a wife for Jacob, as had been done in his own case, possibly because he recognized Jacob's capacity to handle the situation himself. The two imperatives, "up" (qûm) and "go" (lekh), impart an urgent tone to the command. Here is a commandment that is to be carried out now, not a suggestion to be acted upon ultimately. "Paddan-aram" may signify "field of Aram" as many, on the strength of Ho 12:12, conjecture. The only ones Isaac knows of that have spiritual ideals sufficiently akin to those of the chosen race are the relatives in Mesopotamia, He may have felt that there would be opportunity for Jacob to secure a wife from this group because they on their part might till now have been reluctant too about marrying off their daughters to men given to idolatry. Here was not, as some suppose, merely a case of trivial conceit where men were intent upon preserving the strain of blood pure. 3, 4. And may El Shaddai (God Almighty) bless thee and make thee fruitful and multiply thee and mayest thou become a company of peoples; and may He give to thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and to thy descendants with thee, that thou mayest possess the land of thy sojourning, which God gave to Abraham. In giving "the blessing of Abraham" how natural to revert to the language the Almighty Himself had used on that occasion; note the resemblance with Ge 17:1, 2. In point of fact, how appropriate is here the name "God Almighty." Blessings certainly depend upon the Almighty's power to render them effectual. How much in place is the wish, "make thee fruitful and multiply thee," now at a time when the father of the chosen group is still but one. So Isaac would naturally speak. How trivial to say: so P naturally writes. The idea "company of

peoples" (qehal ammîm) in a connection where strength of numbers alone is under consideration could hardly involve the Messianic thought of the spiritual subjugation of many nations. The Messianic thought finds expression in v.4. Nor is this a blessing that went wide of the mark, failing of fulfillment. Apparently, the separate tribes that came from Jacob are to be understood here, each being viewed poetically as the equivalent of a "people" ('am). This involves a figure of speech but does not yet, as K. W. contends, establish the meaning of "tribe" for 'am. Consequently, we do not here find an expansion of the blessing of Abraham. 4. In fact, the identity of this blessing with the one given to Abraham is established by the words, "may He give thee the blessing of Abraham." By these words Isaac conveys the most important part of the patriarchal blessing, the part relative to the Messiah, which he had not quite ventured to bestow previously when he still thought that he was dealing with Esau. Sobered by the failure of his attempt and made wiser, he freely gives what he fully understands to have been divinely destined for Jacob. "The blessing of Abraham" is fully as much as was promised to him but no more. Since previously (Ge 27:27-29) Isaac also had not ventured to bestow the land of promise on the one who presumably was Esau, now he unmistakably bestows it on Jacob, that which is now a "land of sojourning" where the patriarchs have as yet no permanent possession except a burial place. Lerishtekha, "for thy possessing," has a subject suffix (G. K.69-m). God "gave" this land to Abraham, of course, only by promise but none the less actually. 5. So Isaac sent Jacob away; and he went to Paddan-Aram to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramaean (Syrian), the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau. In rather a formal fashion the author reports how Jacob obeyed the paternal injunction. The formality consists in repeating the name of the place to which, as well as that of the person to whom he went. The identity of this person is also established in a formal manner -- his nationality and his relation to Jacob's mother also being appended. This formality is the Hebrew way of emphasizing the importance of an event. For, certainly, very much hinged on this momentous journey, and very important issues depended on it. 6-9. When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him away to Paddan-Aram to get a wife there or himself, and that as he blessed him he also commanded him, saying: Not shall thou take a wife from the daughters of Canaan; and that Jacob hearkened unto his father and unto his mother and went to Paddan-Aram; and when Esau further saw that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac, his father, then Esau went to Ishmael and took to wife Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael the son of Abraham, and the sister of Nebaioth in addition to the wives that he had. Hardly with a touch of irony and yet as an indication of Esau's obtuseness in the more spiritual issues, the author now reports how Esau felt impelled to take a non-Canaanite wife. Esau observes, first of all, that Jacob is sent away for a wife. Besides, Esau either himself hears or hears by report that in the blessing spoken at the dismissal (observe how the infinitive construction goes over into the finite verb, K. S.413 a-e) Isaac even commanded Jacob not to take a Canaanite wife. Then Esau observes -- for apparently v.7 is still object of the wayyar' of v.6 -- that Jacob obeys this command emanating from father and mother. 8. The initial wayyar' of v.6 is resumed -- and when Esau further saw. Apparently, at this late date Esau first discovers, or at least begins to reckon with the fact, that the heathen Canaanite wives pleased not Isaac. What a dullness of spiritual perception! Growing up in a household where it was well known why Abraham had taken pains to secure a non-Canaanite wife for Isaac, Esau never seems to have understood why this was done. The entire spiritual heritage and all spiritual traditions had not as yet begun to mean anything to Esau. These few verses help us to understand very clearly why God could not use Esau in the building of the kingdom. Besides, it is quite

significantly reported that Esau noted only that these Canaanitish wives did not please his father. Apparently, he never troubled to discover his mother's reaction -- and she was vexed most. The expression "pleased not" gives a milder touch to the Hebrew, which originally said: "were evil (ra'ôth) in the eyes of." 9. Even in his attempt to go right Esau still goes at least half wrong, for he takes a wife from stock which has already been cast off by God, from Ishmael's family, who may, indeed, yet have preserved some of the good traditions of the house of Abraham. Procksch has an idle and erroneous speculation when he remarks in this connection: "It is here indicated that the blessing had to come upon Jacob and not upon Esau because it is tied up with the purity of the blood." Spiritual issues not blood issues govern the case. Esau could not have visited Ishmael in person, for, as we showed at the beginning of the preceding chapter, Ishmael had died about thirteen years before this time. The preposition al here bears the less common meaning of "in addition to," as in Ge 31:50 (B D B, 755 a). It must further be observed that Esau's attempted remedy of the evil is no remedy. He allows the evil to continue and merely adds something that may be half right. The existing wrong is not broken with, and so the moral indecision of the man is made very apparent.10, 11. And Jacob went forth from Beersheba and came to Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place and spent the night there, for the sun had gone down, and he took one of the stones of the place and laid it as his head place and he lay down in that place.A characteristic Hebrew way of summarizing the whole story before the details are given: he "went forth from Beersheba and came to Haran," cf. "and he blessed" (v. Ge 28:1). Was Jacob a fugitive? In a mild sense, Yes. But they let their imagination play too freely, who make him run forth in haste from home in continual fear of being overtaken and let him cover the entire distance from Beersheba to Bethel -- about 70 miles as the crow flies over mountain roads -- in one day. Esau had threatened to kill his brother only after the death of Isaac. It may have been about the third day when Jacob arrived at this spot after traveling leisurely, for he had a long journey before him.11. "Lighted upon" (pagha') is to be taken much in the sense of "he chanced upon." However, we avoided the latter rendering because the Scriptures know of no "chance." The verb implies that there was no design or purpose behind Jacob's coming here. However, is maqôm, "place," here meant, as often in the Scriptures, as "the cult-place" belonging to a certain town? We doubt it very much. Such a "cult-place" would hardly have been a seemly place for Yahweh to reveal Himself; for perhaps without exception these places were set apart for the idols of the land. Yahweh has nothing in common with the idols. Such a spot would be an abomination to Yahweh. The article bammaqôm -- "upon the place" -- does not overthrow our contention, for as Skinner admits, "the rendering a certain place' would be grammatically correct (G. K.126 r)." Meek renders the phrase in the same way. The article simply marks it as the place which was afterward to become famous. Jacob spends the night just there because that was all that was left for him, for "the sun had gone down" and the night had fallen swiftly, as oriental nights do. The hardy shepherd is not disturbed by the experience, for shepherds often spend the night thus and are observed to this day sleeping with a stone for a pillow. Here mera'ashtaw does not actually mean "pillow" but "head place" -- a proper distinction, for pillows are soft, "head places" not necessarily so.They who must find rational explanations for everything here conjecture about some stony ascent which Jacob saw in the rapidly descending dusk and which then afterward in the dream took the form of a ladder (even Edersheim). Dreams, especially those sent by the Almighty, require no such substructure.Not quite so harmless is the contention of those who import liberally of their own thoughts into the text and then secure a sequence about as follows: The stone used by Jacob is one of the pillars or

sacred stones of the "cult-place," (a pure invention). Jacob unwittingly takes it in the semi-darkness and prepares it for a headrest. The charmed stone then superinduces a dream. On awakening, Jacob is afraid, because he realizes he has rashly used a sacred stone and quickly makes a vow to fend off possible evil consequences and to appease the angered Deity. Such interpretations transport the occurrence into the realm of superstition, magic, fetish and animistic conceptions, debasing everything and especially the patriarch's conception of things.12, 13 a. And he dreamed and, behold, there was a ladder set upon the earth and its top touched the heavens; and, behold, the angels of God were going up and down on it; and, behold, Yahweh stood above it.This is the first theophany that Jacob experiences of a total of seven according to the following count: the second, Ge 31:3, cf. Ge 31:11-13; the third, Ge 32:1, 2; the fourth, Ge 32:24-30; the fifth, Ge 35:1; the sixth, Ge 35:9-13; the seventh, Ge 46:1-4. Men may differ in their mode of counting but not to any very great extent. Dreams are a legitimate mode of divine revelation. On this instance the ladder is the most notable external feature of the dream. The word sullam, used only here, is well established in its meaning "ladder." If it reaches from earth to heaven, that does not necessitate anything grotesque; dreams seem to make the strangest things appear perfectly natural. Nor could a ladder sufficiently broad to allow angels to ascend and descend constitute an incongruity in a dream. The surprise occasioned by the character of the dream is reflected by the threefold hinneh -- "behold": behold a ladder, angels, and Yahweh. The last prepositional phrase, 'alaw, could mean that Yahweh was standing "over him," but grammatically simpler and fitting better into the picture is the old "above it" (R. V., also Luther). Such a clear-cut dream must embody a deeper symbolism. Why a ladder? Why the angels? Why the Lord above it? Answer: In order to convey by a visible sign what the words themselves also convey as Yahweh speaks. The ladder symbolizes the uninterrupted communion between heaven and earth, mediated through God's holy angels and instituted for the care and the needs of God's children on earth. The angels bear man's needs before God and God's help to man. For this reason Jesus could alluding specifically to this passage (John 1:51), claim that the truth involved was most significantly displayed in His own life, for in Him the divine and the human met in perfect union. So Jacob becomes a type of the Christ, though, indeed, an imperfect one. The many other interpretations that have been attempted must be rejected: the ladder does not symbolize the church, or faith; nor "the heavenly source and goal of the revealed religion of Abraham and Israel" (K. C.); nor "the mystery of the incarnation" (Luther), at least not so immediately as Luther construes it. 13 b-15. And He said: I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac -- the land upon which thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy descendants. And thy descendants shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south. And in thee shall be blessed all the families of the earth and in thy seed. And, behold, I am with thee and will keep thee withersoever thou goest; and I will bring thee back to this land, for I will not forsake thee, until I have done what I have told thee.Is the Lord blessing a cheat and prospering one who secured a blessing by craft? By no means. Our interpretation of the preceding chapter confirms itself at this point. Jacob is being strengthened in the faith and supported by liberal promises, because he was penitent over his sin and stood greatly in need of the assurance of divine grace. Besides, Jacob was deeply grieved at being called upon to sever the ties that bound him to house and home, and he was apprehensive of the future as well. The Lord meets him in his need and grants him the support of His grace.After identifying Himself as Yahweh, the God of Abraham and Isaac, and so tying up this present revelation with those that preceded,

Yahweh, the merciful covenant God, proceeds to confirm to Jacob "the blessing of Abraham," which Isaac had bestowed upon him just at his departure. The first element of the promise bestowed by the Lord is the possession of the land ("the land upon which thou liest") on which he now lay practically an exile. Ha'ßrets is a nominative absolute (K.S.341 c).14. The second portion of the blessing that is specially confirmed to him is that of numerous descendants like "the dust of the earth" (Ge 13:16 cf. Ge 22:17). For "spread out" the Hebrew uses parats, "to break through," in the sense of bursting all restraining bonds. Emphasis is added to the thought by letting the expansion extend to all points of the compass.15. Lastly, protection during the time of his absence from home is promised to Jacob, protection due to nothing less than God's personal presence -- "I am with thee and will keep thee." "Whithersoever thou goest" implies that Jacob's wanderings will be extensive. The protection promised involves being brought back to this very land of promise, and it is further confirmed by the added assurance not to be forsaken until all that is promised has been attained. 'Asîthî, a perfect, practically -- a future perfect -- "until I shall have done" (G. K.1060). "To this land," 'adhamah -- to "this piece of ground," for Jacob is to experience the providence of God in being brought back even to this very region and this very spot.16. And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said: Surely, Yahweh is in this place and I knew it not.This verse and the next record Jacob's immediate reaction to the dream, spoken while the effect of the dream was still strongest upon him. This word indicates what had been uppermost in his mind. Jacob had felt himself severed from the gracious presence and the manifestation, of Yahweh, which he knew centered in his father's house. Jacob understood full well the omnipresence of God, but he knew, too, that it had not pleased God to manifest and reveal Himself everywhere as Yahweh. Now the patriarch receives specific assurance that God in His character as Yahweh was content to be with Jacob and keep and bless him for the covenant's sake. That Yahweh was going to do this much for him, that is what Jacob had not known. To understand the word rightly note that Jacob could not have said -- for it would have involved an untruth: "Surely, God is in this place and I knew it not." Of course he knew that. Any true believer's knowledge of God involves such elementary things as knowledge of His not being confined to one place. Such crude conceptions the patriarchs never had. To suppose that the account is trying to picture Jacob as on a lower level than Abraham in spiritual discernment is misunderstanding.17. And he was afraid and said: How aweinspiring is this place! This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven.Since Jacob, a sinful man, had come near to God, this nearness caused fear. Any other reaction would have been improper. The Hebrew nôra'," awe-inspiring," is the passive participle of yare', "to be afraid." The translation could cover this by the rendering: "he was awed, saying: How awesome,' etc." Since here is a place where God meets man, Jacob gives expression to this thought thus: "This is none other that God's house," for to him this was at the same time as kindly an experience in spite of his fear as though he had been allowed to enter God's dwellingplace and meet Him. But to be at such a place was practically equivalent to having found a gate leading to heaven. At such places where God had once revealed Himself men with good reason felt that they would be sure to be able to meet God again. Yet on the other hand, besides construing "gate of heaven" as gate leading to heaven, it is equally proper to construe it as gate leading from heaven, through which, when it so pleases God, He steps forth into contact with men. The divine name 'Elohîm appears here because Jacob wishes to express the simple thought: Contact with the Deity is possible here. Yet previously (v. Ge 28:16) he had recognized that Yahweh in His mercy granted this revelation. Criticism makes another of its unproven claims, when, largely because of

the divine name Yahweh, the verses Ge 28:13-16 are described as a Yahwistic insertion in an Elohistic narrative: "v.17 follows v. Ge 28:12 without sensible breach of continuity." Now, without a doubt, the climax of the whole divine revelation was the word spoken v.13-16; that is the golden jewel of the chapter. Yet so discerning a writer as the supposed E had lost the best part, which then had to be supplied from J. This creates a problem that criticism will never explain and which overthrows its contention.Witness also the following exposition, the most fantastic of all: the entire experience is supposed to convey the thought that from this gate to heaven access to the heavenly sanctuary is gained, as it were by the ladder -- "when to this (to the idea of a sacred stone or sanctuary at Bethel) was added the idea of God's dwelling in heaven, the earthly sanctuary became as it were the entrance to the heavenly temple, with which it communicated by means of a ladder" (Skinner).Luther's rendering, "here is none other, etc." for this is none other, etc., is also entirely permissible; for the demonstrative zeh is used as the adverb "here" (cf. Ges. Buhl, and K. S.43).18. And Jacob arose early in the morning and took the stone which he set as his head place and set it up as a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it.The words spoken in v. Ge 28:16, 17 were uttered during the night immediately after the dream. Whether Jacob again fell asleep or not is not told. In any case, he arose early in the morning and took the stone used for a head place and set it up in a manner calculated to make it stand out and so to mark the precise spot where the dream-vision had occurred. The stone must have had enough size so that when it was set up it might be classed as "a pillar" (matstsebhah). Since the pillar marked a holy experience, it was in this instance consecrated by the pouring out of oil upon it (cf. Ex 40:9-11). It has been claimed that travelers would in olden times regularly carry a horn of oil with them so that the oil might be used for purposes of anointing and for food. In addition to the consecration expressed by the anointing there is the possibility that the oil also gave expression to the idea of sacrifice and was offered as sacrifice, for in Ge 35:14 in consecrating the Bethel altar Jacob poured a drink offering and oil upon the altar. In any case, we need not wonder that Abraham and Isaac had not set up memorial stones heretofore; they had no direct occasion to do so as Jacob here had. Good parallels are seen in Ge 31:45; Jos 4; 24:26 f; 1 Samuel 7:12. So natural is it to do a thing of this sort that anyone of us might in our day do a similar thing with the utmost of propriety, Later, when the Canaanite shrines for idolatrous worship had these "pillars" regularly set up round about the "holy place" (maqôm), as excavations still amply prove, and Israel stood in danger of copying heathen abominations, the Lord saw fit to forbid the use of such matstsebhoth and bade Israel to destroy them -- Ex 23:24; Ge 34:13; Le 26:1; De 12:3; 16:22. The idea of a fetish stone simply does not enter into this case. Efforts to inject it by claims very boldly stated are quite futile; as when it is said: matstsebhah -- "originally a fetish, the supposed abode of a spirit or deity -- a belief of which there are clear traces in this passage." Koenig has successfully refuted such claims by pointing out that Jacob says: "How awe-inspiring is this place" -- not "this stone."It is much to be deplored that on this point another attempt to cheapen the holy record is made by identifying Jacob's anointing of the stone with the so-called Baetylian stone worship. That such a practice as stone worship existed rather widely in days of old is, of course, true. That such anointed stones were called in Greek baituloi is also known. But this accidental point of coincidence proves nothing about Jacob's experience as belonging into this class. It might possibly be admitted that a distorted record of the Bethel experience began to circulate among the Gentiles and gave rise to stone worship. But even that assumption has great difficulties. For, in the first place, the name baiuhl ("Bethel") does not occur in this chapter of the Septuagint, being rendered "house of God,"

and if it did appear, as Keil points out, it would be quite inexplicable how the u was changed to the t in baituloi. Besides, it is claimed that Baetylian worship in days of old centered around meteoric stones, which were thought to have been dropped down from high heaven by the gods. In any case, if a superstitious practice existed among the heathen, must everything similar at once be put into the same class? Then with equal propriety sacred memorials that we might set up in our day would also have to be classed as Baetylian worship, especially if the practice of anointing stones should be revived.19. And he called the name of that place Bethel, whereas the name of the city had formerly been Luz. Beth-'el means "house of God." The substance of the thought of v. Ge 28:17 is incorporated in this name. Jacob may have meant the name for this particular spot only. The city that already may have stood there then, or perhaps was first built there or near there later, presently came to bear that name. Originally it was called Luz, remarks the well-informed author, who had used the name Bethel already in Ge 12:8 by anticipation. Joshua 16:2 does not conflict with our passage, for there, according to v. Ge 28:1, "Bethel" must mean "mountains of Bethel."20-22. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying: If God will be with me and will keep me in this way which I am going, and will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I shall return in peace to my father's house, and Yahweh will be God to me -- then this stone, which I have set up as pillar, shall be a house of God and of all that Thou givest to me, I will surely give a tithe to Thee.Jacob's gratitude for the much needed comfort and encouragement finds expression in an appropriate vow, of which v.28:20, 21 forms the protasis and v.22 the apodosis. True, the greater promises concerning the possession of the land and of being a blessing to all the families of the earth are not mentioned. That does not say that Jacob does not understand them and is not grateful for them. They, in the nature of the case, are seen to lie in the distant future. For the other tangible blessings which the next years are to bring Jacob vows to give tangible tokens of gratitude. For the greater blessings, what shall or can he return to the Lord? Nothing except praise and thanks, because these blessings are unspeakably great. In enumerating protection, food, clothing and safe return Jacob is not displaying a mind ignorant of higher values but merely unfolding the potentialities of God's promise (v. Ge 28:15), "I will keep thee and bring thee again," etc. When he says: "If Yahweh will be God to me," he is paraphrasing the promise (v.15): "I am with thee." Consequently, in all this Jacob is not betraying a cheap, mercenary spirit, bargaining with God for food and drink and saying: "If I get these, then Yahweh shall be my God." That would be about the cheapest case of arrogant bargaining with God recorded anywhere. In fact, it is difficult even with the very best construction that it is possible to put upon the words to draw the clause wehayah yahweh lî le'lohim into the apodosis: "then shall the Lord be my God" (A. V. and Luther). The Lord was his God. Jacob was not an unconverted man still debating whether or not to be on the Lord's side and here making an advantageous bargain out of the case. They who postpone his conversion to a time twenty years later at the river Jabbok completely misunderstand Jacob. Not only does the construction of the Hebrew allow for our interpretation, it even suggests it. The "if" clauses of the protasis all run along after the same pattern as converted perfects -- future: "if He will," etc., including: "if Yahweh will be, or prove Himself, God to me." Then to make the beginning of the apodosis prominent comes a new construction: noun first, then adjective clause, then verb.22. By "house of God" (beth-'el) Jacob does not mean a temple but a sacred spot, a sanctuary, which he purposes to establish and to perpetuate. How Jacob carried out the vow is reported in Ge 35:1-7: he built an altar to Yahweh on the spot. Nothing is reported about his giving of the tithe, perhaps because that is presupposed as the condition upon which the maintenance of

the sanctuary depended. The silence of the Scriptures on this latter point by no means indicates that it was neglected. Incidentally, this constitutes the second Scriptural reference to the voluntary tithe (cf. Ge 14:20).HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIf the first five verses of this chapter are to be used as a text, the last verse of the preceding chapter should be prefaced to them. Though a similar text is found in the beginning of chapter 12 and repeatedly thereafter, this text should be evaluated according to its connection and should be used to show that the Messianic hope was clearly understood and realized to be the crowning glory of God's revelation to Abraham. The next portion, v. Ge 28:6-9, is not to be recommended for use, for its subject is too largely negative: the folly of an unspiritual man. The last section, v. Ge 28:10-22, is unusually fruitful. The most natural approach is to regard it as an excellent demonstration of God's providential care for His erring children. It sets forth a broader comprehension of what God's omnipresence means to His children. Since John 1:51 is an evident allusion to this experience of Jacob, it would be very much in order to approach the text from the angle that suggests that Christ is the perfect embodiment of continual communion with the Father in heaven.

CHAPTER XXIX

5. Jacob's Double Marriage (29:1-30) In this chapter the major emphasis lies on God's gracious providence: in the preceding chapter Yahweh had promised to manifest His grace to Jacob; here definite tokens of that grace are received. Jacob finds those of his mother's family without difficulty; he meets with a pleasant reception; his years of work are rendered delightful; he secures a wife from the relationship of his mother; children come from this union. In the second place, of course, there are also indications of just retribution when the deceiver is also deceived. Writers of our day are inclined to stress, particularly the romantic phases of the chapter. These phases are, incidentally, an added ornament; but to regard the whole narrative from this point of view makes the incidental paramount. It is not to be denied that the Scriptures also glorify true and honourable love but always without growing sentimental about it. Those who are without spiritual discernment may consider the matter of this chapter as being altogether off the spiritual plane and dropping to the level of the almost trivial. However, in the ordinary events of everyday life true faith finds its right sphere of activity, and the trivial things of one's daily task become great and important if in them a man expresses his faith, as Jacob does. It is especially Luther's exposition that knows how to set forth this important angle of the case. On the matter of the critical analysis of the chapter we need say little. The majority of the critics seem to agree that v. Ge 29:1 comes from E, v. Ge 29:2-14 from J, v. Ge 29:15-30 from E; perhaps v. Ge 29:24, 29 from P. In this case J never bridged over the gap from Bethel to Haran, an absurdity, which Procksch in the interest of defending the critical analysis expressly defends. Aside from this it need only be remarked that criticism is entirely committed to the proposition that as soon as both sides of a case are presented this fact is a trace of dual authorship. J and E for all their commendable qualities never have quite risen to that fine level of discernment which sees two or more sides in a proposition. Then, too, though the so-called critical analysis of the chapter is admittedly difficult, nevertheless all critics cheerfully and almost positively make it and quite staunchly defend their findings. 1. And Jacob got under way and went to the land of the children of the East. "He lifted up his feet," says the more colourful Hebrew expression for "got under way." Naturally the expression "land of the children of the East" is a bit vague, but the use of it in the Scriptures always seems to take the land west of the Euphrates into consideration. To try to extend the term to include Mesopotamia and so Haran is quite unwarranted. But this does not now point to different sources with different or conflicting viewpoints. The whole matter is as simple as daylight. Between Mesopotamia, Jacob's goal, and Palestine lay "the land of the children of the East." Consequently, Jacob strikes out for it next in order to traverse it and so to arrive at Mesopotamia. The uneventful journey as such is passed by. 2, 3. And he looked about and, lo, there was a well in the open field, and, lo, three flocks of sheep were there lying beside it, for from this well men were wont to water the flocks, and the customary great stone lay on the mouth of the well; and thither all the flocks were wont to gather, and then they would roll away the stone from the mouth of the well and would water the sheep. Then they would replace the stone on the mouth of the well. The unusual thing, marked as unusual by a double hinneh ("behold," or "lo"), was that Jacob encountered at once the very well where the sheep of his kinsfolk were regularly watered. In "the open field (sadheh) three flocks of sheep"

would be quite conspicuous and stand out distinctly the one from the other. The Hebrew says they lay 'al ("above") rather than "beside" the well, for it regards the fact that the water always lies on a lower level. The imperfect yashqû marks the habitual thing in this instance, "men were wont to water" (K. S.157; G. K.107 e). The third person plural indicates the indefinite subject "men." The article ha'ébhen indicates the customary thing: "the customary great stone," which always covered the opening of these wells. Travellers like Robinson and Thomson testify to the prevalence of this type of well down to the present. Usually these wells do not contain "living water" but stored-up water. First the opening is covered by a large fiat stone with a smaller opening in the centre, which, in turn is covered by a smaller stone. The "large stone" prevented theft by individuals. 3. The converted perfects are brought into alignment with the yashqû of the preceding verse and are so made to express the rest of the habitual acts: flocks would gather, men would roll away the stone, and water sheep and replace the stone. In order not to conflict with v. Ge 29:10 we do best to regard the waiting until all the flocks were assembled partly as a matter of necessity partly a matter of common consent. For if a girl like Rachel tends her father's flock, like Jethro's daughters near Mt. Sinai (Ex 2:16) at a later date, then others of the shepherds may well have been young men, in fact, quite young men, who would require their united strength, or at least that of some two or three of the lads, to remove the stone. Now apparently, in order to be the first to water their flocks, shepherds would frequently come in rather early in the afternoon and there lie awaiting their turn, when they might yet have been out in pasture. It is this part of the procedure that somewhat perplexes Jacob (v. Ge 29:7), that grazing time should thus be lost. 4-6. And Jacob said: My brethren, whence are ye? And they said: We are from Haran. And he said to them: Do ye know Laban, the son of Nahor? And they said: Yes. And he said to them: Is all well with him? And they said: He is well, and, see, Rachel, his daughter, is coming with the sheep. The conversation that follows is the most natural and true to life imaginable. The shepherds are not a taciturn lot, but Jacob, being about seventy-seven, was much older than they, and so the younger men wait till they are spoken to. With good tact, Jacob addresses them "brethren" -- the wider use of the word 'ach, as members of the same people; for Jacob's ancestors came out of their midst. Apparently, too, both yet spoke the same language. The first thing for Jacob to determine is where he is. The well in the open field is not a town; but if Jacob learns where the shepherds come from, he will know which is the nearest town. Imagine the glad surprise of Jacob when they answer: "We are from Haran." Without betraying too much of his identity to total strangers Jacob can learn what he needs to know if they should happen to know Laban, whom he here calls, "the son of Nahor" rather then Bethuel's son, naming the grandfather, as, no doubt, the more illustrious ancestor; cf.2 Kings 9:20 with v. Ge 29:14; also Ezra 5:1 with Zechariah 1:1 for similar cases. The "a" of the interrogative particle lengthened before Schwa. 6. Next Jacob must know whether after all these newsless years Laban, his mother's brother, still fares well: hashalôm lô -- "Is there peace to him?" "Peace" in connections such as these refers to a state of well-being in which nothing essential is lacking. This question meets with an affirmative response. Besides, even then the shepherds were anticipating the arrival of Laban's daughter, Rachel. Perhaps the hinneh ("see") points to her as she becomes visible at some distance. Ba'ah, with the accent on the last syllable, is the feminine form of the durative participle -- "is coming."Though "Rachel" signifies "ewe" and "Leah" "wild cow," that fact in itself does not support the groundless contention that the early stages of the patriarchal religion included totemism. For nowhere do these or other names of wild beasts or tame appear as totems, nor are there indications anywhere of totemism in the legitimate religion of

Israel.7, 8. And he said: Lo, the day is far from spent; it is not yet time for gathering the cattle. Water the sheep and go and pasture them. But they said: We cannot, until all herds are gathered together. Then they roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and then we water the sheep.At that time there were still hours left for pasturing. The efficient shepherd Jacob is pained to see good time wasted thus. That is not what he would have done. So he urges them to do the necessary watering and then again lead the flock out to pasture. Besides, it is very manifest that by this manoeuvre Jacob is trying to remove the onlookers from the scene against the time when Rachel arrives. "The day is big" is the Hebrew expression for our: "the day is far from spent."8. Now it appears that they are agreed to wait till all are assembled before the stone is removed. Compare also our remarks on v. Ge 29:3. In this instance the assembled shepherds are just as loath to miss the meeting between this stranger and Rachel as Jacob is anxious to remove them from the scene. We take the expression "we cannot" as involving moral inability (they have agreed to act in unison) as well as physical.9, 10. While he was still speaking with them, Rachel arrived with her father's flock; for she was a shepherdess. And it came to pass when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his mother's brother, Laban, and the sheep of his mother's brother, Laban, that Jacob drew near and rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of his mother's brother, Laban.'ôdhénû -- "still he" (G. K.100o), with the participle here goes to make up an adverbial clause of time. Here the form bß'ah (accent on the first syllable) is the perfect "she arrived." It may not have been customary in all lands also not among the Israelites to have girls tend flocks. Consequently, the explanation: "for she was a shepherdess" is necessary.10. It is really a very characteristic trait observed by the author at this point that Jacob took separate note first of Rachel, then of Laban's flock. Nor should the second observation surprise us in one who had been a shepherd all his days. Nor need we wonder at the threefold repetition of the phrase "of his mother's brother, Laban." What else would a man like Jacob, loving his mother with particular affection, do under such circumstances than keep saying to himself: "This is the daughter of my mother's brother, Laban, whom she has mentioned so often; these are his sheep"? But what of the fact that he rolls away singlehanded a stone which required the united efforts of the rest? That is to be explained partly by the fact that he was naturally very strong, then partly by a mixture of two facts: his joy at finding his kinsfolks and his joy at finding such a pretty cousin stirs him greatly and makes him strong. It may be that we here have a Biblical instance of love at first sight, although even that had more fitly find mention in connection with the next verse. But to talk only of that love and to make Jacob act like a young fellow who tries to impress his ladylove by feats of strength is just a bit shallow by way of interpretation. Life here, as usual, was rather a complex of various motives that surged strongly in Jacob's heart. The text by its threefold repetition of the phrase "of his mother's brother, Laban" shows on what his thoughts dwelt at the moment. It has remained for Gunkel and men of his type to ascribe to the narrative the attempt to make out Jacob to be a man of Herculean strength, a gigantic fellow -- fabulous elements in the story. Such conclusions in reference to Jacob are, to say the least, most fantastic and farfetched. Wayyßghel is Kal -- G. K.67p.11, 12. And Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up his voice and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman and that he was a son of Rebekah. And she ran and told her father.The other shepherds now fade out of the picture. Whether they still were present when Jacob kissed Rachel is not told, though it seems quite likely. Such matters are so entirely secondary to the author's putpose that they may well be ignored. Allowing for the fact that in those days, among a different people, a kiss of cousins was a proper greeting, there is little doubt that

Rachel was taken quite unawares and may well have been astonished, for as yet she knew nothing of this strong shepherd's identity. The more natural procedure would have been to explain first who he was, then to give the kiss of greeting. The reverse of the procedure indicates how his glad emotions, ran away with him. No man will determine how much of this emotion was plain joy at seeing a cousin and how much incipient love for pretty Rachel, and Jacob himself, perhaps, at the moment would have been least able to make an accurate analysis of what his heart actually felt at the occasion. We can hardly go wrong in claiming to detect a trace of love at first sight. The strength of Jacob's emotion is attested to by the fact that after having bestowed the kiss "he lifted up his voice and wept" -- not a dishonourable or unmanly thing for the Oriental then or now, for he is a man inclined to make a greater display of his emotions. At the same time, what he does betrays, on the one hand, how keenly the loss of the association with the loved ones at home was missed by this quasi-fugitive, and, on the other hand, how deeply the new joy of the promise of attachment of his kinsfolk touched him. When the identity of Jacob is revealed to Rachel, she makes haste to impart the welcome news to her father, not like Rebekah to her mother. In fact, Rebekah's mother is not even mentioned in these narratives and may already have been dead. 'Ach, "brother," here appears in the broader use as "kinsman," it could also be rendered "nephew."13, 14. And it came to pass when Laban heard the report about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran out to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him repeatedly and brought him to his house. Then he reported to Laban all these matters. And Laban said to him: Thou certainly art of my own flesh and blood. And he lived with him a month's time.The Hebrew uses the expression: "he heard the hearing," which means: "he heard the report." "The report of Jacob" must be "report about Jacob" -- objective genitive. The strength of Laban's interest in a nephew, whom he had never seen and who brings, in fact, the only direct news that has come from his sister, who left almost a hundred years previously, is attested to by the fact that he on his part "ran out to meet him." We need not impute only base motives and emotions to Laban, though many of the things he did must call forth our sharpest disapproval. Without a doubt, the man was glad to meet his nephew and "embraced him" in all sincerity and "kissed him repeatedly" with true affection. Yet the Piel stem yenashsheq does not mean just "give a kiss" as does the kal wayyishshaq (v.11). Perhaps the overplus of affection displayed carries with it a trace of insincerity, for the truest affection does not make a display of itself. When Jacob has been escorted courteously to his uncle's house, it behooves him to give an account of himself. So "he reported to Laban all these matters." How much is to be included in haddebharîm ha'elleh ("all these things")? Without a doubt, the most recent occurrences concerning the meeting with the shepherds and Rachel. But will not his unattended coming, so different from that of Abraham's servant who led Rebekah back, have called for an explanation? Not to explain this difference would have raised justifiable questions and even doubts in the minds of his kinsmen. Consequently, if Jacob came as a godly man and one repentant of his recent deceit, as we have every reason to believe that he was, then he could not do otherwise than relate the direct and the more remote reasons of his coming. Consequently, "these matters" will have included an honest report concerning the things of chapters 27 and 28. Otherwise Jacob would have been sailing under false colours.14. Jacob's report at least conveyed, first of all, to Laban full proof of Jacob's identity: this man was truly his kinsman, a blood relative, or, as the Hebrew says: "my bone and my flesh," for which we have substituted the more common English expression "my own flesh and blood." A total stranger had, of course, to furnish unequivocal proof of his identity. Laban is so thoroughly convinced by Jacob's

account of himself that he prefaces his acknowledgment with a "certainly" ('akh). Nothing definite is agreed on for the present, except that Jacob should "live" (yeshebh) there. So "a month's time" elapses. The Hebrew expression has been variously rendered. Chôdhesh yamîm, "a month of days," employs the term "days" in the common meaning of "time," consequently, the almost colloquial English expression "a month's time" is very satisfactory. "The space of a month" (A. V.) is very good, also Luther: ein Monat lang. Attempted improvements are wrong, such as "a full month" or "about a month."15-17. Then Laban said to Jacob: Shouldest thou serve me for nothing, just because thou art my kinsman? Tell me what shall be thy wages? Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah and the name of the younger Rachel; and Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was of beautiful form and beautiful looks.By this time Laban has discerned that in Jacob he would have a very competent shepherd. No doubt, Jacob began to serve in this capacity at once. His faithfulness and his industry were immediately apparent. A measure of selfishness enters into Laban's proposal without a doubt. But most likely it is a compound of honest and selfish motives. The good features in it are that he wishes to bind a relative to himself, especially as this relative is unusually competent. Besides, he wants to arrive at a definite understanding as soon as possible in order to obviate future misunderstandings. Furthermore, it behooves him as the elder to steer toward a definite agreement. Each of these good motives had an admixture of selfishness, for Laban was basically a selfish and a tricky man. No doubt, he was planning to gain this competent young man as a son-in-law. Laban must have anticipated the proposal that was actually made. Perhaps Laban had noticed that Jacob had fallen violently in love, and now Laban hoped that if he let Jacob set the terms, Jacob's newborn love would incline to make a generous proposal. The basic statement is correct in every way: Shouldest thou serve me for nothing, just because thou art my kinsman? The second is not generous. For though in a sense Jacob was for the moment impecunious, yet Laban had clearly discerned that he was prospective heir to a very great fortune. Even if Jacob failed to tender the customary móhar, or dowry, that lack was more than compensated for by his potential wealth. The formality of the case could well have been met by a nominal service of one year.16. Here criticism makes a very positive assertion: v.16 as it stands could not have been written thus by the same author who had written v. Ge 29:6; and so the critics claim to have firm ground for assigning v. Ge 29:16-30 to E. We claim -- since here only an unproved and unprovable claim has been advanced -- on the contrary: Without a doubt the author of v.6 could have written v.16 just as he did and be perfectly consistent; there is not the slightest difficulty in the way of this assumption.17. "Leah" (meaning "wild cow"), though the elder, has "weak (rakh) eyes." This, according to the oriental standard, did not imply defective vision but merely the absence of that clear-cut brilliance and lustre that the Orientals love. "Tender" (A. V.) is in a sense even more correct than "weak." By contrast Rachel's eyes are not specifically referred to but seem, indeed, to have been dark and lustrous. But a "beautiful form and beautiful looks" are attributed to her. Add to these her natural assets the dramatic meeting at the well and it becomes very clear why Leah did not even enter into consideration for Jacob. Yet by v.16, 17 we are prepared fully to understand the later complications that arise.18. And Jacob loved Rachel, and so he said: I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter.True love between man and woman is here approved by the Scriptures. In the month's time spent with his relatives Jacob had come to know very definitely what his heart felt. Everything indicates that his was a very true and lasting devotion. A man deeply in love makes the terms that follow -- seven year's service -- and certainly does not look

primarily to his own advantage.19, 20. And Laban said: .It is better that I should give her to thee than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me. And Jacob served for Rachel seven years and they seemed to him like just so many days for the love he had to her.To this day Orientals and specially Syrians and Arabs much prefer to marry their daughters to those in their own relationship. Higher motives will have entered into the case on Laban's part. Jacob's worth of character and his true religiousness may have made a strong appeal to a man who had himself departed from this higher standard -- a silent tribute often paid by the less godly to the more godly. The comparative with min -- "good from" -- is used here (G. K.133 a). Laban's ready assent leads us to think that he had anticipated some such proposal and found Jacob's terms so very generous that he closed with them at once.All they who attempt to reduce the transaction here described to the level of a purchase are injecting foreign elements into the text. At no time in Israel's history were wives purchased. The customary móhar, or dowry-money, was regarded as proof of financial competence on the bridegroom's part.20. Without sentimentality or cheap emotionalism the author describes very beautifully and most effectively the strength of Jacob's love. Years seemed like mere days "for the love he had to her." Yamîm achadhîm is strictly "a few days." We have rendered it more colloquially, "just so many days." 'Ahabhathô, "his loving," is an infinitive used as a feminine noun with a suffix. Wayyihyû is masculine though it really has shanîm, a feminine noun, as its subject. But this strange anomaly grows out of the tendency almost always to begin sentences with the masculine (G. K.145 p), especially in the plural.21. And Jacob said to Laban: Give me my wife, for my time is up that I go in unto her.Laban should have taken the initiative at the end of the seven years. Selfishness lets him wait. Jacob must remind him. For "go in unto" we should say "marry." We'abhô'ah is a final clause (G. K.165 a). Jacob's somewhat curt demand indicates that he has come to know his father-in-law's character pretty well by this time.22-24. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. And it came to pass in the evening that he took Leah, his daughter, and brought her in to him and he went in unto her. Also Laban gave Zilpah his maid to Leah, his daughter, as her own maid.Now the crafty and cunning dealings of Laban come to light. First of all, though, indeed, custom demands that "all the men of the place" be invited to the marriage banquet, yet that arrangement will serve Laban's purpose well. When the prank played on Jacob becomes known to all, it will not be easy for Jacob to cast off Leah, and so Laban will have disposed advantageously of a daughter whom perhaps none would have desired. The expression "all the men of the place" may involve a natural hyperbole, unless Haran had still been but a tiny place, which is not very likely. 23. This was about one of the meanest pranks ever played on a man. It almost seems as though this boldly conceived plan could not have succeeded. But if one considers that Jacob had absolutely no reasons for suspicion; that his wife was brought in under the cover of darkness; that she was, no doubt, veiled (Ge 24:65); that two sisters, utterly unlike only as to facial appearance, may yet have had a pronounced physical resemblance otherwise as to size and stature; that the conversations of the bridal night may have been entirely whispered; that reticence on the bride's part would hardly seem unnatural under the circumstances; that intimate association, commonly found in modern courtships before marriage, were unthought of in days of old; and that Jacob may well be thought of as under the spell of a strong infatuation, which may have led him to overlook what at other times might have aroused suspicion -- we say, if one considers all these circumstances, it becomes clear that it may all have happened just as it is here told.24. Here is a convenient place to insert the comment that Laban gave his daughter a handmaid to be specifically her own. We shall need to know this fact

later. We combine the lah with the final shiphchah to make "as her own maid." It is true, Laban did not deal with his daughters as generously as Bethuel had dealt with Rebekah. For Rebekah according to Ge 24:59 received a "nurse," but according to Ge 24:61 there were "damsels" in the train. Laban's greed and parsimoniousness comes to light more and more. "Zilpah" perhaps means "nearness," "intimacy."Leah's part in the plot requires explanation. She cannot be absolved from guilt even on the score that it behoved her according to the conceptions of those days to submit to parental authority. She knew that Jacob was to be deceived. Common decency and uprightness would have demanded that she apprise Jacob of the fact at the risk of severe parental displeasure. A moral issue was involved. Apparently, though, indeed, far less guilty than her father, Leah was guilty in so far as she was not entirely averse to the whole scheme. She may have loved Jacob secretly. She may have considered this her one chance to get a husband. She may have thought this an unsought, and therefore justifiable, opportunity to steal a march on her sister. Even absolving her from all improper motives, we cannot entirely condone her action on the ground of the need of absolute obedience to her father as the times demanded it.25-27. And it came to pass in the morning that, lo, it was Leah. And he said to Laban: What is this that thou hast done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I worked for thee, and why didst thou trick me? And Laban said: Not is it customarily done so in our community, to give the younger before the elder. Finish the week with this one, and also the other shall be given to thee in return for the service which thou shalt do with me for yet another seven years.After the bridal night comes the rude shock of the discovery that it is Leah. Jacob recognizes that the fault lies preponderantly at the father's door. So Jacob at once takes his father-in-law to task. First he addresses to him the justly outraged question: "What is this that thou hast done?" This question implies that Laban has made a sport of all the finer and truer aspirations of men, has toyed with loyalty, truth and pure love. Next Jacob casts the terms of the original contract into Laban's teeth and adds to them the question: "Why didst thou trick me?" Surely, Jacob had been remiss in nothing. He had served with the truest fidelity. He had taken advantage of his father-in-law in nothing. Yet Jacob's words are comparatively few, his self-justification quite brief. For one who has been so grievously wronged he submits rather tamely after all, at least after the first outbreak. One cannot help but feel that the memory of the treachery he practised on his brother and his father was being refreshed strongly and sealed his lips from making further accusations. The justice of God's retributions seems to have overwhelmed Jacob and made him very docile on this occasion. Now Jacob felt what it meant to have a piece of deceit practised on one in reference to things that are especially prized.26. Everyone recognizes at a glance that if this really was the ironclad rule in this "community" (maqôm -- literally, "place") that the elder be given in marriage before the younger, then the time for saying so would have been at the time the agreement was originally made. The imperfect ye'aseh here expresses customary action; therefore we rendered: "not is it customarily done so."27. Observing his son-in-law's unexpected meekness and realizing the difficult position into which he has put Jacob -- Jacob would be the laughing-stock in any case, and Leah doubly so if Jacob simply cast her off -- Laban makes a new set of terms, which have regard exclusively to Laban's advantage. He suggests seven years' service for her for whom Jacob has just rendered the stipulated seven years. For downright, galling meanness these terms could hardly be surpassed. For despicability Laban takes the prize in the Old Testament. "The week" mentioned is the bridal week, which the Syrians still term the "king's week," the time during which bridegroom and bride are respectively addressed as king and queen. What a tumult of disappointment and

vexation for Jacob during this festive week! The brazen impudence which prompts Laban to add the terms for receiving Rachel as being "for the service (beth of price) which thou shalt do with me for yet another seven years," almost passes belief. We believe nittenah fits better into the connection if it be construed as Niphal perfect with waw conversive, rather than as a Kal imperfect, first person plural; for "we shall give" is quite out of place in a case where only Laban had done the giving. Fully to understand the entire situation it becomes necessary to answer the question: "Were Jacob and Leah guilty of adultery, or would their union have to be classed as adulterous if Jacob had refused further to consort with her?" Luther was right when he said, No. Their union was not marriage at first, because there was no free consent between these two. It was not adultery, for Jacob consorted with one whom he certainly did not desire. Consequently, Jacob could on ethical grounds have rejected Leah and would still have been guiltless.28-30. And Jacob did so and finished the week with this one, and then he gave to him Rachel, his daughter, for wife. And Laban gave to Rachel, his daughter, Bilhah, his handmaid, to be her handmaid. And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked for him still another seven years.Summarizing our previous contention, we believe that Jacob, smitten with a sense of guilt because of his own deception practised on father and brother and also having consideration for the sorry plight into which Leah would fall if he were to reject her, consented to "finish the week," that is pose as and actually be her husband. Then, not waiting till the second period of seven years' service was terminated, Laban at once gave Rachel to Jacob. Very likely, Laban sensed that Jacob would be adamant in insisting on his right, at least on this one point, and so Laban conceded what could not be avoided.29. Here, as in v. Ge 29:24, appears to be the most convenient place for inserting this notice essential for the understanding of the next chapter. No matter where these notices about the maids are inserted, they are always bound to make the impression as being additional bits of information, which is exactly what they are and are intended to be. But that furnishes no ground for the critical contention that other sources are involved. As long as writing is done, supplementary bits of information have to be added at certain points by all authors, and yet this fact does not point to other sources. "Bilhah" may mean "terror" or, perhaps, "terror is God."30. The marriage with Rachel is also consummated. Here the very natural fact is recorded that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. This by a very natural interpretation involves that a measure of love also grew up for Leah. Here, then, we have the strange case of a man who is a bigamist, primarily by accident, certainly not by choice. Still we must claim in the interest of the true conception of a truly monogamous marriage that Jacob would have done right only if he had refused Leah and married Rachel and so loved one wife only. His own earlier sin made him timid and prevented his carrying out this only correct solution of the difficulty. We are also here informed that Jacob was as good as his word: he had agreed to work "still another seven years" and so he lived up to his agreement. The second gam must be a copyist's error. Perhaps the copyist's eye ran into the wrong line, and so the gam should have stood before 'eth-Rachel v.28 (K. C.). In any case, neither of the two very ancient witnesses, the Septuagint and the Vulgate, have it. It certainly does not make sense.6. Jacob's Children and His Increasing Wealth (29:31-30:43)The last five verses of chapter 29 plainly belong to the subject matter of chapter 30. Now the account centres on the fulfilment of Yahweh's promise to be with Jacob and to bless him. But incidentally parallel with this most delightful fact runs the observation that the house of the bigamist is a house divided against itself and the fruitful source of much mischief and the effectual disruption of all true discipline. Though the statement is not explicitly made that bigamy is bound to be a grievous evil,

the chapter as such by its objective record conveys the truth of this statement.31, 32. And Yahweh saw that Leah was slighted, so He opened her womb, but Rachel remained barren. And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben ("behold, a son"), for she said: .... because Yahweh hath looked upon my affliction; for now will my husband love me.For a third time in the line of Abraham barrenness occurs, but parallel with it runs fruitfulness on the part of the less beloved wife. For senûah, literally "hated," in connections such as this (cf. De 21:15) means only "less beloved" or "slighted" (Meek). Yahweh, who has regard to his promise to Abraham as well as to the affliction of Leah, grants to the less beloved wife a son. "Rachel remains barren" in order that husband and wife may learn the more to trust in God's mercy. It seems that Jacob's love for Rachel savoured too much of infatution growing out of purely physical attraction. Higher motives should animate those to whom God's rich promises are entrusted.32. On the etymology of the proper names of this and of the next chapter it has been remarked: "The popular etymologies attached to the names are here extremely forced and sometimes unintelligible" (Skinner). Such a statement is the result of the critic's confusion. He acts on the assumption that these etymologies are to be scholarly efforts based on a careful analysis of Hebrew roots according to the Hebrew lexicon. Whereas, in reality, these are not etymologies at all but expressions wrought into the form of proper names, expressing the sentiments or the hopes associated With the birth of these sons. So someone or even the mother may have remarked at the birth of the first-born, "Look, a son," Re'û-bhen. Result, the proper name "Reuben." What is there "forced" or "unintelligible" about such a name? The added explanation as to what further thoughts Leah associated with this name "Reuben" do, indeed, not grow out of the words, "look, a son," but they lay bare the inmost thoughts of her heart. Leah knows God as "Yahweh," an index of fine spiritual understanding and faith, and ascribes to him her fertility. She sees that Yahweh delights in being compassionate toward them that have "afflication" and hers was a state of affliction; and she anticipates that her husband will love her more. Kî involves an ellipsis: (I have named him so) "because." 33. And she conceived again and bore a son and she said, -- because Yahweh hath heard that I am hated, and so He hath given me this one too. And she called his name Simeon (Hearing).Yahweh "heard" (shama'), so she calls him "hearing" (shim'ôn). So in Hebrew the idea becomes more readily apparent. Leah implies that she had asked for this child in prayer. Again she ascribes the son to the graciousness of "Yahweh." She must have been a woman of faith.If after the simple and convincing explanation given, "Simeon" is by some deduced from the Arabic root -- which signifies a beast which is a cross between a wolf and a hyena, we can but marvel and let such an explanation pass as an instance of critical arbitrariness.34. And she conceived again and bore a son, and said: Now this time my husband will grow attached to me, for I have borne him three sons. Therefore his name was called Levi (Attachment):Here the play on words centres upon the root lawah which in the passive signifies "grow attached to." How poor Leah must have thirsted for the love that was denied her. Leah now stands on pretty firm ground: any man would be grateful for three healthy sons; especially are men in the Orient minded thus. On happa'am see Ge 2:23.35. And she again conceived and bore a son and said: This time I praise Yahweh. Therefore she called his name Judah (Praised). Then she ceased bearing children.Apparently her hopes are by this time realized; she is no longer disregarded or loved but little. But in a sense of true devoutness she lets all praise be given to Yahweh and here contents herself with pure praise. Without knowing Hebrew one can hardly see the connection between the name and the words spoken. "I praise" -- 'ôdheh, a Hifil, active form. The passive, third person, is yûdheh -- "he will be

praised." This form distends itself into Yehudwhah, a form still having the same meaning.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSWe cannot persuade ourselves that this chapter furnishes material for homiletical use. The portion, v. Ge 29:1-20, could be used; but, for that matter, chapter 24 has already furnished more suitable texts on the same subject. Besides, the instruction of the Sunday school will always keep the subject matter of this chapter fresh in the memory of men. Certainly, v. Ge 29:21-35 is not well adapted for use in the pulpit, important as the issues involved may otherwise be in sketching the development of Jacob's character, the just retribution of God, and the essentials of the beginnings of the history of the fathers of the twelve tribes.

CHAPTER XXX

6. Jacob's Children and His Increasing Wealth (Continued) (30:1-43) 1, 2. When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob children, Rachel became jealous of her sister and said to Jacob: Give me children, or else I die. And Jacob's anger against Rachel was kindled and he said: Do I stand in God's place, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? The sequence of time is not necessarily being followed very strictly throughout this account. For, surely, it would seem quite unreasonable to suppose that Rachel never experienced a trace of envy until Leah had borne four sons. The likelihood is that already when Leah's first, or at least her second, son had been born, Rachel's jealousy put in its appearance. So the closing verses of the preceding chapter apparently grouped together the first four births for convenience' sake. Nowhere does the author claim to follow a strict sequence in his narrative. Yet, on the other hand, lumping together a series of kindred happenings is always permissible and in this case particularly expedient. Rachel, the well-beloved, finds her secure position less satisfactory than it once was. Desire for offspring is a healthy and a natural desire. In childbearing woman fulfils her destiny. But Rachel's jealousy is not excusable and her impatience far from harmless, for both in the last analysis question the wisdom of God. Her impatient demand is positively sinful, though it very accurately reflects her spiritual state. In the chosen race God was making it very apparent that human ambitions and human devices were not going to carry on the line of promise and furnish the desired offspring. Strong, indeed, must have been Rachel's jealousy and impatience to dictate so unreasonable a demand and to back it up with the contention that she would die unless her wish were granted. The participle methah, as is frequently the case, points to a future event: "I shall soon die," moritura ego (K. S.237 d). In the phrase methah anokhî, the threatening methah is in the emphatic position (K. S.239 g). 2. Jacob's anger is justifiable, for his wife has given vent to a foolish and a sinful utterance. She certainly has every reason to know better than to speak thus. Therefore Jacob very properly reminds her that conception and the bearing of offspring lie in the will and the power of God alone, who is here designated as 'elohîm, because to 'elohîm creative works are to be attributed. The rhetorical positive question, "Do I stand in God's place?" is the equivalent of a direct negative claim (K. S.352 a): I am not in God's place. Tachath in the sense of "in the place of" appears also in Ge 2:21; and Ge 22:13. It is by no means a superstitious notion on Jacob's part when he ascribes fruitfulness or its absence to divine will and control. Here is simply another instance of the deeper insight characteristic of the patriarchal religion. "Fruit of the womb" for children is a characteristic, as well as expressive, Hebrew idiom. The expedient adopted in v. Ge 30:3 indicates that Keil is right in charging Jacob with lacking capacity to comfort his wife, inasmuch as he at the time, apparently, was not sufficiently strong in faith to bring the problem before God in prayer together with his wife. Isaac's example (Ge 25:21) should have taught him what was to be done in such a case, and, surely, Jacob had learned from his mother about that incident. Again, the miscarriage of Abraham's plan when Sarah substituted Hagar should have taught Jacob the inadequacy of the plan that was being devised. Jacob still appears as a man who has quite a bit to learn. 3, 4. And she said: There is my handmaid Bilhah; go in unto her, that she may bear children upon my knees, that so I too may build up a family through her. So she gave

him Bilhah, her handmaid, to wife, and Jacob went in unto her. The expression found in Hebrew, "Behold, my handmaid," is like our: "There is my handmaid." This demonstrates the variety of translations that must be made of the interjection hinneh. "Go in" is the usual euphemism for sexual intercourse. If Bilhah is to "bear children upon the knees" of Rachel, that is simply another way of saying that Rachel will take the children her maid bears and set them upon her own knees and treat them as her own. It may also be that setting the children upon the knee was a formal mode of the adoption of such children. The handmaid's wishes were not consulted in the matter. She was originally bestowed upon her mistress at the time of the marriage of the mistress, partly in view of the possibility of the barrenness of her mistress, that then the mistress might give the handmaid to her husband. So did Sarah, and so Rachel, and so Leah. The expression "build up a family through her" is borrowed from Meek's admirable translation of the statement which in the original merely says: "that I may be built of her." This possibility of translation grows out of the fact that the word for "house," or "family" in Hebrew has the root banah, "to build." In mimménnah the agent is introduced by min (K. S.107). 4. It is no credit to either Jacob or Rachel that this device is resorted to. God's institution of the order of marriage is ignored. The lesson taught to Abraham is not heeded. Human expedients are trusted in rather than God's blessing. 5, 6. And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. And Rachel said: God has vindicated me and has hearkened also to my voice, and has given to me a son. Wherefore she called his name Dan (Vindication). As far as securing its immediate object is concerned, this new union was indeed successful -- a son is born. Some faith must be ascribed to Rachel. She too, in spite of what she said in a rash utterance in v. Ge 30:1, recognizes that children are the gift of God. This foster child may be looked upon as a means whereby God has vindicated her. Though dîn does primarily mean "judge" (A. V.), in a case such as the one before us the judging is meant in the sense not of pronouncing sentence but of securing one's rights for him, jemanden sein Recht finden lassen (K. W.). In other words, Rachel was relatively justified in expecting that she as really the one destined to be Jacob's wife would be privileged to bear her husband children. She believes that God, in giving success to the substitute expedient adopted, has vindicated her right publicly. By her explanation she indicates that both she and her sister had with chaste desire made this a matter of prayer. Now she says: "God has hearkened also to my voice," i. e. as well as to Leah's. She does not rise to the level of Leah's earlier utterance, who (Ge 29:32) ascribes her offspring to the faithful God, Yahweh. Rachel thinks of God only as the Creator and Source of life, Elohim. The higher covenant issues involved do not seem as yet to be discerned by her. In the Hebrew the relation of dan ("vindicator" or "vindication") to dîn, "vindicate," is quite apparent. To extract from v. Ge 30:6 the meaning: "God brought judgment upon me, but now has heeded," etc., is made impossible by the name dan ("judge") which would in that case commemorate not the deliverance but the preceding disfavour. 7, 8. And Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, conceived and bore a second son to Jacob. And Rachel said: Wrestlings with God have I wrestled together with my sister and I have prevailed, and she called his name Naphtali (Wrestling).Though it goes without saying that Bilhah is "Rachel's handmaid," yet the appositional statement is inserted to indicate that she bore a son only in her capacity as a maid. He did not count as her own, nor was the disposal of his lot in her hands. Where the previous verses indicated how strenuous contentions with her sister were, this verse (v. Ge 30:8) makes is still more apparent. On the one hand, though, indeed, it merely looks like rivalry between two sisters, there is a higher element involved on the part of both: they strive with one another in rivalry and with God in prayer. This is what Rachel means by her remark, "wrestlings

with God have I wrestled together with my sister." In the expression naphtûley elohîm the construct relationship represents a prepositional relationship which immediately afterward in the case of the sister is expressed by the preposition îm. To regard the use of the divine name in this connection as merely a device for expressing a kind of superlative, as does K. S. (3091), is the shallow approach of rationalism. That such a construction may replace the prepositional construction is apparent from K. S.336 d. "Wrestlings with God," however, in the last analysis are wrestlings for God's mercy. We may wonder that one and the same situation may present such a tangle of jealousy and faith; but the soul's workings are often just such a tangled thing. The name given to the son, "Naphtali" ("Wrestling"), preserves the foster mother's sentiment for later consideration. They who find fault with some of these names as not being strictly etymological forget what popular etymologies are in the habit of doing: they work very freely with words.A peculiar side light falls on the critical method at this point. The critical verdict is that in JE the names are usually bestowed by the mother. The verdict of history is: when the mother has particular reason for doing so, she gives names to her children. Circumstances, not authors, explain this fact.The untenable exegesis of rationalism furnishes one of its best contributions on this verse, when Meek renders: "It was a clever trick that I played my sister, and I succeeded too." There was at least a measure of reason behind translations which rendered: "It was a veritable God's bout," in the sense of a superhuman struggle. But "clever trick" can never be deduced from naphtulim by any legitimate device, to say nothing of the questionable attitude of such a statement as a whole.9-11. When Leah saw that she had ceased from bearing children, she took Zilpah, her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob for wife. And Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore Jacob a son. And Leah said: Good Luck! and she called his name Gad (Luck).Leah might have continued without resorting to the devise employed by her sister to secure children had it not been for the fact that she herself ceased bearing children. When this, however, happened she followed in her sister's footsteps and gave Zilpah to Jacob for wife. When v.10 repeats that it was Zilpah, "Leah's handmaid," who did the bearing, this again emphasizes, as did v. Ge 30:7, that only in this capacity does her childbearing come into consideration.11. The significant name given to the son in this case is gadh, "luck" or "fortune" -- based on the foster mother's exclamation on the occasion of his birth, when she said begadh, "with luck" or "in luck" -- an ellipsis for, "we acted with" or "we are in luck." To us it seems that "good luck," as an exclamation, well covers the case. It is true that this necessitates adopting the textual reading followed by the Greek translators and by Jerome. But still this reading seems simpler than bagadh, which the marginal reading (keri) alters to ba'gadh -- "fortune has come." An exclamation is more natural here than the formal statement.Since Leah nowhere else gives indications of polytheistic leanings, and since Jacob surely would have tolerated no names for his children that were allusions to Aramaean or other divinities, we believe that the interpretation which draws upon the fact that there was a god of luck, Gad, has absolutely nothing to do with our case. Besides, how unnatural to call a child by the very name of the god of luck! Interpretations that claim this to be the source and the import of the name are attempts to degrade and to make light of the patriarchal religion.12, 13. And Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore Jacob a second son and Leah said: Good fortune, for daughters shall call me fortunate -- and she called his name Asher (Fortune).Zilpah has the same measure of success: she too has two sons. Leah's sentiments on the occasion are so much the same as in the previous instance that the name of Asher is practically only a synonym of Gad, as is also indicated by dictionaries. K. W. gives Glueck as the meaning for both. Only, of course, the motivation of the

name must needs be a bit different. Here it is derived from the fact that Leah exclaims: "Daughters shall call me fortunate" -- the verb being 'asher in the piel stem, 'ishsherûnî. Leah alludes to the well-known custom that in lands where many sons are deemed the finest gift a wife can bestow upon her husband, daughters will naturally extol a mother of whom such praise can be spoken. To be consistent, Procksch invents the idea that "Asher" must be the name of a Canaanite-Aramaean divinity, masculine to the feminine "Asherah." 14, 15. And Reuben went out in the days of the wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to Leah, his mother. And Rachel said unto Leah: Please, give me some of the mandrakes of thy son. And she said to her: Is it not enough that thou hast taken my husband away from me, that thou wouldest take my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said: Therefore he shall lie with thee tonight for thy son's mandrakes.Rivalry and jealousy in the bigamist's household continue even though the two wives are sisters, or perhaps all the more on that account. One object of the narrative, without a doubt, is thus to portray the evils of bigamy in a drastic fashion. The major purpose, of course, is to show how the fathers of the twelve tribes came into being. For though on the human level petty jealousies and the natural longing for offspring are the things that are chiefly in evidence, on the divine level the forebears of the chosen race are being called into being, and the basis is being laid for the rapid increasing of the seed of Abraham.By this time Reuben may have been a lad of about four years, just old enough to toddle out into the field after the reapers. Childlike, he gathers what especially attracts the eye, the yellow berries of the mandrake about of the size of a nutmeg. The Hebrew knows them as dûda'îm, which according to its root signifies "love-apples." The ancients and, perhaps, the early Hebrews, too, regarded this fruit as an aphrodisiac and as promoting fertility. Had that thought not been involved here, this innocent episode could hardly have given rise to such a clash between the sisters. Reuben, as little children will, presents the mandrakes to his mother. Rachel, present at the time and much concerned as usual about her sterility, thinks to resort to this traditional means of relieving the disability and asks for "some of the mandrakes" (min -- "some of") of Reuben. She had hardly thought that this harmless request would provoke, such an outbreak on her sister's part. For Leah bitterly upbraids her with not being content to have withdrawn her husband from her, but, she petulantly adds, Rachel even wants to get the mandrakes of her son Reuben. Apparently, her hope that her husband would love her after she had born several sons (see Ge 29:32) had not been fully realized. Childless Rachel still had the major part of his affection. Quite unjustly Leah charges Rachel with alienation of affection where such affection had perhaps never really existed. Leah still was being treated with more or less tolerance. So Leah certainly begrudges her sister the mandrakes, lest they prove effective and so give her sister a still more decided advantage. Yet the English idiom, "is it not enough," etc.? is not quite the same as the Hebrew which says: "is it a little thing that," etc.? We follow Luther for an easier idiom.Rachel desires to preserve peace in the household and so concedes to yield the husband to her sister for the night in return for the mandrakes which she nevertheless purposes to eat. The frank narrative of the Scriptures on this point makes us blush with shame at the indelicate bargaining of the sisters -- one of the fruits of a bigamous connection.The efforts of critics to make the text appear at variance with itself here draw attention to the fact that nomads are said to be harvesting grain ("wheat harvest"). However, the contention is obviously unwarranted. It is not said that the nomads did the harvesting; and, surely, no one would deny the possibility of their using the expression "wheat harvest" to mark a definite season of the year even if they themselves did no harvesting. In any case, it may be only the author's remark, used to fix a particular season

when, as his readers knew, mandrakes usually ripened. Or may not the lad have followed along in the fields of some neighbours, farmers, and gathered his mandrakes? Where several possibilities suggest an easy explanation, critics select the one best suited to their constructions and treat it as the only one: "the agricultural background shows that the episode is out of place in its present nomadic setting" (Skinner). Without good reason K. C. makes lakhen concessive -- "nevertheless." Besides, on occasion the patriarchs sowed and reaped (Ge 26:12), perhaps also in Mesopotamia.16. And Jacob came from the field toward evening and Leah went forth to meet him, and she said: To me shalt thou come in, for I have indeed hired thee for my son's mandrakes. So he lay with her that night.Jacob's lot cannot have been a very happy one. To an extent he was shuttled back and forth between two wives and even their handmaids. Almost a certain shamelessness has taken possession of Jacob's wives in their intense rivalry. Leah almost triumphantly claims him as a result of her bargain, as he comes in from the field. The Beth in bedhûdha'ey is the Beth of price.17, 18. And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived and bare Jacob a fifth son. And Leah said: God hath given me my reward, because I gave my handmaid to my husband. And she called his name Issachar (Reward). For all the jealous and indelicate bickering on Leah's part there must, nevertheless, have been also a measure of faith, for she had called upon God in her distress, and her cry cannot have been without faith, for "God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived," etc.Yet the jealous struggles that went on day by day had dragged Leah down to a lower level than the one she had first occupied when she had attributed her offspring to "Yahweh," the God of covenant grace (Ge 29:32). Now she merely regards him as 'Elohim, the God of power over his creatures. She actually believes that when she so humbled herself as to grant her handmaid to her husband for offspring's sake, God recognized her sincerity and is now rewarding her for it. Truth and error blend in that opinion. God may, indeed, have recognized her humble unselfishness. But God does not sanction bigamous proceedings, much as a certain age may condone them. The name "Issachar" embodies Leah's idea; for the simplest analysis of the form is still the one which sees the name as a compound of yesh and sakhar -- "there is reward." This explanation would account for the otiose "s" or "sh," consistently found in the writing of the Hebrew name; as a Keri perpetuum. A parallel to this name is found in Jeremiah 31:16.19, 20. And Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. And Leah said: God has bestowed an excellent gift on me; now my husband will dwell with me, for I have borne him six sons. And she called his name Zebulon (Dwelling).The second period of fertility into which Leah enters results in two more sons. Her statement resulting in the naming of the child offers a kind of a pun. For the first word: "God has bestowed an excellent gift on me" operates with the verb zabhadh, "to present"; with the cognate object it literally means "present a present." Now as the result of the zabhadh Leah expects her husband will zabhal ("dwell") with her. This derivation makes the double propriety of the name Zebulon very apparent.21. Afterward she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah.This statement is inserted at this point because it prepares most appropriately for the events of chapter 34. We know from Ge 37:35; 46:7,15 b that Jacob had other daughters. There was no occasion for making reference to them at this point. In fact, Dinah may actually have been born shortly after the sixth son. The name Dinah is about the same in meaning as Dan and could mean "Vindication."22-24. And God remembered Rachel and God hearkened unto her and opened her womb. And she conceived and bore a son and she said: God has taken away my reproach. And she called his name Joseph (May he add) saying: May Yahweh add for me another son.Criticism offers some strange reasoning on the verb

"remembered." Only P is supposed to use it. So entirely mechanical is a man's style supposed to be that so common an idiom is supposed to be P's exclusive property. Critics actually believe J could not have said: "God remembered." Such remembering, zakhar, in cases such as these involved "granting requests" (B D B).By this statement ("God remembered") the author indicates that Rachel's conception was not due to the mandrakes but to the omnipotent power of God, who is the Author of all life. In any case, the story has advanced several years beyond the point where the mandrakes were eaten. Yet Procksch claims without sufficient evidence that the birth of Joseph must originally have stood in connection with the mandrake episode.23. Quite humbly Rachel, who early in her marriage may have been a more or less haughty and selfsufficient personage, now gives God the glory and rejoices that He "has taken away" her "reproach." Sterility brought reproach, as though God had deemed a wife unworthy of children. Rachel still stands on the lower, level of faith when she makes this remark, for she thinks only of the sovereign power of God. Yet her experience of divine help raises her faith to the higher level where she asks for grace from the faithful covenant God Yahweh: "May Yahweh add for me another son."24. A double thought plays into the name Joseph: it incorporates both of Rachel's remarks. For yoseph may count as an imperfect of 'asaph, "to take away." Or it may also count more definitely as imperfect (Hilfil) of the verb yasaph "to add." We must admit this to be very ingenious. But why deny to a mother a happy ingenuity on the occasion of her greatest joy? Why try to inject the thought of a confusion of two sources?25, 26. And it came to pass that when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban: Let me go that I may depart to my place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for which I have served thee and let me go; for thou knowest what service I have rendered unto thee.From what is here said it appears that Joseph must have been born at the end of the fourteen years of service. However, it must also be remarked here that apparently there is no attempt made to report the birth of Jacob's sons in a strictly consecutive fashion. If that were the case, seven years would never have sufficed for eleven children. Apparently, the children born of one mother are listed in a group in order to dispose of all of them at once, except in the case of Leah where about a year may have elapsed between the birth of the fourth and the fifth son. Whitelaw summarizes the· possible sequence as concisely as it may be put when he says: "The six sons of Leah may have been born in the seven years, allowing one year's complete cessation from pregnancy, viz. the fifth; Bilhah's in the third and fourth years; Zilpah's in the beginning of the sixth and seventh; and Rachel's toward the end of the seventh, leaving Dinah to be born later." So by this time Jacob's family was almost complete as to numbers, and he might well think of looking to the establishment of an independent home. The birth of Joseph had rounded out the one gap which had been felt till now. "Let me go" is a bit stronger in the original and could be rendered, "send me away" or "dismiss me." "My place and my country" are mentioned side by side in the sense where we sometimes refer first to a more definite then to a more general object; therefore we could render: "that I may go to my place, and in general to my country." For even after Jacob comes to his native country he will not confine himself strictly to his "place," for he is a nomad and must wander about.26. Since Jacob had pledged himself to seven years of additional service for the possession of Rachel, he could not strictly call his whole family his own until the second seven years were fulfilled. He now wants Laban to acknowledge the fulfilment of his contract by giving him his wives and his children that he might depart. In a sense all had been Laban's or at least under Laban's acknowledged jurisdiction. Laban is asked to admit that this is cancelled. Jacob's experience with Laban has not been such as to make Jacob

desirous of staying with him any longer. Jacob realizes that the service he has rendered during all these years was in an eminent sense marked by faithfulness, so he remarks, "thou knowest what service I have rendered to thee." Jacob implies that what he has done will bear closest scrutiny and must be acknowledged to be a faithful performance of his own part of the agreement. There is no obsequiousness about Jacob's attitude, no diffidence. He knows his father-in-law must be dealt with firmly. On the other hand, he also knows how to treat him with becoming respect.27, 28. And Laban said unto him: If I have found favour in thy sight I have consulted the omens and find that Yahweh hath blessed me for thy sake. Besides he said: Fix the wages I am to pay thee, and I will pay them.Laban is quite deferential to this son-in-law whom he respects for his character and his success. He begins with the somewhat elaborate oriental courtesy: "If I have found favour in thy sight" -- an ellipsis. Perhaps it involves a courteous protest like, "please don't talk about leaving," or else the conclusion might run, "tarry" (A. V.). In any case, the superstitious old fellow had surmised right along that Yahweh was granting blessings to Jacob's endeavour. Now recently he had "consulted the omens" (ni (ch) chßshtî), and they had pointed to the same conclusion. What heathen device Laban had resorted to in consulting the omens cannot be determined. But the act as such does reveal a departure from the true service of God and practically stamps him as an idolater. His reference to God as Yahweh is merely a case of accommodating himself to Jacob's mode of speech. Laban did not know Him as such or believe in Him. Any man with even a measure of insight could have determined without augury what Laban claimed had been revealed to him by augury. Jacob's faithful service of Yahweh was not kept hidden by him.28. Laban is ready to go almost any limit to retain a man whose services have been so advantageous to himself. Laban is an eminently selfish man. He makes Jacob a proposition which at once substantially alters Jacob's status. From the position of a bound servant he is raised to that of a partner who may freely dictate his own terms. Now, indeed, such an offer is not to be despised, for it puts Jacob in a position where he can build up a small fortune of his own and so removes him from the necessity of returning home practically a penniless adventurer, though a man with a good-sized family.29, 30. And he said to him. Thou thyself knowest what service I have rendered thee and how thy cattle fared under my care; for it was but a little that thou didst own before I came, but it expanded tremendously and Yahweh let blessings follow wherever I went. And now when am I to provide for my own house also?Apparently, before Jacob began to take steps to leave Laban had never admitted that he owed his newly won prosperity to Jacob. Since he admits at least so much, Jacob improves the situation by driving home that point and emphasizing it. Again he tells Laban that he is very well aware of the type of service his son-in-law has been rendering: this is the emphasis conveyed by the statement "thou thyself knowest." Jacob adds as a particular illustration how well Laban's cattle have fared. For in the case of nomads practically their entire wealth consisted in cattle. The phrase 'ittî must mean "under my care," or literally "with me." Apparently, Laban had had but indifferent success before. Jacob frankly tells Laban that Laban had "but a little" before his coming, lephanay (literally: "before my face or presence"). A change must have been apparent at once upon Jacob's arrival, for from that time onward Laban's wealth "expanded tremendously" (larobh -- "unto a multitude"). But it would ill behove this true follower of Yahweh's to ascribe such wealth to himself. Here is his opportunity roundly to confess his faith in Yahweh's blessing, and he does it in no uncertain terms: "Yahweh let blessings follow wherever I went." This last statement really reads: "Yahweh blessed me upon the foot." Now leraghlî, "to my foot," usually means "after me," as 1 Samuel 25:42; Habakkuk 3:5 show. From this

it follows, if blessing go after him, blessings attend wherever he goes. Where such is the case, a very high measure of blessings is certainly being bestowed. The rest of Jacob's argument now runs modestly as follows: I have done all in my power to provide for you and have done my work very successfully; "when am I to provide for my own house also?" The fairness of the demand can hardly be questioned. 31-33. And he said: What shall I give thee? And Jacob said: Thou shalt not give me anything. Yet I will again pasture thy flocks; yea, and guard them, if thou wilt do for me this thing: I shall pass through thy entire flock today removing from it every sheep that is speckled and spotted and every one of the lambs that is black, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; that shall be my pay. Then my righteousness shall answer for me on any future day, if thou shalt come upon my hire before thee; everything that is not speckled or spotted among the goats or black among the lambs, it shall count with me as a thing stolen.By his question, "What shall I give thee?" Laban admits that Jacob is quite justified in asking for a substantial flock for himself and appears quite ready to give it on the spot. Jacob knows the niggardly disposition of his father-in-law and that he will rue very shortly having parted with any of his goods. So Jacob says: "Thou shalt not give me anything" (me'û'mah, second last syllable accented because the ultima is an old case ending, S. G.90 f). Yet Jacob will do the work of a shepherd ('er'eh -- "I will pasture") "yea, also guard them," i. e. use the best of caution in all his work on one condition which he is about to state, v. Ge 30:32, 33. The plan suggested puts the possibility of acquiring wealth entirely in the providence of God. Jacob does not know whether it will please God to have him acquire wealth. Now to understand what follows it must be borne in mind that sheep are normally white in the Orient (cf. Psalms 147:16; So 4:2; 6:6; Da 7:9); goats are normally black or brown-black (So 4:1 b). The exceptions to this rule are not numerous. Yet Jacob will take only the exceptions. If he is to acquire wealth according to God's will, the Almighty Disposer of events must grant it. This was a fine act of faith on Jacob's part. He cast himself wholly upon God's mercy.32. Jacob proposes to go through all the flocks in person and separate that very day every one of the abnormally coloured sheep or goats, i. e. the naqôdh, covered with smaller spots, or "speckled," and the talû', marked by larger spots, or "spotted." Though he says, "that shall be my pay," yet this remark must be held against his initial statement: "Thou shalt not give me anything" (v.31). Jacob is not now changing his mind. He merely means all future speckled or spotted lambs and goats shall be my pay. He actually asks for nothing at the outset. Haser is an absolute infinite used as an accusative of relation expressing mode (G. K.113 h, K. S.402 b).33. Jacob expects that from time to time suspicious Laban will come, bent on investigating. Jacob expects to have a very clear case in such an event; for either flocks consist of such as are normally coloured, or they do not. One glance will always suffice to tell whether Jacob is dealing fairly or not; in other words, "my righteousness shall answer for me on any future day." If anything appears in Jacob's flocks "not speckled or spotted," that is to be dealt with as "a thing stolen," that is to say, Laban may promptly remove it and claim it for his own. The issue will be very clear-cut. Deceit will be out of the question. With good reason, at least from this point of view, Jacob chose such a basis of division.Jacob cannot be charged with tempting God in this case and, as it were, seeking to induce God to work a miracle for him. For when Jacob was still at Bethel, God had promised to care for him; and since his arrival in Canaan Jacob had had ample tokens of divine favour. He may, therefore, well commit the issues entirely to God. We repeat, Jacob's proposition to Laban was a fine act of faith.34. And Laban said: Right; let it be as you say.Laban is only too ready to close with an offer such as Jacob's. Hen, "behold," expresses a kind of eagerness, like our exclamation of

assent "right." The Hebrew wish is really a bit more formal than our translation indicates, for it says: "would that it might become according to thy word."35, 36. And on that day he removed the striped and spotted he-goats and all speckled and spotted she-goats and all that had white on them, and all the black among the sheep and put them in the care of his sons. And he put a distance of a three days' journey between himself and Jacob; but Jacob tended the rest of Laban's flock.Verse 35 can mean only this, that Laban himself did the separating of the ones that were to be kept apart from the rest, yet v. Ge 30:32 Jacob had stipulated that he himself would take care of that work. Laban's interference indicates his mistrust of Jacob, not a warranted mistrust but the mistrust of a man who is himself not to be trusted. Whatever promptings of generosity Laban may have felt at the time when he stood in danger of losing the valuable services of Jacob, these promptings are all dissipated as soon as he sees that the son-in-law will continue in his service. Two other indications of mistrust on Laban's part are that he puts the abnormally coloured under the care of his sons, lest Jacob tamper with them and perhaps use them for breeding purposes, where, of course, the chance of abnormal offspring would be proportionately greater. The original agreement had no such proviso in it: Jacob had always been treated as perfectly competent and dependable for the care of any part of the flock. But Laban's conduct and attitude become downright insulting when he gives a third indication of mistrust in putting "a distance (Hebrew "way") of a three days' journey between himself and Jacob." Had Jacob not displayed a fine tolerance at this point, he might well have been tempted to sever connections with Laban on the spot in spite of any agreement that might have just been made. It is true, the enumeration in v.35 is not complete, but everyone understands that the ones not mentioned are to be supplied in thought. A number of new terms appears here, apparently the ones that were used at this point by the contracting parties to define more closely the terms previously used. So "striped" ('aquddîn) appears for the first time, for, indeed, the "striped" are neither "speckled" nor exactly "spotted," and yet Jacob must have had them in mind originally. So, too, the "she-goats" are separately mentioned, though there could have been no thought of exempting them. Likewise, "all that had white on them" must have been included in any reasonable definition of what was to be included in this group. Hannôtharoth, plural, agrees ad sensum with the collective singular tso'n (K. S.334i).37-39. And Jacob took fresh rods of poplar, almond, and plane trees, and peeled white stripes on them, laying bare the white part of the rods; and he laid these rods which he had peeled in front of the sheep in the gutters of the watering troughs to which the sheep came to drink. And they were in heat when they came to drink. So the cattle bred before the rods and the cattle bare striped, speckled and spotted.The bargain relative to Jacob's wages, as it was originally made, was actually an act of faith on Jacob's part. But when Laban's several acts of mistrust came to light, it seems Jacob was somewhat shaken from his resolution to make an issue of faith of the whole matter; and so on his part he resorted to tricky devices in order to be assured of success. Mistrust lies behind Jacob's devices.If now biologists raise the issue that prenatal influence cannot determine the colour of sheep or of goats, as far as we can discern, they must add the qualifying statement: "as far as their observation goes." Here seem to lie certain problems with which they have not sufficiently grappled. Though, indeed, there may be curious superstitions on the part of people in reference to some of these matters, yet as the Biblical record here runs, its meaning without a doubt is that Jacob's crafty device helped determine the colour of the lambs and the goats. The observations of the ancients, backed by the experience of many moderns, seems to confirm the practicability of the device here described.Quite another question is the one of the

ethics of Jacob's act. Here it must be conceded that when Jacob originally made his bargain, he certainly meant that the varicoloured sheep and goats were to be his, but only those that would be born under perfectly normal circumstances. If Laban's acts led him to feel that certain schemes are thereby justified, Jacob is in the wrong in thinking so. True, the text says nothing of the sort, but then the issue is sufficiently clear without a statement of the text, and Ge 31:9 does not conflict with our claim as we shall presently show. Certain extenuating circumstances, however; certainly appear in this case, which, if they do not justify Jacob, at least lessen his guilt.Jacob's device, then, as here described is to lay peeled rods of trees that peel more readily than others and show a particularly white surface after peeling -- the white "poplar" as the name libhneh ("white") indicates, the lûz, or "almond" and the 'ermôn, or "plane tree," whose bark naturally peels off in large slabs -- to lay these in the troughs where the sheep drink during the breeding season. Breeding took place with these speckled or spotted objects before the eyes of the she-goats and the lambs. Now, especially the lamb is said to be susceptible to the things seen at the time of copulation or during the period of gestation by way of having the effects of such sight passed on to the offspring. And yet, certainly, another influence must be allowed at this point. Surely, man cannot so definitely control nature. Biologists admit the possibility of prenatal influences that they have not yet fully discerned. One such influence in this case was the overruling providence of God which in an unequal contest between two men gave the advantage to the one who was relatively innocent. In v.37 machsoph is a verbal noun, like an absolute infinitive (G. K.117 r). Again, pitstsel petsalôth gives an instance of a cognate object. In v.38 the collective singular tso'n has a plural verb. In v.39 yechemû ("they bred") is masculine but is quite naturally replaced by a feminine teladhnah ("they bore") with again the collective tso'n a subject for both.40. And the lambs Jacob set apart and set the faces of the flock toward the striped and all the black in Laban's flock and he made separate herds for himself and did not put them together, with Laban's flock.Here many insist that the thought of the verse is an impossibility. How, they ask, could the cattle under Jacob's care see Laban's flock, a three days' journey distant? Without a doubt, the author is not guilty of any such absurdities. For the understanding of the verse it must be remembered that Jacob had Laban's flock -- the white sheep and the black goats -- that is, the normal colour. Laban had Jacob's flock -- all the abnormally coloured. The preceding verse had mentioned "the striped, speckled, and spotted" that were born. These v.40 groups together under the term "lambs." These were to go under Laban's care according to contract, so they are called Laban's flock by anticipation. These "lambs" are not at once taken over by Laban, but, no doubt, the shepherds would wait until they were weaned and had gotten old enough to be moved some distance away. But as long as Jacob had them under his own care he made a separate unit of them as much as possible and would so pasture all of Laban's sheep that were under his care that he "set the faces of the flock toward the striped and the black" in the expectation that this sight, an unusual one, would impress itself on the white flock in advance and so prepare the influence that would be intensified later by the peeled rods. With this interpretation the second half of the verse agrees, except that "Laban's flock" is now used to refer not to the flock Laban tended but to the flock which he owned but which Jacob tended. Everyone understands how the expression "Laban's flock" would continually be used in two senses as long as the arrangement they had agreed upon remained in force. 41, 42. And it came to pass whenever the sturdier cattle were breeding, Jacob would place his rods before the eyes of the cattle in the drinking troughs in order that they might have breeding heat among the rods. But when the flocks showed feebleness, he did not lay out

(his rods). As a result, the more feeble were Laban's, and the sturdier, Jacob's.In v.41 the converted perfects equal the frequentative imperfects, even as the imperfect of v.42 yasîm is frequentative (K. S.401 p, 367 e, G. K.112 ee). Since the flocks bore twice a year, apparently Jacob's experience had taught him that those born in the fall were the "sturdier" or hardier. He so adjusted his device that it would react upon these and omitted to use it "when the flocks showed feebleness" (B D B). But for v.42 one might argue that he, indeed, employed the device, but the text as such says nothing of its effectiveness. It must be conceded that v.42 states that his device proved effective; but again we add: only in the providence of God.43. And the man became exceedingly rich and had large flocks and handmaidens and servants and camels and asses.The Hebrew says: "the man burst out exceedingly exceedingly." Our translation catches the import of the statement, though in a less colourful fashion. To take care of the ever increasing flocks a multitude of servants became necessary, and camels and asses as well, for keeping in touch with the various movements of the flock and for moving from place to place with the nomadic establishment. God had fulfilled His promise of Ge 28:15 beyond what Jacob could ever have anticipated. Observe rabbôth, plural adjective with tso'n, singular collective (K. S.346 d).HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSImportant as the revelation of this chapter may be from several points of view, again it does not happen to be suited for use in the pulpit. For without a doubt, no man would care to lay bare the rivalries between Rachel and Leah as recorded v. Ge 30:1-24. Still less adapted to sermonic use is v. Ge 30:37-43. That would leave v. Ge 30:25-36, which again would fall under the same general heading as Ge 26:12-17: "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich."

