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COMMENTARY

**COMMENTARY ON THE
OLD TESTAMENT**

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MATTHEW HENRY'S
COMMENTARY
ON THE WHOLE BIBLE
BY
MATTHEW HENRY
CONSCISE VERSION
GENESIS TO MALACHI

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED

GENESIS

Genesis is a name taken from the Greek, and signifies “the book of generation or production;” it is properly so called, as containing an account of the origin of all things. There is no other history so old. There is nothing in the most ancient book which exists that contradicts it; while many things recorded by the oldest heathen writers, or to be traced in the customs of different nations, confirm what is related in the book of Genesis.

CHAPTER 1

God creates heaven and earth. (1,2) The creation of light. (3-5) God separates the earth from the waters, and makes it fruitful. (6-13) God forms the sun, moon, and stars. (14-19) Animals created. (20-25) Man created in the image of God. (26-28) Food appointed. (29,30) The work of creation ended and approved. (31)

Genesis 1:1

Vs. 1, 2: The first verse of the Bible gives us a satisfying and useful account of the origin of the earth and the heavens. The faith of humble Christians understands this better than the fancy of the most learned men. From what we see of heaven and earth, we learn the power of the great Creator. And let our make and place as men, remind us of our duty as Christians, always to keep heaven in our eye, and the earth under our feet. The Son of God, one with the Father, was with him when he made the world; nay, we are often told that the world was made by him, and nothing was made without him. Oh, what high thoughts should there be in our minds, of that great God whom we worship, and of that great Mediator in whose name we pray! And here, at the beginning of the sacred volume, we read of that Divine Spirit, whose work upon the heart of man is so often mentioned in other parts of the Bible. Observe, that at first there was nothing desirable to be seen, for the world was without form, and void; it

was confusion, and emptiness. In like manner the work of grace in the soul is a new creation: and in a graceless soul, one that is not born again, there is disorder, confusion, and every evil work: it is empty of all good, for it is without God; it is dark, it is darkness itself: this is our condition by nature, till Almighty grace works a change in us.

Genesis 1:3

Vs. 3-5: God said, Let there be light; he willed it, and at once there was light. Oh, the power of the word of God! And in the new creation, the first thing that is wrought in the soul is light: the blessed Spirit works upon the will and affection by enlightening the understanding. Those who by sin were darkness, by grace become light in the Lord. Darkness would have been always upon villainy man, if the Son of God had not come and given us understanding, ¹ John 5:20. The light which God willed, he approved of. God divided the light from the darkness; for what fellowship has light with darkness? In heaven there is perfect light, and no darkness at all; in hell, utter darkness, and no gleam of light. The day and the night are the Lord's; let us use both to his honor, by working for him every day, and resting in him every night, meditating in his law both day and night.

Genesis 1:6

Vs. 6-13: The earth was emptiness, but by a word spoken, it became full of God's riches, and his they are still. Though the use of them is allowed to man, they are from God, and to his service and honor they must be used. The earth, at his command, brings forth grass, herbs, and fruits. God must have the glory of all the benefit we receive from the produce of the earth. If we have, through grace, an interest in Him who is the Fountain, we may rejoice in him when the streams of temporal mercies are dried up.

Genesis 1:14

Vs. 14-19: In the fourth day's work, the creation of the sun, moon, and stars is accounted for. All these are the works of God. The stars are spoken of as they appear to our eyes, without telling their number, nature, place, size, or motions; for the Scriptures were written, not to gratify curiosity, or make us astronomers, but to lead us to God, and make us saints. The lights of heaven are made to serve him; they do it faithfully, and shine in their season without fail. We are set as lights in this world to

serve God; but do we in like manner answer the end of our creation? We do not: our light does not shine before God, as his lights shine before us. We burn our Master's candles, but do not mind our Master's work.

Genesis 1:20

Vs. 20-25: God commanded the fish and fowl to be produced. This command he himself executed. Insects, which are more numerous than the birds and beasts, and as curious, seem to have been part of this day's work. The Creator's wisdom and power are to be admired as much in an ant as in an elephant. The power of God's providence preserves all things, and fruitfulness is the effect of his blessing.

Genesis 1:26

Vs. 26-28: Man was made last of all the creatures: this was both an honor and a favor to him. Yet man was made the same day that the beasts were; his body was made of the same earth with theirs; and while he is in the body, he inhabits the same earth with them. God forbid that by indulging the body, and the desires of it, we should make ourselves like the beasts that perish! Man was to be a creature different from all that had been hitherto made. Flesh and spirit, heaven and earth, must be put together in him. God said, "Let us make man." Man, when he was made, was to glorify the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Into that great name we are baptized, for to that great name we owe our being. It is the soul of man that especially bears God's image. Man was made upright, ²⁰¹⁹Ecclesiastes 7:29. His understanding saw Divine things clearly and truly; there were no errors or mistakes in his knowledge; his will consented at once, and in all things, to the will of God. His affection were all regular, and he had no bad appetites or passions. His thoughts were easily brought and fixed to the best subjects. Thus holy, thus happy, were our first parents in having the image of God upon them. But how is this image of God upon man defaced! May the Lord renew it upon our souls by his grace!

Genesis 1:29

Vs. 29, 30: Herbs and fruits must be man's food, unequalled corn, and all the products of the earth. Let God's people cast their care upon him, and not be troubled about what they shall eat, and what they shall drink. He that feeds his birds will not starve his babes.

Genesis 1:31

Vs. 31: When we come to think about our works, we find, to our shame, that much has been very bad; but when God saw his work, all was very good. Good, for it was all just as the Creator would have it to be. All his works, in all places of his dominion, bless him; and therefore, bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Let us bless God for the gospel of Christ, and when we consider his almighty power, let us sinners flee from the wrath to come. If new-created unto the image of God in holiness, we shall at length enter the “new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

CHAPTER 2

The first Sabbath. (1-3) Particulars about the creation. (4-7) The planting of the garden of Eden. (8-14) Man is placed in it. (15) God's command. (16,17) The animals named, The making of woman, The Divine institution of marriage. (18-25)

Genesis 2:1

Vs. 1-3: After six days, God ceased from all works of creation. In miracles, he has overruled nature, but never changed its settled course, or added to it. God did not rest as one weary, but as one well pleased. Notice the beginning of the kingdom of grace, in the sanctification, or keeping holy, of the Sabbath day. The solemn observing of one day in seven as a day of holy rest and holy work, to God's honor, is the duty of all to whom God has made known his holy Sabbaths. At this time none of the human race were in being but our first parents. For them the Sabbath was appointed; and clearly for all succeeding generations also. The Christian Sabbath, which we observe, is a seventh day, and in it we celebrate the rest of God the Son, and the finishing the work of our redemption.

Genesis 2:4

Vs. 4-7: Here is a name given to the Creator, "Jehovah." Where the word "LORD" is printed in capital letters in our Unequaled Bibles, in the original it is "Jehovah." Jehovah is that name of God, which denotes that he alone has his being of himself, and that he gives being to all creatures and things. Further notice is taken of plants and herbs, because they were made and appointed to be food for man. The earth did not bring forth its fruits of itself: this was done by Almighty power. Thus grace in the soul grows not of itself in nature's soil, but is the work of God. Rain also is the gift of God; it came not till the Lord God caused it. Though God works by means, yet when he pleases he can do his own work without them; and though we must not tempt God in the neglect of means, we must trust God, both in the use and in the want of means. Some way or other, God will water the plants of his own planting. Divine grace comes down like the dew, and waters the church without noise. Man was made of the small dust, such as is on the surface of the earth. The soul was not made of the

earth, as the body: pity then that it should cleave to the earth, and mind earthly things. To God we must shortly give an account, how we have employed these souls; and if it be found that we have lost them, though it were to gain the world, we are undone for ever! Fools despise their own souls, by caring for their bodies before their souls.

Genesis 2:8

Vs. 8-14: The place fixed upon for Adam to dwell in, was not a palace, but a garden. The better we take up with plain things, and the less we seek things to gratify pride and luxury, the nearer we approach to innocency. Nature is content with a little, and that which is most natural; grace with less; but lust craves every thing, and is content with nothing. No delights can be satisfying to the soul, but those which God himself has provided and appointed for it. Eden signifies delight and pleasure. Wherever it was, it had all desirable conveniences, without any inconvenience, though no other house or garden on earth ever was so. It was adorned with every tree pleasant to the sight, and enriched with every tree that yielded fruit grateful to the taste and good for food. God, as a tender Father, desired not only Adam's profit, but his pleasure; for there is pleasure with innocency, nay there is true pleasure only in innocency. When Providence puts us in a place of plenty and pleasure, we ought to serve God with gladness of heart in the good things he gives us. Eden had two trees peculiar to itself.

1. There was the tree of life in the midst of the garden. Of this man might eat and live. Christ is now to us the Tree of life, ^{<66>}Revelation 2:7; ^{<62>}22:2; and the Bread of life, ^{<68>}John 6:48,51.

2. There was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so called because there was a positive revelation of the will of God about this tree, so that by it man might know moral good and evil.

What is good? It is good not to eat of this tree. What is evil? It is evil to eat of this tree. In these two trees God set before Adam good and evil, the blessing and the curse.

Genesis 2:15

Vs. 15: After God had formed Adam, he put him in the garden. All boasting was thereby shut out. Only he that made us can make us happy;

he that is the Former of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits, and none but he, can fully provide for the happiness of both. Even in paradise itself man had to work. None of us were sent into the world to be idle. He that made our souls and bodies, has given us something to work with; and he that gave us this earth for our habitation, has made us something to work upon. The sons and heirs of heaven, while in this world, have something to do about this earth, which must have its share of their time and thoughts; and if they do it with an eye to God, they as truly serve him in it, as when they are upon their knees. Observe that the husbandman's calling is an ancient and honorable calling; it was needful even in paradise. Also, there is true pleasure in the business God calls us to, and employs us in. Adam could not have been happy if he had been idle: it is still God's law, He that will not work has no right to eat, ^{<SCRIPT>}2 Thessalonians 3:10.

^{<SCRIPT>}Genesis 2:16

Vs. 16, 17: Let us never set up our own will against the holy will of God. There was not only liberty allowed to man, in taking the fruits of paradise, but everlasting life made sure to him upon his obedience. There was a trial appointed of his obedience. By transgression he would forfeit his Maker's favor, and deserve his displeasure, with all its awful effects; so that he would become liable to pain, disease, and death. Worse than that, he would lose the holy image of God, and all the comfort of his favor; and feel the torment of sinful passions, and the terror of his Maker's vengeance, which must endure for ever with his never dying soul. The forbidding to eat of the fruit of a particular tree was wisely suited to the state of our first parents. In their state of innocence, and separated from any others, what opportunity or what temptation had they to break any of the ten commandments? The event proves that the whole human race were concerned in the trial and fall of our first parents. To argue against these things is to strive against stubborn facts, as well as Divine revelation; for man is sinful, and shows by his first actions, and his conduct ever afterwards, that he is ready to do evil. He is under the Divine displeasure, exposed to sufferings and death. The Scriptures always speak of man as of this sinful character, and in this miserable state; and these things are true of men in all ages, and of all nations.

Genesis 2:18

Vs. 18-25: Power over the creatures was given to man, and as a proof of this he named them all. It also shows his insight into the works of God. But though he was Lord of the creatures, yet nothing in this world was a help meet for man. From God are all our helpers. If we rest in God, he will work all for good. God caused deep sleep to fall on Adam; while he knows no sin, God will take care that he shall feel no pain. God, as her Father, brought the woman to the man, as his second self, and a help meet for him. That wife, who is of God's making by special grace, and of God's bringing by special providence, is likely to prove a help meet for a man. See what need there is, both of prudence and prayer in the choice of this relation, which is so near and so lasting. That had need to be well done, which is to be done for life. Our first parents needed no clothes for covering against cold or heat, for neither could hurt them: they needed none for ornament. Thus easy, thus happy, was man in his state of innocency. How good was God to him! How many favors did he load him with! How easy were the laws given to him! Yet man, being in honor, understood not his own interest, but soon became as the beasts that perish.

CHAPTER 3

The serpent deceives Eve. (1-5) Adam and Eve transgress the Divine command, and fall into sin and misery. (6-8) God calls upon Adam and Eve to answer. (9-13) The serpent cursed, The promised Seed. (14,15) The punishment of mankind. (16-19) The first clothing of mankind. (20,21) Adam and Eve are driven out from paradise. (22-24)

◀OR▶ **Genesis 3:1**

Vs. 1-5: Satan assaulted our first parents, to draw them to sin, and the temptation proved fatal to them. The tempter was the devil, in the shape and likeness of a serpent. Satan's plan was to draw our first parents to sin, and so to separate between them and their God. Thus the devil was from the beginning a murderer, and the great mischief maker. The person tempted was the woman: it was Satan's policy to enter into talk with her when she was alone. There are many temptations to which being alone gives great advantage; but the communion of saints tends very much to their strength and safety. Satan took advantage by finding her near the forbidden tree. They that would not eat the forbidden fruit, must not come near the forbidden tree. Satan tempted Eve, that by her he might tempt Adam. It is his policy to send temptations by hands we do not suspect, and by those that have most influence upon us. Satan questioned whether it were a sin or not, to eat of this tree. He did not disclose his design at first, but he put a question which seemed innocent. Those who would be safe, need to be shy of talking with the tempter. He quoted the command wrong. He spoke in a taunting way. The devil, as he is a liar, so he is a scoffer from the beginning; and scoffers are his children. It is the craft of Satan to speak of the Divine law as uncertain or unreasonable, and so to draw people to sin; it is our wisdom to keep up a firm belief of God's command, and a high respect for it. Has God said, Ye shall not lie, nor take his name in vain, nor be drunk, etc.? Yes, I am sure he has, and it is well said; and by his grace I will abide by it. It was Eve's weakness to enter into this talk with the serpent: she might have perceived by his question, that he had no good design, and should therefore have started back. Satan teaches men first to doubt, and then to deny. He promises advantage from

their eating this fruit. He aims to make them discontented with their present state, as if it were not so good as it might be, and should be. No condition will of itself bring content, unless the mind be brought to it. He tempts them to seek preferment, as if they were fit to be gods. Satan ruined himself by desiring to be like the Most High, therefore he sought to infect our first parents with the same desire, that he might ruin them too. And still the devil draws people into his interest, by suggesting to them hard thoughts of God, and false hopes of advantage by sin. Let us, therefore, always think well of God as the best good, and think ill of sin as the worst evil: thus let us resist the devil, and he will flee from us.

Genesis 3:6

Vs. 6-8: Observe the steps of the transgression: not steps upward, but downward toward the pit.

1. She saw. A great deal of sin comes in at the eye. Let us not look on that which we are in danger of lusting after, ^{<415>}Matthew 5:28.
2. She took. It was her own act and deed. Satan may tempt, but he cannot force; may persuade us to cast ourselves down, but he cannot cast us down, ^{<400>}Matthew 4:6.
3. She did eat. When she looked perhaps she did not intend to take; or when she took, not to eat: but it ended in that. It is wisdom to stop the first motions of sin, and to leave it off before it be meddled with.
4. She gave it also to her husband with her. Those that have done ill, are willing to draw in others to do the same.
5. He did eat. In neglecting the tree of life, of which he was allowed to eat, and eating of the tree of knowledge, which was forbidden, Adam plainly showed a contempt of what God had bestowed on him, and a desire for what God did not see fit to give him.

He would have what he pleased, and do what he pleased. His sin was, in one word, disobedience, ^{<415>}Romans 5:19; disobedience to a plain, easy, and express command. He had no corrupt nature within, to betray him; but had a freedom of will, in full strength, not weakened or impaired. He turned aside quickly. He drew all his posterity into sin and ruin. Who then can say that Adam's sin had but little harm in it? When too late, Adam and

Eve saw the folly of eating forbidden fruit. They saw the happiness they fell from, and the misery they were villainy into. They saw a loving God provoked, his grace and favor forfeited. See here what dishonor and trouble sin is; it makes mischief wherever it gets in, and destroys all comfort. Sooner or later it will bring shame; either the shame of true repentance, which ends in glory, or that shame and everlasting contempt, to which the wicked shall rise at the great day. See here what is commonly the folly of those that have sinned. They have more care to save their credit before men, than to obtain their pardon from God. The excuses men make to cover and lessen their sins, are vain and frivolous; like the aprons of fig-leaves, they make the matter never the better: yet we are all apt to cover our transgressions as Adam. Before they sinned, they would have welcomed God's gracious visits with humble joy; but now he was become a terror to them. No marvel that they became a terror to themselves, and full of confusion. This shows the falsehood of the tempter, and the frauds of his temptations. Satan promised they should be safe, but they cannot so much as think themselves so! Adam and Eve were now miserable comforters to each other!

Genesis 3:9

Vs. 9-13: Observe the startling question, Adam, where art thou? Those who by sin go astray from God, should seriously consider where they are; they are afar off from all good, in the midst of their enemies, in bondage to Satan, and in the high road to utter ruin. This lost sheep had wandered without end, if the good Shepherd had not sought after him, and told him, that where he was straying he could not be either happy or easy. If sinners will but consider where they are, they will not rest till they return to God. It is the common fault and folly of those that have done ill, when questioned about it, to acknowledge only that which is so manifest that they cannot deny it. Like Adam, we have reason to be afraid of approaching to God, if we are not covered and clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Sin appears most plainly in the glass of the commandment, therefore God set it before Adam; and in it we should see our faces. But instead of acknowledging the sin in its full extent, and taking shame to themselves, Adam and Eve excuse the sin, and lay the shame and blame on others. There is a strange proneness in those that are tempted, to say, they are tempted of God; as if our abuse of God's gifts would excuse

our breaking God's laws. Those who are willing to take the pleasure and profit of sin, are backward to take the blame and shame of it. Learn hence, that Satan's temptations are all beguilings; his arguments are all deceits; his allurements are all cheats; when he speaks fair, believe him not. It is by the deceitfulness of sin the heart is hardened. See ^{<B11>}Romans 7:11; ^{<S13>}Hebrews 3:13. But though Satan's subtlety may draw us into sin, yet it will not justify us in sin. Though he is the tempter, we are the sinners. Let it not lessen our sorrow for sin, that we were beguiled into it; but let it increase our self-indignation, that we should suffer ourselves to be deceived by a known cheat, and a sworn enemy, who would destroy our souls.

^{<C14>}Genesis 3:14

Vs. 14, 15: God passes sentence; and he begins where the sin began, with the serpent. The devil's instruments must share in the devil's punishments. Under the cover of the serpent, the devil is sentenced to be degraded and accursed of God; detested and abhorred of all mankind: also to be destroyed and ruined at last by the great Redeemer, signified by the breaking of his head. War is proclaimed between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. It is the fruit of this enmity, that there is a continual warfare between grace and corruption, in the hearts of God's people. Satan, by their corruptions, buffets them, sifts them, and seeks to devour them. Heaven and hell can never be reconciled, nor light and darkness; no more can Satan and a sanctified soul. Also, there is a continual struggle between the wicked and the godly in this world. A gracious promise is here made of Christ, as the Deliverer of villainy man from the power of Satan. Here was the drawn of the gospel day: no sooner was the wound given, than the remedy was provided and revealed. This gracious revelation of a Savior came unasked, and unlooked for. Without a revelation of mercy, giving some hope of forgiveness, the convinced sinner would sink into despair, and be hardened. By faith in this promise, our first parents, and the patriarchs before the flood, were justified and saved. Notice is given concerning Christ.

1. His incarnation, or coming in the flesh. It speaks great encouragement to sinners, that their Savior is the Seed of the woman, bone of our bone, ^{<S11>}Hebrews 2:11,14.

2. His sufferings and death; pointed at in Satan's bruising his heel, that is, his human nature. And Christ's sufferings are continued in the sufferings of the saints for his name. The devil tempts them, persecutes and slays them; and so bruises the heel of Christ, who is afflicted in their afflictions. But while the heel is bruised on earth, the Head is in heaven.

3. His victory over Satan thereby. Christ baffled Satan's temptations, rescued souls out of his hands. By his death he gave a fatal blow to the devil's kingdom, a wound to the head of this serpent that cannot be healed. As the gospel gains ground, Satan falls.

~~CHAP~~ **Genesis 3:16**

Vs. 16-19: The woman, for her sin, is condemned to a state of sorrow, and of subjection; proper punishments of that sin, in which she had sought to gratify the desire of her eye, and of the flesh, and her pride. Sin brought sorrow into the world; that made the world a vale of tears. No wonder our sorrows are multiplied, when our sins are so. He shall rule over thee, is but God's command, Wives, be subject to your own husbands. If man had not sinned, he would always have ruled with wisdom and love; if the woman had not sinned, she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness. Adam laid the blame on his wife; but though it was her fault to persuade him to eat the forbidden fruit, it was his fault to hearken to her. Thus men's frivolous pleas will, in the day of God's judgment, be turned against them. God put marks of displeasure on Adam.

1. His habitation is cursed. God gave the earth to the children of men, to be a comfortable dwelling; but it is now cursed for man's sin. Yet Adam is not himself cursed, as the serpent was, but only the ground for his sake.

2. His employments and enjoyments are embittered to him. Labor is our duty, which we must faithfully perform; it is part of man's sentence, which idleness daringly defies. Uneasiness and weariness with labor are our just punishment, which we must patiently submit to, since they are less than our iniquity deserves. Man's food shall become unpleasant to him. Yet man is not sentenced to eat dust as the serpent, only to eat the herb of the field.

3. His life also is but short; considering how full of trouble his days are, it is in favor to him that they are few. Yet death being dreadful to nature, even when life is unpleasant, that concludes the punishment. Sin brought death into the world: if Adam had not sinned, he had not died.

He gave way to temptation, but the Savior withstood it. And how admirably the satisfaction of our Lord Jesus, by his death and sufferings, answered the sentence passed on our first parents! Did travailing pains come with sin? We read of the travail of Christ's soul, ^{<2531>}Isaiah 53:11; and the pains of death he was held by, are so called, ^{<4124>}Acts 2:24. Did subjection come in with sin? Christ was made under the law, ^{<4801>}Galatians 4:4. Did the curse come in with sin? Christ was made a curse for us, he died a cursed death, ^{<4813>}Galatians 3:13. Did thorns come in with sin? He was crowned with thorns for us. Did sweat come in with sin? He sweat for us, as it had been great drops of blood. Did sorrow come in with sin? He was a man of sorrows; his soul was, in his agony, exceeding sorrowful. Did death come in with sin? He became obedient unto death. Thus is the plaster as wide as the wound. Blessed be God for his Son our Lord Jesus Christ.

^{<0031>}Genesis 3:20

Vs. 20, 21: God named the man, and called him Adam, which signifies red earth; Adam named the woman, and called her Eve, that is, life. Adam bears the name of the dying body, Eve of the living soul. Adam probably had regard to the blessing of a Redeemer, the promised Seed, in calling his wife Eve, or life; for He should be the life of all believers, and in Him all the families of the earth should be blessed. See also God's care for our first parents, notwithstanding their sin. Clothes came in with sin. Little reason have we to be proud of our clothes, which are but the badges of our shame. When God made clothes for our first parents, he made them warm and strong, but coarse and very plain; not robes of scarlet, but coats of skin. Let those that are meanly clad, learn from hence not to complain. Having food and a covering, let them be content; they are as well off as Adam and Eve. And let those that are finely clad, learn not to make the putting on of apparel their adorning. The beasts, from whose skins they were clothed, it is supposed were slain, not for man's food, but for sacrifice, to typify

Christ, the great Sacrifice. Adam and Eve made for themselves aprons of fig-leaves, a covering too narrow for them to wrap themselves in, ^{<333>}Isaiah 28:20. Such are all the rags of our own righteousness. But God made them coats of skin, large, strong, durable, and fit for them: such is the righteousness of Christ; therefore put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

^{<000>}**Genesis 3:22**

Vs. 22-24: God bid man go out; told him he should no longer occupy and enjoy that garden: but man liked the place, and was unwilling to leave it, therefore God made him go out. This signified the shutting out of him, and all his guilty race, from that communion with God, which was the bliss and glory of paradise. But man was only sent to till the ground out of which he was taken. He was sent to a place of toil, not to a place of torment. Our first parents were shut out from the privileges of their state of innocency, yet they were not left to despair. The way to the tree of life was shut. It was henceforward in vain for him and his to expect righteousness, life, and happiness, by the covenant of works; for the command of that covenant being broken, the curse of it is in full force: we are all undone, if we are judged by that covenant. God revealed this to Adam, not to drive him to despair, but to quicken him to look for life and happiness in the promised Seed, by whom a new and living way into the holiest is laid open for us.

