

Genesis Devotionals by F B Meyer

F B MEYER DEVOTIONALS ON GENESIS

Our Daily Homily

Our Daily Walk

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

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

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

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

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Genesis 1:5 (Our Daily Homily)

The Evening and the Morning were the First Day

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

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

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

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

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IN THE BEGINNING GOD-2

Genesis 1:1

DECEMBER 12- Our Daily Walk

"In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth."--Genesis 1:1.

"In the beginning was the Word... all things were made by Him."--John 1:1, 2, 3.

GENESIS MEANS Beginning. Here we discover the source of many streams, some crystal, some turbid, which are still flowing through the world. It tells us of the beginning of the heavens and the earth; of the human race; of sin and redemption; of marriage

and the institution of the home; of the sciences and arts that have built up the fabric of our civilisation; of the existence of the Hebrew race, and of the division of the human family into the various nationalities of the world. All of these cannot be attributed to the originating of God, for with regard to the sin and pain and sorrow of the world, it must be conceded that "an enemy hath done this."

In Hebrew the word for God is plural, the verb conjoined to it is singular, indicating that God is One, but the noun is plural, indicating the mystery of the Holy Trinity. In His earthly life, our Lord asked the Father to glorify Him with the glory that they had together before the world was.

Let us make God in Christ our beginning, the beginning of the book of our life, of our heaven, with its prayer, meditation, and devotion; of our earth, with its practical daily business; of our marriage and home; of our interests and pleasures. Here is the chief corner-stone in which alone the whole building of life can be fitly framed together. Here is the chord of harmony, with which the subsequent oratorio must be consistent. Here is the perfect circle of happiness, in which all that is fairest, sweetest, and strongest must be found.

God is a Faithful Creator. What He begins He finishes. He fainteth not, neither is weary. You may exhaust the dearest human love, but you can never wear out God. If you have never entered on the Divine life, begin with putting God in His right place, as Alpha, the First. If we cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." He will answer, "Behold I make all things new." Listen to the Divine assurance: "I am Alpha and Omega... the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. He that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely."

PRAYER - O God, my Father supremely Good. Beauty of all things beautiful. To Thee will I intrust whatsoever I have received from Thee, so shall I lose nothing. Thou madest me for Thyself, and my heart is restless until it repose in Thee. AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Genesis 1:3

DECEMBER 1-Our Daily Walk

"God said, Let there be Light; and there was Light."---Genesis 1:3.

"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: Walk as children of Light."--Eph. 5:8note

ST. PAUL makes use of this passage in Genesis, when He says, that "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He seems to go back in his experience to that remarkable vision on the road to Damascus, when the light shone, and he saw the face of the Lord Jesus. It was as though he had passed through the experience of chaos, while kicking against the goad of conviction, and at that moment, which he could never forget, God said: "Let there be light." Looking up, he saw the light of the glory of God reflected in that dear Face that looked down on him with ineffable love. It was life out of death; light replaced darkness, and peace chased away the last vestige of storm.

This is ever the result and climax of the work in our hearts wrought by the Holy Spirit. He leads us out of darkness; He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. His one aim is to glorify our Saviour, and to make Him the Alpha and Omega of our faith, as we walk in the light.

When I was in Tasmania, I was shown a great mountain range on which was a vast lake, fifty-two miles in circumference. The overflow yielded a perennial waterfall of a thousand feet, the force of which was translated into electricity which made light and power cheap for great factories and for domestic needs. It seemed to me, as I thought about it, that the great sheet of water resembled the Love of God, in its longing to help mankind; that the descending waterfall might be taken to illustrate the Incarnation of our Saviour, who was the Sent-One of the Eternal Trinity; and that the electric current, invisible but mighty, was typical of the Holy Spirit, who brings to our hearts the Light and Power of the Divine Nature. The lesson is obvious, that as the manufacturer or the scientist invents machinery to meet the conditions on which alone the electric current can do its work, so must we learn to adapt ourselves to receive and transmit the power and light of God, which comes to us through our union with Jesus.

PRAYER - May the Holy Spirit keep us ever walking in the light of Thy countenance. May He fill our hearts with the sense of Thy nearness and loving fellowship. Order our steps in Thy way, and then walk with us, for in Thee is no darkness at all. AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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THE MORNING COMETH

Genesis 1:5

MARCH 26 - Our Daily Walk

"And the evening and the morning were the first day."--Genesis 1:5

SIX TIMES these words are repeated, and the one lesson that rings out is that God counts His periods, not as man does from night to night, but from evening till morning. ' Not first the light, and after that the dark; but first the dark, and after that the light." God saw that each night would end in daylight, and that the end of all the nights and all the days would be the eternal day in which there can be no darkness at all. This is what St. John saw: "There shall be no night there, for the Lord God giveth them light" (Rev. 22:5). The sun of materialism sets in a black ocean, unlit by the star of hope. But as long as God is, we believe that He will make a new heaven and new earth; and from out of what seems disappointing and hopeless He will bring a fairer creation than before. Creation shall participate in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Watchman what of the night? The morning cometh! The darkness will finally pass away before the radiance of the dawn, and this because God is God; He is Love and Light and His Word creates.

So it is with the individual. Life may be dark. Sin is darkness; sorrow is darkness; ignorance is darkness, and these three may be part of your daily lot. But the night is far spent, the day is at hand. For you the morning star is in the sky. The education of your soul is like that of a child at school. How hard and difficult those first days, but when the rudiments were mastered; when the discipline had played its part, then were reaped the harvests of sowing, and darkness was turned to day. Be of good cheer! Even in death there is nothing to fear. "That night they caught nothing; but when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore." The dark waves, as they break around the boat of your life, are bearing you onward to the morning meal upon the golden sands, where you will find that Love has gone before you with its preparations! It shall be evening and morning and lo! the day without night.

PRAYER - O God, the darkness and light are both alike to Thee, and the night shineth as the day. Help us to follow Thee even through the valley of the shadow, and to trust Thee whatever be our lot; until the day dawns, and the shadows flee away. AMEN (F.

B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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Genesis 1:1

IN THE BEGINNING GOD

Chapter 1 from "In the Beginning God"

"Naked belief in God the Omnipotent--
Omniscient--Omnipresent--sears too much
The sense of conscious creatures to be borne!
It were the seeing Him, no flesh shall dare!

Some think Creation's meant to show Him forth;
I say it's meant to hide Him all it can,
And that's what all the blessed Evil's for!

Its use in Time is to environ us--
Our breath,--our drop of dew,--
with shield enough Against that,
Sight till we can bear its stress."
--Browning

AS we open a book we naturally turn to the title-page for the name of the author. It is, however, in vain that we look for the name of the Author of this wonderful volume, which, more than any other book, has influenced the history of our race. Turn to the title-page. You will find there the words, THE HOLY BIBLE; but even this well-known title was not coined until the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament were put together into one hook, and recognised as one, in the fourth century of the Christian era. And what more appropriate term could be discovered than to speak of this sublime collection as The Book?--but there is no mention of the Author's name.

