

CHAPTER 24

Marriages and funerals are the changes of families, and the common news among the inhabitants of the villages. In the foregoing chapter we had Abraham burying his wife, here we have him marrying his son. These stories concerning his family, with their minute circumstances, are largely related, while the histories of the kingdoms of the world then in being, with their revolutions, are buried in silence; for the Lord knows those that are his. The subjoining of Isaac's marriage to Sarah's funeral (with a particular reference to it, v. 67) shows us that as "one generation passes away another generation comes;" and thus the entail both of the human nature, and of the covenant, is preserved. Here is,

- I.** Abraham's care about the marrying of his son, and the charge he gave to his servant about it (v. 1-9).
- II.** His servant's journey into Abraham's country, to seek a wife for his young master among his own relations (v. 10-14).
- III.** The kind providence which brought him acquainted with Rebekah, whose father was Isaac's cousin-german (v. 15-28).
- IV.** The treaty of marriage with her relations (v. 29-49).
- V.** Their consent obtained (v. 50-60).
- VI.** The happy meeting and marriage between Isaac and Rebekah (v. 61, etc.).

~~121~~ GENESIS 24:1-9

ABRAHAM'S CHARGE TO HIS SERVANT

Three things we may observe here concerning Abraham: —

- I.** The care he took of a good son, to get him married, well married. It was high time to think of it now, for Isaac was about forty years old, and it had been customary with his ancestors to marry at thirty, or sooner, ~~121~~Genesis 11:14, 18, 22, 24. Abraham believed the promise of the building up of his

family, and therefore did not make haste; not more haste than good speed. Two considerations moved him to think of it now (v. 1): —

1. That he himself was likely to leave the world quickly, for he was *old, and well-stricken in age*, and it would be a satisfaction to him to see his son settled before he died; and,
2. That he had a good estate to leave behind him, for *the Lord had blessed him in all things*; and the blessing of the Lord makes rich. See how much religion and piety befriend outward prosperity. Now Abraham's pious care concerning his son was,

(1.) That he should not marry a daughter of Canaan, but one of his kindred. He saw that the Canaanites were degenerating into great wickedness, and knew by revelation that they were designed for ruin, and therefore he would not marry his son among them, lest they should be either a snare to his soul, or at least a blot to his name.

(2.) That yet he should not leave the land of Canaan, to go himself among his kindred, not even for the purpose of choosing a wife, lest he should be tempted to settle there. This caution is given 5:6, and repeated, v. 8.

“Bring not my son thither again, whatever comes of it. Let him rather want a wife than expose himself to that temptation.” Note, Parents in disposing of their children, should carefully consult the welfare of their souls, and their furtherance in the way to heaven. Those who through grace have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, and have brought up their children accordingly, should take heed of doing any thing by which they may be again entangled therein and overcome, ^{Gen 2} Peter 2:20. Beware that you bring them not thither again, ^{Heb 11:15} Hebrews 11:15.

II. The charge he gave to a good servant, probably Eliezer of Damascus, one of whose conduct, fidelity, and affection to him and his family, he had had long experience. He trusted him with this great affair, and not Isaac himself, because he would not have Isaac go at all into that country, but marry there by proxy; and no proxy so fit as this *steward of his house*. This matter is settled between the master and the servant with a great deal of care and solemnity.

1. The servant must be bound by an oath to do his utmost to get a wife for Isaac from among his relations, v. 2-4. Abraham swears him to it, both for

his own satisfaction and for the engagement of his servant to all possible care and diligence in this matter. Thus God swears his servants to their work, that, having sworn, they may perform it. Honour is here done to the eternal God; for he it is that is sworn by, to whom alone these appeals ought to be made. And some think honour is done to the covenant of circumcision by the ceremony here used of *putting his hand under his thigh*. Note, Swearing being an ordinance not peculiar to the church, but common to mankind, is to be performed by such signs as are the appointments and common usages of our country, for binding the person sworn.