CHAPTER 4

The birth, employment, and religion of Cain and Abel. (1-7) Cain murders Abel, The curse of Cain. (8-15) The conduct of Cain, His family. (16-18) Lamech and his wives, The skill of Cain's descendants. (19-24) The birth of another son and grandson of Adam. (25,26)

Genesis 4:1

Vs. 1-7: When Cain was born, Eve said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. Perhaps she thought that this was the promised seed. If so, she was woefully disappointed. Abel signifies vanity: when she thought she had the promised seed in Cain, whose name signifies possession, she was so taken up with him that another son was as vanity to her. Observe, each son had a calling. It is the will of God for every one to have something to do in this world. Parents ought to bring up their children to work. Give them a Bible and a calling, said good Mr. Dod, and God be with them. We may believe that God commanded Adam, after the fall, to shed the blood of innocent animals, and after their death to burn part or the whole of their bodies by fire. Thus that punishment which sinners deserve, even the death of the body, and the wrath of God, of which fire is a well-known emblem, and also the sufferings of Christ, were prefigured. Observe that the religious worship of God is no new invention. It was from the beginning; it is the good old way, ^{<3101>}Jeremiah 6:16. The offerings of Cain and Abel were different. Cain showed a proud, unbelieving heart. Therefore he and his offering were rejected. Abel came as a sinner, and according to God's appointment, by his sacrifice expressing humility, sincerity, and believing obedience. Thus, seeking the benefit of the new covenant of mercy, through the promised Seed, his sacrifice had a token that God accepted it. Abel offered in faith, and Cain did not, ^{<3101>}Hebrews 11:4. In all ages there have been two sorts of worshippers, such as Cain and Abel; namely, proud, hardened despisers of the gospel method of salvation, who attempt to please God in ways of their own devising; and humble believers, who draw near to him in the way he has revealed. Cain indulged malignant anger against Abel. He harbored an evil spirit of discontent and rebellion against God. God notices all our sinful passions

and discontents. There is not an angry, envious, or fretful look, that escapes his observing eye. The Lord reasoned with this rebellious man; if he came in the right way, he should be accepted. Some understand this as an intimation of mercy. “If thou doest not well, sin, that is, the sin-offering, lies at the door, and thou mayest take the benefit of it.” The same word signifies sin, and a sacrifice for sin. “Though thou hast not done well, yet do not despair; the remedy is at hand.” Christ, the great sin-offering, is said to stand at the door, ^(REV) Revelation 3:20. And those well deserve to perish in their sins, that will not go to the door to ask for the benefit of this sin-offering. God’s acceptance of Abel’s offering did not change the birthright, and make it his; why then should Cain be so angry? Sinful heats and disquiets vanish before a strict and fair inquiry into the cause.

^(GEN) Genesis 4:8

Vs. 8-15: Malice in the heart ends in murder by the hands. Cain slew Abel, his own brother, his own mother’s son, whom he ought to have loved; his younger brother, whom he ought to have protected; a good brother, who had never done him any wrong. What fatal effects were these of our first parents’ sin, and how must their hearts have been filled with anguish! Observe the pride, unbelief, and impenitence of Cain. He denies the crime, as if he could conceal it from God. He tries to cover a deliberate murder with a deliberate lie. Murder is a crying sin. Blood calls for blood, the blood of the murdered for the blood of the murderer. Who knows the extent and weight of a Divine curse, how far it reaches, how deep it pierces? Only in Christ are believers saved from it, and inherit the blessing. Cain was cursed from the earth. He found his punishment there where he chose his portion, and set his heart. Every creature is to us what God makes it, a comfort or a cross, a blessing or a curse. The wickedness of the wicked brings a curse upon all they do, and all they have. Cain complains not of his sin, but of his punishment. It shows great hardness of heart to be more concerned about our sufferings than our sins. God has wise and holy ends in prolonging the lives even of very wicked men. It is in vain to inquire what was the mark set upon Cain. It was doubtless known, both as a brand of infamy on Cain, and a token from God that they should not kill him. Abel, being dead, yet speaketh. He tells the heinous guilt of murder, and warns us to stifle the first risings of wrath, and teaches us that

persecution must be expected by the righteous. Also, that there is a future state, and an eternal recompense to be enjoyed, through faith in Christ and his atoning sacrifice. And he tells us the excellencies of faith in the atoning sacrifice and blood of the Lamb of God. Cain slew his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous, ^{GEN2}1 John 3:12. In consequence of the enmity put between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the war broke out, which has been waged ever since. In this war we are all concerned, none are neuter; our Captain has declared, He that is not with me is against me. Let us decidedly, yet in meekness, support the cause of truth and righteousness against Satan.

^{GEN16}Genesis 4:16

Vs. 16-18: Cain cast off all fear of God, and attended no more on God's ordinances. Hypocritical professors, who dissemble and trifle with God, are justly left to themselves to do something grossly scandalous. So they throw off that form of godliness to which they have been a reproach, and of which they deny the power. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and we never find that he came into it again, to his comfort. The land Cain dwelt in was called the land of Nod, which means, 'shaking,' or 'trembling,' and so shows the restlessness and uneasiness of his own spirit, or 'the land of a vagabond:' they that depart from God cannot find rest any where else. Those on earth who looked for the heavenly city, chose to dwell in tabernacles or tents; but Cain, as not minding that city, built one on earth. Thus all who are cursed of God seek their settlement and satisfaction here below.

^{GEN19}Genesis 4:19

Vs. 19-24: One of Cain's wicked race is the first recorded, as having broken the law of marriage. Hitherto, one man had but one wife at a time; but Lamech took two. Worldly things, are the only things that carnal, wicked people set their hearts upon, and are most clever and industrious about. So it was with this race of Cain. Here was a father of shepherds, and a father of musicians, but not a father of the faithful. Here is one to teach about brass and iron, but none to teach the good knowledge of the Lord: here are devices how to be rich, and how to be mighty, and how to be merry; but nothing of God, of his fear and service. Present things fill the heads of most. Lamech had enemies, whom he had provoked. He draws a

comparison betwixt himself and his ancestor Cain; and flatters himself that he is much less criminal. He seems to abuse the patience of God in sparing Cain, into an encouragement to expect that he may sin unpunished.

Genesis 4:25:

Vs. 25, 26: Our first parents were comforted in their affliction by the birth of a son, whom they called Seth, that is, 'set,' 'settled,' or 'placed;' in his seed mankind should continue to the end of time, and from him the Messiah should descend. While Cain, the head of the apostasy, is made a wanderer, Seth, from whom the true church was to come, is one fixed. In Christ and his church is the only true settlement. Seth walked in the steps of his martyred brother Abel; he was a partaker of like precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, and so became a fresh witness of the grace and influence of God the Holy Spirit. God gave Adam and Eve to see the revival of religion in their family. The worshippers of God began to do more in religion; some, by an open profession of true religion, protested against the wickedness of the world around. The worse others are, the better we should be, and the more zealous. Then began the distinction between professors and profane, which has been kept up ever since, and will be, while the world stands.

CHAPTER 5

*Adam and Seth. (1-5) The patriarchs from Seth to Enoch. (6-20)
Enoch. (21-24) Methuselah to Noah. (25-32)*

<ORF> **Genesis 5:1**

Vs. 1-5: Adam was made in the image of God; but when villainy he begat a son in his own image, sinful and defiled, frail, wretched, and mortal, like himself. Not only a man like himself, consisting of body and soul, but a sinner like himself. This was the reverse of that Divine likeness in which Adam was made; having lost it, he could not convey it to his seed. Adam lived, in all, 930 years; and then died, according to the sentence passed upon him, “To dust thou shalt return.” Though he did not die in the day he ate forbidden fruit, yet in that very day he became mortal. Then he began to die; his whole life after was but a reprieve, a forfeited, condemned life; it was a wasting, dying life. Man’s life is but dying by degrees.

<ORF> **Genesis 5:6**

Vs. 6-20: Concerning each of these, except Enoch, it is said, “and he died.” It is well to observe the deaths of others. They all lived very long; not one of them died till he had seen almost eight hundred years, and some of them lived much longer; a great while for an immortal soul to be a prisoner in a house of clay. The present life surely was not to them such a burden as it commonly is now, else they would have been weary of it. Nor was the future life so clearly revealed then, as it now under the gospel, else they would have been urgent to remove to it. All the patriarchs that lived before the flood, except Noah, were born before Adam died. From him they might receive a full account of the creation, the fall, the promise, and the Divine precepts about religious worship and a religious life. Thus God kept up in his church the knowledge of his will.

<ORF> **Genesis 5:21**

Vs. 21-24: Enoch was the seventh from Adam. Godliness is walking with God: which shows reconciliation to God, for two cannot walk together except they be agreed, <ORF> Amos 3:3. It unequaled all the parts of a godly,

righteous, and sober life. To walk with God, is to set God always before us, to act as always under his eye. It is constantly to care, in all things to please God, and in nothing to offend him. It is to be followers of him as dear children. The Holy Spirit, instead of saying, Enoch lived, says, Enoch walked with God. This was his constant care and work; while others lived to themselves and the world, he lived to God. It was the joy of his life. Enoch was removed to a better world. As he did not live like the rest of mankind, so he did not leave the world by death as they did. He was not found, because God had translated him, ⁻⁵⁸¹¹⁵ Hebrews 11:5. He had lived but 365 years, which, as men's ages were then, was but the midst of a man's days. God often takes those soonest whom he loves best; the time they lose on earth, is gained in heaven, to their unspeakable advantage. See how Enoch's removal is expressed: he was not, for God took him. He was not any longer in this world; he was changed, as the saints shall be, who are alive at Christ's second coming. Those who begin to walk with God when young, may expect to walk with him long, comfortably, and usefully. The true Christian's steady walk in holiness, through many a year, till God takes him, will best recommend that religion which many oppose and many abuse. And walking with God well agrees with the cares, comforts, and duties of life.

⁻⁰¹⁶⁵ Genesis 5:25

Vs. 25-32: Methuselah signifies, 'he dies, there is a dart,' 'a sending forth,' namely, of the deluge, which came the year that Methuselah died. He lived 969 years, the longest that any man ever lived on earth; but the longest liver must die at last. Noah signifies rest; his parents gave him that name, with a prospect of his being a great blessing to his generation. Observe his father's complaint of the calamitous state of human life, by the entrance of sin, and the curse of sin. Our whole life is spent in labor, and our time filled up with continual toil. God having cursed the ground, it is as much as some can do, with the utmost care and pains, to get a hard livelihood out of it. Lamech hoped for relief by the birth of this son, "This same shall comfort us." It signifies not only that desire and expectation which parents generally have about their children, that they will be comforts to them and helpers, though they often prove otherwise; but it signifies also a prospect of something more. Is Christ ours? Is heaven ours? We need better

comforters under our toil and sorrow, than the dearest relations and the most promising offspring; may we seek and find comforts in Christ.

CHAPTER 6

The wickedness of the world which provoked God's wrath. (1-7) Noah finds grace. (8-11) Noah warned of the flood, The directions respecting the ark. (12-21) Noah's faith and obedience. (22)

◀ **Genesis 6:1**

Vs. 1-7: The most remarkable thing concerning the old world, is the destroying of it by the deluge, or flood. We are told of the abounding iniquity of that wicked world: God's just wrath, and his holy resolution to punish it. In all ages there has been a peculiar curse of God upon marriages between professors of true religion and its avowed enemies. The evil example of the ungodly party corrupts or greatly hurts the other. Family religion is put an end to, and the children are trained up according to the worldly maxims of that parent who is without the fear of God. If we profess to be the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, we must not marry without his consent. He will never give his blessing, if we prefer beauty, wit, wealth, or worldly honors, to faith and holiness. The Spirit of God strove with men, by sending Enoch, Noah, and perhaps others, to preach to them; by waiting to be gracious, notwithstanding their rebellions; and by exciting alarm and convictions in their consciences. But the Lord declared that his Spirit should not thus strive with men always; he would leave them to be hardened in sin, and ripened for destruction. This he determined on, because man was flesh: not only frail and feeble, but carnal and depraved; having misused the noble powers of his soul to gratify his corrupt unequaled. God sees all the wickedness that is among the children of men; it cannot be hid from him now; and if it be not repented of, it shall be made known by him shortly. The wickedness of a people is great indeed, when noted sinners are men renowned among them. Very much sin was committed in all places, by all sorts of people. Any one might see that the wickedness of man was great: but God saw that every imagination, or purpose, of the thoughts of man's heart, was only evil continually. This was the bitter root, the corrupt spring. The heart was deceitful and desperately wicked; the principles were corrupt; the habits and dispositions evil. Their designs and devices were wicked. They did evil deliberately, contriving how to do mischief. There was no good among

them. God saw man's wickedness as one injured and wronged by it. He saw it as a tender father sees the folly and stubbornness of a rebellious and disobedient child, which grieves him, and makes him wish he had been childless. The words here used are remarkable; they are used after the manner of men, and do not mean that God can change, or be unhappy. Does God thus hate our sin? And shall not we be grieved to the heart for it? Oh that we may look on Him whom we have grieved, and mourn! God repented that he had made man; but we never find him repent that he redeemed man. God resolves to destroy man: the original word is very striking, 'I will wipe off man from the earth,' as dirt or filth is wiped off from a place which should be clean, and is thrown to the dunghill, the proper place for it. God speaks of man as his own creature, when he resolves upon his punishment. Those forfeit their lives who do not answer the end of their living. God speaks of resolution concerning men, after his Spirit had been long striving with them in vain. None are punished by the justice of God, but those who hate to be reformed by the grace of God.

Genesis 6:8

Vs. 8-11: Noah did not find favor in the eyes of men; they hated and persecuted him, because both by his life and preaching he condemned the world: but he found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and this made him more truly honorable than the men of renown. Let this be our chief desire, let us labor that we may be accepted of him. When the rest of the world was wicked, Noah kept his integrity. God's goodwill towards Noah produced this good work in him. He was a just man, that is, justified before God, by faith in the promised Seed. As such he was made holy, and had right principles; and was righteous in his conversation. He was not only honest, but devout; it was his constant care to do the will of God. God looks down upon those with an eye of favor, who sincerely look up to him with an eye of faith. It is easy to be religious when religion is in fashion; but it shows strong faith and resolution, to swim against the stream, and to appear for God when no one else appears for him; Noah did so. All kinds of sin were found among men. They corrupted God's worship. Sin fills the earth with violence, and this fully justified God's resolution to destroy the world. The contagion spread. When wickedness is become general, ruin is not far off; while there is a remnant of praying people in a nation, to empty the measure as it fills, judgments may be long kept off; but when all hands are

at work to pull down the fences, by sin, and none stand in the gap to make up the breach, what can be expected but a flood of wrath?

Genesis 6:12

Vs. 12-21: God told Noah his purpose to destroy the wicked world by water. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, Psalms 25:14. It is with all believers, enabling them to understand and apply the declarations and warnings of the written word. God chose to do it by a flood of waters, which should drown the world. As he chooses the rod with which he corrects his children, so he chooses the sword with which he cuts off his enemies. God established his covenant with Noah. This is the first place in the Bible where the word ‘covenant’ is found; it seems to mean,

1. The covenant of providence; that the course of nature shall be continued to the end of time.
2. The covenant of grace; that God would be a God to Noah, and that out of his seed God would take to himself a people.

God directed Noah to make an ark. This ark was like the hulk of a ship, fitted to float upon the waters. It was very large, half the size of St. Paul’s cathedral, and would hold more than eighteen of the largest ships now used. God could have secured Noah without putting him to any care, or pains, or trouble; but employed him in making that which was to be the means to preserve him, for the trial of his faith and obedience. Both the providence of God, and the grace of God, own and crown the obedient and diligent. God gave Noah particular orders how to make the ark, which could not therefore but be well fitted for the purpose. God promised Noah that he and his family should be kept alive in the ark. What we do in obedience to God, we and our families are likely to have the benefit of. The piety of parents gets their children good in this life, and furthers them in the way to eternal life, if they improve it.

Genesis 6:22

Vs. 22: Noah’s faith triumphed over all corrupt reasonings. To rear so large a building, such a one as he never saw, and to provide food for the living creatures, would require from him a great deal of care, and labor, and

expense. His neighbors would laugh at him. But all such objections, Noah, by faith, got over; his obedience was ready and resolute. Having begun to build, he did not leave off till he had finished: so did he, and so must we do. He feared the deluge, and therefore prepared the ark. And in the warning given to Noah, there is a more solemn warning given to us, to flee from the wrath to come, which will sweep the world of unbelievers into the pit of destruction. Christ, the true Noah, which same shall comfort us, hath by his sufferings already prepared the ark, and kindly invites us by faith to enter in. While the day of his patience continues, let us hear and obey his voice.

CHAPTER 7

Noah, and his family and the living creatures, enter the ark, and the flood begins. (1-12) Noah shut in the ark. (13-16) The increase of the flood for forty days. (17-20) All flesh is destroyed by the flood. (21-24)

Genesis 7:1

Vs. 1-12: The call to Noah is very kind, like that of a tender father to his children to come in-doors when he sees night or a storm coming. Noah did not go into the ark till God bade him, though he knew it was to be his place of refuge. It is very comfortable to see God going before us in every step we take. Noah had taken a great deal of pains to build the ark, and now he was himself kept alive in it. What we do in obedience to the command of God, and in faith, we ourselves shall certainly have the comfort of, first or last. This call to Noah reminds us of the call the gospel gives to poor sinners. Christ is an ark, in whom alone we can be safe, when death and judgment approach. The word says, “Come;” ministers say, “Come;” the Spirit says, “Come, come into the Ark.” Noah was accounted righteous, not for his own righteousness, but as an heir of the righteousness which is by faith, ^{<small>Hebrews 11:7.} He believed the revelation of a savior, and sought and expected salvation through Him alone. Thus was he justified by faith, and received that Spirit whose fruit is in all goodness; but if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. After the hundred and twenty years, God granted seven days’ longer space for repentance. But these seven days were trifled away, like all the rest. It shall be but seven days. They had only one week more, one Sabbath more to improve, and to consider the things that belonged to their peace. But it is common for those who have been careless of their souls during the years of their health, when they have looked upon death at a distance, to be as careless during the days, the few days of their sickness, when they see death approaching; their hearts being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. As Noah prepared the ark by faith in the warning given that the flood would come, so he went into it, by faith in this warning that it would come quickly. And on the day Noah was securely fixed in the ark, the fountains of the great deep were broken up. The earth had within it those waters, which, at God’s

command, sprang up and flooded it; and thus our bodies have in themselves those humors, which, when God pleases, become the seeds and springs of mortal diseases. The windows of heaven were opened, and the waters which were above the firmament, that is, in the air, were poured out upon the earth. The rain comes down in drops; but such rains fell then, as were never known before or since. It rained without stop or abatement, forty days and forty nights, upon the whole earth at once. As there was a peculiar exercise of the almighty power of God in causing the flood, it is vain and presumptuous to attempt explaining the method of it, by human wisdom.

Genesis 7:13

Vs. 13-16: The ravenous creatures were made mild and manageable; yet, when this occasion was over, they were of the same kind as before; for the ark did not alter their natures. Hypocrites in the church, who outwardly conform to the laws of that ark, are yet unchanged; and it will appear, one time or other, what kind they are after. God continued his care of Noah. God shut the door, to secure him and keep him safe in the ark; also to keep all others for ever out. In what manner this was done, God has not been pleased to make known. There is much of our gospel duty and privilege to be seen in Noah's safety in the ark. The apostle makes it a type of Christian baptism, ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾1 Peter 3:20,21. Observe then, it is our great duty, in obedience to the gospel call, by a lively faith in Christ, to come into that way of salvation which God has provided for poor sinners. Those that come into the ark, should bring as many as they can with them, by good instructions, by persuasions, and by good examples. There is room enough in Christ for all comers. God put Adam into paradise, but did not shut him in, so he threw himself out; but when God put Noah into the ark, and so when he brings a soul to Christ, the salvation is sure: it is not in our own keeping, but in the Mediator's hand. But the door of mercy will shortly be shut against those that now make light of it. Knock now, and it shall be opened, ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾Luke 13:25.

Genesis 7:17

Vs. 17-20: The flood was increasing forty days. The waters rose so high, that the tops of the highest mountains were overflowed more than twenty feet. There is no place on earth so high as to set men out of the reach of

God's judgments. God's hand will find out all his enemies, ^{<3218>}Psalm 21:8. When the flood thus increased, Noah's ark was lifted up, and the waters which broke down every thing else, bore up the ark. That which to unbelievers betokens death unto death, to the faithful betokens life unto life.

^{<0071>}Genesis 7:21

Vs. 21-24: All the men, women, and children, that were in the world, excepting those in the ark, died. We may easily imagine what terror seized them. Our Savior tells us, that till the very day that the flood came, they were eating and drinking, ^{<2726>}Luke 17:26,27; they were deaf and blind to all Divine warnings. In this posture death surprised them. They were convinced of their folly when it was too late. We may suppose they tried all ways and means possible to save themselves, but all in vain. And those that are not found in Christ, the Ark, are certainly undone, undone for ever. Let us pause, and consider this tremendous judgment! Who can stand before the Lord when he is angry? The sin of sinners will be their ruin, first or last, if not repented of. The righteous God knows how to bring ruin upon the world of the ungodly, ^{<0015>}2 Peter 2:5. How tremendous will be the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men! Happy they who are part of Christ's family, and safe with him as such; they may look forward without dismay, and rejoice that they shall triumph, when fire shall burn up the earth, and all that therein is. We are apt to suppose some favorable distinctions in our own case or character; but if we neglect, refuse, or abuse the salvation of Christ, we shall, notwithstanding such fancied advantages, be destroyed in the common ruin of an unbelieving world.

CHAPTER 8

God remembers Noah, and dries up the waters. (1-3) The ark rests on Ararat, Noah sends forth a raven and a dove. (4-12) Noah being commanded, goes out of the ark. (13-19) Noah offers sacrifice, God promises to curse the earth no more. (20-22)

◀◀◀ Genesis 8:1

Vs. 1-3: The whole race of mankind, except Noah and his family, were now dead, so that God's remembering Noah, was the return of his mercy to mankind, of whom he would not make a full end. The demands of Divine justice had been answered by the ruin of sinners. God sent his wind to dry the earth, and seal up his waters. The same hand that brings the desolation, must bring the deliverance; to that hand, therefore, we must ever look. When afflictions have done the work for which they are sent, whether killing work or curing work, they will be taken away. As the earth was not drowned in a day, so it was not dried in a day. God usually works deliverance for his people gradually, that the day of small things may not be despised, nor the day of great things despaired of.

◀◀◀ Genesis 8:4

Vs. 4-12: The ark rested upon a mountain, whither it was directed by the wise and gracious providence of God, that might rest the sooner. God has times and places of rest for his people after their tossing; and many times he provides for their seasonable and comfortable settlement, without their own contrivance, and quite beyond their own foresight. God had told Noah when the flood would come, yet he did not give him an account by revelation, at what times and by what steps it should go away. The knowledge of the former was necessary to his preparing the ark; but the knowledge of the latter would serve only to gratify curiosity; and concealing it from him would exercise his faith and patience. Noah sent forth a raven from the ark, which went flying about, and feeding on the carcasses that floated. Noah then sent forth a dove, which returned the first time without good news; but the second time, she brought an olive leaf in her bill, plucked off, plainly showing that trees, fruit trees, began to appear above water. Noah sent forth the dove the second time, seven days

after the first, and the third time was after seven days also; probably on the Sabbath day. Having kept the Sabbath with his little church, he expected especial blessings from Heaven, and inquired concerning them. The dove is an emblem of a gracious soul, that, finding no solid peace of satisfaction in this deluged, defiling world, returns to Christ as to its ark, as to its Noah, its rest. The defiling world, returns to Christ as to its ark, as to its Noah, its rest. The carnal heart, like the raven, takes up with the world, and feeds on the carrion it finds there; but return thou to my rest, O my soul; to thy Noah, so the word is, ^{Psalm} Psalm 116:7. And as Noah put forth his hand, and took the dove, and pulled her to him, into the ark, so Christ will save, and help, and welcome those that flee to him for rest.

^{Gen} Genesis 8:13

Vs. 13-19: God consults our benefit, rather than our desires; he knows what is good for us better than we do for ourselves, and how long it is fit our restraints should continue, and desired mercies should be delayed. We would go out of the ark before the ground is dried; and perhaps, if the door, is shut, are ready to thrust off the covering, and to climb up some other way; but God's time of showing mercy is the best time. As Noah had a command to go into the ark, so, how tedious soever his confinement there was, he would wait for a command to go out of it again. We must in all our ways acknowledge God, and set him before us in all our removals. Those only go under God's protection, who follow God's direction, and submit to him.