That there must have been an Author is certain. These numerous books were written in different ages and countries, by men of different ranks and occupations--shepherds, fishermen, priests, warriors, statesmen, kings. Their differences of style confer brightness and piquancy, interest and zest, to the pages as we turn them over; but as the same ideas are presented with all the glow and colour of different minds, they compel us to recognise that we are in the presence of a single structure, the product of one Mind which has uttered its thoughts "at sundry times and in divers manners."

We look in vain on the title-page for that Author's name. It is written there in invisible ink, and men like Paul have realised that only one conclusion is possible about it; and if you will read the Book from cover to cover, you will, without any theologian or commentator urging you, come to the same conclusion as he. I, for one, am quite content to leave that question to be settled by each individual soul, being persuaded that wherever these pages are read persistently, patiently, and prayerfully, they will produce an unwavering conviction that "all Scripture is inspired by God."

The first book of the Bible was known among the Jews as "The Book of Beginnings." The name is most suitable. It is the seed-plot of the Bible. Here we may discover the source of many streams, some crystal, some turbid, which are still flowing through the world.

It is natural for us, as we find ourselves in the midst of this strange and wonderful existence, to ask how all these things began. Was the universe always in being, and if not, how did it begin? Did the heavens always spread forth as the curtains of a tent, did the sun always shine, did the stars always revolve in mazy dance? And if not, what was their origin? What was the beginning of the human race, of nations and tribes, of the societies and homes of men, of the pain and sorrow of the world, of the Hebrew race, of sacrifice, and of the priest? Such questions are natural to us all, and rise spontaneously to our lips.

To such questions there are only three possible replies. First, it may be said that these things never began to be; that is, you have a chain consisting of an innumerable number of links, not one of which rests on anything; but this is unthinkable, for there must have been a staple somewhere from which the first link started. Secondly, it may be said that all things were the product of chance; which is equally unthinkable, for how then can you account for dead matter producing life? Thirdly, it may be said that all things emanated from the will and thought of a great Personal Cause, of whom they are the visible expression. Such is the explanation which is given here, as this Book, without preface or introduction, without an attempt at argument or proof, writes the name of God on the universe, whether visible or invisible, and says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,"

Notice how much is excluded by this simple statement. It excludes Atheism, for God created; Polytheism, for the Hebrew verb attests that one created; the Eternity of Matter, for all things began in God, and the word create clearly implies to make out of nothing (Heb. 11:9); and Pantheism, for God, the Builder of all, must clearly be distinct from the work of His hands.

On whose authority is this statement made? From the earliest ages the Jews have ascribed this book to the hand of Moses. Joshua says so, and David, and Ezra, and the Greatest Prophet of all; but it is almost certain that the great Lawgiver made use of traditions and documents of far earlier times than his own, interweaving them into the flow of his noble and majestic style.

We can detect the presence of two or three of these ancient records in the first chapters. In Gen. 1:1 to Gen. 2:3 we find the simple word God, the translation of the word Elohim. Then there seems to be a break, and in Gen. 2:4, 3:24 we find the peculiar combination of the names, the Lord God. In Gen. 4. the name Jehovah is used alone. There is a marked difference in these paragraphs, which can be best accounted for by believing that they are fragments of ancient tradition, handed down from father to son, since the earliest days of human history.

Imagine Moses alone amid the wilds of Sinai, while Jethro's sheep browse beneath his care. The ambitions of his earlier life are cold ashes on his heart; his path is shut up; he seems doomed to bury his years in a living grave. Presently there sweeps over him the mighty impulse of a resolution to write the story of the past. If he struggles against it he struggles in vain. Write he must. But how shall he begin? Shall he write a preface on Inspiration? No. Shall he unfold his credentials and qualifications? No. How shall he begin? What kind of porch shall he build for this sacred house? Finally he recalls this great Hymn of Creation, which he may have first heard from the lips of Jochebed; and when we compare it with the legends of the same character which have been discovered by the excavations at Babylon, we can only magnify the grace and wisdom by which he was guided to make such a selection. Abraham may have learnt it from Shem, Shem from Enoch, and Enoch from Adam. It is not absolutely impossible, therefore, that we are to-day studying words which were familiar in the infancy of our race: and so they come to us not simply from the pen of the man of God, the servant of the Lord, but from the venerable lips of "the world's grey fathers."

But, after all, the authority of these words for you and me lies in the sign and seal of truth that is impressed upon them. To use the words of another, this majestic statement is so simple, so sublime, so sufficient, and, we may add, so satisfactory in the light of modern science.

This record is simple. A child can understand it. And is not this simplicity the authentication of its truth? Yonder is a learned man who talks deeply, philosophically, and scientifically about the origin of things. However accurate his language may be, its involved sentences are unintelligible to the world of men; and this is probably a reason for believing that he has not yet reached the very heart of the matter or the final statement. But the absolute simplicity of this august sentence carries with it the mint-mark of truth: "In the" beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

It is sublime. We travel back beneath the inspiration of these words through untold ages. Strange scenes meet us on our way.

Gigantic upheavals, vast convulsions, mighty oceans slowly depositing great continents of soil; now a universal arctic winter, now the greenery of a perpetual spring, now rolling floods of lava; perhaps creations of noble and intelligent beings, whose, forms are buried beneath our feet. So we grope our way backward till we reach the beginning moment, and stand there with our back to all these ages, and with our face to all the previous eternity. What can you see? Ah! there is nothing to fill that void but God only God. "In the beginning God." "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, from everlasting Thou art God."

The word translated God means strong. It is an appropriate title. He is strong to create, strong to maintain what He has created, strong to suffer, strong to wait, strong to rule. "O Lord God, who is a strong Lord like unto Thee? or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea."

It is sufficient. Here are locks that need unlocking, and here are keys. Let us not argue about keys in general, or any one key in particular, but let us try them, and the one that turns the wards is obviously the right one. So with the hypotheses which are suggested to account for creation; amongst them all there is none that accounts so readily and sufficiently for all that we see around us as the solution of our text: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

It is consistent with the findings of science. Science says, You must accept the nebular hypothesis, and believe that the planets were formed of rings which flew off from a rotating mass. Well, if it is proved to be a law of nature we will accept it; only, who made the rotating mass and started it rotating? "In the beginning" (before there was any mass or rotation) "God created."

Science says, You must not believe that all things were made in seven literal days--the days are aeons. Well, it may be so: but, before the aeons, as the Father of them all, "in the beginning God created."

Science says, You must accept the idea of evolution, and believe that one order of beings led to another, in natural sequence, like the steps of a spiral ladder. Again we say, It may have been so, but in the beginning God created all things. If all "things have been evolved they must have been involved, and the Agent in each process is God.

Let us try our key! We look up into the heavens, with their measureless spaces, their azure depths, the white band of the Milky Way, the clouds that carry the water like buckets, and we whisper to ourselves, "In the beginning God created the heavens."