CHAPTER XXXI

7. Jacob's Flight from Laban; their Treaty (31:1-54) It may seem very strange to regard the preceding chapter and the present one as still belonging to the "story of Isaac," as the heading Ge 25:19 suggests. But though Jacob is the active figure, Isaac still dominates this portion of the history of the chosen people: v. Ge 31:18 Jacob is going back to Isaac under whom he belongs; verse Ge 31:53 Jacob swears by Isaac's God or "fear." Jacob's "story" begins Ge 37:2. These headings ("history," or "story" -- toledôth, see Ge 2:4) are aptly chosen. The chapter before us may be divided into three parts: a. the flight of Jacob, v. Ge 31:1-21; b. the interference of Laban, v. Ge 31:22-42; c. the treaty, v. Ge 31:43-54. (a) The Flight of Jacob (v.1-21) 1, 2. And he heard the words of Laban's sons, who said: Jacob hath taken all that belonged to our father; and from that which was our father's hath he achieved all this abundance. And Jacob observed Laban's face, and it certainly was no longer as it had formerly been. Jacob thrived far more abundantly than Laban. Apparently, Laban himself was doing far better than when Jacob first arrived. But Laban's sons have too much of the niggardly spirit of their father. When they observe that Jacob is growing wealthy, they vent their displeasure in grumbling remarks, which, perhaps, are not heard by Jacob directly but are reported by others. Jealousy leads the sons of Laban to overstate the case, almost absurdly: "he hath taken all that belonged to our father," as though Laban had been impoverished, and as though Jacob had been guilty of some form of theft. Another statement of theirs ran thus: "from that which was our father's hath he achieved all this abundance." Here kabhodh is better taken as "abundance" (B D B) or Masse (K. W.) rather than wealth, for the heads of cattle, numerous as they were, are under consideration. In addition, though Laban is more adroit and refrains from saying what might be used against him, yet he has dark looks for Jacob in place of the hypocritical smiles that once wreathed his face. We render kithmol shilshom, "formerly," though literally it means: "yesterday (and) the third day." By synecdoche the special is used for the general (K. W.) and so the expression is little different from our "formerly." We take the liberty of rendering hinneh, ("behold,") "certainly," which points out as definitely as "behold." The expression me'asher must mean "from that which" (G. K.138e). Peney is not "attitude." 3. And Yahweh said to Jacob: Return to the land of thy fathers and to thy relationship, and I will be with thee. Many times before this Jacob may have desired to return, especially since living together with Laban was becoming increasingly difficult. We have every reason to believe that, godly man that he was, Jacob had been submitting his difficulty to his God in prayer. Since he had been living under God's direct guidance ever since the time of the Bethel vision, Jacob would not presume to return unless God so directed. The substance of the Bethel promise (Ge 28:15) is here renewed. God indicates that now Jacob may feel free to return. Most appropriately He is here designated as Yahweh, the faithful Lord, who had kept all promises made to Jacob. After all the promises made to Abraham, Jacob well understood the necessity of returning to "the land" of his fathers. 4-6. So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah out into the field to his flock, and he said to them: I have been observing your father's face, for it is no longer toward me as it formerly was; but the God of my father hath been with me. And you for your part know that I served your father to the best of my ability. The wives are to be apprised of Jacob's purpose to flee. The fact that Jacob sends for them

to come "out into the field" -- hassadheh used adverbially (K. S.330 c) -- gives the first indication that Jacob is determined to flee secretly. This plan is not to be commended. If the separation from Laban was permissible and right, and God has even sanctioned it, then it should have been carried out openly as the honourable thing that it actually was. Fear of the consequences should have been dismissed, since divine approval was assured. Here, too, Jacob is seen putting undue confidence in purely human devices. Rachel is mentioned first because she still ranked pre-eminent in Jacob's esteem. The wives are not only to be informed; their active co-operation is to be enlisted. It would seem as though Jacob had never fully spoken his mind to his wives on this subject. The patriarchal manner of life seems to have made such a step as Jacob here contemplated appear too much like rebellion to allow him even to discuss it with his wives prior to this time. Emancipation desires were not the order of the day then as now.5. "I have been observing" (ro'eh, participle and first by way of emphasis) indicates that Jacob wishes to assure his wives that this is not an impression based on a glimpse or two of Laban's face. Laban's ill will has now already become a fixed attitude. The expression relative to the change in Laban's face involves in this case active and harmful enmity, because Jacob hastens to point out by way of contrast (we adversative) that God had definitely taken Jacob's part to guard him against the harm which Laban's attitude presaged or even may already have attempted. The expression, "God of my father," does not mean that He is not Jacob's God, but rather that He is giving proof of the faithfulness which the fathers experienced. Elohim is here used because Jacob is thinking of the power which the Creator displayed in overruling the things that Laban did to overreach his son-in-law.6. Jacob, however, knows himself to have been quite undeserving of such treatment as he has been receiving at Laban's hands, and he knows how thoroughly his wives understand the justice of his cause: they have seen day for day how faithfully their husband was serving their father. Therefore 'atténah, first by way of emphasis -- "you for your part" or "you, at least."7-9. But your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times; but God did not allow him to do me harm. If he said thus: The speckled ones shall be your wage, then the entire flock bore speckled ones. But if he said: The striped ones shall be your wage, then the entire flock bore striped ones. So God has taken away your father's herd and given it to me.Now we learn, what had not yet been revealed in chapter 30, that Laban had repeatedly altered and realtered the original agreement in an effort to fleece Jacob. Whereas at first it was merely stipulated that all that was unusual in colour should be Jacob's (Ge 30:32), Laban had changed these terms so that only one particular class of the off-colour sheep or goats should be Jacob's such as only "the speckled" (nequddim), i. e., those with smaller spots, or only "the striped ones" ('aquddim), always hoping that surely the man Jacob could not continue to be so particularly favoured. The statement "ten times" here stands as a round number signifying as much as: just as often as he could. Apparently, Jacob, secure in the confidence of divine favour, had acceded to each new request, exorbitant though it was. Jacob throughout ascribes his success to "God," Elohim who as Creator can well control His creation. Under these circumstances Dillmann should not have described Jacob as God's "favourite" (Schuetzling). For Laban was actually "deceiving" (hethel -- Hifil from talal) Jacob, for the original agreement, which was to have covered all relations between the two, was always being invalidated by Laban. Besides, without a doubt, Laban was trying every possible demand or combination of demands of which he was capable. Of course, in these later instances Jacob could not longer resort to devices mentioned in the previous chapter, for no device could be calculated to produce such nice differentiations in colouring as the new contracts made necessary.

So, without a doubt, Jacob himself was led to ascribe all success he had to God's providence. On the other hand, it must have been very strange that Laban could not sense divine interference. Hethel used with be implies a despising of the object (K. S.212 f). Hecheliph is really iterative: "he has kept on changing" (K. S.367 h).9. The absolute statement of this verse, is certainly to be taken as being only relatively correct: surely, Laban had not lost everything, nor had Jacob come into possession of all. But God certainly had taken away from the one and given to the other. The verb "take away" (natsal in the Hifil) bears an unusual shade of meaning here. It usually means "to deliver" and here practically implies that for a flock to come out from under the hand of Laban was the equivalent of a deliverance. In v.8 the yihyeh is singular, being influenced by the predicate noun rather than by the subject (K. S.350a). In v.9 the suffix on 'abhikhem is masculine representing the infrequent feminine (G. K.135 o; K. S.9).10-13. And it happened at the time when the flock was hot in breeding that I lifted up my eyes and saw things in a dream, and, lo, rams that were leaping upon the goats were striped and speckled and spotted. And the angel of God said unto me in a dream, Jacob; and I said: Here I am. And he said unto me. Lift up now thine eyes and see: all the rams that are leaping upon the goats are striped, speckled and spotted, for I have taken note of all that Laban bath done to thee. I am the God of Bethel where thou didst anoint a pillar and didst vow a vow unto me. Up now, go forth from this land and return to the land of thy birth. We must first dispose of the problem whether God actually inspired this dream and actually spoke in the dream to Jacob, or whether the dream was conjured up by Jacob's excited imagination or subconscious mind which had been busied rather intensively with the problem the dream reflects. Keil and Strack and others, without offering proof, assume the latter. They do not attribute deception to Jacob; they allow that he may have had such a dream but simply state, e. g., "it is certain that God did not show Jacob the rams in a dream" (Strack). However, such a dream of a man of God, if it were a subjective delusion and yet reported in the Scriptures, would be quite without analogy. In fact, in all other cases such men were sure that a divine revelation had come to them, and Jacob is no less sure than they. As for the question whether God will stoop to reveal such trivial, if not even unseemly, matters as the details of breeding, it must be remembered that such matters could hardly be offensive and trivial to a shepherd like Jacob. It is an injustice to the man Jacob to assume that he reported as a divine revelation a dream whose origin may have seemed doubtful to him and used the dream to influence his wives and to justify himself.This dream, then, is not for the purpose of suggesting to Jacob what lambs and what kids he is to select the next time he bargains with Laban, for, as we just learned, Laban was the one who kept altering the terms of the agreement. This dream is rather a revelation given to Jacob at a particular breeding time to make him aware of the fact that even this matter was being regulated entirely by God's providence, and that Jacob could put full confidence in God to guard his best interests. Surely, what Jacob saw in the dream (v.10) was not necessarily what was happening in reality. Yet even here we must concede that God might so have regulated the matter that only "the striped, speckled and spotted" rams did the breeding. However, according to a wellknown biological law that would not guarantee offspring only of the colour of the rams. Therefore this part of the dream may have been suggestive, indicating to Jacob that God had the issues fully under control.Berudhim ("spotted") seems to involve bigger spots than nequddim ("speckled") which seems to involve a being mottled. Therefore K. W., grossfleckig for the former.11. The one who addresses Jacob is "the angel of God." Yet in verse Ge 31:13 this person identifies himself with God and so cannot have been a created angel but must have been divine. Here Ge 16:7-11 as

well as Ge 22:11, 15 should again be compared, together with the comments there made. The fact that previously He was called "angel of Yahweh" but here "angel of God" makes no appreciable difference.12. The Angel of God specially draws Jacob's attention to what he sees. Jacob is not to regard the thing seen as trivial but as indicative of the fact that God had "taken note of all that Laban had done" to him and was, of course, Himself taking measures to safeguard Jacob in what seemed like an unequal contest.13. Very definitely God identifies Himself to Jacob as the one who formerly had appeared at Bethel and to whom Jacob had anointed a pillar (matstsebha) and vowed a vow. This is another way of saying that what He had promised then to do for Jacob is now actually being done. For assuredly, but for divine interference Jacob would have suffered irreparable loss. Strangely, ha'el, though construct state, has the article. Yet this is not so difficult if it be noted that the generic noun 'el, as it passes over into use as a proper noun, retains the article, so that the whole combination ha'el becomes the proper noun (cf. K. S.295 i; 303 a; G. K.127 f).This dream, of course, did not need to be repeated every year when a new situation arose, for mutatis mutandis it indicated what God was doing. Very likely, what v.3 reports in summary is given in fuller detail in v.10-13. There is no need of assuming a series of dreams, as does Lange.V.13b -- v. Ge 31:3. It is the climax of this dream revelation. The time for departure is at hand. This land of adoption must be forsaken. The land of birth is to be sought. Such a declaration as Jacob here reports must have deeply influenced Jacob's wives. It would not seem as though this divine vision had ever been told to them before. Jacob knew that sacred spiritual experiences were not to be discussed too freely. Perhaps, too, his wives were not yet spiritually ready for this information. Coming to them at this juncture, it may have been overwhelming in its impression.14-16. And Rachel and Leah answered and said to him: Have we still any share or inheritance in our father's house? Have we not been accounted as foreigners by him? for he hath sold us and hath entirely used up the money that should have been ours. For all riches which God hath taken away from our father really belong to us and to our children. And now as for all that God bade thee, do it.The two wives are of one mind and agree entirely with their husband. The construction indicates that Rachel took the lead and spoke first -- watta'an, singular, though a double subject follows; yet that alone is a common enough construction and used as an alternate for the plural verb (cf. K. S.349u). Yet Rachel is placed first, indicating that the initiation lay with her. The wives recognize that they no longer share the interests and the objectives of their paternal home. B D B under cheleq suggests quite aptly that the idea "obligation to the paternal home" is involved. Anteil (K. W.) could cover the case. Then, coming to more material concerns, their "inheritance" apparently need not be hoped for. 15. In fact, the father has treated his own children not as though they were his own flesh and blood but as though they were of as little concern to him as nokhriyyoth, "foreigners," i. e., those of an unsympathetic foreign group. "Strangers" (A. V.) is not quite exact. Proof of this unpaternal attitude lies, first, in the manner in which he disposed of his daughters: it was a case of sale (makhar -- "he sold"), and their mode of referring to it indicates that the daughters knew a better mode of giving in marriage to have been the custom even in their day. Seven (or fourteen) years of service constituted the price paid. But besides, whereas a less greedy father would have used the gift from his prospective sonin-law to provide a dowry for his daughters, Laban "entirely used it up" (Hebrew, "eaten up" -- 'akhal with absolute infinite -- "entirely") most likely by investing it directly in his flocks and herds so that it was completely absorbed. Consequently, kaspénu -- not "our money" but "the money that should have been ours," or perhaps, "the money he acquired through us" (K. C.). Yet our translation lies closer

to the facts under discussion.16. From one point of view the wives are correct when they assert that all the present wealth of their father belongs to them and to their children, because he apparently had not been wealthy before Jacob came who by his assiduous and skilful management increased his father-in-law's "riches" enormously. By all canons of right Jacob's family ought to have been adjudged as deserving of a good share of these riches. But the wives saw that their father was not minded to give them or their husband anything at all. Apparently, the long pent-up grievances find expression in these words. Ultimately, then, the wives arrive at the conclusion that the best thing Jacob can do is to obey God's command and depart. Their mode of arriving at this conclusion is not the most desirable: they finally conclude to consent to what God commands because their best material interests are not being served by the present arrangement. Jacob, no doubt, approached the problem on the higher plane: he was obeying the God of his fathers, who had made promises to Jacob previously and was now fulfilling these promises. So in Jacob's case we have fidelity to God; in the case of his wives a greater measure of interest in material advantage. For that reason, too, Jacob's wives refer to Him only as Elohim. There is no special reason for regarding the introductory ki as "so that," since the customary "for" is quite adequate, tying back, however, to the idea of considering his daughters as "foreigners."17, 18. So Jacob proceeded to set his children and his wives upon camels, and he drove away all his cattle and all his substance which he had acquired, the cattle constituting his property which he had acquired in Paddan Aram, in order to go to Isaac, his father, to the land of Canaan.The Hebrew "rose up" (A. V.) wayyaqom, is often used in the looser sense of addressing oneself to a task; therefore: "he proceeded" (Meek). With skilful and picturesque detail the father is shown getting his family under way for the flight, "he set them upon camels." The original has even a bit more of colour -- nasa' -- "he lifted up."18. "He drove away" indicates not a leisurely departure but all possible haste, though, of course, flocks had to be driven carefully lest they suffer from overexertion and perish. In addition to the cattle there were other possessions of Jacob that he had acquired in Paddan-Aram or Mesopotamia. For Jacob had not been, and was not intending to be after his return, a nomad. By a repetition of miqneh, "cattle," this part of his possessions is reverted to as "constituting" the major part of "his property," qinyano, as K. W. well translates: der Viehbesitz, der sein Vermoegen bildete. The statement is rounded out by a double statement of the objective of his journey: on the one hand, he was going back "to Isaac, his father," under whose authority he felt he still, belonged, and "to the land of Canaan," which according to divine decree was ultimately destined to be the possession of his posterity. Such precise formal statements including all the major facts are wont to be made by Moses when he records a particularly momentous act. The very circumstantiality of its form makes one feel its importance -- a device, by the way, quite naturally employed for similar purposes to this day. Critics miss all these finer points of style, for the supposed authors that the critics imagine have wrought out parts of Genesis (E, J, P, D) are poor fellows with one-track minds, not one of whom has the least adaptability of style, but all of whom write in a stiff, stilted fashion after one pattern only. Critics ascribe most of v.18 to P.19-21. But Laban had gone to shear his sheep; and Rachel stole the teraphim which belonged to her father. And Jacob tricked Laban, the Aramaean, by not telling him that he was fleeing. So he and all that were his fled. He proceeded, namely, and crossed the River and set his face in the direction of Mount Gilead. As it just happened, the rather important task of sheepshearing was just engrossing Laban's attention. Among the ancients, at least of a later date, the event was quite a festivity (cf. Ge 38:12; 1Sa 25; 2 Samuel 13:23). Since Laban was at some

distance from Jacob, flocks (Ge 30:36), and since all hands were kept quite busy for a few days, no time could have been more opportune. Because the father was away from home, Rachel had a chance to carry out a special project of her own: she stole her father's household gods, the ter'aphim. The plural may be a plural of excellence patterned after Elohim, and so only one image may have been involved. Whether these were larger, almost man-sized as 1 Samuel 19:13, 16 seems to suggest, or actually were only the small figurines that excavations in Palestine now yield matters little; both types may have prevailed. Apparently, judging by the parallel Hebrew root, they were regarded as promoting domestic prosperity, and so were a kind of gods of the hearth, Penates. Apparently, according to Zechariah 10:2, they were also used for purposes of divination. It seems hardly fair to assume that the Israelites carelessly carried these household divinities over from the time of these early Mesopotamian contacts and continued to use them almost uninterruptedly. When Michal happens to have such a figure handy (1Sa 19), that is not as yet proof that from Rachel's day to Michal's Israel had quite carelessly tolerated them. We should rather say that whenever Israel lapsed into idolatry, especially in Canaan, then the backsliders would also adapt themselves to the teraphim cult. Ho 3:4 by no means lists them as legitimate objects of worship.But of some moment is the question: Why did Rachel steal this teraphim? To be rejected are such conjectures as merely to play her father a prank; or to take them for their intrinsic worth, supposing that they were gold or silver figurines; or to employ a drastic or almost fanatical mode of seeking to break her father's idolatry -- views current among Jewish commentators and early church fathers and to some extent to this day. More nearly correct might seem to be the opinion which suggests that she aimed to deprive her father of the blessings which might have been conferred by them. Most reasonable of all, though it does not exclude the last mentioned view, is the supposition that Rachel took them along for her own use, being herself somewhat given to superstitious or idolatrous practices. For though Ge 30:23, 24 suggest a measure of faith and of knowledge of the true God, even as Jehovah, yet it would seem that as a true daughter of her father she had been addicted to his religion and now had a kind of divided allegiance, trusting in Jehovah and not wanting to be deprived of the good luck teraphim might confer. In any case, since she took what did not belong to her, she is guilty of theft -- "she stole."20. Jacob, skilled in the use of devices to further his own interest, spread the veil of secrecy over what he did: "he stole the heart of Laban." But since the heart is the centre of mental activity, this idiom signifies to "trick" or "deceive" (B D B), not yet, however, "outwit" (Meek). Laban is here called "the Aramaean" (ha'arami), which could also be translated "the Syrian" (A. V.). The reason for this apposition is puzzling. It hardly grows out of the Hebrew national consciousness which here proudly asserts itself. Perhaps the opinion advanced by Clericus still deserves most consideration. He believes Laban's nationality is mentioned because the Syrians were known from of old as the trickiest people; here one of this people in a kind of just retribution meets one trickier than himself. Yet this is not written to glorify trickery. The participle bore (a) ch expresses the idea that Jacob concealed that he was "making preparations for flight" (K. C.).21. Here is a typical example of Hebrew narrative. First the summary statement: "Jacob fled"; then the details: "he proceeded (wayyaqom) and crossed (wayya'abhor) the River and set his face," etc. (wayyßsem). We have sought to express this relation by inserting a "namely" after the summary statement. The necessity of our interpretation becomes apparent also from the peculiar sequence, if all verbs are supposed to be strictly consecutive: he fled, he proceeded, he crossed, he set his face. Plainly, the last three give the details of "he fled." The article before nahar ("river") is the article of distinction, and so

hannahar is the Euphrates. The point of crossing seems to have been the ancient ford at Thapsachus. Naturally, from this point the next objective had to be the mountain of Gilead or "Mount Gilead."(b) The Interference of Laban (v.22-42)22-24. And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled. So he took his kinsmen with him and pursued after him a seven days' journey and he overtook him in Mount Gilead. And God came unto Laban, the Aramaean, in a dream by night and said to him: Take care not to say anything to Jacob.According to Ge 30:36 a three days' journey was set between Jacob and Laban. Though this may not have been permanent or even the constant distance between the two flocks, in this case it at least took three days till the message came to Laban. 23. Laban takes with him his 'ackchim, literally: "brethren," here most likely "kinsmen." Jacob, encumbered with his herds, loses his three days' advantage by the time seven days of pursuit are ended. There can be no question in Laban's mind whither Jacob is going. Besides, such a group as Jacob's train made must have left a broad trail in their going. Consequently, somewhere in Mount Gilead he practically comes up with his son-in-law and goes into camp, knowing that escape is out of the question for Jacob.The distance covered by Jacob creates a problem. Some have computed that the distance involved is about 350 miles as the crow flies. This need not necessarily be assumed. We have accurate maps that represent it to be no more than about 275 miles to the fringes of Mount Gilead. Besides, in shifting his grazing ground Jacob may have so arranged things before he took his flight in hand as to gravitate some three days' journey to the south of Haran -- certainly not an impossibility. If only fifteen miles constituted an average day's journey, the total distance would be cut down to almost 230 miles. Now, certainly, Jacob will have pressed on faster than the average day's journey, perhaps even at the cost of the loss of a bit of cattle. The cooler part of the day and portions of the night may have been utilized in order to spare the cattle. Then, too, the boundaries of Gilead may originally have extended nearer to Damascus. Skinner's criticism that "the distance is much too great to be traversed in that time" is quite out of place. K. C. shows that "Gilead" is used for the country east of Jordan in general.24. Apparently, during that last night God appears to Laban in a dream. Is he again called "the Aramaean" in reference to his ingrained trickery, which would have sought to inveigle Jacob into some agreement disadvantageous to himself? It almost seems so. The dream, employed especially for men on the lower spiritual level, is the medium of approach to Laban. God's injunction laid upon Laban is, "Take care (hishshamer -- nifal, here more reflexive, like watch yourself') not to say anything to Jacob." The unusual Hebrew idiom has it: "not to speak from good to bad." This is an expression designed to cover the entire scope of a concept, like "from the least to the greatest," or "root and branch." See K. S.92 b. Here "from good to bad" means "anything." Yet the statement involves an ellipsis. Laban is not forbidden even to speak with Jacob but to say anything to influence Jacob to return, or to say anything by way of bitter reproach. Luther stresses the latter by rendering: "speak only in a kindly fashion" -- nicht anders redest denn freundlich. The A. V. rendering "either good or bad" is literal but bears a connotation different from the Hebrew.25-29. And Laban came up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent on the mountain, and Laban on his part pitched in Mount Gilead together with his kinsmen. Then Laban said to Jacob: Why didst thou undertake to deceive me and drive off my daughters as though they had been captured by the sword? Why didst thou flee secretly and deceive me and not inform me? I should have sent thee on thy way with joyful festivities and songs, with timbrel and harp. But thou didst not suffer me to kiss my grandchildren and my daughters, Now that was foolishly done. It lies within the power of my hand to do thee harm. But the God of thy fathers

spoke to me last night and said, Take heed not to say anything to Jacob.Above, v. Ge 31:23 merely reported that Laban had virtually caught up with Jacob. Now v.25 describes their actual meeting on the next morning: "Laban came up with Jacob." We learn besides that Jacob had actually pitched tent at this point, a thing that had often not been done as his caravan and drove progressed day for day. That Mount Gilead is meant by "on the mountain" is entirely clear from verse 23. In the case of Laban the specific statement that it was "Mount Gilead" where tents were pitched makes it entirely plain that both had pitched on the same mountain, though over against one another. The critical correction, which tries to put Jacob on Mount Mizpah, grows out of the desire to prove that two threads of narrative intertwine. Critics are continually, though often unwittingly, "doctoring up" the evidence.26. Blustering and simulating righteous indignation, Laban demands to know why he was deceived thus: "what hast thou done and thou didst deceive me" -- "why didst thou undertake to deceive me?" He tries to present Jacob's course in the most unfavourable light possible: "why drive off my daughters as though they had been captured with the sword?" Laban is as much aware of the extent of his exaggeration as are all others who hear him. At the same time he himself knows best why Jacob fled secretly and without announcement. Shebhuyoth is plural feminine of the Kal passive participle. Chérebh, "by the sword," substitutes the genitive for the active agent with the passive (K. S.336 n).27. The Hebrew idiom reverses the sequence in "flee secretly" by the construction: "make secret the fleeing," or "hide to flee." Says the smooth hypocrite: "I should have set thee on thy way with joyful festivities (Hebrew: "joy") and songs, with timbrel (toph, a kind of tambourine) and harp" (kinnor, perhaps originally an instrument more like a violin). All this he would never have done. Jacob interposes no defense for the present, knowing how empty the boast is. Then Laban plays the part of the outraged parent and grandparent. He was not able to kiss his banim, i. e., "sons," here grandchildren, and "daughters." For the present his bombastic harangue reaches a temporary stop in the summary statement: "now that was foolishly done." 29. Well remembering God's warning and not for a moment daring to carry out his threat, Laban nevertheless claims that he could do Jacob harm. He mentions no wrong that Jacob did. He merely boasts. But the overwhelming impression of God's warning here compels him to admit all that God had said and so explains why he utters all his threats as vain words -- a queer conclusion for one who thus far tried to play the part of a man grievously wronged. "Power" -- 'el, a form which has a full parallel in another el from the same root, ('alah, "to be strong".) and meaning God. It is useless to try to contend for the fact that 'el must always mean "God"; for in De 28:32; Micah 2:1; Pr 3:27; Ne 5:5 such certainly cannot be the case.Laban throughout this section is a good illustration of the man who has fallen away from the true God, still knows of Him, feels impelled to heed His Word, but otherwise has put God on the same level with heathen deities, and lives a life such as a renegade might live.30-32. So now thou hast indeed gone, for thou didst long very much after thy father's house. Why didst thou steal my gods? Jacob answered and said to Laban: Because I was afraid -- because I said -- that thou wouldest take thy daughters from me by force. With whomsoever thy gods be found, that one shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen make a search for thyself what of thine I have and take it for thyself. For Jacob knew nothing of the fact that Rachel had stolen them.The familiar versions (not so, however, the Septuagint) have made a subordination of clauses in this verse that is not so desirable and that erases the peculiar flavour of the thought. We should not read: "though thou wouldest needs be gone." But rather by way of summary: "thou hast indeed gone (verb plus infinitive absolute), for thou didst long very much after thy father's house" (again verb plus infinitive

absolute). Now very abruptly in order to catch Jacob unawares: "Why didst thou steal my gods?"31. Now Jacob gives an answer but not at once to the last question, because the reason for his secret flight has been demanded. Apparently he has resolved to use no subtleties. The truth of the matter actually is that he was "afraid." He even anticipated that Laban might use his power as patriarch of his tribe and take from Jacob by force the wives whom he had grown to love. Resuming the construction already once employed, Jacob begins: "Because I was afraid -- because I said -- that," etc. Apparently, Jacob is conveying the thought: I was afraid and had also said I was afraid. The deeper reason for departure, God's command, Jacob does not mention, apparently for the reason that Laban would not have believed that God appeared to Jacob. But all this Jacob disposes of quite briefly because he feels Laban was only blustering and certainly cared little about an explanation. Laban knew better than anyone else why Jacob had fled. But since Jacob's cause was just and since he had just been charged with theft, Jacob feels the necessity of answering the last question or charge. He is so sure that no one would have been guilty of such a deed that he boldly asserts that the thief shall die, should he be found. Such a punishment for such a crime may have been suggested by the prevalent attitude of the times reflected in the Code of Hammurabi -- a few centuries old by this time -- that they who stole the property of a god (or temple) should die. Yet, though in himself entirely certain of his ground, Jacob ought never to have made such an assertion. Seemingly Jacob feels this, for as he invites a search, he merely asks Laban to take whatever he thinks Jacob or his retinue have taken wrongfully; he does not again threaten the death of the idol thief. That nothing be covered up Jacob asks that the search be made "in the presence of our kinsmen" -- ('a(ch)chim -- "brothers"). Finally the necessary explanation that Jacob had never for a moment thought Rachel capable of such a deed.The suffix on the last verb ("stolen them") suggests that at least a couple of teraphim may have been involved. In Ge 35:16, 18 Rachel's death is reported as occurring rather a short time after this event. It is hardly correct to call this death an event that was fulfilled as a result of Jacob's prediction, as the rabbis believed. We rather hold that Rachel's death so soon after this word was a merely accidental coincidence.33-35. So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's (also into the tent of the two handmaidens) and found nothing; and he came forth from Leah's tent and went into the tent of Rachel. But Rachel had taken the teraphim and put them into the camel's litter and sat upon them. And Laban felt all over the tent and found nothing. And she said: Let it not vex my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the manner of women is upon me. So he searched and did not find the teraphim.The search begins. First Jacob's tent is combed through -- the piel of chaphas v.35, being an intensive, suggests the thoroughness of the search. Next comes Leah's tent. The two handmaidens are inserted parenthetically for completeness' sake. Separate tents for the husband and the wives and the handmaidens apparently were the rule in those days. Disregarding the parenthesis, the writer goes on, working up to the climax of the search: he (Laban) came out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's. Rachel is a match for her father in craftiness. She has taken the teraphim and put them into "the camel's litter," a capacious saddle with wicker basket attachments on either side. Some describe it as a palanquin. Apparently it was so constructed that even when it was removed from the camel it offered a convenient seat for travellers. Laban feels over everything in the tent. The litter is all that remains. Had Rachel raised her protestation or excuse before this time she would have roused suspicion. By waiting till the last critical moment she diverts attention from the fact that she may be sitting upon the teraphim. For who would care to trouble a menstruating woman suffering pain? Besides, it may actually have

been true what she was asserting. Nothing appears here of the taboo that some tribes and some races associated with women in this condition, taboos which temporarily rendered such women untouchable. So Jacob appeared justified, for a painstaking search revealed no theft. We may well wonder what he would have done if Rachel's theft had come to light. 36, 37. So Jacob grew angry and stern with Laban; and Jacob answered and said to Laban: What am I guilty of? wherein have I sinned? that thou didst hotly pursue after me. For thou hast felt over all my goods. What hast thou found of all thy household goods? Set it here before my and thy kinsmen, and let them give the verdict over both of us.The long pent-up emotions of years find expression in this eloquent defense of Jacob's. He is justifiably angry, he "strives" (ribh), i. e., settles the matter of controversy between them in a heated expostulation. First he protests his innocence, and apparently on good grounds: he has neither guilt nor sin in this case. Least of all has anything called for such a pursuit as this which might justly have been inaugurated against an evildoer (dalaq -- "to pursue hotly"). There was a high measure of indignity about Laban's treatment of Jacob throughout, also in the matter of feeling over all his goods. Jacob waxes bold and challenges Laban to set forth before all their kinsmen whatever of his own he may have found. The kinsmen can serve as arbiters or judges to render a public verdict, which must be all the more fair because it will be a jury composed of adherents of both parties. This challenge must have embarrassed even thick-skinned old Laban. Now for the rest of Jacob's self-defense.38-42. Look here, for twenty years I have been with thee. Thy ewes and thy she-goats have not miscarried; the rams of thy flock I have not eaten. If anything would be torn, I did not bring it to thee; it was I who used to make good. Thou didst hold me responsible for that which was stolen by day as well as for that which was stolen by night. I was a man whom heat consumed by day and frost by night; and sleep would flee from my eyes. Look here now, for twenty years I have been doing service in thy house, fourteen years for thy daughters and six years in connection with thy cattle, and thou hast altered my pay ten times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and He whom Isaac reverenced, had not been for me, surely now thou wouldst have let me go empty-handed. But my misery and the toil of my hands, God saw it and reproved thee last night."These twenty years" (A. R. V.) or "this twenty years" (A. Y.) would require a different Hebrew construction, aside from the bad grammar of A. V. The initial zeh is an expression of impatience, which we have tried to cover by "look here." First, then, Jacob reminds Laban how during the past twenty years no losses were suffered by miscarriage -- a matter largely attributable to the careful oversight of the shepherd at the time of the birth of lambs and of goats. Even the occasional ram that custom allowed to the shepherd Jacob did not take for fear of being criticized later.39. Sellin reminds us that a custom of the East provided that as long as a shepherd could lay before the owner the torn beast, the shepherd was not held chargeable, inasmuch as the torn beast counted as evidence that the shepherd had boldly driven off the predatory beast. Jacob was accorded no such consideration. He was held accountable. The 'achatténnah is durative -- "I used to make good." "Thou didst hold me responsible" in the Hebrew idiom reads thus: "thou didst seek it at my hand." The passive participle construct has an archaic case ending to mark it as used as a noun rather than as a verb genubhti (K. S.241a; 272 a; G. K.90 1); genitive construction for the adverbial (K. S.336 q).40. The broken construction of the sentence bears testimony to its strength of feeling -- "I was one -- by day heat consumed me," etc. The more intense the heat by day in the near tropical regions, the more acute the cold. Out in the open Jacob's shepherd duties exposed him aplenty to both. Short rations of sleep were almost the rule besides.41. The same expression of impatience as in verse

38 only here intensified by a kind of ethical dative (zeh -- li) "look here now." Be used before daughters is a kind of genitive of price; not so before "cattle," because his service was not being regarded as work by which he should acquire cattle. The cattle were rather acquired incidentally. In return for this rather generous period of service Jacob had been rewarded by tricky salary alterations.42. Finally Jacob traces down the true source of his own prosperity and cheerfully confesses to his unbelieving father-in-law that God was the one to whom alone he owed all blessings. In calling God "the God of my father" Jacob is reminding Laban that while he (Jacob) has remained true to the ancestral religion of truth, Laban has departed from it. So for special emphasis Jacob also designates Him as the God of Abraham as well as the one "whom Isaac reverenced" (literally, "the fear of Isaac"). In true faith Jacob confesses God to be the Disposer of the affairs of men and the Judge of evildoers. At the same time Jacob charges Laban with having been ready, but for God's intervention, to send his son-inlaw away empty-handed (reqam). So little does Jacob give credence to the above protestations of love and concern (v. Ge 31:26-28). Jacob boldly closes with the assertion that God had finally taken a hand in the matter and reproved Laban. (c) The Treaty (v.43-54)43, 44. And Laban answered and said to Jacob: The daughters are my daughters and the children are my children and the cattle is my cattle and all that thou seest belongs to me; and, as for my daughters, what can I do to them this day or to their children which they have borne? And now come let us make a covenant, I and thou, and let it be for a witness between me and thee.Laban skilfully avoids the issue, which centres on the question whether Jacob has ever treated him unfairly, and substitutes another, namely, whether there is any likelihood of his avenging himself on Jacob and his family. In a rather grandiose fashion he claims that all that Jacob has -- household and cattle -- is his own. The only use he makes of this strong claim is that, naturally, these being his own family, he would not harm them. It hardly seems that he has been "cut to the quick" by the justice of Jacob's defense. He is merely bluffing through a contention in which he was being worsted. But being a suspicious character, he fears that Jacob might eventually do what he apparently would have done under like circumstances, namely, after arriving home and having grown strong, he may come with an armed band to avenge all the wrongs of the past. To forestall this he suggests a "covenant." This covenant might serve to deter Jacob, of whose justice and fairness he is convinced, and who, Laban trusts, will keep a covenant inviolate.45-47. And Jacob took a stone and raised it up as a pillar. And Jacob said to his kinsmen: Gather stones. And they gathered stones and made a heap and they ate there upon the heap; and Laban called it Jegar-sahadhutha, but Jacob called it Galed.Because Laban suggested the making of the covenant, it would seem that he should have made the witnessing pillar and heap. So sure of this are some critics that they call the word "Jacob" at the beginning of v.45 a mistake. Historical evidence must be judged according to its face value not by subjective expectations. The objective facts indicate Jacob's personal readiness to preserve peace and harmony, showing that he even took the initiative in sealing a treaty that he might well have resented. Jacob himself raises a memorial stone or "pillar," a matstsebha, meaning, "a thing raised up," as in Ge 28:18.46. Jacob goes a step farther: he summons his kinsmen to make the memorial more substantial by gathering stones. These were, perhaps, heaped around the one stone which stood up pillar-like. Such a heap is called gal. Here apparently the gal served as a kind of table upon which the covenant feast was eaten. For to the full sealing of a covenant belonged a solemn covenant feast.Very strangely the critics, who are intent upon proving that two documents giving two recensions of the event are woven together, here hit upon the pillar, or monolith, and the heap or cairn, and claim these two as

one of the things that prove their point. Instead of pointing to a double recension or to two authors this merely points to the fact that Jacob was ready to go the limit to keep peace and harmony, as he always had been doing. The critics' argument is a non sequitur. All the rest of their so-called proof is of the same sort and too flimsy to refute.47. Here Moses inserts a notice to the effect that Laban and Jacob each gave a name to the cairn, and each man in his native tongue, that of Laban being Aramaic and that of Jacob Hebrew. Nothing indicates that this is a later insertion. Why might not Moses consider it a matter worthy of record that in Mesopotamia Aramaic prevailed; whereas in Canaan Hebrew, perhaps the ancient Canaanite language, was spoken? The exactness of his observation is established by this definite bit of historical information. The two names are not absolutely identical, as is usually claimed, though the difference is slight. Jegar-sakadhutha means "heap of testimony," gal'ed means "heap of witness" or witnessing heap. For "testimony" is an abstract noun, "witness" is a personal noun or name of a person.We observe, therefore, that at the beginning of their history the nation Israel came of a stock that spoke Aramaic but abandoned the Aramaic for the Hebrew. After the Captivity the nation, strange to say, veered from Hebrew back to Aramaic.48-53. And Laban said: This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. That is why he called its name Galed, and also Mizpah (Watch); for he said: May Yahweh watch between me and thee when one of us cannot see the other. If thou shouldest treat my daughters harshly, or if thou shouldest take other wives in addition to my daughters, with no man to check up on us, may God see it, as witness between me and thee. Laban also said to Jacob: See, this heap and this watch-station (Mizpah) which I have planted between me and thee: a witness is this heap and a witness is this pillar, that I will not go past this heap against thee, and that thou wilt not go past this heap against me, neither past this pillar to do any harm. The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor they shall judge between us: the gods of their fathers. And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. Here the critics hold that the redactor, who wove the threads of E and J together, made a sorry job of his task. They are very confident that since the cairn of stones is called a "heap" and a "pillar" this difference in terminology quite fully substantiates that E and J here each used his own term. But when a third term mizpah, "watch," or "watch-station," enters upon the scene, describing the same cairn, then they decree that a textual or copyist's error alone can account for the third term and proceed to alter the text to conform to their previous conclusion -- very unscientific! But the true cue to the whole section is completely missed. And why, by the way, cannot one and the same writer have ingenuity enough to discern that one thing may be regarded from two, yea, even from three, points of view?The whole matter involved in what seems a rather diffuse and verbose passage is very simple: Moses describes Laban as using so many and so varied terms because he actually used so many terms. Not to be trusted himself, not being a man of his word, Laban uses many words to cover up his untrustworthiness. Besides, as Luther already discerned, the undependable man is trying to make the dependable one appear as undependable by using many turns and expressions and so creating the impression that Jacob is a slippery character who has to be bound fast by a whole series of stipulations. At the same time Laban seeks by hard and sharp terms actually to terrify Jacob, the godly man, as though he were ungodly and needed to be threatened. We shall try to trace out briefly how this crafty fellow goes about his unholy work.There is craft even in the opening remark, this heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Laban was not the one who made "the heap." That was Jacob's idea. Now Laban appropriates what Jacob made, as though the idea had been his (Laban's) own, originated for the purpose of binding a crafty opponent. That was the spirit in which Laban had given the name

"Galed." Of course, there cannot be an inaccuracy here in the statement, as the literalist critics claim, saying: the writer makes Laban speak Hebrew instead of Aramaic. Any man not absorbed in finding fault, recognizes that the writer is going back quite naturally to the use of the Hebrew equivalent of "Jegar-sahadhutha."49. In his craft Laban invents another idea that may be attached to the cairn: it may serve as a mizpah, "a watch" or "watch-station" or "sentry," standing aloft between these two when they cannot keep watch upon one another. Here again, of course, the idea implied is that Jacob is the one who bears watching. For that reason Laban employs the name of the true God "Yahweh." Whoever may be Laban's god, Laban does not require watching; but may Jacob's God watch over Jacob and keep him from harming Laban. "When one cannot see the other" really reads in the original "when we are hidden (not absent' A. V.) one from another." But the Hebrew plainly involves, as our translation indicates, when one cannot keep an eye on the other. It is unfortunate that this unkind word, full of suspicion, should in our day so often be used as a benediction at parting. This almost amounts to a wicked perversion of Scripture.50. To cast a further shadow upon Jacob's character Laban conjures up what was in reality a highly improbable situation. Suppose Jacob should treat Laban's daughters harshly ('anah -- "afflict, oppress"), or should take other wives in addition to the ones he had. But Jacob had never given the least indication of being inclined to treat his wives harshly. Gentleness and goodness are characteristics of Jacob. Besides, as the account reads, Jacob had more wives already than he had ever desired. He apparently recognized the evils of bigamy sufficiently in his own home. Both these cases mentioned by Laban as possible are in themselves harsh and unjust slanders. The statement, "there being no man with us," does not refer to the present (Luther) but to a future eventuality and should therefore be taken in the sense, "with no man to check up on us." Very solemnly God is adjured to act as a witness in such a case and, of course, to act as avenger. For all the solemnity of the adjuration there is nothing good about this word. It is an effort to slander a good man and do it with the sanctions of apparent piety -- in other words, it is wicked hypocrisy.51. Very solemnly Laban begins again, saying nothing new, but desirous of creating the impression that this dangerous character Jacob must be tied as firmly as possible. Only now he lays emphasis on the possibility of Jacob's coming back on a punitive expedition. It is true that Laban's bad conscience may actually have induced him to reckon with such a possibility. But in any case he merely suspects Jacob of being capable of such a deed because he himself would no doubt have avenged himself thus. In this case (v. Ge 31:51, 52) Laban refers to the cairn only as "heap" and as "pillar" (matstsebha), the latter expression involving the idea of a sacred pillar. Laban safeguards himself by all possible sanctions and calls upon Jacob's religious scruples. Incidentally, so as not to make the aspersions too direct and so defeat his own purpose, Laban also pledges himself not to "go past this heap" against Jacob "to do any harm" (Hebrew: "for evil"). 53. In conclusion Laban offers his most solemn adjuration, stronger than v.50 b; for God is called upon not only to "witness" but to "judge." Besides, he is called by the solemn title "God of Abraham." In fact, another god is invoked, "the god of Nahor." If v. Ge 31:29, 42 are compared, it seems most likely that two different deities, are under consideration: the true God; and Nahor's, that is also Laban's idol. The plural of the verb "judge" (yishpetu) therefore points to two different gods. So the polytheist Laban speaks. The more gods to help bind the pact, the better it is sealed, thinks Laban. Without directly correcting Laban or his statement of the case, Jacob swears by the true God under the same name as that used v.42, the Fear (i. e., object of fear, or reverence) of his father Isaac. Had the renegade Laban perhaps meant to identify his own god with the true God

of Abraham? And is Jacob's statement of His name an attempt to ward off such an identification? This is not impossible.54. And Jacob offered a sacrifice upon the mountain and called upon his kinsmen to eat bread. So they ate bread and spent the night upon the mountain.We view Jacob's sacrifice as one of thanksgiving that this last serious danger that threatened from Laban is removed. We cannot conceive of Jacob as joining with the idolater Laban in worship and sacrifice. Consequently, we hesitate to identify the "eating of bread" with the partaking of the sacrificial feast, unless the "kinsmen" here are to be regarded only as the men on Jacob's side, as 'a(ch)chim is used throughout the chapter. In that event the kinsmen are to be thought of as having the same mind as Jacob on questions of religious practices. But the summons to eat bread might also signalize that the transactions between Jacob and Laban are concluded. The events of the meeting between Jacob and Laban may well have consumed an entire day, and so the night has to be spent in the same place.We cannot drop the chapter without indicating to what unwarranted extremes critical analysis has gone. Procksch assigns to J verses Ge 31:1,3,10,12,20-23,26,27,31,36,38-40, Ge 31:42,45,49-51,53,54. The rest, with the exception of a part of verse Ge 31:18, is ascribed to E. The tortuous reasoning by which this separation is supported is one feature against the analysis. The manifest desire to see two threads in a narrative marked by singleness of purpose constitutes a second count on which we reject the whole approach. Add to this Koenig's verdict, "the attempt to separate the successive strata rests very often on indecisive criteria."We have nothing certain as to the location of the heap called "Galed" or "Mizpah" in Mount Gilead. "Mizpah" itself is a rather general term: there were many points of eminence in the land which could serve as "watch-stations." We personally do not believe that the Mizpah located in Jebel Ajlun is far enough to the north. We can only be sure of this that according to chapter 32 it must have lain to the north of the River Jabbok.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSOne may well question whether this chapter offers suitable matter for preaching. Certain negative matters loom up rather prominently -- Laban's treachery and duplicity; Rachel's theft, involving incipient idolatry at least on her father's part; Rachel's lie. Though such material could be used for illustrative purposes in sermons, yet it is not of a character to furnish a text or a theme. In the section v. Ge 31:1-16, v.12 is an essential part, yet offensive for public use. Again the portion v. Ge 31:22-32 consists mostly of the protestations of a hypocrite. Even if one should think v. Ge 31:36-42 suitable in a sense as the defense of a faithful workman, surely the evangelical pulpit needs more comprehensive themes. The concluding section v. Ge 31:43 ff. reports for the most part how a suspicious and utterly untrustworthy fellow seeks to safeguard himself by binding others through solemn contracts and covenants. All this should be taught with necessary omissions to the youth of the church, and such use will always have its value.

CHAPTER XXXII

(8) Preparations for Meeting Esau (31:55-32:32) This caption may at first glance seem somewhat inapt for the chapter, but further reflection will indicate that in v. Ge 32:1-3 (Hebrew) God is preparing Jacob to meet Esau. Then Jacob's preparations by the sending of messengers, by the division of his caravan train, and by prayer are recorded. Jacob's further preparations by the conciliatory gift which is tendered Esau are next related (v. Ge 32:13-21) The rest of the chapter describes his spiritual preparation in which God again takes a hand and in which indeed broader issues are involved than mere preparations to encounter Esau, though the latter still stand in the forefront. 31:55-32:2. And Laban arose early in the morning and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Thereupon Laban went and returned to his place; whereas Jacob continued along his route. And angels of God met him; and Jacob said, when he saw them: This is God's host. And he called the name of that place Mahanaim (double host or camp). We group these three verses together as the Hebrew text does (Ge 32:1,3), apparently because the first events of the day after the treaty are here recorded, though certainly the first verse could serve as a conclusion of the matters recorded in chapter 31 (So A. V. and Luther). As Ge 31:28 reported, Laban's ground for complaint was that he had not been allowed to take affectionate leave of his kin, young and old. For all his faults toward Jacob, Laban may not have been deficient in love for Jacob's family. The grandfather kisses the grandchildren first. Following patriarchal custom, Laban bestows a blessing. Then he returns to his place. Jacob, however, goes on along the route that he had been following (literally, "according to his way"). The accusative 'ethhem has a masculine suffix for the feminine (K. S.13). He may now be considered as crossing the borders of the land of promise, when suddenly he beholds "angels of God": they "met him." This does not necessarily imply that they came toward him but simply that they encountered him. They may for the brief time that they were seen have been accompanying Jacob's train. They may merely have been discovered as present. In any case, it is quite appropriate that here at the borders of the land of promise they put in their appearance. Their object was, without a doubt, to afford Jacob reassurance at a time when he was about to need it sorely. For scarcely had he gotten rid of the danger that threatened from Laban, when a new danger and a grievous one had to be reckoned with -- Esau's attitude. As angels had reassured Jacob at Bethel (ch.23), so here; but now especially because Jacob was following a course prescribed by God. 2. Luther delights in pointing out in this connection how a certain exultation of faith was roused in Jacob by the sight of the angels, and so, to mark the place of this experience, Jacob designates it by the name "Mahanaim." The singular may mean "camp" or by metonomy "host." Here, since machanßyim is a dual, the name must signify a "double camp or host," depending on whether the Lord's army was seen encamped or moving along. The latter seems more likely since (v.1) they "met him." The most likely meaning intended by "double host" would then be to designate the angels' host as well as Jacob's. Jacob would no longer feel unprotected. Though Mahanaim is repeatedly mentioned in the Scriptures, we cannot be sure of its exact location. It must have lain somewhere east of Jordan near the confluence of the Jordan and the Jabbok. The present site Machneh often mentioned in this connection seems too far to the north. But how did Jacob "see" this host? Nothing suggests a

dream of the night. Whether the inner eye beheld it or the physical eye may be almost impossible to determine. Jacob, as spiritually the most mature, seems to have been the only one to see the angels. 3-5. And Jacob sent messengers on in advance to Esau, his brother, to the land of Seir, the region of Edom. And he gave them orders saying: Thus shall ye say to my master, to Esau: Thus saith thy servant \Jacob: I was staying with Laban and was detained till now. And I have ox and ass and flock and servant and handmaid, and I am sending to inform my master that I may meet with his favour. Jacob's first object in dealing with Esau is to conciliate him. Rebekah has not sent for Jacob, as she was to do when Esau's wrath relented. Jacob has no indication that Esau's intentions are kindly. A delegation, acknowledging Esau as one entitled to receive reports about one who is about to enter the land such a delegation may produce goodwill on the part of the man thus honoured. So Jacob sends messengers "in advance," i. e. lephanaw -- "before his face." The region where Jacob anticipated that Esau could be met is "the land of Seir" south of the Dead Sea. "Seir" means "shaggy," i. e. "wooded." The apposition adds to the name one more readily understood, "the region of Edom." 4. Jacob prescribes the exact message that is to be delivered. With good diplomacy Esau is to be addressed as the "master." Jacob describes himself as the "servant" of Esau. Nor is this diplomacy insincere. Jacob, well aware of his pre-eminence as rooted in God's blessing, is ready to concede to Esau every outward advantage and honour. He makes no secret where he has been; he was with Laban. He indicates further that his stay was temporary, for garti from gûr signifies "to stay as a stranger," "to sojourn," and therefore implies: temporarily. But echar (contracted from 'e'echar, G. K.68 f) adds "I was detained" (K. C., musste bis jetzt zurueckbleiben), suggesting that his stay had become more protracted than he had at first intended that it should be. 5. Nor should Esau get the impression that an impecunious beggar dependant on Esau's charity is coming back as a suppliant. So the messengers enumerate all that Jacob brings with him. Yet here again a modest statement of the case is made so as not to arouse Esau's jealousy. The enumeration of Jacob's possessions is made in collective singulars: "ox, ass," etc., as our translation indicates. Yet it should be noted that similar enumerations in the Scriptures are regularly found in the singular. The concluding statement of the report sounds like a humble request for permission to enter the land -- "I am sending to inform my master that I may meet with his favour." In wa'eshlekhah the converted imperfect has the added syllable ah, (yaqtul gravatum) rather common for such a form in some books (see G. K.49 e; K. S.200). Here again, in the interest of tracing down sources more or less out of harmony with one another, critics assert that these verses (v.3-5) assume Isaac's death and Esau's occupation of the land which he in reality only took in hand somewhat later, according to Ge 36:6, which is ascribed to P. Isaac, with his non-aggressive temperament, may have allowed the far more active Esau to take the disposition of matters in hand. So Jacob may well have been justified in dealing with Esau as "master." This is all quite plausible even if Isaac had not died. Furthermore, in speaking of "the land of Seir, the region of Edom" Jacob may only imply that Esau had begun to take possession of the land which was afterward to become his and of whose definite and final occupation 36:6 speaks. In any case, "master," used in reference to Esau, only describes Jacob's conception of their new relation. Jacob did not need to enter into negotiations with Isaac, his father, in approaching the land. His welcome was assured at his father's hand. But the previous misunderstanding called for an adjustment with Esau. At the same time our explanation accounts for Esau's 400 men: they are an army that he has gathered while engaged upon his task of subduing Seir, the old domain of the Horites. Skinner's further objection: "how he was ready to

strike so far north of his territory is a difficulty," is thus also disposed of.6. And the messengers returned to Jacob say, ing: We came to thy brother, to Esau, and he is already coming to meet thee, and there are four hundred men with him.What is recorded in v. Ge 32:4-14 apparently takes place within one day. The messengers are anticipating a journey of several days to the land of Edom and meet Esau the selfsame day. News is known to travel with incredible swiftness in these lands, as travellers have reported in many instances. So Esau has been apprised of Jacob's return and is already on the way several days. He receives Jacob's messengers. He sends no reply. He seems desirous of informing himself in person exactly as to how things stand. His intentions were, without a doubt, none too clearly defined in his own mind. He must first see for himself just what Jacob intends to do and what his personal attitude is. For the present Esau's following may serve to impress Jacob, and should it have seemed desirable, Esau may actually not have been averse to employing his martial escort to harm Jacob. Esau seems to have been about as uncertain in his own mind as to his plans and purposes as Jacob was in reference to these same plans and purposes. The very uncertainty of the report of Jacob's messengers makes it all the more alarming.7, 8. And Jacob was very much afraid and distressed, and he divided the people that were with him and the flocks and the herds and the camels into two camps; and he said: If Esau come against the one camp and smite it, then the remaining camp may have a chance to escape.The courage engendered by the vision of angels is dissipated. The exaltation of faith gives way to the agony of despair as soon as the stern reality of Esau's coming with 400 men is encountered. No one knew better than Jacob how deeply Esau's grudge had taken root. The failure of Esau to give an answer to Jacob's messengers seemed ominous. Jacob's fear is very great; he finds himself "distressed" (yétser -- from tsarrar, "to be tightly pressed"). A quick precautionary measure is taken -- his entire train is divided into two sections. We have translated machaneh "camp" to remind of the similarity of the "camps" or "hosts" of v. Ge 32:2. "Sections" would have been a better rendering. Half the men and half the beasts go into each section.8. The explanation that he gives while making the division is that if Esau should attack and smite the one section, "then the remaining camp (section) shall be for escape," plainly meaning "may have a chance to escape." The we before hayah introduces the apodosis. This seems to have been a stratagem resorted to with caravans in the East from days of old, Procksch charges Jacob with smooth trickery (Schlaukopf) on account of this stratagem, whereas Jacob is employing nothing other than justifiable prudence. Nor can the same writer prove "camels" to be a gloss merely by the absence of the sign of the accusative. No writer is perfectly consistent in such matters.9-12. And Jacob said: O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Yahweh, Thou who didst say unto me, Return to thy land and to thy relation and I will do thee good, I am unworthy of all the acts of kindness and of all the faithfulness which thou hast bestowed upon thy servant; for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him, lest he come and smite me -- both mothers and children. Yet thou didst say unto me, I will do only good to thee, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea which is too plentiful to count.Now Jacob betakes himself to prayer. He should not be sharply criticized for taking precautionary measures first and praying afterward. Many a man in the face of extreme danger has lost his sense of proportion. Besides, there are emergencies that call for action first and prayer afterward. "God of my father" does not imply: not my God, but does ask: As Thou wast faithful to them be faithful to me. Yahweh specifically implies the idea of God faithful in performing His merciful promises. The special promise under

consideration is the command to return to his own land with the prospect of receiving good at God's hand. Jacob can therefore plead that he was not following his own devices but God's orders. It is almost unbelievable that Tuch should have been scandalized because Jacob reminds God of His promises. But is not that the approach of all true prayer, taking one's stand firmly on divine promises? Equally deplorable is Procksch's estimate who terms the whole prayer "a specific creation of J." Was ever a prayer truer to life? There are few prayers from which we can learn more. It loses all its worth if it is to be regarded as a clever fiction which a fictitious J put upon Jacob's lips. 10. "I am unworthy" is qatónti -- "I am little." The perfect implies: I always have been too little and still am (K. S.127) -- too little, of course, to deserve them, not to repay them. Chasadhim, "mercies," or "kindnesses," means acts of kindness, freely bestowed. 'E'meth is "truth" in the sense of "faithfulness." The measure of these gracious gifts at God's hands is best illustrated by the contrast between what Jacob was when he first crossed the Jordan and what he now has upon his return to Jordan. The be before maqlî is the be of accompaniment. The adjective idea in qatonti used with min results in a comparative (K. S.308 b) "With my staff" means, as Luther translates, "with only this staff."It is hard to understand how men can claim that "the element of confession is significantly absent" in Jacob's prayer. True, a specific confession of sin is not made in these words. But what does, "I am unworthy," imply? Why is he unworthy? There is only one thing that renders us unworthy of God's mercies and that is our sin. Must this simple piece of insight be denied Jacob? It is so elementary in itself as to be among the rudiments of spiritual insight. Let men also remember that lengthy confessions of sin may be made where there is no sense of repentance whatsoever. And again, men may be most sincerely penitent and yet may say little about their sin. If ever a prayer implied a deep sense of guilt it is Jacob's. Behind the critics' claim that "confession is absent" from this prayer lies the purpose to thrust an evolutionistic development into religious experiences, a development which is "significantly absent." It was not first "in later supplications" that this element became "so prominent." It was just that in this earlier age the experience of sin and guilt particularly impressed God's saints as rendering them unworthy of God's mercies (cf. also Ge 18:27 in Abraham's case). Maqqel is the shepherd's or the wanderer's staff. A rare specimen of misinterpretation is that of A. Jeremias who refers to a traditional belief that three stars of the constellation Orion are still regarded as Jacob's staff -- a very questionable tradition -- and so give evidence that a mythological motive -- some astral myth -- underlies this story. Are such farfetched vagaries deserving of refutation?11. From profession of unworthiness or confession the prayer turns to petition: "Deliver me" (hatstasiléni, from nasal). "From the hand" may be construed to mean "from the power," for in reality Jacob is at Esau's mercy. The eagerness of the petition is reflected in such a repetition as "from the hand of my brother" followed by "from the hand of Esau." The critic rejects the one or the other for metrical reasons, in spite of the fact that it is even very dubious whether there is any poetical meter in these parts of Genesis. Jacob admits freely to God that he is afraid that Esau may "come and smite" him. Naturally, Jacob will not suffer alone. The attack will centre on him, but should it come, mothers and children will suffer as well. Jacob says literally: "mother upon children," apparently using a proverbial expression, 'em, singular, because usually there is one "mother," and 'al banim, "upon children," because in case of attack the mother would bend over her children in an effort to shield them with her own body. The whole expression is one of those, like "root and branch," which covers the entire range of a concept (cf. Ge 31:24), as K. S. defines, 92; and so this means: "me and all mine."12. The only ground upon which godly men can take their stand in times of

distress is God's Word. It alone is sure, as Luther so beautifully argues in connection with this passage. Jacob remembers exactly what form God's promise took: "doing good I will do thee good," meaning either: "I will surely do thee good," or "I will do thee only good." Then, too, God had said (Ge 22:17) to Abraham that his seed was to be "as the sand of the sea, which is too plentiful to count." But when Jacob had become the bearer of the Messianic promise (Ge 28:13, 14), all the things spoken to Abraham in that connection became applicable to Jacob as well. Jacob has a correct estimate of the situation from this point of view. Naturally there is a certain boldness about holding God's promises before Him and taking one's stand on the ground of them; but such an attitude distinctly belongs to faith. Imperfects like yissapher convey a modality of thought like "it cannot be counted." (K. S.186 b.)13-16. And he spent that night there; and he took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau, his brother: two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten foals; and entrusted them to the care of his servants, each herd for itself, and he said to his servants: Pass along ahead of me, and leave intervals between the herds.The night is spent at that place, which later is found to be at the ford of the river Jabbok (v. Ge 32:22). Though the major work is accomplished, for Jacob committed all the issues into God's hands in the prayer recorded above, yet prudence and foresight are to find their place in the course followed by Jacob. Prayer does not necessarily result in inaction. Luther states the case quite strongly when he says, "men should not tempt God but should employ every device and means that is available." The device Jacob employed was to send a substantial gift on before to his brother Esau as a token of good will. A check-up will reveal that the total count of the beasts sent is 580, not an inconsiderable number. Jacob must have been enormously wealthy to be able to afford such a present. Certainly it was good psychology on Jacob's part to prepare so substantial a gift. Goats and sheep predominated among the possessions of Jacob. Cows and asses have not been mentioned heretofore, but that need not surprise us, for they were proportionately few in number. But, surely, asses and camels were essential for the oversight of so large a semi-nomadic establishment. Besides, camels' milk was a regular article of diet. Each type of stock constituted a separate "herd" or drove. The ratio of male and female is that which is usually maintained by those who breed stock, according to the old rule cited by the Latin writer Varro. In v.13 the expression "that which came to his hand" means, whatever he was able to assemble as it came along. It does not mean, of what he owned, because such a statement is quite unmotivated; what else could he give? It does not imply that he made a careful selection: Vulgate: separavit. We must remember that it was night and that the gift had to be gotten ready in great haste, for Esau was near. Besides, the separate droves had to be arranged. All Jacob could do was to assemble quickly whatever he could lay hands on. In v.15 gemalîm, though masculine in form, is construed as a feminine as the Hifil participle meniqôth indicates. In benehem the masculine suffix is used for the less common feminine, as in Ge 31:9. In v.16 the repetition 'edher edher gives a distributive sense, "by droves" or "each herd for itself" (G. K.123 d; K. S.85).The shrewd forethought displayed by Jacob is most clearly revealed by his arrangement of the gifts. First comes a drove of 220, then an interval; then another drove of 220, again an interval; now a drove of sixty, then a drove of fifty, and the last of thirty, The effect is cumulative. Yet Jacob, the giver, the brother who left twenty years before had not appeared, for all these "passed along ahead" ('abhar) of Jacob.17-21. And he gave orders to the first one saying: If Esau, my brother, meet thee and ask thee: To whom dost thou belong, and whither art thou going, and whose are

these animals before thee? then thou shalt say: They belong to thy servant, to Jacob, and are a present sent to my master, to Esau, and, see, he himself is coming along after us. And he gave the same orders to the second fellow, and to the third, and to all that followed their herds, telling them: Speak exactly these words to Esau when ye meet him, and ye shall say: And see, thy servant Jacob is right behind us. For, he thought, I will conciliate him by the gift that goes on before me; afterwards I can see by his face whether he will receive me kindly. So the present passed on ahead of him, and he spent that night in the encampment.Jacob does not depend on the ingenuity of the shepherds to whom he entrusts the separate droves. Their message is given to them practically verbatim: they are to make sure that they ascribe all these herds to Jacob but describe Jacob as Esau's "servant" ('ébhedh, a strong term implying even "bond-servant" but here definitely describing Esau as his superior). At the same time Esau is to be addressed as Jacob's "master." Jacob is actually ready to accord to Esau any external advantage of position and any honour that he may desire, if only peace and concord be preserved. Then they are to inform Esau that all this is a gift from Jacob. The words to be used are repeated for each shepherd separately. Ri'shon is here used for the more common 'echchadh.19. Note that the shepherds are described as "following" their herds. In the Orient the shepherd usually goes before his herd. In this case perhaps the herd was to impress its ultimate recipient before the shepherd could deliver his message. Kaddabhar hazzeh, "according to this word," is like our "exactly these words." Bemotsa'akhem is the infinitive of matsa'.20. Each man is to conclude his message: "And, see, thy servant Jacob is right behind us." 'Amar here very likely means "thought" rather than "said." Jacob's purpose is to "conciliate" his brother. The Hebrew idiom for this idea is rather unusual; it says: "I will cover his face." The gift "covers" and, as it were prevents the wronged person from seeing the wrong that has been done him, As a result he becomes "conciliated" or reconciled. This procedure by no means involves anything unworthy or improper. The gift is not a bribe but a token of goodwill. When Jacob then finally comes up himself, he will be able to read from Esau's countenance whether a kindly reception awaits him. However, perhaps after all the current translation should be preferred to ours for the second half of this verse. As A. V. has it: "afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept me." For "accept me" the original has the idiom "receive my face."21. "The present passed on ahead of him"; otherwise it would have failed entirely of its effect. It must meet Esau part by part on the following morning, and Jacob himself must be the climax of the procession. So Jacob stays behind in the encampment, at least it is his purpose at first just to spend the night where he is. As the next verse indicates, this purpose is somewhat modified. In a sense, however, Jacob stays with the camp through the night.Now follows the story of the mysterious prayerstruggle that marked this night as well as the climax of Jacob's spiritual development. To a degree, at least, this experience is for Jacob what the offering of Isaac on Moriah was to Abraham. Here Jacob is brought to the point where human devices and carnal ingenuity are no longer equal to the need that has arisen. His own cleverness on which he has so largely leaned in the past proves inadequate. Jacob has only the Lord left in this extremity and learns in faith, though it costs him a hard struggle, to cast himself wholly and resolutely upon God's mercy alone. But to do so involves an agony of prayer that leaves its mark upon the man. 22-24. And he arose in the course of that night and took his two wives and his two handmaids and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them, namely, and brought them over the brook and brought over all that he had. And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until dawn arose.Danger threatens. At first it seems very surprising that Jacob should lead his

entire train directly into the face of danger. Some see behind this act a return of the spirit of courage and resolution on Jacob's part. They describe him as the same old, confident, resourceful Jacob that he always was, trusting even now that in some way or other his ingenuity will not fail him in these emergencies as he clashes with his more slow-witted brother. But nothing really indicates that the great fear that in part prompted the above prayer (v. Ge 32:8-11) has subsided. That fear was very real, and nothing had happened to allay it. Yes, a certain measure of boldness is displayed in the course followed by Jacob. He had not cast off utterly his confidence in the word of the Lord, which had bid him to be on his way. Furthermore, he saw that to retreat and to flee would invite attack. So the only course left was to proceed confidently and so to create the impression of courage and confidence. However, it would hardly have been wise to allow himself to be caught in the midst of the somewhat disorderly business of fording the stream. The need of having this work of crossing out of the way occurs to Jacob as soon as the gift has been dispatched. He promptly arises and takes stops to have the business of fording disposed of at once. The Jabbok is the Wady-ez-Zerka, as almost all commentators agree -- ez-Zerka signifying "the blue" i. e. the clear mountain stream. "Jabbok" means "Wrestler," reminding of Jacob's experience. Jacob is still on the north side of the Jabbok. Now when Jacob remains behind after the others have crossed, that could hardly be called exposing them to undue danger inasmuch as the Jabbok is perhaps thirty feet wide and at most about hip-deep. Jacob could cross over and be on the other side in a minute's time. The wives, handmaids, and sons are brought over first. Only the sons are mentioned, as the one daughter Dinah was not as important for later history as the sons were. The seeming repetitions are to be accounted for by the style of Hebrew narrative which first gives a summary statement that gives the final result ("he crossed," v.22) then follows with details which in this case continue until v. Ge 32:32 where the final crossing occurs. The expression "that night" somewhat irregularly omits the article before the demonstrative.23. In addition to his family there was all the cattle as well as all other possessions that had to be brought across ("all that he had"). Though fording may present difficulties, especially by night, there are several attendant circumstances that may well have aided Jacob on this occasion. There may have been moonlight. The water may not have been at its greatest depth. Again, in those days when bridges were unknown Jacob's men may have negotiated many a fording and have known how to go about it.24. The natural thing for the master of the entire establishment to do is to stay behind to check whether all have really crossed or whether some stragglers of this great host still need directions. In the solitude of the night as Jacob is "left alone," his thoughts naturally turn to prayer again, for he is a godly man. However, here the unusual statement of the case describes his prayer thus: "a man wrestled with him until dawn arose," Rightly Luther says: "Every man holds that this text is one of the most obscure in the Old Testament." There is no commentator who can so expound this experience as to clear up perfectly every difficulty involved. This much, however, is relatively clear: Jacob was praying; the terms used to describe the prayer make us aware of the fact that the prayer described involved a struggle of the entire man, body and soul; the struggle was not imaginary; Jacob must have sensed from the outset that his opponent was none other than God; this conviction became fully established before his opponent finally departed. The verb 'abhaq is correctly translated "wrestled," as just about all translators agree. It matters little whether it be derived from the noun 'abhaq, which means "dust" and so the verb is construed to mean "roll in the dust," or "to become dusty" or "to raise the dust"; or whether the root chabhaq is compared, which means "to clasp," as wrestlers do.The Biblical commentary on the passage is Ho 12:4:

"Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto Him." The antagonist is here described as an "angel." But since the theophanies of the Old Testament regularly involve the Angel of the Lord, we need not be surprised that He who usually assumed angelic guise here assumes, as later in the Incarnation, human form. Again, by way of commentary, "wrestling" is defined as "he wept and made supplication unto Him." That certainly is a description of agonizing prayer. However, when Ho 12:3 is compared, we learn that this struggle in Jacob's manhood was the culmination of the tendency displayed before birth, when by seizing his brother's heel he displayed how eager he was to obtain the spiritual blessings God was ready to bestow. This experience and this trend in Jacob's character is held up before his descendants of a later day that they may seek to emulate it. We mention certain modern interpretations of this experience of Jacob's as instances of how far explanations may veer from the truth and become entirely misleading. It has been described as a "nightmare" (Roscher). Some have thought that Jacob engaged in conflict with the tutelary deity of the stream which Jacob was endeavouring to cross (Frazer), and so this might be regarded as a symbolical portrayal of the difficulties of the crossing. But the stream has already been crossed by this time. One interpreter considers the wrestling as a symbol of "the victory of the invading Israelites over the inhabitants of North Gilead," (Steuernagel), but that is a misconstruction of history: the conquest began much later. Some call the experience a dream; others an allegory. The most common device of our day is to regard it as a legend, "originating," as some say, "on a low level of religion." All such approaches are a slap in the face for the inspired word of Hosea who treats it as a historical event recording the highest development of Jacob's faith-life. For there can be no doubt about it that the motivating power behind Jacob's struggle is faith and the desire to receive God's justifying grace; and the means employed is earnest prayer. Why it pleased the Lord to appear in human guise to elicit the most earnest endeavours on Jacob's part, that we cannot answer.25-28. When he saw that he could not prevail against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was dislocated in his wrestling with him, And he said: Let me go for dawn is arising. But he said: I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And He said to him: What is thy name? And he said: Jacob. And he said: Not Jacob shall thy name be called from now on, but Israel, for thou hast striven with God and men and hast prevailed.There is nothing ambiguous about the subject of the verbs found in v.25, as critics would have us believe. God saw that he could not prevail against this adversary. This statement does not impugn God's omnipotence, but it does effectively portray the power of prayer. God does allow the prayer of men to be mighty in His sight. At the same time there is a certain measure of truth to the idea that God is the opponent of believing men as they pray. God is not pretending. But God must oppose because the sinful will of those that pray often is not yet reduced to full accord with the divine will. As the will of man learns ever more perfectly to submit to God's will, God can no longer "prevail" against such a one. Yet in this case the struggle for submission involved so much for Jacob that he actually needed a memento of his victory as a warning against relapse. The memento consisted in a physical disability which marked the physical being of him who had so long put undue confidence in carnal devices. He is to be reminded that in his own person there had hitherto been a seriously crippled state which had much impeded his progress. God secures this disabling of Jacob by a mere touch. The words used do not suggest that something in the nature of a wrestler's trick was used. "The hollow of the thigh" seems to have been the ball-and-socket joint. This joint "was dislocated," teqa' from yaqa' meaning "to fall or slip out." We are not informed whether this infirmity was permanent or only for a

few days or weeks. Speculation on this point is quite futile.26. The struggle continued through the night to the early hours of the morning. Some admire "the powerful imagination" of the author who here creates a story of "a silent wrestling in a pitch-black night." This is however no creative genius; the author merely writes a historically accurate account. As dawn rises, the divine Opponent asks that He be let go. There is a simple and a sound Biblical reason for this. Ex 33:20 teaches us that man shall not "see God and live." The frailty of sinful man could not have endured the sight of this Pre-incarnate One. Not for His own sake but for Jacob's He asks that Jacob let him go. Just a little too prosy in the explanation which says: since daytime is the season for a man's labours and duties this Divine One was asking Jacob to let Him go and be about his daily duties. Entirely off-key is the explanation which parallels this noble account with fairy tales, which insist that fairies and all spirits of the night must return to their confinement at dawn of day. He who has so little spiritual discernment as to be unable to recognize this fact cannot be convinced even by sound argument. But Jacob has recognized the divine character of his opponent and has persistently sought a blessing. He will not yield except he receive this blessing. All true faith, having taken its stand on God's promises, must have something of this persistence. How and when Jacob became aware of the character of the "Man" with whom he wrestled, we are quite unable to say. Jacob must from the outset have been most distinctly aware that this was not a struggle merely between man and man in physical opposition.27. This question is addressed to Jacob not for information's sake but to centre Jacob's attention upon what was about to come and upon the thought which his name connoted. "Jacob," "the supplanter" (Ge 27:36), was to recall how heretofore he had primarily displayed the characteristics of one who would in emergencies resort to stealth and stratagem. 28. Speaking as one who possesses authority, He says: "Not Jacob" (the negative immediately before the word affected) shall thy name be called from now on but Israel. He adds a reason: "Thou hast striven with God and men and hast prevailed." Sarah means "to strive" or "fight" -- 'el is "God." Yisra'el, according to this explanation, is "The fighter with God," i. e. the one who fought with God, of course, in a good and honourable sense. "Persist" (B D B) for sarah is hardly a strong enough term to cover the experience of this night, which had previously been described as a "wrestling." Buhl and K. W. both offer the meaning "to fight," kaempfen. This meaning fits better with the second object, "men," as well. Apparently Jacob encountered much opposition on the part of men, as his clashes with Esau and Laban illustrate. But there, too, Jacob had fought through his contests until he had prevailed. In maturity (Ho 12:4) this would seem to be the characteristic that best described the man. It is true, in Genesis the name "Israel" is not used from this time on to the exclusion of all others. Apparently, then, since it represents a personal achievement rather than a divine destiny, as by way of contrast "Abraham" does, it is used interchangeably with Jacob, according as the older or the newer type of character predominates. In this respect the use of the name Peter in the Gospels is a close parallel. With the explanation of the text as the final verdict as to the meaning of the name, we hold the case of the meaning of the name to be closed. Attempts to make it mean 'ish rachel, "the husband of Rachel" (Steuernagel) are untenable, as well as grammatical impossibilities. So, too, are the efforts to get nearer the original meaning of the word by comparing Egyptian or Assyrian transliterations; for transliterations are often surprisingly far removed from the original.29-31. And Jacob asked and said: Reveal thy name, I pray? And He said: Why then dost thou ask for My name? And He blessed him there And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (The Face of God). For I have seen God face to face and my soul is preserved. And the sun rose upon him as he passed by

Penuel, and he was limping because of his thigh.The partly unsolved problem for Jacob is the identity of the Wrestler who opposed him. Though relatively sure, as his request for a blessing indicates, he wants full confirmation. The thing that suggested to him to ask at this time was the fact that he had just been asked his own name. But the question: "Reveal thy name, I pray?" implies, according to the Hebrew idiom, that the name is the index of the character or personality. We should have said: "Reveal thy identity." The reply is in part the same as that of the Angel who was asked the same question by Manoah (Jude 13:18), only here the continuation of the answer is omitted -- "seeing it is wonderful." Several reasons for the somewhat evasive reply may be discerned. The one that presents itself first is that the question in reply practically means: "Why ask to know My identity, seeing you already know it?" Add to this the fact that, as Luther indicates, the failure to reply leaves the name as well as the whole experience shrouded in mystery, and mysteries invite further reflection. In spiritual experiences there is and must be the challenge of the mysterious. A spiritual experience so lucid that a man sees through and is able to analyze every part of it must be rather shallow. And lastly, the blessing about to be imparted is a further revelation of His name and being, that carries Jacob as far as he needs to be brought. "Asked" and "said" are also in Hebrew two verbs coinciding in one act and expressed by waw conversives (K. S.369 o). Zeh is not a demonstrative but an emphatic particle.The blessing spoken of is an added blessing. For the entire experience may also well be regarded as a blessing. The substance of this added blessing we do not know. Luther's supposition is as much to the point as any when he remarks that it may have been the great patriarchal blessing concerning the coming Messiah through whom as Jacob's "seed" all the families of the earth were to be blessed.On the question of learning the name, they who put Scripture record and legend on the same level can rise no higher than the supposition that he who has gotten possession of the name of a deity (the nametaboo, as it were) has control of that deity. This, they say, was Jacob's purpose in asking for the name. Do such shallow misinterpretations deserve serious refutation?30. Divine manifestations deserve to be commemorated in every possible way. Jacob marks this one for himself and for his descendants by giving a distinctive name to the place where it occurred. Though "Peniel" like "Mahanaim" has not been deftnitely located, it may be a still used ford of the Jabbok near Jordan and is mentioned Jude 8; 1 Kings 12:25. This name should not be said to be "derived from an incidental feature of the experience." That would be the equivalent of saying: Jacob was unhappy in his choice of a name for this memorable spot. Of course, his experience was a purifying one that was to break self-trust and cast him wholly upon God's mercy. But this experience centred in a personal encounter with God, a direct meeting of God, a seeing of Him, though not with the eye of the body. Does not the whole experience, then, sum itself up as a seeing of God and living to tell of it, though sinful nature should perish at so holy a contact? The name touches upon the essence of Jacob's experience. For Peni'el means "face of God." The explanation really says more than "my life, or soul, was spared." For natsal means "delivered" or "preserved." God did more than let no harm come nigh Jacob; He again restored him, who otherwise would surely have perished. Luther gathers up this idea in "recovered" (genesen). Panim has no article, being a customary phrase (K. S.294 f). With an adequate and a historically accurate account of the origin of the name "Peniel" before us, we may well wonder at those who under such circumstances go far afield and try to account for its origin by comparing the Phoenician promontory of which Strabo speaks, which was called ueou proswpon ("face of God"). Those who have lost their respect for God's Word no longer hear what it says and make fools of themselves in their wisdom by inventing

fanciful explanations for that which has been supplied with an authentic explanation.31. The details of the memorable event stayed with Jacob. He distinctly recalled when in later years he told of this experience how as "he passed by Penuel, the sun rose upon him," (Penu'el has an old case ending û for the construct in place of the other old case ending î in Peni'el). However, the propriety of this symbolic sunrise is what chiefly prompts this statement: a new day of light and of hope was dawning for Jacob after the night of gloom and despair. Analogous by way of contrast is the remark made in connection with Judas Iscariot's departure on the night of betrayal, where after he went out the evangelist remarks: "and it was night" (John 13:30). What men observed as they saw him approaching was that "he was limping because of his thigh" (tsoléa', durative participle, yet saying nothing as to whether the infirmity continued long thereafter). The expression 'al yerekho may mean "upon his thigh" (A. V.) or perhaps a little more exactly "because of his thigh" (Meek).32. Therefore the children of Israel are not in the habit of eating even to this day the sinew of the hip muscle which is upon the socket joint of the hip, because that He touched the socket joint of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the hip muscle.God did not demand this ritual observance in the Mosaic law, but the descendants of Israel of their own accord instituted the practice because they recognized how extremely important this experience of Jacob was for him and for themselves. Some interpret this gidh hannasheh to be the sciatic nerve. Delitzsch tells us that Jewish practice defines it as the inner vein on the hindquarter together with the outer vein plus the ramifications of both. The imperfect yo'khelu expresses what is habitual: "are not in the habit of eating."Generally speaking, critics assign the most of verse Ge 32:10-13 to J, and verse Ge 32:14 b Ge 32:15-22 to E; Ge 32:23 ff. is hard to analyze. Procksch, as usual, makes a very intricate analysis on very flimsy grounds. We do wonder that v. Ge 32:30 (English) Jacob says: "I have seen God," 'Elohim, where surely it was Yahweh. But his choice of the divine name is motivated by the idea of the contrast between a creature encountering the Creator-God, i. e. 'Elohim.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThe central portion of this chapter, v. Ge 32:13-21, is, indeed, an example of fine prudence, but there are not many that would feel inclined to use it as a text. However, the initial section, v. Ge 32:3-12, or also v. Ge 32:1-12, is rather suggestive from several points of view. One angle of approach would be to consider primarily the latter part of the section and treat of Pleading God's Promises. Looking at the central part of the section, suggests The Extreme Danger of a Saint of God. Looking at v. Ge 32:1-2, one might incline to set down as a theme God's Rich Assurances, or The Strong Protection of God's Holy Angels. Of necessity, the entirely different types of approach would lead to a very different type of treatment of the various elements in the text. The portion v. Ge 32:22-32 would be treated adequately under a theme such as The Crowning Victory of Jacob's Faith-Life. If Jacob himself sums up his experience in the designation that he coins for the place -- "Peniel" -- no one could question the propriety of this name as a theme. For that matter, the new name given to Jacob -- "Israel" -- is the embodiment of the whole experience and therefore most suitable as a theme. In the case of these last two proper names, nothing would be more essential by way of introduction then an immediate simple definition of the words.