^{Gen} Genesis 8:20

Vs. 20-22: Noah was now gone out into a desolate world, where, one might have thought, his first care would have been to build a house for himself, but he begins with an altar for God. He begins well, that begins with God. Though Noah's stock of cattle was small, and that saved at great care and pains, yet he did not grudge to serve God out of it. Serving God with our little is the way to make it more; we must never think that is wasted with which God is honored. The first thing done in the new world was an act of worship. We are now to express our thankfulness, not by burnt-offerings, but by praise, and pious devotions and conversation. God was well pleased with what was done. But the burning flesh could no more please God, than the blood of bulls and goats, except as typical of the

sacrifice of Christ, and expressing Noah's humble faith and devotedness to God. The flood washed away the race of wicked men, but it did not remove sin from man's nature, who being conceived and born in sin, thinks, devises, and loves wickedness, even from his youth, and that as much since the flood as before. But God graciously declared he never would drown the world again. While the earth remains, and man upon it, there shall be summer and winter. It is plain that this earth is not to remain always. It, and all the works in it, must shortly be burned up; and we look for new heavens and a new earth, when all these things shall be dissolved. But as long as it does remain, God's providence will cause the course of times and seasons to go on, and makes each to know its place. And on this word we depend, that thus it shall be. We see God's promises to the creatures made good, and may infer that his promises to all believers shall be so.

CHAPTER 9

God blesses Noah, and grants flesh for food. (1-3) Blood, and murder forbidden. (4-7) God's covenant by the rainbow. (8-17) Noah plants a vineyard, is drunken and mocked by Ham. (18-23) Noah curses Canaan, blesses Shem, prays for Japheth, His death. (24-29)

◀◀◀ Genesis 9:1

Vs. 1-3: The blessing of God is the cause of our doing well. On him we depend, to him we should be thankful. Let us not forget the advantage and pleasure we have from the labor of beasts, and which their flesh affords. Nor ought we to be less thankful for the security we enjoy from the savage and hurtful beasts, through the fear of man which God has fixed deep in them. We see the fulfillment of this promise every day, and on every side. This grant of the animals for food fully warrants the use of them, but not the abuse of them by gluttony, still less by cruelty. We ought not to pain them needlessly whilst they live, nor when we take away their lives.

◀◀◀ Genesis 9:4


Vs. 4-7: The main reason of forbidding the eating of blood, doubtless was because the shedding of blood in sacrifices was to keep the worshippers in mind of the great atonement; yet it seems intended also to check cruelty, lest men, being used to shed and feed upon the blood of animals, should grow unfeeling to them, and be less shocked at the idea of shedding human blood. Man must not take away his own life. Our lives are God's, and we must only give them up when he pleases. If we in any way hasten our own death, we are accountable to God for it. When God requires the life of a man from him that took it away unjustly, the murderer cannot render that, and therefore must render his own instead. One time or other, in this world or in the next, God will discover murders, and punish those murders which are beyond man's power to punish. But there are those who are ministers of God to protect the innocent, by being a terror to evil-doers, and they must not bear the sword in vain, ◀◀◀ Romans 13:4. Willful murder ought always to be punished with death. To this law there is a reason added.

Such remains of God's image are still upon villainy man, that he who unjustly kills a man, defaces the image of God, and does dishonor to him.

Genesis 9:8

Vs. 8-17: As the old world was ruined, to be a monument of justice, so this world remains to this day a monument of mercy. But sin, that drowned the old world, will burn this. Articles of agreement among men are sealed, that what is promised may be the more solemn, and the doing of what is covenanted the more sure to mutual satisfaction. The seal of this covenant was the rainbow, which, it is likely, was seen in the clouds before, but was never a seal of the covenant till now it was made so. The rainbow appears when we have most reason to fear the rain prevailing; God then shows this seal of the promise, that it shall not prevail. The thicker the cloud, the brighter the bow in the cloud. Thus, as threatening afflictions abound, encouraging consolations much more abound. The rainbow is the reflection of the beams of the sun shining upon or through the drops of rain: all the glory of the seals of the covenant are derived from Christ, the Sun of righteousness. And he will shed a glory on the tears of his saints. A bow speaks terror, but this has neither string nor arrow; and a bow alone will do little hurt. It is a bow, but it is directed upward, not toward the earth; for the seals of the covenant were intended to comfort, not to terrify. As God looks upon the bow, that he may remember the covenant, so should we, that we may be mindful of the covenant with faith and thankfulness. Without revelation this gracious assurance could not be known; and without faith it can be of no use to us; and thus it is as to the still greater dangers to which all are exposed, and as to the new covenant with its blessings.

Genesis 9:18

Vs. 18-23: The drunkenness of Noah is recorded in the Bible, with that fairness which is found only in the Scripture, as a case and proof of human weakness and imperfection, even though he may have been surprised into the sin; and to show that the best of men cannot stand upright, unless they depend upon Divine grace, and are upheld thereby. Ham appears to have been a bad man, and probably rejoiced to find his father in an unbecoming situation. It was said of Noah, that he was perfect in his generations, ch.  6:9; but this is meant of sincerity, not of a sinless perfection. Noah, who

had kept sober in drunken company, is now drunk in sober company. Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. We have need to be very careful when we use God's good creatures plentifully, lest we use them to excess, ^{<02134} Luke 21:34. The consequence of Noah's sin was shame. Observe here the great evil of the sin of drunkenness. It discovers men; what infirmities they have, they betray when they are drunk; and secrets are then easily got out of them. Drunken porters keep open gates. It disgraces men, and exposes them to contempt. As it shows them, so it shames them. Men say and do that when drunken, which, when sober, they would blush to think of. Notice the care of Shem and Japheth to cover their father's shame. There is a mantle of love to be thrown over the faults of all, ^{<0081} Peter 4:8. Beside that, there is a robe of reverence to be thrown over the faults of parents and other superiors. The blessing of God attends on those who honor their parents, and his curse lights especially on those who dishonor them.

^{<0081} Genesis 9:24

Vs. 24-29: Noah declares a curse on Canaan, the son of Ham; perhaps this grandson of his was more guilty than the rest. A servant of servants, that is, The meanest and most despicable servant, shall he be, even to his brethren. This certainly points at the victories in after-times obtained by Israel over the Canaanites, by which they were put to the sword, or brought to pay tribute. The whole continent of Africa was peopled mostly by the descendants of Ham; and for how many ages have the better parts of that country lain under the dominion of the Romans, then of the Saracens, and now of the Turks! In what wickedness, ignorance, barbarity, slavery, and misery most of the inhabitants live! And of the poor Negro's, how many every year are sold and bought, like beasts in the market, and conveyed from one quarter of the world to do the work of beasts in another! But this in no way excuses the covetousness and barbarity of those who enrich themselves with the product of their sweat and blood. God has not commanded us to enslave Negro's; and, without doubt, he will severely punish all such cruel wrongs. The fulfillment of this prophecy, which contains almost a history of the world, frees Noah from the suspicion of having uttered it from personal anger. It fully proves that the Holy Spirit took occasion from Ham's offense to reveal his secret purposes. "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." The church should be built

up and continued in the posterity of Shem; of him came the Jews, who were, for a great while, the only professing people God had in the world. Christ, who was the Lord God, in his human nature should descend from Shem; for of him, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. Noah also blesses Japheth, and, in him, the isles of the gentiles that were peopled by his seed. It speaks of the conversion of the gentiles, and the bringing of them into the church. We may read it, "God shall persuade Japheth, and being persuaded, he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Jews and gentiles shall be united together in the gospel fold; both shall be one in Christ. Noah lived to see two worlds; but being an heir of the righteousness which is by faith, he now rests in hope, waiting to see a better than either.

CHAPTER 10

The sons of Noah, of Japheth, of Ham. (1-7) Nimrod the first monarch. (8-14) The descendants of Canaan, The sons of Shem. (15-32)

Genesis 10:1

Vs. 1-7: This chapter shows concerning the three sons of Noah, that of them was the whole earth overspread. No nation but that of the Jews can be sure from which of these seventy it has come. The lists of names of fathers and sons were preserved of the Jews alone, for the sake of the Messiah. Many learned men, however, have, with some probability, shown which of the nations of the earth descended from each of the sons of Noah To the posterity of Japheth were allotted the isles of the gentiles; probably, the island of Britain among the rest. All places beyond the sea from Judea are called isles, ^{<252>}Jeremiah 25:22. That promise, ^{<240>}Isaiah 42:4, The isles shall wait for his law, speaks of the conversion of the gentiles to the faith of Christ.

Genesis 10:8

Vs. 8-14: Nimrod was a great man in his day; he began to be mighty in the earth, Those before him were content to be upon the same level with their neighbors, and though every man bare rule in his own house, yet no man pretended any further. Nimrod was resolved to Lord it over his neighbors. The spirit of the giants before the flood, who became mighty men, and men of renown, ^{<000>}Genesis 6:4, revived in him. Nimrod was a great hunter. Hunting then was the method of preventing the hurtful increase of wild beasts. This required great courage and address, and thus gave an opportunity for Nimrod to command others, and gradually attached a number of men to one leader. From such a beginning, it is likely, that Nimrod began to rule, and to force others to submit. He invaded his neighbors' rights and properties, and persecuted innocent men; endeavoring to make all his own by force and violence. He carried on his oppressions and violence in defiance of God himself. Nimrod was a great ruler. Some way or other, by arts or arms, he got into power, and so founded a monarchy, which was the terror of the mighty, and bid fair to

rule all the world. Nimrod was a great builder. Observe in Nimrod the nature of ambition. It is boundless; much would have more, and still cries, Give, give. It is restless; Nimrod, when he had four cities under his command, could not be content till he had four more. It is expensive; Nimrod will rather be at the charge of rearing cities, than not have the honor of ruling them. It is daring, and will stick at nothing. Nimrod's name signifies rebellion; tyrants to men are rebels to God. The days are coming, when conquerors will no longer be spoken of with praise, as in man's partial histories, but be branded with infamy, as in the impartial records of the Bible.

Genesis 10:15

Vs. 15-32: The posterity of Canaan were numerous, rich, and pleasantly seated; yet Canaan was under a Divine curse, and not a curse causeless. Those that are under the curse of God, may, perhaps, thrive and prosper in this world; for we cannot know love or hatred, the blessing or the curse, by what is before us, but by what is within us. The curse of God always works really, and always terribly. Perhaps it is a secret curse, a curse to the soul, and does not work so that others can see it; or a slow curse, and does not work soon; but sinners are reserved by it for a day of wrath. Canaan here has a better land than either Shem or Japheth, and yet they have a better lot, for they inherit the blessing. Abram and his seed, God's covenant people, descended from Eber, and from him were called Hebrews. How much better it is to be like Eber, the father of a family of saints and honest men, than the father of a family of hunters after power, worldly wealth, or vanities. Goodness is true greatness.

CHAPTER 11

One language in the world, The building of Babel. (1-4) The confusion of tongues, The builders of Babel dispersed. (5-9) The descendants of Shem. (10-26) Terah, father of Abram, grandfather of Lot, they remove to Haran. (27-32)

Genesis 11:1

Vs. 1-4: How soon men forget the most tremendous judgments, and go back to their former crimes! Though the desolations of the deluge were before their eyes, though they sprang from the stock of righteous Noah, yet even during his life-time, wickedness increases exceedingly. Nothing but the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit can remove the sinful lusts of the human will, and the depravity of the human heart. God's purpose was, that mankind should form many nations, and people all lands. In contempt of the Divine will, and against the counsel of Noah, the bulk of mankind united to build a city and a tower to prevent their separating. Idolatry was begun, and Babel became one of its chief seats. They made one another more daring and resolute. Let us learn to provoke one another to love and to good works, as sinners stir up and encourage one another to wicked works.

Genesis 11:5

Vs. 5-9: Here is an expression after the manner of men; The Lord came down to see the city. God is just and fair in all he does against sin and sinners, and condemns none unheard. Pious Eber is not found among this ungodly crew; for he and his are called the children of God; their souls joined not themselves to the assembly of these children of men. God suffered them to go on some way, that the works of their hands, from which they promised themselves lasting honor, might turn to their lasting reproach. God has wise and holy ends, in allowing the enemies of his glory to carry on their wicked projects a great way, and to prosper long. Observe the wisdom and mercy of God, in the methods taken for defeating this undertaking. And the mercy of God in not making the penalty equal to the offense; for he deals not with us according to our sins. The wisdom of God, in fixing upon a sure way to stop these proceedings. If they could

not understand one another, they could not help one another; this would take them off from their building. God has various means, and effectual ones, to baffle and defeat the projects of proud men that set themselves against him, and particularly he divides them among themselves. Notwithstanding their union and obstinacy God was above them; for who ever hardened his heart against him, and prospered? Their language was confounded. We all suffer by it to this day: in all the pains and trouble used to learn the languages we have occasion for, we suffer for the rebellion of our ancestors at Babel. Nay, and those unhappy disputes, which are strifes of words, and arise from misunderstanding one another's words, for ought we know, are owing to this confusion of tongues. They left off to build the city. The confusion of their tongues not only unfitted them for helping one another, but they saw the hand of the Lord gone out against them. It is wisdom to leave off that which we see God fights against. God is able to blast and bring to naught all the devices and designs of Babel-builders: there is no wisdom nor counsel against the Lord. The builders departed according to their families, and the tongue they spoke, to the countries and places allotted to them. The children of men never did, nor ever will, come all together again, till the great day, when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him.

⦿ Genesis 11:10

Vs. 10-26: Here is a genealogy, or list of names, ending in Abram, the friend of God, and thus leading towards Christ, the promised Seed, who was the son of Abram. Nothing is left upon record but their names and ages; the Holy Ghost seeming to hasten through them to the history of Abram. How little do we know of those that are gone before us in this world, even of those that lived in the same places where we live, as we likewise know little of those who now live in distant places! We have enough to do to mind our own work. When the earth began to be peopled, men's lives began to shorten; this was the wise disposal of Providence.

⦿ Genesis 11:27

Vs. 27-32: Here begins the story of Abram, whose name is famous in both Testaments. Even the children of Eber had become worshippers of false gods. Those who are through grace, heirs of the land of promise, ought to

remember what was the land of their birth; what was their corrupt and sinful state by nature. Abram's brethren were, Nahor, out of whose family both Isaac and Jacob had their wives; and Haran, the father of Lot, who died before his father. Children cannot be sure that they shall outlive their parents. Haran died in Ur, before the happy removal of the family out of that idolatrous country. It concerns us to hasten out of our natural state, lest death surprise us in it. We here read of Abram's departure out of Ur of the Chaldees, with his father Terah, his nephew Lot, and the rest of his family, in obedience to the call of God. This chapter leaves them about mid-way between Ur and Canaan, where they dwelt till Terah's death. Many reach to Charran, and yet fall short of Canaan; they are not far from the kingdom of God, and yet never come thither.

CHAPTER 12

God calls Abram, and blesses him with a promise of Christ. (1-3) Abram departs from Haran. (4,5) He journeys through Canaan, and worships God in that land. (6-9) Abram is driven by a famine into Egypt, He feigns his wife to be his sister. (10-20)

 Genesis 12:1

Vs. 1-3: God made choice of Abram, and singled him out from among his fellow-idolaters, that he might reserve a people for himself, among whom his true worship might be maintained till the coming of Christ. From henceforward Abram and his seed are almost the only subject of the history in the Bible. Abram was tried whether he loved God better than all, and whether he could willingly leave all to go with God. His kindred and his father's house were a constant temptation to him, he could not continue among them without danger of being infected by them. Those who leave their sins, and turn to God, will be unspeakable gainers by the change. The command God gave to Abram, is much the same with the gospel call, for natural affection must give way to Divine grace. Sin, and all the occasions of it, must be forsaken; particularly bad company. Here are many great and precious promises. All God's precepts are attended with promises to the obedient.

- 1.** I will make of thee a great nation. When God took Abram from his own people, he promised to make him the head of another people.
- 2.** I will bless thee. Obedient believers shall be sure to inherit the blessing.
- 3.** I will make thy name great. The name of obedient believers shall certainly be made great.
- 4.** Thou shalt be a blessing. Good men are the blessings of their country.
- 5.** I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee. God will take care that none are losers, by any service done for his people.

6. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Jesus Christ is the great blessing of the world, the greatest that ever the world possessed.

All the true blessedness the world is now, or ever shall be possessed of, is owing to Abram and his posterity. Through them we have a Bible, a Savior, and a gospel. They are the stock on which the Christian church is grafted.

Genesis 12:4

Vs. 4, 5: Abram believed that the blessing of the Almighty would make up for all he could lose or leave behind, supply all his wants, and answer and exceed all his desires; and he knew that nothing but misery would follow disobedience. Such believers, being justified by faith in Christ, have peace with God. They hold on their way to Canaan. They are not discouraged by the difficulties in their way, nor drawn aside by the delights they meet with. Those who set out for heaven must persevere to the end. What we undertake, in obedience to God's command, and in humble attendance on his providence, will certainly succeed, and end with comfort at last. Canaan was not, as other lands, a mere outward possession, but a type of heaven, and in this respect the patriarchs so earnestly prized it.

Genesis 12:6

Vs. 6-9: Abram found the country peopled by Canaanites, who were bad neighbors. He journeyed, going on still. Sometimes it is the lot of good men to be unsettled, and often to remove into various states. Believers must look on themselves as strangers and sojourners in this world, ⁸¹⁰⁹Hebrews 11:8,13,14. But observe how much comfort Abram had in God. When he could have little satisfaction in converse with the Canaanites whom he found there, he had abundance of pleasure in communion with that God, who brought him thither, and did not leave him. Communion with God is kept up by the word and by prayer. God reveals himself and his favors to his people by degrees; before, he had promised to show Abram this land, now, to give it to him: as grace is growing, so is comfort. It should seem, Abram understood it also as a grant of a better land, of which this was a type; for he looked for a heavenly country, ⁸¹¹⁶Hebrews 11:16. As soon as Abram was got to Canaan, though he was but a stranger and sojourner

there, yet he set up, and kept up, the worship of God in his family. He not only minded the ceremonial part of religion, the offering of sacrifice; but he made conscience of seeking his God, and calling on his name; that spiritual sacrifice with which God is well pleased. He preached concerning the name of the Lord; he taught his family and neighbors the knowledge of the true God, and his holy religion. The way of family worship is a good old way, no new thing, but the ancient usage of the saints. Abram was rich, and had a numerous family, was now unsettled, and in the midst of enemies; yet, wherever he pitched his tent, he built an altar: wherever we go, let us not fail to take our religion along with us.

Genesis 12:10

Vs. 10-20 There is no state on earth free from trials, nor any character free from blemishes. There was famine in Canaan, the glory of all lands, and unbelief, with the evils it ever brings, in Abram the father of the faithful. Perfect happiness and perfect purity dwell only in heaven. Abram, when he must for a time quit Canaan, goes to Egypt, that he might not seem to look back, and meaning to tarry there no longer than needful. There Abram dissembled his relation to Sarai, equivocated, and taught his wife and his attendants to do so too. He concealed a truth, so as in effect to deny it, and exposed thereby both his wife and the Egyptians to sin. The grace Abram was most noted for, was faith; yet he thus fell through unbelief and distrust of the Divine providence, even after God had appeared to him twice. Alas, what will become of weak faith, when strong faith is thus shaken! If God did not deliver us, many a time, out of straits and distresses which we bring ourselves into, by our own sin and folly, we should be ruined. He deals not with us according to our deserts. Those are happy chastisements that hinder us in a sinful way, and bring us to our duty, particularly to the duty of restoring what we have wrongfully taken or kept. Pharaoh's reproof of Abram was very just: What is this that thou hast done? How unbecoming a wise and good man! If those who profess religion, do that which is unfair and deceptive, especially if they say that which borders upon a lie, they must expect to hear of it; and they have reason to thank those who will tell them of it. The sending away was kind. Pharaoh was so far from any design to kill Abram, as he feared, that he took particular care of him. We often perplex ourselves with fears which are altogether groundless. Many a time we fear where no fear is. Pharaoh

charged his men not to hurt Abram in any thing. It is not enough for those in authority, that they do not hurt themselves; they must keep their servants and those about them from doing hurt.

CHAPTER 13

Abram returns out of Egypt with great riches. (1-4) Strife between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. Abram gives Lot his choice of the country. (5-9) Lot chooses to dwell at Sodom. (10-13) God renews his promise to Abram, who removes to Hebron. (14-18)

Genesis 13:1

Vs. 1-4: Abram was very rich: he was very heavy, so the Hebrew word is; for riches are a burden; and they that will be rich, do but load themselves with thick clay, ^{<STR>}Habakkuk 2:6. There is a burden of care in getting riches, fear in keeping them, temptation in using them, guilt in abusing them, sorrow in losing them, and a burden of account at last to be given up about them. Yet God in his providence sometimes makes good men rich men, and thus God's blessing made Abram rich without sorrow, ^{<PRO>}Proverbs 10:22. Though it is hard for a rich man to get to heaven, yet in some cases it may be, ^{<MA>}Mark 10:23,24. Nay, outward prosperity, if well managed, is an ornament to piety, and an opportunity for doing more good. Abram removed to Beth-el. His altar was gone, so that he could not offer sacrifice; but he called on the name of the Lord. You may as soon find a living man without breath as one of God's people without prayer.

Genesis 13:5

Vs. 5-9: Riches not only afford matter for strife, and are the things most commonly striven about; but they also stir up a spirit of contention, by making people proud and covetous. Mine and thine are the great make-bates of the world. Poverty and labor, wants and wanderings, could not separate Abram and Lot; but riches did so. Bad servants often make a great deal of mischief in families and among neighbors, by their pride and passion, lying, slandering, and talebearing. What made the quarrel worse was, that the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land. The quarrels of professors are the reproach of religion, and give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. It is best to keep the peace, that it be not broken; but the next best is, if differences do happen, with all speed to quench the fire that is broken out. The attempt to stay this strife was made by Abram, although he was the elder and the greater man. Abram

shows himself to be a man of cool spirit, that had the command of his passion, and knew how to turn away wrath by a soft answer. Those that would keep the peace, must never render railing for railing. And of a condescending spirit; he was willing to beseech even his inferior to be at peace. Whatever others are for, the people of God must be for peace. Abram's plea for peace was very powerful. Let the people of the land contend about trifles; but let not us fall out, who know better things, and look for a better country. Professors of religion should be most careful to avoid contention. Many profess to be for peace who will do nothing towards it: not so Abram. When God condescends to beseech us to be reconciled, we may well beseech one another. Though God had promised Abram to give this land to his seed, yet he offered an equal or better share to Lot, who had not an equal right; and he will not, under the protection of God's promise, act hardly to his kinsman. It is noble to be willing to yield for peace' sake.

Genesis 13:10

Vs. 10-13: Abram having offered Lot the choice, he at once accepted it. Passion and selfishness make men rude. Lot looked to the goodness of the land; therefore he doubted not that in such a fruitful soil he should certainly thrive. But what came of it? Those who, in choosing relations, callings, dwellings, or settlements, are guided and governed by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life, cannot expect God's presence or blessing. They are commonly disappointed even in that which they principally aim at. In all our choices this principle should rule, That is best for us, which is best for our souls. Lot little considered the badness of the inhabitants. The men of Sodom were impudent, daring sinners. This was the iniquity of Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness, ²³⁶⁰ Ezekiel 16:49. God often gives great plenty to great sinners. It has often been the vexatious lot of good men to live among wicked neighbors; and it must be the more grievous, if, as Lot here, they have brought it upon themselves by a wrong choice.

Genesis 13:14

Vs. 14-18: Those are best prepared for the visits of Divine grace, whose spirits are calm, and not ruffled with passion. God will abundantly make up in spiritual peace, what we lose for preserving neighborly peace. When

our relations are separated from us, yet God is not. Observe also the promises with which God now comforted and enriched Abram. Of two things he assures him; a good land, and a numerous issue to enjoy it. The prospects seen by faith are more rich and beautiful than those we see around us. God bade him walk through the land, not to think of fixing in it, but expect to be always unsettled, and walking through it to a better Canaan. He built an altar, in token of his thankfulness to God. When God meets us with gracious promises, he expects that we should attend him with humble praises. In outward difficulties, it is very profitable for the true believer to mediate on the glorious inheritance which the Lord has for him at the last.

CHAPTER 14

The battle of the kings, Lot is taken prisoner. (1-12) Abram rescues Lot. (13-16) Melchizedek blesses Abram. (17-20) Abram restores the spoil. (21-24)

☞ Genesis 14:1

Vs. 1-12: The wars of nations make great figure in history, but we should not have had the record of this war if Abram and Lot had not been concerned. Out of covetousness, Lot had settled in fruitful, but wicked Sodom. Its inhabitants were the most ripe for vengeance of all the descendants of Canaan. The invaders were from Chaldea and Persia, then only small kingdoms. They took Lot among the rest, and his goods. Though he was righteous, and Abram's brother's son, yet he was with the rest in this trouble. Neither our own piety, nor our relation to the favorites of Heaven, will be our security when God's judgments are abroad. Many an honest man fares the worse for his wicked neighbors: it is our wisdom to separate, or at least to distinguish ourselves from them, ☞ 2 Corinthians 6:17. So near a relation of Abram should have been a companion and a disciple of Abram. If he chose to dwell in Sodom, he must thank himself if he share in Sodom's losses. When we go out of the way of our duty, we put ourselves from under God's protection, and cannot expect that the choice made by our lusts, should end to our comfort. They took Lot's goods; it is just with God to deprive us of enjoyments, by which we suffer ourselves to be deprived of the enjoyment of him.