Then we turn to our tiny planet, the earth, named next, not because it is equivalent to the heavens, but because it is the spot on which we are afterwards to concentrate our attention, and again we whisper, "In the beginning God created the earth."

We think of marriage and all the blessedness of the homes of the world--the fountains whence the purest streams of human life are fed--and as we see the pure love of man and maid, we remember that this too was God's work. He said, It is not good for man to be alone, I will make him a help meet for him: and He builded woman out of man, and brought Eve to Adam. So that over every happy home we may write the words: "The God of all the families of the earth--in the beginning God created."

We remember next the mighty scheme of redemption, by which man's sin and shame are remedied, his sin forgiven, and his soul saved; and again we are reminded that the Creator became the Redeemer He had made and He would bear. The song, "Thou hast created all things," is merged in the other song, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." "In the beginning God."

We recall next the wonderful growth of science and art, and again can find no explanation for all the marvels of human laboratories and workshops, except that God laid up the treasures of nature for man to explore and to enrich himself withal. "In the beginning God."

Lastly, there is one people on the face of the world different from all other peoples by their physiognomy and special cast of thought --the Hebrew race--and when we inquire into their origin, here also we are brought face to face with these majestic words: "In the beginning God."

Genesis is pre-eminently the book of beginnings, and of each beginning there must be a sufficient cause; but what cause can you discover or suggest, so appropriate, so befitting, so absolutely satisfactory, as this?

Does a difficulty arise from the presence of sin and pain? Here clearly we must dispense with the explanation which has helped us hitherto. Evidently these are not of a piece with the rest of the Divine handiwork. That is "very good," but the intrusion of these dark and terrible elements is like the sowing of tares among the wheat--the result of an enemy's bitter malice. "An enemy hath done this," to the great anguish and heartbreak of the Lord Himself; and precious Blood must be shed to undo the havoc and ruin he has wrought: and all through the ages, as we "shall see, with awful travail of soul, He 'is working to reverse the enemy's work, and to make all things new.

We cannot forget that in the Hebrew the word for God is plural. The verb is Singular, indicating that God is One; but the noun is plural, pointing to the mystery of the Divine nature. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." In His earthly life He asked the Father to glorify Him with the glory that They had together before the world was made. He said, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." He was the Lamb slain from "before the foundation of the world." The death of the cross was no expedient, no after-thought, no patching up of a bungled scheme. It was in the heart of God from eternity.

It is Christ's voice that is speaking through this chapter. It is the hand that was to be pierced which is laying the beams of the earth in the waters. It is the Redeemer Himself who made the mountain-altars on which He was to kneel, the waves on which His feet were to tread, the stars that were to guide the sons of men across the waste to His cradle, and the iron and wood that were to cause His death. "God created all things by Jesus Christ." "In Him were all things created which are in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible: all things have been created through Him and unto Him, and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."

Let us also make God in Christ the Beginning--the beginning of the book of our life; of our heavens of prayer, meditation, and devotion; of our earth of practical daily business; of our love and home; of our interests and pleasures; of our plans, purposes, and achievements. Here is the chief corner-stone in which alone the whole building can be fitly framed together. Here is the chord with which the subsequent oratorio must be in harmony. Here is the perfect circle of blessedness in which all that is fairest, sweetest, strongest must be for ever found.

What inspiring thoughts are here! If we are believers in the revelation of this Book, we may confidently count on a faithful Creator. He has made, and He will bear. He cannot fail one star which He has made to roll in the firmament, one sparrow which fails to the ground, one soul which He has led out into the life of faith. The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary. You may wear out the dearest human love, but never His.

If we are not godly, and cannot see how to become so, let us ask God to do within us what He did in creation, when He spake and it was done, commanded and it stood fast. Let us repeat the cry of the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation "; and that there may be a new creation within us, the same power is needed, and is put in action, as called the universe out of nothing.

How great the comfort is to turn from the first chapter in the Bible to the last! There the Saviour is speaking: "Behold," He says, "I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 22:12-13).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God." Into the opening words of Genesis we read these words from the New Testament, and realise that all that is said of God is true also of the Son of God, who is Saviour, Brother, Master, and Bridegroom of all faithful hearts. What He has begun, He will finish. He never would have called creation into existence unless He knew that He was stronger than all its dark possibilities, and that in some way He could make it contribute to the glory of the Father. Throughout the ages he has been putting down all rule, authority, and power, and ultimately will hand all over to His Father, that God may be all in all.

Creator Spirit! by whose aid

The world's foundations first were laid,

Come, visit every humble mind;

Come, pour Thy joys on all mankind;

From sin and sorrow set us free,

And make us temples worthy Thee."

Plentiful of grace, descend from high,

Rich in Thy sevenfold energy;

Give us Thyself that we may see The Father and the Son by Thee: Make us eternal truths receive And practise all that we believe." (Excerpt from [In the Beginning God - series of sermon by F. B. Meyer - available as a PBB](#) -- From the Preface to this book Meyer writes "As I read over these pages once more before writing these prefatory words, I confess to myself that these chapters are as the five barley loaves and the two small fishes. But the hand of the Master is as able as ever to make the slenderest provender, which has been prepared with due care, suffice for the many who perish with hunger.")

Genesis 2:15 (Our Daily Homily)

The Lord God put him into the Garden

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

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

The Garden of Gethsemane. - When man forfeited Paradise, the Saviour was revealed to regain it. He trod the winepress alone in the shadowed garden of the olive trees, that through its glades He might pass to His cross, and so make the wastes of sin bloom again as Eden. Is it wonderful that another Paradise is possible, when He sowed its seeds and watered the soil with His blood?

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

THE REST OF GOD

Genesis 2:1, 2, 3

From his book - **In the Beginning God**

"Here finished He, and all that He had made
Viewed, and behold all was entirely good;
So even and morn accomplished the sixth day.
Yet not till the Creator, from His work
Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,
Up to the Heaven of Heavens, His high abode,
Followed with acclamation, and the sound
Symphonious of ten thousand harps that tuned
Angelic harmonies: the earth, the air,
Resounded (thou rememberest, for thou heard'st),
The Heavens and all the constellations rung,
The planets in their station listening stood,
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant. '
Open, ye everlasting gates!' they sung; '
Open, ye Heavens, your living doors, let in
The great Creator from His work returned
Magnificent, His six days' work, a world.' "

MILTON.

THESE three verses belong to the first chapter. Evidently so, because they speak of the Creator by the same word, God, which is the keynote of that chapter, and because the opening words of the next verse, "These are the generations," is the regular phrase which introduces a new division of this book (Ge 5:1, 6:9, 11:10-27, 25:12-19, 36:1, 37:2). Evidently these words close one of the oldest pieces of oral tradition in the world, which Adam told to Shem, and Moses heard from his mother's lips. By its incorporation here it is stamped with the imprimatur of the Spirit of Inspiration.