CHAPTER XXXIII

9. Reconcilation with Esau; Settlement in Canaan (33:1-20) The chapter as a whole furnishes an outstanding example as to how God turns the hearts of men "withersoever he will" (Pr 21:1). A delightful reconciliation takes place between brothers long estranged, but this reconciliation comes from God as an answer to earnest prayer. 1-3. And Jacob raised his eyes, and looked, and there was Esau coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two handmaidens. And he put the handmaidens and their children first, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. But he himself went on ahead of them, and bowed low seven times until he had come close to Esau. The preparations recorded in the previous chapter are apparently just completed, and at daybreak Jacob had just crossed the stream when he looked ahead "and there was Esau coming." One glance suffices to show that the men in attendance are the four hundred that had been reported. One last precautionary measure can yet be taken. To put himself first in the way of danger, if there really be any, induces Jacob to come to the forefront and to arrange his wives and his children in climactic order so that the most beautiful and best beloved come last and so may be spared if none else will. Each mother stands with her own children and Rachel last with Joseph, who, as some seem to compute with a fair measure of accuracy, was now a lad of perhaps six years. Ri'shonah is an adverb. 'Acharonim as an adjective agrees with its nearest noun. 3. 'Abhar does not here mean "cross over," for the stream had been crossed, but "went on ahead." "He bows," 'artsah, i. e., "to the earth," but we have not translated the phrase thus because there is another expression which signifies the deepest bow in which the face actually touches the earth. "Low" seems strong enough here. Jacob bowed, advanced a few steps, and bowed again, until seven obeisances were made. Such tokens of respect to the number of seven were the customary homage tendered to kings according to the el-Amarna tab1ets. Jacob indicates only his deep respect and courtesy toward his brother. Jacob's deceit in the matter of the blessing had made an unceremonious fraternal greeting impossible. Yet Jacob does not indicate Esau to be ruler over him, but he does strongly indicate his willingness to show Esau all due respect and consideration. We have no reason for questioning the sincerity of Jacob's courteous approach. The spirit of cunning which had often dominated Jacob in the past had been put aside in the experience of the previous night. Gishto is infinitive of naghash (G. K.66 b). The words from the el-Amarna tablets referred to above run thus: "At the feet of the king, my lord, seven times and seven times do I fall." The expression is found on these tablets more than fifty times. 4-7. And Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And he lifted up his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said: What relation are they to thee? And he said: The children whom God hath graciously bestowed upon thy servant. And the handmaidens approached -- they and their children -- and bowed. Leah also drew near and her children and bowed; and then Joseph and Rachel drew near and bowed. The much dreaded encounter resolves itself into as friendly a meeting as Jacob could ever have wished. Esau was impulsive. All rancor and bitterness are forgotten at the sight of his only brother. If Esau had himself not been clear in his own mind at first as to the attitude he would take, now all thoughts of vengeance evaporate. That was God's doing. Esau makes the first move: he "runs"

and "embraces" Jacob and "falls upon his neck" and "kisses" him. These many verbs are by no means indications of the smelting together of two original accounts but a historically correct record of what actually transpired in the excess of strong feeling at the moment of meeting. We can hardly determine now what prompted the Masoretes to put the "extraordinary points" over the verb "kissed." Later rabbinical commentators believed the word was a mistake for "bit." But the sincerity of Esau's approach need not be doubted; nothing casts suspicion on his attitude. He is frank and straightforward. The word tsawwa'raw should, apparently, have the ending ro rather than raw, being a word that may be regarded as a singular (ro) or as a plural. 5. Esau's eyes fall upon the women and the children immediately before him -- the handmaidens and their offspring. He may well inquire as to whose they all are, for when Jacob had left home he was still unmarried. Esau asks: "What relation are these to thee?" literally: "What these to thee?" Oriental custom does not suggest that a man take much interest in another man's wife; so Jacob replies only in reference to the children, that they have been "graciously bestowed" upon him by God. Chanan, written with double n because active (G. K.67 a). "God" is referred to as 'Elohim, it seems, because Jacob desires to avoid reference to Yahweh, whose blessing he secured at his brother's expense. 6, 7. Then the handmaidens and their children approach, bowing respectfully as Jacob had done. Then comes Leah and her children; lastly, Joseph and Rachel. How it happened that Joseph came before his mother we do not know. Niggash is the Nifal of naghash, used for the Kal (G. K.78). 8-11. And he said: What about all this host that I met? And he said: To find favor in the sight of my lord. And Esau said: I have much, my brother; keep what thou hast. And Jacob said: Please, no. If only I might find favor in thy sight and thou wouldest accept my gift at my hands! For on that account have I beheld thy face, as one sees the face of God; and thou hast graciously received me. Accept, I pray, my gift of welcome which I have offered thee, for God hath dealt graciously with me, and also because I have everything. So he urged him, and he accepted. Some commentators confuse the whole story at this point by claiming that the "host" referred to is one-half of Jacob's train. This they claim, because "host" (machaneh) in Ge 32:8, 9 is used in reference to one-half of Jacob's goods but nowhere in reference to Jacobs "present" to Esau. But is not the case as simple as it can be? Is not the present so substantial as to be naturally described as a "host"? Making "host" here refer to half of Jacob's train lets the story lose sight of Jacob's "present" entirely; and, besides, it makes Jacob lie smoothly to the effect that he had intended to give one half of his goods to Esau. This type of exegesis, presses words at the expense of common sense, no matter how inadequate the account as such becomes. K. C. perhaps did well to ignore the whole issue as too trivial to mention. Esau's question really has a lekha ("to thee") in it: "What to thee is all this host?" We felt that our form of the question might come fairly close to the original: "What about all this host that I met?" But it was Jacob's present, had not Jacob's servants told Esau what Jacob intended by it? Naturally; but Esau, by ignoring what they have said, implies that he could not be the recipient of so great a gift. But Jacob plainly states his purpose: "to find favor in the sight of my lord." 9. Esau could hardly receive so generous a gift without protestations of his unwillingness to do so, if his meeting with his brother just before had actually been a meeting in brotherly love. He seems to have been quite rich himself. He does not say: "I have enough" (A. V. and Luther), but: "I have much" (rabh). He actually does not want anything from Jacob.10. Jacob pleads urgently. His offer was sincere. Esau's acceptance would be the surest token of his having been reconciled to his brother. If the customs of the Orient of our day are an index of the attitude of bygone days, then the acceptance of the gift of the person

seeking reconciliation would have been the surest proof that all was well. The two perfects after 'im matsathi and laqachti are the expression of a wish, although the wish takes the form of conditional sentences (K. S.355 w): "if I might find favour -- if thou wouldest accept." The expression "for on that account" (ki'al-ken) -- namely, that thou mightest accept my gift -- introduces again in a loose popular style a result just mentioned. The statement: "I beheld thy face as one sees the face of God," is not fulsome flattery meant as if Jacob had been as glad to see Esau as one would be to see the Lord Himself. Such excessive compliments would be obnoxious. Strong but sincere courtesy rules all these utterances. What Jacob means is that in the friendliness beaming from Esau's face he saw a reflection of divine favour, because he knew that it was God Himself who had changed Esau's heart to make it friendly. Passages like 1 Samuel 29:9; 2 Samuel 14:17 are analogous. Skinner runs to extremes when he makes the expression mean, "with the feelings of joy and reverence with which one engages in the worship of God." Since the expression is plainly figurative, Procksch introduces too literal a thought when he draws a parallel between the relief experienced at the danger of death which Esau's presence threatened, even as God's countenance would normally be death to the beholder; but from the one a man is delivered with the same feelings as from the other. K. C. overstates the case when he calls Esau's countenance as "worshipful and comforting" as would be the Lord's. "Thou hast graciously received me" is tirtseni from ratsah, "to accept favorably." The infinitive re'oth has no subject expressed -- which allows for the indefinite subject "one"; yet "I" might well be supplied from the context.11. The urgency of Jacob's plea that his gift be accepted is further reflected by the enclitic na' after "accept." Berakhah, "blessing," also means "gift," but in this case a "gift of welcome" (K. W.). Two further reasons for the acceptance of this gift are added: the first, "God hath dealt graciously with me," therefore a generous gift will not impoverish; and the second is like unto the first, "I have everything." It has often been remarked that Jacob, sure of having the Lord on his side, can boldly claim that he has everything. Esau, not resting his confidence in the Lord, can only say, "I have much" (v.9). Esau recognized the propriety of the motive behind Jacob's gift and saw that acceptance of it would be the strongest proof of thorough reconciliation, so "he accepted" when thus "urged."12-16. And he said: Let us depart and be on our way, and I shall go along parallel with thee. But he said: My lord knoweth that the children are of tender age, and that flocks and herds that are giving suck are upon my hands. If they be overdriven but one day, they will die -- all the flock. Let my lord, I pray, pass on ahead of thy servant, and I shall drive along at my leisure at a gait suited to the cattle before me and at a gait suited to the children, until I come to my lord to Seir. And Esau said: Then let me leave with thee as guard some of the men I have with me. And he said: Why then? Only let me find favor in my master's sight. So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.Esau anticipates that Jacob will at once proceed at least down to Hebron. As an expression of his friendly disposition he suggests that both companies advance together, his four hundred men moving along parallel with Jacob's flocks -- "parallel with," leneghdekha -- "as over against thee" not "before thee" (A. V.). Meek says: "alongside." Jacob suggests that this be not done, not because he mistrusts Esau's sincerity or expects the brotherly goodwill to be of short duration, but exactly for the reason that he assigns, which reason, therefore, is not a pretext. The cattle have actually been driven to the limit in Jacob's escape from Laban, and caution must be used lest they be overdriven. On the other hand, the slow progress of Jacob's cattle would have proved irksome to Esau's unencumbered soldiery. Nor were Jacob's children equal to a strenuous journey, for Reuben, the eldest, could not have been more than twelve years old. Many of the

cattle were with young, 'aloth -- "giving suck"; 'alay -- "upon me" or, as we should say, "upon my hands." Debhaqum -- "they overdrive them," indefinite subject, conveniently rendered as a passive.Jacob seems to have had another reason for refusing Esau's company and protection, though out of delicacy he does not tell it before his brother: Jacob like Abraham (Ge 14:23) was conscious that he owed his entire wealth and success to God's blessing and, therefore, he felt the necessity of maintaining his independence, lest it might seem as though others had contributed to his wealth. The masculine suffix on debhaqum refers to the feminine 'aloth -- an irregularity (K. S.15). 14. Jacob suggests that each proceed at the pace best suited to his condition, Esau "passing on ahead." Throughout these discussions Jacob maintains the respectful address that he had used upon the first approach -- "my lord" -- "thy servant." At is really "gentleness"; but "to my gentleness" -- "at my leisure." So réghel, "foot," here means "gait." Mela'khah, "work," means "the product of one's work" here Jacob's "cattle." The statement that so by easy stages Jacob would finally come to the point where he could come to Esau "to Seir" is not pretense. This evidently was Jacob's sincere purpose. Though it may have been delayed, why should we doubt that Jacob did visit his brother, perhaps even repeatedly? The Scriptures cannot report every major and every minor incident.15. Esau at least would leave a guard with Jacob. For the reason assigned above under v.12 Jacob feels that this kind offer cannot be accepted. Yatsagh, Hifil, means "to set up"; here it must mean "leave a guard." Jacob sincerely means: your goodwill is quite sufficient for me. Jacob really dominates the entire interview, and Esau goes on his way. Lammah zeh, "why then," can, of course, also be construed: "what needeth it?" (A. V.). The imperfect following is optative. Min-ha'am, "from the people," presupposes some such indefinite pronoun as "a few of the people" (K. S.81).16. This verse does not say that Esau was also permanently established in Seir. He may have been busied about the task of subduing the land. But he may also still have had a part of his establishment somewhere in the vicinity of Hebron or Beersheba. Without a doubt, he recognized that his ultimate domain had to be Seir.As to the question of Esau's spiritual status we can hardly agree with Luther, who with great charity assumes that Esau was by this time a man who had come to the faith and was ultimately saved. Of course, the personal salvation of Esau need not be ruled out. But one thing surely stands in the way of regarding Esau as a man who has come to the true faith. Had his faith accepted what the Lord had ordained, he would have held to Jacob as the possessor of the divine promise. His failure to do this seems to indicate that the true spiritual values were not grasped nor understood by him. This prevents his being classed as a man of faith, though in the end the spiritual truth communicated by Isaac may have turned his heart to the Lord.17. Jacob started out for Succoth and built himself a house, and for the cattle he made booths (succoth); therefore the name of the place was called Succoth.Succoth is now usually identified with Tell Deir Alla, a short distance east of the Jordan and north of the Jabbok, i. e., near the point of confluence of the two rivers. To reach this place Jacob naturally had to ford the Jabbok again. The fact that he built "a house" indicates a residence of several years, as does the fact that, according to chapter 34, when Dinah comes to Shechem she is already quite mature. After Esau's departure Jacob may have become aware of the fact that the cattle required more extensive care. This may have necessitated the postponement of his journey to Seir. Thereafter other circumstances may have made a continued stay at Succoth desirable. The name "Succoth" (feminine plural of sukkah, "booth") was derived from the peculiar type of hut or booth, built for the shelter of cattle. These booths are described by travelers as something still occupied by the Bedouin of the Jordan valley, and as being "rude huts of reeds, sometimes covered with long

grass, and sometimes with a piece of tent" (Whitelaw).18-20. And Jacob arrived safe and sound at the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, upon his return from Paddan-Aram, and he encamped in front of the city. And he acquired the portion of the field where he pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitas. There he erected an altar and called it: El-Elohe-Israel (i. e. A Mighty God is the God of Israel).How long the interval was between v.17 and verse 18 we are unable to determine; cf. on v.17. But in reality the land of Canaan was not reached till the Jordan was crossed. But a special significance attaches to the entrance into the land proper, for Ge 28:15 had specially promised this to Jacob. So the fulfillment of this promise is being recorded when it is said that "he arrived safe and sound" and that the city of Shechem to which he came was "in the land of Canaan." Shalem is hardly a proper name (A. V. and Luther) but means "safe and sound" (unversehrt). The remark that this was the case "upon his return (literally: in his coming') from Paddan-Aram" helps to remind us that the fulfillment of the above promise was involved. He encamps "in front of (literally, 'eth peney, by the face') the city," an expression which here definitely means "to the east of."19. As a testimony to the fact that he expects permanent possession of all the land, because it had been promised to him, he purchases the portion where he encamped from the sons of one Hamor, who by way of anticipation of the events of the next chapter, is described as the father of Shechem. It would hardly seem as though the name Shechem already belonged to the city at that time. The following events may have attached the name to the city in years to come. So the writer uses this name proleptically. We do not know the value of a "kesita" (qesitah). K. C. is a bit too positive when he simply asserts that it was "of the value of ten shekels." This is the only place where the coin is mentioned. This parcel of ground was remembered by Jacob's descendants. There Joseph's bones were buried (Joshua 24:32). 20. After the example of Abraham (Ge 12:8) as he entered the land Jacob also builds an altar unto the Lord. The name of the altar embodies the sum of Jacob's spiritual experience, which he sought to transfer to coming generations. So he gives the altar a name which is in itself a statement to the effect that "the God of Israel" is an 'el, i. e., "a Strong One," i. e., "a mighty God." Jacob is remembering God's promise, and God has in an outstanding way proved Himself a God well able to keep His promises. The common name for God, 'el, covers this thought. By the use of his own new name, "Israel," Jacob indicates that the restored, new man within him was the one that understood this newly acquired truth concerning God. We believe those to be in the wrong who assume that while Jacob was in Paddan-Aram he lapsed into the idolatrous ways of men like Laban and so practically forsook the God of his fathers. Nothing points in that direction. The meagre evidence available rather points to a fidelity on Jacob's part, which, though it was not of the strong ethical fibre as was that of Abraham, yet kept him from apostasy. Since it stood in need also of some measure of purification, God took Jacob in hand, especially at Peniel, and raised his faith-life to a higher level.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIf the account of v. Ge 33:1-17 is used as text, the treatment of it must center around the thought of the reconciliation of the two brothers. Some very practical thoughts are offered by this text. In the first place, the emphasis is very clearly on the fact that a true change of heart in the relation of man to man must originate with the good Lord, who can change even the most stubborn of hearts and make them to be inclined to peace and amity. In the second place, this is a Scripture that offers a significant silence: the two brothers do not discuss either at length or in brief the issues that had set them at variance with one another. There are persons who believe that the all-essential thing is discussions. However, there may be a perfect and a satisfactory harmony between men who had

failed to agree, and the basis of such harmony may be the tacit agreement to let bygones be bygones. The last part of the chapter, v. Ge 33:18-20, could be used to furnish a theme that embodies the idea of Jacob's Manly Confession.

CHAPTER XXXIV

10. The Outrage on Dinah Avenged by her Brothers (chapter 34) It would really be better to begin this chapter with v. Ge 33:18 of the preceding chapter, telling of Jacob's arrival at Shechem. For, apparently, the things recorded in it followed immediately or almost so upon the arrival. It must also be determined how much time has elapsed since Jacob's return to Canaan. If Joseph, according to Ge 37:2, was seventeen years old at the time there described, which again was shortly after the events of chapter 34, and Joseph was only about six years old at the time of Jacob's arrival in Canaan, it would be safe to assume that the events of our chapter transpired about ten years after the return to Canaan. Dinah must have been at least fourteen years old; fifteen is not impossible. 1-3. And Dinah, the daughter that Leah had borne to Jacob, went out to see the women of the country; and Shechem, the son of Hamor, the Hivite, a prince of the country, saw her, and took her, and lay with her and ravished her. And he was much attached to Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl, and comforted the girl's heart. For the better understanding of what follows it is well to know that Dinah was "the daughter that Leah had borne to Jacob." It would hardly seem that her act of going out would be referred to as "going out to see the women of the country," if Dinah had been wont to go out thus many times before. It is useless to speculate whether mere idle curiosity prompted her, or whether she went without consulting her parents, or whether she even went forth contrary to their wishes. We are unable to determine to what extent she was at fault, if at all. In any case, it seems she should have known that Egyptians and Canaanites (Ge 12:15; 20:2; 26:7) regarded unmarried women abroad in the land as legitimate prey and should not have gone about unattended. Shechem happens to find her. The fact that he is the son of Hamor, a Hivite prince, seems to make him feel that he especially has privileges in reference to unattended girls. We are not told whether she was pleased with and encouraged his first approaches. At least, the young prince was bent upon seduction. This his object was accomplished, whether she resisted or not. If Ge 48:22 informs us that the inhabitants of Sechem were Amorites, the apparent contradiction seems to be solved by the fact that the general name for the Canaanite tribes was Amorites. 3. At least, wrong as his deed was, Shechem "loved" Dinah; we read "he was much attached" to her, an expression rendered in Hebrew: "his soul clung to her." After her seduction he sought "to comfort the girl's heart" -- an expression for which the original has: "he spoke upon the heart of the girl." For "girl" the common gender form na'ar is regularly used in the Pentateuch, always pointed na'arah by the Masoretes (G. K.17 c), a word supposedly belonging to J, as though only he could write about "girls." Shechem, therefore, was not like cruel Amnon (2Sa 13). This occurrence serves to illustrate the low standard of morals prevalent among the Canaanites. Any unattended female could be raped, and in the transactions that ensue neither father nor son feel the need of apologizing for or excusing what had been committed. But Shechem in his "comforting" no doubt promised marriage to Dinah and otherwise sought to relieve her fears. 4-6. And Shechem spoke unto Hamor, his father, saying: Get me this damsel for wife. And Jacob on his part heard that he had defiled Dinah, his daughter, but as far as his sons were concerned, they were with his cattle out in the field. So Jacob kept still till they came. And Hamor, the father of Shechem, went forth to Jacob to consult with him. Shechem is so

much in earnest about actually having Dinah to wife that he at once goes to his father and asks him to take the steps necessary to secure her. For as the story of Samson (Jude 14:2) also indicates, the ones who arranged for marriages were the parents. The brevity of Shechem's demand -- "Get me this damsel for wife" -- indicates the young man's urgency. 5. The arrangement of verses would seem to indicate that before Hamor came to Jacob news of the misfortune of Dinah had already reached Jacob's ears. Since both "Jacob" and "his sons" stand first in their respective clauses for emphasis, the peculiar emphasis that these clauses gain runs thus: Jacob heard, but his sons were in the field. This definitely implies that in the matter of the disposal of a daughter or of safeguarding her rights the brothers, if of age, acted jointly with the father. The father could according to the custom of those days do nothing without the consent of the full brothers of the girl. Naturally, so large an establishment as Jacob had would keep the individual members of the family pretty well scattered till perhaps toward evening. Despite his great grief Jacob "kept still" -- the perfect with waw conversive makes a durative imperfect (K. S.367 i). Everyone can understand how the father's heart must have been lacerated by this tragic news. Dinah could not have been the one who informed her father, because she was kept in Shechem's house (v. Ge 34:26). The critics call timme', "defile," a ritual term and therefore assert that a later Levitical hand inserted it. B D B proves that the term is used in an "ethical and religious" sense as well as being a ritual term. So the critical objection falls away. 6. Hamor "went forth" because Jacob dwelt outside of the city as a newcomer. 7. And the sons of Jacob on their part came in from the field, when they heard of the matter, and the men were pained and very angry that folly had been committed against Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter -- which thing ought not to be done. Bad news spreads quickly, especially if it be as disastrous as that which we have here. As soon as the sons of Jacob receive the report, they come in from the field. Again the subject stands first, because, as in v. Ge 34:5, their share in the following transactions is specially under consideration. Critics, failing to appreciate this feature of these two verses, call both v.5 and v.7 poor Hebrew -- a patent self-condemnation of scholars proud in their own conceit. The worst offender is Procksch.The first step on the part of the brothers naturally is to hear the entire story. Their first reaction is pain or grief (yith'atsebu, "they were hurt"). The second is anger yichar lahem me'odh, "it burned for them exceedingly." Both these reactions are seen to be more than the ordinary carnal reactions of brothers when the explanatory clause is heeded which we find attached immediately: "that (or "for") folly had been committed against Israel." The sons of Jacob appreciate the honourable destiny which was laid before all descendants of Jacob when God Himself bestowed the honourable epithet of "Israel" on their father. They knew that the tribe was destined to become a great people. God's promises were preserved among them. Two explanations are here possible, which really differ but little in the final analysis. Either Jacob's sons consider their tribe already the Israel out of which the nation Israel is soon to develop and then they mean: "folly has been committed in Israel." Or else they think of the sacred dignity vested by God in their father Israel and mean: "folly has been committed against Israel" -- for be may mean "against." The infinitive lishkabh ("to lie") is here used in a modal sense, called by some a gerundive sense; "by lying with Jacob's daughter" (K. S.402 z). The last clause may be rendered as above: wekhen lo' ye'aseh -- "which thing ought not to be done." K. C. arrives at nearly the same result by assuming a transition from indirect to direct discourse with the omission of the verb "and they said"; then we render after the verb of saying: "So ought not to be done." The obligation ("ought") is covered by the imperfect (G. K.107 w).So far Jacob's sons are to be commended. Canaanite moral

indifference and lascivity would have found what Shechem had done quite natural and certainly not reprehensible. Jacob's sons live on the level of true faith, at least in part, and as a result have clear ethical concepts. Yet, as the sequel shows, a measure of the carnal enters in and blurs their spiritual vision. Usually they are condemned too harshly as being utterly devoid of a sense of higher values. This verse in its use of the name "Israel" compels us to allow a measure of spiritual understanding on their part. They err largely in their choice of means for solving the difficulty involved.8-12. And Hamor spoke with them saying: As for Shechem, my son, he is dearly attached to your daughter. Do give her to him for wife. Intermarry with us: your daughters ye may give us; and our daughters ye may take for yourselves. Then ye may live with us, for the land lies open before you. Dwell in it, travel back and forth in it, establish yourselves in it. And Shechem said to her father and her brethren: Let me find favour in your sight; I will give whatsoever you say. Make the demand for dowry and gift heavy. I will pay it, no matter what you say. Only give me the girl for wife.Though (v. Ge 34:6) Hamor had set out to speak with Jacob, in the meantime Jacob's sons have come home, and so Hamor speaks "with them," here really including the sons and the father. But the Canaanite laxity of morals is apparent in both the father's and the son's words: neither admits that a wrong has been done. They are ready, however, to make an adjustment just as it might have been made for any regular marriage. What has occurred does not constitute an irregularity. They feel that Jacob's clan should feel honoured at the proposal of a matrimonial alliance with their own princely line. Or at least they anticipate that a financial adjustment may smooth out all misunderstanding. Neither of the two modes of settlement dare be agreeable to Jacob's sons if they purpose to remain true to their spiritual heritage.Hamor apparently first comes up alone and speaks first. His proposal is that Jacob consent to have Dinah be Shechem's wife because "he is dearly attached" (Hebrew, "his soul clings") to the girl. He calls her by a kind of zeugma "your daughter," though she is but Jacob's daughter; however, all have the disposal of her in hand. This step Hamor visualizes as the inauguration of the general practice of intermarriage. Chathan in the Hithpael actually means "make oneself a daughter's husband" (B D B). "Intermarry" is a loose equivalent about as inaccurate as the German verschwaegern. Naturally, where two tribes freely intermarry they will "live with" one another. This again was quite feasible because larger stretches of unclaimed country still lay available here and there in those days: "the land lies open before you." Then Hamor tries to paint an attractive picture of the advantages accruing to Israel from such an alliance: they "may dwell" in the land, "travel back and forth in it" (sachar, however, implies travelling mostly for the purpose of trading) and they "may establish themselves in it," departing from their more nomadic way of life and adopting agricultural habits. In v.8 "Shechem" stands first -- nominative absolute -- his attitude is primarily under consideration. 11. In the meantime Shechem has come up also and makes a different set of proposals in pressing his suit. Being younger, he courteously asks "to find favour in their sight" and then talks in terms of a financial settlement. He surely displays willingness as far as meeting the customary conditions is concerned. Let them set the terms as high as they will, he is ready to meet them. Infatuation speaks in the young man. He will give "dowry" (móhar, here, no doubt, actually the purchase price paid to parents for their daughter, though Israelites never bought wives) and "gift" (mattan, the wedding gift presented to the bride).13-17. And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor, his father, with guile, and they spoke because he had defiled Dinah, their sister. And they said to them: It is impossible for us to do this thing, namely to give our sister to an uncircumcised man; for that were a disgrace for us. Only on this condition will we accede to your request, if you will be as

we are, and have all males among you circumcised. Then will we give our daughters to you, and shall take your daughters unto ourselves, and we will dwell with you and we two shall become one people. And if you will not listen to us and be circumcised, then will we take our daughter and go our way.Though right in refusing the proposition of the Hivites -- for had Israel accepted, his descendants would have disappeared among the more numerous Canaanites and their spiritual heritage would have been sacrificed -- yet Jacob's sons sin grievously in the manner of their refusal. "They answered with guile" -- mirmah -- "deception." The next verb may be taken to mean, "they spoke treacherously," because dabhar according to the Arabic dßbara originally meant "be behind" and so, perhaps, "speak behind one's back," though no other instance of such use can be cited. We offer another simpler solution: they might have kept a grudging silence, but "they spoke, because he had defiled Dinah." In other words, all the while they were speaking this outrage kept running through their mind, and so all their speaking had to do with avenging this outrage. Whichever explanation be accepted, there is no need for textual alterations.14. Rightly they insist that they cannot mingle in marriage with the uncircumcised -- but, of course, mere carnal circumcision cannot make any nation worthy to share with them in their rare heritage. So Jacob's sons are guilty of treating the sign of the covenant lightly and of dishonouring it.15. This verse contains rather a sweeping demand, but behind the demand must lie the fact that many nations and tribes practised circumcision. Ne'oth ("be agreeable" or "accede") is derived from the unused Kal oth. Zo'th -- feminine -- represents the neuter and signifies, "on this condition."16. The waw conversive (we) in wenathannu introduces the apodosis in this instance; for that reason we have rendered it "then."17. The condition imposed by Jacob's sons is made rather strong, because if this condition is not met without exception by all inhabitants of their city, the stratagem of Jacob's sons would fail.We may well ask, Where was Jacob when his sons made these conditions that he certainly would in no case have sanctioned? Above, v.13, these terms and conditions are attributed to "the sons of Jacob" exclusively. There is the possibility that after the transactions were under way Jacob retired in the great grief of his heart and trusted that his sons would well be able to handle the case. It is quite certain that they kept their father in the dark both in regard to their original demand as well as in regard to their further purpose.18, 19. Their proposition appealed to Hamor and to Shechem, the son of Hamor. The young man did not hesitate to do this thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter, and he especially was honoured by all who were of his father's house.The original says, "their words were good in the eyes of Hamor," etc. We should say, "their proposition appealed to Hamor," etc. The son is agreeable because he above all things wants the girl. The father is agreeable for his son's sake and also because the demand was quite in keeping with customs prevalent at the time. Hamor will have regarded their demand as the outgrowth of a tribal practice or taboo which they felt they dared not violate.19. The son's attitude is explained at once; but "he did not hesitate" does not mean that he submitted to circumcision on the spot but that he was the first one to submit to the operation after the townsfolk had been found agreeable. Further, by way of anticipation of the agreement of his kinsfolk to the plan, it is explained that he happened to be "honoured by all who were of his father's house." This implies that another young man less respected than Shechem might not have been heeded by the villagers in the proposition on which his marriage hinged.20-23. And Hamor and Shechem, his son, came to the gate of their city and they spoke to the men of the city saying: As far as these men are concerned, they live harmonious with us and they will dwell in the land, and they will travel back and forth in it; and as far as the land is concerned, it is spacious enough on either side

before them. Their daughters we will take to ourselves for wives, and our daughters will we give to them. Only on this condition will the men accede to our request to dwell with us and become one people if every male among us be circumcised, even as they are circumcised. Their cattle and their possessions and all their beasts of burden, shall they not be ours? Only let us accede to their request and they will stay with us. The gate of the city is the natural place for all transactions of a public or even of a private character. The substance of their speech is given in one unified whole, the various arguments with which father and son plied their friends being smelted together. It is an artful speech. With clever rhetoric the acquisitiveness of the Hivites is appealed to. Things that had never been mentioned to Jacob's sons are introduced. They are really inferences that may well be drawn, results that must follow if intermarriage on a general scale is introduced. These additional things are that the Hivites will come into possession of the Israelite "cattle" -- miqneh -- about the same as "stock" (Meek), of their "possessions" and of their "beasts of burden" -- that must be the meaning of behemah here. One other thing not mentioned to Jacob's sons and yet on the whole an inevitable consequence was: both would "become one people." The Hivites apparently predominated in numbers, and so there was no danger that they would become submerged in the process; so to them it may be mentioned. Note how at the beginning of the speech nouns are placed first in the sentences pointing to the various issues involved: as for these "men" -- as far as "the land" is concerned; also in v.23 as far as their "cattle" "possessions," and "beasts" are concerned. This is a touch true to life. The last yeshebhu of v.23 seems to mean "stay" rather than "dwell." In v.21 the dual yadhßyim, "on both hands," means "on either side." In v.22 the infinitive behimmol, "in being circumcised," is the equivalent of a conditional clause (K. S.404 a).24. And they hearkened to Hamor and unto Shechem, his son, all who went out of the gate of his city; and all the males, all who went out of the gate of his city, were circumcised.The entire male population is referred to as adopting the proposed plan. In apposition with "males" twice stands the phrase "all who went out of the gate of his (i. e. his own') city." The participle yotse'ey implies the habitual: they were wont to go out. This phrase, however, refers to the city gate as the castomary council chamber or courthouse; they that go out are the ones that are entitled to sit there. The reason why the expression is used twice is to emphasize that this was a valid decision properly arrived at by those competent to make it. Yotse'ey is a participle construed primarily as a noun (K. S.241 d).25, 26. And it came to pass on the third day when they were suffering pain, that the two sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, full brothers of Dinah, each took his sword and came upon the unsuspecting city and slew all males, Hamor and Shechem, his son, they slew with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from the house of Shechem and went forth.Wounds come to a kind of crisis on the third day, In this instance it was known to be the third day when a man was incapacitated in a very special sense: ko'abhim, they "were suffering pain." Simeon and Levi deem it to be a matter involving their honour in a very special sense, because they were 'achchim, "full brothers." But so were Reuben and Judah as well as two more. Reuben with a sense of the responsibility of the first-born refrained at least from active participation. Judah, a man of nobler cast, also lent no active assistance when this first step of the plan was carried out. Yet neither of these two seems to have offered active opposition. But then there is the possibility that Simeon and Levi finally decided to carry out their nefarious purpose without informing the rest who seemed more than reluctant. Without a doubt, the murderers took their servants for even two very courageous men could hardly venture to attack a city. At the time both could not have been above twenty or twenty-two years old. Betach, according to its position, as practically all now recognize, belongs to "city" and means

"unsuspecting" sorglos (K. W.), being an adverbial accusative and the equivalent of a condensed clause, "as it lay there unsuspecting" (G. K.118 q; K. S.402 k). The men especially involved in this slaughter are specifically mentioned by name, "Hamor and Shechem, his son." Dinah their sister; who must have been kept by Shechem in his house till now, was taken, and so they "went forth," i. e. from the wretched city.One shudders to think of the bloody cruelty that animated these two brothers in their carnal pride. Not a word can be said to excuse these murderers. The account, as Moses offers it, is strictly objective neither commending nor condemning; he trusts his readers to posses sufficient ethical discernment to know how to judge the deed. Those who class these accounts as being largely legendary may well pause at this chapter. For no nation was wont to develop legends about events that reflected dishonour upon their nation, here in particular upon the tribal father of the priests -- Levi.Lephi chérebh, "according to the mouth of the sword," means: as the sword is wont to devour, or "according to the usage of war" or "without quarter" (Skinner).27-29. And the sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the city that had defiled their sister. Their flocks and their herds and their asses they took, both what was in the city and what was in the field. And they captured all their wealth, and all their little ones and their wives, and they plundered even everything that was in the houses. "Sons of Jacob" here refers to all of them. Strangely, they who seemed to have scruples or fears about taking part in the slaughter have no compunctions of conscience about taking a hand in plundering the city. This act of theirs again does them little credit. The thing that rankled in the bosom of all was that this was "the city that had defiled their sister." They are, indeed, largely correct in imputing to the city a share in the wrong done; for the city condoned the wrong and had not the slightest intentions of taking steps to right it. But only the most excessive cruelty can demand such a wholesale retribution for a personal wrong.28. The cattle is mentioned first in the plunder, no doubt, because the wealth of the Shechemites consisted primarily in cattle. "Flocks" and "herds" and "asses" are listed because these were constituent parts of cattle or stock.29. Then to show how thoroughly Jacob's sons were in the heat of their vengeance the author reports that also "all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives" were captured, the latter, no doubt, being kept as slaves. Then to produce the impression that the sacking of the city was done with utmost thoroughness the writer adds: "and they plundered even everything that was in the houses." By translating thus we remove the necessity of textual changes which the critics regard as necessary. We hold our translation to be quite defensible.30, 31. And Jacob said unto Simeon and unto Levi: Ye have brought trouble upon me by causing me to become odious to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and Perizzites, whereas I have but a small following. Now they will gather together against me and smite me and I shall be destroyed, I and my family. And they said: Should our sister be treated like a harlot?It is almost unbelievable that Jacob should be reproached by commentators at this point for what he is supposed to have failed to say, namely for not rebuking Simeon and Levi for "their treachery and cruelty." Yet such a man as Jacob could not have failed to be in perfect accord with us in our estimate of this bloody deed of his sons, for Jacob was a truly spiritual man, especially in these his later years. Nor was the moral issue involved in the least difficult to discern. The chief reason for the writer's not mentioning Jacob's judgment on the moral issue is that this issue is too obvious. Furthermore, that judgment is really included in the statement, "ye have brought trouble upon me." Then, lastly, the author is really leading up to another matter that specially calls for discussion. Since, namely, the entire Pentateuch aims to set forth how God's gracious care led on the undeserving people of His choice from grace to grace,

the author is preparing to show another instance of such doing and prepares for it by mentioning how greatly troubled Jacob was by this deed. For 'akhar, which means "disturb," "destroy," here means "bring into trouble." In what sense he means this in particular is at once explained, "by causing me to become odious (literally: to stink') to the inhabitants of the land." That surely implies that the deed done was both obnoxious and dangerous. In comparison with the inhabitants of the land Jacob had "but a small following," or, says the Hebrew, "men of numbers," i. e., men easily numbered. Had God not intervened, the outcome would inevitably have been as Jacob describes it: they would have gathered together and smitten and destroyed him and his family. Though without a doubt the deed of Jacob's sons gave evidence of great courage, it certainly also entailed even greater rashness. The thoughtlessness of young men who rush headlong into ill-considered projects was abundantly displayed by this massacre.31. Simeon and Levi are still a bit impatient of rebuke. What they say is true enough: their sister should not be treated like a harlot (ye'aseh -- an imperfect expressing a potential "should," durfte -- K. S.181). But Delitzsch very properly adds: "Simeon and Levi have the last word, but the very last of all comes from Jacob on his deathbed" (Ge 49:5-7), where Jacob's verdict is clearly recorded for all times: "Cursed be their anger."We are greatly amazed in reflecting upon the event as a whole that descendants of the worthy patriarch Abraham should almost immediately after his time already have sunk to the level upon which Jacob's sons stand in this chapter. A partial explanation is to be sought in the crafty cunning of their father which in the sons degenerated to the extremes here witnessed. A further bit of explanation is to be sought in their environment: hardly anywhere except in their own home did they see any manifestations of a godly life. Then, in the third place, we must attribute a good measure of guilt of an improper bringing-up of these young men to the irregularities of a home where bigamy ruled. All true spirit of discipline was cancelled by the presence of two wives and two handmaidens in the home -- practically four wives.Lastly, the chapter as a whole furnishes a clear example as to how much the critics are divided against themselves in spite of their strong protestations of unanimity. Skinner claims that two recensions are interwoven here, but he says they are not J and E; rather he introduces two new sources, I and II, but admits that their accounts may have been revamped by Jx and Ex. A few stand as he does, but Procksch claims to find the usual strands of J and E tradition. Koenig contents himself with the modest assumption that a story of J has been filled out a bit. But the critics as a whole for the most part wrest the simple harmonious account, trying to make themselves and others believe that two tales have been woven into one. HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSWe may well wonder if any man who had proper discernment ever drew a text from this chapter. As a rule, the Sunday school scholars do not even hear of this event in the life of Jacob. Men who followed the mechanical procedure in the work of preaching, which consisted in treating in strictly consecutive order the chapters of a Biblical book that they had selected for such treatment, of necessity had to use this chapter also. As a whole it is an invaluable sidelight on the lives of the patriarchs. It is rightly evaluated by the more mature mind and could be treated to advantage before a men's Bible class. But we cannot venture to offer homiletical suggestions for its treatment.11. The Last Events of Isaac's History (35:1-29)If we are to follow the outline offered by the author himself, we must have some such title as the above. For the "history" (toledôth) of Isaac closes with this chapter; he has, unaggressive person that he was, still dominated Jacob's action up to this point. Jacob becomes an independent factor after his father's death, and his own "history" begins with Ge 37:2.1. And God said to Jacob: Arise, go up to Bethel and tarry there, and \make there an altar unto God who appeared to thee at the time of the

flight from before Esau, thy brother.Since the divine name 'Elohim or 'El dominates this chapter, it appears plainly that the writer regards the various acts and words of God here recorded as displaying the activity of the Creator-God in His authority as He deals with His creature man. In this capacity Elohim authoritatively bids Jacob fulfill his vow; the altar is to be erected, to Elohim (v. Ge 35:3), who showed forth His power in protecting Jacob. The God who controls the nations lets a terror fall upon the inhabitants of the land lest they harm Israel (v. Ge 35:5). It is Elohim, who appears to Jacob, blesses him, changes his name, and bestows upon him the blessing of Abraham; for Elohim alone possesses authority to do these things. Without a doubt, some of these acts, like the last, do also show forth the Yahweh character of God; but we sincerely believe the Elohim character predominates.We have no way of knowing in what manner God spoke to Jacob. If this appearance is analogous to that of v. Ge 35:9-13, it would seem that He appeared under some visible guise, because (v.13) He "went up from him." But more puzzling is the question why Jacob should have deferred fulfilling the vow of Ge 28:22 and should have to be bidden by God to do according to it. The readiest explanation is that Jacob had kept putting it off until a more convenient season. The level of faith arrived at at the close of chapter 32 had not been maintained. God Himself prevents further sinful delay by allowing Jacob no choice in the matter. That God demands the building of an altar where Jacob had vowed to build a "house" shows how Jacob had meant his vow: he had intended to establish a sanctuary, whose most prominent feature in days of old could be nothing other than an altar. He should "tarry" (shebh, imperative from yashabh; here not in the sense of "dwell" but "tarry") just long enough to carry out the injunction laid upon him. Jacob was not to "go up to Bethel to live" (Meek). This rendering creates an unnecessary conflict with what Jacob actually does.2-4. And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him: Discard the foreign gods which are in your midst, and purify yourselves and change your garments. And let us set out and go up to Bethel; and there I shall make an altar unto El (God) who answered me at the time of my distress, and was with me on the way that I went. And they turned over to Jacob all the foreign gods in their possession and the rings that were in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the terebinth near Shechem.Such a command as Jacob has just received requires more, as Jacob clearly sees, than a mere literal keeping. A general repentance and reconsecration of all that are with him should accompany the outward act. Certain of the more recent happenings had taught him the need of such a purging of his household. His sons had given evidence of a very carnal and cruel disposition. His daughter may at least have displayed undue levity. The grave danger growing out of the present situation had contributed to stir his conscience. But most important of all, there had been a most pernicious and dangerous practice subtly at work poisoning the fountainhead of all true religion -- idols were worshipped. Most of this evil must have kept under cover. It now appears that Rachel's purpose in stealing her father's teraphim (Ge 31:19) may well have been at least occasionally to engage in the worship of them. Then it is highly probable that the servants acquired in Mesopotamia may in many cases have still been idolaters. The sacking of Shechem may have brought additional "foreign gods" into the possessions of the plunderers, and the mere having of them will have constituted a grave danger for the possessors. Without a doubt, Jacob will as a faithful patriarch have instructed his entire household to serve Yahweh, the only true God, and, as Luther frequently reminds, will have been a faithful preacher in his own household. But now the drastic action that might well have been taken long before marks a courageous and thoroughgoing attempt to root out the evil. Patriarchal authority certainly made Jacob's course possible and effective. Hasiru

means more than our "put away" -- that might imply "storing away"; the verb is rather an emphatic "discard." The command, "purify yourselves," may include ceremonial washing, as in Ex 19:14, but its essence would be: purge your hearts and lives of this noxious influence. Again as at Mt. Sinai the changing of garments was to do honour to the occasion and further symbolize the putting off of the old and the putting on of the new. For "foreign gods" the Hebrew uses the noun in place of the adjective -- "the gods of the foreigner." 3. With the preparations demanded in v.2, which may well be regarded as a repentance of heart, the people as a whole are ready to "set out" (literally: "rise up," qum) and "go up" ('alah, for Bethel lies 1,000 feet higher). In recounting by way of thankful confession what God did for him Jacob remembers what strength God displayed in guarding him against all harm and therefore designates Him as El, the "Strong One." Jacob's confession includes the statement that 'El answered him "in the day" (beyom) or "at the time of my distress." The following words are a definite allusion to Ge 28:15; for this was just what God had promised at Bethel, to be with him on the way that he went. Since, without a doubt, Jacob had frequently told the story of God's promise, this word will have been recognized by those that heard him as an acknowledgment of God's faithfulness.4. When "they gave" (nathan) to Jacob the objects he had asked them to discard, it was with the purpose that he might dispose of them as he pleased; therefore we translate nathan they "turned over" to Jacob. Apparently they entered wholeheartedly upon the plan, for they gave "all the foreign gods in their possession," as well as earrings, which must have served as amulets and tokens of some idolatrous practices. Jacob buries all they give him "under the terebinth near Shechem." Such a terebinth ('elah) was mentioned as having been at Shechem in Abraham's day (Ge 12:6), although there we read, "the terebinth of Moreh," which, as we remarked on this passage, hardly bears any idolatrous connotation. Since it may, nevertheless, be the prominent terebinth under which Abraham had stopped and at which the Lord had appeared to him, the article may here recall that event; and the sacred memories associated with it may well accord with the memorable event of our chapter, and so the tree becomes a memorial tree of the notable religious events. Reluctant to accept Scriptural suggestions and seemingly anxious to obscure a simple text, one critic remarks: "The burial of idolatrous emblems under this sacred tree has some traditional meaning which we cannot now explain." The claims to the effect that some Canaanite cult was associated with this tree rest upon a weak foundation. The dative is here expressed by the preposition 'el, (K. S. p.263, 1). In Joshua 24:26 Shechem becomes the scene of an event much like that of Jacob's days.5-7. Then they departed; but there was a terror of God upon the cities round about them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. And Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan -- that is to say, Bethel -- he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar and called the place El-Bethel (God of Bethel), for there God had been revealed to him in his flight from Esau.God gives plain tokens of his favour and approval of the step just taken by Jacob in purging out idolatry by putting restraint upon all Canaanite projects of revenge for the Shechemites. Certainly, here again God's favour far exceeded the deserts of the chosen group, but on the other hand Jacob's reformation had prepared his family for holier living. The "terror of God" was a supernatural terror -- "of God" being either a descriptive genitive or a genitive of source. Apparently, the neighbouring cities had intended a murderous pursuit, and in point of numbers they certainly had the advantage. But God had purposes for the future in reference to Abraham's seed and so spared them. "Terror," chittah, a feminine noun, has a masculine verb because of the tendency to let sentences begin with masculine verbs (K. S.345a). Cf. also 2 Chronicles 20:29.6. We are reminded of Ge 28:19 where

already Jacob had altered "Luz" to "Bethel." The mention of Bethel is a definite allusion to the former experience at this site. So, too, the mention of the coming of Jacob "and all the people that were with him" aims to show how marvellously God had fulfilled His promise to bring Jacob back unharmed. The critics do not believe the Elohist, so called, capable of making any such point, so they ascribe at least 6a to P. Naturally, such points are too important for the writer, Moses, to overlook.7. Then the altar is built, no doubt, more than the simplest kind of a place of sacrifice. If in making his vow (Ge 28:22) Jacob had spoken of a "house of God," we are justified in thinking here of a permanent sanctuary, such as the needs of that day would require, the task of building which may have required weeks. Yet everything centred about the mizbéach, "the place of slaughtering" or the "altar." Here now, without a doubt, maqom must mean "holy place" or "sanctuary." This holy "place" therefore receives the name 'El-Bethel, "the Strong God of Bethel." Those translators who failed to recognize that the holy place was meant (e. g. Septuagint) altered the name to a mere "Bethel." The propriety of the name Jacob chose is readily apparent: "The Strong One" who had so often delivered him as He had promised at "Bethel" is the one whose altar Jacob has built. The experiences of twenty years are perpetuated pointedly in this name. To make the reason for the erecting of the altar clear beyond all doubt the reason of v.1 is again repeated here: "God had been revealed to him in his flight from Esau." The verb nighlû is plural with ha'elohim, a plural of potentiality, a harmless construction explained above on Ge 20:13; which see. Such expressions never contain reminiscences of a former polytheistic standpoint. Here in particular all such possible allusions are ruled out by 'Elohim with the article ha, a combination always of the strictest monotheistic import, for it means: "the true God." 8. And Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried below Bethel beneath the oak; so it came to be called the Oak of Weeping.Of Deborah we read in Ge 24:59 without being apprised of her name. It will forever remain a puzzle how she came to be with Jacob at Bethel. The simplest surmise is that after Rebekah's death she may have chosen to attach herself to Jacob, because she had loved and tended him in infancy and in youth. Even on Jacob's part there may have been an attachment for one, who in our day might be referred to as an old "mammy." Deborah must have been very old at this time. Since Jacob may have been nearly 110 years old at this time and was born rather late in his mother's life, an age of 170 years for Deborah is not unlikely. But Isaac lived to be 180 years old (v. Ge 35:28). But these unexplained and unusual features constitute no reason for questioning the historicity of this event. The confusion of our event and the person of Deborah (Jude 4:5) does not lie in these passages but in the minds of the critics. The Deborah of a later date "judged" and dwelt "under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel." Our Deborah "died" and was buried "under an oak below Bethel." More important to observe is the fact that the Scripture regards the death and the burial of this menial worthy of notice; and that fact would lead us to infer, as Luther does, that "she was a wise and godly matron, who had served and advised Jacob, had supervised the domestics of the household and had often counselled and comforted Jacob in dangers and difficulties." So the "Oak of Weeping" became a monument to a godly servant whose loss was deeply mourned by all.9-12. And God appeared to Jacob again as he came from Paddan-Aram and blessed him; and God said unto him: Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name. So He called his name Israel, And God said to him: I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a group of peoples shall come from thee, and kings shall come forth from thy loins. And the land which I gave to Abraham and to Isaac, I now give to thee; also to thy seed after thee will I give the land.Apparently the author's point of view is that Jacob is to be regarded as still

on his way home from Paddan-Aram. Only in v. Ge 35:27 does Jacob actually return home to his father Isaac. But since Jacob has returned again to Bethel, at least the significant point of departure had again been reached. To confirm and ratify the promises made at the time when God first appeared to him at this place, God deems it good and necessary for Jacob that He appear to him again. With this appearance is coupled a ratification of the change of name which was first determined Ge 32:28. Since the whole of God's dealings with Jacob in this manifestation may be designated as the imparting of a divine blessing -- even the change of name may be regarded from this point of view -- it is here said and He "blessed him."10. It must remain a divine prerogative to determine when men need manifestations Such as these. So, then, it must have appeared necessary and good in the eyes of the Lord first of all to confirm the change of name and so to reimpress the obligation involved in the new name. If, then, this episode is closed with the assertion: "so He called his name Israel," this is no denial of Ge 32:28 but a reaffirmation of it. But criticism will persist in thinking this account in conflict with the earlier experience. But why should God not repeat what He wishes to emphasize strongly?11, 12. These verses are a reaffirmation of the promise formerly given at Bethel Ge 28:13-15. In the earlier passage Jacob is assured that his seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and that he shall spread abroad to all quarters of the land. Here the blessing of fruitfulness and of multiplying covers the same ground, except that here in addition it is specified that "a nation and a group of peoples shall come" from him, as well as kings. In both words possession of the land is assured to Jacob and his seed. There God designates Himself as the faithful Yahweh; here, as 'El Shadday, i. e., God Almighty. Strangely, the earlier passage Ge 28:14 b offers the Messianic thought ("in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"), which is not restated in the passage before us. May this be due to the fact that this most prominent part of the blessing had been laid hold upon by the faith of Jacob so decisively and retained so firmly that it required no repetition? It seems so. We know no more appropriate explanation.13-15. And God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. And Jacob erected a pillar in the place where God spoke with him, a pillar of stone, and poured a libation on it and also poured oil upon it. And Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.The unusual expression "went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him" implies that as God had spoken to Jacob from a position above Jacob so from this point His visible ascent occurred in a plainly visible fashion. For me'alaw means "from above him" and marks the starting point of His departure. It is hardly to be expected that the stone erected in Ge 28:18 in commemoration of the previous event will still have been standing after a lapse of thirty years, during which time Jacob had had no occasion to visit the spot. The matstsebha is in this instance again a sacred memorial pillar; and since wooden pillars may occasionally have been used, this one is specified to have been "of stone." The libation is poured out (nasakh nésekh -- "pouring out a pouring," i. e., a drink-offering or libation) as a quantity of wine that here constitutes an independent offering but later was always used in conjunction with other offerings. The oil is the oil of consecration. On drink-offerings see De 32:38; Ex 29:40; 30:9. Though this constitutes a repetition of what transpired Ge 28:18, it, like the appearance of God, is a second and a distinct act: God appeared twice; Jacob anointed a stone twice. But no one who reads the account fairly would claim to find evidence here of the fact that "these monuments were doubtless originally objects, of worship," or that the "libation was in the first instance an offering to the dead." Such interpretations impute to the patriarch superstitions of which not one trace appears in the text. Such "debunking" of the patriarchs and their religion deserves the sharpest

rebuke. Note the omission of the dagesh forte in yitsoq (G. K.71). 15. If it seem strange that the name of the place should a second time (cf. Ge 28:19) be called "Bethel," i. e. "house of God" let a distinct difference be noted. Then there was but one person; now there is a multitude. Then the one expressed his godly sentiments in a memorial; now a whole tribal group shares in the experience, even if, perhaps, Jacob alone witnessed the divine manifestation. This time the word "Bethel" expresses what all feel or are to feel.16-18. And they departed from Bethel, and when they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel brought forth a child and had great difficulties in the birth. And it came to pass when her labour was extremely hard that the midwife said to her: Do not be afraid, for this one too shall be a son for you. And it came to pass as her soul departed -- for she was dying -- that she called his name Ben-oni (Son of my sorrow), but his father called him Benjamin (Son of the right hand).Jacob is on the way to his father at Hebron. Rachel's travail comes upon her "when they were still some distance from Ephrath." Now 'ephrath means "fruitful region" and must have been a certain fruitful area within which Bethlehem was the most prominent town. In Jacob's day the limits of that area may have been more distinctly marked so that, as they were approaching it, their location would be marked in reference to the proximity of Ephrath. Unfortunately, no light has as yet been thrown upon the expression kibrath. Luther says ein Feldwegs. Does he mean a distance like the length of an ordinary field? A. V. imagines the distance to have been greater, saying: "still some distance" -- so above. The Syriac Peshito seems to go too far when it calls the distance "a parasang," i. e. about six miles. The expression must mean a familiar distance and hardly seems to imply a great distance. The birth is first recorded in a summary way: watteledh, "and she brought forth a child." In characteristic Hebrew manner the details follow: she "had great difficulties (literally: "she had a hard time of it" or "she was hard beset") in the birth." Lidhtah -- infinitive from yaladh.17. The Hifil stem of the verb qashah here differs little in meaning from the Piel of v.16; if anything, it may be a bit stronger: "her labour was extremely hard" vs. "she had great difficulties." The "midwife" was none other than some older woman experienced in helping at birth. She comforts Rachel when she discerns that this child too is to be a son, as she had prayed Ge 30:24 that he might be.18. Rachel's birth struggle terminated fatally. Since néphesh means both "soul" and "life," we may translate either: "as her soul," or "as her life went forth or departed." There is a very tragic note in this that her dying word is an expression of the anguish of her soul as she gives the name to her son -- Ben-oni, i. e. "son of my sorrow." It would, indeed, have been almost morbid to allow a son to bear such a name through life. So the father promptly alters the name to at least a similar one: Benjamin. Though literally translated: "son of the right hand," this name may signify "a child of good fortune" because the right side was commonly regarded as the stronger and more honourable and so came to symbolize good fortune. Glueckskind has aptly been suggested as a rendering. From Jacob's point of view this is the son that rounds out the number of his children to a perfect twelve, and so his birth is a token of good fortune. It hardly seems likely that this son's birth is contrasted with that of the other sons in that he was born after Jacob became free, whereas the other eleven are the sons begotten in the state of relative bondage.19-21. So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem. And Jacob set up a pillar at her grave. This is the pillar of the grave of Rachel until this day. But Israel moved on and pitched his tent beyond Migdaleder.After Rachel's death the sad duty of love, burial, devolved upon Jacob. The writer gives us the location of this grave very definitely for a reason which will soon become apparent. He says it was "on the way to Ephrath." This does not necessarily involve that the burial took place at the very spot where

she died. Yet it cannot have been far from there, because in v. Ge 35:16 they were "still some distance from Ephrath." Nor are they now there. Ephrath is identified, for strictly speaking it is more in the nature of a common noun ("fruitful region") than a proper noun, or according to its meaning there may have been several such Ephraths in the land. The closer identification says: "that is Bethlehem." Since Bethlehem is a town in a region Ephrath -- so also in Micah 5:2 -- this identification must be meant in the sense that Bethlehem was the best known or most important town in this tract. Another possibility is this: "way" maybe supplied before the second noun, thus: "on the way to Ephrath, that is the way to Bethlehem." Then the region would be mentioned first; thereafter the specific spot in the region. Such a construction has nothing harsh or unnatural about it. Usually critics call the parenthetical identification -- "that is Bethlehem" -- a blunder on the writer's part. They say that the writer did not know that the region and the town were not identical. Strange ignorance on his part! But with our second explanation another difficulty vanishes: Jacob in coming from Bethel and approaching Ephrath may have been just past the site of Jerusalem when Rachel died. Near there he buried her. But now the two passages that are usually said to conflict with this point of view lose their point, viz., 1 Samuel 10:2; Jeremiah 31:15. The first places Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin. But the border between Benjamin and Judah ran diagonally through Jerusalem. All we, then, need to assume is that Jacob had not yet passed Jerusalem when Rachel died. The second passage (Jeremiah 31:15) represents the mother of Benjamin weeping over her slain children at Ramah. Now Ramah lay about five miles north of Jerusalem. However, though Rachel is represented as rising from her tomb and lamenting over her slain descendants that does not say that her sepulchre has to be at the same spot where she weeps. The only discrepancy would then be the traditional site of Rachel's tomb, the Kubbet Rachel about two miles north of Bethlehem.Somehow the peculiar interest attaching to the tomb of Rachel in Moses' day lay in the fact that the pillar, which Jacob set up as a memorial at Rachel's tomb, was still to be seen after a lapse of four hundred years. How it came that this pillar was not dislodged by the Canaanites or did not fall of itself we may not be able to determine. Sometimes burial sites enjoy even the respect of strangers. Neither have we any means of determining how Moses came into possession of this interesting fact. But all this casts no shadow of doubt upon its correctness. Moses, however, inserted such notices to arouse interest in the land of promise on the part of the people whom it was his business to lead there.21. He that departs from the scene of his sorrow is designated as "Israel," as it would seem to indicate that he bore his grief as his better, newer nature helped him to do, and so "moved on" a chastened but a more seasoned saint of God. But for the present he did not move far. For "MigdalEder," meaning "the tower of the flocks," i. e. a lookout tower for shepherds, was, according to Micah 4:8, (rightly interpreted), on the southeast hill of Jerusalem on old territory of the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:28; Jude 1:21).22 a. And it happened while Israel dwelt in that land that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine. And Israel heard of it.A sad testimony to the demoralization of Jacob's sons! Jacob is here called Israel to remind us that in doing this vile deed Reuben dishonoured Israel, the eminent hero of faith. Vile, incestuous lust here has its sway among men who should have been worthy to bear the honourable title sons of Israel. Though Bilhah was heretofore described only as Rachel's "handmaid," she is now after Rachel's death described in her relationship to Jacob against whom the wrong is done and is designated as Jacob's "concubine." Critics cannot see such simple proprieties and promptly seize upon such points as proofs of a supposedly different style of different authors. Need we be told the self-evident thing that Jacob

disapproved and was deeply grieved and shamed? We are merely informed that he became aware of what has happened: he "heard of it." This prepares us for Ge 49:4 where his disapproval finds lasting expression for all future time. Criticism's verdict again cannot satisfy: it calls this statement "probably a temporal clause of which the apodosis has been intentionally omitted." The infinitive bishkon -- a temporal clause (G. K.45 g).22b-27. Now Jacob had twelve sons: the sons of Leah -- the first-born of Jacob, Reuben, and Simeon, and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulon; the sons of Rachel -- Joseph and Benjamin; the sons of Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel -- Dan and Naphtali; the sons of Zilpah, the handmaid of Leah -- Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob which were born to him in PaddanAram. And Jacob came to Isaac, his father, to Mamre, to Kirjath-Arba -- that is Hebron -- where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned.Summaries or recapitulations serve a good purpose in narratives. Here it can be seen to be very appropriate to have those twelve who are Jacob's sons listed together, first, to reimpress their names on the mind and to show what potentialities for development into a numerous people lay in Jacob's descendants at this point already. Critics, of course, call this one of the characteristics of P, to write such summaries and discourse on their supposed findings but fail to see how naturally any writer, or writers, summarize at important junctures of their narratives, as here where Jacob presents himself to his father Isaac.These sons are listed according to their mothers rather than according to age because those of one mother would naturally find themselves drawn closer together. Then, again, it is but natural that the sons of the wives be listed first, then those of the handmaidens. But among the wives, though Rachel was the favourite, Leah had borne many sons long before Rachel began; consequently her children are listed first. These twelve are all said to have been born in Paddan-Aram, though everyone knows that Benjamin was born in Canaan. Yulladh as a singular with a plural subject ("these" being the antecedent) is to be accounted for by the fact that after they have been summarized, they appear to the writer as one group. The passive of this verb is a convenient mode of avoiding the mention of numerous subjects (K. S.108).27. Comparing with Ge 18:1, we notice that Mamre will most likely be a briefer designation for "the terebinths of Mamre." The well-informed writer lists both names of the ancient town, giving "Hebron" parenthetically as the better known name for "KirjathArba," i. e., "the city of Arba." To mention that Abraham and Isaac "had sojourned" there does not serve the purpose of imparting new facts but suggests what it was that drew Jacob to Hebron: the place was redolent with the memories of his godly forefathers. The break in v.22 indicates, as it were, the beginning of a new paragraph. The double accent on yisra'el suggests the two possible modes of reading: othnach for private reading, making a pause according to the sense, the metheg for public or liturgical reading to indicate direct continuation, slurring over the vile deed.28, 29. And the length of Isaac's life was one hundred and eighty years. And Isaac expired and died and was gathered unto his people, an old man and sated with days; and Esau and Jacob his sons buried him.From this time onward Jacob enters into the full patriarchal heritage, having at last attained to a spiritual maturity which is analogous to that of the patriarch. Coincident with this is Isaac's receding into the background. Consequently Isaac's death is now reported, though it did not take place for another twelve or thirteen years. For shortly after this, when Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was seventeen years old. When he stood before Pharaoh he was thirty (Ge 41:46). Seven years later when Joseph was thirtyseven, Jacob came to Egypt at the age of 130 (Ge 47:9). Consequently Jacob must have been ninety-three at Joseph's birth and at the time of our chapter 93 plus 15, i. e. about 108 years. But Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born; 108 plus 60 equals 168 equals Isaac's age

when Jacob returned home. But in closing the life of Isaac it is proper to mention his death, though in reality this did not occur for another twelve years. Strange to say, Isaac lived to witness Jacob's grief over Joseph.29. Gawa'," he expired," describes the process; muth, "he died," marks the conclusion of the process. That he "was gathered unto his people" certainly implies more than being laid in the common ancestral grave or even than passing out of this life. They to whom he goes are a "people" whom he joins. How strong and clear the hope of eternal life was in those days we cannot now tell, but this word bears testimony to such a faith. With the progressive weakening of the human race Isaac at 180 years was counted as an old man. How much of life God had let him taste is indicated by the statement that "he was sated (sebha' -- ' full') with days." He had seen as many as his soul might desire. It is a pleasant fact to note that at the death of their father the once estranged brothers are still united.On the sources of this chapter the critics, though far from being of one mind, claim to have discerned a pattern about as follows: E wrote 1-8, 16-20. To J must be ascribed 21, 22 a. This leaves for P 9-15, 22 b-29 (K. C.). Aside from the fundamentally wrong presuppositions about discernable sources we have pointed to several additional weaknesses of this construction. To one not blinded by the glamour of pseudocriticism and its claims the manifest unity of the chapter and its natural sequence of parts will be sufficient proofs of its original unity.Other untenable claims by more extreme critics are these: v. Ge 35:22 describes an old marriage custom of the Reubenites; v. Ge 35:18 the birth of Benjamin in Canaan is supposed to indicate that the tribe was formed after the conquest of Canaan. Attempts to discover astral myths relative to sun and moon reflected in the appearing of the brighter Jacob (sun) after the dimmer Isaac (moon) are extravagant impossibilities.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThe first episode (v. Ge 35:1-8) suggests some such subject as Spiritual Housecleaning, or since Jacob is performing his vow, why not use the approach suggested by the psalm: Perform Thy Vows unto the Most High? A very practical treatment of that theme is suggested by these verses. Since v. Ge 35:9-15 is in a double sense a repetition of matters found previously in Genesis, why not make that a prominent feature of the treatment of the section and speak of the Repetition of Spiritual Experiences?

CHAPTER XXXV

11. The Last Events of Isaac's History (35:1-29) If we are to follow the outline offered by the author himself, we must have some such title as the above. For the "history" (toledôth) of Isaac closes with this chapter; he has, unaggressive person that he was, still dominated Jacob's action up to this point. Jacob becomes an independent factor after his father's death, and his own "history" begins with Ge 37:2. 1. And God said to Jacob: Arise, go up to Bethel and tarry there, and \make there an altar unto God who appeared to thee at the time of the flight from before Esau, thy brother. Since the divine name 'Elohim or 'El dominates this chapter, it appears plainly that the writer regards the various acts and words of God here recorded as displaying the activity of the Creator-God in His authority as He deals with His creature man. In this capacity Elohim authoritatively bids Jacob fulfill his vow; the altar is to be erected, to Elohim (v. Ge 35:3), who showed forth His power in protecting Jacob. The God who controls the nations lets a terror fall upon the inhabitants of the land lest they harm Israel (v. Ge 35:5). It is Elohim, who appears to Jacob, blesses him, changes his name, and bestows upon him the blessing of Abraham; for Elohim alone possesses authority to do these things. Without a doubt, some of these acts, like the last, do also show forth the Yahweh character of God; but we sincerely believe the Elohim character predominates. We have no way of knowing in what manner God spoke to Jacob. If this appearance is analogous to that of v. Ge 35:9-13, it would seem that He appeared under some visible guise, because (v.13) He "went up from him." But more puzzling is the question why Jacob should have deferred fulfilling the vow of Ge 28:22 and should have to be bidden by God to do according to it. The readiest explanation is that Jacob had kept putting it off until a more convenient season. The level of faith arrived at at the close of chapter 32 had not been maintained. God Himself prevents further sinful delay by allowing Jacob no choice in the matter. That God demands the building of an altar where Jacob had vowed to build a "house" shows how Jacob had meant his vow: he had intended to establish a sanctuary, whose most prominent feature in days of old could be nothing other than an altar. He should "tarry" (shebh, imperative from yashabh; here not in the sense of "dwell" but "tarry") just long enough to carry out the injunction laid upon him. Jacob was not to "go up to Bethel to live" (Meek). This rendering creates an unnecessary conflict with what Jacob actually does. 2-4. And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him: Discard the foreign gods which are in your midst, and purify yourselves and change your garments. And let us set out and go up to Bethel; and there I shall make an altar unto El (God) who answered me at the time of my distress, and was with me on the way that I went. And they turned over to Jacob all the foreign gods in their possession and the rings that were in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the terebinth near Shechem. Such a command as Jacob has just received requires more, as Jacob clearly sees, than a mere literal keeping. A general repentance and reconsecration of all that are with him should accompany the outward act. Certain of the more recent happenings had taught him the need of such a purging of his household. His sons had given evidence of a very carnal and cruel disposition. His daughter may at least have displayed undue levity. The grave danger growing out of the present situation had contributed to stir his conscience. But most important of all, there had been a most pernicious and

dangerous practice subtly at work poisoning the fountainhead of all true religion -- idols were worshipped. Most of this evil must have kept under cover. It now appears that Rachel's purpose in stealing her father's teraphim (Ge 31:19) may well have been at least occasionally to engage in the worship of them. Then it is highly probable that the servants acquired in Mesopotamia may in many cases have still been idolaters. The sacking of Shechem may have brought additional "foreign gods" into the possessions of the plunderers, and the mere having of them will have constituted a grave danger for the possessors. Without a doubt, Jacob will as a faithful patriarch have instructed his entire household to serve Yahweh, the only true God, and, as Luther frequently reminds, will have been a faithful preacher in his own household. But now the drastic action that might well have been taken long before marks a courageous and thoroughgoing attempt to root out the evil. Patriarchal authority certainly made Jacob's course possible and effective. Hasiru means more than our "put away" -- that might imply "storing away"; the verb is rather an emphatic "discard." The command, "purify yourselves," may include ceremonial washing, as in Ex 19:14, but its essence would be: purge your hearts and lives of this noxious influence. Again as at Mt. Sinai the changing of garments was to do honour to the occasion and further symbolize the putting off of the old and the putting on of the new. For "foreign gods" the Hebrew uses the noun in place of the adjective -- "the gods of the foreigner." 3. With the preparations demanded in v.2, which may well be regarded as a repentance of heart, the people as a whole are ready to "set out" (literally: "rise up," qum) and "go up" ('alah, for Bethel lies 1,000 feet higher). In recounting by way of thankful confession what God did for him Jacob remembers what strength God displayed in guarding him against all harm and therefore designates Him as El, the "Strong One." Jacob's confession includes the statement that 'El answered him "in the day" (beyom) or "at the time of my distress." The following words are a definite allusion to Ge 28:15; for this was just what God had promised at Bethel, to be with him on the way that he went. Since, without a doubt, Jacob had frequently told the story of God's promise, this word will have been recognized by those that heard him as an acknowledgment of God's faithfulness. 4. When "they gave" (nathan) to Jacob the objects he had asked them to discard, it was with the purpose that he might dispose of them as he pleased; therefore we translate nathan they "turned over" to Jacob. Apparently they entered wholeheartedly upon the plan, for they gave "all the foreign gods in their possession," as well as earrings, which must have served as amulets and tokens of some idolatrous practices. Jacob buries all they give him "under the terebinth near Shechem." Such a terebinth ('elah) was mentioned as having been at Shechem in Abraham's day (Ge 12:6), although there we read, "the terebinth of Moreh," which, as we remarked on this passage, hardly bears any idolatrous connotation. Since it may, nevertheless, be the prominent terebinth under which Abraham had stopped and at which the Lord had appeared to him, the article may here recall that event; and the sacred memories associated with it may well accord with the memorable event of our chapter, and so the tree becomes a memorial tree of the notable religious events. Reluctant to accept Scriptural suggestions and seemingly anxious to obscure a simple text, one critic remarks: "The burial of idolatrous emblems under this sacred tree has some traditional meaning which we cannot now explain." The claims to the effect that some Canaanite cult was associated with this tree rest upon a weak foundation. The dative is here expressed by the preposition 'el, (K. S. p.263, 1). In Joshua 24:26 Shechem becomes the scene of an event much like that of Jacob's days. 5-7. Then they departed; but there was a terror of God upon the cities round about them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. And Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan -- that is to say, Bethel -- he and all

the people that were with him. And he built there an altar and called the place El-Bethel (God of Bethel), for there God had been revealed to him in his flight from Esau. God gives plain tokens of his favour and approval of the step just taken by Jacob in purging out idolatry by putting restraint upon all Canaanite projects of revenge for the Shechemites. Certainly, here again God's favour far exceeded the deserts of the chosen group, but on the other hand Jacob's reformation had prepared his family for holier living. The "terror of God" was a supernatural terror -- "of God" being either a descriptive genitive or a genitive of source. Apparently, the neighbouring cities had intended a murderous pursuit, and in point of numbers they certainly had the advantage. But God had purposes for the future in reference to Abraham's seed and so spared them. "Terror," chittah, a feminine noun, has a masculine verb because of the tendency to let sentences begin with masculine verbs (K. S.345a). Cf. also 2 Chronicles 20:29. 6. We are reminded of Ge 28:19 where already Jacob had altered "Luz" to "Bethel." The mention of Bethel is a definite allusion to the former experience at this site. So, too, the mention of the coming of Jacob "and all the people that were with him" aims to show how marvellously God had fulfilled His promise to bring Jacob back unharmed. The critics do not believe the Elohist, so called, capable of making any such point, so they ascribe at least 6a to P. Naturally, such points are too important for the writer, Moses, to overlook.7. Then the altar is built, no doubt, more than the simplest kind of a place of sacrifice. If in making his vow (Ge 28:22) Jacob had spoken of a "house of God," we are justified in thinking here of a permanent sanctuary, such as the needs of that day would require, the task of building which may have required weeks. Yet everything centred about the mizbéach, "the place of slaughtering" or the "altar." Here now, without a doubt, maqom must mean "holy place" or "sanctuary." This holy "place" therefore receives the name 'El-Bethel, "the Strong God of Bethel." Those translators who failed to recognize that the holy place was meant (e. g. Septuagint) altered the name to a mere "Bethel." The propriety of the name Jacob chose is readily apparent: "The Strong One" who had so often delivered him as He had promised at "Bethel" is the one whose altar Jacob has built. The experiences of twenty years are perpetuated pointedly in this name. To make the reason for the erecting of the altar clear beyond all doubt the reason of v.1 is again repeated here: "God had been revealed to him in his flight from Esau." The verb nighlû is plural with ha'elohim, a plural of potentiality, a harmless construction explained above on Ge 20:13; which see. Such expressions never contain reminiscences of a former polytheistic standpoint. Here in particular all such possible allusions are ruled out by 'Elohim with the article ha, a combination always of the strictest monotheistic import, for it means: "the true God."8. And Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried below Bethel beneath the oak; so it came to be called the Oak of Weeping.Of Deborah we read in Ge 24:59 without being apprised of her name. It will forever remain a puzzle how she came to be with Jacob at Bethel. The simplest surmise is that after Rebekah's death she may have chosen to attach herself to Jacob, because she had loved and tended him in infancy and in youth. Even on Jacob's part there may have been an attachment for one, who in our day might be referred to as an old "mammy." Deborah must have been very old at this time. Since Jacob may have been nearly 110 years old at this time and was born rather late in his mother's life, an age of 170 years for Deborah is not unlikely. But Isaac lived to be 180 years old (v. Ge 35:28). But these unexplained and unusual features constitute no reason for questioning the historicity of this event. The confusion of our event and the person of Deborah (Jude 4:5) does not lie in these passages but in the minds of the critics. The Deborah of a later date "judged" and dwelt "under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel." Our Deborah "died" and was buried "under an oak below Bethel."