☞ Genesis 14:13

Vs. 13-16: Abram takes this opportunity to give a real proof of his being truly friendly to Lot. We ought to be ready to succor those in distress, especially relations and friends. And though others may have been wanting in their duty to us, yet we must not neglect our duty to them. Abram rescued the captives. As we have opportunity, we must do good to all.

Genesis 14:17

Vs. 17-20: Melchizedek is spoken of as a king of Salem, supposed to be the place afterwards called Jerusalem, and it is generally thought that he was only a man. The words of the apostle, ^{<300B>}Hebrews 7:3, state only, that the sacred history has said nothing of his ancestors. The silence of the Scriptures on this, is to raise our thoughts to Him, whose generation cannot be declared. Bread and wine were suitable refreshment for the weary followers of Abram; and it is remarkable that Christ appointed the same as the memorials of his body and blood, which are meat and drink indeed to the soul. Melchizedek blessed Abram from God. He blessed God from Abram. We ought to give thanks for other's mercies as for our own. Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, is the Mediator both of our prayers and praises, and not only offers up ours, but his own for us. Abram gave him the tenth of the spoils, ^{<300B>}Hebrews 7:4. When we have received some great mercy from God, it is very fit we should express our thankfulness by some special act of pious charity. Jesus Christ, our great Melchizedek, is to have homage done him, and to be humbly acknowledged as our King and Priest; not only the tithe of all, but all we have, must be given up to him.

Genesis 14:21

Vs. 21-24: Observe the king of Sodom's grateful offer to Abram, Give me the souls, and take thou the substance. Gratitude teaches us to recompense to the utmost of our power, those that have undergone fatigues, run hazards, and been at expense for our service and benefit. Abram generously refused this offer. He accompanies his refusal with a good reason, Lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: which would reflect upon the promise and covenant of God, as if He would not have enriched Abraham without the spoils of Sodom. The people of God must, for their credit's sake, take heed of doing any thing that looks mean or mercenary, or that savors of covetousness and self-seeking. Abraham can trust the Possessor of Heaven and earth to provide for him.

CHAPTER 15

God encourages Abram. (1) The Divine promise, Abraham is justified by faith. (2-6) God promises Canaan to Abraham for an inheritance. (7-11) The promise confirmed in a vision. (12-16) The promise confirmed by a sign. (17-21)

<15:1> Genesis 15:1

Vs. 1: God assured Abram of safety and happiness; that he should for ever be safe. I am thy shield; or, I am a shield to thee, present with thee, actually caring for thee. The consideration that God himself is, and will be a shield to his people, to secure them from all evils, a shield ready to them, and a shield round about them, should silence all perplexing, tormenting fears.

<15:2> Genesis 15:2

Vs. 2-6: Though we must never complain of God, yet we have leave to complain to him; and to state all our grievances. It is ease to a burdened spirit, to open its case to a faithful and compassionate friend. Abram's complaint is, that he had no child; that he was never likely to have any; that the want of a son was so great a trouble to him, that it took away all his comfort. If we suppose that Abram looked no further than outward comfort, this complaint was to be blamed. But if we suppose that Abram herein had reference to the promised Seed, his desire was very commendable. Till we have evidence of our interest in Christ, we should not rest satisfied; what will all avail me, if I go Christless? If we continue instant in prayer, yet pray with humble submission to the Divine will, we shall not seek in vain. God gave Abram an express promise of a son. Christians may believe in God with respect to the common concerns of this life; but the faith by which they are justified, always has respect to the person and work of Christ. Abram believed in God as promising Christ; they believe in him as having raised him from the dead, <15:24> Romans 4:24. Through faith in his blood they obtain forgiveness of sins.

Genesis 15:7

Vs. 7-11: Assurance was given to Abram of the land of Canaan for an inheritance. God never promises more than he is able to perform, as men often do. Abram did as God commanded him. He divided the beasts in the midst, according to the ceremony used in confirming covenants, ^{<BIB>}Jeremiah 34:18,19. Having prepared according to God's appointment, he set himself to wait for the sign God might give him. A watch must be kept upon our spiritual sacrifices. When vain thoughts, like these fowls, come down upon our sacrifices, we must drive them away, and seek to attend on God without distraction.

Genesis 15:12

Vs. 12-16: A deep sleep fell upon Abram; with this sleep a horror of great darkness fell upon him: a sudden change. The children of light do not always walk in the light. Several things were then foretold.

- 1.** The suffering state of Abram's seed for a long time. They shall be strangers. The heirs of heaven are strangers on earth. They shall be servants; but Canaanites serve under a curse, the Hebrews under a blessing. They shall be saviors. Those that are blessed and beloved of God, are often sorely afflicted by wicked men.
- 2.** The judgment of the enemies of Abram's seed. Though God may allow persecutors and oppressors to trample upon his people a great while, he will certainly reckon with them at last.
- 3.** That great event, the deliverance of Abram's seed out of Egypt, is here foretold.
- 4.** Their happy settlement in Canaan.

They shall come hither again. The measure of sin fills gradually. Some people's measure of sin fills slowly. The knowledge of future events would seldom add to our comfort. In the most favored families, and most happy lives, there are so many afflictions, that it is merciful in God to conceal what will befall us and ours.

Genesis 15:17

Vs. 17-21: The smoking furnace and the burning lamp, probably represented the Israelites' severe trials and joyful deliverance, with their gracious supports in the mean time. It is probable that this furnace and lamp, which passed between the pieces, burned and consumed them, and so completed the sacrifice, and testified God's acceptance of it. So it intimates that God's covenants with man are made by sacrifice, ^{<1515>}Psalm 50:5. And we may know that he accepts our sacrifices, if he kindles in our souls pious and devout affection. The bounds of the land granted are stated. Several nations, or tribes, are spoken of, that must be cast out to make room for the seed of Abram. In this chapter we perceive in Abram faith struggling against, and triumphing over, unbelief. Wonder not, believers, if you meet with seasons of darkness and distress. But it is not the will of God that you should be cast down: fear not; for all that he was to Abram he will be to you.

CHAPTER 16

Sarai gives Hagar to Abram. (1-3) Hagar's misbehavior to Sarai. (4-6) The Angel commands Hagar to return, The promise to her, Birth of Ishmael. (7-16)

Genesis 16:1

Vs. 1-3: Sarai, no longer expecting to have children herself, proposed to Abram to take another wife, whose children she might; her slave, whose children would be her property. This was done without asking counsel of the Lord. Unbelief worked, God's almighty power was forgotten. It was a bad example, and a source of manifold uneasiness. In every relation and situation in life there is some cross for us to bear: much of the exercise of faith consists in patiently submitting, in waiting the Lord's time, and using only those means which he appoints for the removal of the cross. Foul temptations may have very fair pretenses, and be colored with that which is very plausible. Fleshly wisdom puts us out of God's way. This would not be the case, if we would ask counsel of God by his word and by prayer, before we attempt that which is doubtful.

Genesis 16:4

Vs. 4-6: Abram's unhappy marriage to Hagar very soon made a great deal of mischief. We may thank ourselves for the guilt and grief that follow us, when we go out of the way of our duty. See it in this case. Passionate people often quarrel with others, for things of which they themselves must bear the blame. Sarai had given her maid to Abram, yet she cries out, My wrong be upon thee. That is never said wisely, which pride and anger put into our mouths. Those are not always in the right, who are most loud and forward in appealing to God: such rash and bold imprecations commonly speak guilt and a bad cause. Hagar forgot that she herself had first given the provocation, by despising her mistress. Those that suffer for their faults, ought to bear it patiently, ⁽¹²²⁾ 1 Peter 2:20.

Genesis 16:7

Vs. 7-16: Hagar was out of her place, and out of the way of her duty, and going further astray, when the Angel found her. It is a great mercy to be stopped in a sinful way, either by conscience or by providence. Whence comest thou? Consider that thou art running from duty, and the privileges thou wast blest with in Abram's tent. It is good to live in a religious family, which those ought to consider who have this advantage. Whither wilt thou go? Thou art running into sin; if Hagar return to Egypt, she will return to idol gods, and into danger in the wilderness through which she must travel. Recollecting who we are, would often teach us our duty. Inquiring whence we came, would show us our sin and folly. Considering whither we shall go, discovers our danger and misery. And those who leave their space and duty, must hasten their return, how mortifying soever it be. The declaration of the Angel, "I will," shows this Angel was the eternal Word and Son of God. Hagar could not but admire the Lord's mercy, and feel, Have I, who am so unworthy, been favored with a gracious visit from the Lord? She was brought to a better temper, returned, and by her behavior softened Sarai, and received more gentle treatment. Would that we were always suitably impressed with this thought, Thou God seest me!

CHAPTER 17

God renews the covenant with Abram. (1-6) Circumcision instituted. (7-14) Sarai's name changed, Isaac promised. (15-22) Abraham and his family are circumcised. (23-27)

Genesis 17:1

Vs. 1-6: The covenant was to be accomplished in due time. The promised Seed was Christ, and Christians in him. And all who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abram, being partakers of the same covenant blessings. In token of this covenant his name was changed from Abram, “a high father,” to Abraham, “the father of a multitude.” All that the Christian world enjoys, it is indebted for to Abraham and his Seed.

Genesis 17:7

Vs. 7-14: The covenant of grace is from everlasting in the counsels of it, and to everlasting in the consequences of it. The token of the covenant was circumcision. It is here said to be the covenant which Abraham and his seed must keep. Those who will have the Lord to be to them a God, must resolve to be to him a people. Not only Abraham and Isaac, and his posterity by Isaac, were to be circumcised, but also Ishmael and the bond-servants. It sealed not only the covenant of the land of Canaan to Isaac's posterity, but of heaven, through Christ, to the whole church of God. The outward sign is for the visible church; the inward seal of the Spirit is peculiar to those whom God knows to be believers, and he alone can know them. The religious observance of this institution was required, under a very severe penalty. It is dangerous to make light of Divine institutions, and to live in the neglect of them. The covenant in question was one that involved great blessings for the world in all future ages. Even the blessedness of Abraham himself, and all the rewards conferred upon him, were for Christ's sake. Abraham was justified, as we have seen, not by his own righteousness, but by faith in the promised Messiah.

Genesis 17:15

Vs. 15-22: Here is the promise made to Abraham of a son by Sarai, in whom the promise made to him should be fulfilled. The assurance of this promise was the change of Sarai's name into Sarah. Sarai signifies my princess, as if her honor were confined to one family only; Sarah signifies a princess. The more favors God confers upon us, the more low we should be in our own eyes. Abraham showed great joy; he laughed, it was a laughter of delight, not of distrust. Now it was that Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day; now he saw it and was glad, ^{<41859>}John 8:56. Abraham, dreading lest Ishmael should be abandoned and forsaken of God, put up a petition on his behalf. God gives us leave in prayer to be particular in making known our requests. Whatever is our care and fear, should be spread before God in prayer. It is the duty of parents to pray for their children, and the great thing we should desire is, that they may be kept in covenant with Him, and may have grace to walk before him in uprightness. Common blessings are secured to Ishmael. Outward good things are often given to those children of godly parents who are born after the flesh, for their parents' sake. Covenant blessings are reserved for Isaac, and appropriated to him.

Genesis 17:23

Vs. 23-27: Abraham and all his family were circumcised; so receiving the token of the covenant, and distinguishing themselves from other families that had no part nor lot in the matter. It was an implicit obedience; he did as God said unto him, and did not ask why or wherefore. He did it because God bade him. It was a speedy obedience; in the self-same day. Sincere obedience makes no delay. Not only the doctrines of revelation, but the seals of God's covenant, remind us that we are guilty, polluted sinners. They show us our need of the blood of atonement; they point to the promised Savior, and teach us to exercise faith in him. They show us that without regeneration, and sanctification by his Spirit, and the mortification of our corrupt and carnal unequaled, we cannot be in covenant with God. But let us remember that the true circumcision is that of the heart, by the Spirit, ^{<4122>}Romans 2:28,29. Both under the old and new dispensation, many have had the outward profession, and the outward seal, who were never sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.

CHAPTER 18

The Lord appears to Abraham. (1-8) Sarah's unbelief reproved. (9-15) God reveals to Abraham the destruction of Sodom. (16-22) Abraham's intercession for Sodom. (23-33)

◀181▶ Genesis 18:1

Vs. 1-8: Abraham was waiting to entertain any weary traveler, for inns were not to be met with as among us. While Abraham was thus sitting, he saw three men coming. These were three heavenly beings in human bodies. Some think they were all created angels; others, that one of them was the Son of God, the Angel of the covenant. Washing the feet is customary in those hot climates, where only sandals are worn. We should not be forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares, ^{◀581▶} Hebrews 13:2; nay, the Lord of angels himself; as we always do, when for his sake we entertain the least of his brethren. Cheerful and obliging manners in showing kindness, are great ornaments to piety. Though our condescending Lord vouchsafes not personal visits to us, yet still by his Spirit he stands at the door and knocks; when we are unequaled to open, he deigns to enter; and by his gracious consolations he provides a rich feast, of which we partake with him, ^{◀612▶} Revelation 3:20.

◀189▶ Genesis 18:9

Vs. 9-15: Where is Sarah thy wife? was asked. Note the answer, In the tent. Just at hand, in her proper place, occupied in her household concerns. There is nothing got by gadding. Those are most likely to receive comfort from God and his promises, who are in their proper place, and in the way of their duty, ^{◀418▶} Luke 2:8. We are slow of heart to believe, and need line upon line to the same purport. The blessings others have from common providence, believers have from the Divine promise, which makes them very sweet, and very sure. The spiritual seed of Abraham owe their life, and joy, and hope, and all, to the promise. Sarah thinks this too good news to be true; she laughed, and therefore cannot as yet find in her heart to believe it. Sarah laughed. We might not have thought there was a difference between Sarah's laughter and Abraham's, ch. ^{◀1171▶} 17:17; but He who searches the heart, saw that the one sprung from unbelief, and the other

from faith. She denied that she had laughed. One sin commonly brings in another, and it is not likely we shall strictly keep to truth, when we question the Divine truth. But whom the Lord loves he will rebuke, convict, silence, and bring to repentance, and if they sin before him.

Genesis 18:16

Vs. 16-22: The two who are supposed to have been created angels went toward Sodom. The one who is called Jehovah throughout the chapter, continued with Abraham, and would not hide from him the thing he intended to do. Though God long forbears with sinners, from which they fancy that the Lord does not see, and does not regard; yet when the day of his wrath comes, he will look toward them. The Lord will give Abraham an opportunity to intercede with him, and shows him the reason of his conduct. Consider, as a very bright part of Abraham's character and example, that he not only prayed with his family, but he was very careful to teach and rule them well. Those who expect family blessings must make conscience of family duty. Abraham did not fill their heads with matters of doubtful dispute; but he taught them to be serious and devout in the worship of God, and to be honest in their dealings with all men. Of how few may such a character be given in our days! How little care is taken by masters of families to ground those under them in the principles of religion! Do we watch from Sabbath to Sabbath whether they go forward or backward?

Genesis 18:23

Vs. 23-33: Here is the first solemn prayer upon record in the Bible; and it is a prayer for the sparing of Sodom. Abraham prayed earnestly that Sodom might be spared, if but a few righteous persons should be found in it. Come and learn from Abraham what compassion we should feel for sinners, and how earnestly we should pray for them. We see here that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Abraham, indeed, failed in his request for the whole place, but Lot was miraculously delivered. Be encouraged then to expect, by earnest prayer, the blessing of God upon your families, your friends, your neighborhood. To this end you must not only pray, but you must live like Abraham. He knew the Judge of all the earth would do right. He does not plead that the wicked may be spared for their own sake, or because it would be severe to destroy them,

but for the sake of the righteous who might be found among them. And righteousness only can be made a plea before God. How then did Christ make intercession for transgressors? Not by blaming the Divine law, nor by alleging ought in extenuation or excuse of human guilt; but by pleading HIS OWN obedience unto death.

CHAPTER 19

The destruction of Sodom, and the deliverance of Lot. (1-29) The sin and disgrace of Lot. (30-38)

Genesis 19:1

Vs. 1-29: Lot was good, but there was not one more of the same character in the city. All the people of Sodom were very wicked and vile. Care was therefore taken for saving Lot and his family. Lot lingered; he trifled. Thus many who are under convictions about their spiritual state, and the necessity of a change, defer that needful work. The salvation of the most righteous men is of God's mercy, not by their own merit. We are saved by grace. God's power also must be acknowledged in bringing souls out of a sinful state. If God had not been merciful to us, our lingering had been our ruin. Lot must flee for his life. He must not hanker after Sodom. Such commands as these are given to those who, through grace, are delivered out of a sinful state and condition. Return not to sin and Satan. Rest not in self and the world. Reach toward Christ and heaven, for that is escaping to the mountain, short of which we must not stop. Concerning this destruction, observe that it is a revelation of the wrath of God against sin and sinners of all ages. Let us learn from hence the evil of sin, and its hurtful nature; it leads to ruin.

Genesis 19:30

Vs. 30-38: See the peril of security. Lot, who kept chaste in Sodom, and was a mourner for the wickedness of the place, and a witness against it, when in the mountain, alone, and, as he thought, out of the way of temptation, is shamefully overtaken. Let him that thinks he stands high, and stands firm, take heed lest he fall. See the peril of drunkenness; it is not only a great sin itself, but lets in many sins, which bring a lasting wound and dishonor. Many a man does that, when he is drunk, which, when he is sober, he could not think of without horror. See also the peril of temptation, even from relations and friends, whom we love and esteem, and expect kindness from. We must dread a snare, wherever we are, and be always upon our guard. No excuse can be made for the daughters, nor for Lot. Scarcely any account can be given of the affair but this, The heart is

deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? From the silence of the Scripture concerning Lot henceforward, learn that drunkenness, as it makes men forgetful, so it makes them to be forgotten.

CHAPTER 20

*Abraham's sojourn at Gerar, Sarah is taken by Abimelech. (1-8)
Abimelech's rebuke to Abraham. (9-13) Abimelech restores Sarah.
(14-18)*

Genesis 20:1

Vs. 1-8: Crooked policy will not prosper: it brings ourselves and others into danger. God gives Abimelech notice of his danger of sin, and his danger of death for his sin. Every willful sinner is a dead man, but Abimelech pleads ignorance. If our consciences witness, that, however we may have been cheated into a snare, we have not knowingly sinned against God, it will be our rejoicing in the day of evil. It is matter of comfort to those who are honest, that God knows their honesty, and will acknowledge it. It is a great mercy to be hindered from committing sin; of this God must have the glory. But if we have ignorantly done wrong, that will not excuse us, if we knowingly persist in it. He that does wrong, whoever he is, prince or peasant, shall certainly receive for the wrong which he has done, unless he repent, and, if possible, make restitution.

Genesis 20:9

Vs. 9-13: See here much to blame, even in the father of the faithful. Mark his distrust of God, his undue care about life, his intent to deceive. He also threw temptation in the way of others, caused affliction to them, exposed himself and Sarah to just rebukes, and yet attempted an excuse. These things are written for our warning, not for us to imitate. Even Abraham hath not whereof to glory. He cannot be justified by his works, but must be indebted for justification, to that righteousness which is upon all and unto all them that believe. We must not condemn all as hypocrites who fall into sin, if they do not continue in it. But let the unhumiliated and impenitent take heed that they do not sin on, thinking that grace may abound. Abimelech, being warned of God, takes the warning; and being truly afraid of sin and its consequences, he rose early to pursue the directions given him.

Genesis 20:14

Vs. 14-18: We often trouble ourselves, and even are led into temptation and sin, by groundless suspicions; and find the fear of God where we expected it not. Agreements to deceive generally end in shame and sorrow; and restraints from sin, though by suffering, should be thankfully acknowledged. Though the Lord rebuke, yet he will pardon and deliver his people, and he will give them favor in the sight of those with whom they sojourn; and overrule their infirmities, when they are humbled for them, so that they shall prove useful to themselves and others.

CHAPTER 21

*Birth of Isaac, Sarah's joy. (1-8) Ishmael mocks Isaac. (9-13)
Hagar and Ishmael are cast forth, They are relieved and comforted
by an angel. (14-21) Abimelech's covenant with Abraham. (22-34)*

Genesis 21:1

Vs. 1-8: Few under the Old Testament were brought into the world with such expectations as Isaac. He was in this a type of Christ, that Seed which the holy God so long promised, and holy men so long expected. He was born according to the promise, at the set time of which God had spoken. God's promised mercies will certainly come at the time which He sets, and that is the best time. Isaac means "laughter," and there was good reason for the name, ch. ^{<177>}17:17; ^{<183>}18:13. When the Sun of comfort is risen upon the soul, it is good to remember how welcome the dawning of the day was. When Sarah received the promise, she laughed with distrust and doubt. When God gives us the mercies we began to despair of, we ought to remember with sorrow and shame our sinful distrust of his power and promise, when we were in pursuit of them. This mercy filled Sarah with joy and wonder. God's favors to his covenant people are such as surpass their own and others' thoughts and expectations: who could imagine that he should do so much for those that deserve so little, nay, for those that deserve so ill? Who would have said that God should send his Son to die for us, his Spirit to make us holy, his angels to attend us? Who would have said that such great sins should be pardoned, such mean services accepted, and such worthless worms taken into covenant? A short account of Isaac's infancy is given. God's blessing upon the nursing of children, and the preservation of them through the perils of the infant age, are to be acknowledged as signal instances of the care and tenderness of the Divine providence. See ^{<129>}Psalm 22:9,10; ^{<311>}Hosea 11:1,2.

Genesis 21:9

Vs. 9-13: Let us not overlook the manner in which this family matter instructs us not to rest in outward privileges, or in our own doings. And let us seek the blessings of the new covenant by faith in its Divine Surety. Ishmael's conduct was persecution, being done in profane contempt of the

covenant and promise, and with malice against Isaac. God takes notice of what children say and do in their play; and will reckon with them, if they say or do amiss, though their parents do not. Mocking is a great sin, and very provoking to God. And the children of promise must expect to be mocked. Abraham was grieved that Ishmael should misbehave, and Sarah demand so severe a punishment. But God showed him that Isaac must be the father of the promised Seed; therefore, send Ishmael away, lest he corrupt the manners, or try to take the rights of Isaac. The covenant seed of Abraham must be a people by themselves, not mingled with those who were out of covenant: Sarah little thought of this; but God turned aright what she said.

Genesis 21:14

Vs. 14-21: If Hagar and Ishmael had behaved well in Abraham's family, they might have continued there; but they were justly punished. By abusing privileges, we forfeit them. Those who know not when they are well off, will be made to know the worth of mercies by the want of them. They were brought to distress in the wilderness. It is not said that the provisions were spent, or that Abraham sent them away without money. But the water was spent; and having lost their way, in that hot climate Ishmael was soon overcome with fatigue and thirst. God's readiness to help us when we are in trouble, must not slacken, but quicken our endeavors to help ourselves. The promise concerning her son is repeated, as a reason why Hagar should bestir herself to help him. It should engage our care and pains about children and young people, to consider that we know not what great use God has designed them for, and may make of them. The angel directs her to a present supply. Many who have reason to be comforted, go mourning from day to day, because they do not see the reason they have for comfort. There is a well of water near them in the covenant of grace, but they are not aware of it, till the same God that opened their eyes to see their wound, opens them to see their remedy. Paran was a wild place, fit for a wild man; such as Ishmael. Those who are born after the flesh, take up with the wilderness of this world, while the children of the promise aim at the heavenly Canaan, and cannot be at rest till they are there. Yet God was with the lad; his outward welfare was owing to this.

Genesis 21:22

Vs. 22-34: Abimelech felt sure that the promises of God would be fulfilled to Abraham. It is wise to connect ourselves with those who are blessed of God; and we ought to requite kindness to those who have been kind to us. Wells of water are scarce and valuable in eastern countries. Abraham took care to have his title to the well allowed, to prevent disputes in future. No more can be expected from an honest man than that he be ready to do right, as soon as he knows he has done wrong. Abraham, being now in a good neighborhood, stayed a great while there. There he made, not only a constant practice, but an open profession of his religion. There he called on the name of the Lord, as the everlasting God; probably in the grove he planted, which was his place of prayer. Abraham kept up public worship, in which his neighbors might join. Good men should do all they can to make others so. Wherever we sojourn, we must neither neglect nor be ashamed of the worship of Jehovah.