In this climacteric paragraph let us notice once again the emphasis with which the sacred narrator insists on the Creatorship of God. "God finished His work which He had made." "He rested from all His work which He had made." "He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

But these affirmations are attested and witnessed to by reason, by conscience, and by science. By Reason. One of the most exquisite objects in the world is to be found in the Indian Ocean. It is called Neptune's Cup. Sometimes it reaches the height of six feet, and a breadth of three. It is built solely by myriads of infinitesimal animals called polypi, shrunk within their tiny cells, and reaching out their tiny arms into the surrounding waves. Myriads of them are at work, each in its separate cell, as much cut off from

communication with every other as an inmate of a prison cell from his fellow-prisoners. They fashion, without consultation, the base of the goblet; then they carry up the long, slender stem; when it has reached its proper height they begin to widen it; then they build up the sides of the cup, leaving a hollow within. Everything proceeds according to a plan--first the pedestal, then the stem, then the widened flange of the goblet, then the hollow within facing heaven. The savage passes by and gazes on that beautiful object, and looks up to heaven to find there the Being whose intelligence has been working through the unintelligent creatures to produce it. And must we not look in the same direction? There is evidently a plan, and a beautiful plan, behind their achievement, and you cannot have plan without thought, or thought without a thinker, or a thinker without a person. This was the corner-stone of the philosophy of Descartes, the Christian philosopher, on which he placed himself face to face with all skepticism and unrest: wherever there is thought there must be an intelligent Being. The eye is a Neptune's Cup, and the hand another Neptune's Cup, and all this universe is another Neptune's Cup, from which we may drink the glad wine of belief in the Personal Creator.

By Conscience. In the breast of every man, and most in those who are most sensitive to its voice, is the wonderful faculty of conscience; and this faculty, which is a miniature judgment-throne, witnesses not to a somewhat which makes for righteousness, but to a Someone who fills the throne of the heart, and of the universe as well. It is because of Him that people pay back their conscience-money; and it is a remarkable fact that the amount which is returned to the public treasury is in exact proportion to the revival of the religious life of the community. The voice of conscience attests a Person as the first and final cause.

By Science. For long, scientific men, while not denying the possibility of God, took up a strictly agnostic attitude. It was impossible to say that there was no God, because they had not been everywhere to see; but they could say that they did not know of any. But the last twenty-five years have witnessed a remarkable change in the attitude of science towards the Ultimate Source of being.

A striking proof of this was given not long ago at London University College by Lord Kelvin, who is known as "the prince of science." "Science," he said, "positively affirmed creative power. Was there anything so absurd as to believe that a number of atoms, by falling together of their own accord, could make a sprig of moss, a microbe, or a living animal? Biologists only knew God in His works, but they were absolutely forced by science to admit, and to believe with absolute confidence in a directive power--in an influence other than physical, dynamical, electrical forces. Science is not antagonistic to religion, but a help to religion."

In a letter which appeared in the Times shortly afterwards, he said: "Scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of creative power"; and further: "Forty years ago I asked Liebig, when we were walking together in the country, if he believed that the grass and flowers which we saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. 'No,' he answered; 'no more than I could believe that a book of botany describing them could grow by mere chemical force.'"

Such is the last utterance of science, and it is very reassuring. But we need something more. "All night," said a Hindu woman to a missionary, "when the household is sleeping, I go up alone to an upper room, and stretch out my hands to the God of all, and cry with a long, loud cry." Ah! science cannot satisfy that cry; but this Book can, and it is of real comfort to find that these earlier chapters are increasingly being attested as true by the most thorough and reliable thought of our time as far as their accuracy is concerned. May we not believe that if there is an agreement with the facts of natural order there is also an agreement with those of the spiritual?

We are next told that God rested. Obviously this was not the result of weariness or exhaustion. "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard? Has it not been told thee from the beginning, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" Man rests because his nature must recuperate its exhausted powers. Whether the work is done or not, he must unbuckle the strap, untie the girdle, and relax the tension. The little child on the bank of roses, the prisoner on the plank bed, and the soldier on the battlefield are alike in this. The most imposing pieces of furniture in old palaces and mansions are beds where kings and queens have slept. But God suffers not from overwork. In His rest there is nothing of weariness or exhaustion. Though He had been engaged for untold aeons creating the material of which suns and worlds are made, guiding its solidification and superintending its evolution, creating out of nothing, and making, i.e., moulding, what He had created, His fancy was not exhausted, His interest had not slackened, His power was not taxed or strained.

What comfort is here! God's arm is never tired, though it carries the universe; His mind is never tired, though it is weighted with the care of all things, from the soaring seraph to the crawling snail; His heart is never tired, though we have "made Him serve" with our sins; His ear is never heavy that it cannot hear. You may wear out mother, nurse, friend; you may tire the strongest, gentlest love; but His mercy endureth for ever.

It was not the rest of inaction. Our Lord taught this when He healed the lame man, who for more than a third of a century had lain beside Bethesda's pool. "The Jews sought to slay Jesus because He had done this work on the Sabbath Day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." It was as though He had said: "Go back to your ancient record, the Book of Genesis, and you will find there that of each of the days of creation it was said, The evening and the morning were the first, or second, or third, or fourth, or fifth, or sixth day. But nothing of the kind was said of the seventh, because that day has never closed. It is still in progress. Yet, even in that Sabbath-rest of the Divine Nature, does God not work? Does He not constantly maintain the

universe? Does He not control the course of human history? Does He not throw open the gates of day and draw the dusky curtains of the night? Does He not change the configuration of continents by the chafe of the waters? Does He not open His hand and satisfy the hunger of every living thing? If, then, in the long Sabbath of the present age God works so untiringly, surely you have no right to condemn Me for performing this deed of mercy!"

If it were needful to enforce still further the thought that in all probability the days of Genesis 1. are not periods of twenty-four hours, but vast periods of time, as is suggested by Gen. 2:4, we might find in it this wonderful suggestion of Christ, that the centuries which have passed since creation to the resurrection were God's . rest-age, one long space of duration, during which He was resting, but during which He was also working. And if our weekly rest-day is on the model of His, it also must not be characterised by inaction, but by the most untiring works of beneficence and mercy.

An infidel writer asks, with a sneer: "Has God done anything since the Saturday evening of the first week?" Done anything? Why, the Divine Energy has never ceased to go forth! When God had finished the work of creation He took up that of continual providence. The very breath with which the critic uttered his sneer was due to the forth-putting of God's power.

It was the rest of completion and satisfaction. "The heavens and the earth were finished." All the work, to do which He had arisen, was done. He paused or ceased. He laid down His graving tool. Everything was done that required to be done to manifest His nature, to give joy and blessing to His creatures, and to afford a theatre for the accomplishment of redemption.

"And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good." It was as though He passed in review all creation, from the lowest zoophyte to man created in His own image, and pronounced the benediction that fell on them all like sunshine. Good the hoary ocean, teeming with life through all its coral caves! Good the far-spread land, built on cellars of gold, porphyry, and coal! Good the light, the orbs of day, the star-spangled curtains of the night! Good the winged things of the air and the finned things of the water! Good the mammoth beasts that plunged through the thickets and played in the swamps! Not less good the gazelle, the kitten, or the lamb! Good above all, man, made in His likeness: king to all below, priest to Himself above! And because all was so good, and nothing needed to be added or subtracted, God rested --satisfied.