More important to observe is the fact that the Scripture regards the death and the burial of this menial worthy of notice; and that fact would lead us to infer, as Luther does, that "she was a wise and godly matron, who had served and advised Jacob, had supervised the domestics of the household and had often counselled and comforted Jacob in dangers and difficulties." So the "Oak of Weeping" became a monument to a godly servant whose loss was deeply mourned by all.9-12. And God appeared to Jacob again as he came from Paddan-Aram and blessed him; and God said unto him: Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name. So He called his name Israel, And God said to him: I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a group of peoples shall come from thee, and kings shall come forth from thy loins. And the land which I gave to Abraham and to Isaac, I now give to thee; also to thy seed after thee will I give the land.Apparently the author's point of view is that Jacob is to be regarded as still on his way home from Paddan-Aram. Only in v. Ge 35:27 does Jacob actually return home to his father Isaac. But since Jacob has returned again to Bethel, at least the significant point of departure had again been reached. To confirm and ratify the promises made at the time when God first appeared to him at this place, God deems it good and necessary for Jacob that He appear to him again. With this appearance is coupled a ratification of the change of name which was first determined Ge 32:28. Since the whole of God's dealings with Jacob in this manifestation may be designated as the imparting of a divine blessing -- even the change of name may be regarded from this point of view -- it is here said and He "blessed him."10. It must remain a divine prerogative to determine when men need manifestations Such as these. So, then, it must have appeared necessary and good in the eyes of the Lord first of all to confirm the change of name and so to reimpress the obligation involved in the new name. If, then, this episode is closed with the assertion: "so He called his name Israel," this is no denial of Ge 32:28 but a reaffirmation of it. But criticism will persist in thinking this account in conflict with the earlier experience. But why should God not repeat what He wishes to emphasize strongly? 11, 12. These verses are a reaffirmation of the promise formerly given at Bethel Ge 28:13-15. In the earlier passage Jacob is assured that his seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and that he shall spread abroad to all quarters of the land. Here the blessing of fruitfulness and of multiplying covers the same ground, except that here in addition it is specified that "a nation and a group of peoples shall come" from him, as well as kings. In both words possession of the land is assured to Jacob and his seed. There God designates Himself as the faithful Yahweh; here, as 'El Shadday, i. e., God Almighty. Strangely, the earlier passage Ge 28:14 b offers the Messianic thought ("in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"), which is not restated in the passage before us. May this be due to the fact that this most prominent part of the blessing had been laid hold upon by the faith of Jacob so decisively and retained so firmly that it required no repetition? It seems so. We know no more appropriate explanation.13-15. And God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. And Jacob erected a pillar in the place where God spoke with him, a pillar of stone, and poured a libation on it and also poured oil upon it. And Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.The unusual expression "went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him" implies that as God had spoken to Jacob from a position above Jacob so from this point His visible ascent occurred in a plainly visible fashion. For me'alaw means "from above him" and marks the starting point of His departure. It is hardly to be expected that the stone erected in Ge 28:18 in commemoration of the previous event will still have been standing after a lapse of thirty years, during which time Jacob had had no occasion to visit the spot. The

matstsebha is in this instance again a sacred memorial pillar; and since wooden pillars may occasionally have been used, this one is specified to have been "of stone." The libation is poured out (nasakh nésekh -- "pouring out a pouring," i. e., a drink-offering or libation) as a quantity of wine that here constitutes an independent offering but later was always used in conjunction with other offerings. The oil is the oil of consecration. On drink-offerings see De 32:38; Ex 29:40; 30:9. Though this constitutes a repetition of what transpired Ge 28:18, it, like the appearance of God, is a second and a distinct act: God appeared twice; Jacob anointed a stone twice. But no one who reads the account fairly would claim to find evidence here of the fact that "these monuments were doubtless originally objects, of worship," or that the "libation was in the first instance an offering to the dead." Such interpretations impute to the patriarch superstitions of which not one trace appears in the text. Such "debunking" of the patriarchs and their religion deserves the sharpest rebuke. Note the omission of the dagesh forte in yitsoq (G. K.71).15. If it seem strange that the name of the place should a second time (cf. Ge 28:19) be called "Bethel," i. e. "house of God" let a distinct difference be noted. Then there was but one person; now there is a multitude. Then the one expressed his godly sentiments in a memorial; now a whole tribal group shares in the experience, even if, perhaps, Jacob alone witnessed the divine manifestation. This time the word "Bethel" expresses what all feel or are to feel.16-18. And they departed from Bethel, and when they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel brought forth a child and had great difficulties in the birth. And it came to pass when her labour was extremely hard that the midwife said to her: Do not be afraid, for this one too shall be a son for you. And it came to pass as her soul departed -- for she was dying -- that she called his name Ben-oni (Son of my sorrow), but his father called him Benjamin (Son of the right hand).Jacob is on the way to his father at Hebron. Rachel's travail comes upon her "when they were still some distance from Ephrath." Now 'ephrath means "fruitful region" and must have been a certain fruitful area within which Bethlehem was the most prominent town. In Jacob's day the limits of that area may have been more distinctly marked so that, as they were approaching it, their location would be marked in reference to the proximity of Ephrath. Unfortunately, no light has as yet been thrown upon the expression kibrath. Luther says ein Feldwegs. Does he mean a distance like the length of an ordinary field? A. V. imagines the distance to have been greater, saying: "still some distance" -- so above. The Syriac Peshito seems to go too far when it calls the distance "a parasang," i. e. about six miles. The expression must mean a familiar distance and hardly seems to imply a great distance. The birth is first recorded in a summary way: watteledh, "and she brought forth a child." In characteristic Hebrew manner the details follow: she "had great difficulties (literally: "she had a hard time of it" or "she was hard beset") in the birth." Lidhtah -- infinitive from yaladh. 17. The Hifil stem of the verb qashah here differs little in meaning from the Piel of v.16; if anything, it may be a bit stronger: "her labour was extremely hard" vs. "she had great difficulties." The "midwife" was none other than some older woman experienced in helping at birth. She comforts Rachel when she discerns that this child too is to be a son, as she had prayed Ge 30:24 that he might be.18. Rachel's birth struggle terminated fatally. Since néphesh means both "soul" and "life," we may translate either: "as her soul," or "as her life went forth or departed." There is a very tragic note in this that her dying word is an expression of the anguish of her soul as she gives the name to her son -- Ben-oni, i. e. "son of my sorrow." It would, indeed, have been almost morbid to allow a son to bear such a name through life. So the father promptly alters the name to at least a similar one: Benjamin. Though literally translated: "son of the right hand," this name may signify "a child of good fortune" because the

right side was commonly regarded as the stronger and more honourable and so came to symbolize good fortune. Glueckskind has aptly been suggested as a rendering. From Jacob's point of view this is the son that rounds out the number of his children to a perfect twelve, and so his birth is a token of good fortune. It hardly seems likely that this son's birth is contrasted with that of the other sons in that he was born after Jacob became free, whereas the other eleven are the sons begotten in the state of relative bondage.19-21. So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem. And Jacob set up a pillar at her grave. This is the pillar of the grave of Rachel until this day. But Israel moved on and pitched his tent beyond Migdaleder.After Rachel's death the sad duty of love, burial, devolved upon Jacob. The writer gives us the location of this grave very definitely for a reason which will soon become apparent. He says it was "on the way to Ephrath." This does not necessarily involve that the burial took place at the very spot where she died. Yet it cannot have been far from there, because in v. Ge 35:16 they were "still some distance from Ephrath." Nor are they now there. Ephrath is identified, for strictly speaking it is more in the nature of a common noun ("fruitful region") than a proper noun, or according to its meaning there may have been several such Ephraths in the land. The closer identification says: "that is Bethlehem." Since Bethlehem is a town in a region Ephrath -- so also in Micah 5:2 -- this identification must be meant in the sense that Bethlehem was the best known or most important town in this tract. Another possibility is this: "way" maybe supplied before the second noun, thus: "on the way to Ephrath, that is the way to Bethlehem." Then the region would be mentioned first; thereafter the specific spot in the region. Such a construction has nothing harsh or unnatural about it. Usually critics call the parenthetical identification -- "that is Bethlehem" -- a blunder on the writer's part. They say that the writer did not know that the region and the town were not identical. Strange ignorance on his part! But with our second explanation another difficulty vanishes: Jacob in coming from Bethel and approaching Ephrath may have been just past the site of Jerusalem when Rachel died. Near there he buried her. But now the two passages that are usually said to conflict with this point of view lose their point, viz., 1 Samuel 10:2; Jeremiah 31:15. The first places Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin. But the border between Benjamin and Judah ran diagonally through Jerusalem. All we, then, need to assume is that Jacob had not yet passed Jerusalem when Rachel died.The second passage (Jeremiah 31:15) represents the mother of Benjamin weeping over her slain children at Ramah. Now Ramah lay about five miles north of Jerusalem. However, though Rachel is represented as rising from her tomb and lamenting over her slain descendants that does not say that her sepulchre has to be at the same spot where she weeps. The only discrepancy would then be the traditional site of Rachel's tomb, the Kubbet Rachel about two miles north of Bethlehem.Somehow the peculiar interest attaching to the tomb of Rachel in Moses' day lay in the fact that the pillar, which Jacob set up as a memorial at Rachel's tomb, was still to be seen after a lapse of four hundred years. How it came that this pillar was not dislodged by the Canaanites or did not fall of itself we may not be able to determine. Sometimes burial sites enjoy even the respect of strangers. Neither have we any means of determining how Moses came into possession of this interesting fact. But all this casts no shadow of doubt upon its correctness. Moses, however, inserted such notices to arouse interest in the land of promise on the part of the people whom it was his business to lead there.21. He that departs from the scene of his sorrow is designated as "Israel," as it would seem to indicate that he bore his grief as his better, newer nature helped him to do, and so "moved on" a chastened but a more seasoned saint of God. But for the present he did not move far. For "MigdalEder," meaning "the tower of the

flocks," i. e. a lookout tower for shepherds, was, according to Micah 4:8, (rightly interpreted), on the southeast hill of Jerusalem on old territory of the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:28; Jude 1:21). 22 a. And it happened while Israel dwelt in that land that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine. And Israel heard of it.A sad testimony to the demoralization of Jacob's sons! Jacob is here called Israel to remind us that in doing this vile deed Reuben dishonoured Israel, the eminent hero of faith. Vile, incestuous lust here has its sway among men who should have been worthy to bear the honourable title sons of Israel. Though Bilhah was heretofore described only as Rachel's "handmaid," she is now after Rachel's death described in her relationship to Jacob against whom the wrong is done and is designated as Jacob's "concubine." Critics cannot see such simple proprieties and promptly seize upon such points as proofs of a supposedly different style of different authors. Need we be told the self-evident thing that Jacob disapproved and was deeply grieved and shamed? We are merely informed that he became aware of what has happened: he "heard of it." This prepares us for Ge 49:4 where his disapproval finds lasting expression for all future time. Criticism's verdict again cannot satisfy: it calls this statement "probably a temporal clause of which the apodosis has been intentionally omitted." The infinitive bishkon -- a temporal clause (G. K.45 g).22b-27. Now Jacob had twelve sons: the sons of Leah -- the first-born of Jacob, Reuben, and Simeon, and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulon; the sons of Rachel -- Joseph and Benjamin; the sons of Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel -- Dan and Naphtali; the sons of Zilpah, the handmaid of Leah -- Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob which were born to him in PaddanAram. And Jacob came to Isaac, his father, to Mamre, to Kirjath-Arba -- that is Hebron -- where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned.Summaries or recapitulations serve a good purpose in narratives. Here it can be seen to be very appropriate to have those twelve who are Jacob's sons listed together, first, to reimpress their names on the mind and to show what potentialities for development into a numerous people lay in Jacob's descendants at this point already. Critics, of course, call this one of the characteristics of P, to write such summaries and discourse on their supposed findings but fail to see how naturally any writer, or writers, summarize at important junctures of their narratives, as here where Jacob presents himself to his father Isaac.These sons are listed according to their mothers rather than according to age because those of one mother would naturally find themselves drawn closer together. Then, again, it is but natural that the sons of the wives be listed first, then those of the handmaidens. But among the wives, though Rachel was the favourite, Leah had borne many sons long before Rachel began; consequently her children are listed first. These twelve are all said to have been born in Paddan-Aram, though everyone knows that Benjamin was born in Canaan. Yulladh as a singular with a plural subject ("these" being the antecedent) is to be accounted for by the fact that after they have been summarized, they appear to the writer as one group. The passive of this verb is a convenient mode of avoiding the mention of numerous subjects (K. S.108).27. Comparing with Ge 18:1, we notice that Mamre will most likely be a briefer designation for "the terebinths of Mamre." The well-informed writer lists both names of the ancient town, giving "Hebron" parenthetically as the better known name for "KirjathArba," i. e., "the city of Arba." To mention that Abraham and Isaac "had sojourned" there does not serve the purpose of imparting new facts but suggests what it was that drew Jacob to Hebron: the place was redolent with the memories of his godly forefathers.The break in v.22 indicates, as it were, the beginning of a new paragraph. The double accent on yisra'el suggests the two possible modes of reading: othnach for private reading, making a pause according to the sense, the metheg for public or liturgical reading

to indicate direct continuation, slurring over the vile deed.28, 29. And the length of Isaac's life was one hundred and eighty years. And Isaac expired and died and was gathered unto his people, an old man and sated with days; and Esau and Jacob his sons buried him.From this time onward Jacob enters into the full patriarchal heritage, having at last attained to a spiritual maturity which is analogous to that of the patriarch. Coincident with this is Isaac's receding into the background. Consequently Isaac's death is now reported, though it did not take place for another twelve or thirteen years. For shortly after this, when Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was seventeen years old. When he stood before Pharaoh he was thirty (Ge 41:46). Seven years later when Joseph was thirtyseven, Jacob came to Egypt at the age of 130 (Ge 47:9). Consequently Jacob must have been ninety-three at Joseph's birth and at the time of our chapter 93 plus 15, i. e. about 108 years. But Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born; 108 plus 60 equals 168 equals Isaac's age when Jacob returned home. But in closing the life of Isaac it is proper to mention his death, though in reality this did not occur for another twelve years. Strange to say, Isaac lived to witness Jacob's grief over Joseph. 29. Gawa'," he expired," describes the process; muth, "he died," marks the conclusion of the process. That he "was gathered unto his people" certainly implies more than being laid in the common ancestral grave or even than passing out of this life. They to whom he goes are a "people" whom he joins. How strong and clear the hope of eternal life was in those days we cannot now tell, but this word bears testimony to such a faith. With the progressive weakening of the human race Isaac at 180 years was counted as an old man. How much of life God had let him taste is indicated by the statement that "he was sated (sebha' -- ' full') with days." He had seen as many as his soul might desire. It is a pleasant fact to note that at the death of their father the once estranged brothers are still united.On the sources of this chapter the critics, though far from being of one mind, claim to have discerned a pattern about as follows: E wrote 1-8, 16-20. To J must be ascribed 21, 22 a. This leaves for P 9-15, 22 b-29 (K. C.). Aside from the fundamentally wrong presuppositions about discernable sources we have pointed to several additional weaknesses of this construction. To one not blinded by the glamour of pseudocriticism and its claims the manifest unity of the chapter and its natural sequence of parts will be sufficient proofs of its original unity.Other untenable claims by more extreme critics are these: v. Ge 35:22 describes an old marriage custom of the Reubenites; v. Ge 35:18 the birth of Benjamin in Canaan is supposed to indicate that the tribe was formed after the conquest of Canaan. Attempts to discover astral myths relative to sun and moon reflected in the appearing of the brighter Jacob (sun) after the dimmer Isaac (moon) are extravagant impossibilities.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThe first episode (v. Ge 35:1-8) suggests some such subject as Spiritual Housecleaning, or since Jacob is performing his vow, why not use the approach suggested by the psalm: Perform Thy Vows unto the Most High? A very practical treatment of that theme is suggested by these verses. Since v. Ge 35:9-15 is in a double sense a repetition of matters found previously in Genesis, why not make that a prominent feature of the treatment of the section and speak of the Repetition of Spiritual Experiences?

CHAPTER XXXVI

9. The History of Esau (Chapter 36) On the heading ("history" fortoledôth) see remarks on Ge 2:4. Quite in harmony with his previous procedure the author, having concluded the "History of Isaac" and being about to take in hand the "History of Jacob," disposes first of the less relevant "History of Esau." For, at least briefly, the marvels of divine grace in reference to Esau are worthy to be recounted. In Ge 27:39,40 a blessing had been pronounced upon Esau, a blessing which was not meaningless. It is worth tracing down how it pleased the Almighty to bless Esau and to make him to become a nation. This skeleton history of Esau serves this purpose and at the same time bears testimony to a breadth of interest on Moses' part that was indeed worthy of emulation. For though Esau had, indeed, begun to display its inveterate animosity quite fully at Moses' time, Moses believed that it behooved Israel to have a generous interest in this brother-race. The information conveyed by the chapter is so obviously correct that it has been remarked that "the chapter evidently embodies authentic information regarding the history and ethnology of Edom" (Skinner). A word on the meaning of the proper names of the chapter may serve a purpose. As usual the meaning of many of these names is far from certain, as, for example, Whitelaw's comments amply indicate. The meaning of some, which are reasonably sure, shows how in many cases they reflect the natural surroundings of the people. 'Ahah (v. Ge 36:2) may mean "ornament" or "morning." 'Elon (v.2) may mean "a region of deer" or wildreiche Gegend. Zibe'on signifies "hyena." Basemath (v. Ge 36:3) means "perfume." 'Eliphaz seems to mean "pure gold." Re'u'el (v. Ge 36:4) is "friend of God," though this very likely is to be taken in an idolatrous sense. Je'ush (v. Ge 36:5) may mean "helper (is God)." Nahath (v. Ge 36:13) means "rest," Zerah -- "rising" or "east"; Dishon (v. Ge 36:21) -- "gazelle"; Alvan (v. Ge 36:23) -- "wicked"; Shepho -- "bald"; 'Ajah (v. Ge 36:24) -- "hawk"; 'Eshban (v. Ge 36:26) -- "restorer"; Ithran -- "advantage"; Cheran -- "turtle"; 'Akan (v. Ge 36:27) -- "swift"; 'Aran (v. Ge 36:28) -- "mountain goat"; Jobab (v. Ge 36:33) -- "jubilation"; Bozrah -- "fold"; 'Achbor -- "mouse," etc. We have listed these to give a representative selection and to show how groundless the assumption is that we find in these names traces of a totemistic religion, especially on the part of the old Horites. For as Procksch rightly remarks, first of all we know nothing about the religion of the Horites; and, secondly, the giving of names of beasts and birds may be occasioned by many other motives: some names may be "satire" (Spitznamen), some a "boast" (Prahlnamen), some merely "figurative," as found among all nations; cf. even our "Leo" and "Agnes." We now offer an outline of the chapter to demonstrate at once that it aims to do much more than merely to sketch a brief list of descendants. For from the outline it will immediately become apparent that we are apprised also of the non-Edomitish elements that were incorporated into the race and of the "chiefs" and "kings" that were men of prominence among this people. The outline of the contents of the chapter runs thus: (1) Esau's wives and children and their settlement in Seir (v. Ge 36:1-8); (2) Esau's descendants (v. Ge 36:9-14); (3) the Edomitish chiefs (v. Ge 36:15-19); (4) the Horite chiefs (v. Ge 36:20-30); (5) the Edomitish kings (v. Ge 36:31-39); (6) the Edomitish chiefs -- after another classification (v. Ge 36:40-43). Strangely, 1 Chronicles 1:35-54 gives lists parallel to these. (1) Esau's Wives and Children and their Settlement in Seir (v.1-8) The following outline shows the relation of names: (See figure 934) Our chief difficulty arises from a

comparison of the names of Esau's wives as they previously appeared. In Ge 26:34 the Canaanite wives bore the names, "Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite," and "Basemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite," whereas in Ge 28:9 the Ishmaelite wife was described as "Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael." Apparently, then, Judith must be identified with Oholibamah, Basemath with Adah -- for both are followed by the name of the same father "Elon" -- and Mahalath must be the Basemath of our list, because in each case follows the father's name, "Ishmael." The reason for identifying Judith with Oholibamah may be made somewhat more convincing by noting that Oholibamah is described (v. Ge 36:2) as "the daughter of Anah." Now Anah, according to v. Ge 36:24, discovered "hot springs"; but be'er is the Hebrew word for spring. However, in the former list he is described as Beeri -- "springman." Such changes of names need surprise no one, for Orientals commonly go under several names, especially the women, who frequently receive a new name at marriage. Men should, therefore, not speak here of a "contradiction as to Esau's wives" and call this "a crucial difficulty." 1-5. And this is the history of Esau -- that is Edom. Esau married women who were Canaanites: Adah, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite, and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the granddaughter of Zibeon, the Hivite; and besides, Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. And Adah bare Eliphaz to Esau; and Basemath bare Reuel; and Oholibamah bare Jeush and Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau which were born to him in the land of Canaan. The parenthetical, "that is Edom," recalls very briefly Ge 25:30. The Hebrew expression for "married" is here again the common idiom, he "took" wives. This sense plainly obtains here; the author is not writing the "took" that is resumed in v. Ge 36:6, for that would make an exceedingly clumsy construction. Since the Anah of v. Ge 36:2 no doubt is a man (cf. v. Ge 36:25), the word bath ("daughter") following it cannot refer to him but must be used in the looser sense of "granddaughter" and naturally refers to Oholibamah. This same Anah appears here as a "Hivite" but in Ge 26:34 as a "Hittite." The difficulty resolves itself quite readily when we observe that "Hittite" is simply a more general designation of Canaanites, which use of the term is found in Joshua 1:4; 1 Kings 10:29; 2 Kings 7:6. For the Hittites were a very prominent group among the inhabitants of the land and so came to stand for all of them. If in v. Ge 36:20, however, Anah appears as a Horite, a term meaning "cave dweller," why should not one, originally a Hivite, also be able to dwell in a cave and so merit the additional cognomen "Horite"? A summary expression like "these are the sons of Esau which were born to him in the land of Canaan" is not a mark of any particular author's style (such as P) but a necessary summary, lest we overlook that these five were distinct from all other descendants also in this that they were born in Canaan.6-8. And Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all individuals of his household and his flocks and all his cattle and all his possessions which he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to a land where he was far away from Jacob, his brother. For their property was too great to allow for them to dwell together, nor was the land where they sojourned able to support them in view of their flocks. So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir -- Esau is Edom.We are brought to the time where Esau sees the necessity of leaving the land of Canaan, which has definitely been assigned to his brother Jacob. It will be difficult to determine whether he took this step before Jacob's return from Mesopotamia or some time thereafter. For there is the possibility that Esau's and Jacob's flocks could not subsist together even when the flocks which were potentially Jacob's were still in reality under Isaac's care. The more likely construction to put upon the case would be that Jacob with his large flocks and herds, freshly returned from Mesopotamia, made the problem a critical one. But Esau on his part was by this time resigned to his lot that he yield the preference to his

brother to whom the better blessing had been given, and when a clash like that which threatened between Abraham's and Lot's herdsmen seemed imminent, Esau showed prudence in promptly yielding. The naphshoth betho, "souls of his house," here are the "members" or "individuals of his household." The word 'érets, "land," must be construed as being closely connected with the word immediately following mippenê, "from the face of," and so the words signify "a land far away from," or "where he was far away from" -- to use a freer rendering. To concede that some word like "Seir" had fallen away after 'êrets is therefore unnecessary.7. Apparently Esau, too, under the blessing of Almighty God, had grown enormously wealthy. Besides, these patriarchs were at a very special disadvantage for the present: Canaan was "the land where they sojourned," literally: "the land of their sojournings." Therefore they were only journeying about, utilizing unclaimed pasturage, and yet, no doubt, wealthier than the actual inhabitants of the land. The resulting jealousy of the native inhabitants will have made their position still more difficult. The negative clause of purpose that some languages might use is covered by the infinitive with min -- mishshébheth -- "from dwelling" -- "to allow them to dwell" (K. S.406 h). The expression "from the face of their flocks" means, of course, "in view of their flocks."8. "So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir" means that he chose this land south of the Dead Sea for his permanent home. "Seir" -- or "Mount Seir," since it is such mountainous terrain -- is the original designation of the land. Exactly how this occupation proceeded we do not know. Perhaps several modes of procedure blended into one another. As we suggested in the preceding chapter, a process of conquest may have been involved. As the material of this chapter suggests, intermarriage with native Seirites or Horites figured quite largely in the process. Sometimes intermarriage may have preceded, sometimes it may have followed upon certain stages of the conquest, until the aboriginal inhabitants are eliminated and the Edomite stock has become the dominant factor.(2) Esau's Sons (v.9-14)9-14. This is the, history of Esau, the father of the Edomites, in Mount Seir. These are the names of the sons of Esau: Eliphaz, the son of Adah, the wife of Esau -- Reuel, the son of Basemath, the wife Esau. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam and Kenaz. And Timnah was a concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore to Eliphaz, Amalek. These are the sons of Adah, the wife of Esau. And these are the sons of Reuel: Nahath and Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, the wife of Esau. And the following were the sons of Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the granddaughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: she bore to Esau Jeush and Jalam and Korah.Verse 1 began as does v.9, the difference being that from v.9 onward we have "the history of Esau -- in Mount Seir." What preceded was his history in the land of Canaan. Where in v. Ge 36:1-8 we had only the names of those who in the strictest sense were "sons of Esau," here the same expression is used in the looser sense and takes in the grandsons, at least those of Eliphaz and Reuel and incidentally also Amalek. The grandsons of Oholibamah are not listed. Regard 12a as parenthetical and the summary statement, "these are the sons of Adah," fits perfectly into the picture. The following diagram makes the entire section clear at a glance:(See figure 938)Trying to force history into certain patterns according to which its author was supposed to have written it, Gunkel claims that the author devises twelve patriarchs for Esau as well as for Jacob -- an attempt on Gunkel's part indirectly to prove how history is manufactured by Biblical writers according to preconceived notions. But he obtains the twelve by the omission of Amalek, whom Moses definitely includes in the list. If we note Amalek as belonging among the Edomites (v. Ge 36:12), we can understand how, being the son of a concubine, he may have been discriminated against and how that may have resulted in his separation from his brethren. For

according to Ex 17:8 and Nu 13:29; 14:25 the Amalekites must have held territory much farther to the west. According to Jude 5:14; 12:15 they must once have occupied territory much farther to the north. Ge 14:7 points to the fact that Amalekites had once dwelt much farther eastward, although in this passage the term refers to territory which later was occupied by Amalekites. All of this cannot seem strange if it be borne in mind that all these tribes may have been more or less nomadic in their day.How Strack can claim that the Kenizzites of Ge 15:19 may have sprung from the Kenaz of v. Ge 36:11 is difficult to see in view of the fact that these Kenizzites have a land called after their name already in Abraham's day, five generations before Kenaz was born.In v.9 we have an instance where the name of an individual doubtless is used as a tribal name, for Esau is called 'abi Edom, "the father of Edom," in the sense of "father of the Edomites." Though such a use of proper names indubitably occurs, this use is not to be as freely assumed as is done in critical works.(3) The Edomitish Chiefs (v.15-19)15-19. These are the chiefs of the descendants of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz, the first-born of Esau: chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, chief Korah, chief Gatam, chief Amalek. These are the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. These are descendants of Adah. And these are the sons of Reuel, the son of Esau: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah. These are the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These are descendants of Basemath, the wife of Esau. And these are the sons of Oholibamah, the wife of Esau: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Korah. These are descendants of Esau and these are their chiefs -- that is Edom's.A diagram of the chiefs yields the following result:Sons of Eliphaz Sons of Reuel Sons of OholibamahChief Teman Chief Nahath Chief JeushChief Omar Chief Zerah Chief JalamChief Zepho Chief Shamrnah Chief KorahChief Kenaz Chief MizzahChief KorahChief GatamChief AmalekComparing this diagram with that covering v.9-14, we note that all the descendants of Esau on the former list rose to the rank of "chiefs." We need not find it strange that Amalek should be listed among the chiefs who trace their ancestry to Eliphaz, though he was born of a concubine. But the fifth name "Korah," identical with the last son of Oholibamah as far as name is concerned, does surprise us. It is idle to try to settle speculations such as: did he come into this list by some matrimonial alliance, or is he merely another person of the same name? No one knows. Elaborate conjectures leave us just as much in the dark.But this is the significant thing about this list: it shows how at a comparatively early date Esau's descendants advance to positions of prominence and honour. For 'alluph, "chief," may well mean "chiliarch," "ruler over a thousand," for 'alluph is from the root 'éleph, which means a "thousand." Now, though the idea of "thousand" is not to be pressed, in any case a rather outstanding dignity was involved in the case of those who bore the name; they were men who ruled a "thousand," or "a thousand families." In these lists the mothers are always prominently mentioned, the reason for this most likely being the fact that Edomites attached importance to the line of maternal descent, and yet this fact could hardly point to a matriarchate.(4) The Horite Chiefs (v.20-30)20-30. The following are the sons of Seir, the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah; and Dishon and Ezer and Dishan. These are the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom. And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and the sister of Lotan was Timna. And these are the children of Shobal: Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shepho and Onam. And these are the children of Zibeon: both Ajah and Anah. It was this Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon, his father. And these are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah. And these are the children of Dishan: Hemdan and Eshban, and Ithran and Cheran. And these are the children of Ezer: Bilhan, and

Zaavan, and Akan. These are the children of Dishan: Uz and Aran. The following are the chiefs of the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. These are the chiefs of the Horites in the land of Seir, chief by chief.The object of this section is to show the ones who comprised the descendants of Seir, that other major group which entered into the making of the Edomites; and at the same time to show how these Seirites were of ancient and honourable stock, for they, too, numbered many "chiefs" in their race. Though "Seir" usually designates the land of the Edomites, extending south from the lower end of the Dead Sea to the Elanitic Gulf, here, without a doubt, it signifies a person, the ancestor of the Horites ("cave dwellers"), who occupied the land before the children of Esau overcame them (cf. De 2:12,22). Chori from chor, "cave," is very properly construed to mean "cave dwellers." A diagram of the "Horite chiefs" together with their descendants will show at a glance what the list of v.20-30 offers:(See Figure 942)It appears at a glance that every son of Seir became a chief. There are no others who succeeded in rising to the level of this honour as was the case in the list of the Edomitish chiefs. From this list we also discover that the Anah, who was the father of Oholibamah, was a son of Seir.Trying to identify these names with certain others mentioned in the Scriptures, which are either similar or identical, is seldom safe. So to seek to connect "Lotan" (v.20) with Lot, Abraham's nephew, is utterly impossible (though Procksch does it), for one was descended from Seir, the other from Haran (Ge 11:31). "Bilhan" (v.27) can for the same reason not be identified with Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid.In v.25 beney, "sons," is used where of the two descendants one is a son and another a daughter. The same usage appears in Ge 46:23; Nu 26:8.In v.24 Anah is said to have discovered yemim. The Jews had lost the meaning of the word and so invented the conjecture that it meant "mules" (A. V. and Luther), an idea that may be traced to Jewish antipathy for the Edmonites, whom they by this fiction describe as men tampering with the original purpose of the Creator. The Vulgate already had the correct meaning of the word, which, as K. W. demonstrates, is not farfetched or doubtful. Hot springs, it is claimed, are still found at the point where the ancient pilgrimage route from Damascus crosses the Wadi Hesa, about ten miles southeast of the Dead Sea, and so in Edomite territory.The linguist will be interested in an observation by Skinner to the effect that "the endings -- an and -- on in this list point to a primitive nunation, as contrasted with sporadic cases of mimation in the Edomite names" (cf. Gatam, Jalam).The man "Uz" (v.28) may have given name to the land of Uz from which Job came (Job 1:1). Who knows?The different form of the names in a few instances in the list of 1 Chronicles 1:38-42 may be accounted for on the score that some of these names quite naturally had variant forms.Nothing is said concerning the Edomitish or the Horite "chiefs" to indicate that they ruled successively. Rather, if one notes that they were all children or grandchildren of the same generation, the conclusion becomes, inevitable, as Luther already pointed out, that these "chiefs" held office simultaneously. In other words, Edom was not governed by a long succession of "chiefs" before a long succession of "kings" came to power.(5) The Edomitish Kings (v.31-39)31-39. The following are the kings who ruled over the land of Edom before the ruling of a king for the children of Israel. Now there ruled over Edom Bela, the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And Bela died and Jobab ruled in his stead, the son of Zerah of Bozrah. And Jobab died and there ruled in his stead Husham of the land of the Temanites. And Husham died and there ruled in his stead Hadad, the son of Bedad, the man who smote Midian in the field of Moab, and the name of his city was Avith. And Hadad died, and there ruled in his stead Samlah from Masrekah. And Samlah died, and there ruled in his stead Shaul from Rehoboth-hannahar.

And Shaul died, and there ruled in his stead Baal-Hanan, the son of Achbor. And Baal-Hanan, the son of Achbor, died and there ruled in his stead Hadar, and the name of his city was Pau, and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the granddaughter of Mezahab.Verse 31 is to this day listed by the critics as belonging definitely to the post-Mosaica, i. e. statements written later than the time of Moses. Some merely make their assertion to this effect without troubling to offer proof. So sure are they of being right. K. C. offers laboured proof, but what he offers is ineffectual. For what an unbiased exegete must admit is that the statement is a very natural one for a man like Moses to make if he knew definitely that also the descendants of Israel were destined to have kings in the course of time. To one who remembers besides that Jacob (Israel) and Esau were brothers such a comparison very naturally suggests itself. Now Moses had previously indicated that kings would come of Israel's line (Ge 35:11 cf. Ge 17:4 ff.). In fact, a common meaning for the verb malakh is not only "be king" or "rule," but to "become king." Note how naturally our interpretation fits into the picture when we render: "the following are the kings who ruled over the land of Edom before a king (cf. G. K.129 c) of the children of Israel became king." All claims, therefore, that this list of Edomitish kings, must have been made in Saul's or David's time or even Solomon's are poorly substantiated. In fact, our contention gains added support from the fact that the death of the last king is not mentioned. This could easily be accounted for by the fact that Moses, who was well informed on the subject he treated, mentions the last king as contemporary with the time of his writing. For himself Moses does not know how many additional kings Esau will have or how long it will be before Israel has kings. But it certainly is very proper in a chapter where the rapid development of the Edomites is sketched to show how in the matter of instituting the royal office they outran Israel by many years. If now kings began to rule about the third generation after Esau, that is about a generation after the "chiefs" began to rule or about 1850 B. C., and Moses wrote about 1450, that would seem to allow 400 years for the eight kings of this list. But that offers no grave difficulty. The kingdom may have been established a century later than we suggest. This idea gains support from the fact that "chiefs" and "kings" ruled simultaneously in Edom, as a comparison of Ex 15:15 with Nu 20:14 ff shows. Besides, in those days, at least in the earlier of these four centuries men lived longer. Besides, interregna may have occurred between the kings of this list. For it should also be noted that the line of succession in Edom was not hereditary. Not one of these eight kings succeeded his father. Note what things the following list reveals:Kings of Edom1. Bela -- son of Beor -- his city Dinhabah.2. Jobab -- son of Zeta -- of Bozra.8. Husham -- of the land of the Temanites.4. Hadad -- son of Bedad -- his city Avith.5. Samlah -- from Masrekah.6. Shaul -- from Rehoboth-hannahar.7. Baal-Hanan -- son of Achbor.8. Hadar -- his city Pau.Three of these kings had each "his city," which must mean, his royal city where he established himself as king. Either the other five had no city, or else after one had become king, he continued to use the royal city of his predecessor until his successor in turn shifted to another capital city. The list most clearly shows that not one of the kings was descended from another."Hadar" (v.39) is called "Hadad" in 1 Chronicles 1:50. That, however, by no means identifies him with the Hadad who was Solomon's adversary, 1 Kings 11:14. In fact, this last named Hadad was not a king but only a man "of the king's seed."In v.37 the town "Rehoboth" is followed by the word hannahar, i. e. "of the river." This expression (noun plus the article) almost invariably refers to the Euphrates, unless the connection points to another stream. K. C. therefore places Rehoboth on the Euphrates. Foreign conquerors have sometimes established themselves in a land even if they came from afar. Yet it cannot be denied that in a connection such as this

nahar might refer to almost any stream.Attempts have been made to identify béla', the son of be'or (v.32), with bil'am, the son of be'or (Nu 22:5). Though the names are strikingly similar, the identity is far from likely. Nor is the Jobab (v.33) to be regarded as the same person as Job, whose Hebrew name is 'iyyobh. Even Michaelis already declared this latter view an insignis error.(6) The Edomitish Chiefs -- a geographical classification (v.40-43)We already had one list of Edomitish chiefs in v. Ge 36:15-19. Only a few of the names of that list recur in v. Ge 36:40-43. The cue to the difference between these two lists therefore seems to be found in v.40 in the statement: "These are the names of the chiefs of Esau by clans according to their places of residence (limqomotham)." Dillmann, therefore, seems to be entirely correct in calling the first list of chiefs "historic-genealogic" and our list "geographic-statistic." Then Elah (v.41) may be identical with Elath (De 2:8) on the Elanitic Gulf. Then, of course, all the proper names are place names not personal names, as the following translation shows:40-43. The following are the names of the chiefs of Esau by clans according to their place of residence, name by name: the chief of Timna, the chief of Alvah, the chief of Jetheth, the chief of Oholibamah, the chief of Elah, the chief of Pinon, the chief of Kenaz, the chief of Teman, the chief of Mibzar, the chief of Magdiel, the chief of Iram. These are the chiefs of Edom according to their habitations in the land of their possession. This is Esau, the father of the Edomites.It can hardly be doubted that the last word 'edhom must be translated "Edomites" and not "Edom."A brief explanation as to the so-called sources of this chapter as the critics see them. The following outline will show quite clearly what a problem the critics have on their hands and how little harmonious "the assured results" of criticism are. Skinner's position is covered by the statement that the chapter contains "partly P," for he recognizes the problematic nature of many of the conclusions. Strack says: P: 6-8, 40-43; JE: v.31-39. Procksch: P.9, 6, 7, 40, 41; J: 8, 10-14; 20-28; 31-39. Koenig: P: 7, 9, 31; J: 8, 10-30.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSSource analysis here too is "groping blindly."

CHAPTER XXXVII

10. History of Jacob (chapters 37-50) This portion of the book of Genesis is, without doubt, the most interesting and dramatic of the entire book. The author's skill as a narrator is throughout displayed to excellent advantage. A part of the interest of the narrative lies in the greater wealth of detail. If the author employed available sources, as it seems most likely that he did, his source material, apparently, was more copious the farther he advanced in these early histories. But on the other hand, it seems equally true that the nearer he gets to the events of his own day, the more would his readers desire full information. Moses is now writing history that involves the fathers of the twelve tribes. There is much in this history that the tribes themselves should be acquainted with for their comfort and their admonition. But when we say that the dramatic element begins to predominate more in the narrative, we do not imply that the author injected it. Truth still is stranger than fiction. It was not the author's skill that rendered these tales dramatic. These things actually transpired as they were narrated. The drama involved is practically nothing other than the unusual display of divine providence, which shines forth more brilliantly here than perhaps anywhere else in sacred history. Step for step God's providence watched over the chosen race as it was about to go into the depths of national enslavement. One element of encouragement for these trying days was to be the remembrance of the signal tokens of divine grace experienced shortly before. One very noticeable feature of this "history (toledôth) of Jacob" is the predominance of Joseph practically throughout the entire section. Yet for all that, though he is the mainspring of the movement of the history, Jacob is still the dominant character. We remind of this, for though Joseph is prominent, he is not to be estimated too highly. God never appeared to him as he did to his father Jacob, or to Isaac and to Abraham. Joseph dare not be ranked higher on the level of faith than his forefathers. It is a case of misplaced emphasis to say that "the hero himself is idealized as no other patriarchal personality is -- (Joseph) is the ideal son, the ideal brother, the ideal servant, the ideal administrator." In contact with non-Israelites Joseph surely achieved remarkable prominence, but for the inner, spiritual history of the kingdom of God he does not come up to the level of his fathers. There is another feature of his life which is rather striking and demands closer attention. In a more distinct way than in the lives of his fathers Joseph stands out as a type of Christ. Abraham exemplifies the Father's love who gave up His only-begotten Son. Isaac passively typifies the Son who suffers Himself to be offered up. But in Joseph's case a wealth of suggestive parallels come to the surface upon closer study. Though these parallels are not stamped as typical by the New Testament, there can hardly be any doubt as to their validity. For as Joseph is a righteous man and in this capacity is strongly antagonized and made to suffer for righteousness' sake but finally triumphs over all iniquity, so the truly Righteous One, the Saviour of men, experiences the same things in an intensified degree. Lange lists the details of this type in a very excellent summary. He mentions as prefiguring what transpired in the life of the great Antitype, Jesus Christ, the following: "the envy and hatred of the brethren against Joseph and the fact that he is sold; the realization of Joseph's prophetic dreams by the very fact that his brethren seek to prevent his exaltation by destroying him; the fact that the malicious plot of the brethren results in the salvation of many, however, in a very particular sense for the brethren and

for Jacob's house; the judgment of the Spirit upon the treachery of the brethren and the victory of forgiving love; Judah's surety for Benjamin and his rivalry with Joseph in the spirit of self-sacrifice; the revival of Jacob in his joy over the fact that the son long deemed dead was alive and eminently successful." This angle of the case is beautifully supplemented by Pascal (Pensées, quoted by Delitzsch): "Jesus Christ is prefigured by Joseph: the beloved of his father, sent by the father to his brethren, the innocent one sold by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver and so made their lord, their saviour and the saviour of strangers and the saviour of the world; all of which would not have happened if they had not had the purpose to destroy him, if they had not sold and rejected him. In prison Joseph the innocent one between two malefactors -- Jesus on the cross between two evildoers: Joseph predicts good fortune to the one and death to the other; though both appear alike -- Jesus saves the one and leaves the other in his just condemnation, though both stood charged with the same crime. Joseph begs of the one who is to be delivered to remember him when he is restored to honour, and he whom Jesus saves asks to be remembered when He comes in His kingdom." The ways of divine providence could hardly be stranger, and God's guiding hand in history is marvelously displayed to the eyes of faith. 1. And Jacob dwelt in the land of the sojournings of his father, in the land of Canaan. This verse is plainly a transition verse and at the same time it constitutes a contrast to the preceding chapter. In every preceding instance the words 'elleh toledoth, which open v.2, have stood at the head of each of the preceding nine major divisions of Genesis. Consequently, v.1 cannot be brought in as an introductory verse to this toledôth or "history." It does, however, remind us that as Esau (chapter 36) settled in the land of Seir, so Jacob after the separation of the brethren continued in the ancestral territory, a sojourner, where his father had sojourned. Nothing was more natural than that he, who continued the line of promise according to God's choice, should also settle in the land of promise. By this word, furthermore, it is indicated that Jacob had actually left the land east of the Jordan, where he had first stayed after his return from Mesopotamia, and had come to the land west of Jordan, which alone ranks as the land of Isaac's sojourning -- and for that matter to the southern part of this land, where Isaac had been found, namely the vicinity of Hebron, Beersheba and the region toward the west, bordering on the Philistine land. Isaac, though his death was reported proleptically Ge 35:29 continued to live for perhaps another twelve years and so shared in Jacob's grief over Joseph. But at this point Jacob supersedes Isaac and begins to carry on the history of the chosen race. (1) Joseph sold into Egypt (37:2-36) 2. This is the history of Jacob. Joseph at the age of seventeen years was doing a shepherd's work among the flocks together with his brethren, and in fact he was a servant together with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, the wives of his father; and he brought the report about them, which was evil, to their father. Strictly speaking, the caption, "History of Jacob," that is set down as a heading for the chapter, should appear after v.1 with the subhead that we have set above v.2. In any case, it is the author's own title and so at the same time an indication of the beginning of the last subdivision (compare remarks on Ge 2:4). Consequently, to label this section, "The Story of Joseph," (Meek) indicates complete disregard of the authors's mode of treatment of this section and labels his point of view as trivial or unimportant. One reason why critics so consistently ignore Moses' own divisions of the book seems to be, because to let the author's plan or outline emerge clearly would display what they deny -- the manifest unity of the entire book.True, from our point of view, it may seem strange to begin Jacob's history with details about Joseph's experiences. But does not the father's life express itself in his sons? First we are told Joseph's age at the time under consideration: he was seventeen years old.

Next we are informed as to his occupation: "he was doing a shepherd's work" -- ro'eh; literally: "he was shepherding." He was not with the cattle but "among the flocks," tso'n -Kleinvieh. In this work he stood on the same level as his brothers who shared the work with him. The next "and" (we), as is frequently the case, offers more specific details, as we should say, "and in fact" (und zwar). He had not yet advanced to the point of being a master shepherd; he was merely "a servant" (na'ar commonly bears this meaning -- see B D B, p.655, 2a). The following phrase "with the sons," etc., would seem to indicate that these brothers of his perhaps were also still learning how to be competent shepherds. "The sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah" are his companions because in point of age they stand nearest to Joseph, hardly because of Joseph's humility in associating with those who were less proud than the sons of the regular wife, Leah. For sons of concubines ranked but slightly inferior in social standing. Joseph was associated with just these brethren more by virtue of his father's choice than by his own. Bilhah's sons were Dan and Naphtali (Ge 30:6-7); Zilpah's, Gad and Asher (Ge 30:9-13)."The report about them" (dibbatham -- with object suffix as a kind of objective genitive -- "their report" -- from a root analogous to the Arabic signifying "to flow along slowly," "to glide along") Joseph brought to his father. Not his own observations so much as what others said. No doubt Joseph recognized on the strength of what he saw that this report was the truth. In any case, the report was "evil." Joseph's motive in conveying this report seems to have been good. He was the one son who had spiritual kinship with his father. He had nobler ideals than did his brothers. He felt that it behoved Jacob to know these reports. But Joseph hardly did wisely in telling what his brothers were said to do. It seems quite likely that a trace of spiritual pride tainted what may otherwise have been prompted by a good motive. For a youth to know himself better than his brothers and not to feel a measure of selfexaltation is hardly thinkable.3, 4. Now Israel had come to love Joseph most of all his sons, because he was the son of his old age and he made him a long-sleeved cloak. But his brethren observed that their father loved him more than all his brethren and they hated him and were not able to speak peacefully with him.The perfect 'ahabh must express something that has come to a conclusion; consequently, "he had come to love" as a result of contact over many years -- rather than just simply he loved. "Israel" stands first for emphasis to indicate how he stood related to the brothers between whom a tension was growing. The primary reason assigned for Jacob's preference of Joseph is "he was the son of his old age" (zequnîm, plural of condition, to mark the various aspects involved in such a situation). It is commonly to be observed that children of old age enjoy preference and are pets. Here other factors contributed to make this preference more pronounced. The whole narrative indicates that not one of the sons came as near to the father's spiritual stature as Joseph did. The outward distinction which the father bestows upon this son is "a long-sleeved cloak," kethóneth passim. The kethóneth is the undergarment or tunic, which usually was sleeveless -- a thing of about knee-length. But passim means "ankles" or "wrists." Consequently, this tunic was sleeved and extended to the ankles. It was not, therefore, a garment adapted to work but suitable to distinguish a superior, or an overseer. By this very garment the father expressed his thought that this son should have pre-eminence over the rest. For Reuben had sacrificed his claim by incest. Simeon and Levi were poor candidates for leaders because of their headstrong cruelty. Besides, the converted we'asah means rather "he used to make" -- when one such cloak was worn out the father furnished another. Such distinction by the father was hardly wise. Luther's translation bunter Rock (like the A. V.'s "a coat of many colours") was a shrewd guess on the translator's part who confessed: "I confess freely that I do not know what the term means." But he surmised that the

father wished to designate the son as a ruler and used bunter Rock because the garments Of the ruling classes were more brilliant in colour in his day. 4. This ill-advised distinction bestowed upon this young brother moved the others to actual hatred. They would hardly ask the question, Does he deserve this preference? but would be stirred by the petty jealousies characteristic of those of one family. Besides, Joseph's dreams created additional antipathy. This verse describes the situation after it had developed to the point where they were no longer "able to speak peaceably with him." In dabberô the direct pronominal object had taken the place of a dative object, like our "bespeak him" in place of "speak to him" (K. S.22). In leshalom le is dative of norm (K. S.332 q): "according to peace." This translation is to be preferred to the one which renders "greet him,"' because the latter calls for the verb sha'al rather than for dabhar.5-8. And Joseph dreamed a dream and told it to his brethren with the result that they hated him still more. For he said to them: Do hear this dream that I dreamed. Look, we were binding sheaves in the midst of the field, and, look, my sheaf rose up, and even remained standing, and, look, your sheaves gathered around it and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brothers said to him: Dost thou really expect to be king over us? or dost thou at least expect to rule over us? And they hated him still more for his dreams and for his words.The narrative shows how the hatred already engendered was fanned to a brighter flame by successive events. Joseph's dream need not be regarded as divinely inspired. Nothing shows that it originated in any other way than do other dreams. It may have in part grown out of the ambitious thoughts of the young shepherd. It certainly was divinely controlled so as to express what afterward actually transpired. It need not be thought of as involving a reference to Joseph's work as grain regulator. For binding sheaves is work that stands far removed from grain conservation. Besides, it is not a prophetic dream such as prophets have. The Lord was not informing Joseph concerning things that would come to pass, yet God so controlled the dream that later it was seen to be in conformity with fact. The expression, "they hated him still more," involves the familiar Hebrew idiom: "they added still to hate him" -- the chief verb in Hebrew being actually rendered as an adverb in English. An instance of hasty inference and unwarranted critical alteration of the text appears in the striking out of 5b after the example of the Septuagint. It is claimed by Procksch to be premature because "he has not as yet said a thing." But does not 5a ("he told it") cover in a summary form what Joseph said; and cannot the result of such telling be reported before the dream is told?6. "And he said" (wayyo'mer) must mean "for he said" or "namely he said," for the details of the dream mentioned in v.5 are to be given. The opening statement shows the eager interest or the enthusiasm the dream had roused in the lad's heart, who well saw what the dream implied. In his enthusiasm Joseph begins: "Do hear (shim'ûna' -- literally: hear, pray') this dream that I dreamed."7. Three times hinneh, "behold," occurs in the sentence. We have rendered it "look." The word betokens not so much surprise as eager interest. Joseph none too wisely grows quite enthusiastic over the prospect of rising above his brethren. The dream involves a situation common enough in the family life of those days. In harvest time all able-bodied men were in the field. Though partly nomadic in its habits, Jacob's family was also partly agricultural, as was Isaac's (cf. Ge 26:12). But, for that matter, such groups are found in Palestine to this day, partly nomadic and partly agricultural in their pursuits. Criticism here, as usually, misconstrues the statements in favour of two different viewpoints originating from two distinct sources.Now what happened in the dream was simply this: the sheaves that had been tied lay about in the field as usual. Perhaps all brothers had started binding simultaneously. Each had just tied a sheaf when Joseph's rose up and also "remained standing" (nitsabh -- Nifal from

yatsabh). Then the sheaves of the others gathered around this one and "made obeisance" -- a verb used of any token of respect to a superior.8. The meaning of the dream was so very transparent that the brothers catch its import at once. The construction which reinforces the verb with the absolute infinitive (malokh timlokh and mashol timshol) in this case is expressive of their indignation. Literally they say: "Being king wilt thou be king?" and "ruling wilt thou rule?" We feel that the translation: "Dost thou really expect to be king over us? or dost thou at least expect to rule over us?" just about reproduces these sentiments of theirs. The "at least" that we have inserted in the second member of the question grows out of the fact that from "being king" to "ruling" the idea is stepped down very noticeably.In v.7 the hinneh with the perfect qamah merely makes the statement vivid (K. S.131). Hinneh, with the imperfect tesubbénah makes a historical present, marking the act as not brought to a conclusion (K. S.158). Though Joseph has had only one dream according to this report up to this time, yet (v.8, conclusion) they hated him "for his dreams" (plural). This construction apparently involves a kind of generalization: because he was dealing in such things as dreams (K. S.264 c).9-11. And he again dreamed a dream and told it to his brethren, and he said: Look, I have again dreamed a dream; and, look, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were making obeisance to me. And he told it to his father as well as to his brethren. And his father sharply rebuked him and said to him: What dream is this that thou hast had? Shall we indeed come -- I and thy mother and thy brethren -- to make obeisance to the earth before thee? And his brothers were envious of him, but his father bore the thing in mind.The Hebrew uses an expression which we would deem redundant when it says: "he again dreamed another dream." To us this would seem to indicate a third dream. The Hebrew regards it as a strong expression that the dream was actually another one. Caution and discretion should have taught Joseph to keep silence about this dream in the presence of his brethren, for he must have noticed how the former dream had displeased them. This indiscretion gives us cause to think that a secret pride possessed Joseph. The double hinneh ("look") used in the telling of it shows how the thought suggested by the dream personally pleased Joseph. The dream as such is typically a dream: impossible things are happening. How else but in a dream could luminaries make obeisance? The participle mishtachawîm is durative -- "they were making obeisance," that is, they were doing it repeatedly.10. Since this verse translated literally begins: "and he told it is his father and his brethren," the second "and" before brethren must be a waw adaequationis (K. S.375 i) meaning "as well as," because we have already been told v.9 that he told it to his brethren. This way of stating the case implies that the previous dream had not been told his father. We then get the impression that the impression created by the second dream emboldened Joseph to venture to tell what in the first instance he had dreaded might incur the father's displeasure. The father could well sense that a secret pride and self-satisfaction prompted the telling and administered a deserved rebuke. Ga'ar means anschreien, "to scream at," and so, at least, he "sharply rebuked him." The father sees what the dream signifies. The numbers coincide so perfectly with Jacob's family. Therefore he interprets the luminaries to mean, "I and thy mother and thy brethren." The question quite naturally arises: how can the mother, though dead, make obeisance? The simplest answer is that though she was dead she lived in the memory of this son and the father. Besides, who would expect historical accuracy from a dream? Stranger incidents than this have figured in dreams. It is, therefore, unnecessary to say that "mother" must here refer to Leah, who had mothered Joseph since Rachel's death; or to one of the handmaids; or by synecdoche to Jacob and his family in whom Rachel lived.11. To the hatred of v.8 jealousy or envy is now added. For this dream went

beyond the former one. Previously Joseph's supremacy over his brethren was indicated. Now it is the supremacy over the entire family that is suggested. But Jacob, like Mary (Lu 2:19), bore the thing in mind. Strange things seemed to be foreshadowed by these remarkable dreams. In a measure they coincided with Jacob's own purposes, which he had intimated by the special cloak he had been providing for his favourite son. On the whole the folly of parental partiality is only too effectively portrayed.The notion, advanced so positively by Jeremias and accepted as quite likely by such as Skinner, that the eleven stars are a mythical designation of the signs of the Zodiac is really too untenable to be regarded seriously. The signs of the zodiac are twelve. Eleven is not twelve. Very fanciful, too, are the explanations why one of the twelve is suppressed. Then, too, the signs of the zodiac are groups of stars, constellations. Our chapter speaks of single stars. The astral myth theory of patriarchal history is a subjective claim.12-14. And his brethren went to shepherd the flock of their father in Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph: Do not thy brethren shepherd the flock in Shechem? Come, let me send thee to them. And he said to him: Here am I. And he said to him: Go now, look to the welfare of thy brethren and to the welfare of the flock, and report back to me. So he sent him forth from the valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.It does seem a bit strange that Joseph's brethren should venture back to Shechem again after the events of chapter 34. Perhaps the fear of God (Ge 35:5) was still upon the place. Equally plausible is the explanation that these were bold men who sometimes courted danger. Or did these men wish to use the portion of ground their father owned there? (John 4:5). The points set in the Hebrew text over 'eth, the sign of the accusative, show that the Masoretes had misgivings about retaining the word. Yet we cannot see why. 13. Israel himself is not entirely at ease about the venture. The question asked of Joseph is a characteristic Hebrew way of making a positive assertion: he knows they are "shepherding" (ro'im, plural participle from ro'eh) the flock there. He desires to send Joseph because he knows he can (Leviticus 27:5). So this price fits well for Joseph who was seventeen. The average price of a slave of full physical maturity was thirty shekels (Ex 21:32). For the present a brief statement covers the ultimate destination to which Joseph was brought: it was Egypt. If the road we described before was followed, Joseph may have passed quite near to his father's house at Hebron. But of all this we know nothing.29, 30. And Reuben returned to the cistern and, lo, Joseph was not in the cistern; and he rent his garments. And he returned to his brethren and said: The lad has disappeared; and as for me, whither shall I go?The statement that Reuben "returned" (wayyßshobh) is sufficient indication that Reuben was absent at the time of the sale. Perhaps he had intentionaly gone away to allay suspicion as to his further purposes. It is just as likely that the other brothers purposely disposed of Joseph during the absence of the first-born, lest he again interfere. We can well imagine Reuben's consternation as he comes to the pit by himself with none of the others near and finds it empty. His grief expresses itself in the conventional fashion by the rending of the garment, seizing the inner garment, the tunic, at the neck and rending downwards a few inches. Thoroughly alarmed, he returns to the brethren with the cry, "the lad has disappeared," literally 'eynennu, i. e., "is not." Their lack of surprise will soon have made him aware of the fact that they themselves had disposed of him. His further cry, "as for me, whither shall I go?" shows his complete bewilderment. Shall he attempt a rescue? Shall he hasten home? Shall he call a rescue party? To translate: "And I, how can I go home" (Meek) is too specific a limitation.31-34. And they took Joseph's cloak, and killed a goat and dipped the cloak in the blood. And they sent the long-sleeved cloak and had it brought to their father, and said: This we found; examine it whether it be thy son's cloak or not? And he examined it and said: It is my

son's cloak. Some wild beast hath devoured him; Joseph has certainly been torn in pieces. And Jacob rent his robe and put sackcloth upon his loins and demeaned himself as a mourner for his son many days.The brothers are resourceful. They seem to be planning at the same time to take revenge on their father for having preferred Joseph. Their resourcefulness lets the cloak be profusely stained with goat's blood. Their revenge thus prepares a cruel shock for the father. Had the father controlled his grief he might have found it suspicious that the cloak was not torn but only stained with blood. We translate wayyabhi'u "they had it brought" -- the third person plural may express an indefinite subject, rendered by a passive; for they certainly "sent" the cloak and did not bring it themselves. The message accompanying the cloak has a certain blunt brutality about it. They did not try to soften the blow.33. Everything works out according to schedule: the father examines the cloak, arrives at the desired conclusion. In fact, he expresses his conviction more drastically than his sons, because of his greater grief: "Joseph has certainly been torn to pieces." Taroph -- pual -- is reinforced by a kal infinitive taraph (K. S.215 d; G. K.113 w). The sackcloth Jacob puts upon his loins was a very coarse garment -- if it deserved to be called a garment, being in the nature of old gunny sacks -- usually worn over the inner tunic. Jacob's greater grief displays itself more fully: Yith'abbel, a hithpael, should be rendered as a reflexive: "demeaned himself as a mourner."35, 36. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, and he refused to let himself be comforted, and said: No, for I shall go down in grief to my son to Sheol. So his father bewailed him. But the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh's, captain of the bodyguard.The cruel device of the brothers succeeded too well. Jacob's grief proved excessive; he was simply inconsolable. Alarmed and prompted by a feeling of guilt, the sons without exception sought to administer comfort. How hard it must have been for them and how hypocritical it must have sounded to them! His daughters joined them in these efforts -- "daughters" including daughters-in-law and daughters born later than Dinah. But the grief was too deep; they had not realized how deep the love was. Jacob anticipates to die of his grief and so to go to where his son has gone, to the afterworld, i. e. "to Sheol," where all go after death. It is visualized as being below, as higher things are visualized as being above. Yet this does not warrant attributing to the Hebrews the conception that Sheol actually "lay beneath the surface of the earth," even though the verb yaradh ("go down") is used in reference to it. Still less tenable is the view that the conception of Sheol is derived from Babylonian sources. Israel and Babylonians both drew upon a fund of original tradition, which Israel retained uncontaminated. 36. For preliminary information we are apprised of the name and the official position of Joseph's master. "Potiphar" is traced (K. W.) to the Egyptian word signifying "he whom Ra (the sun god) gave," a typically Egyptian proper name. Though married, he is a saris, i. e. a eunuch. Besides, he is "captain of the bodyguard," sar hattabachim, i. e. "captain of the slaughterers."On the chapter as a whole criticism claims that it offers some of the plainest proof of duality of sources, mostly J and E, with a slight admixture of P. The following supposed doublets are stressed: two dreams, or two occasions for the hatred of the brothers: the cloak and the dreams; the efforts at liberation by Reuben vs. those of Judah; Ishmaelites vs. Midianites, etc. Procksch, as usual, has two separate stories to which he gives two different titles, viz. a. the Sale of Joseph; b. the Treachery. In some instances radical changes of the text are made in order to secure the needed evidence. We believe our interpretation has shown the futility of these, misconstructions. Life is manysided. When the writer shows this manysidedness, he simply proves himself to be a shrewd observer. The fictitious writers of criticism, E, J, and P, are never able to see or to record more than one side

of an event -- an unheardof narrowness!To conceive of the narrative as a Hebrew version of the Tammuz legend is simply a farfetched vagary.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThere are, no doubt, many points of view from which the preacher may approach this chapter. Lest it be overlooked, we should like to suggest first that method of treatment that lays emphasis on the providential factors -- Divine Providence in the Early Years of Joseph's Life. One must at the outset limit himself to the matter found in the chapter, because so many indications of providence occur throughout the rest of Joseph's life. In this chapter the following providential features stand out: the father's godly influence; the warning example of the wicked life of the brothers; the strong encouragement of the double dream; the sparing of Joseph's life when his brothers had determined his death; the selling into Egypt, the land of destiny for Joseph and for Israel. An entirely different approach to this chapter, or more specifically to the part v. Ge 37:1-28, would be the evaluation of Joseph as a Type of Christ. We have indicated above the major items involved. Again only those features could be treated which the text offers. Though v.1-28 be utilized, v. Ge 37:36 ought to be added, because it gives occasion to introduce the thought: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

2. The Danger that threatened Jacob's Sons (Chapter 38) He that has made up his mind that since Joseph's story was treated in the last chapter, chapter 38 must needs continue the story, will find this chapter out of place. The heading Ge 37:2 showed that "Jacob's History" is being considered. Our portion under consideration shows a very definite angle of Jacob's History. Jacob's family was a minority group. For the present, no matter how strongly Jacob's sons may have believed in the divine destiny of their family, they were running grave danger of being submerged by the Canaanite element, making matrimonial alliances with them, adopting Canaanite ideals of life, and so being ultimately absorbed by this dominant element. For it is to be observed repeatedly that, though the Canaanites were already far inferior to Israel morally, they were very amiable and ready to establish closer contacts with the descendants of Abraham. Realizing this, we can the more readily see why a sojourn in a land like Egypt was a necessity from the Lord's point of view. For the Egyptians of old were noted for their aversion to strangers, especially to shepherds (Ge 46:34). We are struck at the same time by the rhetorical skill of the author who makes this chapter serve the purpose of letting us feel the lapse of time after the sale of Joseph. The events recorded in the chapter show a decline to a low moral plane. Things positively offensive to good taste are here recorded. But every attentive reader will have to admit that the manner of relating these events is calculated to produce a deeper abhorrence of sin. It is just as true to state that a remarkable impartiality pervades the entire account. Israel's past was not glorified at the expense of truth. Add to this what Luther emphasized, that these records that show the grievous faults of God's weak saints and the forgiveness they received are of great comfort to all poor sinners of our time. 1-5. And it came to pass at that time that Judah went down away from his brethren and pitched his tent near a man of Adullam, whose name was Hirah. And there Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite man whose name was Shun, and he married her and went in unto her. And she conceived and bare a son and he called his name Er. Again she conceived and bore a son and she called his name Onan. Even once more she bore a son and she called his name Shelah. It happened at Chezib that she bore him. Is there a strict sequence of time between chapters 37 and 38? It seems so. "At that time" would mean: just after Joseph had been sold into Egypt. We need not assume that only the climax of the event recorded in this chapter took place after the sale of Joseph (Strack, and many from Augustine down; also Luther). For about twenty-two years intervene between the sale of Joseph and the settlement in Egypt (13 years till Joseph's promotion plus 7 years of plenty plus 2 years of famine). Judah has time to marry, to have a son whom in his seventeenth year he gives in marriage; to have a second son whom in his eighteenth year he gives to the same wife; and two years remain for the rest of the events of this chapter. Then the items: involved fit closely together: Judah departs from his brethren in vexation over their treatment of their brother Joseph and over their hypocrisy in the sight of their father. At least some such reason for his going "away from his brethren" (me'eth echaw) is possible. His next step was wayyet 'adh ish -- yet shortened imperfect from natah, "to stretch" or "bend." This verb is to be considered as used absolutely, omitting the common object "tent," and so meaning "he pitched" (his tent), or else in the sense of "bend," i. e. "turned aside to a man of Adullam." K. W.

suggests both possibilities; commentaries waver; the result is about the same in either case. Judah does approach more closely to a Canaanite man, who appears to have been friendly and welcomed the approach. "Adullam" lay in the western part of the later territory of the tribe of Judah, very likely in the foothills, the Shephelah. In place of a relative clause a co-ordinated clause is preferred: "his name Hirah" for "whose name Hirah" (K. S.351 a). 2. A further contact with Canaanites follows. A man by the name of Shua (a name meaning perhaps "opulence") has a daughter, whom Judah takes to wife. Whether resentment against his brethren had anything to do with this, or whether easygoing friendship with Canaanites lay at the bottom of it all, is hard to say. Three sons are born of this union. To the first the father gives the name; to the second and the third, the mother. As Whitelaw points, out, the giving of the name by the father is supposed to be an idiosyncrasy of the Elohist; yet this chapter is unhesitatingly assigned to J. "Er," from 'ûr, may mean "watcher" or in a theophoric sense: "God is watcher." Onan may mean "strength." Then by contrast Shelah may mean "weak," "drooping," if the lad was less robust than his brothers. Or the name may also mean "rest." At least the birthplace of the latter is definitely recorded as "Chezib," a town near Adullam. This is mentioned for the definite information of the descendants of Shelah of the tribe of Judah (Nu 26:20), that they might know their birthplace or ancestral city. Since "Chezib," or Achzib, could mean "town of lies" or "Lieham" (K. C., Lugheim), the insertion of its name as suggestive of Judah's deception in the matter of giving Shelah to Tamar is possible, yet hardly seems likely. The allusion would be too subtle. Skinner, intent upon discrediting a good text, labels the wehayah of the last clause as "impossible." The clause being a digression has no waw conversive, simply waw conjunctive (K. S.370 1). 6-10. And Judah procured a wife for Er, his first-born, and her name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the estimation of Yahweh, so Yahweh let him die. Then Judah said to Onan, go in unto thy brother's wife and marry her as brother-in-law, and raise up spring to thy brother. But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his own, so it happened that each time he went in unto his brother's wife he took preventive measures so as not to give offspring to his brother. And that which he did was evil in the estimation of Yahweh, and He let him die also. Whereas Judah had gone out to select as a wife whom he pleased, apparently he acted without consulting his father. Yet Judah selected his son's wife. Our reckoning above displayed that the son must have been comparatively young at the time. Did the father perhaps by an early marriage seek to steer his son clear of Canaanite vices in matters sexual? It would almost seem so. Er's wife's name was "Tamar," a word meaning "palm tree." They that think the Scriptures to be on the same level with folklore generally here attempt to establish a parallel between this story and the Tammuz myth or with the Babylonian Ishtar myth -- the "goddess who slays her lovers" -- but the evidence advanced by way of support of their contention is quite inconclusive. 7. But "Er was wicked in the estimation of the Lord." Specific mention is made of this wickedness. It is the direct cause for the death of Er. The modifying phrase is appended: "in the estimation (Hebrew: in the eyes') of the Lord." From this last phrase alone we should conclude that the wickedness involved called forth the heaviest divine disapproval. We conclude that it may well have been some sexual perversity, for it is mentioned in connection with Er's marriage. This man was therefore guilty, in a special sense, and "so Yahweh let him die." We find in this fact a direct indication of the truth, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," man echo that. rings through the entire Old Testament (cf. Ge 2:17; Psalms 90:7ff.; Pr 10:27). 8. The custom of levirate marriage seems to have prevailed quite universally at the time, as it is known to have been customary among many nations ancient and modern. Judah does not appear as an innovator in

this instance. Levirate marriage implied that if a man had died without leaving a son, the next brother of the deceased, if unmarried, would take the widow to wife with the understanding that the first son born would carry on the line of the deceased, but all other children would be accounted his own. The Mosaic code refers to the custom De 25:5 ff. and made what had previously been a custom among such as the Israelites a divine ordinance. See a further reference in Mt 22:24. The root yabam means "brother-in-law." The Piel of the derivative verb could then be translated "marry her as brother-in-law," the ultimate purpose of course being "to raise up offspring" (Hebrew: "seed") to the brother. 9. Onan knew of this provision and intentionally prevented its realization. Selfishness may have prompted him; he did not care to preserve his brother's family. Greed may have been a concurrent motive; he desired to prevent the division of the patrimony into smaller units. But in addition to these two faults there was palpably involved the sin of a complete perversion of the purpose of marriage, that divine institution. What he did is described as "taking preventive measures." The original says: "he destroyed (i. e. the semen) to the ground." From him the extreme sexual perversion called onanism has its name. The case is revolting enough. But plain speech in this case serves as a healthy warning. Yahweh let him die even as his brother. On wayyéra' see G. K.67 p; on wayyßmeth, G. K.72 f.11. And Judah said to Tamar, his daughterin-law: Stay a widow in thy father's house until Shelah, my son, grow up. For he said: Lest he die too like his brethren. So Tamar went and stayed in her father's house.A peculiar situation obtains here: it rests with Judah, the father-in-law, how Tamar is to be disposed of in marriage; Tamar's temporary home, however, until such disposition is made is her father's house. Social customs prevalent at the time were the norm governing such cases. But Judah is using deceit in counselling Tamar to wait (Shebhi -- imperative from yashabh, "to sit or dwell" -- here "stay"), nor does he directly promise to give her to his son. His unexpressed thought, "lest he die too like his brethren," shows his attitude. He believed Tamar was a woman who brought bad luck. Yet, as we have just been informed, the reason for the death of the first two sons lay in their own sinfulness. Somehow the father failed to see this and instead became obsessed with a kind of superstitious notion, worthy rather of a heathen Canaanite than of a member of the chosen family. Beth is accusative of place where (G. K.118 g).12-14. And quite a number of days passed, and the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died. Then when Judah had recovered from his grief, he went up to his sheepshearers, he and Hirah his friend, the Adullamite, to Timnah. And it was reported to Tamer: Look, thy father-in-law hath gone up to Timnah to shear sheep. So she laid aside the garments of a widow, and covered herself with a veil, and completely disguised herself and sat down at the entrance to Enayim, which is on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she was not being given to him as wife.The Hebrew says, "and the days grew many." We should say, "quite a number of days passed." That does not mean "years," at least not many years. But for a woman destined to be married to the next son it may have seemed like quite a while. Judah's wife dies in the meantime. When he has "recovered from his grief" (wayyinnachem really means "was comforted") it happens to be the time for sheepshearing, a season of general festivity and hilarity. Since they are his own sheep that are to be sheared, he goes to the scene of their shearing to Timnah. This cannot be the Timnah down in the plain, mentioned Joshua 15:10; 19:43, but must be another that lay in the mountains, mentioned Joshua 15:57, as "went up" shows (Keil). Hirah, Judah's Canaanite friend (v. Ge 38:1), goes with him.The report of what Judah is doing comes to Tamar's ears. The course that she adopts as a result perplexes us a bit. She makes calculations that seem to have but one chance in a hundred of

being realized, but just that one chance is sufficient. It seems she is determined to secure offspring if she can, and if her father-in-law has thwarted her, she purposes to thwart him. Mere lust cannot be laid to her charge. On the other hand, her course is far from innocent. It almost seems as if she had calculated on two things, namely that the sheepshearing festivities would lead to conviviality and more generous drinking of wine (cf.1 Samuel 25:36), and, then, one is almost inclined to believe that she had heard of other escapades of Judah. Or, at least, she calculated that the widower would at such a time be peculiarly susceptible. In any case, she puts on the disguise that makes her appear as a harlot -- "a veil," (Hebrew: "the veil," the article of the customary thing for such a case, K. S.299 b), "and completely disguised herself" (Hebrew: "wrapped herself up"). Then she sat down by the wayside, as such did who plied this iniquitous trade. She chose "the entrance" (pétach, not sha'ar, "gate") of Enayim, called also Enam (Joshua 15:34), "which is on the way to Timnah." Here her grievance is recorded: Shelah had grown to be as old as his brothers had been when she was given to them in marriage, and Judah was doing nothing to keep his implied promise. Without a doubt, had any stranger or any other man than Judah approached her, she would have refused them.15-19. And Judah saw her and took her for a harlot, for she had her face covered. And he turned to her by the wayside and said: Look here, I want to go in to thee, for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said: What wilt thou give me for coming in to me? And he said: I on my part will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said: If thou wilt give a pledge until thou send it. And he said: What is the pledge that I should give to thee? And she said: Thy seal, thy cord, and thy staff which is in thy hand. So he gave these to her and went in unto her; and she conceived of him. And she arose and went away and put aside her veil, and clothed herself with her widow's garments. What Tamar had designed actually came to pass. Judah does not appear to very good advantage in this account. He seems to know altogether too well how to carry on a transaction of this sort. Since the veil merely seems to be the customary device to give herself the appearance of coyness, such as persons of this sort may use, it effectually serves the purposes of disguising Tamar. When, besides, it is indicated that Judah did not know that she was his daughter-in-law, we see that Judah surely would not have consciously made himself guilty of incest. 'El dérekh rather means "by the wayside" (K. C.) than "to the way." Some compensation should fall to the harlot's lot. She bargains as others might in such a case. The customary fee seems to have been a kid (Jude 15:1). They that suggest that in classical antiquity the goat was sacred to the goddess of love may have the correct explanation. For Canaanite standards prevail throughout this vile episode. Tamar's answer, "if thou wilt give a pledge until thou send it," is an unfinished statement, an aposiopesis, the omitted conclusion being, "I shall be satisfied." 'Erabhon, traced to a Phoenician source meaning "pledge," went over into the Greek as arrabwn.18. Shrewdly Tamar asks for what she can use as evidence of a conclusive sort, should circumstances make it necessary: seal, cord, and staff. The "seal" (chotham) may have been a ring or even a cylinder seal, such as the Babylonians commonly used. This was always carried around upon his person by the well-to-do man, suspended by the "cord" (pethil); cf. So 8:6. The "staff" may have been like those which, according to Herodotus, the Babylonians carried, having at its head a specially carved figure of "an apple, or a rose, or a lily, or an eagle, or any such thing, for no man may carry a staff without a device," (Herodotus 1:195, cited by Delitzsch). Wattßhar anticipates the result far in advance of the sequence of the narrative. (K. S.369 c). Having achieved her purpose, Tamar lays aside her disguise and arrays herself in the garments of widowhood, which custom demanded.20-23. And Judah sent the kid by the hand

of his friend, the Adullamite, in order to recover the pledge from the woman's hand; and he could not find her. So he asked the men of her place, saying: Where is the sacred prostitute, the one that sat in Enayim by the wayside? And they said: There was no sacred prostitute here. So he returned to Judah and said to him: I could not find her. Furthermore, the men of the place said there was no sacred prostitute there. Then Judah said: Let her keep them for herself, lest we bring disgrace on ourselves. In any case, I sent this kid, and thou wast not able to find her.This is the conclusion of the very regrettable tale. Judah sends his pledge. A certain shame may have led him to choose a less sensitive Canaanite to pay his whorish debts, The Adullamite seems to regard such service as a true token of friendship. It follows that very shortly after Judah's falling into her snare, she was no longer to be seen at that place, nor did she appear as a whore. Compelled to ask for her whereabouts, even the Adullamite tries to give the case a better colour by asking for the qedkeshah, "the sacred prostitute." A qedheshah, considered her debasing of herself a votive offering brought to the goddess of love, whether this was merely an occasional act or whether she was a professional (cf. Ho 4:14; De 23:18). So depraved were also the Canaanite morals. But even such a one the men of the place had not seen. Tamar had apparently waited at Enayim so short a time as to be noticed by no one. Hirah reports his failure to Judah. Judah sees the advisability of letting the matter ride and making no further inquiry, for, surely, by extensive inquiries Judah would have advertised his deed. So Judah, content to have done what lay in his power to redeem his pledge, says, "let her keep them for herself."24-26. It came to pass after about three months that is was reported to Judah: Tamar, thy daughter-in-law, has played the harlot; and, mark, she is also pregnant as a result of her harlotry. And Judah said: Bring her forth that she may be burned. When she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law and said: By the man to whom these things belong have I become pregnant. She further said: Look closely now, to whom do these things belong -- this seal, these cords, this staff? And Judah looked closely and said: She is more in the right than I, for I did not give her to Shelah, my son. And he never again had intercourse with her.Judah is the head of the family and responsible for all that transpires in it. So even his former daughter-in-law, or, as she may also be called, his potential daughter-in-law comes under his jurisdiction. When her condition becomes apparent, it is reported to him as a grave moral offense. We consider kemishlosh as compounded of the inseparable prefix ke-minsh-elosh -- no dagesh forte in the sh, because the consonant is supported only by a Schwa.Judah's verdict may only have been the traditional one for delinquents who were virtually betrothed. It hardly seems right to assume that Judah designed an especially rigorous punishment for her. At this point already Judah's conscience may have stirred: this would hardly have befallen Tamar had he given her to Shelah for wife. But, then, very likely he will have regarded this outcome as a convenient release from the necessity of ever giving her to his youngest son. The Mosaic law fixed the penalty of burning only for the case of a priest's daughter who had become guilty of harlotry (cf. De 22:20-24 with Le 21:9). The usual mode of execution for other cases was stoning. Here then Judah orders, "bring her forth," i. e. out of the house where she naturally would be found. The word "bring forth" has a forensic flavour. The next clause, wethissareph, "and she shall be burned," is final: "that she may be burned." The le before zenunim is a le of relation (K. S.105) -- "she is pregnant relative to her harlotries," in which plural lies an exaggeration. 25. Tamar is completely prepared for this outcome. She has reason to believe that for all his delinquencies Judah will give her fair play. So she takes Judah's three articles of pledge and sends them to him with the statement that she will not conceal the paternity of the expected child:

the owner of these articles is the father. She invites Judah by messenger to look closely whose they be. For "cord," pethil, Tamar uses the plural pethilim, perhaps because of the several strands twisted together to make the stronger cord. Meek translates "seal," chothémeth, as "signet ring." Should the chothémeth actually have been a seal cylinder, this rendering would not fit. This verse begins with a participle and continues with waw conversive with the finite verb (K. S.412n).26. Judah is taken under circumstances that make evasion impossible. Most likely he would not have attempted evasion anyhow. The mysterious qedheshah of three months ago suddenly stands revealed very clearly. Judah is not ignorant of Tamar's guilt in the case, but his own is double: refusal of Shelah and illicit whoredom. He makes a manly confession. To word this confession "she hath been more righteous than I" (A. V.) sounds too much as though two relatively righteous persons are being compared. Therefore we prefer a rendering like Meek's, "she is more in the right than I." Judah seems to see that the guilt involved is not hers, especially since he himself did her the wrong of refusing the son promised as a husband. After such incestuous connection it was right neither for Judah nor for his son to have her. A notice covering this case closes this part of the episode. We cannot support the statement that claims: (the author) "presents Judah's behaviour in as favourable a light as possible, suggesting extenuating circumstances for what could not be altogether excused; and regards that of Tamar as a glory to her tribe." Many of us from the days of our earliest youth in reading this account have had the impression which later years has but deepened that Judah and Tamar are both represented as guilty of a grievous, yea, even a shocking, moral lapse. The extenuating circumstances applying to the cases of both are also truthfully recorded by the sacred writer.K. S. has an unusual translation for tsadheqah min: sie hat ein Uebergewicht yon Momenten der Normalitaet. However, since tsedhaqah, the root involved, means "normalcy," this seemingly cumbersome translation is really quite accurate (K. S.308 b). The expression ki-'al-ken is not to be rendered "for on that account," as many still claim. For, as K. W. has demonstrated, a kind of popular pleonasm is involved -- 'al ken is really only an amplied ki or "for."27-30. And it came to pass at the time of birth, lo, there were twins in her womb. And it happened in birth that one put out a hand and the midwife took it and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying: This one came out first. Then it happened that he drew back his hand, and lo, his brother came out. And she said: How you have forged your way through! And they called his name Perez (forging through). And afterwards his brother came out, upon whose hand was the scarlet thread. And they called his name Zerach.This conclusion of the chapter records what would be of interest to the descendants of Judah, the birth of Tamar's twin sons. In v.28 wayyitten yadh is an instance of an indefinite subject: "one put out a hand" (G. K.144 a). Apparently, the midwife's only reason for using a scarlet thread to mark this one was because it happened to be conveniently at hand and certainly could serve as an identification tag. It naturally would be anticipated that he would be born first. Such, however, was not the case. Of course, to have a hand emerge is an indication that delivery is not about to be perfectly normal. When his brother preceded him who first put out the hand, he was greeted by the midwife with the remark: "How you have forged your way through" -- an expression of wonder, for which the Hebrew idiom says: "How hast thou breached a breach (parßtsta pérets) for thyself" -- a cognate object, not as A. V. has: "How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee," a rendering which like Luther's (solchen Riss getan) involves the idea of causing a serious rent or rupture. The rendering used above is copied from Meek. Again the two verbs (v.29 and 30) wayyiqra' ("and he called") involve the indefinite subject and may be rendered "and they called." "Perez" means "forging through" rather

than "breach." What "Zerah" means we do not know; it hardly means "scarlet."Criticism regards the chapter as a whole "a pure specimen of Yahwistic narration." Phrases that have been discovered as common to the sections ascribed to J and also exclusively used by him are cited as proof for this claim: "evil in the sight of" (v. Ge 38:7,10), "come now" (v. Ge 38:16), "for therefore" (v. Ge 38:26), "Yahweh" (v.7, 10). This exclusive use is purely accidental, however, even as it is unreasonable to suppose that such common stock terms should be stylistic peculiarities. "Yahweh" is used in v.7 and 10 because God is thought of as the covenant God of Abraham, who watches over the moral integrity of His chosen people. HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSEntirely unsuited to homiletical use, much as the devout Bible student may glean from the chapter.