CHAPTER 22

God commands Abraham to offer up Isaac. (1,2) Abraham's faith and obedience to the Divine command. (3-10) Another sacrifice is provided instead of Isaac. (11-14) The covenant with Abraham renewed. (15-19) The family of Nahor. (20-24)

Genesis 22:1

Vs. 1, 2: We never are secure from trials. In Hebrew, to tempt, and to try, or to prove, are expressed by the same word. Every trial is indeed a temptation, and tends to show the dispositions of the heart, whether holy or unholy. But God proved Abraham, not to draw him to sin, as Satan tempts. Strong faith is often exercised with strong trials, and put upon hard services. The command to offer up his son, is given in such language as makes the trial more grievous; every word here is a sword. Observe,

- 1.** The person to be offered: Take thy son; not thy bullocks and thy lambs. How willingly would Abraham have parted with them all to redeem Isaac! Thy son; not thy servant. Thine only son; thine only son by Sarah. Take Isaac, that son whom thou lovest.
- 2.** The place: three days' journey off; so that Abraham might have time to consider, and might deliberately obey.
- 3.** The manner: Offer him for a burnt-offering; not only kill his son, his Isaac, but kill him as a sacrifice; kill him with all that solemn pomp and ceremony, with which he used to offer his burnt-offerings.

Genesis 22:3

Vs. 3-10: Never was any gold tried in so hot a fire. Who but Abraham would not have argued with God? Such would have been the thought of a weak heart; but Abraham knew that he had to do with a God, even Jehovah. Faith had taught him not to argue, but to obey. He is sure that what God commands is good; that what he promises cannot be broken. In matters of God, whoever consults with flesh and blood, will never offer up his Isaac to God. The good patriarch rises early, and begins his sad journey. And now he travels three days, and Isaac still is in his sight!

Misery is made worse when long continued. The expression, We will come again to you, shows that Abraham expected that Isaac, being raised from the dead, would return with him. It was a very affecting question that Isaac asked him, as they were going together: "My father," said Isaac; it was a melting word, which, one would think, should strike deeper in the heart of Abraham, than his knife could in the heart of Isaac. Yet he waits for his son's question. Then Abraham, where he meant not, prophesies: "My son, God will provide a lamb for a burnt-offering." The Holy Spirit, by his mouth, seems to predict the Lamb of God, which he has provided, and which taketh away the sin of the world. Abraham lays the wood in order for his Isaac's funeral pile, and now tells him the amazing news: Isaac, thou art the lamb which God has provided! Abraham, no doubt, comforting him with the same hopes with which he himself by faith was comforted. Yet it is necessary that the sacrifice be bound. The great Sacrifice, which, in the fullness of time, was to be offered up, must be bound, and so must Isaac. This being done, Abraham takes the knife, and stretches out his hand to give the fatal blow. Here is an act of faith and obedience, which deserves to be a spectacle to God, angels, and men. God, by his providence, calls us to part with an Isaac sometimes, and we must do it with cheerful submission to his holy will, ⁽¹²¹⁾1 Samuel 3:18.

⁽¹²¹⁾Genesis 22:11

Vs. 11-14: It was not God's intention that Isaac should actually be sacrificed, yet nobler blood than that of animals, in due time, was to be shed for sin, even the blood of the only begotten Son of God. But in the mean while God would not in any case have human sacrifices used. Another sacrifice is provided. Reference must be had to the promised Messiah, the blessed Seed. Christ was sacrificed in our stead, as this ram instead of Isaac, and his death was our discharge. And observe, that the temple, the place of sacrifice, was afterwards built upon this same mount Moriah; and Calvary, where Christ was crucified, was near. A new name was given to that place, for the encouragement of all believers, to the end of the world, cheerfully to trust in God, and obey him. Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord will provide; probably alluding to what Abraham had said, God will provide himself a lamb. The Lord will always have his eye upon his people, in their straits and distresses, that he may give them seasonable help.

Genesis 22:15

Vs. 15-19: There are high declarations of God's favor to Abraham in this confirmation of the covenant with him, exceeding any he had yet been blessed with. Those that are willing to part with any thing for God, shall have it made up to them with unspeakable advantage. The promise, ver. 18, doubtless points at the Messiah, and the grace of the gospel. Hereby we know the loving-kindness of God our Savior towards sinful man, in that he hath not withheld his Son, his only Son, from us. Hereby we perceive the love of Christ, in that he gave himself a sacrifice for our sins. Yet he lives, and calls to sinners to come to him, and partake of his blood-bought salvation. He calls to his redeemed people to rejoice in him, and to glorify him. What then shall we render for all his benefits? Let his love constrain us to live not to ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and rose again. Admiring and adoring His grace, let us devote our all to his service, who laid down his life for our salvation. Whatever is dearest to us upon earth is our Isaac. And the only way for us to find comfort in an earthly thing, is to give it by faith into the hands of God. Yet remember that Abraham was not justified by his readiness to obey, but by the infinitely more noble obedience of Jesus Christ; his faith receiving this, relying on this, rejoicing in this, disposed and made him able for such wonderful self-denial and duty.

Genesis 22:20

Vs. 20-24: This chapter ends with some account of Nahor's family, who had settled at Haran. This seems to be given for the connection which it had with the church of God. From thence Isaac and Jacob took wives; and before the account of those events this list is recorded. It shows that though Abraham saw his own family highly honored with privileges, admitted into covenant, and blessed with the assurance of the promise, yet he did not look with disdain upon his relations, but was glad to hear of the increase and welfare of their families.

CHAPTER 23

The death of Sarah, Abraham applies for a burying-place. (1-13)

Sarah's burying-place. (14-20)

Genesis 23:1

Vs. 1-13: The longest life must shortly come to a close. Blessed be God that there is a world where sin, death, vanity, and vexation cannot enter. Blessed be his name, that even death cannot part believers from union with Christ. Those whom we most love, yea, even our own bodies, which we so care for, must soon become loathsome lumps of clays, and be buried out of sight. How loose then should we be to all earthly attachments and adornments! Let us seek rather that our souls be adorned with heavenly graces. Abraham rendered honor and respect to the princes of Heth, although of the ungodly Canaanites. The religion of the Bible enjoins to pay due respect to all in authority, without flattering their persons, or countenancing their crimes if they are unworthy characters. And the noble generosity of these Canaanites shames and condemns the closeness, selfishness, and ill-humor of many that call themselves Israelites. It was not in pride that Abraham refused the gift, because he scorned to be beholden to Ephron; but in justice and in prudence. Abraham was able to pay for the field, and therefore would not take advantage of Ephron's generosity. Honesty, as well as honor, forbids us to take advantage of our neighbor's liberality, and to impose, upon those who give freely.

Genesis 23:14

Vs. 14-20: Prudence, as well as justice, directs us to be fair and open in our dealings; cheating bargains will not bear the light. Abraham, without fraud or delay, pays the money. He pays it at once in full, without keeping any part back; and by weight, current money with the merchant, without deceit. See how anciently money was used for the help of trade, and how honestly it should be paid when it is due. Though all the land of Canaan was Abraham by promise, yet the time of his possessing it not being come, what he had occasion for he bought and paid for. Dominion is not founded in grace. The saints' title to an eternal inheritance does not entitle them to the possessions of this world, nor justify them in doing wrong.

Ephron honestly and fairly makes a good title to the land. As that which is bought, must be honestly paid for, so that which is sold, must be honestly delivered and secured. Let us manage our concerns with punctuality and exactness, in order to avoid contention. Abraham buried Sarah in the cave, or vault, which was in the purchased field. It would tend to endear the land to his posterity. And it is worth noting, that a burying-place was the only piece of the land which Abraham possessed in Canaan. Those who have least of this earth, find a grave in it. This sepulcher was at the end of the field; whatever our possessions are, there is a burial-place at the end of them. It was a token of his belief and expectation of the resurrection. Abraham is contented to be still a pilgrim while he lives, but secures a place where, when he dies, his flesh may rest in hope. After all, the chief concern is, with whom we shall rise.

CHAPTER 24

Abraham's care for Isaac's marriage. (1-9) The journey of Abraham's servant to Mesopotamia, His meeting with Rebekah. (10-28) Rebekah and her relatives consent to her marriage. (29-53) The happy meeting and marriage of Isaac and Rebekah. (54-67)

Genesis 24:1

Vs. 1-9: The effect of good example, good teaching, and the worship of God in a family, will generally appear in the piety, faithfulness, prudence, and affection of the servants. To live in such families, or to have such servants, both are blessings from God which should be highly valued, and thankfully acknowledged. But no concern in life is of greater importance to ourselves, to others, or to the church of God, than marriage. It therefore ought always to be undertaken with much care and prudence, especially with reference to the will of God, and with prayer for his direction and blessing. Where good parents are not consulted and regarded, the blessing of God cannot be expected. Parents, in disposing of their children, should carefully consult the welfare of their souls, and their furtherance in the way to heaven. Observe the charge Abraham gave to a good servant, one whose conduct, faithfulness, and affection, to him and his family, he had long known. Observe also, that Abraham remembers that God had wonderfully brought him out of the land of his birth, by the call of his grace; and therefore doubts not but He will prosper his care, not to bring his son thither again. God will cause that to end in our comfort, in which we sincerely aim at his glory.

Genesis 24:10

Vs. 10-28: Abraham's servant devoutly acknowledged God. We have leave to be particular in recommending our affairs to the care of Divine providence. He proposes a sign, not that he intended to proceed no further, if not gratified in it; but it is a prayer that God would provide a good wife for his young master; and that was a good prayer. She should be simple, industrious, humble, cheerful, serviceable, and hospitable. Whatever may be the fashion, common sense, as well as piety, tells us, these are the proper qualifications for a wife and mother; for one who is to

be a companion to her husband, the manager of domestic concerns, and trusted to form the minds of children. When the steward came to seek a wife for his master, he did not go to places of amusement and sinful pleasure, and pray that he might meet one there, but to the well of water, expecting to find one there employed aright. He prayed that God would please to make his way in this matter plain and clear before him. Our times are in God's hand; not only events themselves, but the times of them. We must take heed of being over-bold in urging what God should do, lest the event should weaken our faith, rather than strengthen it. But God owned him by making his way clear. Rebekah, in all respects, answered the characters he sought for in the woman that was to be his master's wife. When she came to the well, 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 or confidently enter into discourse with him, but answered him modestly. Being satisfied that the Lord had heard his prayer, he gave the damsel some ornaments worn in eastern countries; asking at the same time respecting her kindred. On learning that she was of his master's relations, he bowed down his head and worshipped, blessing God. His words were addressed to the Lord, but being spoken in the hearing of Rebekah, she could perceive who he was, and whence he came.

Genesis 24:29

Vs. 29-53: The making up of the marriage between Isaac and Rebekah is told very particularly. We are to notice God's providence in the common events of human life, and in them to exercise prudence and other graces. Laban went to ask Abraham's servant in, but not till he saw the ear-ring, and bracelet upon his sister's hands. We know Laban's character, by his conduct afterwards, and may think that he would not have been so free to entertain him, if he had not hoped to be well rewarded for it. The servant was intent upon his business. Though he was come off a journey, and come to a good house, he would not eat till he had told his errand. The doing our work, and the fulfilling our trusts, either for God or man, should be preferred by us before our food: it was our Savior's meat and drink, John 4:34. He tells them the charge his master had given him, with the reason of it. He relates what had happened at the well, to further the

proposal, plainly showing the finger of God in it. Those events which to us seem the effect of choice, contrivance, or chance, are “appointed out” of God. This hinders not, but rather encourages the use of all proper means. They freely and cheerfully close with the proposal; and any matter is likely to be comfortable, when it proceeds from the Lord. Abraham’s servant thankfully acknowledges the good success he had met with. He was a humble man, and humble men are not ashamed to own their situation in life, whatever it may be. All our temporal concerns are sweet if intermixed with godliness.

Genesis 24:54

Vs. 54-67: Abraham’s servant, as one that chose his work before his pleasure, was for hastening home. Lingered and loitering no way become a wise and good man who is faithful to his duty. As children ought not to marry without their parents’ consent, so parents ought not to marry them without their own. Rebekah consented, not only to go, but to go at once. The goodness of Rebecca’s character shows there was nothing wrong in her answer, though it be not agreeable to modern customs among us. We may hope that she had such an idea of the religion and godliness in the family she was to go to, as made her willing to forget her own people and her father’s house. Her friends dismiss her with suitable attendants, and with hearty good wishes. They blessed Rebekah. When our relations are entering into a new condition, we ought by prayer to commend them to the blessing and grace of God. Isaac was well employed when he met Rebekah. He went out to take the advantage of a silent evening, and a solitary place, for meditation and prayer; those divine exercises by which we converse with God and our own hearts. Holy souls love retirement; it will do us good to be often alone, if rightly employed; and we are never less alone than when alone. Observe what an affection son Isaac was: it was about three years since his mother died, and yet he was not, till now, comforted. See also what an affection husband he was to his wife. Dutiful sons promise fair to be affection husbands; he that fills up his first station in life with honor, is likely to do the same in those that follow.

CHAPTER 25

Abraham's family by Keturah, His death and burial. (1-10) God blesses Isaac The descendants of Ishmael. (11-18) The birth of Esau and Jacob. (19-26) The different characters of Esau and Jacob. (27,28) Esau despises and sells his birth-right. (29-34)

Genesis 25:1

Vs. 1-10: All the days, even of the best and greatest saints, are not remarkable days; some slide on silently; such were these last days of Abraham. Here is an account of Abraham's children by Keturah, and the disposition which he made of his estate. After the birth of these sons, he set his house in order, with prudence and justice. He did this while he yet lived. It is wisdom for men to do what they find to do while they live, as far as they can. Abraham lived 175 years; just one hundred years after he came to Canaan; so long he was a sojourner in a strange country. Whether our stay in this life be long or short, it matters but little, provided we leave behind us a testimony to the faithfulness and goodness of the Lord, and a good example to our families. We are told that his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him. It seems that Abraham had himself brought them together while he lived. Let us not close the history of the life of Abraham without blessing God for such a testimony of the triumph of faith.

Genesis 25:11

Vs. 11-18: Ishmael had twelve sons, whose families became distinct tribes. They peopled a very large country that lay between Egypt and Assyria, called Arabia. The number and strength of this family were the fruit of the promise, made to Hagar and to Abraham, concerning Ishmael.

Genesis 25:19

Vs. 19-26: Isaac seems not to have been much tried, but to have spent his days in quietness. Jacob and Esau were prayed for; their parents, after being long childless, obtained them by prayer. The fulfillment of God's promise is always sure, yet it is often slow. The faith of believers is tried, their patience exercised, and mercies long waited for are more welcome

when they come. Isaac and Rebekah kept in view the promise of all nations being blessed in their posterity, therefore were not only desirous of children, but anxious concerning every thing which seemed to mark their future character. In all our doubts we should inquire of the Lord by prayer. In many of our conflicts with sin and temptation, we may adopt Rebecca's words, "If it be so, why am I thus?" If a child of God, why so careless or carnal? If not a child of God, why so afraid of, or so burdened with sin?

Genesis 25:27

Vs. 27, 28: Esau hunted the beasts of the field with dexterity and success, till he became a conqueror, ruling over his neighbors. Jacob was a plain man, one that liked the true delights of retirement, better than all pretended pleasures. He was a stranger and a pilgrim in his spirit, and a shepherd all his days. Isaac and Rebekah had but these two children, one was the father's darling, and the other the mother's. And though godly parents must feel their affection most drawn over towards a godly child, yet they will not show partiality. Let their affection lead them to do what is just and equal to every child, or evils will arise.

Genesis 25:29

Vs. 29-34: We have here the bargain made between Jacob and Esau about the right, which was Esau's by birth, but Jacob's by promise. It was for a spiritual privilege; and we see Jacob's desire of the birth-right, but he sought to obtain it by crooked courses, not like his character as a plain man. He was right, that he coveted earnestly the best gifts; he was wrong, that he took advantage of his brother's need. The inheritance of their father's worldly goods did not descend to Jacob, and was not meant in this proposal. But it unequalled the future possession of the land of Canaan by his children's children, and the covenant made with Abraham as to Christ the promised Seed. Believing Jacob valued these above all things; unbelieving Esau despised them. Yet although we must be of Jacob's judgment in seeking the birth-right, we ought carefully to avoid all guile, in seeking to obtain even the greatest advantages. Jacob's pottage pleased Esau's eye. "Give me some of that red;" for this he was called Edom, or Red. Gratifying the sensual appetite ruins thousands of precious souls. When men's hearts walk after their own eyes, ^{<18310>} Job 31:7, and when they serve their own bellies, they are sure to be punished. If we use ourselves to

deny ourselves, we break the force of most temptations. It cannot be supposed that Esau was dying of hunger in Isaac's house. The words signify, I am going towards death; he seems to mean, I shall never live to inherit Canaan, or any of those future supposed blessings; and what signifies it who has them when I am dead and gone. This would be the language of profaneness, with which the apostle brands him, ^{<SR216} Hebrews 12:16; and this contempt of the birth-right is blamed, ver. 34. It is the greatest folly to part with our interest in God, and Christ, and heaven, for the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world; it is as bad a bargain as his who sold a birth-right for a dish of pottage. Esau ate and drank, pleased his palate, satisfied his appetite, and then carelessly rose up and went his way, without any serious thought, or any regret, about the bad bargain he had made. Thus Esau despised his birth-right. By his neglect and contempt afterwards, and by justifying himself in what he had done, he put the bargain past recall. People are ruined, not so much by doing what is amiss, as by doing it and not repenting of it.

CHAPTER 26

Isaac, because of famine, goes to Gerar. (1-5) He denies his wife and is reproved by Abimelech. (6-11) Isaac grows rich, The Philistines' envy. (12-17) Isaac digs wells, God blesses him. (18-25) Abimelech makes a covenant with Isaac. (26-33) Esau's wives. (34,35)

Genesis 26:1

Vs. 1-5: Isaac had been trained up in a believing dependence upon the Divine grant of the land of Canaan to him and his heirs; and now that there is a famine in the land, Isaac still cleaves to the covenant. The real worth of God's promises cannot be lessened to a believer by any cross providence that may befall him. If God engage to be with us, and we are where he would have us to be, nothing but our own unbelief and distrust can prevent our comfort. The obedience of Abraham to the Divine command, was evidence of that faith, whereby, as a sinner, he was justified before God, and the effect of that love whereby true faith works. God testifies that he approved this obedience, to encourage others, especially Isaac.

Genesis 26:6

Vs. 6-11 There is nothing in Isaac's denial of his wife to be imitated, nor even excused. The temptation of Isaac is the same as that which overcame his father, and that in two instances. This rendered his conduct the greater sin. The falls of those who are gone before us are so many rocks on which others have split; and the recording of them is like placing buoys to save future mariners. This Abimelech was not the same that lived in Abraham's days, but both acted rightly. The sins of professors shame them before those that are not themselves religious.

Genesis 26:12

Vs. 12-17: God blessed Isaac. Be it observed, for the encouragement of poor tenants who occupy other people's lands, and are honest and industrious, that God blessed him with a great increase. The Philistines envied Isaac. It is an instance of the vanity of the world; for the more men

have of it, the more they are envied, and exposed to censure and injury. Also of the corruption of nature; for that is an ill principle indeed, which makes men grieve at the good of others. They made Isaac go out of their country. That wisdom which is from above, will teach us to give up our right, and to draw back from contentions. If we are wrongfully driven from one place, the Lord will make room for us in another.

Genesis 26:18

Vs. 18-25: Isaac met with much opposition in digging wells. Two were called Contention and Hatred. See the nature of worldly things; they make quarrels, and are occasions of strife; and what is often the lot of the most quiet and peaceable; those who avoid striving, yet cannot avoid being striven with. And what a mercy it is to have plenty of water; to have it without striving for it! The more common this mercy is, the more reason to be thankful for it. At length Isaac dugged a well, for which they strove not. Those that study to be quiet, seldom fail of being so. When men are false and unkind, still God is faithful and gracious; and his time to show himself so is, when we are most disappointed by men. The same night that Isaac came weary and uneasy to Beer-sheba, God brought comforts to his soul. Those may remove with comfort who are sure of God's presence.

Genesis 26:26

Vs. 26-33: When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him, ^{<1607>}Proverbs 16:7. Kings' hearts are in his hands, and when he pleases, he can turn them to favor his people. It is not wrong to stand upon our guard in dealing with those who have acted unfairly. But Isaac did not insist on the unkindnesses they had done him; he freely entered into friendship with them. Religion teaches us to be neighborly, and, as much as in us lies, to live peaceable with all men. Providence smiled upon what Isaac did; God blessed his labors.

Genesis 26:34

Vs. 34, 35: Esau was foolish in marrying two wives together, and still more in marrying Canaanites, strangers to the blessing of Abraham, and subject to the curse of Noah. It grieved his parents that he married without their advice and consent. It grieved them that he married among those who

had no religion. Children have little reason to expect God's blessing who do that which is a grief of mind to good parents.

CHAPTER 27

Isaac sends Esau for venison. (1-5) Rebekah teaches Jacob to obtain the blessing. (6-17) Jacob, pretending to be Esau, obtains the blessing. (18-29) Isaac's fear, Esau's importunity. (30-40) Esau threatens Jacob's life, Rebekah sends Jacob away. (41-46)

Genesis 27:1

Vs. 1-5: The promises of the Messiah, and of the land of Canaan, had come down to Isaac. Isaac being now about 135 years of age, and his sons about 75, and not duly considering the Divine word concerning his two sons, that the elder should serve the younger, resolved to put all the honor and power that were in the promise, upon Esau his eldest son. We are very apt to take measures rather from our own reason than from Divine revelation, and thereby often miss our way.

Genesis 27:6

Vs. 6-17: Rebekah knew that the blessing was intended for Jacob, and expected he would have it. But she wronged Isaac by putting a cheat on him; she wronged Jacob by tempting him to wickedness. She put a stumbling-block in Esau's way, and gave him a pretext for hatred to Jacob and to religion. All were to be blamed. It was one of those crooked measures often adopted to further the Divine promises; as if the end would justify, or excuse wrong means. Thus many have acted wrong, under the idea of being useful in promoting the cause of Christ. The answer to all such things is that which God addressed to Abraham, I am God Almighty; walk before me and be thou perfect. And it was a very rash speech of Rebekah, "Upon me be thy curse, my son." Christ has born the curse of the law for all who take upon them the yoke of the command, the command of the gospel. But it is too daring for any creature to say, Upon me be thy curse.

Genesis 27:18

Vs. 18-29: Jacob, with some difficulty, gained his point, and got the blessing. This blessing is in very general terms. No mention is made of the

distinguishing mercies in the covenant with Abraham. This might be owing to Isaac having Esau in his mind, though it was Jacob who was before him. He could not be ignorant how Esau had despised the best things. Moreover, his attachment to Esau, so as to disregard the mind of God, must have greatly weakened his own faith in these things. It might therefore be expected, that leanness would attend his blessing, agreeing with the state of his mind.

Genesis 27:30

Vs. 30-40: When Esau understood that Jacob had got the blessing, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry. The day is coming, when those that now make light of the blessings of the covenant, and sell their title to spiritual blessings for that which is of no value, will, in vain, ask urgently for them. Isaac, when made sensible of the deceit practiced on him, trembled exceedingly. Those who follow the choice of their own affection, rather than the Divine will, get themselves into perplexity. But he soon recovers, and confirms the blessing he had given to Jacob, saying, I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed. Those who part with their wisdom and grace, their faith and a good conscience, for the honors, wealth, or pleasures of this world, however they feign a zeal for the blessing, have judged themselves unworthy of it, and their doom shall be accordingly. A common blessing was bestowed upon Esau. This he desired. Faint desires of happiness, without right choice of the end, and right use of the means, deceive many unto their own ruin. Multitudes go to hell with their mouths full of good wishes. The great difference is, that there is nothing in Esau's blessing which points at Christ; and without that, the fatness of the earth, and the plunder of the field, will stand in little stead. Thus Isaac, by faith, blessed both his sons, according as their lot should be.

Genesis 27:41

Vs. 41-46: Esau bore malice to Jacob on account of the blessing he had obtained. Thus he went in the way of Cain, who slew his brother, because he gained that acceptance with God of which he had rendered himself unworthy. Esau aimed to prevent Jacob or his seed from having the dominion, by taking away his life. Men may fret at God's counsels, but cannot change them. To prevent mischief, Rebekah warned Jacob of his danger, and advised him to withdraw for his safety. We must not presume

too far upon the wisdom and resolution, even of the most hopeful and promising children; but care must be taken to keep them out of the way of evil. When reading this chapter, we should not fail to observe, that we must not follow even the best of men further than they act according to the law of God. We must not do evil that good may come. And though God overruled the bad actions recorded in this chapter, to fulfill his purposes, yet we see his judgment of them, in the painful consequences to all the parties concerned. It was the peculiar privilege and advantage of Jacob to convey these spiritual blessings to all nations. The Christ, the Savior of the world, was to be born of some one family; and Jacob's was preferred to Esau's, out of the good pleasure of Almighty God, who is certainly the best judge of what is fit, and has an undoubted right to dispense his favors as he sees proper, ⁴⁸⁹² Romans 9:12-15.