Science, again, gives a remarkable and unmistakable corroboration of these things. With lighted candle in her hand she has descended into those primeval depths, and has discovered the successive layers of created things; but as soon as the last--the human, the historic--age begins, she can come on no trace of subsequent creation. All things continue as they were from the beginning. According to her witness the Almighty has made no addition to the material universe, no addition to the forms of animal life. There is perpetual change. Fire and water, glacier and hurricane, do their work, but only to mould existing matter into newer types.

In all this there is a remarkable parallel with the work of the Lord Jesus. He lay in the grave on the Sabbath, the rest-day, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. "He that is entered into His rest (i.e., our Lord) hath Himself also rested from His works, as God did from His" (Heb. 4:10). What works were these from which the Redeemer rested? Surely from the works of redemption, from the agony and bloody sweat, from the cross and passion, from His sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Was He weary? Nay, verily, He cannot fail nor be discouraged. His energies were unspent. When He left His grave He left a young man sitting there--the symbol of His immortal youth.

Was He thenceforth to be inactive? No. As His disciples go forth the Lord works with them. He adds to the Church daily; He baptizes with the Holy Ghost; He walks amid the seven golden candlesticks, and holds the stars in His right hand; He ever lives to intercede, and to save to the uttermost. For Zion's sake He does not hold His peace, and for Jerusalem's sake He does not rest. The Father is ever working in Providence, and the Son in winning back to Him the kingdom.

His rest was one of blessed completion and satisfaction. He had set Himself to do a certain work, and had done it. He could look into God's face and say, "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." On that day, the day of His crucifixion, Christ finished the work of redemption which He came to accomplish, and rested from His work which He had made. It was so perfectly accomplished that nothing needed to be added, He had undertaken to work out and bring in a righteousness which would make the most ungodly acceptable to God through faith--and it was perfectly accomplished; not a stain nor flaw was apparent. He had undertaken to destroy him that had the power of death--the devil and He had done it so completely that the serpent's head was crushed, and he had fallen like lightning from heaven. He had undertaken to reveal the love of God, and it was so apparent that the least informed and blindest must see it shining through every wound and word. He had undertaken to fulfil the old types and prophecies, and had done so, even to that which predicted that the Messiah would drink of wine mingled with myrrh.

All was done that had to be done; and because Christ knew this He said, "It is finished," and yielded up-the Ghost. When God finished His work in creation, what man would dare to add a line to the rainbow, a petal to a flower, a star to the Milky Way? And since Christ has finished His work, what need we add of tears, or prayers, or vows? Hands off! We have not to complete, but accept. "He that believeth is justified from all things."

There are deep lessons here. It has been suggested that perhaps each of the aeons of creation ended on a definite day. The first on Sunday afternoon, the second on Monday, the third on Tuesday, the fourth on Wednesday, the fifth on Thursday, sixth on Friday afternoon. Thus God's rest-day began on Friday evening. God's rest, therefore, may be said to have dated from Saturday. Therefore it is said God rested on the seventh day. Our Lord, as we have seen, lay in the grave on the seventh day, and rose on the early morning of the first; and He summons us to pass with Him from the natural to the spiritual, from Moses to Christ, from time to the procession of eternal ages.

Ever since these words were written the door of God's rest has been standing open for the sons of men; but of this and the other generation it has been said: "They shall not enter into My rest." Men might keep the Sabbath, but still that rest remained un-exhausted, unentered. The Jews might enter Canaan, but centuries after we learn from the ninety-fifth Psalm that they had not entered into God's rest. Many hands fumbled to find the door-latch, in vain. At last Jesus, standing amid men who seemed to Him as panting, harried sheep, said: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest. Learn of Me, and ye shall find rest."

Ah, blessed rest of ceasing from our own works, from endeavouring to save ourselves, from bearing our own burdens and achieving our own ends, and of handing over the entire responsibility to Him who tells us that He is meek and lowly in heart!

When we speak of rest it must not be supposed that we advocate Quietism in any form, which has generally meant that the quietist withdraws from active service of the world, and drifts at the mercy of tides of emotion. This is not the model that any Christian should emulate. No; the rest to which we are called is that in which we cease from the fret and chafe of earthly circumstance, from the fever of competition, and from the desire to achieve our own purposes. We quiet ourselves as wearied children. In quietness and in confidence we find our strength, because God works in us and through us. Instead of working for Him we allow Him to work through us.

"O blessed Life! the heart at rest,

When all without tumultuous seems,

That trusts a higher will, and deems

That higher will, not ours, the best.

O blessed Life! the mind that sees--

Whatever change the years may bring--

A mercy still in everything,

And shining through all mysteries.

O blessed Life! heart, mind, and soul

From self-born aims and wishes free,

In all at one with Deity

And loyal to the Lord's control.

O Life! how blessed! how divine!

High life, the earnest of a higher!

Saviour fulfil my deep desire,

And let this blessed life be mine."

(Excerpt from [In the Beginning God - series of sermon by F. B. Meyer - available as a PBB](#)-- From the Preface to this book Meyer writes "*As I read over these pages once more before writing these prefatory words, I confess to myself that these chapters are as the five barley loaves and the two small fishes. But the hand of the Master is as able as ever to make the slenderest provender, which has been prepared with due care, suffice for the many who perish with hunger.*")

3

Genesis 3:9 (Our Daily Homily)

Where art thou?

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

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

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

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

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

4

Genesis 4:9 (Our Daily Homily)

Where is Abel thy Brother?

The first question God puts to the soul is, "Adam, where art thou?"

The next, "Where is Abel thy brother?"

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

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

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

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MY BROTHER!

Genesis 4:9

OCTOBER 9 - Our Daily Walk

"The Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said: I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"--Genesis 4:9.

"He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness."--1John 2:11.

MAN'S FALL, whatever else it may have been, resulted in a complete change of the centre of his being. He was made in the likeness of God, and God's nature is absolutely selfless. God's will and purpose was the one rule of man's existence until the moment came when our first parents substituted the gratification of self for the will and law of God. From that hour the self-life became the dominant principle of mankind, and the world is what it is because the essence of life is the service of self.

We do not know what really caused the difference in the disposition of Cain and Abel. There are hints and suggestions, but the

fundamental reason why these two brothers differed so is veiled in mystery, though the like of it still shows itself in our homes. St. John gives us the clue in his first Epistle, where he says that Cain slew his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

God remonstrated with Cain and warned him that sin was lying at the door of his heart, waiting to enter. He exhorted him to watch and not allow it to intrude. When the dreadful deed was done, Cain found that all nature was in arms against him, and he became an outcast. The blood of Abel cried against Cain, for all sin cries to God, and He is the Avenger and Vindicator of wronged ones who in simplicity and faith have cast themselves upon Him. Thank God, also, there is a cry louder than that of Abel's, which pleads not for judgment but for mercy (Heb. 12:24-note).