CHAPTER XXXIX

3. Joseph's Imprisonment because of his Steadfastness (39:1-23) Several purposes are served by this chapter, which manifestly directs the current of the narrative into the channel of the experience of Joseph. First of all, we cannot help but notice that in a twofold way the things narrated serve to prepare Joseph for the portion he is to fill later in life. In Potiphar's household he becomes familiar with Egyptian life in general and with the elements of successful business administration. In the humiliation of the prison, however, Joseph is seasoned so that he is later able to endure being placed in an exalted position without danger of falling into conceit. Besides, Joseph's character is purged from dross by the trying experiences of these years. He personally stood in need of a measure of purging, for he, too, had an admixture of pride in his disposition. After being himself purged Joseph is an instrument qualified to work in the direction of purging the character of his brothers. Joseph unrefined would hardly have been suited for his task. At the same time the chapter stands in strong contrast with the preceding one. Judah has been contaminated by the laxity of morals characteristic of the Canaanites. Joseph, who has grown up under the same circumstances, has preserved the ideal of the godly patriarchs. The one falls, the other stands. At the same time the victory of true virtue is so represented as to be a lesson and an encouragement for all that are of a godly mind. Besides, the impressions of the thirty-seventh chapter are confirmed relative to the innocent sufferings of righteous men. They that walk uprightly are not to expect the reward of their righteousness as a necessary and an immediate result. Their lot may at least for a time be entirely out of harmony with their deserts. This valuable lesson, amply confirmed by the experiences of many, is taught very plainly by the early experiences of Joseph. 1-4. And as for Joseph he was brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh's, captain of the bodyguard, an Egyptian man, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. And Yahweh was with Joseph, so that he became a successful man, and he stayed in the house of his master, the Egyptian. And his master noticed that Yahweh was with him and that Yahweh made everything that he did prosper under his hands. So Joseph found favour in his sight and became his personal attendant. Besides he appointed him over his house and gave all his possessions into his hands. The current of the narrative turns back to Joseph. This fact is indicated by the prominent position of the noun yoseph before the verb, a construction somewhat like our, "as for Joseph, he," etc. The repetition of the words, "Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh's, captain of the bodyguard" from Ge 37:36 ties the thread of the narrative back to the previous mention of Joseph and leads us to reflect more on this important personage who figures prominently in the following narrative. It seems very strange that a eunuch should be married as we learn of Potiphar in this chapter. Two possibilities confront us, and the choice between them is difficult. It actually happened in days of old that eunuchs had wives. On the other hand, the term "eunuch" (saris) very likely lost its original meaning and came to signify: prominent court officials. The name "Pharaoh" has been traced down by Egyptiologists to mean "great house" and is used by metonomy for him who has his seat in the great house or royal palace (K. W.). It is just another of the guesses of criticism when these repeated words are said to be a redactional insertion into the J document. In like manner, criticism claims that the apposition, "an Egyptian man," originally

standing in J, makes J refer to this character as a nameless person. The case is much simpler than that. Men who were not Egyptians must also have been employed in state offices in those days. In this instance the fact that Potiphar was of Egyptian blood is brought to our attention. If all this happened in the era of the Hyksos domination, the phrase in question is all the more readily understandable. The closing words, that it was Potiphar who "bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there," complete the tie-up with the last mention of Joseph. Having heard this, we are ready to resume the narrative. 2. It pleased Yahweh to lend His kind help to Joseph from the very outset. Joseph's sufferings were not unknown to Him, and His first token of favour consisted in letting Joseph experience His help. This act is rightly ascribed to "Yahweh," because it was the covenant God who for the sake of the promises made to the fathers and for the sake of the future destiny of this chosen race helped Joseph. Yahweh's favour appeared in this that Joseph "became a successful man." Whatever he took in hand thrived. Besides, to understand what developed later we are told that "he stayed" (literally: "was") in the house of his master, the Egyptian, not in the servants' quarters. Potiphar desired to have this helpful man near at hand and showed his appreciation for services rendered by housing him well. 3. In fact, that Joseph's success was traceable to more than human ingenuity was apparent even to the Egyptian, who in truly heathen fashion ascribed it to Him whom Joseph openly acknowledged to be his God and the source of his blessings -- Yahweh. Joseph, for one, certainly recognized the universal power of Yahweh and never for a moment thought of Him only as a tribal god. The Egyptian, by his admissions, must himself have recognized something of this. Matslíach here has a meaning different from that found in the preceding verse: there it meant "prosperous," here, "making to prosper." The participle 'oseh, which we rendered "all that he did," should actually be rendered "was doing," and so it creates the impression that the projects of the past as well as those which were even then passing through Joseph's hands, all gave evidence of being successful. 4. As the account progresses, we are made to feel the successive and, no doubt, gradual stages by which Joseph moved forward in the process of time: God with him; God prospering him; Joseph living in the Egyptian's house; the Egyptian taking note of Yahweh's blessing; his taking note of the fact that every project of Joseph's thrived; the resultant increase of favour that Joseph enjoys, and so forth. This "favour" (chen) would seem to imply a personal attachment which the Egyptian formed for him as a result of which he "became his personal attendant." For yeshareth (G. K.64 g) means "to wait on." Hitherto the service had been more impersonal; now Joseph must personally attend to his master's wants. We can understand all this. The indolence of Orientals readily allows them to turn responsibility and duties over to competent hands. So finally "he appointed him (hiphqidh) over his house and gave all his possessions (literally: all that was to him') into his hands." In the expression "all that was to him" the relative "that" is implied in a certain conciseness of the original (K. S.337 v; G. K.530 d). Joseph could hardly have risen higher. We gather besides from the emphasis laid upon his advancement as being a very significant one, that the estate of Potiphar must have been considerable. This would follow already from Potiphar's official station as "chief of the bodyguard."5, 6. And so it happened that from the time he appointed him over his house and over all that he possessed that Yahweh blessed the house of the Egyptian for Joseph's sake, and Yahweh's blessing was upon all he possessed in the household and in the fields. So he left all he had in Joseph's hand, and, having him, he had no concern for anything, except the bread which he on his part used to eat. Besides, Joseph was of beautiful form and of beautiful appearance.Still another step in the progression

recorded concerning Joseph's advancement is to be noted: from the time of Joseph's advancement to the point of being in complete charge Yahweh's blessing began to rest on the Egyptian, apparently in noticeable measure. But it was all for Joseph's sake and could be discerned indoors and out-of-doors. God was encouraging Joseph and displaying His sovereign power and goodwill in the eyes of the Egyptians. Yet, strictly speaking, all this was done for the chosen race out of pure mercy, and so it is rightly and consistently ascribed to "Yahweh."6. So all things were thriving better than they ever had when Potiphar himself supervised more closely. Why should he not leave everything in Joseph's hand? The exception mentioned really is no exception. For we cannot follow those who think that Potiphar supervised only his food that it might conform to the Egyptian rules of cleanliness. For if Joseph was so trustworthy in all things, else, why should he have been untrustworthy in the dietetic regulations that Egyptian ceremonies demanded? The having "no concern for anything (lo' yadha' here means have no concern') except the bread which he on his part used to eat" does not mean that he personally supervised the food he ate and its preparation. It does mean he only interested himself in his meals and that only because his appetite drove him to do so.These preparatory statements need to be supplemented by the fact, recorded very briefly at this point, that Joseph was beautiful as to form and appearance -- well-built and good-looking, as we should say. Of only two other men is it said in the Scriptures that they were beautiful -- David and Absalom. The Hebrew idiom says "beautiful in form" and "beautiful of appearance," using the construct relationship (K. S.336 h). We believe that 'itto, "with him" used here is taken in the sense of "having him" (Meek).7-10. And it came to pass after these matters that his master's wife began to observe Joseph, and she said: Lie with me. But he refused and said to his master's wife: See, my master, having me, does not concern himself what is in the house, and all that is in the house he has given into my hand. He is not greater in this house than I; nor has he withheld anything from me except thee, inasmuch as thou art his wife. How then can I do this great evil and sin against God? And it came to pass as she spoke to Joseph day by day, he would not listen to her to lie at her side, or even to be with her.Previously Potiphar's wife had not noticed Joseph. As he was advanced in her husband's favour he came to wear garments in keeping with his station, garments which set off the beauty of his person to advanrage. So she "began to observe Joseph." The Hebrew says: "she lifted up her eyes to Joseph." For the present this only means "observe," not yet, "take a fancy to." But her observation rapidly ripens into desire. Shamelessly she proposes at once "lie with me" -- a euphemism for intercourse. Kerl and others have pointed out that Egyptian women were noted for their lascivious and unfaithful ways. Shikhbah is a stronger form of the imperative from yashabh (G. K.48i).8. Joseph's answer was unmistakable: "he refused." He makes his refusal the stronger by a statement calculated to give pause to his master's wife. There are three major considerations that he presses upon her notice: 1. the unlimited confidence that his master has bestowed upon him -- he concerns himself about nothing; has put everything into Joseph's hands; he is not greater in his own house than Joseph. The baseness of betraying so complete a trust is what Joseph stresses first. The greater the confidence given, the baser the betrayal of it.2. Joseph emphasizes that the woman is withheld from him, for she is Potiphar's wife. She herself may esteem this position rather lightly. It still involves obligations.3. Such a deed would be a "great evil" and a "sin against God." Joseph realizes what the woman may not perceive, that sins against man are sins against God. For Joseph it would have been a sin against Yahweh, who had prospered him. Over against the woman, whose spiritual insight is very limited, he merely calls it a sin against the Higher Being,

Elohim. 10. The shameless hussy was not in the least impressed by any of the higher considerations that Joseph had sought to drive into her conscience. "Day by day" (Hebrew: yom yom) she approached him. She was as persistent in her solicitations as he in his steadfastness: "he would not (Hebrew: did not') listen to her to lie at her side." In fact, he took double precautions: he took care not even "to be with her." The infinitive construction (kedhabberah) goes over into the finite verb construction (shama'), cf. G. K.114 r.11-15. And it came to pass, as was customary, that he came into the house to attend to his work, and there was no man of the men of the household there in the house. And she laid hold of his coat and said: Lie with me. And he left his coat in her hand and fled, going out-of-doors. And it came to pass when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out-of-doors, that she called the men of the household and said to them: Look, he brought us a Hebrew man to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I raised a loud outcry; and it came to pass when I lifted up my voice and cried out, that he left his coat by my side and fled, going out-of-doors.In spite of his careful avoidance of the woman Joseph could not keep out of the house entirely. The difficult expression kehayyom hazzeh, "as this day," seems to be elliptical and perhaps not as "elusive" as Skinner would have us believe. For K. W. has aptly suggested that it may mean "as was customary," filling in the ellipsis: "as this day (shows)." This at least makes very fitting sense. Joseph is intent upon some necessary work. The woman either has arranged that no man be in the house or has carefully waited till such a coincidence occurred. This time her insistence passes beyond mere words: she actually lays hold of his coat (béghedh -- garment,) and repeats her shameless invitation. Joseph must have realized that the situation called for immediate and drastic action and let her have the coat and fled, not merely into the next room but "out-of-doors" (chûtzah -- "to the street").13. This was definitely a case of spurned love but different from all previous instances, for Joseph had left his coat behind and had fled out-of-doors. Now either servants might come and see the coat and raise incriminating questions, or they might also have witnessed the hasty exit of Joseph. In either case Potiphar's wife would stand under strong suspicion. To divert suspicion to Joseph she hastily goes on the offensive by raising an outcry, summoning the men of the household and making the protestation of an outraged innocence. When her passion put her in danger, its unholy flame burns against Joseph without any consideration of what might befall him. In this respect she presents an analogy to Amnon (2 Samuel 13:15-19). By raising an outcry she puts herself in the class of those who are mentioned De 22:24 and have a claim upon innocence by virtue of their outcry. The charge that Joseph at least acted indiscretely in leaving his coat behind overlooks the fact that an emergency had actually arisen, calling for immediate and determined action. The critics here, as usual, construct artificial distinctions: they assign v.8 and 9 (so Procksch and others) to E, where Joseph reasons with the woman. Then our verses (11-15) are said to be J's account, said to be more effective than E's, for J lets Joseph flee in speechless fear. But the critics frequently are more intent upon separating sources or making sources than upon valid exegesis.14. Potiphar's wife seems to refer to him a bit disparagingly when, without mentioning his name, she lets him be the nameless "he" -- "he brought us a Hebrew man." This latter designation of Joseph as "a Hebrew man" ('ish ibri) is the term used for all the descendants of Eber (11:16). "Hebrews," as a term, therefore, included a much broader scope than the later term "Israelites." Only after Jacob's family became a more prominent group, did the later term come into vogue. The term 'ibhrim ("Hebrews") may, therefore, correspond to the Habiri of the Tellel-Amarna tablets, although the incursions coming from the south at that time may have nothing to do with Israelites. Jacob's sons

preferred to refer to themselves as Hebrews in speaking to men of another nationality (Ge 40:15). It is not reported that the men of Potiphar's household made any response when his wife explained to them how she came into possession of Joseph's coat. They may not have been unduly impressed by her protestations of innocence.16-18. And she laid the coat beside her until her lord came home, and she spoke to him after these very words, saying: The Hebrew slave whom thou didst bring to us came in to me to make sport of me And it happened when I lifted up my voice and made an outcry, he left his coat beside me and fled out-of-doors.There is a cleverness about this woman's presentation of the case. The garment by her side looks like a substantial bit of evidence, which she in her indignation has laid aside as positive proof. The verb "to make sport of" (tsa (ch) cheq) is also euphemistic here (v.17) as above in v.14 and implies attempted rape. Above (v.14) the woman includes as potential objects of rape all the other female members of the household. The preposition be with which this verb is construed involves the idea of disparagement of the object involved (K. S.212 f). Wattßnach is Hifil of nûach (G. K.72 ee). 19, 20. And it came to pass when his master heard his wife's words which she spoke, saying: So and so thy slave did to me, that his anger flared up; and Joseph's master took him and threw him into prison, the place where the king's prisoners lay bound. So he lay there in the prison.It is significant that we do not read that the master's anger flared against Joseph. Perhaps it was caused chiefly by the vexation created by the whole bothersome incident. Since he could not disprove his wife's statements -- it would hardly have done to take a foreign slave's word against his wife's -- all that remained was to do the conventional thing and to punish Joseph and incidentally to get rid of a most efficient business manager. This interpretation of the master's anger is confirmed by the further consideration that the customary punishment for adultery was extreme. To be cast into a prison was a relatively light penalty. In view of the things that are yet to develop the writer tells us that the prison was the one used for the king's prisoners. Joseph, the chief servant of the captain of the bodyguard, was as important a man as the king's prisoners. We are not able to say whether the king's prisoners had better treatment than the ordinary run of prisoners or whether such confinement was unusually rigorous. "So he lay there in prison" implies that this new situation in Joseph's life did not soon undergo a change. 'Adhoney as a plural expresses quality rather than number (K. S.304d). The word for prison beth hassóhar, "the house of enclosure," is different from the other Hebrew expressions for the same thing found Ex 12:29; Isaiah 42:7; Jude 16:21. Meqom is unusual, being construct state, though instead of having a noun attached to it, we have a complete relative clause (K. S.337 z; G. K.130 c). The marginal reading 'asirey appears to be the more correct, being a regular noun, whereas the following 'asurim is a participle. K. S. says: this means, the captivi of the king were capti there (235 d).21-23. And Yahweh was with Joseph and made him the object of goodwill and gave him favour in the sight of the overseer of the prison. And the overseer of the prison put all those that were lodged in the prison into Joseph's care, and everything that men were doing there, he was responsible for it. The overseer of the prison himself gave no attention to anything that he had turned over to him, inasmuch as Yahweh was with him, and whatsoever he would undertake, Yahweh would make it succeed.Grievous as Joseph's disappointment was at this second serious setback, Yahweh did not let him go on long without tokens of divine favour. These were the more necessary, humanly speaking, because in this instance Joseph's calamity was certainly not caused by his own sin, as it was in part at least in the first instance. Here a man was very definitely suffering for righteousness' sake. But the gracious God who had covenanted to be with his chosen ones -- Yahweh -- "was with Joseph." This

involves that the comforts of being conscious of God's presence and favour were experienced by Joseph from the outset. This hardly allows us to think of Joseph as being tried severely in his faith and as utterly downcast in Spirit. The first tokens of such divine presence were that Yahweh "made him the object of goodwill," So the Hebrew phrase is meant: "he turned to him goodwill" (chésedh), of course, the goodwill of others. In particular "He gave him favour in the sight of the overseer, (sar -- 'captain') of the prison." God, who turns the hearts of men as the water brooks, was actively interposing in Joseph's behalf. Chinno has a suffix used as an objective genitive: "his favour" -- favour toward him (K. S.37).22. It was not long, apparently, before the overseer of the prison reposed as complete confidence in Joseph as Potiphar formerly had. He must look after the prisoners and their welfare. His administrative ability is recognized, and Joseph puts it to use with the same faithfulness as when he was outside of the prison. He is made responsible for all things done in prison; literally the statement runs: "everything that they were doing (indefinite subject for the participle, K. S.324 n) there, he was the one doing it." Nor was Joseph proving unworthy of such trust. All things that he undertook were proving successful. But all this was not due to Joseph's ingenuity, though that may have been great enough, but to Yahweh's blessing: "Yahweh would make it succeed" -- Yahweh matslíach, "was causing it to thrive."Criticism stands divided on the question of sources. Some say that aside from "a sprinkling of E in variants -- the whole passage is from J." Wellhausen assigned v.6-19 to E. Procksch gives E v.6-10. And they are both reputable critics.Most reprehensible of all is the treatment of this historical narrative as though it were a document of fiction with different trends woven in according to the author's fancy. A similar Egyptian tale has been discovered on the papyrus of Orbiney -- the tale of the two brothers, of whom the one is solicited by his brother's wife but refuses to do such wrong to his brother. Men without due respect for God's Word in some cases assume that because of this similarity the writer of the Genesis account must have woven the Egyptian tale with modifications into his Joseph tale. Such assumptions are groundless. To approach Biblical accounts as though they were borrowed and unreliable, indicates strong prejudices against them. For a thorough refutation of all attacks upon the historical reliability of these chapters we refer the careful student to Koenig's Commentary, where in the section immediately preceding our chapter he thoroughly disposes of these ill-founded attacks.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSSince the element of providence stands out so distinctly in Joseph's life, it would be well to follow through from this point of view and so to treat this chapter as a unit from the point of view of the Mysterious Providence of God. Equally proper would be that type of approach which emphasizes that here the Scriptures offer an excellent example of Suffering for Righteousness' sake. This particular approach, however, may be put under the caption: "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth."

CHAPTER XL

4. Interpretation of the Prisoners' Dreams by Joseph (40:1-23) The things that transpire in this chapter are in preparation for Joseph's deliverance. He was not forgotten and forsaken as he may at times have deemed himself to be. The experiences of this chapter lead directly to Joseph's advancement. 1-4. And it came to pass after these things that the butler of the king of Egypt and the baker offended their master, the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry at his two eunuchs, at the chief of the butlers and at the chief of the bakers, and put them under guard in the house of the chief of the bodyguard, the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. And the chief of the bodyguard entrusted Joseph with them and he waited on them; and they were under guard for quite a while. The chapter connects very directly with what was last narrated. After Joseph had advanced to the position of trust and responsibility where all things were directly under his responsibility, the two high officers of the court incurred the royal displeasure. When it is said that they "offended" their lord, the verb used, hate'u implies actual guilt on the part of each, for literally it means, "they sinned." This verb does not connect with the introductory verb "it came to pass" by the customary "and" (waw). For parallel instances see K. S.370 b. The offending officials, who according to v.2 are the chief of their class in each case, are here merely designated as "the butler" and "the baker." But already the article is practically equivalent to "the chief of." Where critics regard this difference as indicative of two different authors, they are arguing on the assumption that an author would not care to alter expressions for variety's sake. 2. These two officials are designated as "eunuchs" sarisaw, with long "a" -- so-called qamets impurum. We have no means of determining whether in this case the men actually were eunuchs, or whether the term had come to signify merely a royal officer. In any case, we know both from secular parallels as well as from Scriptures (Nehemiah 1:11 -- Nehemiah; and 2 Kings 18:17 -- Rabshakeh, which Aramaic name means "chief of the cupbearers") that at least the butler's office was one of the most influential, and presumably the baker's also. Mashqeh is strictly a participle and means "giving to drink," so "cupbearer." Since such persons had to be trusty individuals not involved in the frequent court intrigues, it is not to be wondered at that other responsibilities were laid upon them and that they constituted a group with a chief (sar) over them. Since v.1 said "they sinned," v.2 very likely speaks of a justifiable anger on Pharaoh's part. To impute their imprisonment to some drunken whim is quite unwarranted. Again, the Jewish supposition that these officials had shared in a plot to poison their lord is too harsh. Such a deed would have called for more than temporary imprisonment. 3. Here it appears for the first time that the superintendent of the prison must have been Potiphar, "the captain of the bodyguard," and that "the prison" (beth hassohar as in Ge 39:20) was in some way connected with Potiphar's palace. So we see that the "keeper of the prison" (Ge 39:21) was this same Potiphar. These prisoners of high station apparently received better treatment than the common run of prisoners. Of them it is said: they were "put under guard" -- not just cast into prison -- "guard," mishmar from shamar, "to guard." By a dispensation of divine providence these two prisoners come to the very prison which is "the place where Joseph was bound." Meqom is construct state before a relative clause. Some light is thrown on the expression "bound" in reference to Joseph if we compare Psalms 105:18. Apparently, Joseph lay bound for a

time when he first came to this prison. Afterward the expression is used as a loose synonym for "confined." 4. Prisoners of such high rank are deserving of special attention. The captain of the bodyguard may have reckoned from the very outset with the possibility of the restoration of these important prisoners. For their sake as well as for his own "he entrusted Joseph with them." Paqadh here really means he "appointed" or "assigned" Joseph to be with them. Besides, Joseph "waited on them" -- shareth for higher forms of service, not like 'abhadh, which covers the menial tasks of a slave. Though yamim means only "days," here it may well signify "for quite a while," for in some cases the expression even means "years." (G. K.139 h). 5-8. And both of them dreamed a dream, each man his own dream in one night, each man a dream with its own particular meaning, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were lying bound in the prison house. As Joseph came to them in the morning be noticed that they were out of humour. So he asked these eunuchs of Pharaoh which were with him in ward in his master's house: Why are your faces so gloomy today? And they said to him: A dream we have dreamed, and as for an interpreter -- we cannot get one. And Joseph said to them: interpretations are God's matter. Pray tell me about it. To tell the truth, it is rather unusual that dreams should be so numerous at this point of the Genesis narrative after the many earlier instances we have encountered; cf. Ge 20:3; 21:12; 28:12; 31:11, 24; 37:5 ff. But to tell about dreams is not a peculiarity of style of one man, as E. Why should J and P not be ready to record a dream if they know of one? The simple solution of the artificial problem created by criticism is just this: Moses wrote of dreams as they had bearing upon his subject and, therefore, as they actually occurred. It pleased God in His providence to let dreams play a more important role in the history of His people at this time. Persons who stand on a lower spiritual level are the ones to whom revelation comes through dreams. Yet there is a difference between dreams and dreams. Vilmar has this to say: "The dreams of this and the following chapter are not to be put on a par with the dreams of Abraham and Jacob, in which the Lord appeared to them. They are phenomena of the natural psyche, the nephesh chayyah, but yet not entirely natural. In a secondary sense they appear as manifestations of God. For God's revelation has a great variety of stages (Hebrews 1:1). They may, therefore, be conceived of about as follows: God arouses the natural soul to be able to discern things, which according to God's purpose are about to transpire." 5. The first statement stresses the fact that these dreams have something in common: they both come on the same night; they both have a meaning. But it stresses also that both have a very distinct difference -- "each man a dream with its own particular meaning." The Hebrew way of putting this is: "each man according to the interpretation of his dream." But pithron, "interpretation," must mean "significance." So we believe our rendering covers the thought in idiomatic English. Stating this now, the story indicates that God so adapted these dreams as to give them this difference. It was not a matter of accident or something that developed in the sequel, namely that these dreams are actually indicative of the things to come. God or the devil may influence dreams, as may also a poor digestion; but in this case it was God. It is not a meaningless repetition here to recount that the ones who dreamed were "the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were lying bound in the prison house." This is repeated to show us that divine providence was reckoning with these details when it roused these dreams in the souls of these men. 6. Joseph takes note that the men are out of sorts or "out of humour." Zo'aphim refers to any state of perturbation, whether more or less severe. We hold that the term is stronger than "sad" yet not quite "excited" (erregt) K. C. For Joseph to notice this at once indicates his kindness in attending upon the men who have been allotted to him.7. He asks these men "with him" ('itto), that is "under his care":

"Why are your faces so gloomy (ra'im -- 'evil') today?" The mode of putting the question betokens kindliness, interest, respect. He asks as one who may be told and will be of whatever service he can. The whole expression "with him in ward in his master's house" recalls that his position really demanded of him to take note even of such a thing as their moods and feelings. They had been "entrusted" to Joseph (v.4), and Joseph took all such commissions very seriously. Therein lay a large measure of the secret of his success. Had Joseph not inquired of them why they were so gloomy, the entire chain of events that followed might have been rendered impossible.8. Their answer indicates what was uppermost in their thoughts. The Hebrew sentence order in the first two clauses throws the emphatic word forward, thus: "A dream we have dreamed, and an interpreter -- none" (cf. K. S.339 h). 'Eyn before 'otho is still construct state (G. K.152 o). The manner of statement of these high officials indicates that on general principles they believed in dreams and would, had they been at liberty, at once have resorted to some acknowledged interpreter. Being under restraint in this latter respect makes them "out of humour" and "gloomy." Joseph's reply is a revelation of Joseph's principles and convictions. The claim, "interpretations are God's matter," would strike a responsive chord in the Egyptians' heart, though they would take it in the sense of some particular god who dominated such activity. Joseph meant: Only the one true God can interpret what he has sent. In the Hebrew the affirmation is made strong by putting the obvious truth in the form of a question which expects an affirmative answer: "Is it not that to God (belong) interpretations?" Joseph well knows, that even though a dream may reveal something, yet no man can detect what it is unless God grant him insight (cf. Da 2:11, 28, 47). Yet he asks, somewhat eagerly: "Pray tell me about it," literally: "tell, pray, to me." More than interest or curiosity lies behind this request. Appearing in the connection in which it does, it strongly suggests that Joseph surmised that under the circumstances God would grant the favour of interpretation to him, and he asks with this in mind.9-11. And the chief of the butlers told his dream to Joseph and said to him: In my dream, see, a vine was before me; and on the vine were three tendrils; and as soon as it sprouted, blossoms had come upon it and its clusters had ripened out grapes. And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them out into Pharaoh's cup and gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.The butler speaks first. This may have been due to the fact that he had no misgivings about his dream, much as it may have puzzled him. His account is very clear as it would be if the dream left a definite impression. But still it is a dream. If certain elements of the impossible are encountered, that will not surprise us: that is a usual feature in dreams. First, there was a vine standing directly before him. Three "tendrils," or "branches" (A. V.) are on this vine. This feature of the dream impressed the butler as an outstanding one. The season for sprouting is upon it, and the very process of sprouting takes place with visible progress before his very eyes. The quick succession of the ensuing steps in the process is indicated by unconnected perfects after khephorßchath -- "as it was sprouting" ('alethah -- "there had come up"; hibhshilû -- "they had ripened out" -- K. S.119). Blossoms develop into grapes, which appear in complete clusters, which in turn are ripe almost on the spot. At this point the butler finds Pharaoh's cup, no doubt a beautiful example of the goldsmith's art, ready in his hand. While the grapes still hang on the vine, he takes them and presses them out into Pharaoh's cup and then proceeds to hand the cup to Pharaoh, the final assumption being that with all these accelerated processes involved, by the time the cup was in Pharaoh's hand its contents was the customary wine. The whole makes up a dream just as fantastic as those which every man has dreamed many a time.Certainly, the deduction that the kings of ancient Egypt drank only fresh grape juice is

exceedingly farfetched. Archaeological conclusions are not based on dreams as source material. The claim of some that Moses slipped up on a matter of archaeological accuracy has since been dropped. The monuments of earlier days show various drinking utensils, men treading the wine press, men drinking wine to excess, even drunken women (Delitzsch). The Scriptural references, therefore, referring to Egyptian vine culture are very much in place (Psalms 78:47; 105:33; Nu 20:5). Hengstenberg has given the subject thoroughgoing treatment in Die Buecher Moses und Aegypten, in the first chapter. 12, 13. And Joseph said to him: This is the interpretation of it: the three tendrils stand for three days; yet three days and Pharaoh will lift up thy head and restore thee to thy position; and thou wilt hand Pharaoh's cup to him, according to thy manner when formerly thou wast his butler.Luther suggests that at this point, immediately upon hearing the butler's dream, Joseph sought privacy and approached his God in prayer, as Christians are wont to do in all things in their daily life. We cannot think of Joseph as forgetting or overlooking prayer after what he had just said to the butler. God grants Joseph to discern the interpretation of the dream with perfect clearness. Therefore we see no wavering or uncertainty on Joseph's part. He seizes upon the essential features of the dream that are now, after the interpretation of the dream, seen to stand out all the more clearly: three tendrils, the days; in three days restoration to former position and duties. Whatever parallel from heathen antiquity may be cited for tendrils signifying days, all such bear at best only an accidental similarity and never could have in any case made an authoritative interpretation possible: The expression, "lift up thy head," is idiomatic and takes its meaning from its connection. Here it must refer to putting an end to the butler's gloom, when he had hung his head. A parallel thought is found Ge 4:6, 7. A parallel case 2 Kings 25:27.14, 15. Only thou wilt remember me by thyself when it goeth well with thee, and do thou, I pray, show kindness to me and do thou bring me to Pharaoh's remembrance and do thou bring me forth from this house. For I was of a truth stolen from the land of the Hebrews; and here too I have done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon.Usually the translations give a different turn to the first words of v.14 than the original allows for: they make the perfect a precative -- an impossibility -- "but think on me" (A. V.). Ki'im -- "only." The perfect of zekhartßni is, indeed, used in a futuristic sense: "thou wilt remember." The thought then is: everything will again be with you as it formerly was, except that from time to time "thou wilt remember me by thyself." This will happen when he is alone by himself and his thoughts revert to these unpleasant prison years. Then, when it "goes well" with him, the contrast may serve as a reminder, and the butler will be in a position to "show kindness" to Joseph and to bring his case to Pharaoh's attention. The perfects ('asíthi and hizkartßni) are converted and so become hortative or precative futures.15. If a prisoner lays claims to liberation, he must offer some explanation for his right to be liberated. Joseph covers both the more remote past as well as the more recent. He came to Egypt, he says, having been "stolen from the land of the Hebrews." That should appeal to the butler: Joseph has done no wrong; wrong was done to him. That accounts for his presence as a Hebrew in the land of Egypt. The rest of his claim is that here in Egypt he has "done nothing that they should have put" him "into the dungeon" (here bor, i. e. "pit"). The whole explanation bears the stamp of verity. It is not too brief or so vague as to lead to the supposition that something is being suppressed. It is not so lengthy as fictitious explanations are liable to become in an effort to achieve plausibility. It bears all the earmarks of truth. "Land of the Hebrews" -- a fitting expression, not an anachronism, for "Hebrews were all the inhabitants of Palestine of whatever race, who spoke the Phoenician -- Canaanite -- Hebrew tongue" Bailey and Kent, History of the Hebrew Commonwealth, p.414.The

critics stress the verb "stolen" at this point setting it over against "sold" (Ge 37:28). This is supposed to be a wry strong proof for the different tales of J and E. Procksch says: "One ought to see into the fact that stealing and selling are two different things." However, the case is quite simple. If a great injustice is done to me by selling me into slavery, I am justified in calling that: stealing me, for that is what it amounts to. One ought to be able to see into that fact also. The only possibility the critics would allow for is that Joseph tells exactly what transpired. Of course, the critics cannot tell what transpired. For them there are two unreconciled and unreconcilable accounts in this story -- J's and E's. But apart from that, they fail to see Joseph's charity, which refuses to incriminate his own brothers, guilty as they are. He merely says in a general way that a great injustice was done him. He may in view of the underhanded way in which the transaction was carried through by his brothers well say that he was stolen.16, 17. When the chief of the bakers saw that he had interpreted something promising, he said to Joseph: I too had a dream, and in my dream there were three baskets of white baked goods upon my head; and in the top basket there was some of every sort of Pharaoh's food -- handiwork of the baker -- and birds were eating them out of the basket upon my head. From one point of view the chief of the bakers could hardly be blamed for expecting a favourable interpretation of his own dream, for there surely was at least something of a striking similarity between his dream and that of the butler. Both had the man who dreamed busied with the things relating to his former office. Both had the element of three prominently figuring in them. Now the butler had heard "something promising" (Hebrew: tobh -- "good"). The baker tries his luck, 'ani emphatic. He tells of the three baskets -- no doubt one on top of the other -- with chori in them. This is best taken as coming from the root chur, meaning "white" -- here "white baked goods" -- not "open-work." The top basket had a variety of "some of every sort of Pharaoh's food -- handiwork of the baker." From this top basket birds did eat. Now all this had nothing unusual about it, as was the case in the butler's dream. For baskets were commonly carried on their head by men, though not exclusively by them, as Herodotus claimed. And birds are liable to be especially bold in a land where, as was the case in days of old, no beast or bird was molested. But one thing the baker failed to notice, which is really one of the outstanding things of the dream and which was really ominous: he was unable to drive the birds off; they ate unmolested.18, 19. And Joseph answered and said: This is its interpretation: Three baskets stand for three days; yet three days and Pharaoh will lift up thy head from off thee, and hang thee on a tree, and birds shall devour thy flesh from off thee.God enables Joseph to discern the distinctive feature of this dream and to interpret very definitely and correctly. Three days are signified by the three baskets. But now a very radical difference: "lifting up the head" (nasa' ro'sh) must have an entirely different meaning because it is followed by "from thee." That must mean decapitation, a common form of capital punishment in Egypt. This is to be followed by hanging on a "tree", or "wood," 'ets, a less common mode of punishment. Then will the birds of prey be able to eat his flesh from off him. Whether this interpretation, which reads rather like a sentence than like an interpretation, was offered with all possible sympathy, or spoken bluntly and harshly we cannot know. If the baker had been a wicked fellow, the latter is the more likely. But judging by Joseph's kindliness, we are rather inclined to favour the view which holds, that he broke the unwelcome news as kindly as he knew how. The writer says nothing on this score so as not to detract from major issues.20-23. And it came to pass on the third day, Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a banquet for his courtiers, and he lifted up the head of the chief of the butlers and the head of the chief of the bakers amongst his courtiers; namely, he restored the chief of the butlers to his

butlership, so that he again placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand; but the chief of the bakers he hanged, as Joseph had interpreted for them. But the chief of the butlers did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.As usual, an important step in the narrative is introduced by wayhi, "and it came to pass:" The significant "third day" happened to be "Pharaoh's birthday," yom hullédheth, the latter form being infinitive Hophal (G. K, 69 w) and is used as an attribute: "day of his being born" (K. S.227 b), the sign of the direct object being retained before the noun Pharaoh though construed with a passive verb (K. S.109). Royal birthdays were celebrated by "banquets" (mishteh -- a "drinking") and by amnesties, if the king was so minded. Both are common features of antiquity for royal birthdays at least for the Ptolemaic period according to the Rosetta stone. The ones invited are the "courtiers," strictly 'abhadhaw, "his servants." The play of words on "lifted up the head" is maintained, and the difference in the use of the phrase is at once adjusted. The one is restored to his "butlership," mashqeh, literally "drink" but by metonomy here the office. The fuller description of his reinstatement shows him again placing the cup in Pharaoh's hand. The other courtier is hanged. Joseph's interpretation of the dreams stands justified. Only the immediate sequel is disappointing: the butler did not "remember," he "forgot." This cannot have been an accidental forgetting. The thought of his promise must have kept recurring, but it was put off either for a more convenient season or because the butler just was not a man of his word. This surely was a culpable forgetting.Nothing indicates that Joseph's fate came as a punishment for his having presumed to interpret these dreams. We find no trace of presumption in what Joseph did. Joseph just was not yet fully tested in God's crucible. For the great elevation impending a very thoroughgoing preparation was essential.A sample of critical analysis of the chapter may be appended more as an illustration of presumption than as proof of scholarship. Procksch arrives at the following conclusions, accepted with many differences of opinion by critics as a whole; he ascribes to J 1, 3a, 5 (Sb), 6, 14b, 15b; and to E: 2, 3, 4, 5a, 7:9, 10-12, 14a, 15 a, 16-23. Consequently, E gets the lion's share. We have showed the idle grounds for this division in some major cases in our exposition. HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSSeveral Scripture passages could be used as the key for the approach to this chapter. If one prefers to develop more fully the mysterious providence of God, then one would operate with the Scripture truth embodied in the words of the hymn,"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."Very similar would be the approach that builds on the word, "We walk by faith, not by sight." But Joseph at the same time fulfils the requirement that his Lord makes of him by proving himself one who "is faithful in that which is least" by humbling himself to perform lowly service for those committed to his care. It might also be quite proper to approach the chapter from the angle of Warranted and Unwarranted Use of Dreams.

CHAPTER XLI

5. Joseph's Exaltation (41:1-57) For the third time dreams figure prominently in the history of Joseph. Yet really none of these dreams, except perhaps the first set, were primarily for Joseph. Joseph's connection with them was primarily that of interpreter, after his own first set of dreams had been interpreted by his own father. Since then it was chiefly for the sake of others that these dreams were granted. There may be truth in Dod's suggestion: "If these men were to receive any knowledge beyond what their own unaided efforts could attain, they must be taught in a language they understood." Men like Jacob and Joseph could receive revelation perhaps by a word or in a vision, but not Pharaoh and his courtiers. 1-4. And it happened at the expiration of two years that Pharaoh was dreaming, and, lo, he was standing by the side of the Nile; and, lo, from the Nile there were coming up seven beautiful fat cows, and they grazed among the reeds. And, lo, seven other cows were coming up after them from the Nile, ugly and skinny, and took their place by the side of the first cows by the bank of the Nile. And the ugly looking and skinny cows ate up the seven beautiful fat cows. Then Pharaoh awoke. Two full years elapse before the case of Joseph comes to Pharaoh's attention. Shenathßyim alone means "two years." The added expression yamim, "days," on the one hand, seems to indicate that it was "two whole years" (Meek); but on the other, it almost seems as if the expression recalls how Joseph was by this time eagerly counting the days. The two nouns are not in construct relationship but purely appositional as is often the case with terms of weight and measure (K. S.333 e). Pharaoh "was dreaming" (cholem); the participle implies that after idle dreaming had been going on for a time, the dream suddenly took very tangible shape. What he became definitely aware of is drawn to our attention by a hinneh, "lo." He himself was standing by the Nile. The Hebrew says 'al ("over") because the bank is always higher than the stream. Ye'or, a form in which, apparently, an Egyptian and an Assyrian root blend, standing in reference to Egyptian surroundings, always refers to "the River" of Egypt, i. e. the Nile. A participle like cholem may be used in place of a finite verb in the past tense also (K. S.238 b). 2. Again the participle lets the scene progressively re-enact itself -- 'oloth -- "they were coming up." Apparently, these cows left nothing to be desired: they were "beautiful" and "fat" -- the Hebrew expressively says "fat of flesh." The "reeds" in which they graze are achû, a distinctly Egyptian word. The scene could hardly be more characteristically Egyptian. In "beautiful of appearance" -- "appearance" (mar'eh) is an accusative of specification. 3. The second seven cows are in every way the opposite of the first: "ugly and skinny" -- daqqôth basar, "beaten, or thin of flesh." Watha'amóvdhnah -- "and they stood" -- we render they "took their place." Apparently, the two groups of seven each first appear side by side for a while in order to make the contrast between them forcibly apparent. But as to their origin in the dream it is noteworthy that both groups come from the same river. 4. Cow eating up cow is the strange thing that now follows; and yet in a dream such an occurrence is entirely of the type that might be expected. Still that part of the dream was so utterly strange as to startle Pharaoh into a waking state. 5-8. And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time: and, lo, there were seven ears of grain coming up on one stalk, plump and nice; and, lo, seven ears, thin and blasted by the east wind, were sprouting up after them; and the seven thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke,

and, lo, it was a dream. And it came to pass in the morning that his mind was wrought up and he sent and summoned all the magicians of Egypt and all her sages, and Pharaoh told them his dream. But there was no man who could furnish an interpretation for Pharaoh. The second dream is as distinctly Egyptian as the first, at least, objects familiar to the Egyptian are involved. Egypt was known as the granary of the ancient world. Seven ears on a stalk were not at all uncommon. These seen in the dream were so "plump" (literally: "fat") that it was a pleasure to behold them: they were "nice" (literally "good," tobh). 6. The seven lean ears have the same word applied to them that was used in reference to the cows, daqqoth, "thin." In addition, as they were developing in their wretched state, apparently the withering "east wind," qadhim -- for Egypt more usually a southeast wind -- had blasted what little remained. This wretched wind, called to this day chamsin, utterly wilts all green things upon which it blows. Since these last seven ears are not said to have come upon a single stalk, the implication is that each grew on its own stalk. In shedhuphoth qadhim, "blasted of the east wind," a genitive construction replaces the construction which offers an active subject (K. S.336 n). On this "east wind" see Ho 13:15; Jeremiah 18:17; cf. also Jonah 4:8. 7. The lean "swallow up" the plump. We interpret that to mean more than that in their weedlike growth they crowded out and smothered the plump, as Strack suggests. The "thin" were too "blasted" for that. Grotesque as dreams are, this one actually showed the one group swallowing up the other, an act in itself as unnatural as that cows should turn carnivorous. The uniqueness of the scene again startles the king awake. The remark, "lo, it was a dream," leads us to conclude that, as often happens, the dream had been so realistic that for a time the king had almost believed that it was an actual occurrence, even though his reason was protesting at its impossibility.8. The resultant impression is so strong that even on the next morning Pharaoh's mind (Hebrew: "spirit") was still "wrought up." Unable to decipher his dreams, he calls upon the chartumîm, the men versed in deciphering hieroglyphics, wherefore the Septuagint describes them as ierogrammateiv, "men versed in the sacred writings." No doubt they also cultivated arts such as astrology. The root as such means one who wields a writing instrument, Griffelfuehrer (K. W.). "Magician" seems to cover the case most nearly. To these are added the sages (chakhamîm, "wise men"). They hear the double dream and find themselves unable to interpret it: 'en pother'otham -- "there was not an interpreter of them." The suffix on "his dream" is singular, treating both dreams as one.We must admire the honesty of these men. To offer some makeshift interpretation would seemingly have been so easy. Perhaps they were entirely conscientious: their science offered them no clue; they admitted it. Yet the whole thing seemed so very obvious, as has often been pointed out. The part that the Nile plays in at least the first dream is too evident to demand explanation. Let Dods tell the rest of the story: "The cow also was reverenced as the symbol of the earth's productive power. If then -- God wished to show to Pharaoh that seven years of plenty were approaching, this announcement could hardly have been made plainer in the language of dreams than by showing to Pharaoh seven wellfavoured kine coming up out of the bountiful river to feed on the meadow made richly green by its water." Apparently, the hand of God was upon the interpreters, making their own devices of no effect, in order that the revelation might come by His own chosen instrument.9-13. And the chief of the butlers spoke to Pharaoh saying: My sins do I for one call to mind this day. Pharaoh was angry at bis servants and put me under guard in the house of the chief of the bodyguard, both me and the chief of the bakers, And we dreamed a dream in one night, both I and he, each man dreaming according to the particular interpretation of his own dream. And there, with us, was a Hebrew lad, a servant of the captain of the bodyguard; and we told him, and

he furnished us with an interpretation of our dreams; he interpreted for each man as his dream demanded. And it came to pass that everything turned out as he interpreted for us: me he restored to my position, and him he let be hanged.The chief of the butlers could hardly have forgotten Joseph under these circumstances. The sequence of thought in what he says regarding Pharaoh's anger leads us to believe that his word "my sins" (chata'ay), A. V., "my faults," is only a reference to his own misdeeds over against the king and does not mean that he remembers how shabbily he treated Joseph in not pleading his cause. To him Joseph is the Hebrew prison-slave; he himself, however, is the noble courtier. Then follows his story how Joseph had furnished an entirely reliable interpretation to clear up the butler's great perplexity, and how the interpretation furnished to the baker had also proved correct. The details are explained in the preceding chapter.In v.11, in nachalmah the ending ah with waw conversive is quite the exception (G. K.49e and K. S.200). In v.12 'ébhedh lesar -- "a servant of the captain," because the intention is to leave the first noun indefinite, therefore le in the construct relationship (K. S.280 l). "To each one," 'îsh, furnishes an instance of a casus pendens, the noun standing as an absolute rather than as a dative as the construction demands (G. K.139 c). "Me he restored" -- of course, "I was restored," etc.14-16. And Pharaoh sent and let Joseph be summoned and brought in haste from the prison; and he let himself be shaved and provided with a change of garments, and he came to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph: I have dreamed a dream and no man can interpret it. Now I for my part have heard about thee that for thee to hear a dream is to interpret it. But Joseph answered Pharaoh: Not at all! God will give Pharaoh a favourable answer.Pharaoh's need is urgent: it matters little who will furnish the interpretation. The utmost of meticulous cleanliness was essential for those who were to be presented to the Pharaoh. Consequently also the shaved head as well as the shaved body would present rather a delay in this instance. Besides, adequate raiment had to be provided for such a presentation. Several of the verbs used refer to what was ordered to be done rather than to what the subject executed in person. Wayyiqra'," and he called" -- "he let Joseph be summoned," and in reference to Joseph waygalach, "and he shaved" -- "he let himself be shaved," and the next verb: "he let himself be provided with a change of raiment." For this impecunious prisoner would hardly have had the proper shaving utensils or a change of raiment. 15. Very concisely Pharaoh formulates the problem which led to this unceremonious summons of Joseph. Equally concise is Pharaoh's statement concerning the report he has heard about Joseph. To lend the needed dignity to his urgent presentation of the case, Pharaoh refers to his royal person with emphasis: "I for my part have heard," 'anî shamß'ti. What he has heard is really: "thou hearest a dream to interpret it." That must mean: "for thee to hear a dream is to interpret it." That clearly claims unfailing ability to cope with all dreams. "The Hebrew subordinates the emphatic clause where we would subordinate the condition" (Skinner).16. Joseph's reply is usually given too much emphasis in its first part; bil'adhay is not: "it is not in me" (A. V.), nor really quite as we have rendered, "not at all" (B D B), nor yet as Luther rendered: das stehet bei mir nicht. For the word means: "quite apart from me." Certainly Joseph is disclaiming unfailing ability to interpret. We believe that, roughly paraphrased, the remark means: "leave me aside for the present," and it is followed at once by a statement that lodges all power and all honour with God -- here 'elohim, for Pharaoh had no acquaintance with Yahweh. Yet the implication of the brief but courteous reply is that God will use Joseph as the medium for his revelation. We may well be astounded at the downright honesty which refuses to profit even in an emergency by a slight distortion of the truth. As far as Joseph was concerned, absolute truthfulness in guarding God's honour was far more

important than personal advantage. After twelve years and more of injustice Joseph's first consideration is not deliverance but to take care that his relation to his God be entirely upright. In the original "a favourable answer" is an "answer of peace," or more literally: "God will answer the peace of Pharaoh," i. e., that which will be conducive to Pharaoh's well-being. Note also the tactful courtesy of Joseph's reply: he does not by unwarranted claims take advantage of a situation that might make him appear a great expert and all the court magicians poor bunglers -- an attitude that would have antagonized these courtiers.17-24. And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph: In my dream, lo, I was standing on the bank of the Nile; and, lo, from the Nile there were coming up seven cows, fat and beautiful, and they grazed among the reeds. And, lo, seven other cows were coming up after them, thin, very ugly and poor looking -- I never saw such poor specimens in all the land of Egypt -- and the skinny, ugly cows ate up the first seven fat cows; and they went down into the midst of them and it was not to be noticed that they had gone down into the midst of them; and they looked just as bad as they had before. Then I awoke. And I noticed in my dream, and, lo, seven ears of grain were coming up on one stalk, plump and good; and, lo, seven ears of grain, hard and dry, and blasted by the east wind, were sprouting up after them. And the thin ears swallowed up the good ears. Now I have spoken to the magicians, and there is not a man that can enlighten me.Pharaoh is so vitally interested in what seems a matter of great importance to him, that he retells his dreams himself. Everything is as true to life as it can be. You would expect the major terms used to be the same as those found in the first account. You would expect some points to be stressed a bit more: the account has not been rehearsed so frequently as to become, utterly stereotyped. On the face of it, it would appear ridiculous to attribute an account that varied slightly from the first account to a different source, as ridiculous, we say, as it would be unnatural to have both accounts entirely the same. First the poor cows are merely "ugly and skinny"; now they are "thin, very ugly and poor looking." Besides, further reflection on the whole dream has now led him to remark: "I never saw such poor specimens in all the land of Egypt." In the first recital the latter seven merely ate the former seven. Now he recalls "that they went down into the midst of them and it was not to be noticed that they had gone down into the midst of them; and they looked just as bad as they had before." But who would venture to put the second recital at variance with the first? Even Skinner says: "The slight differences in phraseology are due to the literary instinct for variety." Though we believe our explanation to be far more natural, we are surprised that the tendency to set source, so called, at variance with source does not control all critics here.Similar minor differences appear in reference to the second recital of the second dream. After it has been given, the king, impatient for a solution, summarizes very briefly, concluding: "there is not a man that can enlighten me" -- Hebrew: "there is not a one telling (maggidh) me."In v.21 qirbénnah really has a plural suffix (G. K.91 f) and mar'êhen, all appearances to the contrary, a singular one (G. K.99 ss). In v.22 Wa'e're' is rather an unusual form for the first person (G. K.75 o p). In v.23 the masculine suffix on 'ach(ch)arêhem, being the one more frequently used, has displaced the feminine (G. K.135 o). 25-32. Then Joseph said to Pharaoh: Pharaoh's dream is but one; God has made known to Pharaoh that which He is about to do: The seven good cows stand for seven years, and the seven good ears stand for seven years -- the dream has one meaning. The seven skinny and ugly cows coming up after them, they also stand for seven years; and the seven ears, empty and blasted by the east wind, mean: there will be seven years of famine. This then is the thing that I told Pharaoh: God has showed Pharaoh what He is about to do. See, seven years are about to come -- great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. After these shall arise seven years

of famine, and all the plenty in the land of Egypt shall be forgotten, and the famine shall consume the land. And it shall not be known that there was plenty, because of the ensuing famine. For it shall be extremely grievous. As far as the fact is concerned that the dream came twice to Pharaoh, this signifies that the matter is fully determined by God, and that God will carry it out promptly.With deft skill and with the sure touch of one who knows, Joseph interprets as God reveals it to him. Though nothing is said under this head, it seems too obvious for words specifically to recount how one, who had ascribed all ability to God, first made his earnest silent prayer to God for help. Then comes the swift unravelling of the tangled skein. First: the two dreams have the same interpretation; there is really only one dream. Secondly: God is revealing to Pharaoh what He is about to do ('oseh is future, G. K.116d).26. "The seven good cows stand for seven years" -- the adjective tobhoth has the article, because the numeral "seven" made the preceding noun definite (K. S.334 v) -- "and the seven good ears stand for seven years." This clinches the point that the dual dream has a unit meaning. This was the one difficulty -- seven cows -- seven years -- which had barricaded the approach to the whole interpretation. With this key item clear, everything literally falls into its proper place. The seven skinny cows must be years, too, and bad ones -- that is to say "seven years of famine." At once all difficulties are removed, and the interpretation may proceed to clinch all vital points. Once again Joseph repeats the fundamental point of view which should govern the entire approach: "God has showed Pharaoh what He is about to do." Hû' haddabhar reaches back to 25b, which is almost entirely identical with 28 b. Joseph's life and his thinking are theocentric. These dreams are centred in God's merciful kindness; Pharaoh should gratefully record that fact.29. The inference to be drawn from the above premises is that a first heptad of years is coming -- "great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt" "plenty" stands in apposition to the "seven years," Related to one another, the seven famine years shall make the years of plenty "to be forgotten" -- they "shall consume the land" -- "it shall not be known that there was plenty" ("known"' in the sense of "realized"). Since a needed warning is involved, Joseph summarizes in respect to the famine: "it shall be extremely grievous."32. Now the last essential fact: the repetition of the dream points to the fact that the events revealed will come to pass at once. "The matter is fully determined by God." It is not contingent upon the possible outcome of other matters that are still pending. Besides, "God will carry it out promptly" (Hebrew: "God is making haste in reference to the doing"). The opening clause of this verse in literal translation runs thus: "and upon ('al) double occurrence (hishshanôth) of the dream to Pharaoh" (is built the fact that) "the matter is fully determined" (K. S.403 f).One is amazed how this man Joseph, inspired by God, cuts through the Gordian knot. Every Egyptian magician must have been convinced of the correctness of the interpretation and have marvelled that so obvious a solution did not occur to him. Here the contrast between the certainty of divinely given truth and the unreliability of human thoughts is demonstrated with unusual clearness.33-36. And now let Pharaoh pick a man who is shrewd and wise and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh act and appoint administrators over the land and let him take a fifth part of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven years of plenty. And let them gather all the food of these seven good years that are about to come, and let them heap up the grain under Pharaoh's hand for food in the cities and let them guard it there. And this food shall be for a deposit for the land during the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt. Then the land will not be ruined by the famine.The Spirit of God did more than merely enable Joseph to interpret the king's dreams; he enabled him to furnish a comprehensive plan to meet this unusual emergency. This plan is as masterful as was the

interpretation that preceded. First, a chief administrator is needed. He must have two qualifications: he must be "shrewd and wise." "Shrewd" -- nabhôn, from the root bîn -- "to have insight." He must, therefore, be a man who has keen insight into the situation and its needs. But the capacity for acting constructively in a way to meet these needs is covered by chakham, "wise," which always implies constructive capacity. 34. Joseph's energetic counsel tended toward instantaneous action. So sure was he of the correctness of the interpretation and of the need of action. Therefore ya'aseh, optative -- let Pharaoh "act." Even as there was need of centralized authority to meet the emergency (v.33), so there was need of "sub-administrators" (peqidîm -- "appointees") over portions of the land, whose business would primarily be to chimmesh, "fifth," the land, i. e., "take a fifth part of the produce." "A fifth part" would, indeed, be a double tithe, but in years of plenty that would hardly count as a hardship. Had this surplus not been gathered, it might largely have been wasted by careless management. A further likelihood is that Pharaoh will have secured this surplus by purchase not by merely impounding it. The low prices of bumper crop years will have made greater purchases possible. In no event need the charge of harshness be laid against Joseph's plan as outlined. The jussive ya'aseh is without the usual apocopation ya'as.35. The grain thus gathered is usually called 'okhel, "food," for from that point of view it is usually considered. Once in this verse bar, "grain," is used. "Food" may, of course, include everything that could have been preserved. In the last analysis Pharaoh is to have complete control as the words "under Pharaoh's hand" (i. e., by his authority) indicate. Observe how well co-ordinated this plan is and yet how simple in all its parts. The "cities" are indicated as the logical centre for storage of the grain. Besides, provision is to be made properly to "guard" (shamar) this food after it has been laid up. So, then, when the inevitable famine comes, the land will not "be ruined" (tikkareth -- "cut off" -- A. V. "perish").We feel rather keenly that Joseph never for a moment thought of himself as a possible candidate for head administrator. Verse Ge 41:16 shows how little Joseph thought of turning the situation to his own advantage. How utterly unreasonable for one who had never held an office of state, who, besides, was a foreigner and still almost smelled of the prison whence he had been brought -- for such a one to anticipate immediate advancement to a position second only to that of Pharaoh! The last few years had stifled all ambitions to hold a prominent position. Joseph would have considered himself fortunate indeed merely to be set at liberty.37-41. And the proposition appealed to Pharaoh and to all his courtiers, and Pharaoh said to his courtiers: Shall we find a man with the Spirit of God like this man? Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: Seeing that God has revealed all this to thee, there is no man as shrewd and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and all my people shall be entirely obedient to thee. Only in the matter of the throne shall I be greater than thou art. Besides, Pharaoh said to Joseph: See, I have set thee over the entire land of Egypt.37. Joseph's lucid plan meets with immediate approval by Pharaoh and his courtiers. Its merits kept suggesting themselves so forcibly upon this group, which a moment before was so entirely at a loss, that the next suggestion of Pharaoh also meets with the full approval of all. The thought that stands out in reference to Joseph is that he has "God's Spirit" (ru'ach elohîm), The Egyptians still had so much spiritual discernment as to be able to see that a supernatural element had been involved in this interpretation. Pharaoh senses that this same element as a divine equipment will be essential to carry out a plan of such magnitude as the one Joseph just outlined. Nimtsa' is not potential, "can" or "could we find" but a plain future: "shall we find" (K. S.187). Apparently, there was a measure of the knowledge and fear of God still left to the Egyptians at this point in history.39. Pharaoh

reasons quite cogently: the God who revealed the dream and this excellent plan to you would very likely equip you to carry it out rather than any other man. He observes in Joseph both shrewdness and wisdom. Joseph's prompt response arouses a kindred prompt resolution in Pharaoh. Using his power as supreme ruler, he appoints Joseph over his "house" first of all. When we consider the importance of the major-domus of the Merovingians or of the officials of Israel's court bearing practically the same name (cf.1 Kings 4:6; 16:9; Isaiah 22:15), we see that the position was easily as influential as that of a secretary of state. Joseph's position in reference to the people is also defined at once: "all my people shall be entirely obedient to thee," Hebrew: "they shall hang upon thy mouth" (nashaq -- "cling to," "attach oneself to" -- and so "be entirely obedient" vollkommen gehorchen -- K. W.). Apparently, the verb is not as doubtful as some claim, and the rendering of the Septuagint gives a good lead -- upacousetai. Still Pharaoh will be the supreme ruler; yet he graciously states the case as much in Joseph's favour as possible: "only in the matter of the throne (hakkisse' -- accussative of specification) shall I be greater than thou art." The additional statement rounds out the broad scope of Joseph's authority in reference to the land as a whole: "I have set thee over the entire land of Egypt." Only a man like Joseph, schooled by adversity and sorrow, could meet a sudden elevation like this without pride and self-exaltation. His rigorous training enabled him to encounter success without succumbing to its blandishments.42-45. And Pharaoh removed the signet ring from his finger and put it upon Joseph's finger and clad him in linen robes and put a golden chain around his neck, and had him ride in his second chariot, and men cried out before him: Bow the knee. So he was set over the entire land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said to Joseph: I am Pharaoh; but without thy permission not a man shall move hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-paneah, and gave him a wife Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. And Joseph went forth throughout the land of Egypt.Everything has a strictly Egyptian colouring: "signet ring," "linen robes," "golden chain," "chariot." The students of Egyptiology are wont to point out these details. The "signet ring" (taba'ath from taba'," to sink down," viz., into the clay upon which the signature is affixed) gives its possessor authority to sign documents with the equivalent of royal authority. Robes of "linen" (shesh -- byssus, the characteristic fine linen of the Egyptians) were considered the most elegant. The "golden chain" seems to have been a rather general symbol of authority -- especially in the XVIII and XIX dynasty (Procksch). The "second chariot" must have been a vehicle sufficiently splendid to be recognized as second only to Pharaoh's. So all the outward trappings of authority are provided by Pharaoh himself. The last step taken serves to introduce Joseph formally to the people at large. The word cried out before Joseph's chariot was 'abhrekh. This word has caused much difficulty. Perhaps it was intended to remind the Hebrew of the root barakh, "to bow the knee," and it may have ranked as a kind of Aphel form. Popular etymology may have put some such meanings upon it. This view is reflected in our versions. Luther, however, attempts an unetymological interpretation, guessing at the second half of the word after he removes 'abh which may mean "father" -- dies ist des Landes Vater. B D B lists no less than seven attempted explanations. K. W. offers pass auf, "look out" -- which seems rather inadequate. "Bow the knee" seems to fit the needs of the case most aptly. Nathôn, absolute infinitive, continues the sequence after the finite verb (G. K.113 z).44. The king's word, "I am Pharaoh," is best understood if one recalls the exalted reverence that was shown to such rulers in days of old. Meek seeks to express the thought by rendering: "Although I continue as Pharaoh, yet, etc." The king is telling Joseph that there can be no thought of his ranking as high as does the king, but he tells it very considerately;

he practically appoints Joseph dictator: "without thy permission (Hebrew: apart from thee) not a man shall move hand or foot in all the land of Egypt" -- an effective hyperbole.45. Now Joseph has everything except the requisite social standing. This is provided by egyptianizing his name and giving him an Egyptian wife of priestly extraction. "Zaphenath-paneah" may mean "abundance of life" (K. W.), although the consonants are usually construed to mean, "the god speaks and he lives" (B D B and K. W.) -- not in a monotheistic sense. "Asenath" appears to mean "the one belonging to Neith" (a goddess of the Egyptians). "Potiphera" is said to mean: "he whom Ra (the sun god) gave." The city "On" was the well-known centre of worship of the sun god, Ra. Of course, the Potiphar of chapter 39 is quite distinct from this Potiphera. In any case, much as the Egyptians may have felt an aversion to foreigners, yet to be introduced to one under such auspicious circumstances, to one who besides has contracted so favourable a matrimonial alliance, ought to cancel all prejudice. Students of Egyptian history tell us besides of certain periods where even the reserved and superior Egyptians were possessed of a strange mania for foreign innovations and customs. The last statement is quite in place: "Joseph went forth throughout the land of Egypt" on an initial tour of inspection. Only by securing adequate firsthand information would Joseph be able to estimate rightly the problems involved in his gigantic task. Alterations of the text like: "His fame spread throughout the land of Egypt" (Meek) are without warrant.46-49. Joseph was a man of thirty years when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. So Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence and traversed, the whole land of Egypt. During the seven years of plenty the land produced bumper crops. And he gathered all the food of the seven years which came in the land of Egypt, and put this food into cities, and he put into each city the food from the fields round about. And Joseph heaped up grain like the sand of the sea, exceedingly much, until men left off counting; they could not keep count of it.At such an important juncture in Joseph's life the reader naturally grows desirous of knowing just how old this food administrator was, and the writer meets this legitimate desire by telling him. Critics do not concede such flexibility of style and ascribe all such data to the fictitious P. However, if the picture is to be complete and the measure of favour that God grants is to be rightly evaluated, we practically need to know that these high honours and responsibilities were laid upon one so young -- thirty years old. The expression "stand before the face of," 'amadh liphney, means to "serve one" or here "enter the service," not merely "to stand before," which here at least would be an empty designation. Nor does the next verse merely duplicate 45 b. The verb is different, 'abhar, "traverse," and the territory covered is greater, "all the land of Egypt." So after Joseph's first trips of exploration and investigation there followed extensive journeys leaving no part of the land untouched. 47. What Joseph so confidently foretold actually happened: the land produced liqmatsîm, "with full hands," i. e., "bumper crops." The very practical plan was followed of gathering the abundance found round about the individual cities into these cities. The amount laid up in reserve must have seemed needlessly abundant. Ultimately those entrusted with keeping the records lost count of what reserves they actually had. Perhaps arithmetic had not advanced sufficiently to deal with such enormous totals.50-52. And two sons were born to Joseph before the year of famine came, sons whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him. And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh, for God has caused me to forget all about my toil and my father's house. And the name of the second he called Ephraim, for God has made me fruitful in the land of my misery.The birth of Joseph's sons is set down as a matter of record as to how and when these two fathers of future tribes came into being, and also to give an indication how Joseph, the man of faith, viewed these tokens of

divine favour. The name of the mother is again recorded so that we may take note how in an age of grievous irregularities Joseph remained faithful to the patriarchal standards of monogamous marriage, from which ideal only Abraham and Jacob had departed, and that under very unusual circumstances. Menasseh, as a verbal form, means "making to forget," as the explanatory word following also indicates (nashshßnî, an unusual Piel form for nishshßnî, G. K.52 m). Though the statement is absolute: "God caused me to forget all about my toil and my father's house," there can be no doubt about it that Joseph means: the sting is gone out of the remembrance. "God". ('Elohîm) is said to have wrought this, for it is 'Elohîm who is the mighty Ruler of the world and who disposes of the things in it according to His pleasure. 'Ephraim means "double fruit" (K. W.). God had made his life "fruitful," i. e., exceedingly successful in a land where he had previously seen only "misery."53-57. And there came to an end the seven years of plenty which had been in the land of Egypt; and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said, and there was a famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt suffered hunger, the people cried out unto Pharaoh for bread, and Pharaoh said to all Egypt: Go to Joseph; all that he saith to you, do it. And the famine spread over the whole face of the land. So Joseph threw open all that was in it and started to sell grain to the Egyptians; and yet the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. And the whole earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was so strong over the whole earth.Joseph's prediction was not only relatively true: things developed "just as he had said." The king and the nation must have relied implicitly on this infallible guide in these days. But the famine was of broader scope than merely to involve Egypt: "there was famine in all lands." Divine providence made these two famines to be coincident, the one in Egypt, due to the failure of the annual inundation of the Nile, the one throughout Syria, due to lack of rain, no doubt. For though here we read "in all lands" and in v.57 "over the whole earth," we hardly believe that this is to be regarded literally. An intentional hyperbole is used. The lands beyond Syria and the Mediterranean litoral are hardly under consideration, because distance forbade attempts to get grain from Egypt on the part of those living in Mesopotamia and beyond. Yet, on the other hand, we do not deny the possibility of a world-wide famine at this time.By way of explanation let this be said. The Nile owes its regular overflow partly to the torrential rains in Abyssinia, partly to the steady volume of water maintained by the White Nile, which carries off the melted snows from the high peaks of Central Africa. Occasionally, however, the channel of the White Nile grows choked with a sedge called sud. This takes place in the marsh lands of the Sudan. As a result the waters of the Nile lose themselves in these marshes till the river has cleared a new channel. This is usually regarded as the correct explanation for the failure of the inundations of the Nile, which, by the way, are not so very uncommon. Whitelaw records a similar case; he says:" -- the most complete parallel to Joseph's famine was that which occurred in A. D.1064-1071, in the reign of Fatimee Khaleefeh, Eh Mustansir-b-rllâh, when the people ate corpses and animals that died of themselves."55. When the famine begins to be acute, the people naturally appeal to Pharaoh first. His confidence in Joseph is so complete that he directs the people to him and enjoins complete conformity to whatever plan Joseph puts into operation. Either Pharaoh was weak and recognized that Joseph had greater administrative capacities than he himself did; or else Pharaoh was discreet in recognizing superior capacity coupled with a rare measure of providential guidance. Joseph, however, waited until the famine had spread "over the whole face of the land." Even the ample stores which he had gathered needed husbanding. When the need became imperative, "Joseph threw open (yiphtach -- "open") all that was in it." Bahem,

"in them," correctly refers to the plural "faces of" (peney) of the preceding clause. English demands the translation "in it:" The text is not confused; neither is there "a slight discrepancy" between v.54 and v.55 (no lack of bread vs. they are famishing). The solution is immediately apparent: Joseph was controlling the surplus very strictly; consequently people had to suffer a bit of hunger so as not ultimately to die of hunger. For though the sale of grain had started, "yet the famine was severe in the land of Egypt." 57. Now the narrative definitely prepares the way for the following chapter, for when Jacob's sons come to Egypt for grain, they are merely one of many groups coming on the same mission.It seems difficult to determine whether the famine of Joseph's day is mentioned in the monuments. Kyle, The Deciding Voice of the Monuments, p.225f., claims to have found the evidence. K. C. questions the validity of Kyle's conclusions.The analysis of this chapter according to so-called sources offers no new problem and nothing substantial or constructive.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThe chief difficulty confronting the preacher on a chapter such as this is its bulk. Clearly it would be improper to take anything less than what ends with v. Ge 41:45 and still have a complete unit. Yet forty-five verses certainly comprise more of a text than any man could treat adequately. Yet since the facts of the story are well known on every hand and since the section beginning at v.25 gives an adequate summary of the double dream, it would seem entirely satisfactory to take v. Ge 41:25-45 as one piece and treat it under some such head as "The Exaltation of Joseph." Exaltation was the thing for which Joseph had been in process of preparation for the past twenty years. Yet two extremes should be avoided in the use of this text. Steer safely between the extravagant opinion which guarantees similar deliverance to all who are brought low, and, on the other hand, the attitude of unbelief which despondently says: I am brought so low that even God cannot raise me up. In the practical application God's power to do as much for any man, as He did for Joseph, should be stressed. Then v. Ge 41:46-57 presents a good basis for treating the subject "Successfully Encountering Prosperity." For to cope with prosperity may be more difficult than to cope with poverty. Joseph (v.51 and 52) recognized the mighty hand of God as being the only power that sustained him.