2. He must be clear of this oath if, when he had done his utmost, he could not prevail. This proviso the servant prudently inserted (v. 5), putting the case that the woman would not follow him; and Abraham allowed the exception, v. 8. Note, Oaths are to be taken with great caution, and the matter sworn to should be rightly understood and limited, because it is a *snare to devour that which is holy, and, after vows, to make the enquiry* which should have been made before.

III. The confidence he put in a good God, who, he doubts not, will give his servant success in this undertaking, v. 7. He remembers that God had wonderfully brought him out of the land of his nativity, by the effectual call of his grace; and therefore doubts not but he will succeed him in his care not to bring his son thither again. He remembers also the promise God had made and confirmed to him that he would give Canaan to his seed, and thence infers that God would own him in his endeavours to match his son, not among those devoted nations, but to one that was fit to be the mother of such a seed. “Fear not therefore; he shall send his angel before thee to make thy way prosperous.” Note,

1. Those that carefully keep in the way of duty, and govern themselves by the principles of their religion in their designs and undertakings, have good reason to expect prosperity and success in them. God will cause that to issue in our comfort in which we sincerely aim at his glory.

2. God's promises, and our own experiences, are sufficient to encourage our dependence upon God, and our expectations from him, in all the affairs of this life.

3. God's angels are ministering spirits, sent forth, not only for the protection, but for the guidance, of the heirs of promise, ^{<314>}Hebrews 1:14. "He shall send his angel before thee, and then thou wilt speed well."

^{<1210>}GENESIS 24:10-28

JOURNEY OF ABRAHAM'S SERVANT

Abraham's servant now begins to make a figure in this story; and, though he is not named, yet much is here recorded to his honour, and for an example to all servants, who shall be honoured if, by faithfully serving God and their masters, they adorn the doctrine of Christ (compare ^{<1278>}Proverbs 27:18 with ^{<320>}Titus 2:10); for there is no respect of persons with God, ^{<1282>}Colossians 3:24, 25. A good servant that makes conscience of the duty of his place, and does it in the fear of God, though he make not a figure in the world nor have praise of men, yet shall be owned and accepted of God and have praise of him. Observe here,

I. How faithful Abraham's servant approved himself to his master. Having received his charge, he with all expedition set out on his journey, with an equipage suitable to the object of his negotiation (v. 10), *and he had all the goods of his master*, that is, a schedule or particular account of them, *in his hand*, to show to those with whom he was to treat; for, from first to last, he consulted his master's honour. Isaac being a type of Christ, some make this fetching of a wife for him to signify the espousing of the church by the agency of his servants the ministers. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife, ^{<219>}Revelation 21:9. Christ is the bridegroom, and ministers are the friends of the bridegroom (^{<419>}John 3:29), whose work it is to persuade souls to consent to him, ^{<212>}2 Corinthians 11:2. The spouse of Christ must not be of the Canaanites, but of his own kindred, born again from above. Ministers, like Abraham's servant, must lay out themselves with the utmost wisdom and care to serve their master's interest herein.

II. How devoutly he acknowledged God in this affair, like one of that happy household which Abraham had *commanded to keep the way of the Lord*, etc., ^{<189>}Genesis 18:19. He arrived early in the evening (after many days' journeying) at the place of his destination, and reposed himself by a

well of water, to consider how he might manage his business for the best. And,

1. He acknowledges God by a particular prayer (v. 12-14), wherein,

(1.) He petitions for prosperity and good success in this affair: *Send me good speed, this day.* Note, We have leave to be particular in recommending our affairs to the conduct and care of the divine Providence. Those that would have good speed must pray for it. *This day, in this affair;* thus we must, in all our ways, acknowledge God, ²¹⁸⁶Proverbs 3:6. And, if we thus look up to God in every undertaking which we are in care about, we shall have the comfort of having done our duty, whatever the issue be.

(2.) He pleads God's covenant with his master Abraham: *O God of my master Abraham, show kindness to him.* Note, As the children of good parents, so the servants of good masters, have peculiar encouragement in the prayers they offer to God for prosperity and success.