This world is full of envy, jealousy, strife, and murder, because men keep themselves instead of keeping their brothers; because our own instead of another's welfare revolves round the pivot of "I". The first Epistle of St. John is the antipode of this story in Genesis, and contains its corrective, for it is when we love God first and best that we love our brother, and as we open our whole soul to the tidal wave of God's love, we are lifted above the jagged rocks of the self-life into the broad full ocean of life which is life indeed (1John 3:14, 15, 16, 17).

PRAYER - Our Father! Help us to consider the interests of others, and to act generously towards them, because we are Thy children, and Thy infinite resources are at our commands. AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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5

Genesis 5:24 (Our Daily Homily)

Enoch walked with God

What an epitaph on this ancient saint! It is as clear-cut to-day as when first recorded here. We know nothing of Enoch but this brief record; but it tells us everything. It was not an act or a number of acts, but a high tone of life constantly maintained. Better to walk with God every day in calm, unbroken fellowship, than to have occasional rapturous experiences, succeeded by long relapses and backslidings. The Hebrew word might be rendered, "Enoch walked, and continued to walk."

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

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

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

6

Genesis 6:9 (Our Daily Homily)

Noah was just, perfect, walked with God

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

In himself he is Just. - Not faultless, as judged by the white light of eternity; but blameless, so far as his own consciousness is concerned. He wears ever the white flower of a blameless life. His strength is as the strength of ten, because his heart is pure. He exercises himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and man. This condition is only possible to faith, that

opens the door of the heart to receive the life of God. Wouldst thou be just, welcome that Just One. Let Him live within thee.

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

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

7

Genesis 7:9 (Our Daily Homily)

As God had commanded

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

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

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

In obeying God others obey us. - How came it that these creeping things and flying fowls, these living creatures, clean and unclean, entered the Ark so tamely and submissively? Surely a Divine constraint was upon them. When we are under authority, we can say, "Go," "Come," "Do this." All things serve the man who serves the Divine Master, Christ.

8

Genesis 8:1 (Our Daily Homily)

God remembered Noah

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

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

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

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THE SOUL'S VENTURE

Genesis 8:1

AUGUST 16 - F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk

"And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark."--Genesis 8:1.

IT IS very helpful to ponder these words, for it gives the assurance that not only will God take care of cattle, and birds, and every living thing, as we learn from Deut. 25:4; Ps. 104:11-22; Jonah 4:11; Matt. 6: 26; but that He will much more think of and care for us, His children! Like Noah and his family, you may be shut away from all human help. It may be as impossible for you, as it was for him, to extricate yourself. You may have the responsibility of providing for those in need. Your supplies may be continually decreasing before your eyes, but God remembers you amid the waste of waters, and beneath those dark cloud-covered skies. As a mother cannot forget her sucking child, so God cannot forget you.

The ark grounded on the lower slopes of Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, and the waters decreased so rapidly, that, as Noah had reaped the harvest before the Flood came, he left the ark in time to sow for the succeeding year. Dare to trust the times and seasons of your life to your Heavenly Father's care. He only waits to be trusted, and then life becomes woven into a beautiful mosaic of His loving forethought and care.

Be sure to guard against raven-like thoughts, which are restless and evil-feeding; seek to cultivate meek, gentle, pure, and dove-like thoughts that cull the olive-leaves of promise from the Word of God. Presently He who said "Come in," will say "Go forth!" Then build your altar of self-sacrifice and self-giving.

PRAYER - Heavenly Father, strengthen me that I may look, not on the dark cloud, but for Thy rainbow; not on what Thou hast taken or withheld, but on what Thou hast left; not on the stormy waters, but on the face of Jesus. AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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9

Genesis 9:13 (Our Daily Homily)

My Bow in the Cloud

A covenant is a promise or undertaking, resting on certain conditions, with a sign or token attached to it. (Related Resource: Covenant: Summary)

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

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

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

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

10

Genesis 10:5 (Our Daily Homily)

The Isles of the Gentiles

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

The Oneness of the Human Race. - "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth." The slave that crouches in the African wood, the meanest outcast that creeps along in the dark, the veriest ruffian red-handed in crime - are

bone of our bone, no less than the kings and saints, the prophets and martyrs.

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

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

11

Genesis 11:7 (Our Daily Homily)

Let us go Down

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

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

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

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

12

Genesis 12:1 (Our Daily Homily)

Get thee out

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

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

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

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

THE PILGRIM OF THE UNSEEN

Genesis 12:1, 2

AUGUST 9 - Our Daily Walk

"The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee ... And I will bless thee, and make thy name great." Genesis 12:1, 2.

THE CLUE to the beginning of this chapter is given in various parts of the Bible. From Acts 7:2, 3, 4, 5, we learn that the Call to Abram to go forth, which originally came in Ur of the Chaldees, was repeated in Haran, after his father's death. Probably Terah delayed his son's obedience. Let us help our children to realize God's call, even though we be left lonely on the other side of the river.

In Hebrews 11:8-note, we realize that this Pilgrim of the Eternal stepped out on the wide expanse of the desert, only learning his course day by day; he was like a Columbus, sailing month after month through unknown seas, never knowing at what moment the dim outline of the shore might appear.

In Romans 4. we are told that these promises were vouchsafed to him while still a Gentile (cp Ro 4:10-note). Thirty years passed before he became the founder of the Hebrew nation. The Apostle therefore argues that these promises are guaranteed to all his children, not only to those under the Law, but also to us who have his faith (Ge 12:16). Turn back, my reader, to that ancient page, and realize that it includes thee in its amplitude of blessing! Gal 3:8, 9, 14, assures us that all these blessings are included in the one gift of the Holy Spirit. The blessing of Abraham is for all of us who are in Christ Jesus, as we walk in the steps of this great Pilgrimage.

A vast gulf of Time lies between us and the far-away days of Abraham's life; but recent discoveries have shown that Ur of the Chaldees enjoyed a high State of civilization a thousand years before his exodus. His experiences and ours meet across the gulf of ages!

PRAYER - O God, may the great cloud of witnesses, who have trodden the Pilgrim Way before us, be to us an example of a godly life, so that we may run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus. AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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13

Genesis 13:14 (Our Daily Homily)

The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him

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

Fresh Revelation. - Whenever Abram dared to step out in obedience, the Lord spake freshly to him. But in Egypt we find no trace of the Divine voice. If God spake there, it would be in warning and rebuke. Has the voice of God long been silent to thee - no fresh command, no deeper insight into truth? See to it that thou art not in Egypt. Separate thyself, not only from Haran, but from Lot; not only from what is clearly wrong, but from all that is questionable; and the Lord will speak to thee things it is not possible for men to utter.

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

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

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THE SUPREME CHOICE

Genesis 13:10, 11

AUGUST 10 - Our Daily Walk

"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere.., as the garden of the Lord. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan... and they separated themselves the one from the other."--Genesis 13:10, 11.

THE SOUL that has taken God as its portion can afford to be generous!