CHAPTER XLII

6. The First Journey of Joseph's Brethren to Egypt without Benjamin (42:1-38) First of all, at this point the Joseph story requires further development. The next logical step in this development is the contact between the exalted slave brother and the needy brethren who appear before him as humble and suspected petitioners. A broader point of view needs to be regarded here. Left to themselves, the sons of Jacob, yielding to the effect of sin, would have drifted apart and have lost all true unity as a family group. Joseph by his discriminating direction cancels the effects of incipient sin and leads the brothers to oneness of heart and purpose. In so doing, he prepares them so that they are found ready to go down into Egypt and there as one group to uphold the best traditions of their family. But for this reconstructed unity Jacob's family would have disintegrated in Egypt, would have lost its racial identity, and would have been absorbed by the Egyptians. 1-4. Now when Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons: Why do ye look at one another? He further said: See, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us there, that we may live and not die. So the brethren of Joseph went down -- ten men -- to buy grain in Egypt. But Benjamin, the brother of Joseph, Jacob did not send with his brethren, For, he said, lest harm befall him. The scene seems to be laid in the time when news first reached Canaan that grain was being sold in Egypt. The father and the sons apparently have not discussed this piece of news before. Besides, the entire family had arrived at the point where something had to be done about the famine. The father has noted the look of perplexity in his sons' faces. Each has been looking at the other (ra'ah in the hithpael -- "to look questioningly one at the other") waiting for the other to suggest the next move. It seems rather an exaggeration to think that all regarded Egypt with a certain apprehension as the land to which Joseph had been sold and to which none now cared to go for that very reason. The general perplexity at facing this strange issue was all that their faces reflected. Occasional thoughts of the possible fate of Joseph will also have arisen in their minds. 2. Wayyo'mer must here mean: "he further said." Father Jacob is a man of decision of character. He knows how to act in different situations and holds his position as head of so large a household firmly in hand. Since men had begun to go down to Egypt to buy grain, that was the best course to follow. He commands his sons to take this trip and to make the necessary purchases. It really was already an issue of life and death, for he says, "that we may live and not die." Shébher, "grain," derives its meaning from the root shabhar, "to break," either as that which is broken or threshed, or as that which breaks out or sprouts. We may think it strange that Jacob did not venture to go to Egypt in time of famine as Abraham had (Ge 12:10). But in the first place, in Egypt itself the famine was strong; and then, the household of Jacob together with servants and cattle constituted so immense a group as to render such a journey in a measure impracticable. 3. The Hebrew word order might be rendered by our colloquial idiom: "the brethren of Joseph went down ten men strong," for 'asarah, "ten," is in apposition to the subject, or it may be regarded as a predicate noun. It is a bit unusual to have the numeral appear without the article after a definite noun (K, S.334 u). Here "grain" -- bar, which according to its root means "clean," i. e., the clean grain after the chaff has been removed. 4. Benjamin is not allowed to go along with his brothers. Jacob does not necessarily harbour even a dim suspicion of what the other ten might

do to his present favourite, Benjamin. He merely guards Benjamin with an apprehensiveness that has grown out of his loss of Joseph. Luther rightly indicates that such an attitude on Jacob's part is due to a lack of sufficient faith. But such weaknesses are everyday occurrences even in the lives of God's saints. 5, 6. And the sons of Israel came to buy grain together with others that came; for the famine was in the land of Canaan. Now Joseph, he was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold grain to all the people of the land. Now the brethren of Joseph came and did obeisance before him with their faces to the ground. We are made aware of the fact that many were bound for Egypt on the same mission as Jacob's sons when we are told that these ten came "together with others that came." The Hebrew expression has it: "in the midst of the coming ones." There must have been a steady stream of purchasers coming from Canaan. For, as we are again reminded, "the famine was in the land of Canaan." 6. We are now told how Joseph's work at this time resulted in his coming into contact with his brethren. He acted in a double capacity, as the double hu' indicates (K. S.340 e). He was both "governor" (shallit -- or "vizier" or even "sultan"), in fact, "the governor," and also the one who "sold grain to all the people of the land." He personally managed the sale of grain in every detail with such care that he could well be said to have done all the selling himself. Mashbir -- "causing to sell," a participle serving as the predicate (K. S.409 a). Yet all this may be construed to mean that he superintended all selling and was at hand particularly to give personal attention to all extraordinary cases, especially those that had to do with the sale of grain to foreigners. It does not seem farfetched to us to suppose that Joseph planned to be at hand when grain was disposed of to men from Canaan in expectation of actually encountering his brethren. So it actually came to pass of a day that Joseph's brethren "came and did obeisance before him with their faces to the ground." "Did obeisance" is the same verb as that found Ge 37:7. "With their faces to the ground" is a modal accusative (K. S.402 h). Some trace xalativ, the name of the first Hyksos king, (Josephus, Cont. Ap. [2]) to shallit. The connection is doubtful. 7-9. And Joseph saw his brethren and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger toward them and spoke harshly with them, and said to them: Where do you come from? And they said: From the land of Canaan to buy food. Now Joseph recognized his brethren, but they on their part did not recognize him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed in reference to them, and he said to them: Spies ye are; to see the nakedness of the land have ye come. So it was providentially ordered that Joseph was actually present when his brethren stepped in. The scene which he had actually visualized many times before was now transpiring. There could be little difficulty about "recognizing" them. They were full grown men when Joseph had seen them last. In the years between twenty-five and fifty very radical changes in appearance seldom occur. They appeared in their native garb besides. Then there were just ten of them. By a strange play on words in the use of a different stem the Hebrew secures the meaning, "he acted as a stranger toward them" for "he recognized." So K. W., whereas B D B assumes two distinct roots. "He spoke harshly" in Hebrew -- "he spoke hard things," qashoth -- the feminine for the neuter (G. K.122q; K. S.245d). This harshness is not the outgrowth of a natural and almost justifiable anger. Nor do we "ascribe to Joseph an almost supernatural and superhuman sanctity" (Lange) if we assume that Joseph had his feelings and his purpose under full control from the very moment of meeting. For though vindictive anger would have been natural enough from one point of view, it is just as clear on the other hand that natural emotions of this sort had been purged out of Joseph by the fire of prison tribulation. Furthermore, now for a period of about fifteen years Joseph had enjoyed a position of unusual eminence at Pharaoh's court, a position to which he

could hardly have advanced but for his brothers' treachery. Consequently, the perspective of divine providence will surely have helped Joseph long before this time to adjust himself in reference to his brethren and to map out a general plan of action. First and foremost in this plan will have been the purpose to redeem his brethren from their evil ways if they still stood in need of redemption, as was most likely the case. To forestall all possibility of recognition Joseph uses a harsh mode of address. The ancients had noted that the Egyptians were inclined to view all foreigners with suspicion. All who entered at the northeastern boundary were regarded as potential enemies. The first question grates harshly upon their ears: "Where do you come from?" They attempt to disarm suspicion by giving more information than was asked: they state what their homeland is as well as what their purpose is: "From the land of Canaan to buy food." Surely, theirs was a harmless purpose. Dozens of such purchasers were appearing daily.8. Here another point is definitely settled. The verse might well have been rendered: "Though Joseph recognized his brethren, they on their part did not recognize him." His side of the matter was discussed above. Their side is this: Joseph may have altered somewhat in appearance since the immaturity of his seventeenth year. High position held for some time puts a decided stamp upon a man's personality. Also it would never have occurred to the brethren to look for Joseph as the incumbent of such a position. Add to that the disguise effected by the distinctive Egyptian garb, which surely bore a stamp all its own. Then consider the contrast between the bearded Israelite and the clean-shaven Egyptian. Top all this off with the harsh official tone of the foreign language and the disguise is perfect.9. The statement that "Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed in reference to them" (lahem -- dative of reference) indicates that as they lay before him with their faces to the ground the memory of his dreams came strongly upon him. The guiding hand of Providence will have been very manifest to him at that remembrance. His seeming harshness therefore flows out of his higher purpose when he says: "Spies ye are." Apparently, espionage of nation upon nation was not so uncommon in those early days, when the Asiatics and the Egyptians already clashed rather frequently. "The nakedness of the land" would be the bare or exposed places, as our own idiom and that of many other languages also represent the case. Furthermore, a very definite suspicion had to seize upon Joseph from the very moment he saw but ten brethren. Where was the eleventh? It was easy enough to understand why the father should have sent a big delegation of men -- they were to bring back as ample a store as possible. Ten men could surely secure more than one or two. But if ten, where was the eleventh? Benjamin might have become the father's favourite after Joseph's disappearance. Men who had not stopped short at what was practically murder in the first instance might have been less reluctant about disposing of the second favourite. Besides, as Luther develops at length, Joseph's dealings with his brethren were analogous to those of God when he deals with sinners who are to be led to repentance. Dods offers the key to the situation in the words: "Joseph was, of course, well aware that in the analysis of character the most potent elements are only brought into clear view, when the test of severe trouble is applied, and when men are thrown out of all conventional modes of thinking and speaking."10-13. But they said to him: No, my lord; but thy servants have come to buy food. We all, we are sons of one man; we are honest men; thy servants have never been spies. But he said to them: No; but the nakedness of the land, that is what you have come to see. But they said: Thy servants are twelve in number; we are brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, see, the youngest is with his father this day, and the other is no more. All Jacob's sons can do is faithfully to reiterate their story. One claim of theirs carries particular weight -- "we

are sons of one man." There may have been even a measure of physical resemblance to make this claim more apparent. But if they had been sent out as spies, no father would have sent practically all his sons on so dangerous a mission. Or, to restate the case, it was utterly improbable that ten brothers should be travelling about as a group in order to spy upon a foreign nation. Had Joseph not determined to use the harshness commonly found in foreign officials who claim to have just grounds of suspicion, he would have been compelled to admit the force of their argument. Instead, he stubbornly holds to his original contention: "the nakedness of the land, that is what you have come to see" (so the Hebrew word order). Now the brothers grow a bit more explicit. The circumstances demand a greater measure of detail. It is rather an unsympathetic treatment of the case to attribute this increase of detail to "the social clumsiness of the little fellow" (Procksch) who hopes to disarm suspicion by garrulous honesty. This is nothing more than a natural attempt of honest men to tell the whole truth and so to extricate themselves from a difficult position. They reveal that there are really twelve sons. The statement claiming that they are "brothers, the sons of one man" implies that not all have the same mother. Canaan is their fatherland, though they will hardly have worn the distinctive Canaanite dress. They also reveal the whereabouts of the youngest. (the adjective with the article -- superlative, K. S.309 b) -- "with his father," and on the question of "the other" their statement suddenly drifts into a strange vagueness: "is no more." No doubt, they actually believed that since nothing had been heard of him these twenty years he must have perished. Yet to Joseph this last statement reveals nothing about their attitude of heart. True, here is not the place for the confession of their great wrong. But the words are quite unequivocal. But with men, who once revealed such readiness to resort to desperately cruel means, it would have been wrong quickly to make a few charitable assumptions. Perhaps even "the youngest is with his father this day" might not have been as harmless a statement as it seemed on the surface. Joseph did not dare take anything for granted. For the present the brothers must have a dose of their own medicine. As they once had refused to listen to a brother's plea, so now their pleas must be rudely rejected. The independent lo'(v.10) -- "No" (K. S.352 f). Strack remarks that the briefer form for "we," nachnû (v.11), occurs in but five more instances.14-17. And Joseph said to them: It is just as I have been saying to you -- Ye are spies. By this shall ye be put to the test, as surely as Pharaoh lives: You shall surely not go out from here except your youngest brother come here. Send one of your number and let him bring your brother, but as for you, ye shall be bound; and so your words shall be put to the test, whether ye are speaking the truth. If not, as surely as Pharaoh lives, ye are spies. So he confined them in prison three days.Joseph's attitude has been well described by Skinner as "well-feigned official obstinacy." He keeps repeating after the manner of officers who put a man through the third degree, "ye are spies." First he makes the exorbitant demand that all except one must remain bound in Egypt until this one has gone home and brought the youngest along -- a very unreasonable request. What would hinder this obstinate man from seizing the youngest brother also and thus hold all bound? Consequently, in any case, their hopes of freedom were slim. Yet it is quite true that the return of the messenger with the younger brother would constitute a fair test of the veracity of their claims. But even so, this unreasonable official might refuse to see the case from this angle.The question is here raised whether Joseph did wrong in using the oath, "as surely as Pharaoh lives." Calvin cannot condone the oath. Luther finds nothing wrong about it. Apparently, a similar oath was in use in Israel at a later date, an oath by the life of the king, used in addressing the king: 1 Samuel 17:55; 2 Samuel 11:11; Hebrews 6:16 countenances swearing "by

the greater." Without a doubt, Joseph calculated to give his words as distinctive an Egyptian cast as possible. But as for himself, he will in the oath have remembered the Almighty and thus, though mentioning a ruler whom God acknowledged, he thought of the God that avenges false oaths. Joseph, however, does not swear that he will detain his brothers, as Luther construes the case; but that the brothers shall be put to the test. His second claim is hypothetically true: if a younger brother cannot be produced, then under the circumstances they would be spies. We are unable to depart in v.16 from the original Jewish division of the verse and to take the "or not," we'im lo', as belonging to the preceding clause. That would make Joseph use an insincere or idle oath: "as surely as Pharaoh lives, ye are spies," when he well knew they were not spies. The Jewish punctuation and our translation (also Luther, A. V., and A. R. V.) make the statement hypothetical and the oath permissible. There was a very appropriate strategy as well as psychology about this imprisonment. The strategy involved what Dods has stated thus: "So new an experience to these free dwellers in tents as imprisonment under grim Egyptian guards worked wonders in them." The psychological reaction was bound to be a comparison between what their imprisoned brother must have suffered and what they are suffering now. The more or less dormant conscience was bound to awaken at this point. On chey phar'oh (v.15) see G. K.93 aa. The interrogative has pathach (v.16) before a laryngeal (G. K.100m).18-20. And Joseph said to them on the third day: Do this and live -- for I am a man wont to fear the Deity -- if ye are honest men, one of your brothers may remain bound in your prison, but ye may go and carry home grain to meet the need of your households. But you must bring your youngest brother to me. So shall your words be proved reliable and ye shall not die. And they did so.Joseph cannot persuade himself to make his father's household suffer in working out this plan of the regeneration of his brethren. Three days are deemed sufficient to start their conscience working. At the same time Joseph needed at least so much time to think through his own course of procedure. In making his modified proposal to them -- one stays; the rest go home he represents himself as "a man wont to fear (present participle yare') the Deity." Joseph naturally uses 'elohim at this point, which, coming from the mouth of a man seemingly a Gentile, can mean no more than "Deity." In days of old it was already recognized that a proper relation to God brought about considerate treatment of men. The original fear of God, more or less a tradition among the nations of earliest antiquity, had not yet entirely died out in these days.The injunction laid upon the brethren is made sufficiently serious by the reminder: if your youngest brother is brought, "ye shall not die." Their life is practically to be regarded as hanging in the balance. The summary statement "and they did so," includes what is developed in the verses following to v.26, The expression ra'abhon battêkhem -- literally: "the hunger of your homes," signifies: that which can remove the hunger from your homes, or "to meet the need of your households." See K. S.336 e.21-24. And they said one to another: Verily, we are guilty in reference to our brother, because we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not listen. Therefore has this distress now come upon us. And Reuben answered them and said: Did I not say to you, Don't sin against the lad, and ye would not listen. And as far as his blood is concerned, behold, it is being required. And they knew not that Joseph heard, for there was an interpreter between them. And Joseph turned away from them and wept. Then he returned to them and spoke with them, and took one of their number, Simeon, and had him bound in their sight.Whatever they may have said in prison, how at least they speak in terms of their guilt in the matter of Joseph. Their conscience has awakened mightily during these three days. They feel that a just retribution has come upon them, and are apparently all of one mind in regard to the matter.

They admit guilt, the "only acknowledgment of sin in the book of Genesis" (Inglis; quoted by Whitelaw). They find it to be just compensation -- "because we saw the distress of his soul -- and would not listen. Therefore has this distress now come upon us." Reuben comes to the forefront with a dire, "I told you so" -- he gets some satisfaction from the fact that he had warned them, though he now makes his warning stronger than it then was (Ge 37:22). Now he rubs it in on himself as well as upon them that "his blood is being required" -- nidhrash -- "sought out." We should say: Satisfaction for his blood is being demanded. Nothing was farther from their thoughts in their self-accusations and recriminations than the thought that Joseph might understand. For Joseph had wisely throughout these proceedings availed himself of an interpreter, melîts -- from lûts or lîts, "to mock," for speaking a strange language sounded like mockery. When Joseph "turned away" this seems to signify that he momentarily left the room, for later "he returned." Simeon is singled out to be held bound. It might have been Reuben, the firstborn, but he had half acquitted himself by preventing more serious steps. Simeon seemed to stand in need of a special measure of corrective treatment. He was among the most cruel of the brethren; cf. Ge 34:25; 49:5-7. To make the matter a bit more impressive Joseph lets Simeon be bound "in their sight."25. And Joseph gave orders and they filled the receptacles with grain and they restored each man's money to his sack and gave them provisions for their journey. Thus was done for them.At this point Joseph does what he normally longed to do for his family; he gave them ample stores of grain, restored their money, and furnished provisions for the journey. As far as his brothers were concerned, he well knew that this kindness would only cause consternation and perplexity, but that, he recognized, was good for them. Yemal'û has no dagesh forte in the "l"; cf. G. K.20 m. Bar is accusative of material with verbs of filling and the like (G. K.117 z). Ya'as is impersonal, therefore to be rendered as a passive (K. S.324 d; G. K.144 h). 26-28. Then they loaded their asses with their grain and departed. And a certain one opened his sack to give fodder to his ass at the lodging place, and he saw his money and, lo, it was in the mouth of his sack. And he said to his brother: My money has been restored to me, and, see, it is also in my sack! And their heart failed them, and in fear they turned one to another, saying: What is this that God has done to us?The Egyptians give them the desired grain; the sons of Jacob must load it on their own beasts. At once they "departed," only too glad to get away so cheaply. How many days' journeys they had gone when the next episode occurred we are not told. Since they had "provisions for their journey," this would seem to imply also provender for their beasts. Consequently it may have been near the end of the return journey that some one of their number found it necessary to supplement what fodder he had been provided with in "the lodging place," i. e., the caravansary used for such journeys, an empty shelter by the roadside built to accommodate caravans. The article is used with malôn, signifying the particular one where all this happened. This individual to his great surprise "saw his money," for it was not buried deep in the grain but laid on top so as to be discovered at once. Therefore the remark, "and, lo, it was in the mouth of the sack," is not "unnatural" because "selfevident" as K. C. strangely claims, at least for v.28. For the same reason that appears for making the first statement in v.27 applies also for v.28 where the one tells his brother exactly where he found it. Here practically all critical commentators agree that the text must be charged with being guilty of an omission. For after v.28 a they assume that what happened was that all opened their sacks and discovered their money. So the critics feel the scare they received is better motivated. How unnecessary an assumption! Let them visualize what happened. Apparently, they think that each brother had only one sack, and that all sacks were

opened at the end of the first day. Both of these are very improbable assumptions. If such a journey was to be of any consequence, each man would secure quite a number of sacks. Just by chance one man opened a sack before he came home, and it happened to be the sack containing the money. The others would not have thought of the possibility of having the money restored to each of them, not in the wildest flight of their fancy. But with consciences so badly alarmed as theirs were, and nerves as jittery, even one such sack seemed to spell calamity. Mindful of God's just punishment, they feel that somehow God had a hand in what was befalling them. This was not superstition. The training of their youth received at the hand of a godly father was reasserting itself. "In fear they turned to one another" reads in Hebrew: "they trembled a man toward his brother" -- a pregnant construction with 'el (K. S.213 a). "Their heart failed them," according to the Hebrew idiom -- "their heart went out." Here especially critical ingenuity displays itself: it finds it unthinkable that either E or J could be so clever as to use both "sack" and "bag," i. e., 'amta'chath and saq; and they invent the opening of all bags at the lodging place in order to make J's account differ materially from E's, who has the rest open their bags after they arrive home. All unwarranted devices that are unworthy of the scholars that make them.29-34. And they came to Jacob, their father, to the land of Canaan and they told him all that had befallen them, saying: The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly to us, and treated us as if we were spying upon the land. But we said to him: We are honest men; we have never been spies. Twelve in number we are, brothers, sons of our father, the one is no more, and the youngest is this day with his father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the land, said to us: By this I shall know whether ye are honest -- leave one of your brothers with me and take what meets the need of your households and go; and ye shall bring your youngest brother to me; so shall I know that ye are not spies but are honest men; so shall I give your brother back to you, and ye may go about in the land.This report covers what the preceding verses record. Joseph is designated as "the lord ('adhoney -- plural of potentiality) of the land." It is rather significant that they omit to tell their father of the disgrace of spending three days in prison. Neither do they inform him that Simeon was left behind bound. That, of course, he discovered for himself.35-38. And it came to pass when they emptied their sacks that, behold, each man had the bundle of his money in his sack; and when they saw the bundles of their money, they as well as their father grew afraid. And Jacob, their father, said to them: Me have ye made childless -- Joseph is no more; Simeon is no more; and ye would take Benjamin also? on me are all these things fallen. And Reuben said to his father: You may slay my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Entrust him to my care, and I will return him to you. But he said: My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead and he alone is left. Should a mishap befall him on the way which you go, ye shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the afterworld. The first report of his sons was borne with relative equanimity by old father Jacob. But now an added disturbance arises, which, because it seems so utterly inexplicable, seems all the more dire a threat. All the brethren discover their "bundles of money" (tserorôth kaspêhem -- a kind of double plural: "bundles of money" -- K. S.267 b) in their sacks. This puts them all on the defensive and requires an explanation they cannot furnish and lays every man of them open to serious charges. Now even the father's sober courage fails him. He sees all his sons in danger. He foresees the direst outcome. Though it is unreasonable grief and fear that speak, yet the father hits closer to the truth than he guessed when he charges his sons with being the ones who were making him childless. How the sons must have winced at the charge, wondering how much their father actually guessed! How their already sensitive conscience must have smarted still more!

Jacob anticipates losing at least three sons: Joseph, Simeon, Benjamin.37. Now Reuben seeks to make good at least his share of the original wrong by a rather extravagant offer, which has been described as bearing the marks rather "or a crude heroism than of any common sense" (Lange). Luther charges Reuben with speaking without rhyme or reason: Also hat Ruben allen Verstand und gemeinen Witz oder Vernunft verloren. Tamîth is permissive rather than imperative: "you may stay." But why should the murder of grandchildren compensate for the loss of a son? For the present the father's refusal is categorical (v.38): "My son shall not go down with you." Here it appears how deeply and how long he had grieved over the loss of Joseph. The sons of the favourite wife had been unusually dear to Jacob. After a life that had been marked by many severe buffetings of adversity Jacob feels he simply could not endure another major blow. This would bring his "gray hair" (sebhah -- by metonomy -- him as an aged man) with sorrow to the afterworld, i. e., to Sheol. Now She'ol in earlier Hebrew literature is the common place of abode for all the departed and is, therefore, as vague as "afterworld" or "grave." It asserts nothing about the state of the departed who have gone there. Much later it becomes the term that describes the abode of the wicked. Much has been imputed to the term without good grounds. It involves no thought such as Procksch injects into it when he says: "He that departs to the realm of the dead full of grief rests there in eternal shadowy grief," and cites as proof Job 14:22. What Job said in his most grievous temptation does not reflect the normal belief of the saints of old. Job spoke while under the shadow of doubt, and his word hardly counts as a dogmatic proof passage, a sedes doctrinae. Jacob, therefore expresses only this thought: My last days, should Benjamin die, will be steeped in great grief under the load of which I shall die -- not a very cheerful prospect.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThough the entire chapter makes a long text, its interest is sustained and so will carry the preacher past that difficulty. Two approaches strike us as feasible. Either, one may think in terms of the brothers who thought they had executed the perfect crime. From this angle the word is fulfilled which says: "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Nu 32:23). Or else, one may think in terms of Joseph and his magnanimous conduct toward his brethren. Then the treatment will yield some such approach as that suggested by the word: "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Ro 12:17).

CHAPTER XLIII

7. The Second Journey to Egypt with Benjamin (43:1-34) The work of God upon the hearts of Joseph's brethren is only begun. Joseph himself is the instrument of God and knows himself to be at work in such a capacity. So far the brothers are ready to use selfaccusations; they admit that a just retribution befalls the sinner. They have not, however, consciously broken with their sin, nor has it actually been overcome. They have not yet become regenerate men. The last steps in this work of restoration come in this and in the following chapters. 1-5. But as far as the famine was concerned, it was severe in the land. And it came to pass when they had entirely eaten up the grain which they brought from Egypt, that their father said to them: Buy a bit of food for us again. But Judah said to him: The man strictly admonished us, saying, Ye shall not appear before me except your brother be with you. So if thou art sending our brother along with us, we shall go down and buy food for thee. But if thou art not sending him, we shall not go down. For the man said to us, Ye shall not appear before me except your brother be with you. By putting the noun hara'abh first, the author turns attention back to the famine. Its effects were beginning to be felt heavily; kabhedh is a very emphatic "be heavy" or "severe." "When they had entirely eaten up" is our way of rendering the Hebrew idiom: "when they had finished to eat," where killû is the chief verb and 'ekhol an infinitive, yet the chief verb is best rendered by the adverb "entirely." The same construction appears in "buy again," where "again" is practically the chief verb "return" (G. K.102 g; K. S.361 m). We have no means of knowing how long it took till their grain was "entirely eaten up." A few months would seem to be the limit even with the utmost of stinting. The father's request speaks of "a bit (me'at) of food," because Egypt was selling only in very limited quantities, and, besides, in any case, no matter what amount was secured, it was only "a bit" in comparison with the enormity of the need. 3. Judah functions as spokesman. That others may have contributed their bit to the discussion is not excluded. Several substantial reasons may be advanced why Judah stands in the forefront. The negative aspect of the case is this: Reuben had forfeited his pre-eminence by incest (Ge 35:22); Simeon was incarcerated; Levi had displayed cruel bloodthirstiness (Ge 34:25). On the positive side several factors put Judah in the forefront. He was relatively innocent of disposing of Joseph. (Ge 37:26). Besides, he seems to have grown in solidity of character since his sin of incest, unwittingly committed (ch. Ge 38). For that matter, he seems, to have had the makings of a really strong and resolute character, ready to act in an emergency, more than did the others. But for all his firmness in dealing with the present situation he displays proper respect for his aged father throughout. For even the summons, "Buy a bit of food for us," contains an evasion. The father was reluctant to face the issue (Ge 42:34, 38). He knew that Benjamin had to go along. Yet he had vowed that Benjamin must stay home. Now he tries to send the rest without the youngest -- a natural evasion. such as we poor humans often resort to when an unpleasant situation is encountered. Judah had rightly gathered from the tenor of Joseph's demand that he was not to be trifled with. He expressed this, "admonishing he admonished us" or "strictly admonished," the usual construction of reinforcing the verbal idea by the infinitive absolute ha'edh he'idh, literally "testifying he testified," from 'ûdh. The stern Joseph is evasively referred to as "the man." "Ye shall not appear before me" runs thus in Hebrew: "Ye shall not see my face."

The ultimatum has to be reckoned with: "If thou art sending our brother along (meshalléach -- Piel), we shall go down; if not, we shall not go down." This makes the situation hard for the father, but no harder than it actually is. Judah is actually helping Jacob to make an inevitable decision. 6-10. And Israel said: Why have ye dealt so ill with me as to tell the man that you had another brother? And they said: The man closely questioned us about our family, saying: Is your father still alive? Have you a brother? and so we told him the facts of the case. Could we know in any way that he would say: Bring your brother down? But Judah in particular said to Israel, his father: Let the lad go along with me, and let us be up and going, that we may keep alive and not die, both we, and thou, and our families. I personally will go bond for him. Demand him at my hand. If I do not bring him back to thee and set him before thy face, I shall count as guilty before thee forever. For if we had not procrastinated so long, surely by this time we could have returned at least twice. The name Israel appears here for the first time since chapter 37. Critics claims that as an index of different sources, attributing the name to J. However, this results in a very arbitrary division, especially in chapter 45. The simplest explanation of the use of the two names Jacob and Israel seems to be; where Jacob is used the man is represented as characterized more by his older nature which overlooked his theocratic destiny; and when Israel is used the man is represented as actually acting in the consciousness of his higher calling. For "Jacob" this surely holds good in Ge 42:29-38. The true "Israel" speaks in Ge 43:1-13; also in Ge 45:28. But before the news of Joseph revived him Ge 45:25-27 he thought in terms of "Jacob." The complaint: "Why have ye dealt so ill with me as to tell the man?" is a bit fretful. Israel seems to feel that the family was unduly endangered by incautious remarks. In lehaggîdh the le of relation or sphere (K. S.402 z) is used. 7. Now several brothers take part in the conversation -- wayyo'merû, "and they said." A comparison with Ge 42:13 would suggest that they had volunteered the information given about their family. However, Ge 44:19 confirms the correctness of this seventh verse. Consequently 42:13 is more in the nature of an inexact account such as all men frequently give before the issues are clearly defined. For, without a doubt, much more was said in the course of the conversation than the few words recorded, which in a summary way indicate the major points touched upon. What we have rendered very loosely, "the facts of the case," reads in Hebrew: "according to the measure (literally, mouth) of these things." Again the absolute infinitive figures in, "Could we know in any way?" for the Hebrew has: "knowing could we know?" -- nedha' -- from yadha' -- being an imperfect used potentially: not "will we know?" but "could we know?" (K. S.187; G. K.107 t). "Questioned us closely" also involves an absolute infinitive. 8. We translate wayyo'mer jehûdhah, "Judah in particular said," because this verse stands in contrast with the preceding where they all spoke. It is good to observe that here the Kal imperative is used (emphatic form) shilchah; above in v.5 the Piel appeared, meshalléach. The Kal is the weaker stem and does not imply so much a sending away as a letting go: "Let the lad go along with me" -- and so the statement leaves more room for the idea of a return (K. C.). Sturdy resolution speaks forth in the words, "let us be up and going" -- literally: "let us arise and let us go." The reference to possible death is not ill-timed, for death by starvation must have claimed many victims in those days. We feel that "we, and those, and our families" really constitutes a climactic statement, especially since the tappénû is not "our families" but really "our little ones." But no doubt, since children constituted the major part of the families, the term is used by synecdoche for the whole group. 9. The initial 'anokhi bears the emphasis, "I personally." In the strongest possible terms Judah pledges himself to do everything humanly possible to guarantee a safe return of the young man. For though in v.8 he is called na'ar,

youth or "lad," he must have been easily twenty-one years of age. But the other brothers are so much older that he seems young by contrast. The verb arabh means to "go surety" or "bond" or "to pledge oneself." Again chata'nî is rather, "I shall count as guilty," than, "I shall sin." Judah's proposition is not so extravagant as Reuben's was Ge 42:37, and so is calculated to awaken more confidence. Judah closes his strong plea with the practical observation: But for this unnecessary delay the trip could have been made twice over by this time. Delay increases the suffering and mends nothing. 11-14. And Israel, their father, said to them: If that be the case, then do this: take of the choice fruits of the land in your receptacles and take a present down for the man, a little balm, and a little honey, gum, laudanum, pistachio nuts and almonds; and take some more money along, and also the money that was restored in the opening of your sacks, take it back with you; perhaps there was some mistake. Then take your brother, start out and return to the man. And may God Almighty grant you to find favour before the man and restore to you your other brother and Benjamin. But as for me, as I was childless, so have I become childless again. Throughout this entire discussion are heard frequent references to "the man" -- the ominous individual whose name they scarcely dare mention. Judah has summarized the issues very correctly. By so doing he has helped Israel to see the whole situation in the proper light, so that he finally says: 'im ken, ie., "if so," namely: "if that be the case." The unavoidable must be met. But a bit of careful foresight is still in place. He who once sought to placate Esau's wrath by a gift (Ge 32:13 ff) now orders a gift prepared for "the man." At best the gift must have been meagre, "a little balm, a little honey." Yet when grains do not grow, a few other delicacies may still subsist meagrely. These are described as "the choice fruits of the land," zimrath ha'arets, a term that has been much discussed. For the word zimrah may mean "music" or "praise" and so the thing praised or "choice fruits." The majority of scholars seem to interpret the term thus, as did in a way the old Greek translators, who used carpoi, "fruits." It seems as though some of the gifts sent were not indigenous to Egypt, like pistachio nuts and almonds. Consequently some conclude that "honey" must refer not to bee honey, which is found in Egypt but to grape honey, boiled down from fresh grape juice to the consistency of syrup, a product of which Delitzsch reported that 300 camels' burden of it still was being exported annually to Egypt from Hebron in his day. "Balm," "gum" and "laudanum" were discussed Ge 37:25. Besides, they were to take "more money" along. Késeph mishneh may mean "double money." But since the original money is mentioned besides, it seems to mean only "other money" (so K. W., sub mishneh). We simply say "more money." The manner of referring to "the money that was restored" indicates that it has been kept intact in its original bundles, a kind of unlucky coin which no one cared to use. The simplest explanation to be devised for the present is: "perhaps there was some mistake."13. The word order puts "brother" first with an emphasis of about this sort: "And as far as your brother is concerned, take him." Seeing clearly that Benjamin must go, Jacob reaches a quick decision and settles the case that was so long pending. Of course, qûmû means "arise," but usually its implication is to address one's self to a task. We therefore· translate: "Start out."14. "God Almighty" ('el shadday), Who was the covenant God of Abraham, is besought to afford the protection that human agencies cannot give. Note the faith of the man Jacob. He certainly tried to exhaust every human expedient before he exposed Benjamin to the dangers of the journey. Then he committed the issues into God's hand. Nor has he a limited and an unworthy conception of God. The term employed suggests the unlimited power of God. Nor is his God a local, tribal deity; He has power to control the hearts of men anywhere, and if it so please the Almighty, He will make the hearts of the unfriendly to be favourably disposed

to God's people and will induce them to cancel their harsh deeds. Jacob's words at this point are not a timid wish but a powerful benediction spoken in faith. The adjective "other" after "brother" is without the article after a definite noun -- a construction often used with numerals after a definite noun (K. S.334 w).Israel's benediction and the spirit in which it was spoken indicate the character of the words that follow. They are not a weak complaint but a word of grief spoken in the spirit of faith. The King James Version makes it too much a word of resignation: "If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." Besides, "be bereaved" would require an imperfect rather than the perfect shakhólti. Luther's translation makes it too much a word of bitter complaint: Ich aber muss sein wie einer, der seiner Kinder gar beraubet ist:" I must be as one who is spoiled of all his children." This rendering, too, clashes with the perfect. As a matter of fact, the perfect suggests: "As I was childless, so have I become childless again" -- the second perfect shakhßlti being a perfect of result, perfectum resultativum (K. S.127a). The thought is: not so many years ago I was a childless man, now I have practically again become such a one. The extreme hyperbole of grief expresses thus the thought: I am rapidly losing my children one after another. Extreme as the utterance is, being coupled with faith, it means: if it so please God, so let it be. Similar thoughts are similarly expressed in Es 4:16; 2 Kings 7:4.15-17. And the men took such a gift, and twice as much money, did they take along with them, and Benjamin. Then they started out and went down to Egypt and stood in Joseph's presence. And Joseph saw Benjamin with them and he said to the man who was over his house: Bring the men down to the house, slay a beast and prepare it; for the men are to eat with me at noon. And the man did as Joseph had said, and the man brought these men to Joseph's house.The narrative moves along in the stately lapidary style of the Scriptures. Three things are taken along: "this gift" (hamminchah hazzo'th) or as we should say: "such a gift." Then "twice as much money" -- literally: "the double in respect to money" (késeph being an accusative of specification). The verb "take" is repeated for this second object to make this item stand out prominently. Thirdly, since the father's permission had been secured, they took Benjamin. We see the apprehensive group get under way and "go down" to the lower lying country of Egypt. And there we meet them in the presence of the man who had engaged their waking thoughts for the past months. Apprehensiveness is written in every man's face. 16. A multitude of issues are settled for Joseph the moment he sees Benjamin. The brothers have not ventured to do anything to his younger brother like what they did to him. Besides, all that the brothers had said on this matter bore the stamp of veracity. The time for Joseph to rejoice, at least over this fact, is at hand. Without a moment's hesitation and glad beyond measure to see his only maternal brother in the flesh, Joseph gives orders "to the man who was over his house," i. e., his stewart, to "bring these men down to the house, slay a beast and prepare it" Joseph's explanation is: "The men are to eat with me at noon." A great man such as Joseph is does not stand under obligation to his subordinates to account for the seemingly unusual things that he does. For one in Joseph's exalted position to select a group of foreigners for such an honour for no apparent reason must have seemed passing strange. The respect Joseph enjoyed is displayed most significantly in his servant's attitude: He "did as Joseph had said," and "the man brought these men (both nouns repeated, instead of pronouns, used to make the contrast the stronger: Joseph's steward was a man of influential position) to Joseph's house."Here the question is usually discussed about Joseph's eating meat, though he lived like a typical Egyptian. The assumption usually is that since so many animals were sacred in Egypt, the natives ate no meat. It is known from Herodotus that Egyptians so abhorred things foreign, that priests, at least, ate and drank nothing that was

imported, nor would they use utensils for eating that had been used by Greeks. Wilkinson, quoted by Whitelaw, informs us that "beef and goose constituted the principal part of the animal food throughout Egypt"; also that the monuments indicate that "a considerable quantity of meat was served up at those repasts to which strangers were invited." So we need not fear that any inaccuracy lurks in the command to "slay a beast." "Noon" (tsohorßyim) is a dual because it marks the point where the day divides itself into two halves, the noon really extending into both.18-22. And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house and they said: It is because of the matter of the money that came back to our sacks the first time that we are being brought, that one may roll himself upon us and cast himself upon us and take us for slaves and our asses. And they approached the man who was over Joseph's house and they spoke with him at the door of the house, saying: Oh please, dear sir, we merely came down the first time to purchase grain. And it happened when we came to the lodgingplace and opened our sacks, that, lo, each man's money was found in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; and we brought it back with us. And other money have we brought down with us to buy food. We do not know who placed our money in our sacks.It has been rightly remarked that Joseph first confused his brethren by his severity, then by his gracious invitation (Procksch). Who could interpret such a complete reversal of attitude? Naturally the men construe the invitation to be something in the nature of a judicial summons and tie it up in their thoughts with the returned money. As vaguely as possible they speak of it as the money "that came back to our sacks." For shabh, the participle, is to be construed actively, "came back," not "was returned" (A. V., also K. S.97). This vague expression, without necessarily involving superstitious notions, indicates their perplexity; they feel there is something mysterious about it all -- but also something ominous. This will furnish occasion for "one (Joseph is implied) to roll himself upon" them and "to cast himself upon" them, expressions indicative of their apprehension of being overwhelmed by a calamity which is in the last analysis "that man." Since a provision of the Mosaic law (Ex 22:3) provides that thieves be sold as bondmen, it is quite likely that such a provision prevailed at an earlier date; and this led the brothers to conclude that they would be impounded as "slaves," and also their "asses," they add with a mournful pessimism that visualizes the worst.19. Before they ever get into the house, which appears to them as a trap, they approach the steward "at the door (adverbial accusative -- péthach habbßyith) of the house." They plead their case very humbly: "oh please, dear sir" -- 'adhonî -- "my lord" in the sense of our "dear sir." "Coming down we came down," yarodh yarßdhnû, here gives a meaning like "we merely came down" or "indeed we came down." Here they condense the narrative without anything remotely like falsification, for when they claim that they opened their sacks at the lodgingplace, they mean only that their sacks were not opened until they were too far removed from Egypt to return and to restore the money. "Sacks" is a categorical plural. It is to be observed in their report of things, whether made at home or before Egyptians, that these men are always strictly honest, a thing that certainly turned out very decidedly in their favour. "Our money in full weight" is really our money "according to its weight" (bemishqalô). This suggests that in these early days before the coinage of money "silver" (késeph -- usually translated "money" because silver was the metal most used for such purposes) was weighed and apparently circulated as small bits, rings, bars and the like. The brothers express their readiness to restore this mysterious money as well as to pay for what they purpose to buy afresh, and they rightly say they cannot tell "who placed the money" in their sacks. Joseph's steward, no doubt informed as to that part of the situation, could check on the correctness of this last statement. Wanniphtechah

(v.21) is one of those rarer forms where an imperfect with waw conversive has an "ah hortative" (yaktul gravatum, K. S.200), which ending has completely lost its force. 23-25. And he said: Be at ease; do not be afraid; your and your father's God has given you a treasure in your sacks; your money came into my hands. Then he brought Simeon out to them. And the man brought these men into Joseph's house; and he gave them water to wash their feet; and he gave them fodder for their asses. And they prepared the gift against Joseph's coming at noon; for they had heard that they were to have their meal there.The double mention of the steward's bringing these men to Joseph's house found in Ge 43:17b and Ge 43:24 a is not an indication of how two literary sources merged, as even Koenig unnecessarily concedes. A fine point of realism is lost by such an interpretation. It is far more to the point to construe the statement of v.17 as marking the beginning of the steward's work along this line: he begins to escort the strangers towards his master's house. But they make a definite halt at the door, and only after their problem has been adjusted can the steward lead the men indoors: "he brought these men in." Such obvious and natural interpretations escape the critics because of their confusing source analysis."Be at ease" (the Hebrew, "Peace be with you") is a good rendering of Meek's. It shows that this expression sometimes has no deeper implications. Here it might actually be rendered: "Everything is all right." The steward has perhaps copied the more godly forms of speech of his master, or else he has caught his master's piety when he ascribes the return of the money to God. The Hebrew expression does not allow for a polytheistic interpretation of the expression "your God and the God of your father" (A. V.). Therefore we have translated, "your and your father's God." The Hebrew does not like to extend the construct relationship over a succession of nouns as K. S.276a explains; but rather prefers to repeat the first noun, viz., "the God of you and the God of your father," The steward calls the money a "treasure," i. e., "a buried thing." This answer or reassurance, is given to the brothers outside the door. Further to increase their confidence Simeon is restored to them. Then they are led indoors and treated as honoured guests, being provided with water for the washing of their feet. In fact, even their asses are provided with fodder. Then they make ready their gift, which their father had suggested, "against Joseph's coming at noon." For by this time it has come to their ears that they were "to have their meal there," -- Hebrew idiom: "eat bread there." It seems the Egyptian custom was to have the more substantial meal at noon; the Hebrew custom, at evening.26-31. Then Joseph came home, and they presented to him the gift which was in their hand, bringing it into the house, and they bowed down before him to the ground· And he inquired after their well-being, and he said: Is your father well? the old man of whom ye told me; is he yet alive? And they said: Thy servant, our father, is well; he is yet alive. And they did obeisance and bowed down. And he raised his eyes and saw Benjamin, his brother, the son of his mother, and he said: is this your youngest brother of whom ye told me? And he said: God be gracious to thee, my son. And Joseph hurriedly sought a place to weep, for his feelings were stirred at the sight of his brother; and he went into an inner room and wept there. Then he washed his face and came back and kept himself under control, and said: Serve the meal.Joseph, the busy food administrator, cannot be home before noon. When he arrives, they present their gift first. Nothing is said as to how Joseph received it. Apparently, Joseph knew that he had to take care to keep himself well in hand. To take too much note even of so small a thing as this gift might have caused him to lose his cool reserve. The expression in reference to the gift which was "in their hand" we have translated previously where it occurred in the chapter (v. Ge 43:12 and v. Ge 43:15) merely as "along" or "along with them," for the idea certainly was not that the money was to be carried all the way "in their hand"

(beyedhkhem). But here (v.26) the expression could be translated literally. The pregnant construction "to the house" (habbayethah) means "bringing it into the house." Again the dream of chapter 37 is manifestly fulfilled as "they bowed down before him to the ground;" the customary gesture of oriental respect. Joseph, no doubt, made his inquiries as casual as possible. First he inquires after their own "wellbeing" -- Hebrew: "peace," shalôm. So as not to make the inquiry concerning the father appear too pointed he adds, "the old man of whom ye told me." Deep attachment dictated the solicitude of the question, "is he well; is he yet alive?" The sons reply with the courteous idiom of their day, designating their father, as they do themselves, as Joseph's "servant"; and they acknowledge the courtesy of the inquiry by "doing obeisance" (yiqqedhû from qadhad) and by "bowing down" (yishtachawû) -- a pair of words often appearing together.29. The next step comes naturally. Next to his father, Benjamin is the object of Joseph's concern. The greater length at which the meeting with Benjamin is dwelt upon shows the importance of this meeting to Joseph; for Benjamin is in a stronger sense "his brother," for he is "the son of his mother." All this must have run strongly through Joseph's feelings at the sight of his brother, who was perhaps a year old when Joseph last saw him and now was a young man of twenty-two years. Joseph dare not admit that he really knows him, and so he inquires as a stranger might. Throughout the interview thus far Joseph has very correctly played the part of the high-standing Egyptian lord: he has not troubled to acknowledge their gift; now he does not wait for an answer to his question. But his deeper feelings at this point break into utterance in the brief but touching: "God be gracious to thee, my son." "Son" is quite permissible because of the prominent difference in age. Besides, it is a part of Joseph's disguise. Yechonkha, imperfect optative from chanan, the "o" having receded into the first syllable before the suffix. Till now Joseph's self-control has been admirable. We do not at all wonder that he now "hurriedly yema (h) her -- translated as an adverb, being auxiliary to sought' sought a place to weep." Nikhmerû literally means "to grow warm," here "were stirred." The final shammah apparently gets its "ah locative" by attraction to the ah of hachchadhrah (K. S.330 h). The interruption dare not be long if Joseph is to play his role successfully. He washes his face, indicating that he must have wept rather freely, returns, keeps himself under control, and bids the meal be served -- Hebrew: "set on bread." The dagesh in 'aleph of yabhî'û v.26 marks the 'aleph as not having lost its natural Hebrew character of a smooth breathing and as not having become like double "y" between two vowels as is the case in the Aramaic. 32-34. And they served him alone and them alone, and the Egyptians eating with him alone; for the Egyptians cannot eat a meal together with Hebrews; for that would be an abomination to the Egyptians. And they were seated before him according to age, the eldest first, the youngest last; and the men looked at one another in astonishment. And he provided portions for them from his own table, and Benjamin's portion was five times as great as the portion of all the rest of them. So they feasted and drank freely with him.The exclusiveness of the Egyptians over against foreigners is well known, especially the exclusiveness of the priests. It would hardly have done for Joseph to incur Egyptian displeasure by flagrant disregard of custom. So everything proceeds in approved fashion. He, who belongs to the priestly cast, is served alone. So are his brothers. So are his Egyptian guests. All caste distinctions are thus faithfully upheld. Egyptians regarded eating together with foreigners as tô'ebhah, "an abomination" -- (Meek good: "abhorrent"). Here Joseph again introduces a touch of mystery which, as Keil says, "necessarily impressed them with the idea that this great man had been supernaturally enlightened as to their family affairs." How could they think otherwise? They had never revealed a thing about the matter

to anyone in Egypt, and here they sit, accurately arranged according to age. They cannot, but "look at one another in astonishment" -- Hebrew: "they were astonished, a man toward his fellow" -- pregnant construction of 'el. The phrase lephanay can hardly mean "according to his judgment," as K. C. strangely translates. They actually sat before Joseph -- "before him" -- so that he could in a measure feast his eyes upon them, but perhaps primarily for the purpose of keeping their unusual Egyptian patron distinctly before their eyes.34. Now Joseph does something that provides a further test of the brethren. He purposely shows preference for Benjamin. Had the same feeling prevailed over against Benjamin that had once animated them over against Joseph, such preference would have stirred resentment that could hardly have been kept under cover. But they meet the test successfully. Even when the more generous use of wine has removed the restraint from their tongues, the men still ring true. The distinction conferred on Benjamin was "portions" of honour from Joseph's table, five "portions" to the one received by every other brother. Mas'ah is a noun derived from the root nasa', "to lift up," by prefixing an "m." Such gifts, not required to be eaten but to be regarded as honorary distinctions, have their parallels in antiquity, as Dillmann shows, quoting Knobel. Spartan kings always received a double portion; Cretan archons a quadruple portion. However, among the Egyptians five was a number enjoying a special distinction. Shakhar, the last verb, sometimes means to become drunk, but apparently the milder meaning prevails here: they "drank freely."The chapter is assigned by critics to J with the possible exception of about v. Ge 43:12-15, or Ge 43:16, 23 b. But the arbitrary distinctions made offer no new problem here and have been answered by us above.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThere is hardly any danger that this chapter will ever fall into neglect in the Church, for all children hear the substance of it and readily remember it. As a whole or in its various parts the chapter is so intimately bound up with the unravelling of the knot of the plot of the Joseph story that there is very little about it that suggests itself for use as a sermon text. Every part is so clear in itself that, should any man take a portion of the chapter as a text, he should have no difficulty about the treatment of it.

CHAPTER XLIV

8. The Test Successfully Met by Joseph's Brethren (Chapter 44) The approach that Luther makes to this chapter is worth noting. He asks why it should have pleased the Holy Ghost to write down things seemingly so trivial; for the individual steps in the development of this sacred drama are, indeed, recorded very minutely. He answers that this was done in order that men might learn to perform faithfully the duty assigned them. Joseph displays a fine attitude toward his duty and his calling when he performs all parts of it in a conscientious way. Such works done in the way of one's calling are right and pleasing to God. Aside from that, Joseph's brethren have not yet been tested to the fullest extent nor led to the point where they have an opportunity to retrace their steps and to make good their shameful treatment of Joseph. To this point Joseph guides them, being himself directed by God's Holy Spirit to display a wisdom and an unselfishness which call forth our highest admiration. 1-3. And he gave commandment to the man who was over his household, saying: Fill the sacks of the men with as much food as they will be able to carry away, and place each man's money in the mouth of his sack. And place my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest as well as the money for his grain. And he did according to the orders that Joseph gave. Morning came and the men were dismissed with their asses. Joseph's steward co-operated perfectly with his master in a very discreet way. But behind this discretion and the very practical wisdom of Joseph one involuntarily feels the guiding hand of the good Lord, who gave success to a plan that might have miscarried in a number of ways. The steward's orders were to give the men all the grain their sacks would hold. This generosity would be noticed, and the elation of the brethren would be increased thereby. Again the money was to be laid in the mouth of the sack -- késeph -- "silver," again for "money," as in the preceding chapters. The purpose of this was to be what it had been in the first instance. This mysterious money preyed on the mind of the brethren and roused a sense of the presence of a higher hand in all these proceedings. Besides, as it roused a sense of involuntary guilt on the part of the brethren, we believe that Delitzsch is right when he claims that "the brethren forfeited the right to give up Benjamin because all had in their bags something incriminating." Yet we doubt whether that was felt or realized at the time, because not a word is said in the further course of the narrative about this second money in the bags. This money simply faded into the background because of the prominence of the fateful cup. This gabhî'a' was apparently a cup of special design, for it is mentioned in connection with the seven branched candlestick as being upon each branch. According to the root the term means something "convex" or "swelling." No doubt, a typically Egyptian cup is meant. This cup is to be placed in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, in order to create the impression that he had filched it, and so, of course, the brothers would be put to the test as to whether they were ready to abandon him to his fate. These orders from Joseph are carried out. A certain abruptness characterizes the style at this point, first, by the use of the asyndeton: "morning came" or "became light" ('ôr); then, by the use of successive perfects, also in v.4 (K. S.119). 4-9. They on their part went forth from the city. They had not yet gone far when Joseph said to the one who was over his house: Up, follow after the men, and when thou hast overtaken them, thou shalt say to them: Why have ye requited evil for good? Is not this that out of

which my master drinks? in fact, he practices divination thereby. Ye have done evil in so doing. And he overtook them and spoke these very words. And they said to him: Why does my lord say such things? Far be it from thy servants to do anything like this. Look, silver that we found in the mouth of our sacks we returned to thee from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal from thy lord's house, silver or gold? He of thy servants with whom it might be found, both he shall die, and we on our part shall be slaves to my lord. It is not difficult to imagine with what cheerful hearts and almost exultant behaviour these men took their departure ("go forth" with direct object in the sense of "leave the city"). They had been treated like royalty. The man whom they had dreaded to encounter had proved a genial host. Their grain sacks were well filled. Eagerly they recounted every detail of their experience. In the meantime Joseph barely allows them time to get beyond the city when he instructs his steward to make haste lest the men by discovering the cup themselves and returning it thwart his purpose. The perfect tenses still continue the impression of abrupt haste in the narrative. Much depends on the very words used, therefore Joseph lays the very statements to be made upon his steward's lips. First comes the general accusation calculated to arouse a measure of apprehension: "why have ye requited evil for good?" an arresting question while the memory of the favours received was still remarkably fresh. 5. The vague "this" spoken as though all of the men must know that he referred to the stolen cup is a clever approach and very realistic. The steward makes it appear that this was in a very special sense Joseph's cup ("to drink" is construed with be, "in," because the lips touch the cup in drinking). Some translators, like the Greek Septuagint and the Vulgate, certainly missed the fine point of the steward's clever approach on the indefinite "this" without an antecedent, when they felt it necessary to prefix the explanatory remark: "Why have ye stolen the silver cup?" However, the steward's next remark causes us a measure of perplexity when he says: "in fact, he practices divination thereby." Practising divination is a heathen custom. The type referred to here is cupdivination, called culicomanteia by the ancients. As far as the practice as such is concerned, it is said to have been used in several forms. Some poured clear water into a bowl or a cup and then strewed into the water small pieces or particles of gold and of silver or even of precious stones. Some poured oil into the water. Still others observed the manner in which light rays broke on the surface. Usually the resulting designs to be observed in the water, whether from the particles thrown into it or from the oil, were construed after certain rules in order to draw conclusions as to the future. Surely, if Joseph had imitated these customs, he would have been guilty of heathenish and sinful practices. Or does he merely feign that he uses them? Such feigning would have been a form of deception both here and in v.15. There still remains the possibility, as Vilmar points out, that it may actually have pleased God to use some such means in order to convey higher revelation to Joseph. In fact, we know too little about the whole matter to pass judgment upon it in one way or in another. The last charge to be spoken is, "Ye have done evil in so doing," (literally: "ye have done ill what ye did"). 6. The steward does his part of the work successfully. He delivers his message correctly. A strong protestation of innocence is the reaction on the part of the brethren. Conscious of their innocence, their reply bears all the earmarks of sincerity: strong assertion of innocence coupled with a respectful attitude. They cite a very good illustration of a typical attitude on their part. There was some "silver" involved here recently in a certain case ("silver" -- "money" -- no article, a thing overlooked by the familiar versions; the absence of the article generalizes the statement more). They had found this in their bags; and though they had been in "the land of Canaan" and so beyond the range of observation, they had brought the silver back from a sense of obligation.

Surely, such men could not desire to take from the house of the steward's lord "silver or gold." That is really a forceful argument. The consciousness of their entire innocence leads them to make an extravagant offer: Should this cup be found in the possession of any, that one shall die, and they as a body are ready to return as slaves. The imperfect nighnobh here (v.8) acquires an optative or potential meaning: "how could we steal?" (K. S.187). The relative clause of v.9 practically has a conditional meaning: "if it be found with any of thy servants" (K. S.390 e). 10-13. And he said: Even though now this is to be settled according to your words, yet only he with whom it is found shall be my servant, whereas ye shall be innocent. So they made haste, every man of them, and set their sacks on the ground, and they opened every man his sack. And he made the search -- with the eldest he began, with the youngest he finished -- and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. And they rent their garments, and each man reloaded his ass, and they returned to the city. The usual translations of v.10 (A. V. and Luther) make the verse contain a contradiction: for first the steward says: "let it be according to your words," then he sets up terms radically different from those proposed by the brethren. Apparently, the difficulty can be settled as K. C. proposes by taking gam, "even," in a concessive sense: "Even though now this is to be settled according to your words" -- the thought being implied: in a general way. Then the apodosis reads: "Yet only he with whom it is found shall be my servant, whereas ye will be innocent." The steward speaks thus, well knowing what the outcome of the search will be.11. The brothers make haste to have the unpleasant interruption disposed of as soon as possible. The sacks are set on the ground ready for inspection, They are opened for the steward. The words, "with the eldest he began, with the youngest he finished," are best treated as parenthetical. We can hardly imagine the astonishment when they, practically sure of vindication, see the cup emerge from Benjamin's sack.13. We are struck by the reaction of the brothers of Benjamin. They do not inquire of Benjamin; they do not remonstrate with him; they do not seem to think of the possibility of a piece of deception being practised on them; they do not seem to think Benjamin guilty. They merely rend their garments, reload their asses, and return to the city. The mysteriousness of what happened in just singling out Benjamin seems to impress them all so strongly with the thought that a higher hand is at work, that they actually overlook a few obvious possibilities and reckon only in terms of how their duty demands that they act in reference to Benjamin and in reference to their father. Dods lets his imagination run riot when he actually conjures up the possibility that Benjamin may have made boastful remarks beforehand of the things he was going to do, to show that he was not the child they seemed to think he was; and so the brethren at this point may actually have thought Benjamin guilty of having done the bold thing of actually taking Joseph's cup in order to make good his proud boast.14-17. And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house and he was still there, and they fell down before him on the ground; and Joseph said to them: What is this deed which ye have done? Did ye not know that a man such as I am, is indeed able to use divination? And Judah said: What shall we say to my lord; what can we speak; how can we justify ourselves? God has found the guilt of thy servants. Behold, we are servants to my master, both we and he with whom the cup was found. But he said: Far be it from me to do this. The man with whom the cup was found, he shall be my servant. But as far as ye are concerned, go up in peace to your father.Judah is mentioned separately, apparently because he at this point definitely took the whole situation in hand. The busy food administrator of Egypt in this instance made all things else wait till he had reached the conclusion of the unusual trial that was pending: "he was still there." Again the brethren prostrate themselves. For this was the necessary token of courtesy for all who would

approach a person of such a standing as Joseph had. Joseph first heaps reproach on the brethren, because, surely, in the light of yesterday's favour shown to them they were apparently rank ingrates. Then he increases the sense of higher powers at work in the case by referring to gifts of prognostication which were admittedly his. He may actually, as our remarks on v. Ge 44:5 indicate, have been known in the past to have received revelation from on high. Perhaps he refers to the example known throughout Egypt, how it was he that foretold the event indicated by Pharaoh's dream. The absolute infinitive makes the expression strong: "I am indeed able to use divination" (nach (ck) esh yenach (ch) esh).16. The strong feeling of helplessness is reflected in Judah's triple question: "What shall we say; what can we speak; how can we justify ourselves?" -- potential imperfects; in the last instance mah -- "how." Some here speak of the brethren as being aware of the fact that an adverse fate had caught up with them. We believe such a statement to be out of place. Joseph's brethren knew better than to believe in a blind fate, Their better instruction in the paternal home had taught them concerning the true God. Into His hands they now believed themselves to have fallen: "God has found the guilt of thy servants." They do not actually confess their wrong against Joseph here, but that is what they all thought of at these words of Judah. They felt that divine retribution had caught up with them. Judah's next statement is the utterance of a faithful heart. The idea of Benjamin's remaining alone in Egypt simply could not enter the mind of one of them. If one stays, they all must stay. A good feeling of the solidarity of their group was here recreated in all of them. But Joseph tries them to the uttermost to give the deepest feelings of the heart an opportunity to display themselves. He protests strongly against the idea of keeping back all of them. He even makes release seem delightful by practically guaranteeing them all safe conduct: "go up in peace." But Joseph's mention of their father made them all the more keenly aware of their obligation to him. 18-24. And Judah came up to him and said: Please, lord, let thy servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not become angered at thy servant. For thou art just as Pharaoh is. My lord asked his servant, saying: Have you still a father or a brother? And we said to my lord: Yes we have a father, an old man, and a son of his old age, a youth; and his brother is dead; and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father dearly loves him. And thou didst say to thy servants: Bring him down to me that I may set eyes on him. And we said to my lord: The lad cannot leave his father; his father would die if he should leave him. And thou didst say to thy servants: If your youngest brother does not come down along with you, you cannot appear in my presence. And it came to pass, as we went up to thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord.This is one of the manliest, most straightforward speeches ever delivered by any man. For depth of feeling and sincerity of purpose it stands unexcelled. What makes it most remarkable, however, is the fact that it comes from the lips of one who once upon a time was so calloused that he cared nothing about the grief he had caused his father. The speech is well ordered, being a historical presentation of the facts of the case: how Joseph had learned of their brother and had demanded his presence as a condition of their appearing again before his face; how their father had been apprised of the demand and had grieved over letting the youngest depart; what the effect of the non-appearance of Benjamin on the father would be: and finally it contains a moving plea that Judah might be permitted to stay in Egypt in his brother's stead. It presents no particular exegetical difficulties. But a few things call for explanation. First of all, it is difficult to determine whether as Judah stepped up to Joseph the others remained prostrate on the ground. It seems more likely to us that when he arose they also arose. Then, there is an honest compliment in the words, "for thou art just as Pharaoh is." It means: you have as great power as

Pharaoh and must be respected as he is. It supplies the reason why Judah speaks so respectfully; K. C. makes the clause concessive, but without good reason.In v.20 "he alone is left of his mother's children" runs literally: "and he is left, he alone to his mother." Apparently the le before 'immô is the le used as a substitute for the construct relationship (K. S.280 c). In v.22 the co-ordinated clause, "and he shall leave his father, then he would die," plainly necessitates rendering the first clause conditional, much as K. C. protests; cf. K. S.369 s. Therefore we render, "his father would die, if he should leave him," patterning after Meek's good suggestion.25-34. And our father said: Purchase a little food for us again. And we said: We cannot go down, unless our youngest brother be with us. Then we could go down; for we cannot see the face of the man, if our youngest brother be not with us. And thy servant, my father, said to us: Ye know that my wife bore me two sons, and the one went forth from my presence; all I could say was: surely he hath been rent by a wild beast, and I have not seen him to this day. If ye shall take this one too from me, and evil should befall him, ye should bring down my gray hairs with trouble to Sheol. And now, should I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with me, seeing that his and his father's soul are closely knit together, it will happen that when he sees the lad is not there, he will die; and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of their father with sorrow to Sheol. For thy servant went bond for the lad with my father, saying: If I do not bring him back to thee, I shall be guilty before my father forever. And now let thy servant stay in place of the lad as servant to my lord. And let the lad go up with his brethren. For how could I go up to my father and the lad be not with me? Oh that I might not be obliged to see the evil that would come upon my father!Here, as in the previous portion of Judah's speech, we notice that the whole account must have been condensed quite a bit. The fact mentioned in v.22 has not been recorded heretofore. Yet none of these facts is out of harmony with the original version. Now v.27 and 28 appear as words of Jacob which were not previously reported as belonging in this connection.In v.28 "and I said, Surely, he is torn in pieces" (A. V.) is intended as a summary of the whole experience after he "went forth" from his father's presence. We sought to reproduce this purpose by rendering: "All I could say was, Surely, he hath been rent." Verse 30 presents, a good statement of the case where two are bound together by a close love, "his and his father's soul are closely knit together" (qeshûrah). In v.34 appears that particular use of pen, usually "lest," which introduces negative wishes, "Oh that not." A son that can say: "Oh that I might not be obliged to see the evil that would come upon my father," is a son who really cares for his father and is much concerned not to cause him grief. Judah was a transformed man. That is clearly displayed by his words. No doubt, the entire attitude of all the rest showed just as clearly that Judah was speaking the inmost, thoughts of their heart. There could be no more doubt as to whether the brethren were minded toward their father and his most dearly beloved son as they once were. They were all transformed men. HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSWe feel that our remarks concerning the use of the material of the preceding chapter as a text for a sermon apply also to this chapter.

CHAPTER XLV

9. Joseph Revealed to His Brethren; Summons the Family to Egypt (45:1-28) The test planned and carried through by Joseph had now gone far enough and had proved entirely successful. The deepest feelings of the heart of these men had been laid bare. They were heartily sorry for what they had done to Joseph. In a similar situation they had not thought of dealing heartlessly with their father again. They had refused to take advantage of Benjamin when a very easy way of escape from evil had offered itself for them by abandoning him. They felt that divine justice was slowly but surely catching up with them for their betrayal of Joseph. One of them in particular, Judah, had given proof of heroic self-sacrifice to spare the father. There was no need of probing further. God had so effectually blessed Joseph's course with these brethren of his that manifestly the crowning touch could now be given to it all by Joseph's revelation of his own identity. 1-4. But Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood round about him; so he called out: Have everyone go out from my presence. And so there was no one standing about when Joseph made himself known to his brethren. Joseph raised his voice so loudly in weeping, that the Egyptians heard it, and even the house of Pharaoh heard it. And Joseph said to his brethren: I am Joseph. Is my father still alive? But his brethren were not able to answer him, for they were terrified at the sight of him. But Joseph said to his brethren: Come nearer to me, and they came nearer. And he said: I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. The whole scene as it now follows is a family matter. Our deeper emotions are not to be displayed before the general public. What is sacred to a family group may only be an object of curiosity or of amusement to those outside the group. Very wisely and properly Joseph bids all others leave the room. Then with only the twelve sons of the one father present in the one room comes the revelation. Joseph's overwrought emotions find relief in giving vent to loud weeping, the weeping of joy. It is specifically remarked that they who just had been dismissed, "the Egyptians," (Hebrew: "Egypt") heard him weep. They naturally carried the report to Pharaoh's house. So he heard of it. The simple statement, "I am Joseph," must have come like a thunderclap out of a clear sky on these unsuspecting men. It was spoken, besides, without the assistance of an interpreter and in their own native tongue. The question immediately following could be construed as incongruous and unnecessary. For their previous words had just referred to the father repeatedly as still living. However, upon second thought we discern that everything follows in natural sequence. Before he had asked as a stranger; now he asks as a brother, expecting such an account as one brother might give to another. Besides, as has been repeatedly pointed out, Joseph softens the harshness of the startling announcement, "I am Joseph," by an eager, friendly inquiry about the father. He wants to draw their thoughts away from the alarming disclosure he has just made. We can well understand the reaction of the brothers. Here they were completely in their brother's power, whom they knew for the most part as a harsh and rather cruel man. If the sense of guilt was strong before, now it was overwhelming and entirely alarming. "They were terrified" (nibhhalû -- "trembling" "dismayed") at the sight of him. Perhaps, too, they now recognized a resemblance to their brother's facial traits, mannerisms, bearing and expressions characteristic of him. In horror, wonder anal dismay they naturally started back. 4. But Joseph's entire attitude was one of sincere

friendliness. He invited them to "come nearer." Perhaps more or less automatically they came nearer, feeling that the man must be obeyed. Apprehension still marked every countenance. Fear would not relax its hold on them. Joseph had to win their confidence. His next step serves to establish his identity fully, if that were still necessary, when he mentions that he is the one whom they sold. Lange very correctly sees in this statement on Joseph's part a delicate attempt to make their difficult confession for them, so that for the present this very painful experience does not need to come to the forefront any more. 5-8. And now be not grieved, neither be angry with yourselves that ye have sold me here; for it was for the saving of life that God sent me on before you. For it is now two years that the famine has been in the land, and there are yet five years that there will be neither plowing nor reaping. But God sent me on before you in order to set up for you a remnant on earth and in order to keep alive for you a great number of such who escape. And now it was not ye that sent me here but God, and He has appointed me a father to Pharaoh and lord over all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. A double reaction was liable to appear on the part of Joseph's brethren. They that had contrived the sale of their brother were liable to "grieve" unduly over the wrong they had done, and so might embitter their own lives as well as those of the rest. But they who were relatively innocent might be "angry" ('al yich (ch) ar -- "let it not burn" in your eyes, i. e., do not let anger rise within you as you view this case). The summary statement of the deeper purpose involved is, "it was for the saving of life that God sent me on before you." Michyah -- "life," or "saving of life" -- Leben, Lebensunterhalt (K. W.). It should be noted that Joseph very appropriately ascribes these higher divine plans to 'Elohim, for He it is who as the mighty Ruler of the world providentially controls the affairs of His children. Here another reason becomes apparent. why these matters were not divulged before the ears of the Egyptians. Egyptians would hardly have appreciated the peculiar destiny of Israel. Joseph reminds his brethren that five more years like the last two must be reckoned with. When he says, "there will be neither plowing nor reaping," the statement is meant relatively and not absolutely. Here and there in the land a few may have attempted the one or the other, but with little success. 7. The difficulties of this verse are largely removed if it be remembered that the "remnant" (she'erîth) is Joseph himself. He was "set up" (sîm, "put" or "place") as something left over, a remnant, in order that the others might cluster around him. In the second place, the le before pelêtah indicates the direct object (K. S.289 b). And lastly, pelêtah, literally, "escape," here signifies "the number of such who escape." The verse, therefore, means that Joseph is the nucleus appointed by God, that the men of Israel might rally around him, and so there will be kept alive a great number of such who escape. 8. Now Joseph's explanation grows more pointed. It was not really they who sent him here but God. This is a strong way of asserting the fact of God's overruling providence, stated so strongly for the comfort of his brothers. Here Joseph shows himself particularly wise in ministering to the souls of his brethren. If their sorrow does not learn to reckon with God, His mercy and His mighty providence, it will remain a mere earthly sorrow, which serves no particular purpose. To see God's purpose and judge from His point of view, that throws clear light on everything. Joseph has no overwrought notions about himself, but He clearly sees that his exalted position is arranged for Israel's advantage. His relation to Pharaoh is that of paternal advisor or "father" ('abh). His relation to the royal household is that of supreme controller or "lord," 'adhôn. His relation to Egypt is that of "ruler over all the land." There is no boastful ring in what Joseph here asserts. Strangely, the monuments have titles for men as exalted as Joseph, titles which sound almost the same as 'abh and 'adhôn but have a meaning which is quite different. Joseph may intentionally have used

these titles as a play on terms. In this verse we have Ha-e'lohîm, "the personal God," designated as the one who placed Joseph in the position he occupied. It hardly seems permissible to translate beqérebh ha'arets, v.6, "in the midst of the world," as Strack suggests; such a thought is not motivated in this connection, even though in Ge 46:16 and in Ex 8:18 such a translation might prove admissible. 9-13. Go up quickly to my father and say to him: Thus saith thy son Joseph: God hath appointed me lord of all Egypt; come down to me; delay not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen and thou shalt be near to me, thou, thy sons and thy grandchildren, and thy flocks and thy herds and all that belongs to thee. And I shall provide for thee there, for there are yet five years of famine, lest thou come to poverty, thou and thy sons and all that belongs to thee. For, look, your eyes as well as the eyes of my full brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that is speaking to you. And ye shall tell my father of all my renown in Egypt and of all that ye have seen, and bring my father down here quickly. A further means of setting his brothers' minds at rest is for Joseph to disclose in detail his plans for the future. He has just said that he has been brought to Egypt providentially. What, then, does he purpose to do? The resourceful Joseph, quick at formulating effective plans, has everything arranged for and tells his brothers exactly what is to be done. They are to lose no time: "Go up quickly" (Hebrew: "make haste and go up"). They are to inform their father of Joseph's position of authority and that his message is: "Come down to me; delay not." Joseph's adequate plans have even selected the very place where all are to settle -- "the land of Goshen." This land lies in northeastern Egypt. Here Jacob shall be near Joseph, an added inducement for coming down. It is believed that in these days the Egyptian court was held in Zoan or Tanis, perhaps twenty or twenty-five miles directly north of Goshen. Joseph's plan further stipulates that a complete transmigration take place, involving the head of the family, his children and grandchildren, flocks and herds and all that belongs to him. He himself, Joseph, agrees to provide for all these while they are there during the five years of famine that still remain. Otherwise the family would "come to poverty" (tiwwaresh -- "be dispossessed," i. e., because of debt). That this entire plan has been unfolded with the purpose of also setting the brothers' minds at ease, appears from the next statement (v.12): "Your eyes -- see that it is my own mouth that is speaking to you." Joseph means: there can no longer be any doubt as to my identity and my purpose; the clearest proof that I am really your brother is the fact that without an interpreter I with my own mouth am talking with you in your native tongue; Benjamin, whom the father will most readily believe, sees these same tokens and will corroborate what you say. Achî, "my brother," must here mean "my full brother." Lastly Joseph enjoins upon his brethren to tell their father of all his "renown" (kabhôdh, "glory," "honour," etc.) in Egypt. The purpose of this information is not to be self-glorification on Joseph's part, for this is mentioned last and briefly, and certainly not in a vainglorious fashion. The purpose of telling of Joseph's renown must then simply be to convince the father that Joseph possesses sufficient power to carry through all that he has agreed to do for his family. Conclusion: "Bring my father down here quickly," (mahar -- Piel -- again translated as an adverb, though it is the chief verb in Hebrew; cf. v.9). In v.12 the participle hammedabber is not subject, as G. K. claims (126k), but predicate (K. S.409 a). Strack, as others, concludes without warrant that, since v.13 is practically the same in substance as v.9, the former must be from J. Critical intent on detecting parallel sources lets these critics overlook such plain facts as that our own words often offer repetitions. Here, however, both statements are necessary to a well-rounded out statement for the father: first he must be informed of Joseph's position and plan (v.9). Then, after the details of Joseph's plan of providing for the family have been stated, it is

proper again to remind the father that Joseph's position will enable him to achieve this plan.14, 15. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. And he kissed all the brethren and wept over them. Afterwards his brethren talked with him.The identification is complete; the first restraint has worn away; the revelation of Joseph's plans has quieted misgivings; now a more brotherly greeting is in place. But it still behooves Joseph to take the initiative. This he does, greeting Benjamin, his full brother, first and giving free vent to his emotions, though not so loudly as at first. The expression in reference to Benjamin seems to imply a measure of greater affection displayed in his case -- they "wept on one another's neck" implies clinging to one another. The rest were "kissed" and "wept over" -- all a truly oriental display of emotion. Then, finally, the barriers are down, and the brethren feel free to talk with him.16-20. The report was heard at Pharaoh's court, Joseph's brethren have come, and it pleased Pharaoh well and his servants. And Pharaoh spoke with Joseph: Tell thy brethren: This is the thing to do: load your beasts; up, and go to the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the good things of the land of Egypt and ye shall eat the fat of the land. And as for thee, thou art under orders -- this do: Take wagons for yourself from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives and bring your father and come. Do not bother about your utensils, for the good things of all the land of Egypt are to be yours.So stirring an experience cannot remain hid. Its effect upon Pharaoh's court is particularly noteworthy. First of all, "the report" (qôl -- not "sound" for v. Ge 45:2 spoke of that) came through to "Pharaoh's court" (here bêth par'oh, i. e., "house of Pharaoh"), accusative of place. Since Joseph was so universally esteemed, all things connected with his fortunes were a matter of interest to all. In this instance Pharaoh might well be pleased, for a kind of stigma had been attached to Joseph's origin; for he had been accounted a slave. Now proof is offered that Joseph comes of an honourable family of free nomads, who were generally held in high regard in those days. Joseph's universal popularity is attested to by the fact that Pharaoh's command coincides with Joseph's plan, which he had just made known to his brethren -- a providential coincidence: They are now to load their beasts, return to Canaan, get their father and their households (Hebrew: "houses"), and come to Egypt. He promises to give "the good things of the land of Egypt." The word tûbh means "the good." Here it hardly means "the best," for why should foreigners get the best? Nor does it mean the "best part of the land," as many since Rashi have contended. For in v.20 and in v. Ge 45:23 where the expression recurs it cannot refer to Goshen. So it means the good things of the land, generally speaking, as Keil claims, and so is a far broader expression than "the fat of the land," which follows and expressly emphasizes the food for the present time of famine.19. It has been correctly observed (Lange) that whereas the king allows Joseph much liberty in the matter of disposing of the affairs of the realm, he lays strict orders upon him in the matters concerning his own welfare and says: "as for thee, thou art under orders" (tsuwwethah, Pual). In fact, he shows himself to be a man also accustomed to issuing orders; for his commands are curt: "this do" -- "take wagons," etc. A strictly Egyptian touch is introduced at this point, for "wagons" were found only in Egypt in those days, though it is said that the 'aghalôth were originally introduced from Canaan and the Semitic name was retained. They were two or fourwheeled carts without seats; they were not the "chariots" heard of elsewhere (e. g., Ex 14:6) called rékhebh, or merkabhah. They merely served to transport those who could neither walk nor ride. Pharaoh's orders further bid the family: "Do not bother about your utensils" -- a peculiar Hebrew idiom: "As for your eyes, do not pity your utensils" -- kelî, vessels or tools of any sort. The matter was urgent. Utensils would have encumbered or

delayed them, and so Joseph would have been caused added anxiety. Pharaoh purposes to deal very liberally with Joseph's family out of gratitude for the great deliverance Joseph wrought for Egypt. "The good things of all the land of Egypt" will be at their disposal to recompense them for what must be left behind. 21-25. And the sons of Israel acted accordingly. Joseph gave them wagons, as Pharaoh had ordered, He also gave them food for the journey. To each separately he gave extra garments and to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five extra garments. And to his father he accordingly sent ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with grain and bread and provisions for his father for the journey. And he sent his brethren and they went; and he said to them: Do not grow angry on the way. And they went up from Egypt and they came to the land of Canaan to Jacob, their father.The writer begins with one of those summary statements so common in Hebrew narrative, "and the sons of Israel acted accordingly." The details of what they did follows. Joseph gives them wagons and food for the journey. Incidentally Joseph gives further tokens of his goodwill: each man of them separately receives "extra garments" -- perhaps two of them. The Hebrew calls them "changes of garments" -- chaliphoth semaloth -- the second noun being assimilated to the plural of the first. The thing meant, of course, is a garment for special occasions. Meek translates "festal garments," patterning after Luther's Feierkleider. Benjamin, who stands nearest to him, is given "three hundred shekels of silver" -- "shekels" being understood according to a common Hebrew construction (G. K.134 n; K. S.314h) -- and five "extra garments." As a gift of courtesy and a token of esteem he sends his father "ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt" -- the good things corresponding perhaps to the gift Jacob had sent. Besides, Joseph sends what is of greater value under the circumstances, "ten she-asses laden with grain and bread and provisions for the journey."24. But Joseph knows human nature. The brethren scarcely dare to do a thing; they are so overawed by his authority and capacity for management. Joseph sends them on their way. But he sees what must necessarily develop on the way: "they are liable to grow angry (not grow excited' -- that is too trivial) on the way." They will attempt to allocate the share of guilt of each participant in the nefarious sale. Each one will try to exculpate himself and make the guilty ones appear more guilty. So fruitless anger and ill-will could result. Apparently they gave heed to his admonition, for the journey, is reported as uneventful: "they went up and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob, their father."26-28. And they told him: Joseph is still living, and that he was ruler over all the land of Egypt. But his heart grew numb, for he did not believe them. But they spoke to him all the words of Joseph which he had spoken to them, and he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to bring him. Then the spirit of Jacob, their father, revived. And Israel said: Enough! Joseph my son is still alive; I will go down and see him before I die.The substance of all their message is, of course, "Joseph is still living." This they tell first as they encounter their father. Next the very remarkable circumstance clamours for utterance that he is "ruler over all the land of Egypt." With the kî the report passes from direct to indirect discourse. But the two reports together seem so far beyond the pale of the possible that they serve to stupefy the father: "his heart grew numb," (pûgh, "to grow cold"). The brothers can well understand the father's difficulty. They keep right on, as men who know first hand what they are reporting, and their reports all agree. They keep telling what Joseph had told them to arrange. Stupefaction gave way to understanding, and when Jacob finally saw the wagons, that distinctively Egyptian thing, sent besides by Joseph to transport the aged father to Egypt, then conviction grew on him and "his spirit revived." The old energy began to assert itself. The customary gloom of resignation vanished. Old "Jacob" again became "Israel," as the significant change of name

indicates, an aggressive combatant in the battle of life, ready to overcome obstacles in the power of his God. He needs no more argument or proof -- "enough!" he says, "Joseph my son is still alive." We should not venture to measure the deep joy reflected in this word. Jacob has now just this one ambition before he dies: to go down to Egypt and to see Joseph. The soberness of old age is not deeply impressed with the glories of Joseph's position in Egypt.Here criticism has an objection to raise which may at least be noted. Gunkel (see K. C.) finds that the author ought at this point to have made mention of the brothers' repentance, supposing that they would naturally have made a full confession at this point. Procksch seconds him in this, claiming that our ethical feeling would demand that the brothers admit their wrong. Such subjective criticism has little value. In fact, do not these men see that the record as it stands is the more true to life? Joseph forgave them. The father learned from the account of his sons how Joseph had come to Egypt. The wound in the conscience of the brothers is too deep to call for much probing. This sore point is touched no more. Joseph knows of the sincerity of their repentance; so does their father. Least said, soonest mended, applies to such sorry cases when there is true repentance. All of which reminds us that the whole narrative from the literary point of view displays the finest skill. It is a narrative pearl. The skilful portrayal of the psychological reaction of the different characters reveals the touch of a master hand.But a few more things must be mentioned. As the fulfilment shows, there is a deeper typical import behind the things narrated. As the nation, which is designated as God's son (Ex 4:22), here goes down to Egypt during the time of suffering as to a haven of refuge and is recalled thereafter, so God did for His only-begotten Son and called Him again after the danger had passed (cf. Mt 2:15; Ho 11:1). So, as Vilmar points out, shall it be in the time of the last persecution, when a place of refuge shall be provided for the church according to Re 12:6.Criticism, in its source analysis, is pretty much at sea despite its display of ingenuity. Skinner definitely asserts "the preponderance of E." Procksch assigns the major part to J and gives a rather generous portion to P besides. All this work is speculation that draws the thoughts of men from the truth revealed to uncertain externals.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThe chapter is a unit as far as serving as a text is concerned. It centres on the theme of God's marvellous provisions for the maintenance of His Church. For, strictly speaking, the children of Israel, few as they are in number, constitute the Old Testament Church in its then state of development. Certainly one should guard against losing the broader viewpoints of a chapter such as this. Merely to think in terms of domestic scenes or along the line of personal ethics loses sight of the bigger issues.