(3.) He proposes a sign (v. 14), not by it to limit God, nor with a design to proceed no further if he were not gratified in it; but it is a prayer,

[1.] That God would provide a good wife for his young master, and this was a good prayer. He knew that *a prudent wife is from the Lord* (²¹⁸⁴Proverbs 19:14), and therefore that for this he will be enquired of. He desires that his master's wife might be humble and industrious woman, bred up to care and labour, and willing to put her hand to any work that was to be done; and that she might be of a courteous disposition, and charitable to strangers. When he came to seek a wife for his master, he did not go to the playhouse or the park, and pray that he might meet one there, but to *the well of water*, expecting to find one there well employed.

[2.] That he would please to make his way, in this matter, plain and clear before him, by the concurrence of minute circumstances in his favour. Note, *First*, It is the comfort, as well as the belief, of a good man, that God's providence extends itself to the smallest occurrences and admirably serves its own purposes by them. Our times are in God's hand; not only events themselves, but the times of them. *Secondly*, It is our wisdom, in all our affairs, to follow Providence, and folly to force it. *Thirdly*, It is very desirable, and that which we may lawfully pray for, while in the general we set God's will before us as our rule, that he will, by hints of providence,

direct us in the way of our duty, and give us indications what his mind it. Thus he guides his people with his eye (^{137B}Psalm 32:8), and leads them in a plain path, (^{137I}Psalm 27:11).

2. God owns him by a particular providence. He decreed the thing, and it was established to him, (^{137B}Job 22:28). According to his faith, so was it unto him. The answer to this prayer was,

(1.) Speedy — *before he had made an end of speaking* (v. 15), as it is written (^{235B}Isaiah 65:24), *While they are yet speaking, I will hear*. Though we are backward to pray, God is forward to hear prayer.

(2.) Satisfactory: the first that came to draw water was, and did, in every thing, according to his own heart.

[1.] She was so well qualified that in all respects she answered the characters he wished for in the woman that was to be his master's wife, handsome and healthful, humble and industrious, very courteous and obliging to a stranger, and having all the marks of a good disposition. When she came to the well (v. 16), she went down and *filled her pitcher, and came up* to go home with it. She did not stand to gaze upon the strange man and his camels, but minded her business, and would not have been diverted from it but by an opportunity of doing good. She did not curiously nor confidently enter into discourse with him, but modestly answered him, with all the decorum that became her sex. What a degenerate age do we live in, in which appear all the instances of pride, luxury, and laziness, the reverse of Rebekah's character, whose daughters few are! Those instances of goodness which were then in honour are now in contempt.

[2.] Providence so ordered it that she did that which exactly answered to his sign, and was wonderfully the counterpart of his proposal: she not only gave him drink, but, which was more than could have been expected, she offered her services to give his camels drink, which was the very sign he proposed. Note, *First*, God, in his providence, does sometimes wonderfully own the prayer of faith, and gratify the innocent desires of his praying people, even in little things, that he may show the extent of his care, and may encourage them at all times to seek to him and trust in him; yet we must take heed of being over-bold in prescribing to God, lest the event should weaken our faith rather than strengthen it. *Secondly*, It is good to take all opportunities of showing a humble, courteous, charitable,

disposition, because, some time or other, it may turn more to our honour and benefit than we think of; some hereby have entertained angels, and Rebekah hereby, quite beyond her expectation at this time, was brought into the line of Christ and the covenant. *Thirdly*, There may be a great deal of obliging kindness in that which costs but little: our Saviour has promised a reward for a cup of cold water, ^{<400>}Matthew 10:42. *Fourthly*, The concurrence of providences and their minute circumstances, for the furtherance of our success in any business, ought to be particularly observed, with wonder and thankfulness, to the glory of God: *The man wondered*, v. 21. We have been wanting to ourselves, both in duty and in comfort, by neglecting to observe Providence.

[3.] Upon enquiry he found, to his great satisfaction, that she was a near relation to his master, and that the family she was of was considerable, and able to give him entertainment, v. 23-25. Note, Providence sometimes wonderfully directs those that by faith and prayer seek direction from heaven in the choice of suitable yoke-fellows: happy marriages those are likely to be that are made in the fear of God; and these, we are sure, are made in heaven.