As the older man, Abraham might well have claimed the priority of choice, leaving the rest to Lot; but he was quite content to waive his rights, since his Almighty Friend had fixed the place which he was destined to receive for his inheritance. Let Lot choose as he might, he could not obtain an inch of the land which God had included in His Divine purpose for His faithful and obedient servant. "Wait on tee Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land."

It was, therefore, in quiet confidence that the Patriarch stood beside his kinsman and watched him, as he lifted up his eyes to take and claim the fullest advantage of his uncle's unexpected offer. When Lot chose for himself the Plain of Sodom, which was well watered everywhere and lovely as Paradise itself, Abraham acquiesced in the choice with unperturbed equanimity. Looking into the face of God, he said in effect: "Thou art the portion of mine inheritance; Thou maintainest my lot; the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

Then--the separation having taken place--God called His servant back to the hill-top, and gave him all the land in a covenant for ever, and bade him pass whither he wished over the soil, for it was all his own (Gen. 13:14, 15, 16, 17).

Let God choose for you! Especially, at the beginning of life, as you stand on its threshold and view the land, dare to follow the promptings of " His inner Voice. His Call still comes ringing down the ages: "Follow Me." "Lo, I am with you all the days!"

PRAYER - O God, I believe that Thou knowest just what is best for me. I can ask nothing better than this, to be Thy care, not my own. Through Thy grace, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. AMEN. (**F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk**)

14

Genesis 14:19 (Our Daily Homily)

God Most High, Maker of Heaven and Earth

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

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

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

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

15

Genesis 15:17 (Our Daily Homily)

Behold, a Smoking Furnace and a Flaming Torch

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

God as a Furnace. - Take up a piece of iron ore, and see how the metal is scattered amid commoner substances. How can it be

disintegrated? The chisel cannot do it, but fire will. Plunge it now into the fire; let it fall in the heart of the glowing furnace, and presently the stream of liquid metal will issue forth, pure and beautiful. It is thus that God deals with human hearts; the blood makes propitiation, but the fire cleanses. The love of God, the purity of God, the spirituality of God brought home to us by the Holy Ghost, search and try us to the innermost fibre of our being, and burn out of us the evils which had long held empire.

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

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

16

Genesis 16:9 (Our Daily Homily)

Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands

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

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

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

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

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GOD'S THOUGHT OF ME

Genesis 16:13

DECEMBER 13 - Our Daily Walk

See Related Resource: **El Roi: God Who Sees**

"Thou art a God that seeth me."--Genesis 16:13

"How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God."--Ps. 139:17.

HAGAR WAS an Egyptian slave-girl, who had been brought up amid the idolatries of Egypt, and had no sort of idea that the gods had any personal interest in so insignificant a human atom as she was. Probably in Abraham's encampment she had heard of Jehovah, but would doubtless think of Him as being equally outside the limits of her little life. What care should the God of her master and mistress have for her, as she fled from the harsh treatment of Sarah, and was in danger of perishing in the lonely desert! Then, suddenly, in her despair, she heard the voice of the Angel-Jehovah speaking to her, and she called Him "The Living One who seeth me".

To her the thought was an inspiration and comfort, enabling her to return and submit herself to Sarah. But to many these words

have been a note of fear and judgment. They have thought of God as spying upon their evil ways, and have shrunk from the thought of His eye seeing them. That thought, however, is not the significance of these inspiring words, but that we can never wander into the far country, or take one weary step in loneliness without the tender notice of God our Father, who notices even the sparrow that falls to the ground.

The Psalmist had the same thought when he wrote the 139th Psalm. When he says that God knows his downsitting and uprising, that his thoughts and ways are all open to His Almighty Friend, it is in a tone of rapturous gladness. It is the prerogative of friendship to love the presence and thought of a friend, and the crowning characteristic of Christianity is that we are admitted into personal friendship with our Lord. He knows our thoughts afar off. With an instant sympathy He enters into our anxieties and discouragements. Wherever we go He precedes and brings up the rear; we are beset by His care behind and before. Let every reader open the door to this great Friend, remembering that His one test is obedience: "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Thus you will find His presence the delight of your life (Rev. 3:20).

PRAYER - We thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast been about our path, considering all our ways, and encompassing us with blessing. Thine eye has been upon us to deliver our soul from death, and to be our help and shield. For all Thy gracious care we thank Thee. AMEN (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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17

Genesis 17:1 (Our Daily Homily)

Walk before Me and be thou Perfect

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

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

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

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

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The Secret of Fruitfulness

Genesis 17:6

F B Meyer has the following chapter in "**Meet for the Master's Use**"

THE SECRET OF FRUITFULNESS

"I will make thee exceeding fruitful."--Genesis 17:6.

When God says to a soul, "I will make thee exceeding fruitful," it becomes all others carefully to notice the circumstances and conditions under which that promise is made.

There has been a great amount of heart-searching throughout the church in recent months because of the failure of conversions. Great communities of Christians, after toiling for a whole twelvemonth, have been compelled to confess that their ranks are not increased by a single unit. Ministers, well furnished for their work, have had no sheaves to bring from the whitened fields, and the

total aggregate of conversions from the world hardly avails to meet the drain caused by an inevitable leakage. Oh! if God should say of some hundreds of us, "I will make you exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of you," with what new hope we should anticipate our work! Would it not be a day for which all" other days were made and waiting, if the Eternal God were to speak to some child of His by these lines, and say, "Thy name shall no more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham, the father of a great multitude"?

I. THE TIME.

"When Abram was ninety years old and nine." Genesis 17:1

He was an old man and well stricken in age. According to the laws of human life it was not likely that he should have a child. Ask any men belonging to the neighboring clans, who would be Abram's heir; they would have answered:

"The son of a slave woman, Ishmael by name. There is no child by Sarah, his wedded wife, and no likelihood of there being one. Poor man, it seems strange that all his vast possessions should go to such an heir!"

So men talked! And it was at such a time that God stepped in and said:

"I will make thee exceeding fruitful."

Years ago you thought you could effect something in your life. You had energy, genius, the grace of oratory, the power of personal attraction and fascination. You could sway men, men gathered around you and recognized their born leader. Perhaps you could organize efficiently; beneath your word and deft hand, a rabble would fall into rank and become an army. The faculty of selection was yours; intrepid courage, wise counsel, quick sympathy. Possibly you had money; you thought it was simply a question of employing the best talent and equipping your workers in the best style. But all this is over now, and you are compelled reluctantly to confess that the total residuum is disappointing. At the best, our Ishmaels are like wild asses' colts. And you are coming to think that the remainder of your life will never rise above the dead levels of the past, will never achieve any large success for God, will never be fruitful in the conversion of men.

"I will do my best," you say, "building up believers, if I may not win the ungodly. I can train children, but never bear them. Mine the fashioning of the stones, but not the quarrying."

To such God comes with His assurance, "I am able to make thee exceeding fruitful." Fulfil the Divine conditions, and there is no reason why the great multitude should not hail you, Parent!