CHAPTER XLVI

10. The Temporary Emigration of Israel to Egypt (46:1-34) A rather momentous step for this small nation to transfer its abode to another land! That it is momentous is indicated by the fact that the patriarch does not venture to take it until he has full divine sanction. Yet from the very outset it is borne in mind that God does not intend it to be a permanent settlement. All the promises since Abraham concerning the ultimate possession of Canaan by the Israelites still stand. God's people do not move blindly at such important junctures of their history. The tendency that we have observed repeatedly before this, to summarize at critical turning points, (Ge 6:9, 10; 10:1-32; 11:27-32) displays itself here again. The heads of clans are mentioned, practically the same persons as those who went down to Egypt with Jacob. Such summaries serve to place very definitely before one's eyes just what the situation was at a given period. At this point it may be desirable to examine the deeper providential motives that lay behind this momentous step of the migration to Egypt. The one manifest purpose that lay prominently on the surface was, of course, to preserve the nation, small as it was, during the time of famine. Deeper reflection reveals the following additional points that were apparently also involved in the divine plan. First of all, a distinct and separate consciousness of being a nation by itself was begotten and nourished by being isolated in Egypt. For the Egyptian pride, which led that nation to disdain all foreigners, is well known. Israelites were, therefore, isolated geographically and nationally as long as they were in Egypt. Intermarriage with Israelites was out of the question. Consequently, there was no danger of Israel's amalgamating with the Egyptians as there had been of arealgamating with the Canaanites; cf. Judah's and Simeon's (v.10) Canaanitish wives. In such an amalgamation Israel, the smaller group, would naturally have been absorbed. In Egypt such a misfortune was precluded. At the same time Israel was guarded against falling into the idolatry of its neighbours as a nation. For the strict isolation of the nation as long as it was in Egypt naturally extended also to matters of religion. Safeguarded thus against idolatry, Israel was at the same time outside of the reach of Canaanite immorality and its contaminations, a very real danger as chapter 38 shows. Yet during all this time of isolation from the culture of Canaan, which was of the first order, Israel was, nevertheless, in contact with another type of eminent culture, namely the Egyptian, and so was not in danger of cultural retrogression. For good culture could prove to be a very valuable asset also for the people of God during all the years of its development. At the same time faith and hope were nurtured by having the land of promise in prospect on the basis of clear promises of the God of their fathers. The persecutions in Egypt, however served to make this hope of the possession of the promised land more fervent. (The above summary in general is based upon Hengstenberg's Geschichte des' Reiches Gottes, with certain modifications; especially do we concede the high cultural level of Canaanite civilization of patriarchal days, as it is established by the researches of archaeology). 1-4. And Israel set out and all who belonged to him, and he came to Beersheba and sacrificed to the God of his father Isaac. And God said to Israel in a night vision: Jacob, Jacob! And he said: Here am I. And He said: I am the true God (El), the God (Elohim) of thy father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for a great nation will I make thee there. I myself will go down with thee to Egypt, and I myself will most certainly bring thee up again; and Joseph shall close thy eyes

(in death). Jacob is very appropriately called "Israel" as he starts out; for, strictly speaking, it is not a personal but a national venture. Criticism does not see this simple fact, for according to its critical canons vv.1-5 belong to E, but E always says "Jacob." Consequently the unscientific expedient is resorted to of attributing the presence of "Israel" in v. I to some Redactor, R. By such critical devices almost anything can be proved. So, then, the nation, small as it is, sets out, as is further indicated by the words, "and all who belonged to him." It seems that the point of departure was Hebron (Ge 37:14). The road to Egypt from Hebron runs directly over Beersheba. Here Jacob "sacrificed (Hebrew: sacrificed sacrifices') to the God of his father Isaac." This expression cannot mean that this God was a god different from other gods Jacob had worshipped; but it does strongly remind of the fact that at Beersheba Isaac had offered sacrifices to God Ge 26:25; in fact (Ge 28:13), by this name God had designated Himself over against Jacob. The expression reminds of all the promises given to Isaac. The primary purpose of the sacrifice was to have it embody the petition for guidance and for protection on this journey. Other purposes will have entered in secondarily, such as gratitude for the impending deliverance; praise for the promises given to the nation; renewed consecration to the divine purpose respecting the nation. But raising the question, Why were the sacrifices made here and not in Hebron? we are inclined to view the case as follows: Providential guidance had seemed so clear when Joseph's message came to Hebron that Jacob got under way for Egypt at once. At the southern extremity of the land of promise the momentous character of such a step came home to him with greater clearness. God had not yet spoken directly. Abraham's going to that land had led to his fall into sin (Ge 12:10 ff). Isaac had been forbidden to go to Egypt (Ge 26:2). The prophetic word, Ge 15:13-16, must have been in Jacob's thoughts. Yet the decisive step was not to be taken without clear divine sanction. 2. The desired answer comes "in a night vision." Hebrew: plural: "visions" marôth "of the night" -- the plural being indicative of the various steps of a process (K. S.261 c) or of the magnitude and the glory of the experience. This was the last of the patriarchal visions. It is given not to the individual as such but to the one who is the father of the nation, to "Israel." He is addressed by his old, personal name "Jacob," perhaps to remind him of what he once was, or to indicate that as long as he doubts and hesitates he is the old Jacob rather than the new Israel. Criticism renders a hasty judgment when it pronounces: this is "a sentence, which no original writer would have penned." The repetition of the name "Jacob" indicates a strength of divine interest in the nation's welfare. 3. First God identifies Himself, recalling his earlier promises by His manner of doing it. He designates Himself first as Ha'el, i. e., "the true God," 'el itself meaning "Strong One." With the article it means: the one who especially deserves the name. Very appropriately he is "the Strong One" here, because His ability to help and to protect is being considered. Then the more general title "God of thy father," 'elohey abhî'kha, reminds Jacob that God will deal as faithfully with him as He did with Isaac. Then the paramount issue is definitely decided: "Do not be afraid to go to Egypt." Jacob's fear must have been primarily a fear of acting contrary to the divine will, less a fear of the dangers otherwise to be encountered there. What Jacob and the nation need to know besides for their guidance during the time of their stay there is that in Egypt they will be made "a great nation." So that is revealed next. When K. C. declares the translation, "I am the true God, the God of thy father," to be wrong, he does this not on grammatical grounds but on dogmatic. He simply does not believe that true monotheism prevailed at so early a date, whereas the true people of God never had any other faith than the monotheistic faith. Redhah, usually rédheth, is infinitive construct of yaradh (G. K.69 m). 4. The promise becomes more intimate and gracious. With

emphasis God says that He Himself ("I" 'anokhî -- emphatic by position) will be the one that will go along down to Egypt, as well as the one that will bring Jacob back. By metonomy Jacob, the individual, refers to his descendants as a group. "I will bring thee up again" naturally refers to the return of the whole nation and not to the relatively trivial return of Israel's bones for burial. The emphasis of the divine statement shows that the biggest issues are involved. The absolute infinitive following the verb -- Kal after Hifil (G. K.113 w) -- makes the promise as positive as possible. One purely personal touch is added when Jacob is assured that Joseph shall close his eyes -- Hebrew: "he shall lay his hand upon thy eyes." Many nations of antiquity speak of this special last duty to the dead (cf. Dillmann). 5-7. And Jacob set out from Beersheba, and the children of Israel transported Jacob, their father, and their little ones and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to transport him. And they took their cattle and their possessions which they had acquired in the land of Canaan and they came to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him -- his sons and his sons' sons with him, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants -- he brought them with him to Egypt. Till now the interest has centred more on the vision which God sent to confirm Jacob's purpose, less on the transmigration as such, because that was still in a sense problematical. After the vision Jacob burns all his bridges behind him, and now the attention centres on the big train that travels to Egypt. A unique feature in that train was found to be the "wagons" Pharaoh had sent up. That is why they are first mentioned here, although they had already served to transport Jacob, the little ones, and the wives from Hebron. Criticism sees in the appearance of the wagons first in v.5 a crude joining together of the sources. Pharaoh's rather generous demand to leave their "utensils" (A. V. "stuff") behind and to be supplied by the rich Egyptian resources can hardly have involved leaving "the cattle" behind. Perhaps the herds had already been much reduced during the time of famine, and they were further reduced by the rigors of the journey to Egypt. However, a true sense of frugality induced Jacob's sons to take along all "their possessions." Perhaps sound common sense taught them to evaluate boastful royal munificence somewhat lightly. More to the point is the consideration that as godly men Jacob's sons regarded their possessions as good gifts of God, which they did not dare to abandon rashly. With unusual fulness of expression, calculated to draw a clearer picture before our eyes of this train that went down to Egypt, we are told that "all his descendants" went with him, and that these included "his sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and (here -- 'namely') all his descendants." And we are again reminded that in the last analysis this was an act for which the old patriarch himself was responsible: "he brought them with him to Egypt." Miqnehem is not a plural noun, for the y represents h of miqneh (G. K.93 ss).8-15. And these are the names of the children of Israel that came down to Egypt -- Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's first-born. And the sons of Reuben: Hanoch and Pallu and Hezron and Carmi. And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Shaul, the son of the Canaanitish woman. And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. And the sons of Judah: Er and Onan and Shelah and Perez and Zerah -- now Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan -- and the sons of Perez: Hezron and Hamul. And the sons of Issachar: Tola and Puvah and Job and Shimron. And the sons of Zebulon: Sered and Elon and Jahleel. These are the descendants of Leah whom she bare unto Jacob in Paddan-aram -- and Dinah, her daughter. The total number of his sons and his daughters was thirty-three.The mental picture becomes a bit clearer if we use the following grouping:(See figure 1110)A count of names reveals: Reuben 6, Simeon 7, Levi 4, Judah 8, Issachar 5, Zebulon 4 equals 33. Consequently Dinah, though

mentioned, is not counted. For verse 15 also lists a total of 33.Now at least two parallel lists are available -- disregarding the partial list of Ex 6:14 ff. -- namely Nu 26 and 1Ch 4; 5; 6. A comparison with these indicates that certain of the names found above were in circulation also in another form, usually pretty much like the ones above, sometimes radically different as to form but similar in meaning. For, as the margin of A. R. V. briefly indicates, "Jemuel" v.10 in both Num. and I Chron. appears as "Nemuel." "Jachin" has the parallel form in Chron. of "Jarib." "Zohar" appears as "Zerah." "Gershon" (v.11) has the parallel "Gershom" (I Chron.). "Puvah" (v.13) and "Job" have parallels "Puah" and "Jashub" (I Chron.). These variants need disturb no one. The similarity of forms is usually apparent at a glance. From many instances of the Scriptures we conclude that in every period of Israel's history men had several names which were legitimately theirs.A few additional facts should be noticed. Beney Jisra'el (v.8) cannot be translated "sons of Israel," for all that follows indicates that the broader term "descendants" or "children of Israel" is meant. Of Simeon it is specifically asserted that Shaul, his son, was begotten of a "Canaanitish woman." Since this is mentioned in this manner, it would appear that it was rather the exceptional thing for Jacob's sons to have taken Canaanitish wives. They must, therefore, have followed the patriarchal example of procuring their wives from Mesopotamia or at least from such racial groups that had kept themselves from. the contamination of Canaanite corruption. Another strange thing is to be observed in the case of Er and Onan, Judah's sons, who died in the land of Canaan (chapter 38). Yet they are listed among those, who are the heads of the clans (mishpachoth) of Israel. Some adjustment must have been made, as a result of which clans nevertheless bore their names. For we can hardly accept the surmise of Procksch that "dead names appear in our list, names of men who had never actually existed" -- a claim which would rob our list of its historical validity. The concluding statement, that here is the total of "his sons and his daughters" from Leah is a bit unusual from our point of view, for Dinah, though mentioned, is not counted -- as we showed above. The remark may, therefore, include the daughters-in-law in so far as they are thought of as the mothers of Jacob's grandsons, and may be thought of as living in their sons. 16-18. And the sons of Gad: Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni and Ezbon, Eri and Arodi and Areli. And the sons of Asher: Imnah and Ishvah and Ishvi and Beriah; and Serah was their sister. And the sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel. These are children of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah, his daughter; and these she bare unto Jacob, sixteen persons.Rearranged, the names present the following picture:(See Figure 1112)This makes a total of 16 names. However, in this instance the name of the sister Serah is counted along with that of the brothers and not passed by like that of Dinah. A few variant forms occur here too. "Ziphion" is listed in Numbers as "Zephon." "Ezbon" becomes "Ozni," and "Arodi" appears as "Arod."19-22. The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin. And there were born unto Joseph in the land of Egypt (sons), whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him, Manasseh and Ephraim. And the children of Benjamin: Bela and Becher and Ashbel, Gera and Naaman, Ehi and Rosh, Muppim and Huppim and Ard. These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob, all together fourteen persons.The picture is the following:(See Figure 1113)A few of these have different forms of names which were also in circulation. "Eli" (v.21) appears as "Ahiram" in Numbers, "Muppim" as "Shephupham," but in I Chron. as "Shuppim." "Huppim" appears as "Hupham" in Numbers only. Already above (v.16) "Arodi" was a clan or race name. Here appear two more, namely as plurals "Muppim" and "Huppim." This confirms what we must allude to again: The individuals as such are not so much under consideration; rather the clans derived from them.In the case of Benjamin a new factor

comes up for consideration. Till now Benjamin has been regarded as comparatively young. A sober computation could hardly rate him higher than twenty-three years old. Ten sons at that age is virtually an impossibility. The Septuagint translation, following, it would seem, a reliable tradition, has given us a statement of the case which may be more literally correct. It regroups Benjamin's descendants. It gives him three sons: Bela, Becher and Ashbel. To Bela it gives six sons: Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim and Huppim. But to Gera it ascribes one son: Ard. We shall draw upon this fact in a moment in making our final conclusions as to the object of this entire list.One sees the difficulty of the critical approach to verse 19 (Dillmann). Had the writer followed strictly the pattern previously used in the chapter, he would have said: "The sons of Joseph: Manasseh and Ephraim." Instead we find: "The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife." The critic does not deem the Biblical writer capable of so much originality and ascribes the words to a reviser. What wooden fellows some of these ancient Biblical writers would have been had they not even been able to depart from a form they had begun to use! Critical verdicts on such points are so purely subjective and unscientific as to be worthless. Apparently Moses varied his style at this point to remind us that Rachel actually counts as Jacob's wife.23-25. And the sons of Dan: Hushim. And the sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem. These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave unto Rachel, his daughter, and these she bore unto Jacob; all persons were seven.According to our previous arrangement:Bilhah' s SonsDan Naphtali Hushim JahzeelGuniJezerShillemVariant forms are: for "Hushim" "Shuham"; for "Jahzeel" "Jahziel"; for "Shillem" "Shallum."It must be very apparent that the opening verse in this catalogue of names (v. Ge 46:8) uses the statement in a very loose sense when it says: "these are the names of the children of Israel that came down to Egypt." It means: shortly after the children of Israel had come to Egypt there were to be found those seventy fathers from whom were derived the seventy clans that were the prevailing clans throughout Israel's early history. Some seem to treat the author as though he had sought to deceive his readers by exaggerating or by misrepresenting. Others charge him with being confused a bit himself. Yet even upon the first reading of the list of names one is struck with the fact that Benjamin cannot have had ten sons, and so it becomes clear in what sense this list is meant.Now a word as to the different totals. In v. Ge 46:26 the count is sixty-six; in v.27 we have seventy. Ac 7:14 creates an added problem by offering the total seventy-five. A few difficulties of a minor character appear insoluble. The major facts are clear enough. The four lists we presented above give totals as follows: Leah's sons -- 33; Zilpah's -- 16; Rachel's 14; Bilhah's -- 7. Now 33 plus 16 plus 14 plus 7 equals 70. Here the difficulty is that Jacob is not counted in. Yet, perhaps, he may be counted in on the first group of thirty-three. For if the two who died in CanaanEr and Onan -- be dropped and Dinah recounted along as is Serah, the sister, in the second group and Jacob's name be added, the requisite thirty-three is arrived at. This seems to be the simplest solution. Then the sixty-six of v.26 would quite naturally omit Jacob and Joseph and his two sons, for the latter already were in Egypt. For there the statement is meant literally: "all the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt." But how about the New Testament statement Ac 7:14: "Jacob -- and all his kindred, three -- score and fifteen souls"? It must be that Luke in writing the Book of Acts followed the Septuagint translation, which gives five grandsons of Joseph. For Manasseh's son Machir and his son Gilead ate there listed as well as two sons of Ephraim, Soutalaam and Taam, and also one son of Soutalaam, namely Edem. This Septuagint list may also be strictly historical. These five descendants of Joseph may actually have become heads of clans in later years. These clans may not have endured as long as some others or may

have been counted in with the two Josephite clans: Ephraim and Manasseh. So, then, from one point of view there were seventy clans, according to another count seventy-five -- all depending on a man's point of view.But Moses emphasized that seventy clans were in existence in their clan fathers at this early date, for the number "seventy" has symbolical significance. Being composed of "seven" times "ten" -seven is the number which marks a divine covenant work; ten is the number of completeness -- this number then signifies that at this point God had done a complete divine work upon Israel and had made a substantial people, which was able to weather the storms which were only too soon to break upon their head. The Greek translators had less of the Jewish viewpoint. For them the round number seventy-five was more significant than the symbolical number seventy. Seven also is the covenant number: this involves that God's covenant was to hold in the land of Egypt.26, 27. The total number of persons belonging to Jacob that came to Egypt, his direct descendants, apart from the wives of Jacob's sons, all these persons numbered sixty-six. And the sons of Joseph, which were born to him in Egypt, were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob that came to Egypt were seventy.The main issue of these verses regarding the numbers involved was settled above. The le before ya'aqobh is the dative of the possessor; it does not mean "with." Yotse ey yerekhô, "going out of his loins," is well covered by Meek's rendering: "his direct descendants." In v.26 habba'ßh is the participle with the article agreeing with néphesh. In v.27 habbß'ah is a verb form with the article, in which case the article serves as a relative pronoun.28-30. And he sent Judah on before him to Joseph to point out before him (the way) to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen. And Joseph hitched up his chariot and came up to meet Israel, his father, to Goshen. And he appeared unto him and fell upon his neck and wept long upon his neck. And Israel said to Joseph: Now I can die after I have seen thy face and that thou still art alive.Goshen may have been available for settlement. But that does not mean that the children of Israel might have settled anywhere in that land. No doubt, Joseph knew best where Israel should settle. So Israel send Judah, the energetic and competent son, who now had the father's confidence in fullest measure, to inquire of Joseph what his plans were and then to come back and to guide Israel's family to the most suitable part of Goshen. Though the pronouns are not all expressed, as we might express them, there can be no doubt about it that this is the simple meaning of the verse. Critics like to make things hard for themselves in an effort to discredit the present text and they say: "The Hebrew here gives no tolerable sense."29. As soon as it is certain that Israel has arrived, Joseph rides by chariot -- "his chariot" implying some splendid state chariot -- and comes up to Goshen to meet his father; the verb used here is very unusual, as we have tried to show by our translation, "he (Joseph) appeared unto him," wayyera' -- a verb usually used for a divine appearance. This indicates that it was an experience like unto having the Lord appear, or better, an appearing in which at least the hand of the Lord was manifest. Joseph falls upon his father's neck and weeps there a long time. Overcharged emotion long pent up seeks a natural outlet. Not a word is spoken. There is no need of words. Words cannot utter the deep feelings of this hour.30. Finally the father voices his reaction. We do not feel that he desires death and actually says: "Now let me die," as A. V. translated, but 'amûthah is rather potential: "Now I can die," implying: whenever my hour comes, I can die at ease, which is practically Luther's rendering: Ich will nun gerne sterben. Father and son must have loved one another very dearly and been deeply attached to one another.31-34. And Joseph said to his brethren and to his father's house: I shall go up and tell Pharaoh and I shall say to him: My brethren and my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come down to me. And the

men are shepherds, for they are men who have dealt in livestock; and they have brought with them their flocks and their herds and all that they possess. And it shall be if Pharaoh summons you and shall say: What is your business? Then ye shall say: Thy servants have been dealing in livestock from our youth up to this day, both we and our fathers, in order that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen. For every shepherd of flocks is an abomination to the Egyptians. Joseph said these words "to his brethren and to his father's house" or household. Naturally, his "brethren" are a part of "his father's house." But such combinations are rather common in Hebrew and are always to be construed in the sense of: "to his brethren" in particular, and generally speaking also "to his father's household." In these verses the issue is not, and cannot be, to convey information to Pharaoh chiefly concerning the arrival of Israel in Egypt. Pharaoh had anticipated that and practically arranged for it. Naturally, courtesy demanded that he be informed of the arrival. But Joseph has wisely chosen Goshen as the prospective dwelling place of his kindred, and now he desires to secure Pharaoh's free and hearty approval. To that intent he conveys the information that had not come to Pharaoh heretofore, namely, that these men are all shepherds. Joseph informs his brethren in advance that he purposes to do this. For Joseph is dealing with a somewhat delicate situation, the key to which is given in the second half of v.34 in an explanatory remark of the author of the book to the effect that "every shepherd of flocks is an abomination to the Egyptians." The brethren must have known this fact, for they were now coming down to Egypt for the third time; in fact, they may have heard of it in Canaan, which was a country bordering on Egypt. Now this situation required delicate handling from two points of view. Joseph dare not offend his brethren by making them feel that he, perhaps, had adopted the Egyptian attitude merely to please the Egyptians and was treating his brethren as social inferiors. So perfect frankness in the whole matter and securing for them a position of comparative isolation geographically was the happiest solution of the problem. On the other hand, the situation was delicate in reference to Pharaoh. For as king he was bound by Egyptian customs and prejudice. He would, however, not want to offend Joseph or his brethren. To have the matter disposed of practically in advance by the geographical isolation of Israel, which practically required only his stamp of approval -- all this was a very wise adjustment on Joseph's part. So he personally first informs Pharaoh (v.32) that they are shepherds; that they have always dealt in livestock; that they have brought their flocks and herds with them. "He also coaches his brethren as to what they are to say, should Pharaoh put the question: "What is your business?" i. e., ma'aseh, originally "deed" or "work." They are to speak frankly and unashamed as men who feel that no stigma is attached to their calling, but at the same time very deferentially ("thy servants"), and are to make it plain that they have always followed this occupation. The hayû is interesting: they "have been" -- implying: should it please Pharaoh to decree otherwise, they would desist from this work. Joseph's discrete handling of the whole situation is usually not evaluated as highly as it deserves. He discerns quite clearly that the easiest course for Pharaoh will be to confirm the whole arrangement and let them stay in Egypt. For Pharaoh's original suggestions had left this question as to exactly where they should settle open; cf. Ge 45:16-20. It was Joseph who made the selection of Goshen, a fertile country, known as such from antiquity and well adapted to the keeping of cattle. Whitelaw summarizes well the advantages of this land for Israel: (1) It was suitable for their flocks and herds; (2) it would secure their isolation from the Egyptians; (3) it was contiguous to Canaan, and would be easier vacated when the time arrived for their return." In v.34 tô'abhath, though construct before a definite noun, does not acquire definiteness, "the abomination," as the general rule

requires. Exceptions are allowable (K. S.304 a) when the sense demands it: here plainly other abominations of the Egyptians must be allowed for. Therefore: "an abomination."The statement, "every shepherd of flocks is an abomination to the Egyptians," has provoked much discussion. This explanation is applicable not only to foreign shepherds but, as Keil has shown, to natives as well, who are represented on monuments in a way calculated to express the fact that they were of a low and despised caste, for they "are constantly depicted as lanky, withered, distorted, emaciated, and sometimes almost ghostly figures." Herodotus confirms this in words that appear to be applicable to all shepherds (Keil). The Hyksos domination will have served to establish this natural aversion. Quite naturally such a feeling will have been displayed still more strongly toward foreigners.References made to the Israelites in this connection, as though they came down to Egypt as a strictly nomad group, are quite misleading. In reality they were only half-nomadic in their habits. Isaac already had sowed and reaped (Ge 26:12). Jacob continued in a settled life. Goshen, having abundant pasturage, would discourage nomadic wanderings and make them unnecessary. Being a fertile land, it would encourage agriculture. So Israel came in as a seminomadic group and became a predominantly agricultural group in very short order. Only a few critical problems can be treated by way of samples. K. C. feels that he must concede that the words, "for "they are men who have dealt in livestock" (v.32), are a gloss, for they seem to say the same thing as the preceding words, "the men are shepherds." As our explanation indicates, the verse marks a threefold progression of thought: (1) they are shepherds; (2) they have always been shepherds; (3) they have brought their flocks along. Consequently: the best thing would be to let them settle in Goshen. Gunkel holds that Joseph Coached his brothers to tell a lie" for they were not strictly shepherds. They, however, who are half-nomads and half-agriculturalists may with perfect honesty refer to their experience as shepherds as Joseph's brethren did; they are only describing their experience along one particular line. There was no attempt at deception.The critical source analysis presents the usual problems, weaknesses and lack of agreement among the critics.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSThe first seven verses of the chapter furnish a good basis for a sermon on the theme "Thy will be done." A godly man's concern about having certainty in the matter of a momentous decision in life, even where the decision seems to involve only his advantage -- such concern, we say, should teach men to let God's will be paramount in all decisions, great or small.

CHAPTER XLVII

11. Establishment of Israel in Goshen and Egyptian Famine Measures (47:1-26) This chapter ties up so closely with the subject of the preceding one as to require no further introduction. However, we may consider briefly at this point the question of chronology -- in what dynasty or under which of the Pharaohs did this famine take place? We believe that most writers on the subject are guilty of misdating this event as a result of their distrust of the Biblical chronology. The usual assumption, made quite apart from strictly chronological issues, is that Joseph must have had contact with the Hyksos kings, whose rule is commonly dated from 1680-1580 B. C. This assumption builds on the somewhat plausible contention that the Hyksos rulers, themselves shepherd kings, will have been friendly disposed toward Israel and his family -- also shepherd folk. Yet the assumption is gaining ground that "Hyksos" meant "Ruler of Countries." [3] Besides, we still maintain that the chronology of the Bible points to a date for the Exodus in the fifteenth century -- about 1449 B. C. We also believe that Ex 12:40 is a correct statement -- "the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was 430 years." This should lead exegetes to look for the famine in the days of Joseph about the year 1880 B. C. If now available historical data of Egyptian history reveal nothing concerning Joseph or the famine or the agrarian policy developed by Joseph, such silence by no means discredits the Mosaic record. It means nothing more than that the available records concerning things Egyptian are incomplete. 1-4. Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh and said: My father and my brethren, together with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and, see, they are in the land of Goshen. Now he had taken five men from the total number of his brethren, and he presented them unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to his brethren: What is your business? And they said to Pharaoh: Shepherds of flocks thy servants are -- both we and our fathers. They said moreover unto Pharaoh: To sojourn in the land have we come; for there is no pasture for the flocks which thy servants have -- for the famine is heavy in the land of Canaan. May thy servants, pray, settle in the land of Goshen. Joseph knew the exact situation in reference to all things Egyptian and had coached his brethren how to meet this particular occasion. Yet much would depend on his own approach to Pharaoh. Pharaoh's attitude had been very generous (Ge 45:17 ff). But royalty has been known to speak generously and afterward to forget what it had promised. Besides, though Joseph was overlord over the whole land, he would have laid himself open to criticism had he provided for his own family in so liberal a manner as Pharaoh had suggested. It was the part of wisdom to have Pharaoh confirm publicly what he had originally suggested, and so to let it appear that the settlement of Israel was Pharaoh's work. Consequently, the account does not conflict with the representation of the full power conferred upon Joseph according to the rest of this record. Neither is there anything "naive" about the view that these simple shepherds appeared before the very presence of the great Egyptian king, as Israelites did in the days of David and Solomon. These men were brothers of the grand vizier Joseph. Another diplomatic move on Joseph's part was to settle his brethren in Goshen first and then to tell Pharaoh about it. To settle them and their flocks and herds and all their possessions in Goshen is the simplest way of getting the Pharaoh's confirmation. 2. We can hardly suppose that Joseph would first have reported to Pharaoh that

Israel was settled in Goshen, then would have gone out and selected five men, to take them out of the land of Goshen, and then would have presented them at court. No doubt the selection was made in advance, and the five were presented at once. Therefore laqach ranks as a pluperfect (K. S.117). Miqtseh (from min and qatseh) here means from "the whole" (B D B), i. e., "from the total number of his brethren." We are not able to determine whether they were the eldest or the youngest or a mixed group. No doubt, Joseph's wisdom taught him to discern which men were most presentable at court. 3. Joseph had also rightly discerned what question the Pharaoh would put on this occasion. The Egyptian monarch may well have put other questions. One that was bound to arise was: "What is your business?" The full truth is the safest course, undiplomatic as it might appear to be. The brethren do as Joseph had instructed them: they say with unmistakable plainness -- ro'eh first for emphasis -- "shepherds of flocks thy servants are." Ro'eh ("shepherds") stands first in the singular, as the verb often does, though the subject following is plural, "thy servants" (K. S.348 m). To correct the text to ro'ey (plural construct) is unnecessary. With a true pride in an honourable and ancient calling they are ready, for that matter, to inform the Pharaoh that both they and their "fathers" have long followed this calling. 4. The brethren also explain very satisfactorily how they conceive of the dwelling in the land (Ge 46:34). They say, again with emphasis, "to sojourn in the land have we come." It certainly will make Pharaoh still better disposed toward them if they say truthfully that they intend only to "sojourn," i. e., to settle for the time being. They added by way of explanation what Joseph had not told them to say, but what was eminently proper: "for the famine is heavy in the land of Canaan." In other words: they have left their native land only as a matter of utter necessity. To this explanation they then attach the modest request to be allowed to settle in Goshen -- the imperfect yeshebhû is optative -- "may they settle." 5, 6. And Pharaoh said to Joseph: Thy father and thy brethren have come to thee. The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle thy father and thy brethren in the best part of the land; let them settle in the land of Goshen. And if thou knowest of competent men among them, appoint them to have charge of the stock which belong to me. Pharaoh's first statement by way of response summarizes the situation, much as we might say: "So I see your father and your brothers have arrived." This is a gracious royal acknowledgment of the fact, and it is not to be regarded as an idle or unlikely statement. From this acknowledgment the Pharaoh proceeds to reiterate what he had promised in advance (Ge 45:18), only here, if anything, he makes his proposition more generous, as though, as far as he is concerned, they might settle wheresoever they pleased. The statement in the original has it: "The land of Egypt is before thy face." That must here mean, "lies open before you" or "is at your disposal" (Meek). He then proceeds to confirm the arrangements toward which Joseph's initial steps pointed, namely, he gave command that Joseph should "cause them to dwell" (hôshebh), i. e., "settle" them "in the best part of the land" -- a noun metabh used to express a superlative (K. S.309 f). By a kind of self-correction or by way of making his statement more specific Pharaoh adds, "let them settle in the land of Goshen" -- just what Joseph had wanted him to grant. Then, by way of a further indication of royal goodwill, he suggests that any "competent men" ('anshey chßyil, i. e., "men of might or capacity") from among their number be appointed "to have charge (i. e., be sarey miqneh -- 'chief of the cattle') of the stock" of Pharaoh. These two verses fit so excellently into the picture and make such excellent sense and such good sequence of thought that we must confess to be greatly surprised at certain claims advanced by the critics at this point. The critics had expected something different or liked particularly a different sequence of clauses as found in the Septuagint (5a, 6b, 5b, 6 a) and so they

claim that "the overlapping of J and P at this point can be proved and corrected from G," i. e. the Greek translation. We venture to assert: nobody can prove anything of the sort; there is no overlapping; criticism is making unwarranted assertions by claims which a straightforward interpretation of the text proves entirely untenable. 7-10. And Joseph brought in Jacob, his father, and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Jacob: How many are the days of the years of thy life? And Jacob said to Pharaoh: The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life and they have not reached the days of the years of the lives of my forefathers in the days of their pilgrimage. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went forth from Pharaoh's presence.A fine token of filial respect is given by Joseph when he next presents his father at court. His father always was his best friend, and Joseph, knowing the true worth of character of true saints of God, felt that in character and personality Jacob was more than Pharaoh's equal. The simple old shepherd contrasts very favourably with the Egyptian monarch. In fact, the very report of the incident seeks to convey the impression that Jacob actually stood forth as the greater figure according to a true analysis, for "Jacob blessed Pharaoh." "But without any dispute the less is blessed of the better" (Hebrews 7:7). Some render waybhßrekh, "and he blessed," very poorly as "greeted" or "paid his respects," The truth of the matter is that these old men of God greeted by blessing, as B D B correctly renders, "greet with an invocation of blessing, (stronger than shalôm)." Conscious that he, a true child of God, has more to offer by his blessing than any earthly monarch can offer him, Jacob here blesses as by an act and a display of true faith. For we should hardly venture to go as far as Luther does in this connection and to suppose that Joseph had converted Pharaoh and the Egyptians to the true and living God. Nor does Psalms 105:20-22 allow for so extreme a position. At most Joseph "taught" the "elders wisdom." Nothing is said of their having accepted it.8. We know not what matters besides may have been discussed by Pharaoh and Jacob. We are loath to believe that no more was said than what we here read. But the answer of Jacob in particular has been handed down to us as a memorable one. The Hebrew idiom, "How many are the days of the years of thy life?" for our simpler question: "How old are you?" lays emphasis on the individual days that go to make up the total of our life.9. Jacob was then 130 years old. He describes his life as a "pilgrimage" (meghûrim, potential plural, indicating the many and the varied episodes involved). The noun is derived from ghûr, "to sojourn" or "dwell as a stranger." The outer circumstances involved are these: in Canaan Jacob had had a fixed possession or property as little as Isaac or Abraham; in Mesopotamia he had dwelled as a stranger twenty years; since his return to Canaan he had dwelled mostly around Hebron but always as a sojourner "having no abiding city." Without a doubt, such an unsettled outward state of life would have served to such a man of God as Jacob was as an excellent type of the spiritual truth that all of a man's life is but a pilgrimage to the eternal home where we no longer stay for the time being as strangers. Therefore Hebrews 11:13-16 is entirely justified in laying emphasis upon this deeper spiritual meaning and in describing Jacob also as having his hope fixed upon the "heavenly country." Yet Jacob's statement of the case covers the outer and the inner meaning. To translate meghûrim, therefore, as "my life as an immigrant" is far too shallow and superficial. The rest of Jacob's statement regards his life as practically finished, and so he looks back upon it as a unit by way of retrospect. This is but a natural thing for old people to do. They often think that their life is practically ended and then go on to live ten or fifteen years more. In this retrospect Jacob contrasts his life with that of his forefathers -- especially Isaac and Abraham, but also the post-diluvians since Noah -- and

finds that his life's days have been "few and evil." For rayim, "evil," we might use "wretched" or "unhappy." Surely, it cannot be denied that not one of his ancestors had so many hardships and disappointments to encounter as he, who was compelled to flee from home, was treated wretchedly and deceived by his father-in-law in a strange land, encountered the hostility of Esau, was grieved by the rape of his daughter Dinah and by the murder perpetrated by his sons, Simeon and Levi, was deeply pained by Reuben's incest, and grieved almost to the point of death by the loss of Joseph and Benjamin, as well as by the death of Rachel. The man can well foretell that his years will not come up to those of Abraham, who became 175 years old, or of Isaac, who reached 180. But that the same spirit animated them as well as him appears from this that he calls their life too a "pilgrimage."10. Again upon leaving Jacob, the man of God, bestows a blessing upon the king, a blessing by way of a farewell greeting. On the use of the word to "bless" (berekh) we may yet add that the secondary meaning which borders on "greet" so little impresses K. W. as not even to be mentioned.11, 12. And Joseph settled his father and his brethren, giving them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best part of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph provided his father and his brethren, and all his father's household with bread according to the number of the children. Since Pharaoh concurred, Joseph made the settlement of his father and brethren permanent. There must have been unoccupied land in Goshen at the time. This is given them as a "possession" ('achuzzah); therefore they had a more permanent foothold in Egypt than they had had thus far in Canaan. Joseph, knowing the aversion of the Egyptians to foreigners, confirmed this grant so as to make later difficulties less likely for the days when the popularity which he and his family enjoyed should have begun to wane. So well did this guardian, whom God raised up for His people, provide for them in their extremity. Besides, (v.12) the "bread" (by metonomy for "food") needed was provided "according to the number of the children," Hebrew: "according to the mouth of the little ones" -- an unusual phrase whose meaning seems plain enough: he who had many children received just so much more food. The children are mentioned, for they will be the chief concern of parents in days of want. The verb "provide" is followed by a double accusative (G. K.117 cc; K. S.327 r).The expression "land of Rameses" (Hebrew -- Ra'mses) is used by Moses proleptically to describe more accurately for his contemporaries the region which they in their day knew as Rameses. For the store cities Pithom and Raamses (Ex 1:11), which the children of Israel built, seem to have stood on this site. The other claim, usually made in this connection, that Rameses must have derived its name from Rameses II, their supposed builder, is unsound; for according to Biblical chronology the Exodus took place about 1449 B. C., whereas Rameses II first ruled beginning about 1300 B. C. A city may be named after a king; but so may a king be named after a city, or both king and city after some other person or other object bearing a familiar name. This Rameses is usually located by geographers about midway between Lake Timsah and the Nile. For further location of the land of Goshen we add some facts to which Keil has drawn attention. It must have bordered on the east on Arabia Petraea because the Septuagint translators' term is tesem arabiav. On the west it must have reached to the Nile, because "the Israelites had an abundance of fish" (Nu 11:5). Then, it "must have skirted the Tanitic arm of the Nile, for the fields of Zoan, i. e. Tanis, are said to have been the scene of the mighty acts of God in Egypt" (Psalms 78:12,43).13-17. But bread there was none in all the rest of the land, for the famine was extremely severe and the land of Egypt as well as the land of Canaan was exhausted because of the famine. And Joseph took in all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain which they were buying,

and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. When the money was used up from the land of Egypt and from the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said: Give us food; why should we die before thy very eyes; for the money is all spent. And Joseph said: Give your livestock, and I will supply you for your livestock if your money is all spent. So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food for their horses, for their livestock in sheep, their livestock in cattle and for their asses; and he supplied them with food for all their livestock that year.By contrast with the unusual provisions made for Israel and his children "the rest of the land" has no bread or food. The Hebrew says, "bread there was none in all the land," meaning: "in all the rest of the land," for we have just been told that the Israelites in Goshen had their wants provided for. The severity of the famine involved "Egypt as well as the land of Canaan." This reference to Canaan may merely have been due to the fact that the two lands primarily affected by this famine actually were Egypt and Canaan. Since it later develops (v.15) that the money from Canaan flowed also into Egypt's coffers, it is quite likely that during this period Canaan was under Egypt's dominion, as happened so often both before and after this time. With this obvious explanation at hand, it seems very strange that critics cannot account for the reference to Canaan and describe it as "quite uncalled for" (ein unberechtigter Seitenblick, K. C.). Several terms make us feel how very severe the famine was; it is said that these lands "were exhausted." Naturally the money is used up first -- késeph is regularly used: "silver" for "money," because of the metal that served as a medium of exchange. Joseph "took in" (laqat -- Piel -- "collect") all this available money both from Egypt and from Canaan, and brought it "into Pharaoh's house" or palace, into the royal treasuries.15. When their money was used up, the Egyptians come to Joseph, to whom they feel they can appeal with confidence, for he has proved himself the nation's saviour thus far. Apparently no Egyptian in those days mistrusted Joseph's motives or misconstrued them. Though he had their money, they seemed to recognize that the course he was pursuing was the wisest. The emergency of those days called for emergency measures. Nothing so unnerves a nation and breaks down its morale so much and so rapidly as complete support by relief long continued. Unfortunately, some otherwise sober commentators sharply censure Joseph's famine measures, as though they proceeded from sinister motives and were aimed directly at the enslavement of the nation. Yet, apparently, afterward Joseph restored their cattle and livestock and provided the Egyptians with seed grain and merely charged what was not an exorbitant tax for a fertile land. The Scriptures neither commend nor censure Joseph's measures, but these measures are quite readily defended. The objections made are largely the inventions of theorists who cannot realize what stern measures extreme emergencies may call for. There is something pathetically helpless about the plea of the Egyptians: they want food; they have no money; they do not appear ready to make further sacrifices. But Joseph has a workable plan. 16. Joseph has the bold plan of having them pay with their "livestock" (miqneh). It really was a relief for the people in famine days to have the care of their cattle taken off their hands. The resources of the government apparently could carry the cattle through famine days better than individuals could have done. Horses, sheep, cattle, asses are sacrificed. The fact that the people brought them all shows their dire need. Silence on the question whether they protested is no proof that protests were not forthcoming. But protests of individuals are in themselves no gauge of the folly or the wisdom of a course in which they are involved. To expect patient and entirely acquiescent acceptance of Joseph's measures on the part of all is to expect the impossible. The price paid was deemed sufficient to maintain the purchasers for a year. Yet the nation had not lost its self-respect: they were paying for what they

got.One difficulty created by the critics on this section must be alluded to. Some hold since Wellhausen that since the scene is laid neither in Ephraim nor in Judah, therefore neither E nor J can be the source. Nothing points to J. Consequently some entirely foreign source is involved, they claim. Note how the weaknesses of the critical theory demand hypothesis after hypothesis to bolster it up.18, 19. When that year was ended, they came to him in the next year and said to him: We will not hide from my lord that if the money and the livestock owned is all spent, for my lord's disposal there is nothing left before my lord except our body and our land. Why should we die before thy very eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, then we on our part and our land shall belong the Pharaoh; then give us seed that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate.The Hebrew says "second year" (hashshanah hashshenîth) but it means the year after the cattle had been purchased and not the second year of the famine. So we translate "next year" to avoid confusion. The people approach Joseph, for he on his part had to make his hoard of grain stretch as far as possible, and so naturally he would not approach them but would wait till their need drove them to him. They on their part cannot forget the loss of their money and their cattle; so they mention it in their plea, although Joseph well knows that both are gone. Consequently, all they have left is their body and their land. We must translate kî im as we did above "that if," for it does not mean "how that" (A. V.). Perhaps for: "we will not hide" (nekhachchedh) we should translate the verb as a potential, "we could not hide" (K. C.). "My lord" for "our lord," a natural irregularity, because it is a stereotyped expression.19. The people speak of their land as dying by a kind of zeugma, for the land deteriorates if it be not worked, and here their plea is for seed. Now this may bring us in point of time to the last year of the famine where they may justly reckon with the idea of again working their lands; or this may mean that a bit of sowing was attempted annually in a few portions where this might yield slight returns. But, in any case, the plan to sell themselves and their land for bread emanated from the people; it was not a scheme of Joseph's to enslave them, as some seem to imply. Besides, this plan shows that the people are learning a lesson from Joseph's approach to the problem. Outright donations have no place in his relief measures. So they compute very correctly that the next step is to sell themselves and their lands. The price paid is not too high, for the thing at stake is their very life ("that we may live and not die"). Namûth -- "should we die" -- the potential imperfect (K. S.187). Léchem, "bread," has the article to express the idea: the bread needed under these circumstances (K. S.298 b).20-22. So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine was very severe on them. So the land came into Pharaoh's possession. And as for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of Egypt to the other. Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for there was an allowance of food for the priests by Pharaoh's command, and they lived off the allowance which Pharaoh gave to them. Therefore they did not sell their land.Pharaoh was the one whose power and influence were greatly enhanced by Joseph's acquisition of land, another one of the wise and considerate features of Joseph's plan, whereby both king and people were led to trust him the more. The added statement, "the Egyptians sold every man his field," shows how entirely universal was the situation that prevailed. Moses is recording a thing of special historic interest for those times, for it is the explanation of a peculiar situation which actually prevailed in Egypt. Therefore Moses says very distinctly: "So the land came into Pharaoh's possession."21. Now another famine measure -- how about the people after Pharaoh had them on his hands? Joseph simplifies the matter of food administration by "removing them to the cities from one end of Egypt to the other." Food could be distributed far

more readily to groups collected in and about the cities. Again the completeness of Joseph's plans is indicated: they cover the situation "from one end of Egypt to the other" -- half-measures had no place in Joseph's administration. Changes in the text to make it conform with the Septuagint are not indicated by any worth-while consideration. The Hebrew text makes such good sense; the Septuagint text flounders helplessly: "he enslaved them into being slaves" could hardly be called an improvement. Procksch produces a rare gem of critical results when he modifies the text to the point where it reads: "He made the people pass in review before him by cities from one end of Egypt to the other." What an idea to stage parades, all the population of the cities, the famishing multitudes! That would have been about the last thing Joseph would have done. 22. One exception was made when the land passed into Pharaoh's hands -- the land of the priests was not bought. This was a concession either to the respect they enjoyed or to their strong influence in the nation, or to both. Instead, a choq, "a portion" or "an allowance of food," (B D B) was designated for their use "by Pharaoh's command," me'eth par'oh, literally -- "from Pharaoh."23-26. And Joseph said to the people: See, I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh; lo, here is seed for you that ye may sow your land. It shall be at the time of your harvest then ye shall give a fifth part to Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own for seed for your fields and for your food, and for those who are in your households, and for food for your little ones. And they said: Thou hast saved our lives; may we find favour in my lord's sight and we will be Pharaoh's servants. And Joseph made it an ordinance concerning the land of Egypt unto this day for Pharaoh in the matter of the fifth part. Only the land of the priests belonged to them alone; it did not become Pharaoh's.Joseph's words on the day that these new land regulations went into effect are here reported. They embody the regulations that were to prevail as laws covering taxes. Joseph tells the people plainly that what he has done profits him nothing; the land was bought together with the people for Pharaoh. Indeed, that involves the setting up of a kind of feudal relationship, a thing apparently unavoidable under the circumstances. In return Joseph at once gives them the seed they were bargaining for. He also defines for them very clearly what their obligations will be in the future. "At the time of harvest" (battebhû'oth -- "in the harvest" -- be being temporal rather than partitive) they are to make five parts, give one to Pharaoh and keep the remaining four. Twenty per cent is a high tax rate but quite moderate for the Orient where one third and one half have been demanded (cf.1Ma 10:30 w Luther v.29). Our tax-ridden age ought not find reason for objection here. These four parts remaining were thought sufficient by Joseph for "seed," and "food," both for their entire "households" as well as particularly for their "little ones," who here, as in v. Ge 47:12 (taph), are a matter of special concern. La'asher expresses a genitive relationship: "for (or of) those who are in your households," for le often serves to express the genitive (K. S.281 b).25. The Egyptians understand Joseph's motive and appreciate what he actually did for them. They admit: "Thou hast saved our lives" (Hifil from chayah). All they desire is that Joseph's goodwill may continue to rest upon them -- "may we find favour in my lord's (for: our lord's) sight." Though they recognize that they will have lost their liberty, yet so long as Joseph is kindly minded, they know their lot will not be an unpleasant one: "we will be Pharaoh's servants." So the whole thing is published as an ordinance which prevailed till the Mosaic age -- "unto this day" -- lephar'oh la (ch) chómesh, literally, "in reference to Pharaoh in reference to the fifth" -- two datives of reference. Only the land of the priests was exempt.12. Jacob's Preparations for His End (47:28-49:32)(a) Provisions for His Burial (47:28-31)28-31. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. And the days of Jacob, that is the years of his life, were one hundred and fortyseven years. And

the days of Israel came near to the point of death; and he called for his son Joseph and said to him: If now I have found favour in thy sight, place thy hand under my thigh, that thou wilt show kindness and faithfulness toward me: do not, I pray thee, bury me in Egypt; but I would lie with my fathers, and do thou take me away from Egypt and do thou bury me in their grave. And he answered: I for my part will do according to thy word. And he said: Give me thy oath. And he gave him his oath. Then Israel bowed down in prayer upon the head of the bed.There is little more of theocratic interest to be reported in the life of Jacob than his last words. So we are informed that though he thought death was near at the time when he stood before Pharaoh, yet he lived a total of seventeen years more near his beloved son in the land of Egypt, bringing his total age (i. e. "the days of Jacob" or, as the appositional statement has it: "the years of his life") up to 147 years. When it became apparent that the end was inevitable, Jacob felt the necessity of seeing Joseph for one last time. He has a special request to make of Joseph. He prefaces it with a respectful statement used in addressing a person of some consequence. By these words Jacob expresses his respect for one who occupies an eminent and responsible position. "Honour to whom honour is due." The words are: "If now I have found favour in thy sight." The gesture used in connection with the oath administered is to "place the hand under the thigh," which gesture we showed in connection with Ge 24:2 to refer to the descendants, in particular to the most prominent descendant hoped for, namely the Christ. The oath, therefore, means: "I adjure thee by the Christ in whom is embodied our dearest hope." Executing the oath is both "kindness and faithfulness:" Jacob makes his entreaty very solemn by all these means, for the thing he asks for is a token of a fine faith in God's promises. The eagerness of the petition finds further expression in the na'," I pray." Upon first hearing the petition one is inclined to regard it as relatively trivial. Why should it be a matter of such moment to ask for burial in Canaan not in Egypt? It is not merely a matter of sentiment when he says besides: "I would lie with my fathers." With men of strong faith, such as the patriarchs had, such petitions would have a deep and worthy motivation. Hebrews 11:21 gives the right direction to all investigation, telling us that this was done "by faith." Jacob believed God's promises in reference to Israel, the land of Canaan, and the blessing of all the nations of the world through the Saviour to come. His deepest hopes were tied up with these promises of the Word of God. Jacob wanted even his burial to give testimony to this faith. But the only suitable land the patriarchs owned was the cave at Machpelah where Abraham and Isaac lay buried. Therefore he requests that he be laid to rest there. This may all agree very well with the statement of Ge 50:5 that he had dug the grave for himself, for the cave still required that each new grave be separately dug within its confines. 30. "To sleep with one's fathers" does not refer to being buried but to falling asleep. Therefore this verse cannot be translated: "But when I sleep with my fathers, thou shalt carry me out of Egypt." (A. R. V.). It must be rendered: "But I would lie with my fathers, and do thou take me away from Egypt" (converted perfects!). Joseph promises: "I for my part will do according to thy words." The emphasis on the initial 'anokhî, "I," means, Joseph will do what lies in his power. That an oath was intended by the gesture used (v.29) is made unmistakably clear by Jacob's next demand: "Give me your oath," (Hebrew: "swear to me"). Joseph readily grants this favour. Jacob is so well pleased with the assurance, for the whole matter was one of greatest importance to his faith, that he proceeds at once to worship. Yishtachû does mean "bow down in reverence," and it might mean a gesture of respect to Joseph, which, however, in this case is hardly seemly. Meek translates, "he settled back on the head of his bed" -- unnatural; a weary old man would settle down on the entire bed. The whole setting indicates that an important need of

faith had been met. That would most naturally suggest that Jacob "bowed down in prayer," thanking God that He had granted him this deep satisfaction. The added phrase, "upon the head of the bed," conveys the sense that the head end (ro'sh), being a bit elevated, would offer a natural point upon which more comfortably to bow his head in prayer.A point occasioning some confusion in this connection is the fact that the words "head of the bed" are rendered "top of his staff" (Hebrews 11:21), this translation being based upon the Greek version which says: epi to acron thv rabdou. The Masoretic Hebrew text has mittah, "bed." The Greek translators pointed the text matteh, "staff." This is manifestly a wrong translation, but the author of the letter to the Hebrews used the Greek version because no vital point was involved.One naturally raises the question in connection with this chapter, whether the agrarian reforms ascribed to Joseph can be traced in other available records of a secular character. Keil takes the sanest view of the whole subject. He points out that Diodorus Siculus (I, 37) reports that all land in Egypt belonged either to the priests, to the king, or to the warriors. Strabo (21 -- 60 A. D.) tells that farmers and traders held taxable lands, but that the peasants were not landowners. Again Herodotus, the old Greek traveller, (425 B. C.), on the one hand tells how Sesostris had once divided the land among all Egyptians, giving every man a square piece, and had derived his revenue from an annual tax on them (2, 109). But later he reports (2, 168) that the warriors had received, every man of them, twelve sections of land exempt from taxation. These various accounts point to the fact that a situation such as Joseph created must have prevailed in Egypt, except that Joseph knows of no tax-free lands for warriors. But at a later date, when the original arrangement had already undergone extensive modification, except as far as the priests were concerned, the memory of how it all had originated was already lost, and so some attributed it to "the half-mythical king" Sesostris. In the last analysis this, then, is the situation: Egyptian sources do not happen to reveal these agrarian measures that the Biblical records have preserved; modification of Joseph's policies in the course of years is to be expected; what later Egyptian sources describe suggests policies of earlier days like those inaugurated by Joseph.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSWe feel that the only portion of this chapter suitable as a text for a sermon is the section v. Ge 47:1-12. It seems to us that the part v. Ge 47:13-26 is too definitely involved in a specifically Egyptian situation which cannot be duplicated anywhere at any time. Regarding the last paragraph, v. Ge 47:27-31, we feel that it corresponds too closely with situations in Abraham's life to afford anything new. But for v.1-12 we have always felt that the focal point lay in v. Ge 47:10, and we regard the whole as an excellent portrayal of the supreme worth of the character of God's saints: God's saints are kings, kings by a higher right than the kings of this earth can claim. This, of course, involves nothing derogatory to civil authorities.

CHAPTER XLVIII

12. Jacob's Provisions for His End (Continued) b. The Blessing of Joseph's Sons (48:1-22) Death was not as near as Jacob (Ge 47:27-31) had supposed, yet he made the needed preparations for it in due season. Now a second event transpires as death is seen to have drawn much nearer: Jacob blesses Joseph's sons. It would seem that at most several months elapsed between these two events. For the first occasion Jacob summoned Joseph to him; in this case a report came to Joseph in an incidental way. 1, 2. And it came to pass after these things that the report came to Joseph: Behold, thy father is sick. So he took his two sons along with him, Manasseh and Ephraim. When it was told to Jacob: Behold, thy son Joseph is coming to thee, Israel made himself strong and sat upon his bed. It is of no moment for us to know how much time elapsed between the previous event and the one about to be related, therefore the writer uses the very general phrase "after these things." "The report came to Joseph" -- for this expression the Hebrew has the impersonal "one said" (wayyó'mer). Apparently, then, Jacob did not summon Joseph and his two sons. Yet the event about to be related seems altogether too important to regard it as a mere chance occurrence: Jacob just happened to see Joseph's two sons and conceived the idea on the spur of the moment to adopt and to bless them. Such an approach leaves vital issues to be the outgrowth of whims and impulses. More acceptable by far is the approach which suggests that some plan like the one here carried out by Jacob had been discussed between the father and the son on a previous occasion. The carrying out of it may not have been feasible at the time. When Joseph hears of his father's weakened state, he promptly gets under way though he has not been sent for, bringing his two sons. Jacob is not greatly surprised when told of Joseph's coming. He had evidently expected it. Here we read "thy father is sick." Apparently Jacob had felt only the general debility of old age in the situation described at the close of the last chapter. Now actual sickness has come besides. 2. Again a double impersonal construction, "one told Jacob and said." We combine the two clauses in the translation and make them a subordinate clause. Very likely the verb form ba' is a participle, because participles are used regularly after hinneh, "behold." Such participles usually convey a future or a present (progressive) sense; therefore: not "has come" but "is coming." How considerately proper names are employed in the Scriptures. "Jacob," the father, received the message, but in his capacity as "Israel," the theocratic and divinely appointed head of the race, he "made himself strong," i. e., summoned up his reserve energy, and "sat upon his bed." An important work was to be done and he wanted to do it well. 3, 4. And Jacob said to Joseph: God Almighty appeared unto me in Luz in the land of Canaan and he blessed me, and He said to me: Behold, I am about to make thee fruitful, and I shall multiply thee and make of thee a company of tribes; and I shall give this land to thee and to thy seed after thee as an everlasting possession. The adoption and the blessing of Joseph's sons is Jacob's manifest purpose. The adoption is to be spoken of in v. Ge 48:5. These two verses (v.3, 4) must be a natural preparation for the adoption. Jacob recalls how God had appeared to him in Luz, the later Bethel, in the land of Canaan -- this appearance is the one of Ge 35:6-13 rather than the one of Ge 28:10-19, although in Jacob's thoughts the two may have blended into one, since the substance of the divine revelation was both times practically the same. The blessing imparted had centred

around great posterity and permanent possession of the land. Again hinneh, "behold," with a participle maphrekha, "am blessing thee," points to the future. The familiar fulness of expressions is used to indicate strongly that there shall be a remarkable multiplication of offspring: "be fruitful," "multiply," "make thee a company of tribes." "Tribes" is better than "people" here for 'ammîm, because in reality Jacob did not develop into separate "peoples" in the course of time as did Abraham; cf. K. W. sub verbo. Many people as descendants need a land to occupy. Consequently, multiplication of offspring and the land occupied are items of the blessing which are frequently joined together. The idea of an "everlasting possession" is familiar since Ge 17:8. However, in the nature of the case that promise is conditioned by the separate existence of Abraham's or Jacob's offspring. When these descendants are scattered abroad, they no longer have need of the land and no guarantee or title to it. The transition from these two verses to v.5 now is this: since Jacob is to multiply greatly in numbers, he is justified in adopting such devices as are in themselves right and calculated to further this multiplication. Such a device he is about to employ. 5-7. And now thy two sons that were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before my coming to thee to Egypt, they shall belong to me: Ephraim and Manasseh shall belong to me as Reuben and Simeon do. And thy descendants whom thou shalt beget after them shall belong to thee. After the name of one of their brethren shall they be designated in their inheritance. But as for me, when I was coming from Paddan then Rachel died to my great grief in the land of Canaan during the journey when we were still a stretch removed from Ephrathah; and I buried her there on the Ephrathah road -- also called Bethlehem. Jacob formally adopts Joseph's sons, who may now have been at least eighteen to twenty years old (cf. Ge 47:28; 41:50). His words are, "they shall belong to me." To indicate that they are not to be reckoned as loose appendages but as full-fledged sons Jacob places Ephraim and Manasseh on a par with his two eldest sons, Reuben and Simeon, mentioning the latter merely as examples. This does not imply that Ephraim and Manasseh replace Reuben and Simeon, for the latter cannot cease to be sons. Yet in one sense, as we shall see in a moment, Joseph's sons acquire the pre-eminence that the two first-born should normally have held by right of primogeniture. Jacob is conferring a favour, and yet as head of the theocratic family he also has full authority to make an adjustment such as this. He knows that Joseph will concur wholeheartedly in this arrangement. The preposition 'adh introduces the infinitive clause, here used in a temporal sense; besides 'adh is used in the "exclusive" sense in this case (K. S.401 w). 6. In constructing genealogical tables, however, any future sons of Joseph's are to be counted as Joseph's own. In the matter of inheritance, however, a special provision has to be made. Apparently Jacob is thinking of ordinary inheritances as well, but primarily of the inheritance of the promised land, which he knew would be distributed according to tribes. Such sons, counting as Joseph's, would receive an inheritance under the name of the one or the other of these adopted sons. For that reason we translated, "after the name of one of their brethren," though the words "of one" are not needed in the Hebrew. We have no knowledge of any further sons born to Joseph, and so this apparently remained an idle provision. Hôlßdhta is to be construed as a kind of future perfect, best rendered as a future in the translation: whom "thou shalt beget" (K. S.129).7. Reading superficially, we might suppose that Jacob's thoughts went wandering at this point after the manner of old men, who are not as keen of mind as they once were; and so he seems to run off into a bit of reminiscing, which comes to an abrupt close with this verse. However, as Luther already goes to some pains to prove in his commentary, Jacob's words show a logical progression. Here Jacob motivates his choice of Joseph's sons a bit more fully. Not only are they

adopted because of God's promise to make Jacob fruitful, but also because Rachel, his beloved wife, of whom he had anticipated further issue, had died prematurely at Ephrathah -- Bethlehem -- at the time of the return of the family from Paddan (usually called Paddan-Aram). The sentence structure betrays heightened emotion on Jacob's part as he recalls the bitter scene -- the pronoun 'anî stands first, "as for me." Jacob recalls how grievous the experience was and what a burden it laid upon him ('alî -- "upon me," i. e., "to my bitter grief," K. C., zu meinem Leidwesen). Now Jacob had naturally destined Rachel to be his only wife. Her sons should have been the first-born. By this arrangement of the adoption of her son's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh receive this position as is indicated by 1 Chronicles 5:1,2. From another point of view this is very proper, inasmuch as the portion of the firstborn always was a double one, and here, then, Joseph in his two sons actually receives that double portion. From another point of view this was extremely proper, because Joseph certainly had been the benefactor of the entire family in a most eminent way. Such services called for recognition. The place of honour was his by merit.All these deeper points of view seem hidden to those who are critically minded. Usually it is assumed that in the source from which this is taken (P) this statement led up to something which has now "been displaced in the redaction." This something K. C. thinks was the request to be buried by Rachel's side. But since that would have harmonized but poorly with Ge 47:30 it is left out; in fact, Jacob is made to say something entirely without a point.8-10. And Israel saw Joseph's sons, and he said: Who are these? And Joseph said to his father: They are my sons, whom God gave to me here. And he said: Bring them to me that I may bless them. Now Israel's eyesight was poor because of old age; he could not see well. So he brought them near to him, and he kissed and embraced them.Joseph now understands sufficiently well why his father is minded to bless Ephraim and Manasseh. Everything is ready -- Jacob may proceed to bless. The successive steps follow as one might have surmised. The grandfather feels that the two dim shapes that he sees are the sons in question. To verify the impression he asks: "Who are these?" We may add that he may have seen Joseph but rarely and Joseph's sons still more rarely and may not have expected that they would have grown to such full manly stature. How often we are surprised at young people's stature if we do not happen to have seen them for a time! Joseph responds, confirming his father's surmise, as much as to say: Yes; "they are my sons whom God gave me here." So Jacob naturally requests: "Bring them to me that I may bless them." Blessing one's descendants was by this time a kind of established tradition among the patriarchs. It was the regular custom. The parenthetical remark that follows explains why Jacob had asked: "Who are these?" Jacob was not actually blind; his "eyesight was poor." That must be the meaning of the Hebrew idiom: "his eyes were heavy" (kabhedhû). That does not mean that he was blind. Consequently the Hebrew "he could not see" is meant in the sense "he could not see well." Viewed thus, all items in the narrative yield a natural harmony. There is no room for the critical position that E says (v.8) Jacob saw; whereas J says (v.10) he could not see. Because of the unlikeliness of such a contradiction within two almost contiguous verses, ordinary common sense has always reconciled them without effort. Joseph complies with his father's request and "brought them near to him." Then the venerable patriarch "kissed and embraced them" in a manner that made these young men understand the better what their grandfather had meant to their father. The imperative qachem (v.9) is followed by a converted imperfect wa'abharakhem -- a rather common sequence (K. S.364 n). The clause (v.10) lo' yakhûl, etc., is asyndetic, expressing result; the imperfect is a yaqtul concomitans (K. S.152). 11-14. And Israel said to Joseph: To see thy face -- I had never expected it; and now God allows me to see

even thy descendants. And Joseph brought them away from beside his knees and fell down before him to the ground. And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim in his right hand at Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand at Israel's right hand, and so he brought them to him. And Israel put forth his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head -- and he was the younger -- and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, and so crossed his hands; for Manasseh was the elder.Who can blame Jacob for lapsing into reminiscences? All the more not since they are remembrances of God's mercy. The order of the sentence gives the true shade of meaning: "to see thy face" stands first. He had never hoped to catch even a passing glimpse of Joseph's face, and he is permitted by God's providence to be in his son's company and even to behold grandsons. The infinitive re'oh is unusual for a construct, yet it is found Ge 50:20; 31:28 (G. K.75 n).12. Joseph naturally wishes to thank his father for the favour granted him. In true oriental courtesy "he fell down before him to the ground," bowing his face to the ground. But in order to be able to do this he first "brought them away from beside his knees," for there they stood in the way between him and his father. They had not been "between his knees," A. R. V., that would have required a different preposition. They had not been sitting on his knees, as some imagine. What a picture! Two youths of twenty sitting on their grandfather's knees! When brought to the old man who was sitting upon his bed, they naturally stood at either side of his knees while he embraced them. The preposition involved is me'im -- "from at," which is best rendered "beside" in this case. No need of rare conjectures about some occult adoption rite. A reference to Ge 30:3 is out of place, for nothing indicates that he took them on or between his knees.13. What now follows is quite simple. Joseph reckons in terms of the rights and the advantages of the first-born. So he takes his two sons and guides them to his father in such a way as to bring the eldest to the father's right hand; the youngest to his left. But here again nature gives no advantages in the kingdom of God; it must be entirely in terms of free grace. Isaac was preferred before the elder Ishmael; Jacob before Esau; now Ephraim to Manasseh. The Spirit of prophecy, who enlightened Jacob to speak his blessing, guided him in this case to let the right hand rest upon the younger. By the way, here we have the first specific mention of the laying on of hands as a rite of benediction. The verb sikkel, used here only, may mean "crossed," as the Greek version already construed it. K. C. imports rather a heavy meaning into the verb from the parallel Arabic root meaning "to be dark," when he translates this verb alone as: "with secret purpose he laid on" his hands. The verb might come from the root which means "to deal wisely or prudently," and then the Piel meaning might be "to do (it) purposely," or "guiding his hand wittingly" (A. V. and Luther). But this seems rather an unwarranted jump in thought from "prudently" to "purposely." (The article in hatstsa'îr -- "the younger" -- marks the comparative, K. S.308a).Genesis 48:1515, 16. And he blessed Joseph and said:The God before whom my fathers walked -- Abrahamand Isaac,The God who shepherds me from of old to thisday,The Angel that redeems me from all evil -- mayHe bless the lads;And may my name be named upon them andthe name of my fathers, Abraham andIsaac;And may they multiply exceedingly in themidst of the land.This arrangement shows that Jacob's blessing is really poetical in form according to the Hebrew law of poetic parallelism. Quite properly it is said that "he blessed Joseph," for in blessing the sons he blessed and purposed to bless the father. The Greek Septuagint, as usual, removes the difficulty by a textual change and says "them" for "Joseph." The noun 'Elohîm with the article means "the true God." The blessing begins rather majestically with a threefold address to God, which we may well regard as designed by the Spirit of inspiration, whether Jacob at the time fully realized this import or not. For Jacob here spoke as a prophet, and not always was the fullest

meaning of the prophetic word entirely apparent to the mouthpiece God employed (though by this we in no wise imply mechanical inspiration). The first reference is to the Father; the last is to the Son, the Redeemer; the second does not specifically refer to the Holy Spirit, though in a sense He may be said to shepherd God's children.When Jacob describes the true God as the one before whom his "father walked," he suggests the necessity of knowing the true God according to the true tradition that the fathers, Abraham and Isaac, possessed concerning Him. He knows God as one whom his fathers knew intimately and whose religion was a vital, living issue with them. This word testifies to a type of godly life that was deeply sincere. In thinking of the fathers he recalls how the preceding generations had already stood under God's gracious blessing. Then he describes God as ro'eh, "the one shepherding," the participle expressing continuity: God still shepherds. Himself a shepherd, Jacob well understood what a measure of tender care the figure involved. In this case Jacob could well testify that this care had extended "from of old to this day." This is the first of those frequent references to the Divine Shepherd (Psalms 23:1; 80:1; Isaiah 40:11; John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25, etc.). The A. V. blurs this thought by rendering "fed." Without a doubt, the third reference is also to God, for it is in strict parallelism with the preceding two and ascribes a truly divine work to the Angel, namely the work of redeeming from all evil. Consequently this is a reference to the divine Angel of the Lord or Angel of Yahweh, whom we already met with Ge 22:11, and who was there already discovered to be more than a created angel. See the remarks on that passage. Cf. also Ge 16:11. For the Son is God's messenger or Angel, sent to deliver man. Here again the participle is used, go'el, "the Redeeming One," i. e., one who still redeems or continually redeems. After an experience of a lifetime marked by many a deliverance Jacob well knew how often He had been delivered.In this case there is no need of specifying wherein the blessing upon "the lads" (ne'arîm -- "young men") is to consist. "May He bless the lads" covers the case, for it involves that He is to continue to manifest the same care, first suffering them to walk before Him; secondly, shepherding them uninterruptedly; thirdly, redeeming them also from all evil. Yet the three mentioned are one, as the singular verb "may He bless" (yebharekh) indicates. In the statement "may my name be named upon them" the term "name" (shem) signifies "character"; i. e., may my and my father's character find expression in them, or: may they express the true patriarchal character and be conscious of what deeper responsibilities are involved. The blessing concludes with a thought that was vital in those days of small beginnings: "may they multiply exceedingly (Hebrew: larobh -- "to a multitude") in the midst of the land" -- beqérebh ha'ßrets involves holding secure possession of the land and not only holding the fringes of it.In this blessing not only did the Spirit of God speak through the venerable old patriarch, but he himself on his part gave proof of a strong and cheerful faith: Such words were an effective benediction and much more than a pious wish.17-19. And Joseph noticed that his father was placing his right hand upon Ephraim's head, and it displeased him, and so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head; and Joseph said to his father: Not so, my father; for this one is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head. But his father refused, saying: I know, my son; I know. He too shall become a people, and he too shall be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall be a multitude of people.Everything is apparently recorded just as it happened. The two men are placed before Jacob; he places his hands crossed upon their heads and at once pronounces his blessing. Joseph observes the irregularity but cannot act at once, for he is also giving heed to what his father says. Furthermore, so solemn a word dare not be lightly interrupted. But as soon as the

father has spoken the benediction, Joseph aims to correct what he thinks is a strange oversight. In fact "it displeased him" -- yera'(imperfect from ra'a') literally: "it was evil in his sight." Having less discernment than his father, he had reckoned the right of the first-born as naturally belonging to the eldest. He even "took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's." But Jacob has been induced by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of prophecy, to do this unusual thing and recognizes that his action is the result of superior, divinely wrought insight. So he refuses very positively and tells Joseph that he himself was aware of the actual situation. Then he proceeds to tell definitely just what difference is involved. Manasseh too shall be "a people and he too shall be great." But Ephraim shall outstrip him, so that "his descendants shall be a multitude of people." This last expression melo' haggoyîm -- "the fulness of peoples" with the article means: he shall constitute a real multitude of people (die wahre Voelkerfuelle, K. C., potential article, K. S.296b). Strange to say, in the first census of Moses' time the tribe "Ephraim had 40,500 men, while that of Manasseh could only reckon 32,200; in the second, the numbers received a temporary alteration, Ephraim counting only 32,500, and Manasseh 52,700" (Whitelaw); cf. Nu 1:33-35 with Nu 26:28-37. Moses gives proof of his faith in prophecy by recording a word which in his day was not yet being fulfilled.20-22. And he blessed them on that day saying: In thee shall Israel bless, saying: May God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh. So he put Ephraim before Manasseh. Then Israel said to Joseph: Behold, I shall die, but God will be with you, and will bring you back unto the land of your fathers. And I myself do give to thee one portion of ground above thy brethren, which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow. Joseph had interrupted the blessing as soon as he had dared, but Jacob had not said all that was on his mind. After gently repelling Joseph's suggestion, he continues to state that these two tribes shall be so greatly blessed that they shall in the course of time become proverbial for blessing and shall provide the formula to be used, i. e., "In thee (-- by referring to the one or the other of you) shall Israel bless" or "invoke a blessing" (Meek), saying: "May God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh." 'Elohîm occurs here rather than Yahweh because the Creator's power in multiplying descendants is being reflected on. But one noteworthy point was that Jacob still continued to "put Ephraim before Manasseh." Such is the certainty of men of God when they speak prophetically. In yesimekha the future is optative. The Jews are said to use this formula of blessing to this day.21. But Jacob has a word for Joseph in particular. He knows death is at hand. He states the fact with the calm courage of faith. But he leaves the assurance with Joseph that Egypt is not the land of their destiny. God in His power ('Elohîm) will bring back Israel's children "to the land of their fathers." They should not allow this prospect to become submerged. Jacob foresaw very clearly on the basis of words spoken to the fathers cf. chap.15 what the next important developments in God's people would be. God's children do not walk on toward a dark and uncertain future.22. Jacob has a last bequest for his favourite son Joseph. He gives it as something to which he, Jacob, has a particular right -- "I myself do give" ('anî, emphatic). It is a special "portion," a shékhem, that is a "shoulder" or "ridge" -- just "one above thy brethren" ('a(ch)chadh min -- construct, before a preposition, G. K.130 g). He asserts that he took this "from the hand of the Amorites with sword and bow." This is a reference to an event not recorded elsewhere in the Scriptures but referred to John 4:5, and so, apparently, the parcel of ground in question was clearly identified for many a century. This cannot be a reference to chapter 34, for in that deed Jacob had no hand and sharply rebuked his sons for it. Therefore the word shékhem, "portion," does not contain a subtle allusion to the town Shechem and the event there recorded. Practically

all commentators see such an allusion because of the accidental correspondence of words, but they create great difficulties for themselves by such an assumption. The patriarchs did more things than Genesis records. But some will protest, as does Delitzsch, that such an act of conquest is contrary to the attitude of the patriarchs, who did nothing to further their own interests but waited patiently till God gave what He had promised to give. Yet here is a situation that would cover the case: Jacob may on some occasion have been wrongfully attacked and resolutely defended himself -- for the patriarchs could on occasion bear arms, as Abraham did Gen.14 -- and as a result in driving off the Amorites he may have acquired right and title to a "portion" or "ridge" of ground. The other explanation resorted to by not a few is to make the perfect nathatti a prophetic perfect, "I shall give," and to refer it to the time of conquest under Joshua when the Ephraimites did take Shechem and the surrounding territory from the Canaanites. But the Hebrew construction opposes itself first of all with the emphatic "I do give": what Ephraim has to conquer is not emphatically Jacob's gift. Lastly, note: nathßttî is a perfectum praesens, "herewith I give" (G. K.106 i).The critical approach to the subject matter of this chapter is what one would be inclined to expect. Since the chapter purports to set forth a prophecy, and criticism does not believe very much in prophecy, we are assured that this must be a prophecy after the event, vaticinium post eventum, and therefore a later account which is cast into the form of a prophecy, as though Biblical writers were not above the use of such morally doubtful devices, and as though the message of the passage were just as valuable whether it be a true, straightforward prophecy or a pious fraud. Along the same line is the critical assumption that the "threefold invocation" (Ge 48:15,16) "has some resemblance to a feature of Babylonian liturgies." Such an accidental "resemblance" may exist, but it takes much more than that to warrant the assumption that therefore the thought of the patriarch must be derived from some Babylonian source.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSWe feel that v. Ge 48:8-20 may be used to demonstrate the potency of the prayers and the blessings of God's saints. This approach involves, of course, that blessings are prayers, and that prayer is heard. One could use the section v. Ge 48:1-20 for the same purpose.