3. He acknowledges God in a particular thanksgiving. He first paid his respects to Rebekah, in gratitude for her civility (v. 22), obliging her with such ornaments and attire as a maid, especially a bride, cannot forget (^{<200>}Jeremiah 2:32), which yet, we should think, ill suited the *pitcher of water*; but the ear-rings and bracelets she sometimes wore did not make her think herself above the labours of a virtuous woman (^{<200>}Proverbs 31:13), who *works willingly with her hands*; nor the services of a child, who, while *under age, differs nothing from a servant*, Galatians 9:1. Having done this, he turns his wonder (v. 21) into worshipping: *Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham*, v. 26, 27. Observe here,

(1.) He had prayed for good speed (v. 12), and now that he had sped well he gives thanks. Note, What we win by prayer we must wear with praise; for mercies in answer to prayer lay us under particular obligations.

(2.) He had as yet but a comfortable prospect of mercy, and was not certain what the issue might prove; yet he gives thanks. Note, When God's favours are coming towards us we must meet them with our praises.

(3.) He blesses God for success when he was negotiating for his master. Note, We should be thankful for our friend's mercies as for our own.

(4.) He gives thanks that, being in the way, at a loss what course to steer, the Lord had led him. Note, In doubtful cases, it is very comfortable to see God leading us, as he led Israel in the wilderness by the pillar of cloud and fire.

(5.) He thinks himself very happy, and owns God in it, that he was led to the *house of his master's brethren*, those of them that had come out of Ur of the Chaldees, though they had not come to Canaan, but remained in Haran. They were not idolaters, but worshippers of the true God, and inclinable to the religion of Abraham's family. Note, God is to be acknowledged in providing suitable yoke-fellows, especially such as are agreeable in religion.

(6.) He acknowledges that God, herein, had not left his master *destitute of his mercy and truth*. God had promised to build up Abraham's family, yet it seemed destitute of the benefit of that promise; but now Providence is working towards the accomplishing of it. Note,

[1.] God's faithful ones, how destitute soever they may be of worldly comforts, shall never be left destitute of God's mercy and truth; for God's mercy is an inexhaustible fountain, and his truth an inviolable foundation.

[2.] It adds much to the comfort of any blessing to see in it the continuance of God's mercy and truth.

GENESIS 24:29-53

ABRAHAM'S SERVANT ENTERTAINED BY LABAN

We have here the making up of the marriage between Isaac and Rebekah. It is related very largely and particularly, even to the minute circumstances, which, we should think, might have been spared, while other things of great moment and mystery (as the story of Melchizedek) are related in few words. Thus God conceals that which is curious from the wise and prudent, reveals to babes that which is common and level to their capacity (⁴¹¹⁵Matthew 11:25), and rules and *saves the world by the foolishness of preaching*, ⁴¹²¹1 Corinthians 1:21. Thus also we are directed to take notice of God's providence in the little common occurrences of human life, and in them also to exercise our own prudence and other graces; for the scripture was not intended for the use of philosophers and

statesmen only, but to make us all wise and virtuous in the conduct of ourselves and families. Here is,

I. The very kind reception given to Abraham's servant by Rebekah's relations. Her brother Laban went to invite and conduct him in, but not till he saw the *ear-rings and the bracelets upon his sister's hands*, v. 30. "O," thinks Laban, "here is a man that there is something to be got by, a man that is rich and generous; we will be sure to bid him welcome!" We know so much of Laban's character, by the following story, as to think that he would not have been so free of his entertainment if he had not hoped to be well paid for it, as he was, v. 53. Note, *A man's gift maketh room for him* (²¹⁸⁶Proverbs 18:16), *which way soever it turneth, it prospereth*, ²¹⁷⁸Proverbs 17:8.

1. The invitation was kind: *Come in, thou blessed of the Lord*, v. 31. They saw he was rich, and therefore pronounced him *blessed of the Lord*; or, perhaps, because they heard from Rebekah (v. 28) or the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, they concluded him a good man, and therefore *blessed of the Lord*. Note, Those that are blessed of God should be welcome to us. It is good owning those whom God owns.