CHAPTER 28

Isaac sends Jacob to Padan-aram. (1-5) Esau marries the daughter of Ishmael. (6-9) Jacob's vision. (10-15) The stone of Beth-el. (16-19) Jacob's vow. (20-22)

☞ Genesis 28:1

Vs. 1-5: Jacob had blessings promised both as to this world and that which is to come; yet goes out to a hard service. This corrected him for the fraud on his father. The blessing shall be conferred on him, yet he shall smart for the indirect course taken to obtain it. Jacob is dismissed by his father with a solemn charge. He must not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan: those who profess religion, should not marry with those that care not for religion. Also with a solemn blessing. Isaac had before blessed him unwittingly; now he does it designedly. This blessing is more full than the former; it is a gospel blessing. This promise looks as high as heaven, of which Canaan was a type. That was the better country which Jacob and the other patriarchs had in view.

☞ Genesis 28:6

Vs. 6-9: Good examples impress even the profane and malicious. But Esau thought, by pleasing his parents in one thing, to atone for other wrong doings. Carnal hearts are apt to think themselves as good as they should be, because in some one matter they are not so bad as they have been.

☞ Genesis 28:10

Vs. 10-15: Jacob's conduct hitherto, as recorded, was not that of one who simply feared and trusted in God. But now in trouble, obliged to flee, he looked only to God to make him to dwell in safety, and he could lie down and sleep in the open air with his head upon a stone. Any true believer would be willing to take up with Jacob's pillow, provided he might have Jacob's vision. God's time to visit his people with his comforts, is, when they are most destitute of other comforts, and other comforters. Jacob saw a ladder which reached from earth to heaven, the angels going up and coming down, and God himself at the head of it. This represents,

1. The providence of God, by which there is a constant intercourse kept up between heaven and earth. This let Jacob know that he had both a good guide and a good guard.
2. The mediation of Christ. He is this ladder; the foot on earth in his human nature, the top in heaven in his Divine nature. Christ is the Way; all God's favors come to us, and all our services go to him, by Christ, ^{<LXX>}John 1:51.

By this way, sinners draw near to the throne of grace with acceptance. By faith we perceive this way, and in prayer we approach by it. In answer to prayer we receive all needful blessings of providence and grace. We have no way of getting to heaven but by Christ. And when the soul, by faith, can see these things, then every place will become pleasant, and every prospect joyful. He will never leave us, until his last promise is accomplished in our everlasting happiness. God now spake comfortably to Jacob. He spake from the head of the ladder. All the glad tidings we receive from heaven come through Jesus Christ. The Messiah should come from Jacob. Christ is the great blessing of the world. All that are blessed, are blessed in him, and none of any family are shut out from blessedness in him, but those that shut out themselves. Jacob had to fear danger from his brother Esau; but God promises to keep him. He had a long journey before him; to an unknown country; but, Behold, I am with thee, and God promises to bring him back again to this land. He seemed to be forsaken of all his friends; but God gives him this assurance, I will not leave thee. Whom God loves, he never leaves.

^{<LXX>}Genesis 28:16

Vs. 16-19: God manifested himself and his favor, to Jacob, when he was asleep. The Spirit, like the wind, blows when and where it listeth, and God's grace, like the dew, tarrieth not for the sons of men. Jacob sought to improve the visit God had made him. Wherever we are, in the city or in the desert, in the house or in the field, in the shop or in the street, we may keep up our intercourse with Heaven, if it is not our own fault. But the more we see of God, the more cause we see for holy trembling before him.

^{<LXX>}Genesis 28:20

Vs. 20-22: Jacob made a solemn vow on this occasion. In this observe,

1. Jacob's faith. He trusts that God will be with him, and will keep him; he depends upon it.
2. Jacob's moderation in his desires. He asks not for soft clothing and dainty meat. If God give us much, we are bound to be thankful, and to use it for him; if he gives us but little, we are bound to be content, and cheerfully to enjoy him in it.
3. Jacob's piety, and his regard to God, appear in what he desired, that God would be with him, and keep him.

We need desire no more to make us easy and happy. Also his resolution is, to cleave to the Lord, as his God in covenant. When we receive more than common mercy from God, we should abound in gratitude to him. The tenth is a fit proportion to be devoted to God, and employed for him; though it may be more or less, as God prospers us, ~~612~~ 1 Corinthians 16:2. Let us then remember our Bethels, how we stand engaged by solemn vows to yield ourselves to the Lord, to take him for our God, and to devote all we have and are to his glory!

CHAPTER 29

Jacob comes to the well of Haran. (1-8) His interview with Rachel, Laban entertains him. (9-14) Jacob's covenant for Rachel, Laban's deceit. (15-30) Leah's sons. (31-35)

Genesis 29:1

Vs. 1-8: Jacob proceeded cheerfully in his journey, after the sweet communion he had with God at Beth-el. Providence brought him to the field where his unequalled flocks were to be watered. What is said of the care of the shepherds for their sheep, may remind us of the tender concern which our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, has for his flock the church; for he is the good Shepherd, that knows his sheep, and is known of them. The stone at the well's mouth was to secure it; water was scarce, it was not there for every one's use: but separate interests should not take us from helping one another. When all the shepherds came together with their flocks, then, like loving neighbors, they watered their flocks together. The law of kindness in the tongue has a commanding power, ¹⁸²³Proverbs 31:26. Jacob was civil to these strangers, and he found them civil to him.

Genesis 29:9

Vs. 9-14: See Rachel's humility and industry. Nobody needs to be ashamed of honest, useful labor, nor ought it to hinder any one's preferment. When Jacob understood that this was his kinswoman, he was very ready to serve her. Laban, though not the best humored, bade him welcome, and was satisfied with the account Jacob gave of himself. While we avoid being foolishly ready to believe every thing which is told us, we must take heed of being uncharitably suspicious.

Genesis 29:15

Vs. 15-30: During the month that Jacob spent as a guest, he was not idle. Wherever we are, it is good to employ ourselves in some useful business. Laban was desirous that Jacob should continue with him. Inferior relations must not be imposed upon; it is our duty to reward them. Jacob made

known to Laban the affection he had for his daughter Rachel. And having no worldly goods with which to endow her, he promises seven years' service. Love makes long and hard services short and easy; hence we read of the labor of love, ^{<3190>}Hebrews 6:10. If we know how to value the happiness of heaven, the sufferings of this present time will be as nothing to us. An age of work will be but as a few days to those that love God, and long for Christ's appearing. Jacob, who had imposed upon his father, is imposed upon by Laban, his father-in-law, by a like deception. Herein, how unrighteous soever Laban was, the Lord was righteous: see ^{<3100>}Judges 1:7. Even the righteous, if they take a false step, are sometimes thus recompense in the earth. And many who are not, like Jacob, in their marriage, disappointed in person, soon find themselves, as much to their grief, disappointed in the character. The choice of that relation ought to be made with good advice and thought on both sides. There is reason to believe that Laban's excuse was not true. His way of settling the matter made bad worse. Jacob was drawn into the disquiet of multiplying wives. He could not refuse Rachel, for he had espoused her; still less could he refuse Leah. As yet there was no express command against marrying more than one wife. It was in the patriarchs a sin of ignorance; but it will not justify the like practice now, when God's will is plainly made known by the Divine law, ^{<3188>}Leviticus 18:18, and more fully since, by our Savior, that one man and woman only must be joined together, ^{<3102>}1 Corinthians 7:2.

^{<1228>}Genesis 29:31

Vs. 31-35: The names Leah gave her children, expressed her respect and regard, both to God and to her husband. Reuben, or See a son, with this thought, Now will my husband love me; Levi, or joined, expecting, Now will my husband be joined unto me. Mutual affection is both the duty and comfort of the married relation; and yoke-fellows should study to recommend themselves to each other, ^{<3173>}1 Corinthians 7:33,34. She thankfully acknowledges the kind providence of God in hearing her. Whatever supports and comforts us under afflictions, or tends to our deliverance from them, God must be owned in it. Her fourth son she called Judah, or praise, saying, Now will I praise the Lord. This was he, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. Whatever is the matter of our rejoicing, ought to be the matter of our thanksgiving. Fresh favors should

quicken us to praise God for former favors; Now will I praise the Lord more and better than I have done. All our praises must center in Christ, both as the matter of them, and as the Mediator of them. He descended after the flesh from him whose name was "Praise," and He is our praise. Is Christ formed in my heart? Now will I praise the Lord.

CHAPTER 30

A further account of Jacob's family. (1-13) Rachel beareth Joseph. (14-24) Jacob's new agreement with Laban to serve him for cattle. (25-43)

Genesis 30:1

Vs. 1-13: Rachel envied her sister: envy is grieving at the good of another, than which no sin is more hateful to God, or more hurtful to our neighbors and ourselves. She considered not that God made the difference, and that in other things she had the advantage. Let us carefully watch against all the risings and workings of this passion in our minds. Let not our eye be evil towards any of our fellow-servants, because our Master's is good. Jacob loved Rachel, and therefore reprov'd her for what she said amiss. Faithful reproofs show true affection. God may be to us instead of any creature; but it is sin and folly to place any creature in God's stead, and to place that confidence in any creature, which should be placed in God only. At the persuasion of Rachel, Jacob took Bilhah her handmaid to wife, that, according to the usage of those times, her children might be owned as her mistress's children. Had not Rachel's heart been influenced by evil passions, she would have thought her sister's children nearer to her, and more entitled to her care than Bilhah's. But children whom she had a right to rule, were more desirable to her than children she had more reason to love. As an early instance of her power over these children, she takes pleasure in giving them names that carry in them marks of rivalry with her sister. See what roots of bitterness envy and strife are, and what mischief they make among relations. At the persuasion of Leah, Jacob took Zilpah her handmaid to wife also. See the power of jealousy and rivalry, and admire the wisdom of the Divine appointment, which joins together one man and one woman only; for God hath called us to peace and purity.

Genesis 30:14

Vs. 14-24: The desire, good in itself, but often too great and irregular, of being the mother of the promised Seed, with the honor of having many children, and the reproach of being barren, were causes of this unbecoming contest between the sisters. The truth appears to be, that they were

influenced by the promises of God to Abraham; whose posterity were promised the richest blessings, and from whom the Messiah was to descend.

Genesis 30:25

Vs. 25-43: The fourteen years being gone, Jacob was willing to depart without any provision, except God's promise. But he had in many ways a just claim on Laban's substance, and it was the will of God that he should be provided for from it. He referred his cause to God, rather than agree for stated wages with Laban, whose selfishness was very great. And it would appear that he acted honestly, when none but those of the colors fixed upon should be found among his cattle. Laban selfishly thought that his cattle would produce few different in color from their own. Jacob's course after this agreement has been considered an instance of his policy and management. But it was done by intimation from God, and as a token of his power. The Lord will one way or another plead the cause of the oppressed, and honor those who simply trust his providence. Neither could Laban complain of Jacob, for he had nothing more than was freely agreed that he should have; nor was he injured, but greatly benefited by Jacob's services. May all our mercies be received with thanksgiving and prayer, that coming from his bounty, they may lead to his praise.

CHAPTER 31

*Jacob departs secretly. (1-21) Laban pursues Jacob. (23-35)
Jacob's complaint of Laban's conduct. (36-42) Their covenant at
Galeed. (43-55)*

Genesis 31:1

Vs. 1-21: The affairs of these families are related very minutely, while (what are called) the great events of states and kingdoms at that period, are not mentioned. The Bible teaches people the common duties of life, how to serve God, how to enjoy the blessings he bestows, and to do good in the various stations and duties of life. Selfish men consider themselves robbed of all that goes past them, and covetousness will even swallow up natural affection. Men's overvaluing worldly wealth is that error which is the root of covetousness, envy, and all evil. The men of the world stand in each other's way, and every one seems to be taking away from the rest; hence discontent, envy, and discord. But there are possessions that will suffice for all; happy they who seek them in the first place. In all our removals we should have respect to the command and promise of God. If He be with us, we need not fear. The perils which surround us are so many, that nothing else can really encourage our hearts. To remember favored seasons of communion with God, is very refreshing when in difficulties; and we should often recollect our vows, that we fail not to fulfill them.

Genesis 31:22

Vs. 22-35: God can put a bridle in the mouth of wicked men, to restrain their malice, though he do not change their hearts. Though they have no love to God's people, they will pretend to it, and try to make a merit of necessity. Foolish Laban! to call those things his gods which could be stolen! Enemies may steal our goods, but not our God. Here Laban lays to Jacob's charge things that he knew not. Those who commit their cause to God, are not forbidden to plead it themselves with meekness and fear. When we read of Rachel's stealing her father's images, what a scene of iniquity opens! The family of Nahor, who left the idolatrous Chaldees; is this family itself become idolatrous? It is even so. The truth seems to be, that they were like some in after-times, who swore by the Lord and by

Malcham, ^{<310>}Zephaniah 1:5; and like others in our times, who wish to serve both God and mammon. Great numbers will acknowledge the true God in words, but their hearts and houses are the abodes of spiritual idolatry. When a man gives himself up to covetousness, like Laban, the world is his God; and he has only to reside among gross idolaters in order to become one, or at least a favorer of their abominations.

^{<133>}**Genesis 31:36**

Vs. 36-42: If Jacob were willingly consumed with heat in the day, and frost by night, to become the son-in-law of Laban, what should we refuse to endure, to become the sons of God? Jacob speaks of God as the God of his father; he thought himself unworthy to be regarded, but was beloved for his father's sake. He calls him the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac; for Abraham was dead, and gone to that world where perfect love casts out fear; but Isaac was yet alive, sanctifying the Lord in his heart, as his fear and his dread.

^{<134>}**Genesis 31:43**

Vs. 43-55: Laban could neither justify himself nor condemn Jacob, therefore desires to hear no more of that matter. He is not willing to own himself in fault, as he ought to have done. But he proposes a covenant of friendship between them, to which Jacob readily agrees. A heap of stones was raised, to keep up the memory of the event, writing being then not known or little used. A sacrifice of peace offerings was offered. Peace with God puts true comfort into our peace with our friends. They did eat bread together, partaking of the feast upon the sacrifice. In ancient times covenants of friendship were ratified by the parties eating and drinking together. God is judge between contending parties, and he will judge righteously; whoever do wrong, it is at their peril. They gave a new name to the place, The heap of witness. After this angry parley, they part friends. God is often better to us than our fears, and overrules the spirits of men in our favor, beyond what we could have expected; for it is not in vain to trust in him.

CHAPTER 32

Jacob's vision at Mahanaim, His fear of Esau. (1-8) Jacob's earnest prayer for deliverance, He prepares a present for Esau. (9-23) He wrestles with the Angel. (24-32)

Genesis 32:1

Vs. 1-8: The angels of God appeared to Jacob, to encourage him with the assurance of the Divine protection. When God designs his people for great trials, he prepares them by great comforts. While Jacob, to whom the promise belonged, had been in hard service, Esau was become a prince. Jacob sent a message, showing that he did not insist upon the birth-right. Yielding pacifies great offenses, ^{<210>} Ecclesiastes 10:4. We must not refuse to speak respectfully, even to those unjustly angry with us. Jacob received an account of Esau's warlike preparations against him, and was greatly afraid. A lively sense of danger, and quickening fear arising from it, may be found united with humble confidence in God's power and promise.

Genesis 32:9

Vs. 9-23: Times of fear should be times of prayer: whatever causes fear, should drive us to our knees, to our God. Jacob had lately seen his guards of angels, but in this distress he applied to God, not to them; he knew they were his fellow-servants, ^{<621>} Revelation 22:9. There cannot be a better pattern for true prayer than this. Here is a thankful acknowledgment of former undeserved favors; a humble confession of unworthiness; a plain statement of his fears and distress; a full reference of the whole affair to the Lord, and resting all his hopes on him. The best we can say to God in prayer, is what he has said to us. Thus he made the name of the Lord his strong tower, and could not but be safe. Jacob's fear did not make him sink into despair, nor did his prayer make him presume upon God's mercy, without the use of means. God answers prayers by teaching us to order our affairs aright. To pacify Esau, Jacob sent him a present. We must not despair of reconciling ourselves to those most angry against us.

Genesis 32:24

Vs. 24-32: A great while before day, Jacob being alone, more fully spread his fears before God in prayer. While thus employed, One in the likeness of a man wrestled with him. When the spirit helpeth our infirmities, and our earnest and vast desires can scarcely find words to utter them, and we still mean more than we can express, then prayer is indeed wrestling with God. However tried or discouraged, we shall prevail; and prevailing with Him in prayer, we shall prevail against all enemies that strive with us. Nothing requires more vigor and unceasing exertion than wrestling. It is an emblem of the true spirit of faith and prayer. Jacob kept his ground; though the struggle continued long, this did not shake his faith, nor silence his prayer. He will have a blessing, and had rather have all his bones put out of joint than go away without one. Those who would have the blessing of Christ, must resolve to take no denial. The fervent prayer is the effectual prayer. The Angel puts a lasting mark of honor upon him, by changing his name. Jacob signifies a supplanter. From henceforth he shall be celebrated, not for craft and artful management, but for true valor. Thou shalt be called Israel, a prince with God, a name greater than those of the great men of the earth. He is a prince indeed that is a prince with God; those are truly honorable that are mighty in prayer. Having power with God, he shall have power with men too; he shall prevail, and gain Esau's favor. Jacob gives a new name to the place. He calls it Peniel, the face of God, because there he had seen the appearance of God, and obtained the favor of God. It becomes those whom God honors, to admire his grace towards them. The Angel who wrestled with Jacob was the second Person in the sacred Trinity, who was afterwards God manifest in the flesh, and who, dwelling in human nature, is called Immanuel, ^{32:24}Hosea 12:4,5. Jacob halted on his thigh. It might serve to keep him from being lifted up with the abundance of the revelations. The sun rose on Jacob: it is sun-rise with that soul, which has had communion with God.

CHAPTER 33

The friendly meeting of Jacob and Esau. (1-16) Jacob comes to Succoth and Shalem, He builds an altar. (17-20)

◀1877 Genesis 33:1

Vs. 1-16: Jacob, having by prayer committed his case to God, went on his way. Come what will, nothing can come amiss to him whose heart is fixed, trusting in God. Jacob bowed to Esau. A humble, submissive behavior goes far towards turning away wrath. Esau embraced Jacob. God has the hearts of all men in his hands, and can turn them when and how he pleases. It is not in vain to trust in God, and to call upon him in the day of trouble. And when a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. Esau receives Jacob as a brother, and much tenderness passes between them. Esau asks, Who are those with thee? To this common question, Jacob spoke like himself, like a man whose eyes are ever directed towards the Lord. Jacob urged Esau, though his fear was over, and he took his present. It is well when men's religion makes them generous, free-hearted, and open-handed. But Jacob declined Esau's offer to accompany him. It is not desirable to be too intimate with superior ungodly relations, who will expect us to join in their vanities, or at least to wink at them, though they blame, and perhaps mock at, our religion. Such will either be a snare to us, or offended with us. We shall venture the loss of all things, rather than endanger our souls, if we know their value; rather than renounce Christ, if we truly love him. And let Jacob's care and tender attention to his family and flocks remind us of the good Shepherd of our souls, who gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young, ²³⁰¹¹Isaiah 40:11. As parents, teachers or pastors, we should all follow his example.

◀1877 Genesis 33:17

Vs. 17-20: Jacob did not content himself with words of thanks for God's favor to him, but gave real thanks. Also he kept up religion, and the worship of God in his family. Where we have a tent, God must have an altar. Jacob dedicated this altar to the honor of El-elohe-Israel, God, the God of Israel; to the honor of God, the only living and true God; and to the

honor of the God of Israel, as a God in covenant with him. Israel's God is Israel's glory. Blessed be his name, he is still the mighty God, the God of Israel. May we praise his name, and rejoice in his love, through our pilgrimage here on earth, and for ever in the heavenly Canaan.

CHAPTER 34

Dinah defiled by Shechem. (1-19) The Shechemites murdered by Simeon and Levi. (20-31)

Genesis 34:1

Vs. 1-19: Young persons, especially females, are never so safe and well off as under the care of pious parents. Their own ignorance, and the flattery and artifices of designing, wicked people, who are ever laying snares for them, expose them to great danger. They are their own enemies if they desire to go abroad, especially alone, among strangers to true religion. Those parents are very wrong who do not hinder their children from needlessly exposing themselves to danger. Indulged children, like Dinah, often become a grief and shame to their families. Her pretense was, to see the daughters of the land, to see how they dressed, and how they danced, and what was fashionable among them; she went to see, yet that was not all, she went to be seen too. She went to get acquaintance with the Canaanites, and to learn their ways. See what came of Dinah's gadding. The beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water. How great a matter does a little fire kindle! We should carefully avoid all occasions of sin and approaches to it.

Genesis 34:20

Vs. 20-31: The Shechemites submitted to the sacred rite, only to serve a turn, to please their prince, and to enrich themselves, and it was just with God to bring punishment upon them. As nothing secures us better than true religion, so nothing exposes us more than religion only pretended to. But Simeon and Levi were most unrighteous. Those who act wickedly, under the pretext of religion, are the worst enemies of the truth, and harden the hearts of many to destruction. The crimes of others form no excuse for us. Alas! how one sin leads on to another, and, like flames of fire, spread desolation in every direction! Foolish pleasures lead to seduction; seduction produces wrath; wrath thirsts for revenge; the thirst of revenge has recourse to treachery; treachery issues in murder; and murder is followed by other lawless actions. Were we to trace the history of

unlawful commerce between the sexes, we should find it, more than any other sin, ending in blood.

CHAPTER 35

God commands Jacob to go to Beth-el, He puts away idols from his family. (1-5) Jacob builds an altar, Death of Deborah, God blesses Jacob. (6-15) Death of Rachel. (16-20) Reuben's crime, The death of Isaac. (21-29)

Genesis 35:1

Vs. 1-5: Beth-el was forgotten. But as many as God loves, he will remind of neglected duties, one way or other, by conscience or by providence. When we have vowed a vow to God, it is best not to defer the payment of it; yet better late than never. Jacob commanded his household to prepare, not only for the journey and removal, but for religious services. Masters of families should use their authority to keep up religion in their families, ⁶⁶⁴⁵Joshua 24:15. They must put away strange gods. In families where there is a face of religion, and an altar to God, yet many times there is much amiss, and more strange gods than one would suppose. They must be clean, and change their garments. These were but outward ceremonies, signifying the purifying and change of the heart. What are clean clothes, and new clothes, without a clean heart, and a new heart? If Jacob had called for these idols sooner, they had parted with them sooner. Sometimes attempts for reformation succeed better than we could have thought. Jacob buried their images. We must be wholly separated from our sins, as we are from those that are dead and buried out of sight. He removed from Shechem to Beth-el. Though the Canaanites were very angry against the sons of Jacob for their barbarous usage of the Shechemites, yet they were so kept back by Divine power, that they could not take the opportunity now offered to avenge them. The way of duty is the way of safety. When we are about God's work, we are under special protection; God is with us, while we are with him; and if He be for us, who can be against us? God governs the world more by secret terrors on men's minds than we are aware of.

Genesis 35:6

Vs. 6-15: The comfort the saints have in holy ordinances, is not so much from Beth-el, the house of God, as from El-beth-el, the God of the house.

The ordinances are empty things, if we do not meet with God in them. There Jacob buried Deborah, Rebecca's nurse. She died much lamented. Old servants in a family, that have in their time been faithful and useful, ought to be respected. God appeared to Jacob. He renewed the covenant with him. I am God Almighty, God all-sufficient, able to make good the promise in due time, and to support thee and provide for thee in the mean time. Two things are promised; that he should be the father of a great nation, and that he should be the master of a good land. These two promises had a spiritual signification, which Jacob had some notion of, though not so clear and distinct as we now have. Christ is the promised Seed, and heaven is the promised land; the former is the foundation, and the latter the top-stone, of all God's favors.

Genesis 35:16

Vs. 16-20: Rachel had passionately said, Give me children, or else I die; and now that she had children, she died! The death of the body is but the departure of the soul to the world of spirits. When shall we learn that it is God alone who really knows what is best for his people, and that in all worldly affairs the safest path for the Christian is to say from the heart, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. Here alone is our safety and our comfort, to know no will but his. Her dying lips called her newborn son Ben-oni, the son of my sorrow; and many a son proves to be the heaviness of her that bare him. Children are enough the sorrow of their mothers; they should, therefore, when they grow up, study to be their joy, and so, if possible, to make them some amends. But Jacob, because he would not renew the sorrowful remembrance of the mother's death every time he called his son, changed his name to Benjamin, the son of my right hand: that is, very dear to me; the support of my age, like the staff in my right hand.