CHAPTER XLIX

14. Conclusion of Jacob's History (Continued) c. The Blessing of His Own Sons (49:1-27) Jacob concludes his life in a manner worthy of the patriarchs, among whom he stands as one fully deserving this honour. Other saints of God are presented in the Scriptures as having spoken a blessing before their end. In this class are Isaac (Ge 27), Moses (De 33), Joshua (Jos 24), Samuel (1Sa 12). What is more natural than that a saint of God departing this life should desire to lay a blessing upon the head of those whom he leaves behind! Upon closer study this blessing of Jacob stands revealed as a piece of rare beauty. Lange has summarized the elements of poetic excellence as "rhythmical movement, a beautiful parallelism of members, a profusion of figures, a play upon the names of the sons, other instances of paronomasia, unusual modes of expression, a truly exalted spirit, as well as a heartfelt warmth." It seems but natural to us that a man of Jacob's energy of mind and character should have cast his thoughts into a mold of fine poetic beauty in order to make his utterances the more clear-cut and also the more easily remembered. They who have a mean conception of the patriarchs as being prosy and trivial characters, standing on a low level of faith and godliness, are inclined to take offense at so noble a production and to pronounce apodictically that Jacob could not have been its author. But before we reckon with the weaknesses of the critical position, we shall set forth a few other features of this blessing that contribute to a correct understanding of it. The sequence of the names is readily understood. The six children of Leah are mentioned first, though it is not clear why Zebulon, the sixth, should be mentioned before Issachar, the fifth. Then come the four sons of the handmaids, though the two sons of Zilpah, Asher and Gad, are inserted between the two sons of Bilhah, Dan and Naphtali. Lastly come Rachel's children, Joseph and Benjamin. Another observation is in order on this matter of grouping. Among the first six Judah definitely stands out by receiving a much more substantial blessing than the rest. His is the pre-eminence in point of leadership. Among the last six Joseph excels by virtue of his blessing, although his is the pre-eminence in the matter of possession. Joseph is blessed by including Ephraim and Manasseh in one. The distinction between these two sons of his was taken care of in the preceding chapter. Some question whether this poem should be designated as a blessing; they emphasize v.1, "that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the latter days." They would prefer to label it prediction or perhaps prophecy. Yet v. Ge 49:28, rightly construed, labels the words spoken by the patriarch a "blessing." So if the Scriptural estimate is at all normative -- and for us it is absolute -- we have here both blessing and prediction, or a prophetic blessing. This claim is by no means impaired by the fact that four of the sons must hear words spoken that involve a censure, in fact, in the case of the first three sons a severe word of censure. Issachar (v. Ge 49:15) gets a milder rebuke. The entire problem, however, is viewed in the wrong light if it is claimed that certain sons were cursed. Reuben is censured (v. Ge 49:4). Simeon's and Levi's anger is cursed (v. Ge 49:7) not they themselves. And rightly considered, these criticism are blessings in disguise, for they point out to the tribes involved the sin that the tribe as a whole is most exposed to and against which it should be particularly on its guard: Reuben against moral instability and licentiousness; Simeon and Levi against hot-headed violence; Issachar against indolence. Yet, for all that, not one of the tribes is removed from the

concord of blessings laid upon the rest, for the blessings laid upon some redound to the welfare of all the rest. The blessed land is denied to none. The benefits of the covenant of the Lord in which all stood are cancelled for none. The dying father recognized that what some needed was not further gifts but restraint in the use of what they already possessed. From the human point of view another matter must be stressed. The father had long observed his sons and knew them perhaps better than they knew themselves. In a pithy final word he gives to each man the counsel that he needed most. Upon this natural foundation the Spirit of God builds up and helps Jacob to foretell in a number of instances how the tribal development tends in the future. So with a fine mixture of council and encouragement the father speaks a word that the sons from the very outset value as a divinely inspired oracle. A godly man's oracles are very potent prayers made according to God's heart and answered by Him. We can, therefore, hardly agree with those who stress the improbability of a decrepit old man's being able to utter thoughts so clear-cut and virile. We know of two possibilities: first, man's intellect may grow feeble and decay before his end; secondly, men have been known to retain full possession of their faculties, in fact, to have their powers of mind and heart at the keenest point of development just prior to their end. Jacob happens to belong to the second class. Some have found fault with the fact that no judgment is pronounced on religious conditions in the course of these last words of Jacob -- kein Urteil ueber die religioesen Verhaeltnisse -- Dillmann. Such a criticism is rather wide of the mark. That is not what Jacob set out to offer. He says (v.1) that he proposes to tell his sons what would befall them in the latter days. From another point of view this is also a blessing (v. Ge 49:28). A man can hardly be criticized for not having said what he did not aim to say. The critical position in regard to these words of Jacob is well known. With almost united mind and voice the critics hold that these are not words of Jacob, at least not in their present form. Instead, the words are relegated to the time of the Judges, perhaps the latter portion of that age. It is claimed that the whole chapter indubitably reflects this later age, and that it received its present shape and form perhaps no later than the days of David and Solomon. A few notable exceptions are still to be found: Hengstenberg, Keil, Delitzsch, Whitelaw, Koenig (with reservations), Strack still have the courage to hold that the words are Jacob's. However, it must be remembered that certain presuppositions condition the critical attitude. In the first place, actual prophecy or prediction as such is regarded as virtually impossible. In the second place, the patriarchs are without good grounds regarded incapable of so significant an utterance. Thirdly, some men are obsessed with the idea of denying outstanding productions like this poem to outstanding characters and of ascribing them to insignificant, obscure and usually unknown authors -- a strange course of procedure. Then we should yet note a fatal weakness of the critical contention: Levi is spoken of in terms of an inferior position, which actually was his in the earlier days and which constituted a disadvantage and in a sense a reproof of the tribe. But this situation underwent a radical change in Moses' day, when Levi rallied to the cause of the Lord (Ex 32:25-28), redeemed itself from disgrace, and advanced to a position of honourable and blessed dispersion among the tribes of Israel. Jacob's words (v. Ge 49:5-7) reflect the earlier situation and would not be the statement of the case for the Age of the Judges. When, then, some critics (Land mentioned by Skinner) "distinguish six stages in the growth of the song," that must be regarded as the type of proof that covers up deficiency of sound logic by bold assertions, none of which are susceptible of proof. Keil has very properly reminded us that the thing that actually appears in the song of blessings is "not the prediction of particular historical events" but rather a "purely ideal portraiture of the peculiarities of the different tribes." This is a

point that must be borne in mind continually. Critics make of these generalized statements specific allusions to particular events or situations and so gain ground for their type of interpretation, which sees the Age of the Judges reflected again and again.One last point of view is not to be lost sight of this blessing was one of the things Israel needed to guide its course through the dark days to be encountered during the stay in Egypt. A blessing like this was a spiritual necessity. By the use of it men of Israel could look forward to the blessed time when the tribes would be safely established in the Promised Land, every tribe in its own inheritance. Without words like this and Ge 15:12-14 Israel would have been a nation sailing upon an uncharted sea. This chapter was a necessity for Israel's faith during the days of the bondage in Egypt.We mention perhaps the strangest of exegetical curiosities, the interpretation of Jeremias (Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients) which makes of the twelve sons of Jacob in this blessing the twelve signs of the Zodiac. To arrive at this result he reconstrues a number of these signs, deliberately changes portions of the Hebrew text, and discovers allusions so subtle and remote that only a very few -- Nork and Zimmern Lepsius, e. g. -- have ventured to follow him. But even if his construction should be correct, to what purpose would the chapter have been written? Men such as Jeremias would say: these are Israel's astral myths. We cannot substitute such vague reconstructions for the sound purposeful meaning that a sober exegesis knows to be the true sense of the Scriptures.Several types of figures are found in this chapter, especially comparisons or metaphors. Judah is a lion; Issachar, an ass; Dan, a serpent; Naphtali, a hind; Benjamin, a wolf. Yet not one of these comparisons of itself involves anything derogatory. Least of all have they any reference to a totemistic state of religion through which the tribes are said to have passed earlier in their history.There are many more minor problems relative to this blessing, but we have touched upon all that are essential to a correct understanding of it and have shown the fallacy of at least the major misconstructions that are put upon it.1. And Jacob summoned his sons and said: Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what shall befall you in the end of the days.For "summoned" the Hebrew says, "he called unto" them. This is meant in the sense of dispatching messengers to gather them together. There is a definite consciousness on the old father's part that he like other old men of God is being granted special insight in reference to his sons' lives, the knowledge of which can be a substantial blessing to them. Jacob never saw more clearly and never spoke more truly. We have here more than pia desideria, "pious wishes." The solemn formal announcement on the father's part also indicates that he is clearly aware of the fact that he is about to pronounce substantial blessings. Besides, these words are to be common property heard and known by all. Each brother is to profit by what the other hears and receives. "Befall" yikra' for yikrah -- a common exchange of the verbs of these two classes (G. K.75 rr).Much depends on the right evaluation of the expression "in the end of the days." So we have translated quite literally be'acharîth hayyamîm. Koenig says very generally in der Folgezeit, "in coming days." Luther was content with the general phrase in kuenftigen Zeiten, "in future days." A. V. uses too strong an expression, "in the last days," laying itself open to the criticism that much of what Jacob foretells does not lie at the end of time. Literally, of course, 'acharîth is "the latter part" (B D B). Some make the expression refer merely to the future, but that is made impossible by the literal meaning, "the latter part." Others construe in a fanciful way, contending that it runs up to the end in so far as an individual may see in the direction of that end, some seeing much farther than others. Most interpreters are ready to concede that the Messianic age is involved in some passages where this expression occurs and that it, therefore, in those passages bears a Messianic connotation. K. W.

will allow this to be the case from Isaiah 2:2 onward. That is the attitude of the majority of expositors. But, as we hope to demonstrate, the Messianic future is very definitely in this chapter. Consequently, from the very first instance of its use as well as in all others the phrase points to the future, including the Messianic future. But it points not to this only but to any preceding part of the future as well, as long as this future is covered by God's promises and is a part of the divine developments culminating in the days of the Messianic age. This meaning holds good also for Nu 24:14; De 4:30; 31:29, as well as for the later prophetic passages. Consequently Keil says correctly, on the one hand: This phrase "in prophetic language denotes not the future generally but the last future, the Messianic age of consummation"; and adds, on the other hand: "It embraces the whole history of completion which underlies the present period of growth.' "Now as far as Jacob himself was concerned, the first instance of fulfilment naturally was the occupation of Canaan by the tribes descended from his sons. As far as Israel as a nation was concerned, that was the first thing to be realized. We need not wonder greatly that his blessing speaks very largely in terms dealing with this first fulfilment. To see this first word realized would serve as a pledge for the realization of all things that God might yet be pleased to reveal and to do. Perspective, as far as time is concerned, was not in evidence in prophetic words. Revelation presents all the elements of the future in its prediction without troubling to reveal the time intervals that may come between the events foretold. This explains how Jacob can see in one picture the occupation of Canaan and the Messiah's kingdom but hardly anything that lies in between. Dillmann makes an unwarranted statement in reference to this phrase: he claims that it was customary in the age of the prophets; therefore it must have been added by some narrator living in that age. Proof for such a claim is not adduced and cannot be. We must also take issue with the question whether it is Jacob who pronounces this blessing or not. For us the question is permanently settled by the statement, perfectly clear in itself -- "Jacob -- said." The statements of v. Ge 49:6,7 b and Ge 49:10 are supposed to demonstrate that it was not Jacob who spoke, for these verses seem to move in terms of the later tribes. Quite so. But it is Jacob thinking in terms of the tribes descended from him -- not at all an unnatural thing, seeing he knew he was to develop into a number of tribes. But the critics claim that some writer of the Age of the Judges sought to recall the tribes that were fast disintegrating and losing their spiritual heritage, and to make his appeal more effective the writer assumed the name of the venerable Jacob -- this literary assumption does not strike us as particularly effective. It is far from convincing. We fail to see how a message cast into such a form could exert any particularly salutary influence.Genesis 49:22. Come together and hearken, ye sons ofJacob,And hearken unto Israel, your father.At this point the poem proper begins, as is indicated by the parallelism of structure. In substance v.1 is repeated, in so far as the sons are bidden to gather round their father. The added feature of the verse is the double summons to "hearken." Good sons would in any case be ready to do that. The father's double exhortation grows out of the knowledge that his words will be doubly precious, since they voice his own best counsel as well as wisdom imparted by God's Holy Spirit. For no man ever yet by the cleverness of his own ingenuity foretold future developments in the kingdom of God. That Jacob is thus speaking in a double capacity is further indicated by the two names he uses, "Jacob," the name of the man naturally clever and ambitious, and Israel, the name of the new man who had submitted to God's leadings, had prevailed in prayer, and had been content to go as God led when native human ingenuity had failed.Genesis 49:33, 4. Reuben, thou art my first-born,My strength and the beginning of my might,The pre-eminence of dignity and the pre-eminence of power,Seething as

water does -- thou shalt not enjoypre-eminence,For thou hast gone up upon thy father's bed,Then didst thou defile -- my couch did hemount.The father cannot forget that Reuben is his "firstborn," nor all the fine hopes that attached themselves to him. The father multiplies himself and grows strong through his children. Therefore the first-born may well be regarded as a pledge of what the others yet to come may achieve together with him. He may, therefore, well be designated "my strength (kochî) and the beginning of my might" ('ôni). This latter expression, "beginning of might," is on several other occasions used in the Scriptures in reference to the first-born: De 21:17; Psalms 78:51; 105:36. For, surely, with all purity we may make the assertion that manly strength best displays itself in procreation. More dignity still may be ascribed to the first-born, for truly in a sense it was divine providence that ordained that a certain one be the first-born among the children of a man. Universal customs and the law itself to an extent at least recognize this distinction. Among the chosen people such a dignity is not lost. If anything, it is like all good things enhanced in value by being found in the kingdom, Jacob expresses this thought by designating Reuben as "the pre-eminence of dignity and the pre-eminence of power." Yéther, here rendered "pre-eminence" could have been rendered equally well as "superiority, excellency" (B D B). Se'eth is the construct infinitive from nasa', which means "to lift up," "to bear." From the great variety of meanings possible from this root "dignity" seems best suited to the context. Luther, following the Vulgate, arrived at a similar meaning, using the idea of nasa' in so far as it is also used for offering up sacrifices; so Luther renders der Oberste im Opfer, "the leader in sacrifice." Yet the A. V.'s rendering has more to commend it. In any case, Reuben's dignity and honour due to his being the first-born are strongly set forth in this verse. The rendering "excessively proud and excessively fierce" is grammatically possible but conflicts with whatever else we know about Reuben. The criticism and the reproof are confined to the next verse.4. There was within Reuben's character a certain unbridled element, a boiling-up, a "seething," which was in itself "wantonness" (B D B). For pßchaz involves both these ideas, being derived from a root which implies "to be reckless" but used in the Scriptures in the sense of "being lascivious." Seething lust, "unbridled license," was within the man. This root fault incapacitated him for the position of leadership which would normally have been his. So the father pronounces the sentence, "thou shalt not enjoy pre-eminence" (tôthar -- Hifil imperfect from yathar). For, apparently, all of the family knew what Reuben's unbridled license had led him to do. If any did not, here the father makes specific mention of the crime of incest reported Ge 35:22. At that time Jacob did not score Reuben's sin, if we are justified to argue thus from the silence of the Bible. There can be no doubt as to what his attitude was toward this foul piece of licentiousness. Here he leaves a public condemnation on record and condemns the deed in no uncertain terms at a time which serves to make his condemnation all the more impressive. This was a rebuke that none who heard it could ever forget. Jacob speaks very plainly, "for thou hast gone up upon thy father's bed." He says nothing by way of accusing Bilhah. Of the two she may have been the less guilty party of the crime. "Then," speaking in more general terms, Jacob adds, "thou didst defile" (chillßta). Nothing is gained by refering to sexual irregularities by terms that specifically describe them. It is enough to note "he defiled," that is, himself, the partner to his misdeed, his father's name, the family's reputation. Then Jacob turns away from his son as from a stranger in sad reflection and speaks in the third person about him (K. S.344 m), "my couch did he mount" -- a statement accompanied, as it were, by a sad shaking of the head as over an unbelievable thing. Mishkebhey, "bed," seems to be a dual (K. S.260 h). This solemn rebuke was the best thing that could have befallen Reuben,

and it will, no doubt, have produced a salutary reaction. One more outbreak of his licentious lack of restraint appears in his descendants when Korah's rebellion flares up in the wilderness (Nu 16). Aside from that, Reuben never furnished a prominent leader for Israel. According to Joshua 22:10 ff. the Reubenites at least acted inadvisedly if not wickedly. In the days of the Judges Reuben failed in an emergency when put to the test (Jude 5:15). The tribe settled east of the Jordan, demanding its share of the inheritance of Israel a bit prematurely (Nu 32). In the course of Israel's further development Reuben grows more and more unimportant. So the father's word became a reality -- "thou shalt not enjoy pre-eminence." With deep insight the father detected the major flaw of this son's makeup and read his character aright.Genesis 49:55-7. Simeon and Levi are brothers,Their tools are implements of violence.May my soul not enter into their council,And may my glory not join in their assembly.For in their anger they slew men,In their self-will they hocked cattle.Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce,And their wrath, for it is cruel!I will parcel them out in Jacob.And scatter them in Israel.It is rather obvious that Simeon and Levi are brothers after the flesh, for Leah was their mother. Here "brothers" implies that they are besides of one mind and disposition. The unfortunate episode in which they figured found them in complete agreement: one was as much to blame as the other. The rebuke administered has reference to the vengeance these two brothers took on the Shechemites because a prince of that city had violated the honour of their sister Dinah. At that time already (Ge 34:30) Jacob had condemned their deed strongly. Apparently, the native perversity of the two was yet unbroken. While the minds of the twelve sons were still shocked over the plain speech used in reference to Reuben, all of them, but especially the two addressed, hear a salutary reproof that is equally strong. Perhaps nothing more helpful could have been spoken for these two; and so again we have a blessing, though in disguise. The word mekherôth, used only here, presents difficulties. From days of old grammarians have sensed the root khûr in this noun and have been struck by the similarity of the Greek macaira, "short sword." Very likely this resemblance is purely accidental. Khûr means "to dig"; a mekherah would be a digging tool, i. e., a "mattock" (K. W., Karste). On that memorable occasion Simeon and Levi, perhaps lacking swords and also to avoid suspicion, may have come down upon Shechem with heavy mattocks in their hands and used them as "implements of violence." Jacob first expresses his disapproval of the deed and the method employed to achieve the deed when he says: "may my soul not enter into their council." His inmost being, his "soul" (néphesh), abhors such crafty schemes. Not only would he not be partner to their deeds; he would not even have it said that he in any wise shared in such nefarious gatherings where the plot was hatched out. For emphasis' sake he repeats the thought in a parallel statement: "May my glory (i. e. again: my soul -- see Psalms 7:6; 16:9; 30:12; for the soul is the most glorious part of man) not join in their assembly." Some render the imperfect of the verbs involved as potentials and gain a still more acceptable form of statement: My soul would not enter (tabho') into their council and my glory would not join (techadh -- from yachadh) in their assembly. "My soul" and "my glory" are, of course, Hebrew substitutes for "I" (K. S.7 and 325 o), being reserved for more elevated strains of diction. Thus far the deed stands condemned as high handed "violence," the planning of it as done in an iniquitous assembly, which all righteous men should abhor. Now the source of the deed or its deeper motive is scrutinized. The brothers had flattered and, no doubt, at first prided themselves upon what they had done, as though it had been a deed born out of righteous indignation. But good motives do not produce murder. So Jacob, reading their hearts better than they themselves did, instructs them that they did it "in their anger" ('aph) and "self-will" (ratsôn). For "men" the Hebrew has the singular

'îsh, "man," as the language often does in the case of nouns whose plural form would be the normal thing (K. S.256b); so also "cattle" singular (shôr). "Hocked" means "hamstringed" (Meek), i. e., cut the leg tendons. "Digged down a wall" (A. V.) is not correct. It is true that Ge 34:27-29 told of the capture of the cattle. In v.6, however, we have supplementary information: what these two men did not lead away as plunder they destroyed in the fierceness of their anger. In our day we should say that these two brothers were actuated by a nationalistic, carnal pride. They particularly resented that their sister, born of the superior stock of Jacob as they felt, had been treated, disrespectfully. They did not regret so much that a daughter of the race of promise had been dealt with dishonourably. 7. Jacob wishes to remove all questions as to the estimate that was to be put upon a deed growing out of such carnal pride in the Israelite race. He pronounces a curse upon such "anger," for it was not holy but "fierce." It was "wrath," 'ebhrah, that is "overflow," "arrogance," or "outburst," something that had gotten beyond control and was also "cruel." Apparently, Jacob spared no man's feelings. It seems as though Simeon and Levi needed a bit of disillusioning, and their father did not lack the courage necessary to administer it. Lastly, a restraint is laid upon both: they are to be "parcelled out" and "scattered" in Israel. Jacob ascribes this act to himself, for in his authority as head of the race he determines that this shall happen. Apparently, this was also a word of prophecy: Jacob spoke what was God's will. Consequently this result was providentially brought to pass. There was a wisdom and a propriety about this punishment. They who had banded together to their own hurt were to be dispersed for their own good. Apparently, after they were scattered, their native bent for hatching out evil plots died out.The fulfilment of this word is instructive. Simeon increased rapidly at first. The first census not long after the Exodus (Nu 1) revealed the count of 59,300. The second census shortly before the Occupation of Canaan (Nu 26) showed that the tribe had shrunk to the number of 22,200. The tribe received its portion of the Promised Land "in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Judah" (Joshua 19:1). Its fortunes are identified with those of Judah (Jude 1:3). Already in his blessing (De 33) Moses had passed it by. Its extinction apparently involved being absorbed by other tribes, especially by Judah. Such as did survive to a later date (1 Chronicles 4:38-43) sought out for themselves regions outside of Canaan and dwelt there. All this, especially the absorption by the other tribes, may have been for the good of this tribe. Had it stood alone as a strong tribe, it might have perpetuated the father's sinful ways.In the case of Levi the situation is different. The Levites were, indeed, dispersed throughout the whole land in the cities mentioned Joshua 21:1-40. But in their dispersion these ministers of the sanctuary served as teachers of Israel and so really became a wholesome leaven, whose influence was felt for good by all. Of course, the turn for the better in the case of the Levites came with Ex 32:26 ff., as noted above. Here it is most evident how an apparent setback may yet be a blessing (v. Ge 49:28) if those upon whom it is laid accept it as a wholesome bit of discipline. No writer of the days of the Judges could have written these words.Thus far the father's last words have not been of a kind to cause joy or to raise hope. Rebuke and correction have been their theme. But, surely, there must be something in the future of these sons of his to give rise to words of a more hopeful and more cheerful character. The next son comes under this second classification.Genesis 49:88, 9. Judah, thee, yes thee will thy brethrenpraise:Thy hand shall be on the nape of the neck ofthine enemies;The sons of thy father shall bow down to thee.A whelp of a lion is Judah;Thou hast mounted up, my son, after eatingthe prey.He crouches, then lies down, as would a lion,or a lioness.Who would dare to rouse him?One at once feels the glad animation that takes possession of the father as he comes to his fourth son. It is as though he had sought one

upon whom to bestow the blessing of the first-born and now had found him. For Judah and Joseph share in this honour, as 1 Chronicles 5:1,2 show, Joseph having received the double portion, Judah carrying on the line from which came "the prince." The emphatic pronoun (G. K.135e) 'attah follows the name "Judah," emphasizing particularly the object of the verb "praise." As in Ge 29:32 we have a play upon the name Judah, Hebrew yehûdha, for yôdhûkha involves the same root -- Hifil of yadhah. As Hengstenberg has shown, this verb especially figures in cases where Yahweh is praised for His faithful goodness. So here: thy brethren shall praise the Lord for what He shall bring to pass through thee. However, the reason for the brothers' praise is immediately stated: in the history of this tribe it shall be particularly evident that God achieves victories through him. His hand is on the 'o'reph, i. e., "the nape of the neck," for the enemies are represented as in flight before him. He leaps upon them and throws them to the ground. When his capacity for overthrowing foes will have become apparent, then "the sons of his father shall bow down" before him, yishtachawû, i. e. "do reverence" as before one who deserves reverence. The most significant instance appears in 2 Samuel 5:1-3, where all the tribes of Israel are compelled to admit Judah's superiority in David. "Sons of thy father" includes more than "sons of thy mother" -- namely half-brothers as well as brothers, here all the tribes of Israel.9. A fuller description of this outstanding trait of heroic courage in Judah now follows by the use of the figure of the lion. First he is labelled a gûr' aryeh, i. e. "whelp of a lion," which here certainly does not mean a young cub but a young lion in the freshness of his just matured strength. He is pictured at the point where he has captured and eaten his prey; literally "from the prey thou art gone up," mittéreph, the min being temporal like "after eating the prey" (K. S.401e). Thereafter he "mounted," i. e. went up to the mountain fastnesses (So 4:8). When he comes to his den, "he crouches" with that peculiar grace characteristic of the strong beast; then he "lies down" in that bold security equally characteristic of the bold lion ('aryeh) or, for that matter, of the still bolder and fiercer "lioness" who has cubs to guard. After such a bold beast has thus lain down, "who would dare to rouse him?" All this furnishes a bold, clear picture of Judah's lionlike courage and strength. By these words a foundation is laid for great achievements yet to follow. Verses 8 and 9 create a sense of expectation, for they ascribe to Judah acknowledged pre-eminence, courage and strength. Genesis 49:1010. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,Nor the ruler's staff from between his feetUntil Shiloh come.And to him (shall be) obedience of peoples."The sceptre" (shébhet) symbolizes rule and dominion or capacity for rule. The qualities mentioned in v.8 and 9 result in this, that rule over the tribes of Israel will sooner or later be conceded to Judah. The statement is to be set forth with emphasis, for a parallel clause that follows presents the same idea, substituting "ruler's staff" (mechoqeq) for "sceptre." This term can mean "prescriber of laws" or "commander," as De 33:21; Jude 5:14; Isaiah 33:22 indicate. Consequently, "law-giver" (A. V.) as such is not wrong. But the ensuing phrase causes difficulty, for "from between his feet" can only with difficulty be understood of descent. However, the meaning "ruler's staff" is also appropriate in Nu 21:18; Psalms 60:7 (A. V.); Psalms 108:8. This translation agrees so very well with the following phrase, because the long ruler's staff would be placed between the feet as the ruler sat on his throne and would then either rest against his shoulder or be held in the hand. Commentators here usually refer to monumental carvings of old Persian kings. A very good illustration, more readily accessible to the average reader, is that of King Tutankhamen found in Barton's, Archaeology and the Bible (1937), Figure 304. The verb "depart" (yasûr) does not quite represent our point of view in the matter, for it is an active, where we should have used a passive (K. S.97). For the idea is

that no one shall remove Judah's sceptre, or Judah's dominion will not be taken away from him until a certain climax is achieved, which is here stated in double form: first "until Shiloh come"; secondly, this climax will be overtopped by a second -- "and to him shall be the obedience of peoples."First we must determine what "Shiloh" means. It is a noun form which, as K. W. concedes and Keil and Hengstenberg have long contended, may well be derived from the root shalah, which means "to rest." Shîloh, therefore, can mean "rest" (Ruhe, K. W.), or "man of rest" or "giver of rest" by metonomy. Such a meaning could very readily have suggested itself to those familiar with Hebrew. In this passage, then, the general meaning might be found: Judah shall continue to hold rule until rest come. But then the concluding statement comes limping after rather lamely, almost without thought connection, "and to him (i. e. Judah) shall be the obedience of peoples." Into this rather pale picture one could implant the Messianic thought, letting the words be a description of the Messianic age. However, this interpretation proceeds on the assumption that nothing in Messianic prophecy even intimated that a personal Messiah would ultimately come, a thought involved, by the way, already in Ge 3:15, though not yet clearly expressed. However, another approach is possible -- that which, regards Shîloh as a proper name of a person and construes the sense of the whole verse thus: Judah's capacity for rule and sovereignty shall not be lost; in fact, it shall come to a climax in a ruler so competent that he shall be able to achieve perfect rest, and who shall because of his achievement in this field of endeavour be called "Rest" or "Restgiver" -- Shîloh; and when the "peoples" become aware of these superior achievements of his, they shall willingly tender "to him obedience."Against this interpretation it may, of course, be urged that it does not appear in the church in this form prior to the last century. But we may well press the counterclaim that from the earliest interpretation onward the passage was always understood as Messianic, an interpretation which has the fullest support in the New Testament, where, most apparently, St. John is alluding to our passage when he speaks of Christ as "the lion that is of the tribe of Judah" (Re 5:5); and this interpretation appears already in the Targum in the very plain form -- "until Messiah come." No version prior to the A. V. offered the word "Shiloh," for they all sought to give the interpretation of the name, and, it must be confessed, they had not approached the problem from the right etymological angle, but yet all from the days of the Septuagint onward felt very strongly the Messianic implications.Now, before we subject the other interpretations that have been suggested to a closer analysis, let us examine more closely the second half of the climax to which the statement rises, that is to say, the words, "and to Him shall be obedience of peoples." The "and to Him" (welô) definitely points back to Shiloh who was just named, and it stands first in the sentence by way of emphasis, as if to say: He shall be so great that men will readily yield him obedience. In fact, not only men but "peoples" ('ammîm). Very likely here the article is merely omitted because the statement is poetic -- a common thing in Hebrew -- and the familiar versions are correct when they say "the people" (A. V.) or "the peoples" (Luther and A. R. V.). In other words, the nations of the world shall willingly submit, for yiqqehath refers to inner submission cheerfully tendered. This, then, is an attractive description of the conquests of the Gospel, and so the critical objection falls to the ground which charges that the term Shîloh, if construed as above, is "at most a negative word, denoting mere tranquillity." For in the first place, we are justified in construing the word personally as "Rest-bringer," and secondly, that this one is not merely passive appears from the conquests that he makes among "the peoples" the world over. From all that has been said it would appear clearly that we are not following the interpretation which makes "until" the limit to which Judah's dominion endures; in other words, we are not

construing 'adh kî in the exclusive but in the inclusive sense, even as it is found in Ge 26:13; 28:15; Psalms 112:8; Psalms 110:1. For if this dominion were to endure only up to a certain point, the word as such would constitute a threat rather than a blessing. A rather common interpretation was the one that said that this verse means Judah must first lose her position of eminence and sovereignty; then the Messiah would appear. Yet is not the sovereignty of Judah brought to its highest point and in reality never lost when the Messiah appears?Aside from this interpretation the one most commonly held by constructive expositors, who feel they must hold fast to a Messianic element, is the one which makes Shîloh mean "rest," Ruhe or Beruhigung, i. e. pacification. Aside from the objection we raised above, we also find the whole statement of the climax which is supposedly involved rather pale and ineffective.Then there is the rather specious claim which asserts that in every other instance where Shîloh occurs it is a proper name, namely that of the city mentioned in Joshua 18:1 and thereafter till the time of Eli (1 Samuel 1:3), and referred to in the psalms and in prophetic writings, the modern Seilûn lying about 9½ miles NNE of Bethel. That claim is very inaccurate, for the form spelled shîloh -- long "i" and final "h" -- occurs only here. The name of the town has three different spellings, as accurate dictionaries indicate -- shilô, shîlô and shiloh. Langensheidt's Pocket Dictionary is inaccurate in listing our word and the name of the city under one head. Buhl, B D B, and K. W. list both words separately. It will help the case of the opposition but little to point to a variant reading shîlô which about forty manuscripts offer. The majority of good manuscripts have the form with final "h." And then, if the sense of this interpretation is weighed -- "until he (Judah) come to Shiloh" -- the difficulties grow still greater. Grammatically such an interpretation is possible. But it is extremely difficult to make it appear as if Judah's leadership continued till he came to Shiloh (Jude 18:1) together with the other tribes. For though this coming to Shiloh marked an epoch in the history of the tribes, it was in no sense epochal for Judah. In fact, Judah had not yet come into its own at that time, in fact, it did not do so for three centuries to come. All that had appeared thus far of Judah's capacity for greater things was that the tribe was appointed to lead the march through the wilderness (Nu 10:14). Then in the Land of Promise Judah's inheritance was allotted first, Joshua 15:1; and then shortly thereafter Judah began the work of completing the conquest of Canaan (Jude 1:1 ff). Yet, to tell the truth, up to this point actual rule over the other tribes ("sceptre" -- rule) had not yet been conceded to Judah. Shiloh, the town, never was of particular moment in Judah's history. Procksch claims very correctly: "It cannot be demonstrated that Shiloh, the Ephraimite capital, ever was of any importance for the history of Judah. Besides, none of the versions ever thought of the city Shiloh."The Septuagint translation is instructive; it runs thus: ewv an eluh ta apoceimena autw -- "until the things laid up in store come into his possession." Behind this lies a Hebrew shello, i. e. shel for asher -- "which" and lô -- "to him." So apparently the Greek translators had a defective reading -- short "i" and final "h" missing. They seem to have thought of Ezekiel 21:32 (English, v.27) which reads, "until he come whose right it is." In any case, they thought of one to whom particular rights and prerogatives appertained.The Vulgate translates at this point qui mittendus est -- "who must be sent." Consequently, this presupposes the altering of the final consonant he to cheth, namely shalúach. But the Hebrew text nowhere suggests that vowel change. Other modern attempts at textual alterations are equally unwarranted, like mosheloh -- "his ruler."Lastly, there is an old Jewish interpretation that has no firm ground on which to stand. It is based on the root shiljah which is taken to mean "son" -- therefore shîloh -- "his son." Helpful as that might be, it is in reality quite impossible, for shiljah does not mean "son" but "afterbirth." Or shîl -- shalil which in

New Hebrew means "embryo." Calvin and Luther favoured this. But there is a world of difference between "son" and "afterbirth."One last objection to the Messianic import of the last clause has not yet been met. K. W. especially contends that 'ammîm, "peoples" here means "tribes." The facts are these: tribes may sometimes in a looser sense be spoken of as peoples, but nothing here indicates that only the submission of the other Israelitish tribes is under consideration. A word should be taken in its primary basic sense unless the connection in which it appears definitely indicates another legitimate meaning. Genesis 49:1111, 12. He tethers his ass to the vineAnd his ass's colt to the choice vine.He washes his garments in wineAnd his robes in the blood of grapes.His eyes are dark from wine,And his teeth white from milk.A difficulty will be encountered if one insists on referring these two verses to the Messiah. But two possibilities must be conceded: either the author of these words, having reached a high point in the reference to the Messiah, may continue on that thought level, or he may drop down again to the level of Judah and conclude in describing what blessings Judah will encounter. If these verses are to be explained in reference to Shiloh, a rather fantastic and fanciful meaning is extracted from them. If they are referred to Judah, they do nothing more than to describe the exuberant fertility that is to prevail in his land, the unexpressed condition being that the uninterrupted enjoyment of these blessings would depend upon Judah's fidelity to his God. "He tethers ('oserî -- participle with old genitive case ending -- K. S.272a; G. K.901) his ass to the vine." The participle used indicates that Judah habitually does this. His reason for so doing is because vines grow in such profusion in the land -- as they still do in the vicinity of Hebron in Judah -- that a man will have no hesitation about tethering the ass to them. What if one vine be damaged? The loss is not felt because there is no end of vines. For that matter, a man would not even show hesitation about binding the more restless "ass's colt to the choice vine" (sereqah). Even these abound. If, then, the noblest and finest plants thrive so profusely, the more ordinary plants without a doubt shall also. Certainly, the verb "wash" in the next comparison is not to be taken literally. It merely describes graphically a picturesque episode from the time of treading out the grapes after the grape harvest. So full will the press be that they that tread out the grapes will stain their garments so profusely that they will come out of the press looking like men who have washed their garments in wine. Since these grapes were for the most part dark and the resultant wine dark, in the parallel expression the wine is called "the blood of grapes." The remaining two lines are entirely in the same spirit and involve absolutely no censure. In a land where wine is drunk regularly there is practically no drinking to excess. Yet the abundance of nourishing food and drink imparts a healthy colour to the inhabitants of the land: the eyes have a ruddy darkness from the wine -- "his eyes are dark from wine." There is no thought here of the bloodshot eye of the drunkard. "His teeth, i. e., the teeth of the typical inhabitant of Judah's land, are white from milk" -- a shrewd observation agreeing with the dentist's recommendation in our day. Lebushô, "his garments," and sûthô, "his robes," are collective singulars (K. S.254 c). Chakhlîlî, "dark," is a genitive: (He is) "dark of eyes from wine" -- min causal; on the genitive see K. S.272 a.Genesis 49:1313. Zebulon shall dwell toward the seashore,Yea, he shall be toward the shore where shipscome,And his flank shall be toward Sidon.In the Spirit Jacob foresees that Zebulon's heritage in Canaan shall lie up toward the north where he can have contact with those that go down to the sea in ships. Yet it is not definitely stated that he is to dwell at or on the seashore but "toward" it -- lechôph yammîm. For though Zebulon's territory touched the Sea of Galilee on the east and swept westward over a big portion of the Plain of Esdraelon, it yet went only two-thirds of the way to the Mediterranean coastline,

having Asher between it and the sea. Yet the people of Zebulon were to have contact with those whose ships touched the shore, as the further statements indicate -- "he shall be toward the shore (lechôph again) where ships come," literally, "toward the shore of ships," and the second statement: "and his flank shall be toward Sidon." Zebulon faces south; its flank is to be toward the old commercial city Sidon, prominent long before Tyre. The products of this commerce shall be transmitted through Zebulon to the rest of the tribes. The opening words constitute a play upon Zebulon's name, which means "dwelling." Consequently, Zebulon "shall dwell" (yishkon) emphasizes his being definitely located in that area. No particular achievement or blessing of Zebulon's is mentioned but merely an attendant circumstance that shall be in evidence after his settlement in the land. The prophetic vision of this fact, however, held up before this tribe a definite prospect of what God held in store for it. This fact explains why the sentence structure is cast as it is, the phrase "toward the seashore" standing first for emphasis. In fact, the Hebrew reads "toward the shore of the seas" (plural), the article being omitted in a poetic piece (K. S.292 a). It is also very true that the Spirit of prophecy did not give Jacob the ability to foresee the entire history of this tribe; but what Jacob saw that he proclaimed. This, of course, is the case in reference practically to most of the tribes. The whole future does not need to be unrolled before them. Genesis 49:1414. Issachar was a strong-boned ass,Couching between the sheepfolds.He saw that rest is good,And that the land is pleasant.So he stooped over with his shoulder to takeon a burdenAnd became a toiling labour band.Jacob speaks of the past; he describes a trait that he has observed in Issachar's character. But the father means these words in the sense that what Issachar the individual did is a trait that the entire tribe will develop. So the word becomes a prophecy. Construing the whole word as spoken in the past tense agrees best with the sequence "and he saw" (wayyar'). Now the chief feature observable about Issachar is that he had a generous amount of sturdy physical strength, expressed figuratively: he is "a strong-boned ass" -- Hebrew "an ass of bones" -- the noun for the adjective. The participle "couching between the sheepfolds" describes the tribe as such rather than the ass. Either sheepfolds abound in his territory, and the members of the tribe are thought of as settled in a country where sheepfolds abound; or else the tribe is thought of as a unit being situated between tribes where sheepfolds abound. Both thoughts, for that matter, may even blend into one. Most dictionaries and most commentaries regard the word mishpethßyim as of somewhat doubtful meaning. The meaning "sheepfolds" is reasonably sure however; see K. W.15. But though the tribe has the advantage of sturdy physical strength, it is spiritually and perhaps mentally lethargic and utterly unambitious. Seeing the prospect of "rest" and a good "land" and "pleasant," this tribe would rather surrender other advantages and become a group who would "stoop over with the shoulder to take on a burden," working for others in work that required only the contented exertion of brute strength, Yea, they were ready to become a "toiling labour band" for others as long as a fair measure of ordinary creature comforts could be enjoyed. Such an unprogressive, unambitious attitude has nothing noble about it. To make the understanding of this word comparatively easier for all who first heard it there may have been a specific instance available remembered by all, where Issachar had done just this. Jacob's word to this son is a rebuke mildly but clearly administered. Issachar is thereby warned against aiming too low, against burying his talent in a napkin. Skinner's translation is too strong for lemas obhedh, "a toiling labour-gang." So also Meek's: "a gang-slave." In this case, too, a play on words is involved. The name Issachar is related to the root sakkîr, "a day labourer," and so Jacob interprets the omen of the nomen.Genesis 49:1616, 17. Dan shall

administer justice for hispeopleAs any other of the tribes of Israel.May Dan be a serpent in the way,A horned serpent in the path,One that bites the horse's heelSo that his rider falls off backward.Again a play upon words: Dan, the name, and dîn, the verb "to judge" or "to administer justice." For the word usually translated "judge" signifies to hold an administrative office or, practically, "to rule." We are at a loss to know why Jacob should emphasize this fact in the case of Dan, that he will always be able to provide the needed rulers to "administer justice for his people," that is, within his own tribe, as the following statement suggests. For "as any other of the tribes of Israel" will hardly mean that they all in their turn supplied judges. For that was not the case. Ke'a(ch)chadh, "as one," must be taken in the sense of "as any other" (K. S.78).17. Now the word takes on the form of a wish, yehî, "may he be." The wish expressed is Jacob's own. The godly patriarch in blessing his son would hardly desire an evil and ungodly thing. Consequently the comparison involved is complimentary, a thing to be desired. Naturally, then, this thought can, not involve that all who have dealings with Dan may find him treacherous. But rather that all who wickedly oppose him may find him as deadly an opponent as "a serpent," (nachash) or more specifically "a horned serpent," (shephîphon) might be. For of the latter it is said that it is of a pale yellowish dust colour and so blends successfully with the dust of the road in which it coils itself. Then wayfarer or horseman -- here the mounted enemy is thought of, since horses particularly shy at the deadly thing -- treading near it find their "heel" bitten in a lightninglike flash. In fright the horse rears and throws its rider. So may Dan successfully overthrow all who wrongfully antagonize him. This may be considered as prophetically covering also the case of the Danite Samson, for who would have supposed that such dangerous powers lurked in that muscular young hero. Yet, though we claim this, we do not regard the word as a specific prophecy concerning Samson. It describes a tribal trait, which was also displayed in the case of the Danites who struck like a serpent in capturing the inhabitants of Dan-Laish (Jude 18). It may be that Jacob put a veiled warning into the comparison of the serpent, implying that Dan had a tendency towards treachery and should guard against it. That other fanciful notion that some fathers held we may well regard as fantastic when they claimed that from the tribe of Dan Anti-Christ would ultimately come forth, and based this largely upon the fact that in Re 7 the tribe of Dan is passed by, and concluded also without warrant that some of the persons who conspired to bring about Christ's death were of this tribe. The singular sûs, "horse," represents the plural -- K. S.256 b. 18. For thy salvation do I wait, O Yahweh.This plainly interrupts the thought sequence, but with good reason. Repeatedly Jacob has spoken of self-help on the part of the tribes: of Judah the lion, of Issachar the strong-boned ass, of Dan the deadly serpent. Yet Jacob would not be misunderstood. Not from that source does he expect true salvation. Even when men help themselves, only then are they truly delivered if God helps them. On the latter help Jacob has grounded his personal salvation and every deliverance, hard though it was for him to learn that submission and trust. On that help he would have his sons ground their every hope. The perfect qiwwîthî expresses the thought: in many instances of the past have I waited or trusted and I do trust still. Therefore it is best translated as a present (K. S.125). Meek renders very nicely: "For succour from thee, Lord, I wait." Is it not trivial to regard such a significant word as merely a short prayer for strength on the part of the fast weakening old man, that he might be enabled to finish blessing the other sons? More correct is the claim that Jacob's prayer also includes the Messianic hope: "salvation" full salvation.Genesis 49:1919-21. As for Gad, troops troop against himBut he presses upon their heel.As for Asher, his food is rich,And he provides royal delicacies.Naphtali is a liberated deer,He also is wont to use

clever speech.The word concerning Gad amounts to this: though he be pressed hard, he in turn presses hard upon those that assail him. The word play is intensified, because "Gad" and "troop" and "press" build upon almost one and the same root. So the Hebrew has: Gadh gedhudh yeghudhenû. We tried to catch at least a part of this by rendering, "a troop shall troop against him," but we were obliged to alter the verb to "press" in the next line in order to make sense. Jacob, therefore, foresees that Gad will be especially exposed to the raids of marauding bands. Gad was exposed to the bands of roving marauders from the desert -- Midianites and Ammonites and Arabians. But though that was the case, Gad was not slow about defending himself and striking back. Of the courage of those of Gad we read in David's time 1 Chronicles 12:8 and before, 1 Chronicles 5:18. The idea of pressing upon their heel involves that he comes in close pursuit, following hot upon the enemy. We have taken the initial letter of v.20 and attached it as the final letter to v.19 and read 'aqebham, "their heel," and so, besides making good sense, we are rid of an uncomfortable and practically senseless "m" at the beginning of v.20. The Greek translators, the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Latin version did the same. The word on the whole is encouragement for a son who in his day will need it, because he will be particularly exposed to attack.20: "Asher" -- the lucky or fortunate one, as his name indicates -- has a portion which conforms to his name. Situated along the seacoast north of Carmel, he has one of the most fruitful areas in the land -- "his food is rich," or "fat," shemenah. Lachmô, "his bread," signifies "his food" -- pars pro toto -- synecdoche. From the abundance of rich things that are produced he is able to provide what would grace any king's table, "royal delicacies." Here it matters little whether one thinks in terms of Israel's kings or of those who were in Phoenicia or of none in particular. Delicacies worthy of a king are meant. Moses in his blessing (De 33:24) states the case thus: "let him dip his foot in oil," i. e., a profusion of rich olive oil shall overflow so that men at times will tread upon the rich overflow. All this by no means contains an allusion, as is foolishly claimed, to the oil pipeline that now has its western terminus at the Bay of Haifa in Asher's territory.21. "A liberated deer" or "a hind let loose" (A. V.) is a deer hemmed in by no restraint. By comparison with 2 Samuel 22:34, where the fleet strength of warriors' feet is pictured by the same figure, we may conclude that the fleet strength of the average man of Naphtali is the point involved. Such men were Barak and the ten thousand of Naphtali and Zebulon that came with him for the deliverance of Israel. The same judge illustrates "the clever speech" here referred to. For 'imrey shßpher are "words of beauty" like the song of Deborah and Barak (Jude 5). These may not be the most notable of achievements but they will be the distinguishing marks of this tribe. The critics try many reconstructions of this verse as though it were quite unsatisfactory, but their best is not an improvement. We regard the last participle nothen as expressing the habitual: "he is wont to use" or "give."Genesis 49:2222-24. Joseph is a shoot of a fruitful branch,A shoot of a fruitful branch by the side of afountain,Whose branches have already climbed up onthe wall.The archers have sorely grieved him, shotat him and persecuted him,But his bow stayed firm,And the arms of his hands remained supple.As a result of the work of the Strong One ofJacobFrom there where the Shepherd, the Stone ofIsrael, is.As the blessing upon Judah is richer and better than that of the tribes grouped around him in this chapter, so that of Joseph stands out in the same fashion, and its phrases and pictures are rich and rare. Some of the comparisons involved require a measure of thought before they are grasped, but the case is far from being as hopeless as some claim. It is not true that "the section is full of obscurities and the text frequently quite untranslatable." This impression of obscurity is fostered by presenting the most difficult of several possible translations.

The unnecessary textual alterations resorted to as pure conjectures result in an amazingly different rendering. Note how Meek translates: 22. Joseph is a young bull,A young bull at a spring,A wild ass at Shur,23. Shooting at him in enmity,The archers fiercely assailed him.24. But their bow was broken by the Eternal,And their arms and hands trembledAt the might of the Mighty One of Jacob,At the name of the Shepherd, the Rock ofIsrael.The impression created upon the uninformed by such a translation is that the Hebrew text must be in a deplorable state -- a thing which is by no means the case. Besides, such unwarranted alterations undermine very effectually the confidence in God's Word. We hope to show both that the text makes sense and that the sense is good. First of all Joseph is described as "a shoot of a fruitful branch," literally, "son of a fruitbearer" (B D B), with the common use of ben, "son," for anything derived from another thing; this means, of course, that since it is derived from a fruitful branch, it is itself fruitful. Consequently, the translation, "Joseph is a fruitful bough" (A. V.), covers the case very acceptably. Porath is the feminine of the participle of parah, "to bear fruit" (G. K.80 g). As a choice phrase the expression "shoot of a fruitful branch" is repeated with the addition of the descriptive phrase "by the side of a fountain." The Hebrew says "over a fountain" using 'al, because the sturdy vine does stand higher than the fountain. Even so far we have a situation that gives a guarantee of fruit. The "shoot" was derived from good stock; its water supply is ample. So the picture does not delay to depict the meagre beginning. At once it gives the shoot in the advanced stage of growth where it has "already climbed up on the wall" -- so the perfect tsa'adhah is meant: it has been growing and now is quite spread out over the wall. The supporting wall, of course, furnishes a good hold for the vine and protection from inclement weather. Such a healthy, thriving, fullgrown, well-supported, fruit-bearing vine well portrays the fruitful sturdy tribe of Joseph or Ephraim and Manasseh. Perhaps a play on words is here intended. For the root parah appears in Ephraim -- the fruitful one. The distributive singular verb tsa'adhah after a plural subject merely concentrates more on the individual shoot that spreads out (cf. G. K.145 k).23. The figure of this verse draws our attention to a situation radically different from the former. The successful tribe is antagonized because of its success. His enemies are thought of under the figure of "archers," called in Hebrew "masters of the bow," ba'aley chitstsim (a peculiar double plural, "masters of bows"; K. S.267 b). These archers "have grieved him sorely" -- from the root marar: yemararuhû -- "to make life bitter for one." Besides, they have "shot at him" -- robbû from rabhabh. They have lastly "persecuted him," yishtemuhû, i. e. "proved themselves adversaries." Apparently, the brunt of hostile opposition to Israel will have to be borne by Joseph, next to Judah. The three verbs indicate that he will have plenty of it. However (waw adversative in wattéshebh) "his bow stayed firm" (v.24). He, too, has a bow for defensive purposes when attacked. He uses it, and his hands do not weaken as they draw the tough bow again and again; it stayed "firm" -- "as a strong one," be'eythan. The arms behind the bow are described thus, "the arms of his hands remained supple." Arms and hands are seen in quick movements, snatching the arrow from the quiver, placing it in position on the bowstring, bending the bow, steadying it for aim, letting it fly. Every movement is eloquent with suppleness. And yet, in harmony with v. Ge 49:18, even this purely physical asset is not to be ascribed to man's native powers. Tracing it back to its true Source, Jacob says that it comes "as a result of the work of (literally: from the hands of') the Strong One of Jacob." By this time Jacob well knows God as strong and as the Source of all strength, and he knows that God will engage in behalf of his loved ones. By a second parallel statement Jacob traces back the strength Joseph will display as coming "from there where (Hebrew: from where') the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, is." A

protecting "Shepherd" is a thought Jacob and his shepherding sons could well appreciate. "The Stone of Israel" ('ébhen yisrael) is not meant any differently than is the other common phrase: "the Rock" of Israel. This pictures Yahweh's sturdy strength and unwavering helpfulness.One would hardly venture to claim that the verses about Joseph considered thus far are lacking in clear, forceful meaning. Any tribe might well have desired such a rich blessing.Genesis 49:2525, 26. From the God of thy father -- and mayHe help thee -- And with the help of the Almighty -- and mayHe bless thee -- With blessings of the heavens above,With blessings of the deep that coucheth beneath,With blessings of breasts and womb.The blessings of thy father have prevailedAbove the blessings of my progenitors,Even unto the border of the everlasting hills;May they be upon the head of Joseph,Upon the crown of the head of the choice oneamong his brethren. The blessings now become superlatively rich. It is hard to say whether Judah or Joseph gets the greater blessing. Jacob it still tracing all gifts and blessings back to their true Source, particularly the deliverance of Joseph. It will be offered from the God ('el, "the Strong One") of Jacob's father. Eagerly Jacob inserts the prayer for his beloved son, "and may He help thee." The next statement, also spoken in an exalted strain of thought, begins with we'eth, "and with," here used in the sense of "and with the help of" as it appears in Ge 4:1. Having told of Joseph's fortunate lot and having now again inserted a brief prayer that God might bless Joseph, the father goes on to heap blessing upon blessing upon his son. If any son was worthy of such wonderful blessings, it surely was Joseph. The following blessings are specialized: first "blessings of the heavens above" -- those would be such blessings as the heavens hold within their grasp -- rain, sunshine and pleasant breezes. Then follow "blessings of the deep," i. e. tehom, the deep source of the subterranean waters, which is pictured as a being "that coucheth (or croucheth) beneath" the earth. This involves the waters stored in the earth that are so essential to all vegetable growth as well as the sources of the much needed streams and of the fountains. Thirdly follow "blessings of breasts and womb" which means abundant offspring of man and of beast and the capacity of caring successfully for them in their early days. If it still seem strange that Jacob in pronouncing blessings offers none of a character that may be termed spiritual blessings, we must again recall to mind that Jacob set out v.1 to foretell "what shall befall." So even the blessings are largely predictions. Then, if no spiritual blessings are foretold in the case of the offspring of this favourite son, it seems to us that this was because the Spirit of truth Himself could foresee none of particular moment. This very silence must have constituted a warning and a lesson to Joseph's descendants. Spiritually they never excelled. It was among the tribe of Ephraim that one of its sons, Jeroboam, instituted the calf worship, whereby he "made Israel to sin."26. It is difficult at first to determine the exact import of the expression "the blessings of thy father." Is the genitive "of thy father" objective or subjective? If it were subjective, i. e., "the blessing that thy father bestows," then Jacob's word would convey the thought: I can bless more potently than my own forefathers. That would be presumption on Jacob's part. There is left the objective genitive, i. e. "the blessings that thy father received." Then the following statement involves: God has blessed me more abundantly than my fathers -- a word spoken, indeed, in all humility in the sense of, "Lord, I am not worthy." Abraham had one son of promise; Isaac had two children; Jacob had twelve sons destined to be heads of tribes. When Jacob came down to Egypt with his family according to Ge 46:27, his descendants numbered seventy. What wonderful provisions for the preservation of this group God had made! Truly: "the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors" (that is horay, participle of harah, plural with the first person suffix). Only here the

word appears as meaning "parents" or "progenitors." But though this is unusual, there is no need to change to the text which would substitute "mountains" (hararey) for "progenitors." Another line added to this statement says that these blessings enjoyed by Jacob extended "even unto the border (ta'avah is admitted to have this sense, even by B D B) of the everlasting hills." The land seems to be thought of as encircled by mountains. The blessings are thought of as growing in rich profusion up to the very borderland of the mountains, thus filling the whole land. With these rich blessings he himself received filling his thoughts, Jacob pronounces the wish over the head of Joseph: may they be also upon his head "and upon the crown of the head of the choice one among his brethren." Nazîr is the word from which "Nazirite" comes. Now that word may mean "one consecrated, devoted," but since that again according to the root means "a separated one," we could also find the meaning in it "the one standing apart" or here practically "the choice one" or "the prince" (A. R. V. m.). Without a doubt, Joseph was the most eminent one among his brethren, eminent in character and in godliness. If any one of the twelve deserved pre-eminence, it was Joseph. Jacob practically claims as much in these words. The 'al of the first line is practically equivalent to a comparative, for the line may be translated: "The blessings of thy father have been stronger than the blessings of my progenitors" (K. S.308 d).Genesis 49:2727. Benjamin is a ravening wolf,In the morning he devours prey,In the evening he divides spoil.This is the last word, spoken in reference to the second son of Rachel. There is no criticism involved in the use of this comparison; it is complimentary. The rapacity of the wolf is not under consideration. Yet even as v. Ge 49:17 contained a veiled warning, so we may also regard this word as suggesting to Benjamin as a tribe that he take heed unto himself lest the undesirable qualities of a wolf develop in him. The original says, "Benjamin, a wolf, rends prey." We prefer to translate as Luther does: Benjamin ist ein reissender Wolf. To describe him as successful in his depredations Jacob speaks of him as always having prey; in the morning he devours it; in the evening, with a change of figure, he is the warrior dividing the spoil. This expression, touching upon the two limits ("morning" and "evening"), is one of many similar expressions designed to cover the entire intervening area. Here, therefore, this means, he is always successful in despoiling his foes. At the same time, when he must encounter his foes, he is a fierce opponent like a wolf. Representative men of this type were Ehud "the Benjamite" (Jude 3:15) and Saul (1 Samuel 9:1) and Jonathan. The whole tribe displayed this attitude, though not in a holy cause, in Jude 20. Jacob's Last Charge and His Death (49:28-33)28. All these constitute the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them; and he blessed them, individually he blessed them with what was in conformity with each man's blessing.Quite naturally the author now summarizes his results. He reminds that the twelve tribes have just been blessed -- twelve being the covenant number, and this, therefore, being an event that has bearing upon the covenant existing between Israel and God. The numeral strangely after a definite noun lacks the definite article (K. S.334 u). To emphasize that Jacob actually spoke all these remarkable words the author then reiterates (cf. v. Ge 49:1), "this is what their father spoke to them." Of course, this statement is either a truth or a lie. We accept it as truth. It had, however, not been said previously that this was a blessing. So after we have the words before us the author reminds us of what is really quite selfevident, that these individual words were in reality blessings, strictly adapted to each man's case and needs, as Jacob foresaw that God would bestow them. This is the meaning of the words, "individually he blessed them with what was in conformity with each man's blessing."Skinner calls the construction 'îsh asher "impossible," for he seemingly overlooks what K. C. points out by his translation that 'asher is the cognate or factative object and

to be translated "with which." Besides, criticism insists that at this point (v.28) P again begins (v. Ge 49:28-33); and so J, who spoke v. Ge 49:1-27, is regarded quite incapable of any summary statement or formal remark such as this is -- a rather unfounded limitation laid on J. Capable writers like these are capable of quite a number of different types of style. To deny to them this capacity, which all good writers have, makes of the Biblical writers a peculiar set of literary dummies of very limited ability. Very queer is the claim of Koenig that the blessing now spoken of in this verse has nothing to do with the preceding verses of the chapter. Rather, it is claimed, having spoken these words (v.1-27), he then proceeded to add a blessing, but the blessing as such is not recorded. How can a man fail to see that in all its parts almost v.1-27 are blessings?29-32. And he laid a charge upon them and said: I for my part am now being gathered unto my people. Bury me together with my fathers in the cave which is in the field of Ephron, the Hittite, namely in the cave which is in the field of Machpelah which is over against Mamre in the land of Canaan, which field Abraham bought from Ephron, the Hittite, for a burial place of his own possession. There they buried Abraham and Sarah, his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah, his wife; and there I buried Leah -- the property consisting of the field and the cave which is in it, bought of the sons of Heth.Joseph had already been placed under oath to see to it that Jacob be buried in Canaan. Now all the sons have the same charge laid upon them. Jacob very clearly realizes that he is dying: "I for my part" -- 'anî for emphasis, namely I, as formerly my fathers -- "am now being gathered unto my people." Ne'esaph as Nifal participle describes an act or experience which is beginning at the time the speaker utters the word and continues into the future (K. S.237 d). Jacob regards "his people" as still existing though dead, and so he gives testimony of his faith in the life to come. It is an act of faith on Jacob's part that he desires burial in Canaan in the grave acquired by Abraham. Abraham's provision for his and for Sarah's burial (chapter 23) was a testimony of faith for the generations that were to come after him. That "being gathered unto his people" is one thing, and that "being buried with his fathers" is another, appears from the fact that the two are mentioned separately. His sons may well have heard of this family sepulchre. He repeats in detail where it is, to whom it formerly belonged, that it is a cave, what other name the field bears, that it lies over against Mamre in the land of Canaan, and that Abraham had bought it of Ephron for this very purpose, that he might at least have "a burial place of his own possession" in the land where he was not privileged to own any other property or fields. The expression 'ahuzzath qébher, "a possession of a grave," means "a burial place of his own possession." Luther renders it well Erbbegraebnis, "a hereditary burial plot."31. Shammah, "thither," is often weakened down to a mere "there," though it involves a kind of pregnant construction: they took him to that place and buried him there. We already know that Abraham (chapter 35) and Sarah lay buried there (chapter 23). Now we are informed of what we would have surmised, that Isaac and Rebekah lay there also. There Jacob himself had buried Leah. Jacob now repeats how much the property actually involved, for he wants his sons to perpetuate a correct tradition concerning it. It is "the property consisting of the field and the cave which is in it." All these directions are not the garrulous reminiscences of an old man but specific directions which are of importance for the future. All three patriarchs wanted their children to have clear testimony that they had believed God's promises also in reference to the land that was ultimately to be theirs. These clear directions help to carry this testimony down to successive generations, clear-cut and correct. 33. And Jacob finished giving his charge to his sons and drew up his feet into his bed and expired and was gathered unto his people.Jacob's very last act on earth was an act of faith. When

the charge is finished, he draws up his feet into his bed. Apparently, he had summoned up his last strength and had sat up in bed to bless his own sons, even as he had done to bless Joseph's sons (Ge 48:2). Practically immediately thereafter he "expired," whether the process of dying was instantaneous or whether it occupied several hours Apparently, death was almost instantaneous. Such remarkable instances occur from time to time where men remain in full possession of their faculties to the end and are also entirely certain that their end is just at hand. On the expression "was gathered unto his people" see v. Ge 49:29. It means here as there to go to the company of those who live in the life to come in a happier existence. For a full discussion of this phrase read our remarks on Ge 25:8.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSIt strikes us that at least two parts of Jacob's Blessing have possibilities as texts: the blessing of Judah and the blessing of Joseph. The blessing of Judah should centre definitely around the Messianic thought. It offers a good text for preaching Christ in so far as He displays the characteristics of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." Note how the Rest-giver idea ties up with this. Only one who is capable of achieving such conquests as are His can also establish and provide true rest. The blessing of Joseph displays "how richly God can bless His own."

CHAPTER L

13. Jacob's Burial (50:1-13) The story of Jacob's burial is told in a rather detailed fashion, more so than is any other burial except Sarah's in the book of Genesis (chapter 23), because it gives a fine example of faith on the part of the patriarchs. Jacob desired burial in the land of promise, thereby testifying to his faith in the promise. His sons did not treat the father's request as an unimportant whim but executed it with fine conscientiousness. Besides, the entire material of the chapter is an excellent preparation for the book of Exodus. The sons of Israel had come down into Egypt at the behest of divine providence. They purposed to stay no longer than that same providence ordained. Jacob's burial testifies that their thoughts and their hopes lay in Canaan. Joseph's dying injunction points in the same direction. 1-3. And Joseph fell upon his father's face and wept over him and kissed him. And Joseph gave charge to servants of his, who were physicians, to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel, being occupied in the task a full forty days; for so many are the days used in embalming. And the Egyptians made mourning for him seventy days. No doubt the other sons were also present at their father's death, not only Joseph. The closing verses of the last chapter indicate this. They, too, grieved greatly to lose their father; but Joseph's grief is especially mentioned, because he had all his days stood closer to his father than the other sons, Consequently his pain was greater. We must remember, too, that the very close relationship existing between Joseph and his father has stood in the forefront of the narrative especially since Jacob's coming to Egypt. For that matter, there was also the promise of Ge 46:4 that Joseph would be at hand to close his father's eyes in death. The fulfilment of that promise deserved to be recorded. First of all "Joseph fell upon his father's face," 'al peney abhîw, a phrase reminding us of Ge 23:3, where Abraham is said to have arisen after Sarah's death from 'al peney Sarah. Natural grief usually finds an outlet in tears; so "he wept over him." A last token of the close affection that existed between the two was the parting kiss bestowed upon the dead lips. Enough is reported to indicate the depth and the sincerity of Joseph's grief. But the manly grief of God's saints has a certain restraint, for even in the Old Testament there was the sure hope of life eternal. 2. It might have been misunderstood if we had translated literally, "he gave a charge to his servants, the physicians," as though all his servants were physicians. So we have rendered: "to servants of his who were physicians." No doubt, the eminence of Joseph's position called for a very great retinue. Even a special group of physicians was detailed to watch over his health. These seem to have been particularly adapted to such a task as embalming the dead, perhaps even more so than the professional embalmers. The process of embalming, described already in some detail by Herodotus, involved the removal of the brain through the nose by a hooked instrument as well as the removal of the entrails through an incision in the side made with a sharp stone knife. The entrails were placed in a jar. The cranial cavity was filled with spices, likewise the abdominal cavity; but it as well as the entire body were thoroughly treated with saltpetre for seven days. Afterward the whole body was washed with a palm wine. Then it was daubed with pitch or gums, swathed in many folds of white cloth and laid away in its mummy case. Jacob and Joseph are the only two Israelites of whom the Scriptures tell that they were "embalmed," chanat, a verb having close Arabic and Ethiopic parallels and meaning first to "ripen" then to "embalm." In the case of

these two Israelites this distinctly Egyptian type of preparation for burial was resorted to in order to make it feasible to transport the mummified remains to Canaan. 3. By way of explanation for later generations Moses relates how much time the entire process entailed. First he tells of their "being occupied with the task a full forty days." The Hebrew idiom is a bit different. It says: "And they made full for him forty days, for thus they fulfil the days of embalming." But the entire mourning extended over a period of "seventy days," including, of course, the forty days during which the embalming took place. Other writers of antiquity assign a period of seventy-two days to the entire process, though that may have been a custom prevalent in another place. The two statements can for all practical purposes be said to agree. But if "Egyptians" (Hebrew: mitsrßyim -- "Egypt") mourn, that is an indication in what high esteem he was held, both as a prince in his own right as well as the father of Joseph. Luther remarks that there is no burial recorded in the Scriptures quite as honourable as this or with such wealth of detail. The imperfect yimle'û expresses the thing that is customary (G. K.107 g). 4-6. When the days of weeping for him were passed, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh and said: if now I have found favour in your eyes, speak, pray, in the hearing of Pharaoh and say: My father exacted an oath of me, saying: Behold, I am to die; in my grave which I digged for myself in the land of Canaan, there bury me. And let me go up, pray, and let me bury my father; thereafter I shall return. And Pharaoh said: Go up and bury thy father as thou art bound by oath to do. Joseph asks the "household" (literally -- "house," bßyith) to present his request to Pharaoh. The reason for this roundabout mode of procedure is not the fact that Joseph was not presentable at court as a mourner, unwashed and unshaven. For we note that he preferred his request to Pharaoh's household "when the days of weeping for him (Jacob) were passed." It would have been a simple matter to wash and to shave and then to go to Pharaoh. Perhaps, then, some defilement according to the Egyptian conception of death and of mourners may have stood in the way. But more suggestive is the explanation which says that this was a wise tactical move on Joseph's part to allay suspicion as to Joseph's perhaps trying to leave Egypt now that his father was dead. In any case, they who had sponsored such a request at court could hardly be the authors of some suspicion concerning Joseph's purpose. If this explanation be correct, Joseph would have given just one more proof of unusual wisdom in dealing with men. Less to the point is the explanation which works on the supposition that Joseph must have been in disfavour at court just at this time. We also reject the opinion which says that Joseph was careful not to prefer any request in matters pertaining to himself. For he should hardly have hesitated to ask a favour that pertained more to his father than to himself. "If now I have found favour" is an expression of fine courtesy commonly met with in Genesis and not the property of the author of some one source (like J). 5. The preference of the Hebrew for direct quotation appears in this verse -- a quotation within a quotation within a quotation. A strong point to win his request for him is that the dying man had "exacted an oath" of him (Hebrew: "he caused me to swear"). Nor was this oath a rash one, for the man Jacob had made preparations for burial during his lifetime, for he had digged his grave in the land of Canaan. It is unwarranted to claim about v.5 that "on any view, the contradiction to Ge 47:30 remains." What if it was the burying place of the fathers? If they did acquire it, did they dig out of its sides as many separate tombs as the next generations needed? Most probably each man during his lifetime made provisions for himself and his family. So Abraham bought the cave and digged his grave and Sarah's. Isaac digged his and Rebekah's. Jacob digged his and Leah's. So the statements of Scripture are in perfect harmony. It is a reprehensible thing continually to speak of contradictions in Sacred Writ, where a bit of patience

could soon have discerned the underlying harmony. Karîthî means "digged" and not "bought." The request is to be presented last, "Let me go up, pray, and let me bury my father." Hardly anybody could deny so proper a request. To set all minds at ease about his purpose Joseph adds the promise, "thereafter I shall return." All the three imperfects used here have the "ah hortative" added (jaqtul elevatum), a common form with the first person imperfect. The words of the oath are here not introduced by the customary 'im or îm lo' but by le'mor "saying" (K. S.391 f). 6. Pharaoh graciously gives his royal permission. "Go up" ('alah) here as in v.5 is naturally used because the mountains of Palestine lie higher than the land of Egypt. On the whole question of Joseph's asking permission to go and bury his father there is one more consideration that carries weight. So important a man as Joseph, ranking second only to the reigning Pharaoh, had to guard himself lest he create the impression that he no longer needed to consult his king. All important steps that could be construed as undue self-assertion had to be covered by a very clear, royal pronouncement. Joseph knew his place also in this respect. 7-10. So Joseph went up to bury his father; and there went up with him all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt; also Joseph's entire household and his brethren and his father's household. Only their little children and their flocks and their cattle did they leave behind in the land of Goshen. There also went up with him both chariots as well as horsemen. Their company was a very considerable one. And they came to Goren Atad which is across the Jordan, and there they lamented with great and very heavy lamentation; and he made a seven-day mourning for his father. One would hardly have expected so numerous a funeral cortege. Several classes felt it incumbent upon them to grace the occasion. The monuments indicate that the Egyptians dearly loved imposing and elaborate funeral processions. Joseph's position in itself was so influential that these persons who attended were in duty and in courtesy bound to do so. They comprised the following classes: "All the servants of Pharaoh" ('abhadhim here cannot mean "slaves"; all chief courtiers must be meant); "the elders of his household" -- a staff of officers who were Pharaoh's personal attendants; "all the elders of the land of Egypt" -- all who held positions of any consequence as leaders. Besides there was "Joseph's own household" -- a considerable number apparently -- also "his brethren" and lastly "his father's household." One can only venture to suppose how many hundreds made up this entire retinue. The only ones of Israel left behind were those that were unable to bear the rigors of such a trip -- "their little children," "flocks and herds." Since Goshen was practically their own, they could with safety leave these behind in that land.9. Such a caravan required food and protection. So there went along with it "chariots and horsemen." Somehow the noun rékhebh is usually a collective singular, whereas parashim (with long "a" in the antepenult) is not governed by such usage. Perhaps "wagons" for rékhebh would be the better rendering. Then "wagons" would have carried the provisions, and the "horsemen" would have constituted the military protection. With good reason the narrator summarizes, "their company machaneh -- originally "camp," then also "army" or "company" was a very considerable one." The correlative of v.9 a is the more uncommon gam -- gam for "both -- and," (K. S.376 b).10. The place where this funeral train came to a standstill was "Goren Atad." Now góren is a "threshing floor," and 'atadh signifies "bramble or buckthorn." Yet the latter may also have come to be the name of a person. In case it is not, then the "bramble" will have to be regarded as the type of hedge that perhaps enclosed the threshing floor. For the threshing floors were level spaces preferably on hilltops and situated outside of villages, and naturally were not roofed over. This one is located as "across the Jordan." Because of v. Ge 50:13, which asserts that Jacob's sons carried their father

"into the land of Canaan," we are practically compelled to place Goren Atad on the east bank of the Jordan. For the expression be'ébher hayyarden, "across the Jordan," may signify either side depending on the speaker's standpoint. Here, however, it cannot be urged that the writer must have resided or written in Canaan, because the writer, Moses, may just as well have written this in the land of Egypt, or, what is equally valid, his mental point of view may have been Egypt, the starting point of the caravan. Then the course taken by this long funeral train would have been more to the south than the usual route along the Mediterranean, then past the land of Philistaea, then over toward Hebron. Yet this would not have necessitated a route as far south as that taken later by the Israelites of the Exodus. The reason for this more southerly course may have been the antagonism of certain nations or groups along the northern route. Then, of course, the route will have curved around the southern end of the Dead Sea up to a place like the Plains of Moab (Nu 22:1). A few writers from Jerome to this day contend that "across the Jordan" must mean the west side, assuming that Moses wrote Genesis while Israel was encamped in the plains of Moab, or else supporting what seems the wrong location of Goren Atad. The Egyptian custom of those days apparently required an additional seven days' lamentation near or at the point of burial. Oriental custom required to make such a lamentation quite demonstrative -- "very heavy." Apparently, Joseph himself made the arrangements required. The Israelites are never known to have indulged their grief so profusely. For Moses they mourned but thirty days (De 34:8); also for Aaron (Nu 20:29).11-14. And the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, beheld the mourning in Goren Atad and they said: Heavy mourning ('e'bhel) is this for the Egyptians. Therefore they called its name meadow ('abhel) of the Egyptians, which is across the Jordan. And his sons did for him even as he had ordered them. And his sons bore him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Macpelah, which field Abraham bought for a burial place of his own possession from Ephron, the Hittite, over against Mamre. Then Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brethren and all who had gone up with him to bury his father, after the burial of his father.So unusual was the display of mourning on the part of an assembly largely Egyptian, perhaps by this time entirely Egyptian as to appearance, that the natives who witnessed it, called "the inhabitants (yoshebh -- singular collective) of the land" and "the Canaanites," the general name for all who dwelt in those parts, remarked about it, calling it a "heavy mourning." 'Ebhel signifies "mourning"; mispedh signifies "lamentation," the public and usually vocal display of the inner mourning, assuming rather extravagant forms in oriental countries, at least if judged by our standards. Therefore the thing that the Canaanites noticed was that the inner grief really appeared to be heavy. As a result of this observation they gave a name to the meadow on which this Egyptian assembly encamped for at least a week, calling it "the meadow of the Egyptians." This name involved a slight play on words that we cannot reproduce but which made this new name suggestive. "Mourning" is 'ébhel;" meadow" is 'abhel. Naturally the latter term suggested the former. This explanation follows the pointing of the Hebrew text which appears to us to follow a very reliable tradition. Because even though the two words have the same consonants in the unprinted original text, it is yet far more likely that a place will be called a "meadow" rather than a mourning, even though some renderings obliterate this distinction. The Septuagint renders 'abhel as penuov -- 'ébhel; Luther says der Aegypter Klage. 12. After this notable display was ended, Jacob's sons become the chief actors in the scene. They take in hand very properly the more intimate part of the burial service, the actual laying of the patriarch in his last resting place. Whether the Egyptians stayed behind or followed along as persons of secondary importance is of so little moment to the writer that he says nothing

about them. The part of the sons must be mentioned because their father had laid a strict charge upon them and the author wishes to describe them as dutiful sons. They personally "bore him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Macpelah." Then follows a description of the field and an account of the manner of its purchase agreeing almost verbatim with the charge given by the dying Jacob (Ge 49:29,30). That, then, is another way of stating the fact that his behest was carried out to the very letter. Critics cannot believe Moses capable of using such flexibility of style, involving a formal repetition, so they assign these two verses (Ge 50:12,13) to P, who is supposed to have written all things that savour of formal statement. Then to bolster up their contention more firmly they claim that these two verses also fail to agree with the rest of the account, for the preceding verses, it is claimed, make the Egyptians the chief actors, whereas these two put Jacob's sons in the forefront, as if both could not be true and in perfect harmony with one another. J is said to have written the rest of v. Ge 50:1-14.14. To leave no doubt in any man's mind whether Joseph actually returned to Egypt as he had promised (v. Ge 50:5) the writer informs us of his own return as well as of that of his brethren and of that of all the rest who "had gone" (ha'olîm -- participle referring to past time as Ge 43:18) up with him. As the group was a unit in its going up, so it apparently continued as a unit in its return, a still further testimony to the honoured memory of Jacob; for out of courtesy to Joseph and to Jacob's memory they did not scatter on the homeward way.15-17. When the brethren of Joseph realized that their father was dead they said: What if Joseph should turn against us and should actually pay back all the evil which we did him! So they sent a message unto Joseph saying: Thy father gave a commandment before his death, saying: Thus shall ye say to Joseph: Pray, do forgive the crime of thy brethren and their sin, for they have done thee wrong. And now do forgive the crime of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept at the message that they sent to him.The Hebrew says "they saw" that their father was dead. This here means they "realized" it and began to see that the restraining influence that the father may have exercised upon Joseph was now at an end. They all seem to feel about the same, except perhaps Benjamin, who naturally was excluded; for they express but one sentiment -- apprehension: "What if (lû introducing a conditional clause, more vivid) Joseph should turn against us (shatam -- "antagonize") and should actually pay back (verb with an absolute infinitive) all the evil which we did him". The apodosis is not stated -- aposiopesis. This silence makes their apprehension appear all the more vivid: there was no end of possibilities that their excited imagination conjured up before them. So they "sent a message" -- tsiwwah means this in the Piel -- to Joseph, perhaps through the person who would meet with the favour of both parties -- Benjamin.17. The best aid to the understanding of the entire situation is to use the approach set forth with greatest emphasis by Luther, who pictures graphically what a bitter thing sin is -- easy to commit, but after it has come to light it rears its ugly head, and its prick keeps rankling, "so that no forgiveness and comfort are strong enough to alleviate the bite and to remove the prick." Consequently, their feeling of guilt is their primary trouble; it tends to make them suspect Joseph. We should hardly do them justice to suppose that the message which they claim to have from their father is merely a fictitious one. It seems fair and right to regard these brethren of Joseph as men of good and seasoned character, who speak the truth as godly men should. They all seem worthy of their rank as patriarchs. Consequently we must probe more deeply into Jacob's motive and purpose in commanding his sons to proceed after this fashion. For Jacob had actually given a commandment (tsiwwah) before his death. It seems unreasonable to suppose that Jacob questioned the sincerity of Joseph's forgiveness of the sin of his brothers. So very likely this

step was taken for the sake of the ten brothers, who had hitherto really made no open confession and full disavowal of their treachery over against Joseph. The episode Ge 42:21,22 cannot be interpreted to amount to a true confession. Yet heavy sins require to be confessed, especially over against the person whom they wronged. Otherwise they leave behind the seed of further misunderstanding. Besides, confession eases the conscience of those who are troubled over their wrong. So Jacob commands them to take this step, partly to put their own mind at ease, when they hear Joseph's assurance of the fullest pardon; and partly to remove any possible remnant of misunderstanding that might yet remain. Jacob as well as those sons use a strong term for their wrong -- pésha' -- " rebellion," of course, against God. Here it seems very proper to render it "crime" (Meek). Very naturally "Joseph wept at the message that they sent to him" -- literally, "at their speaking to him"; but above we noted that they spoke through a messenger. There is a measure of mistrust revealed by the brethren. But it was ungrounded. Joseph's forgiveness had been without condition or proviso. To have sincere motives questioned is painful. 18-21. Then came the brethren themselves and fell down before him and said: Here we are ready to be thy slaves. And Joseph said to them: Do not be afraid; for am I in God's place? Ye on your part did devise evil against me. God devised it for good, in order that he might do as has this day actually happened, namely keep alive a great multitude. And now do not be afraid. I myself will provide for you and for your little ones. So he consoled them and spoke comforting words.Their sorrow is so genuine and their repentance so genuine that these brethren come on the heels of their messenger and offer themselves to Joseph as his slaves. Their words run thus, "Behold us to thee for slaves." That must mean, "Here we are ready to be thy slaves." Joseph seems to understand by this time why his father had ordered his brethren to take this step and reassures them very effectually. His way of doing it is to point primarily to a rare token of divine providence which was immediately before their eyes: God had used their evil deed and turned it for good. All that so openly declares that God has the case in hand that Joseph may well ask, What could I do to interfere with God's plans even if I desired to do so? This is the meaning of the question, "Am I in God's place?" Delitzsch has very correctly pointed out that the same thought is found in Ge 30:2, where it means: have I the power to interfere in God's doings? Here, however, its meaning is: have I the right to do so? Joseph explains this by saying that the proof of God's control of the situation lies in the fact that where they on their part did devise evil against him, God devised it for good -- a remarkable example of God's concurrence, overriding the evil consequence of the wicked deed to bring about results remarkably blessed. For on God's part it was all planned in order "to keep alive a great multitude" -- a result which is clearly in evidence. For the expression "as of this day" means as it "has this day actually happened" (cf. K. S.402 u). It surely is one of the most astounding examples of God's control of all things to see a group like Israel's descendants and household preserved in famine as an indirect result of the treachery of men who thought only in terms of bloody vengeance.A second time Joseph reassures his brethren, "do not be afraid," and promises to use his best endeavours in providing for them and their little ones. This does not imply that the famine was still in progress. But it does suggest that as strangers in Egypt, Jacob's sons could well use an influential person like Joseph to guard their interests and represent fair play. To this Joseph adds words calculated to comfort and reassure them, and he "spoke comforting words," for which the expressive Hebrew says: "he spoke to their hearts."22, 23. And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household and he lived a hundred and ten years. And he saw in reference to Ephraim children of the third generation. Also the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born upon

Joseph's knees.Joseph's story is briefly concluded. So important a character cannot be dismissed without some report as to how his life ended. He "dwelt" -- we would prefer to say "lived" -- in Egypt all his days. All involved understood from chapter 15 that the time involved in their stay in Egypt was not yet concluded. So did also the rest of his father's household continue to reside there. The age to which Joseph attained shows still more clearly how the span of human life was slowly shortening -- Isaac 180, Jacob 147, Joseph 110. During these years Joseph enjoyed the blessing of seeing three generations after him develop and expand in normal growth. For the expression "children of the third generation" (beney shilleshîm) means grandchildren, for in the expression "third generation" the original father, here Joseph, is counted along. K. W. rightly contends that Ex 20:5; De 5:9 settle the case; for if there shilleshîm meant great-grandchildren, then these two passages would strangely have omitted the grandchildren. In Manasseh's line the same development occurred during Joseph's lifetime, with the exception that it appeared only in the line of Machir. The expression "were born upon Joseph's knees" is without a sufficient number of parallels to allow us to decide exactly what it means. Ge 48:12 does not belong here. The only other occurrence of the expression is Ge 30:3. There are two possibilities. Either these words describe some rite of adoption, a meaning suitable in 30:3 but not in our passage. Or else they are a concise way of expressing the double thought that Joseph lived till they were born and he on his part was able to take them upon his knees. This appeals to us as the more reasonable.Genesis 50:2424-26. And Joseph said to his brethren: I am about to die, but God will most assuredly visit you and bring you up from this land to the land which he promised by oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph imposed an oath upon the children of Israel saying: When God does finally visit you, then ye shall bring up my bones from here. And Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years, and they embalmed him and put him in a mummy case in Egypt. When Joseph felt his end approach, he spoke these last words and made this last provision. The participle meth describes an act which takes its beginning in the present and runs on into the future (K. S.237 d). The pronoun "I" ('anokhî) is emphatic by the contrast involved: "I die, but God will visit." The statement implies that during Joseph's lifetime Israel's sons derived much comfort from the fact that Joseph sponsored their best interests. Now he, indeed, must die. Joseph emphasizes that they will have a Greater than himself to provide for them. In giving assurance of positive divine deliverance Joseph is not uttering a prediction which came to him by divine revelation. He is merely perpetuating a truth revealed already in Abraham's time (Ge 15:16), a truth of which Israel will stand in need more and more as the stay in Egypt grows protracted. "Assuredly visit" is expressed by the strong construction of a verb reinforced by an absolute infinitive. God's promise to the patriarchs justly looms up as of fundamental importance from these times onward especially. So much for the momentous word of encouragement from the lips of the dying Joseph.25. In addition he has a solemn word of request to make, to which he binds the Israelites by oath, namely that they are ultimately to bring his bones up to the land of promise, that is to say at the time when they are themselves brought up by God, an act here again rightly described as a "visiting" (paqodh), a term descriptive of every act of divine intervention in the lives of men. Joseph does not expect his brethren to execute this commission at once. The circumstances are so different at his death from what they were when Jacob died. Then an immediate granting of the request was feasible because of Joseph's influential position. After Joseph's death there was no man of Israel influential enough to make the needed arrangements. It would be misconstruing Joseph's purpose to regard the oath imposed as little more than an act

designed for the gratification of a cherished hope. By laying it upon his people he gave eloquent testimony to his faith in God's promises, and by leaving his body in their midst he gave them a continual reminder of that gracious promise.26. The initial step in the keeping of that promise is recorded. When Joseph dies -- the age being repeated in the more solemn style of narrative, as is common in epic poetry also -- they embalm him and put him into an 'arôn, a word whose primary significance is "box," used also of the ark of the covenant. Here the term might mean: "coffin," but the type of box or coffin used for mummies is the familiar painted wooden "mummy case."With this close, which eloquently calls for the continuation provided by Exodus, Genesis comes to a conclusion, which betrays that it, like the others of the five books of Moses, from the very outset constituted a finished literary product designed to be complete in itself but also to be an integral part of a greater work.HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONSMay one not use v. Ge 50:1-14 as a text suggesting what the Christian or Biblical concept of burial is? The display connected with Jacob's burial, the pomp and the ceremony, emanated from the heathen Egyptians. For believers true grief, honest lamentation, proper entombment all have a place. Even in the death of a saint of God his faith may be commemorated. Or he himself may make provision that in some natural way or other he may testify as to his faith. Then v. Ge 50:15-21 furnish an illustration of what is involved in displaying a forgiving spirit. Or in an effort to touch upon both sides of the question one might treat the general theme "True Reconciliation."

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