2. The entertainment was kind, v. 32, 33. Both the house and stable were well furnished, and Abraham's servant was invited to the free use of both. Particular care was taken of the camels; for a *good man regardeth the life of his beast*, ²¹²⁰Proverbs 12:10. If the ox knows his owner to serve him, the owner should know his ox to provide for him that which is fitting for him.

II. The full account which he gave them of his errand, and the court he made to them for their consent respecting Rebekah. Observe,

1. How intent he was upon his business; though he had come off a journey, and come to a good house, he would *not eat, till he had told his errand*, v. 33. Note, The doing of our work, and the fulfilling of our trusts, either for God or man, should be preferred by us before our necessary food: it was our Saviour's meat and drink, ²¹⁰⁶John 4:34.

2. How ingenious he was in the management of it; he approved himself, in this matter, both a prudent man and a man of integrity, faithful to his master by whom he was trusted, and just to those with whom he now treated.

(1.) He gives a short account of the state of his master's family, v. 34-36. He was welcome before, but we may suppose him doubly welcome when he said, *I am Abraham's servant*. Abraham's name, no doubt, was well known among them and respected, and we might suppose them not altogether ignorant of his state, for Abraham knew theirs, ⁽¹²²⁾Genesis 22:20-24. Two things he suggests, to recommend his proposal: —

[1.] That his master Abraham, through the blessing of God, had a very good estate; and,

[2.] That he had settled it all upon Isaac, for whom he was now a suitor.

(2.) He tells them the charge his master had given him, to fetch a wife for his son from among his kindred, with the reason of it, v. 37, 38. Thus he insinuates a pleasing hint, that, though Abraham had removed to a country at so great a distance, yet he still retained the remembrance of his relations that he had left behind, and a respect for them. The highest degrees of divine affection must not divest us of natural affection. He likewise obviates an objection, That, if Isaac were deserving, he needed not send so far off for a wife: why did he not marry nearer home? “For a good reason,” says he; “my master's son must not match with a Canaanite.” He further recommends his proposal,

[1.] From the faith his master had that it would succeed, v. 40. Abraham took encouragement from the testimony of his conscience that he *walked before God* in a regular course of holy living, and thence inferred that God would prosper him; probably he refers to that covenant which God had made with him (⁽¹²³⁾Genesis 17:1), *I am God, all-sufficient, walk before me*. Therefore, says he *the God before whom I walk will send his angel*. Note, While we make conscience of our part of the covenant, we may take the comfort of God's part of it; and we should learn to apply general promises of particular cases, as there is occasion.

[2.] From the care he himself had taken to preserve their liberty of giving or refusing their consent, as they should see cause, without incurring the guilt of perjury (v. 39-41), which showed him, in general, to be a cautious man, and particularly careful that their consent might not be forced, but be either free or not at all.

(3.) He relates to them the wonderful concurrence of providences, to countenance and further the proposal, plainly showing the finger of God in it.

[1.] He tells them how he had prayed for direction by a sign, v. 42-44. Note, It is good dealing with those who be prayer take God along with them in their dealings.

[2.] How God had answered his prayer in the very letter of it. Though he did but *speak in his heart* (v 45), which perhaps he mentions, lest it should be suspected that Rebekah had overheard his prayer and designedly humoured it. “No,” says he, “I spoke *it in my heart*, so that none heard it but God, to whom thought are word, and from him the answer came,” 5:46, 47.

[3.] How he had immediately acknowledged God's goodness to him therein, *leading him*, as he here expresses it, *in the right way*. Note, God's way is always the *right way* (~~DATE~~ Psalm 107:7), and those are well led whom he leads.

(4.) He fairly refers the matter to their consideration, and waits their decision (v. 49): “*If you will deal kindly and truly with my master*, well and good: if you will be sincerely kind, you will accept the proposal, and I have what I came for; if not, do not hold me in suspense.” Note, Those who deal fairly have reason to expect fair dealing.