Genesis 35:21

Vs. 21-29: What a sore affliction Reuben's sin was, is shown, "and Israel heard it." No more is said, but that is enough. Reuben thought that his father would never hear of it; but those that promise themselves secrecy in sin, are generally disappointed. The age and death of Isaac are recorded, though he died not till after Joseph was sold into Egypt. Isaac lived about forty years after he had made his will, chap. ⁽¹²⁷⁾27:2. We shall not die an

hour the sooner, but much the better, for timely setting our hearts and houses in order. Particular notice is taken of the agreement of Esau and Jacob at their father's funeral, to show how God had wonderfully changed Esau's mind. It is awful to behold relations, sometimes for a little of this world's goods, disputing over the graves of their friends, while they are near going to the grave themselves.

CHAPTER 36

Esau and his descendants.

Genesis 36:1

The registers in this chapter show the faithfulness of God to his promise to Abraham. Esau is here called Edom, that name which kept up the remembrance of his selling his birth-right for a mess of pottage. Esau continued the same profane despiser of heavenly things. In outward prosperity and honor, the children of the covenant are often behind, and those that are out of the covenant get the start. We may suppose it a trial to the faith of God's Israel, to hear of the pomp and power of the kings of Edom, while they were bond-slaves in Egypt; but those that look for great things from God, must be content to wait for them; God's time is the best time. Mount Seir is called the land of their possession. Canaan was at this time only the land of promise. Seir was in the possession of the Edomites. The children of this world have their all in hand, and nothing in hope, <2165 Luke 16:25; while the children of God have their all in hope, and next to nothing in hand. But, all things considered, it is beyond compare better to have Canaan in promise, than mount Seir in possession.

CHAPTER 37

Joseph is loved of Jacob, but hated by his brethren. (1-4) Joseph's dreams. (5-11) Jacob sends Joseph to visit his brethren, They conspire his death. (12-22) Joseph's brethren sell him. (23-10) Jacob deceived, Joseph sold to Potiphar. (31-36)

◀1376 Genesis 37:1

Vs. 1-4: In Joseph's history we see something of Christ, who was first humbled and then exalted. It also shows the lot of Christians, who must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom. It is a history that has none like it, for displaying the various workings of the human mind, both good and bad, and the singular providence of God in making use of them for fulfilling his purposes. Though Joseph was his father's darling, yet he was not bred up in idleness. Those do not truly love their children, who do not use them to business, and labor, and hardships. The fondling of children is with good reason called the spoiling of them. Those who are trained up to do nothing, are likely to be good for nothing. But Jacob made known his love, by dressing Joseph finer than the rest of his children. It is wrong for parents to make a difference between one child and another, unless there is great cause for it, by the children's dutifulness, or undutifulness. When parents make a difference, children soon notice it, and it leads to quarrels in families. Jacob's sons did that, when they were from under his eye, which they durst not have done at home with him; but Joseph gave his father an account of their ill conduct, that he might restrain them. Not as a tale-bearer, to sow discord, but as a faithful brother.

◀1376 Genesis 37:5

Vs. 5-11: God gave Joseph betimes the prospect of his advancement, to support and comfort him under his long and grievous troubles. Observe, Joseph dreamed of his preferment, but he did not dream of his imprisonment. Thus many young people, when setting out in the world, think of nothing but prosperity and pleasure, and never dream of trouble. His brethren rightly interpreted the dream, though they abhorred the interpretation of it. While they committed crimes in order to defeat it, they were themselves the instruments of accomplishing it. Thus the Jews

understood what Christ said of his kingdom. Determined that he should not reign over them, they consulted to put him to death; and by his crucifixion, made way for the exaltation they designed to prevent.

Genesis 37:12

Vs. 12-22: How readily does Joseph wait his father's orders! Those children who are best beloved by their parents, should be the most ready to obey them. See how deliberate Joseph's brethren were against him. They thought to slay him from malice aforethought, and in cold blood. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, ^{<1372}1 John 3:15. The sons of Jacob hated their brother because their father loved him. New occasions, as his dreams and the like, drew them on further; but this laid rankling in their hearts, till they resolved on his death. God has all hearts in his hands. Reuben had most reason to be jealous of Joseph, for he was the first-born; yet he proves his best friend. God overruled all to serve his own purpose, of making Joseph an instrument to save much people alive. Joseph was a type of Christ; for though he was the beloved Son of his Father, and hated by a wicked world, yet the Father sent him out of his bosom to visit us in great humility and love. He came from heaven to earth to seek and save us; yet then malicious plots were laid against him. His own not only received him not, but crucified him. This he submitted to, as a part of his design to redeem and save us.

Genesis 37:23

Vs. 23-30: They threw Joseph into a pit, to perish there with hunger and cold; so cruel were their tender mercies. They slighted him when he was in distress, and were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph, see ^{<3106}Amos 6:6; for when he was pining in the pit, they sat down to eat bread. They felt no remorse of conscience for the sin. But the wrath of man shall praise God, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain, ^{<3763}Psalm 76:10. Joseph's brethren were wonderfully restrained from murdering him, and their selling him as wonderfully turned to God's praise.

Genesis 37:31

Vs. 31-36: When Satan has taught men to commit one sin, he teaches them to try to conceal it with another; to hide theft and murder, with lying and false oaths: but he that covers his sin shall not prosper long. Joseph's

brethren kept their own and one another's counsel for some time; but their villainy came to light at last, and it is here published to the world. To grieve their father, they sent him Joseph's coat of colors; and he hastily thought, on seeing the bloody coat, that Joseph was rent in pieces. Let those that know the heart of a parent, suppose the agony of poor Jacob. His sons basely pretended to comfort him, but miserable, hypocritical comforters were they all. Had they really desired to comfort him, they might at once have done it, by telling the truth. The heart is strangely hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Jacob refused to be comforted. Great affection to any creature prepares for so much the greater affliction, when it is taken from us, or made bitter to us: undue love commonly ends in undue grief. It is the wisdom of parents not to bring up children delicately, they know not to what hardships they may be brought before they die. From the whole of this chapter we see with wonder the ways of Providence. The malignant brothers seem to have gotten their ends; the merchants, who care not what they deal in so that they gain, have also obtained theirs; and Potiphar, having got a fine young slave, has obtained his! But God's designs are, by these means, in train for execution. This event shall end in Israel's going down to Egypt; that ends in their deliverance by Moses; that in setting up the true religion in the world; and that in the spread of it among all nations by the gospel. Thus the wrath of man shall praise the Lord, and the remainder thereof will he restrain.

CHAPTER 38

The profligate conduct of Judah and his family.

Genesis 38:1

This chapter gives an account of Judah and his family, and such an account it is, that it seems a wonder that of all Jacob's sons, our Lord should spring out of Judah, ^{}Hebrews 7:14. But God will show that his choice is of grace and not of merit, and that Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief. Also, that the worthiness of Christ is of himself, and not from his ancestors. How little reason had the Jews, who were so called from this Judah, to boast as they did, ^{}John 8:41. What awful examples the Lord proclaims in his punishments, of his utter displeasure at sin! Let us seek grace from God to avoid every appearance of sin. And let that state of humbleness to which Jesus submitted, when he came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, in appointing such characters as those here recorded, to be his ancestors, endear the Redeemer to our hearts.

CHAPTER 39

Joseph preferred by Potiphar. (1-6) Joseph resists temptation. (7-12) Joseph is falsely accused by his mistress. (13-18) He is cast into prison, God is with him there. (19-23)

◀GEN Genesis 39:1

Vs. 1-6: Our enemies may strip us of outward distinctions and ornaments; but wisdom and grace cannot be taken from us. They may separate us from friends, relatives, and country; but they cannot take from us the presence of the Lord. They may shut us from outward blessings, rob us of liberty, and confine us in dungeons; but they cannot shut us out from communion with God, from the throne of grace, or take from us the blessings of salvation. Joseph was blessed, wonderfully blessed, even in the house where he was a slave. God's presence with us, makes all we do prosperous. Good men are the blessings of the place where they live; good servants may be so, though mean and lightly esteemed. The prosperity of the wicked is, one way or other, for the sake of the godly. Here was a wicked family blessed for the sake of one good servant in it.

◀GEN Genesis 39:7

Vs. 7-12: Beauty either in men or women, often proves a snare both to themselves and others. This forbids pride in it, and requires constant watchfulness against the temptation that attends it. We have great need to make a covenant with our eyes, lest the eyes infect the heart. When lust has got power, decency, and reputation, and conscience, are all sacrificed. Potiphar's wife showed that her heart was fully set to do evil. Satan, when he found he could not overcome Joseph with the troubles and the frowns of the world, for in them he still held fast his principle, assaulted him with pleasures, which have ruined more than the former. But Joseph, by the grace of God, was enabled to resist and overcome this temptation; and his escape was as great an instance of the Divine power, as the deliverance of the three children out of the fiery furnace. This sin was one which might most easily beset him. The tempter was his mistress, one whose favor would help him forward; and it was at his utmost peril if he slighted her, and made her his enemy. The time and place favored the temptation. To all

this was added frequent, constant urging. The almighty grace of God enabled Joseph to overcome this assault of the enemy. He urges what he owed both to God and his master. We are bound in honor, as well as justice and gratitude, not in any thing to wrong those who place trust in us, how secretly soever it may be done. He would not offend his God. Three arguments Joseph urges upon himself.

1. He considers who he was that was tempted. One in covenant with God, who professed religion and relation to him.
2. What the sin was to which he was tempted. Others might look upon it as a small matter; but Joseph did not so think of it. Call sin by its own name, and never lessen it. Let sins of this nature always be looked upon as great wickedness, as exceedingly sinful.
3. Against whom he was tempted to sin, against God. Sin is against God, against his nature and his dominion, against his love and his design.

Those that love God, for this reason hate sin. The grace of God enabled Joseph to overcome the temptation, by avoiding the temper. He would not stay to parley with the temptation, but fled from it, as escaping for his life. If we mean not to do iniquity, let us flee as a bird from the snare, and as a roe from the hunter.

Genesis 39:13

Vs. 13-18: Joseph's mistress, having tried in vain to make him a guilty man, endeavored to be avenged on him. Those that have broken the bonds of modesty, will never be held by the bonds of truth. It is no new thing for the best of men to be falsely accused of the worst of crimes, by those who themselves are the worst of criminals. It is well there is a day of discovery coming, in which all shall appear in their true characters.

Genesis 39:19

Vs. 19-23: Joseph's master believed the accusation. Potiphar, it is likely, chose that prison, because it was the worst; but God designed to open the way to Joseph's honor. Joseph was owned and righted by his God. He was away from all his friends and relations; he had none to help or comfort him; but the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy. Those that

have a good conscience in a prison, have a good God there. God gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison; he trusted him to manage the affairs of the prison. A good man will do good wherever he is, and will be a blessing even in bonds and banishment. Let us not forget, through Joseph, to look unto Jesus, who suffered being tempted, yet without sin; who was slandered, and persecuted, and imprisoned, but without cause; who by the cross ascended to the throne. May we be enabled to follow the same path in submitting and in suffering, to the same place of glory.

CHAPTER 40

The chief butler and baker of Pharaoh in prison, Their dreams interpreted by Joseph. (1-19) The ingratitude of the chief butler. (20-23)

Genesis 40:1

Vs. 1-19: It was not so much the prison that made the butler and baker sad, as their dreams. God has more ways than one to sadden the spirits. Joseph had compassion towards them. Let us be concerned for the sadness of our brethren's countenances. It is often a relief to those that are in trouble to be noticed. Also learn to look into the causes of our own sorrow. Is there a good reason? Is there not comfort sufficient to balance it, whatever it is? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Joseph was careful to ascribe the glory to God. The chief butler's dream foretold his advancement. The chief baker's dream his death. It was not Joseph's fault that he brought the baker no better tidings. And thus ministers are but interpreters; they cannot make the thing otherwise than it is: if they deal faithfully, and their message prove displeasing, it is not their fault. Joseph does not reflect upon his brethren that sold him; nor does he reflect on the wrong done him by his mistress and his master, but mildly states his own innocence. When we are called on to clear ourselves, we should carefully avoid, as much as may be, speaking ill of others. Let us be content to prove ourselves innocent, and not upbraid others with their guilt.

Genesis 40:20

Vs. 20-23: Joseph's interpretation of the dreams came to pass on the very day fixed. On Pharaoh's birth-day, all his servants attended him, and then the cases of these two came to be looked into. We may all profitably take notice of our birth-days, with thankfulness for the mercies of our birth, sorrow for the sinfulness of our lives, and expectation of the day of our death, as better than the day of our birth. But it seems strange that worldly people, who are so fond of living here, should rejoice at the end of one year after another of their short span of life. A Christian has cause to rejoice that he was born, also that he comes nearer to the end of his sin and sorrow, and nearer to his everlasting happiness. The chief butler

remembered not Joseph, but forgot him. Joseph had deserved well at his hands, yet he forgot him. We must not think it strange, if in this world we have hatred shown us for our love, and slights for our kindness. See how apt those who are themselves at ease are to forget others in distress. Joseph learned by his disappointment to trust in God only. We cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from God. Let us not forget the sufferings, promises, and love of our Redeemer. We blame the chief butler's ingratitude to Joseph, yet we ourselves act much more ungratefully to the Lord Jesus. Joseph had but foretold the chief butler's enlargement, but Christ wrought out ours; he mediated with the King of Kings for us; yet we forget him, though often reminded of him, and though we have promised never to forget him. Thus ill do we requite Him, like foolish people and unwise.

CHAPTER 41

Pharaoh's dreams. (1-8) Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams. (9-32) Joseph's counsel, He is highly advanced. (33-45) Joseph's children, The beginning of the famine. (46-57)

Genesis 41:1

Vs. 1-8: The means of Joseph's being freed from prison were Pharaoh's dreams, as here related. Now that God no longer speaks to us in that way, it is no matter how little we either heed dreams, or tell them. The telling of foolish dreams can make no better than foolish talk. But these dreams showed that they were sent of God; when he awoke, Pharaoh's spirit was troubled.

Genesis 41:9

Vs. 9-32: God's time for the enlargement of his people is the fittest time. If the chief butler had got Joseph to be released from prison, it is probable he would have gone back to the land of the Hebrews. Then he had neither been so blessed himself, nor such a blessing to his family, as afterwards he proved. Joseph, when introduced to Pharaoh, gives honor to God. Pharaoh had dreamed that he stood upon the bank of the river Nile, and saw the kine, both the fat ones, and the lean ones, come out of the river. Egypt has no rain, but the plenty of the year depends upon the overflowing of the river Nile. See how many ways Providence has of dispensing its gifts; yet our dependence is still the same upon the First Cause, who makes every creature what it is to us, be it rain or river. See to what changes the comforts of this life are subject. We cannot be sure that tomorrow shall be as this day, or next year as this. We must learn how to want, as well as how to abound. Mark the goodness of God in sending the seven years of plenty before those of famine, that provision might be made. The produce of the earth is sometimes more, and sometimes less; yet, take one with another, he that gathers much, has nothing over; and he that gathers little, has no lack, **Exodus 16:18**. And see the perishing nature of our worldly enjoyments. The great harvests of the years of plenty were quite lost, and swallowed up in the years of famine; and that which seemed very much, yet did but just serve to keep the people alive. There is bread which lasts

to eternal life, which it is worth while to labor for. They that make the things of this world their good things, will find little pleasure in remembering that they have received them.

Genesis 41:33

Vs. 33-45: Joseph gave good advice to Pharaoh. Fair warning should always be followed by good counsel. God has in his word told us of a day of trial before us, when we shall need all the grace we can have. Now, therefore, provide accordingly. Pharaoh gave Joseph an honorable testimony. He is a man in whom the spirit of God is; and such men ought to be valued. Pharaoh puts upon Joseph marks of honor. He gave him such a name as spoke the value he had for him, Zaphnath-paaneah, “a revealer of secrets.” This preferment of Joseph encourages all to trust in God. Some translate Joseph’s new name, “the savior of the world.” The brightest glories, even of the upper world, are put upon Christ, the highest trust lodged in his hand, and all power given him, both in heaven and earth.

Genesis 41:46

Vs. 46-57: In the names of his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, Joseph owned the Divine providence.

1. He was made to forget his misery.
2. He was made fruitful in the land of his affliction.

The seven plenteous years came, and were ended. We ought to look forward to the end of the days, both of our prosperity and of our opportunity. We must not be secure in prosperity, nor slothful in making good use of opportunity. Years of plenty will end; what thy hand finds to do, do it; and gather in gathering time. The dearth came, and the famine was not only in Egypt, but in other lands. Joseph was diligent in laying up, while the plenty lasted. He was prudent and careful in giving out, when the famine came. Joseph was engaged in useful and important labors. Yet it was in the midst of this his activity that his father Jacob said, Joseph is not! What a large portion of our troubles would be done away if we knew the whole truth! Let these events lead us to Jesus. There is a famine of the bread of life throughout the whole earth. Go to Jesus, and what he bids you, do. Attend to his voice, apply to him; he will open his treasures, and

satisfy with goodness the hungry soul of every age and nation, without money and without price. But those who slight this provision must starve, and his enemies will be destroyed.

CHAPTER 42

Jacob sends ten sons to buy corn. (1-6) Joseph's treatment of his brethren. (7-20) Their remorse, Simeon detained. (21-24) The rest return with corn. (25-28) Jacob refuses to send Benjamin to Egypt. (29-38)

Genesis 42:1

Vs. 1-6: Jacob saw the corn his neighbors had bought in Egypt, and brought home. It is a spur to exertion to see others supplied. Shall others get food for their souls, and shall we starve while it is to be had? Having discovered where help is to be had, we should apply for it without delay, without shrinking from labor, or grudging expense, especially as regards our never-dying souls. There is provision in Christ; but we must come to him, and seek it from him.

Genesis 42:7

Vs. 7-20: Joseph was hard upon his brethren, not from a spirit of revenge, but to bring them to repentance. Not seeing his brother Benjamin, he suspected that they had made away with him, and he gave them occasion to speak of their father and brother. God, in his providence, sometimes seems harsh with those he loves, and speaks roughly to those for whom yet he has great mercy in store. Joseph settled at last, that one of them should be left, and the rest go home and fetch Benjamin. It was a very encouraging word he said to them, "I fear God;" as if he had said, You may be assured I will do you no wrong; I dare not, for I know there is one higher than I. With those that fear God, we may expect fair dealing.

Genesis 42:21

Vs. 21-24: The office of conscience is to bring to mind things long since said and done. When the guilt of this sin of Joseph's brethren was fresh, they made light of it, and sat down to eat bread; but now, long afterward, their consciences accused them of it. See the good of afflictions; they often prove the happy means of awakening conscience, and bringing sin to our remembrance. Also, the evil of guilt as to our brethren. Conscience now

reproached them for it. Whenever we think we have wrong done us, we ought to remember the wrong we have done to others. Reuben alone remembered with comfort, that he had done what he could to prevent the mischief. When we share with others in their sufferings, it will be a comfort if we have the testimony of our consciences for us, that we did not share in their evil deeds, but in our places witnessed against them. Joseph retired to weep. Though his reason directed that he should still carry himself as a stranger, because they were not as yet humbled enough, yet natural affection could not but work.

⁽¹⁴²⁵⁾ **Genesis 42:25**

Vs. 25-28: The brethren came for corn, and corn they had: not only so, but every man had his money given back. Thus Christ, like Joseph, gives out supplies without money and without price. The poorest are invited to buy. But guilty consciences are apt to take good providence in a bad sense; to put wrong meanings even upon things that make for them.

⁽¹⁴²⁹⁾ **Genesis 42:29**

Vs. 29-38: Here is the report Jacob's sons made to their father. It troubled the good man. Even the bundles of money Joseph returned, in kindness, to his father, frightened him. He laid the fault upon his sons; knowing them, he feared they had provoked the Egyptians, and wrongfully brought home their money. Jacob plainly distrusted his sons, remembering that he never saw Joseph since he had been with them. It is bad with a family, when children behave so ill that their parents know not how to trust them. Jacob gives up Joseph for gone, and Simeon and Benjamin as in danger; and concludes, All these things are against me. It proved otherwise, that all these things were for him, were working together for his good, and the good of his family. We often think that to be against us, which is really for us. We are afflicted in body, estate, name, and in our relations; and think all these things are against us, whereas they are really working for us a weight of glory. Thus does the Lord Jesus conceal himself and his favor, thus he rebukes and chastens those for whom he has purposes of love. By sharp corrections and humbling convictions he will break the stoutness and mar the pride of the heart, and bring to true repentance. Yet before sinners fully know him, or taste that he is gracious, he consults their good, and sustains their souls, to wait for him. May we do thus, never yielding to

discouragement, determining to seek no other refuge, and humbling ourselves more and more under his mighty hand. In due time he will answer our petitions, and do for us more than we can expect.

CHAPTER 43

Jacob is persuaded to send Benjamin into Egypt. (1-14) Joseph's reception of his brethren, their fears. (15-25) Joseph makes a feast for his brethren. (26-34)

◀1811 Genesis 43:1

Vs. 1-14: Jacob urges his sons to go and buy a little food; now, in time of dearth, a little must suffice. Judah urges that Benjamin should go with them. It is not against the honor and duty children owe their parents, humbly to advise them, and when needful, to reason with them. Jacob saw the necessity of the case, and yielded. His prudence and justice appeared in three things.

1. He sent back the money they had found in the sack. Honesty obliges us to restore not only that which comes to us by our own fault, but that which comes to us by the mistakes of others. Though we get it by oversight, if we keep it when the oversight is discovered, it is kept by deceit.
2. He sent as much again as they took the time before; the price of corn might be risen, or they might have to pay a ransom for Simeon.
3. He sent a present of such things as the land afforded, and as were scarce in Egypt, balm, and honey, etc. Providence dispenses not its gifts to all alike. But honey and spice will never make up the want of bread-corn.

The famine was sore in Canaan, yet they had balm and myrrh, etc. We may live well enough upon plain food, without dainties; but we cannot live upon dainties without plain food. Let us thank God that what is most needful and useful, generally is most cheap and common. Though men value very highly their gold and silver, and the luxuries which are counted the best fruits of every land, yet in a time of famine they willingly barter them for bread. And how little will earthly good things stand us in stead in the day of wrath! How ready should we be to renounce them all, as loss, for the excellencies of the knowledge of Jesus Christ! Our way to prevail

with man is by first prevailing with the Lord in fervent prayer. But, Thy will be done, should close every petition for the mercies of this life, or against the afflictions of this life.

Genesis 43:15

Vs. 15-25: Jacob's sons went down the second time into Egypt to buy corn. If we should ever know what a famine of the word means, let us not think it much to travel as far for spiritual food, as they did for bodily food. Joseph's steward had orders from his master to take them to his house. Even this frightened them. Those that are guilty make the worst of every thing. But the steward encouraged them. It appears, from what he said, that by his good master he was brought to the knowledge of the true God, the God of the Hebrews. Religious servants should take all fit occasions to speak of God and his providence, with reverence and seriousness.

Genesis 43:26

Vs. 26-34: Observe the great respect Joseph's brethren paid to him. Thus were Joseph's dreams more and more fulfilled. Joseph showed great kindness to them. He treated them nobly; but see here the early distance between Jews and gentiles. In a day of famine, it is enough to be fed; but they were feasted. Their cares and fears were now over, and they ate their bread with joy, reckoning they were upon good terms with the Lord of the land. If God accept our works, our present, we have reason to be cheerful. Joseph showed special regard for Benjamin, that he might try whether his brethren would envy him. It must be our rule, to be content with what we have, and not to grieve at what others have. Thus Jesus shows those whom he loves, more and more of their need. He makes them see that he is their only refuge from destruction. He overcomes their unwillingness, and brings them to himself. Then, as he sees good, he gives them some taste of his love, and welcomes them to the provisions of his house, as an earnest of what he further intends for them.

CHAPTER 44

Joseph's policy to stay his brethren, and try their affection for Benjamin. (1-17) Judah's supplication to Joseph. (18-34)

Genesis 44:1

Vs. 1-17: Joseph tried how his brethren felt towards Benjamin. Had they envied and hated the other son of Rachel as they had hated him, and if they had the same want of feeling towards their father Jacob as heretofore, they would now have shown it. When the cup was found upon Benjamin, they would have a pretext for leaving him to be a slave. But we cannot judge what men are now, by what they have been formerly; nor what they will do, by what they have done. The steward charged them with being ungrateful, rewarding evil for good; with folly, in taking away the cup of daily use, which would soon be missed, and diligent search made for it; for so it may be read, Is not this it in which my Lord drinketh, as having a particular fondness for it, and for which he would search thoroughly? Or, By which, leaving it carelessly at your table, he would make trial whether you were honest men or not? They throw themselves upon Joseph's mercy, and acknowledge the righteousness of God, perhaps thinking of the injury they had formerly done to Joseph, for which they thought God was now reckoning with them. Even in afflictions wherein we believe ourselves wronged by men, we must own that God is righteous, and finds out our sin.