(5.) They freely and cheerfully close with the proposal upon a very good principle (v. 50): “*The thing proceedeth from the Lord*, Providence smiles upon it, and we have nothing to say against it.” They do not object distance of place, Abraham's forsaking them, or his having no land in possession, but person estate only: they do not question the truth of what this man said; but,

[1.] They trust much to his integrity. It were well if honesty did so universally prevail among men that it might be as much an act of prudence as it is of good nature to take a man's word.

[2.] They trust more to God's providence, and therefore by silence give consent, because it appears to be directed and disposed by Infinite Wisdom. Note, A marriage is then likely to be comfortable when it appears to proceed from the Lord.

(6.) Abraham's servant makes a thankful acknowledgment of the good success he had met with,

[1.] To God: *He worshipped the Lord, v. 52.* Observe, *First,* As his good success went on, he went on to bless God. Those that *pray without ceasing* should *in every thing give thanks*, and own God in every step of mercy. *Secondly,* God sent his angel before him, and so gave him success, v. 7, 40. But when he has the desired success, he worships God, not the angel. Whatever benefit we have by the ministration of angels, all the glory must be given to the Lord of the angels, ^{<1254>}Revelation 22:9.

[2.] He pays his respects to the family also, and particularly to the bride, v. 53. He presented her, and her mother, and brother, with many precious things, both to give a real proof of his master's riches and generosity and in gratitude for their civility to him, and further to ingratiate himself with them.

^{<1254>}GENESIS 24:54-61

REBEKAH'S DEPARTURE

Rebekah is here taking leave of her father's house; and

1. Abraham's servant presses for a dismissal. Though he and his company were very welcome, and very cheerful there, yet he said, *Send me away* (v. 54), and again, v. 56. He knew his master would expect him home with some impatience; he had business to do at home which wanted him, and therefore, as one that preferred his work before his pleasure, he was for hastening home. Note, Linger and loitering no way become a wise and good man; when we have despatched our business abroad we must not delay our return to our business at home, nor be longer from it than needs must; for as a bird that *wanders from her nest so is he that wanders from his place*, ^{<1278>}Proverbs 27:8.

2. Rebekah's relations, from natural affection and according to the usual expression of kindness in that case, solicit for her stay some time among them, v. 55. They could not think of parting with her on a sudden, especially as she was about to remove so far off and it was not likely that they would ever see one another again: *Let her stay a few days, at least ten*, which makes it as reasonable a request as the reading in the margin

seems to make it unreasonable, *a year, or at least ten months*. They had consented to the marriage, and yet were loth to part with her. Note, It is an instance of the vanity of this world that there is nothing in it so agreeable but it has its alloy. *Nulla est sincera voluptas — There is no unmingled pleasure*. They were pleased that they had matched a daughter of their family so well, and yet, when it came to the last, it was with great reluctance that they sent her away.

3. Rebekah herself determined the matter. To her they appealed, as it was fit they should (v. 57): *Call the damsel* (who had retired to her apartment with a modest silence) and *enquire at her mouth*. Note, As children ought not to marry without their parents' consent, so parents ought not to marry them without their own. Before the matter is resolved on, “Ask at the damsel's mouth;” she is a party principally concerned, and therefore ought to be principally consulted. Rebekah consented, not only to go, but to go immediately: *I will go*, v. 58. We may hope that the notice she had taken of the servant's piety and devotion gave her such an idea of the prevalence of religion and godliness in the family she was to go to made her desirous to hasten thither, and willing to forget her own people and her father's house, where religion had not so much the ascendant.

4. Hereupon she is sent away with Abraham's servant; not, we may suppose, the very next day after, but very quickly: her friends see that she has a good heart on it, and so they dismiss her,

(1.) With suitable attendants — her *nurse* (v. 59), her *damsels*, v. 61. It seems, then, that when she went to the well for water it was not because she had not servants at command, but because she took a pleasure in works of humble industry. Now that she was going among strangers, it was fit she should take those with her with whom she was acquainted. Here is nothing said of her portion. Her personal merits were a portion in her, she needed none with her, nor did that ever come into the treaty of marriage.

(2.) With hearty good wishes: *They blessed Rebekah*, v. 60. Note, When our relations are entering into a new condition, we ought by prayer to recommend them to the blessing and grace of God. Now that she was going to be a wife, they prayed that she might be a mother both of a numerous and of a victorious progeny. Perhaps Abraham's servant had told them of the promise God had lately made to his master, which it is likely, Abraham acquainted his household with, that God *would multiply his seed*

as the stars of heaven, and that they should possess the gate of their enemies (¹²¹⁷Genesis 22:17), to which promise they had an eye in this blessing, *Be thou the mother* of that seed.

¹²⁶²GENESIS 24:62-67

ISAAC'S MARRIAGE

Isaac and Rebekah are, at length, happily brought together. Observe,

I. Isaac was well employed when he met Rebekah: *He went out to meditate, or pray, in the field, at the even-tide*, v. 62, 63. Some think he expected the return of his servants about this time, and went out on purpose to meet them. But, it should seem, he went out on another errand, to take the advantage of a silent evening and a solitary field for meditation and prayer, those divine exercises by which we converse with God and our own hearts. Note,

- 1.** Holy souls love retirement. It will do us good to be often left alone, walking alone and sitting alone; and, if we have the art of improving solitude, we shall find we are never less alone than when alone.
- 2.** Meditation and prayer ought to be both our business and our delight when we are alone; while we have a God, a Christ, and a heaven, to acquaint ourselves with, and to secure our interest in, we need not want matter either for meditation or prayer, which, if they go together, will mutually befriend each other.
- 3.** Our walks in the field are then truly pleasant when in them we apply ourselves to meditation and prayer. We there have a free and open prospect of the heavens above us and the earth around us, and the host and riches of both, by the view of which we should be led to the contemplation of the Maker and owner of all.
- 4.** The exercises of devotion should be the refreshment and entertainment of the evening, to relieve us from the fatigue occasioned by the care and business of the day, and to prepare us for the repose and sleep of the night.
- 5.** Merciful providences are then doubly comfortable when they find us well employed and in the way of our duty. Some think Isaac was now

praying for good success in this affair that was depending, and meditating upon that which was proper to encourage his hope in God concerning it; and now, when he sets himself, as it were, upon his watch-tower, to see what God would answer him, as the prophet (^{<301>}Habakkuk 2:1), *he sees the camels coming*. Sometimes God sends in the mercy prayed for immediately, ^{<402>}Acts 12:12.

II. Rebekah behaved herself very becomingly, when she met Isaac: understanding who he was, she *alighted off her camel* (v. 64), and *took a veil, and covered herself* (v. 65), in token of humility, modesty, and subjection. She did not reproach Isaac for not coming himself to fetch her, or, at least, to meet her a day's journey or two, did not complain of the tediousness of her journey, or the difficulty of leaving her relations, to come into a strange place; but, having seen Providence going before her in the affair, she accommodates herself with cheerfulness to her new relation. Those that by faith are espoused to Christ, and would be presented as chaste virgins to him, must, in conformity to his example, humble themselves, as Rebekah, who alighted when she saw Isaac on foot, and must put themselves into subjection to him who is their head (^{<402>}Ephesians 5:24), as Rebekah, signifying it by the veil she put on, ^{<410>}1 Corinthians 11:10.

III. They were brought together (probably after some further acquaintance), to their mutual comfort, v. 67. Observe here,

1. What an affectionate son he was to his mother: it was about three years since her death, and yet he was not, till now, comforted concerning it; the wound which that affliction gave to his tender spirit bled so long, and was never healed till God brought him into this new relation. Thus crosses and comforts are balances to each other (^{<2074>}Ecclesiastes 7:14), and help to keep the scale even.

2. What an affectionate husband he was to his wife. Note, Those that have approved themselves well in one relation, it may be hoped, will do so in another: *She became his wife, and he loved her*; there was all the reason in the world why he should, for *so ought men to love their wives even as themselves*. The duty of the relation is then done, and the comfort of the relation is then enjoyed, when mutual love governs; for *there the Lord commands the blessing*.