Genesis 44:18

Vs. 18-34: Had Joseph been, as Judah supposed him, an utter stranger to the family, he could not but be wrought upon by his powerful reasonings. But neither Jacob nor Benjamin need an intercessor with Joseph; for he himself loved them. Judah's faithful cleaving to Benjamin, now, in his distress, was recompense long afterwards by the tribe of Benjamin keeping with the tribe of Judah, when the other tribes deserted it. The apostle, when discoursing of the mediation of Christ, observes, that our Lord sprang out of Judah, ^{<3074>}Hebrews 7:14; and he not only made intercession for the transgressors, but he became a Surety for them, testifying therein tender concern, both for his Father and for his brethren. Jesus, the great

antitype of Joseph, humbles and proves his people, even after they have had some tastes of his loving-kindness. He brings their sins to their remembrance, that they may exercise and show repentance, and feel how much they owe to his mercy.

CHAPTER 45

*Joseph comforts his brethren, and sends for his father. (1-15)
Pharaoh confirms Joseph's invitation, Joseph's gifts to his
brethren. (16-24) Jacob receives the news of Joseph's being alive.
(25-28)*

◀ **Genesis 45:1**

Vs. 1-15: Joseph let Judah go on, and heard all he had to say. He found his brethren humbled for their sins, mindful of himself, for Judah had mentioned him twice in his speech, respectful to their father, and very tender of their brother Benjamin. Now they were ripe for the comfort he designed, by making himself known. Joseph ordered all his attendants to withdraw. Thus Christ makes himself and his loving-kindness known to his people, out of the sight and hearing of the world. Joseph shed tears of tenderness and strong affection, and with these threw off that austerity with which he had hitherto behaved toward his brethren. This represents the Divine compassion toward returning penitents. "I am Joseph, your brother." This would humble them yet more for their sin in selling him, but would encourage them to hope for kind treatment. Thus, when Christ would convince Paul, he said, I am Jesus; and when he would comfort his disciples, he said, It is I, be not afraid. When Christ manifests himself to his people, he encourages them to draw near to him with a true heart. Joseph does so, and shows them, that whatever they thought to do against him, God had brought good out of it. Sinners must grieve and be angry with themselves for their sins, though God brings good out of it, for that is no thanks to them. The agreement between all this, and the case of a sinner, on Christ's manifesting himself to his soul, is very striking. He does not, on this account, think sin a less, but a greater evil; and yet he is so armed against despair, as even to rejoice in what God hath wrought, while he trembles in thinking of the dangers and destruction from which he has escaped. Joseph promises to take care of his father and all the family. It is the duty of children, if the necessity of their parents at any time require it, to support and supply them to the utmost of their ability; this is showing piety at home, ◀ 1 Timothy 5:4. After Joseph had embraced Benjamin, he caressed them all, and then his brethren talked with him

freely of all the affairs of their father's house. After the tokens of true reconciliation with the Lord Jesus, sweet communion with him follows.

Genesis 45:16

Vs. 16-24: Pharaoh was kind to Joseph, and to his relations for his sake. Egypt would make up the losses of their removal. Thus those for whom Christ intends his heavenly glory, ought not to regard the things of this world. The best of its enjoyments are but lumber; we cannot make sure of them while here, much less can we carry them away with us. Let us not set our eyes or hearts upon the world; there are better things for us in that blessed land, whither Christ, our Joseph, is gone to prepare a place. Joseph dismissed his brethren with a seasonable caution, "See that ye fall not out by the way." He knew they were too apt to be quarrelsome; and having forgiven them all, he lays this charge upon them, not to upbraid one another. This command our Lord Jesus has given to us, that we love one another, and that whatever happens, or has happened, we fall not out. For we are brethren, we have all one Father. We are all guilty, and instead of quarreling with one another, have reason to fall out with ourselves. We are, or hope to be, forgiven of God, whom we have all offended, and, therefore, should be ready to forgive one another. We are "by the way," a way through the land of Egypt, where we have many eyes upon us, that seek advantage against us; a way that leads to the heavenly Canaan, where we hope to be for ever in perfect peace.

Genesis 45:25

Vs. 25-28: To hear that Joseph is alive, is too good news to be true; Jacob faints, for he believes it not. We faint, because we do not believe. At length, Jacob is convinced of the truth. Jacob was old, and did not expect to live long. He says, Let my eyes be refreshed with this sight before they are closed, and then I need no more to make me happy in this world. Behold Jesus manifesting himself as a Brother and a Friend to those who once were his despisers, his enemies. He assures them of his love and the riches of his grace. He commands them to lay aside envy, anger, malice, and strife, and to live in peace with each other. He teaches them to give up the world for him and his fullness. He supplies all that is needful to bring them home to himself, that where he is they may be also. And though, when he at last sends for his people, they may for a time feel some doubts

and fears, yet the thought of seeing his glory and of being with him, will enable them to say, It is enough, I am willing to die; and I go to see, and to be with the Beloved of my soul.

CHAPTER 46

God's promises to Jacob. (1-4) Jacob and his family go to Egypt. (5-27) Joseph meets his father and his brethren. (28-34)

Genesis 46:1

Vs. 1-4: Even as to those events and undertakings which appear most joyful, we should seek counsel, assistance, and a blessing from the Lord. Attending on his ordinances, and receiving the pledges of his covenant love, we expect his presence, and that peace which it confers. In all removals we should be reminded of our removal out of this world. Nothing can encourage us to fear no evil when passing through the valley of the shadow of death, but the presence of Christ.

Genesis 46:5

Vs. 5-27: We have here a particular account of Jacob's family. Though the fulfilling of promises is always sure, yet it is often slow. It was now 215 years since God had promised Abraham to make of him a great nation, ch. **12:2**; yet that branch of his seed, to which the promise was made sure, had only increased to seventy, of whom this particular account is kept, to show the power of God in making these seventy become a vast multitude.

Genesis 46:28

Vs. 28-34: It was justice to Pharaoh to let him know that such a family was come to settle in his dominions. If others put confidence in us, we must not be so base as to abuse it by imposing upon them. But how shall Joseph dispose of his brethren? Time was, when they were contriving to be rid of him; now he is contriving to settle them to their advantage; this is rendering good for evil. He would have them live by themselves, in the land of Goshen, which lay nearest to Canaan. Shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians. Yet Joseph would have them not ashamed to own this as their occupation before Pharaoh. He might have procured places for them at court or in the army. But such preferments would have exposed them to the envy of the Egyptians, and might have tempted them to forget Canaan and the promise made unto their fathers. An honest calling is no disgrace,

nor ought we to account it so, but rather reckon it a shame to be idle, or to have nothing to do. It is generally best for people to abide in the callings they have been bred to and used to. Whatever employment and condition God in his providence has allotted for us, let us suit ourselves to it, satisfy ourselves with it, and not mind high things. It is better to be the credit of a mean post, than the shame of a high one. If we wish to destroy our souls, or the souls of our children, then let us seek for ourselves, and for them, great things; but if not, it becomes us, having food and raiment, therewith to be content.

CHAPTER 47

Joseph presents his brethren to Pharaoh. (1-6) Jacob blesses Pharaoh. (7-12) Joseph's dealings with the Egyptians during the famine. (13-26) Jacob's age. His desire to be buried in Canaan. (27--31)

Genesis 47:1

Vs. 1-6: Though Joseph was a great man, especially in Egypt, yet he owned his brethren. Let the rich and great in the world not overlook or despise poor relations. Our Lord Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren. In answer to Pharaoh's inquiry, What is your calling? they told him that they were shepherds, adding that they were come to sojourn in the land for a time, while the famine prevailed in Canaan. Pharaoh offered to employ them as shepherds, provided they were active men. Whatever our business or employment is, we should aim to excellencies in it, and to prove ourselves clever and industrious.

Genesis 47:7

Vs. 7-12: With the gravity of old age, the piety of a true believer, and the authority of a patriarch and a prophet, Jacob besought the Lord to bestow a blessing upon Pharaoh. He acted as a man not ashamed of his religion; and who would express gratitude to the benefactor of himself and his family. We have here a very uncommon answer given to a very common question. Jacob calls his life a pilgrimage; the sojourning of a stranger in a foreign country, or his journey home to his own country. He was not at home upon earth; his habitation, his inheritance, his treasures were in heaven. He reckons his life by days; even by days life is soon reckoned, and we are not sure of the continuance of it for a day. Let us therefore number our days. His days were few. Though he had now lived one hundred and thirty years, they seemed but a few days, in comparison with the days of eternity, and the eternal state. They were evil; this is true concerning man. He is of few days and full of trouble; since his days are evil, it is well they are few. Jacob's life had been made up of evil days. Old age came sooner upon him than it had done upon some of his fathers. As the young man should not be proud of his strength or beauty, so the old

man should not be proud of his age, and his hoary hairs, though others justly reverence them; for those who are accounted very old, attain not to the years of the patriarchs. The hoary head is only a crown of glory, when found in the way of righteousness. Such an answer could not fail to impress the heart of Pharaoh, by reminding him that worldly prosperity and happiness could not last long, and was not enough to satisfy. After a life of vanity and vexation, man goes down into the grave, equally from the throne as the cottage. Nothing can make us happy, but the prospect of an everlasting home in heaven, after our short and weary pilgrimage on earth.

Genesis 47:13

Vs. 13-26: Care being taken of Jacob and his family, which mercy was especially designed by Providence in Joseph's advancement, an account is given of the saving the kingdom of Egypt from ruin. There was no bread, and the people were ready to die. See how we depend upon God's providence. All our wealth would not keep us from starving, if rain were withheld for two or three years. See how much we are at God's mercy, and let us keep ourselves always in his love. Also see how much we smart by our own want of care. If all the Egyptians had laid up corn for themselves in the seven years of plenty, they had not been in these straits; but they regarded not the warning. Silver and gold would not feed them: they must have corn. All that a man hath will he give for his life. We cannot judge this matter by modern rules. It is plain that the Egyptians regarded Joseph as a public benefactor. The whole is consistent with Joseph's character, acting between Pharaoh and his subjects, in the fear of God. The Egyptians confessed concerning Joseph, Thou hast saved our lives. What multitudes will gratefully say to Jesus, at the last day, Thou hast saved our souls from the most tremendous destruction, and in the season of uttermost distress! The Egyptians parted with all their property, and even their liberty, for the saving of their lives: can it then be too much for us to count all but loss, and part with all, at His command, and for His sake, who will both save our souls, and give us an hundredfold, even here, in this present world? Surely if saved by Christ, we shall be willing to become his servants.

Genesis 47:27

Vs. 27-31: At last the time drew nigh that Israel must die. Israel, a prince with God, had power over the Angel, and prevailed, yet must die. Joseph supplied him with bread, that he might not die by famine, but that did not secure him from dying by age or sickness. He died by degrees; his candle gradually burnt down to the socket, so that he saw the time drawing nigh. It is an advantage to see the approach of death, before we feel it, that we may be quickened to do, with all our might, what our hands find to do. However, death is not far from any of us. Jacob's care, as he saw the day approach, was about his burial; not the pomp of it, but he would be buried in Canaan, because it was the land of promise. It was a type of heaven, that better country, which he declared plainly he expected, ^{<8114>}Hebrews 11:14. Nothing will better help to make a death-bed easy, than the certain prospect of rest in the heavenly Canaan after death. When this was done, Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head, worshipping God, as it is explained, see ^{<8121>}Hebrews 11:21, giving God thanks for all his favors; in febleness thus supporting himself, expressing his willingness to leave the world. Even those who lived on Joseph's provision, and Jacob who was so dear to him, must die. But Christ Jesus gives us the true bread, that we may eat and live for ever. To Him let us come and yield ourselves, and when we draw near to death, he who supported us through life, will meet us and assure us of everlasting salvation.

CHAPTER 48

Joseph visits his dying father. (1-7) Jacob blesses Joseph's sons. (8-22)

Genesis 48:1

Vs. 1-7: The death-beds of believers, with the prayers and counsels of dying persons, are suited to make serious impressions upon the young, the gay, and the prosperous: we shall do well to take children on such occasions, when it can be done properly. If the Lord please, it is very desirable to bear our dying testimony to his truth, to his faithfulness, and the pleasantness of his ways. And one would wish so to live, as to give energy and weight to our dying exhortations. All true believers are blessed at their death, but all do not depart equally full of spiritual consolations. Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons. Let them not succeed their father, in his power and grandeur in Egypt; but let them succeed in the inheritance of the promise made to Abraham. Thus the aged dying patriarch teaches these young persons to take their lot with the people of God. He appoints each of them to be the head of a tribe. Those are worthy of double honor, who, through God's grace, break through the temptations of worldly wealth and preferment, to embrace religion in disgrace and poverty. Jacob will have Ephraim and Manasseh know, that it is better to be low, and in the church, than high, and out of it.

Genesis 48:8

Vs. 8-22: The two good men own God in their comforts. Joseph says, They are my sons whom God has given me. Jacob says, God hath showed me thy seed. Comforts are doubly sweet to us when we see them coming from God's hand. He not only prevents our fears, but exceeds our hopes. Jacob mentions the care the Divine providence had taken of him all his days. A great deal of hardship he had known in his time, but God kept him from the evil of his troubles. Now he was dying, he looked upon himself as redeemed from all sin and sorrow for ever. Christ, the Angel of the covenant, redeems from all evil. Deliverances from misery and dangers, by the Divine power, coming through the ransom of the blood of Christ, in Scripture are often called redemption. In blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob

crossed hands. Joseph was willing to support his first-born, and would have removed his father's hands. But Jacob acted neither by mistake, nor from a partial affection to one more than the other; but from a spirit of prophecy, and by the Divine counsel. God, in bestowing blessings upon his people, gives more to some than to others, more gifts, graces, and comforts, and more of the good things of this life. He often gives most to those that are least likely. He chooses the weak things of the world; he raises the poor out of the dust. Grace observes not the order of nature, nor does God prefer those whom we think fittest to be preferred, but as it pleases him. How poor are they who have no riches but those of this world! How miserable is a death-bed to those who have no well-grounded hope of good, but dreadful apprehensions of evil, and nothing but evil for ever!

CHAPTER 49

Jacob calls his sons to bless them. (1,2) Reuben, Simeon, Levi. (3-7) Judah. (8-12) Zebulun, Issachar, Dan. (13-18) Gad, Asher, Naphtali. (19-21) Joseph and Benjamin. (22-27) Jacob's charge respecting his burial, His death. (28-33)

Genesis 49:1

Vs. 1, 2: All Jacob's sons were living. His calling them together was a precept for them to unite in love, not to mingle with the Egyptians; and foretold that they should not be separated, as Abraham's sons and Isaac's were, but should all make one people. We are not to consider this address as the expression of private feelings of affection, resentment, or partiality; but as the language of the Holy Ghost, declaring the purpose of God respecting the character, circumstances, and situation of the tribes which descended from the sons of Jacob, and which may be traced in their histories.

Genesis 49:3

Vs. 3-7: Reuben was the first-born; but by gross sin, he forfeited the birthright. The character of Reuben is, that he was unstable as water. Men do not thrive, because they do not fix. Reuben's sin left a lasting infamy upon his family. Let us never do evil, then we need not fear being told of it. Simeon and Levi were passionate and revengeful. The murder of the Shechemites is a proof of this. Jacob protested against that barbarous act. Our soul is our honor; by its powers we are distinguished from, and raised above, the beasts that perish. We ought, from our hearts, to abhor all bloody and mischievous men. Cursed be their anger. Jacob does not curse their persons, but their lusts. I will divide them. The sentence as it respects Levi was turned into a blessing. This tribe performed an acceptable service in their zeal against the worshippers of the golden calf, ^{Exod}Exodus 32. Being set apart to God as priests, they were in that character scattered through the nation of Israel.

Genesis 49:8

Vs. 8-12: Judah's name signifies praise. God was praised for him, chap. ^{12:35}29:35, praised by him, and praised in him; therefore his brethren shall praise him. Judah should be a strong and courageous tribe. Judah is compared, not to a lion raging and ranging, but to a lion enjoying the satisfaction of his power and success, without creating vexation to others; this is to be truly great. Judah should be the royal tribe, the tribe from which Messiah the Prince should come. Shiloh, that promised Seed in whom the earth should be blessed, "that peaceable and prosperous One," or "Savior," he shall come of Judah. Thus dying Jacob at a great distance saw Christ's day, and it was his comfort and support on his death-bed. Till Christ's coming, Judah possessed authority, but after his crucifixion this was shortened, and according to what Christ foretold, Jerusalem was destroyed, and all the poor harassed remnant of Jews were confounded together. Much which is here said concerning Judah, is to be applied to our Lord Jesus. In him there is plenty of all which is nourishing and refreshing to the soul, and which maintains and cheers the Divine life in it. He is the true Vine; wine is the appointed symbol of his blood, which is drink indeed, as shed for sinners, and applied in faith; and all the blessings of his gospel are wine and milk, without money and without price, to which every thirsty soul is welcome. ^{25:1}Isaiah 55:1.

Genesis 49:13

Vs. 13-18: Concerning Zebulun: if prophecy says, Zebulun shall be a haven of ships, be sure Providence will so plant him. God appoints the bounds of our habitation. It is our wisdom and duty to accommodate ourselves to our lot, and to improve it; if Zebulun dwell at the haven of the sea, let him be for a haven of ships. Concerning Issachar: he saw that the land was pleasant, yielding not only pleasant prospects, but pleasant fruits to recompense his toils. Let us, with an eye of faith, see the heavenly rest to be good, and that land of promise to be pleasant; this will make our present services easy. Dan should, by art, and policy, and surprise, gain advantages against his enemies, like a serpent biting the heel of the traveler. Jacob, almost spent, and ready to faint, relieves himself with those words, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" The salvation he waited for was Christ, the promised Seed; now that he was

going to be gathered to his people, he breathes after Him to whom the gathering of the people shall be. He declared plainly that he sought heaven, the better country, ^{<3811>}Hebrews 11:13,14. Now he is going to enjoy the salvation, he comforts himself that he had waited for the salvation. Christ, as our way to heaven, is to be waited on; and heaven, as our rest in Christ, is to be waited for. It is the comfort of a dying saint thus to have waited for the salvation of the Lord; for then he shall have what he has been waiting for.

^{<1409>}Genesis 49:19

Vs. 19-21: Concerning Gad, Jacob alludes to his name, which signifies a troop, and foresees the character of that tribe. The cause of God and his people, though for a time it may seem to be baffled and run down, will be victorious at last. It represents the Christian's conflict. Grace in the soul is often foiled in its conflicts; troops of corruption overcome it, but the cause is God's, and grace will in the end come off conqueror, yea, more than conqueror, ^{<8387>}Romans 8:37. Asher should be a rich tribe. His inheritance bordered upon Carmel, which was fruitful to a proverb. Naphtali, is a hind let loose. We may consider it as a description of the character of this tribe. Unlike the laborious ox and ass; desirous of ease and liberty; active, but more noted for quick dispatch than steady labor and perseverance. Like the suppliant who, with goodly words, craves mercy. Let not those of different tempers and gifts censure or envy one another.

^{<1442>}Genesis 49:22

Vs. 22-27: The blessing of Joseph is very full. What Jacob says of him, is history as well as prophecy. Jacob reminds him of the difficulties and fiery darts of temptations he had formerly struggled through. His faith did not fail, but through his trials he bore all his burdens with firmness, and did not do anything unbecoming. All our strength for resisting temptations, and bearing afflictions, comes from God; his grace is sufficient. Joseph became the shepherd of Israel, to take care of his father and family; also the stone of Israel, their foundation and strong support. In this, as in many other things, Joseph was a remarkable type of the Good Shepherd, and tried Corner Stone of the whole church of God. Blessings are promised to Joseph's posterity, typical of the vast and everlasting blessings which come upon the spiritual seed of Christ. Jacob blessed all his sons, but

especially Joseph, “who was separated from his brethren.” Not only separated in Egypt, but, possessing eminent dignity, and more devoted to God. Of Benjamin it is said, He shall ravine as a wolf. Jacob was guided in what he said by the Spirit of prophecy, and not by natural affection; else he would have spoken with more tenderness of his beloved son Benjamin. Concerning him he only foresees and foretells, that his posterity should be a warlike tribe, strong and daring, and that they should enrich themselves with the spoils of their enemies; that they should be active. Blessed Paul was of this tribe, ^{<142>}Romans 11:1; ^{<1015>}Philippians 3:5; he, in the morning of his day, devoured the prey as a persecutor, but in the evening divided the spoils as a preacher; he shared the blessings of Judah’s Lion, and assisted in his victories.

^{<142>}Genesis 49:28

Vs. 28-33: Jacob blessed every one according to the blessings God in after-times intended to bestow upon them. He spoke about his burial-place, from a principle of faith in the promise of God, that Canaan should be the inheritance of his seed in due time. When he had finished both his blessing and his charge, and so had finished his testimony, he addressed himself to his dying work. He gathered up his feet into the bed, not only as one patiently submitting to the stroke, but as one cheerfully composing himself to rest, now that he was weary. He freely gave up his spirit into the hand of God, the Father of spirits. If God’s people be our people, death will gather us to them. Under the care of the Shepherd of Israel, we shall lack nothing for body or soul. We shall remain unmoved until our work is finished; then, breathing out our souls into His hands for whose salvation we have waited, we shall depart in peace, and leave a blessing for our children after us.

CHAPTER 50

The mourning for Jacob. (1-6) His funeral. (7-14) Joseph's brethren crave his pardon, He comforts them. (15-21) Joseph's direction concerning his bones, His death. (22-26)

Genesis 50:1

Vs. 1-6: Though pious relatives and friends have lived to a good old age, and we are confident they are gone to glory, yet we may regret our own loss, and pay respect to their memory by lamenting them. Grace does not destroy, but it purifies, moderates, and regulates natural affection. The departed soul is out of the reach of any tokens of our affection; but it is proper to show respect to the body, of which we look for a glorious and joyful resurrection, whatever may become of its remains in this world. Thus Joseph showed his faith in God, and love to his father. He ordered the body to be embalmed, or wrapped up with spices, to preserve it. See how vile our bodies are, when the soul has forsaken them; they will in a very little time become noisome, and offensive.

Genesis 50:7

Vs. 7-14: Jacob's body was attended, not only by his own family, but by the great men of Egypt. Now that they were better acquainted with the Hebrews, they began to respect them. Professors of religion should endeavor by wisdom and love to remove the prejudices many have against them. Bystanders took notice of it as a grievous mourning. The death of good men is a loss to any place, and ought to be greatly lamented.

Genesis 50:15

Vs. 15-21: Various motives might cause the sons of Jacob to continue in Egypt, notwithstanding the prophetic vision Abraham had of their bondage there. Judging of Joseph from the general temper of human nature, they thought he would now avenge himself on those who hated and injured him without cause. Not being able to resist, or to flee away, they attempted to soften him by humbling themselves. They pleaded with him as the servants of Jacob's God. Joseph was much affected at seeing this

complete fulfillment of his dreams. He directs them not to fear him, but to fear God; to humble themselves before the Lord, and to seek the Divine forgiveness. He assures them of his own kindness to them. See what an excellencies spirit Joseph was of, and learn of him to render good for evil. He comforted them, and, to banish all their fears, he spake kindly to them. Broken spirits must be bound up and encouraged. Those we love and forgive, we must not only do well for, but speak kindly to.

Genesis 50:22

Vs. 22-26: Joseph having honored his father, his days were long in the land, which, for the present, God had given him. When he saw his death approaching, he comforted his brethren with the assurance of their return to Canaan in due time. We must comfort others with the same comforts with which we have been comforted of God, and encourage them to rest on the promises which are our support. For a confession of his own faith, and a confirmation of theirs, he charges them to keep his remains unburied till that glorious day, when they should be settled in the land of promise. Thus Joseph, by faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, and the promise of Canaan, gave commandment concerning his bones. This would keep up their expectation of a speedy departure from Egypt, and keep Canaan continually in their minds. This would also attach Joseph's posterity to their brethren. The death, as well as the life of this eminent saint, was truly excellencies; both furnish us with strong encouragement to persevere in the service of God. How happy to set out early in the heavenly race, to continue steadfast, and to finish the course with joy! This Joseph did, this we also may do. Even when the pains of death are upon us, if we have trusted in Him upon whom the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles depended, we need not fear to say, "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."