"It cannot be! Nature forbids. The experience of the past forbids. Declining brilliancy of gift and energy of power forbid. Other branches recently grafted into the vine may stoop to the ground with their heavy fruitage, but I shall always be as a dry tree."

Wait! Ponder these words again. Write them upon the tablets of thine heart. "When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto him, and said, I am the Almighty God." "What nature cannot do, Almightyness can. What human energy cannot effect, the Divine Spirit will. Till now thy night has hindered Me, has forced Me to wait. In these many decades My night has been thwarted, frustrated, neutralized by thy trust in thyself. But now that this has passed, there is room for My Omnipotence to work, and I, the Almighty God, swear by Myself, since I can swear by no greater, that if thou wilt fulfil the conditions of My covenant, I will make thee abundantly fruitful, and thou shalt be father to a great multitude."

II. THE CONDITION.

"Walk before Me, and be thou perfect." Genesis 17:1

This is the one prime and irreversible condition for the life which shall become fruitful. We have walked before our friends, our neighbors, our church and the world, very eager to win their regard and approval. Each step we have-taken with the consciousness that we were being watched, and with the secret desire that it should be approved. All that must be changed. "Walk before Me," He says, Whose eyes are as a flame of fire. "Let your eye be single. Let your intention be Godward. Let it be your one aim to please Me. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro in all the earth."

"My eyes are ever toward the Lord."

The word rendered "perfect" does not mean that moral blamelessness with which we are accustomed to associate it. It connotes whole-heartedness, entire surrender, absolute consecration, up to the measure of light. Be perfect; there must be no reserve. Be perfect: there must be no Babylonish garment withheld from the fire. Be perfect: there must be no gold, silver or precious stones which are. not freely exposed to the searching tongue of flame. Be perfect: there must be no lowing of the herds or bleating of the flocks which have been unsundered to God.

It is the prime condition of fruitfulness. Have we conformed to it? Is there a glad acquiescence to God's every command? Have we presented ourselves as a living sacrifice? Are we willing that God should have all? Do we recognize His will as the one blessed code of life? And are we prepared to walk like this, step by step, though the feet bleed as we plod through the tangled brake or pass over the jagged rock? Then take heart, for it is to such that God says:

"I will make thee exceeding fruitful."

III. THE CERTAINTY.

"I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." Genesis 17:2

There Will be no doubt about the matter. Where God binds Himself by a covenant He does not draw back. When He passes His word it binds Him. Have the waters of the Deluge ever returned to drown the world? Has He lost one soul included in the everlasting agreement ratified by the Blood of the Cross? Has He broken the covenants of day or night, of the return of the seasons, of His care for man?

God's covenants originate with Himself: "between Me and thee." All the promises emanate from God's heart. It is of grace that He says, "I will make thee exceeding fruitful." We cannot earn, or deserve, or win; we just fall on our face and let God talk right on.

God's covenant is individual and personal: "between Me and thee."

Every believer is included in the covenant entered into with his Head, but there are great moments in the history of the soul when God accosts it, in a moment of reverie or solitude, and says, "From to-day, behold I will make My covenant with thee. I am for thee, be thou for Me. I am all for thee, be thou all for Me. I will give Myself to thee in ever-deepening manifestation, if thou wilt give thyself to Me in ever-deepening consecration."

Has God ever said this to you? Get alone and give Him the opportunity. Recite the provisions of the new covenant, till one of them sparkles out as if struck by a ray direct from the Throne. And let this be your attitude specially when you partake of the Lord's Supper, the emblem of the Blood by which the covenant was ratified. To your wistful soul God will draw nigh, and whilst you are fallen to your face in humility and wonder, He will talk to you and say: "Behold, I make My covenant with thee."

IV. THE SIGN.

"This is My covenant... ye shall be circumcised." Genesis 17:10

Can we ever in this connection forget the words of the apostle: "In Christ also ye are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ?"

This, too, is inevitable. There can be no spiritual fruitfulness which has not been preceded by the use of the sharp knife. Here is one of those profound revelations of the purpose of God in the symbolism of the Old Testament which establishes its divine origin. How wonderful that before Abraham could be the father of a great multitude, he had to submit to suffering! But how precisely the figure fits the spiritual analogy which we are considering. In those who are to be spiritually fruitful, there must be the putting off of the old habits, the affections and evil desires of the old nature, the desire of vain-glory and admiration and praise; there must be the environment of the Cross.

An eminent servant of God once said that he hedged himself around with the Cross of Christ, so that whatever advances were made to him or words said to him, all might come to him through that hedge of fire. Nothing less will avail.

Do you shrink from this sharp cutting-off? Remember it is made without hands, but it is the circumcision of Christ, that is, it is effected by hands which were nailed to the Cross for very love, and whose gentle touch often brought healing and comfort to the sore-suffering ones. Into Thy hands, O Son of God, we commit our spirits, that Thou shouldest free us of everything which hinders our fruitfulness.

Take these assurances. God quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that are not as if they were. In hope, believe in hope. Without being weakened in faith dare to consider yourself now as good as dead. Dare to look at the deadness of the church and neighborhood with which you are associated. Then look unto the promise of God. Dwell on it. So only will you not waver through unbelief, so only will you wax strong through faith. Give Him glory, count on the faithfulness of Him that promised, and the titter of incredulity shall be turned into the Isaac-laughter, as you welcome a spiritual seed which shall multiply, as the years pass, like the grains of the shore and the stars of the Milky Way. **(Chapter 10 in Meet for the Master's Use)**

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Genesis 18:23 (Our Daily Homily)

And Abraham drew near

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

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

He drew near in faith. - He had enjoyed a blessed prevision of the day of Christ. There had been revealed to Him that one perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, in virtue of which sinners are welcome to draw near to God. They have boldness to enter the holiest, and draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, who know the new and living way which Jesus has opened for us.

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

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

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GOD'S RESOURCES

Genesis 18:14

SEPTEMBER 21 - Our Daily Walk

"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"---Genesis 18:14.

"He Lord God! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee."--Jer. 32:17.

THERE IS no doubt as to the identification of these three guests that suddenly appeared before the tent-door of Abraham. We are expressly told that "Jehovah appeared unto him." It was thus that our Lord anticipated His Incarnation. He came incognito, and "His delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. 8:31). During His earthly life, He loved the homes of men, lodged with Peter and Zacchaeus, and in the dear home where Mary loved and Martha served. After His resurrection, He tarried with two of them in the village inn. So He will come to thy heart and mine. Though He is the High and lofty One, who inhabits Eternity, yet He will plead for admission to sup with us and we with Him (Rev. 3:20). But He often comes disguised as a wayfaring man, hungry and athirst. Let us "run to meet Him," remembering Matt. 25:40.

God is no man's debtor; He always pays for His lodging, hence His promise to Sarah! She laughed with incredulity, but is anything too hard for the Lord? That is one of God's unanswered questions. It has accosted the human conscience all down the ages. Let us look away from the difficulties imposed by nature, to Him who holds the oceans in the hollow of His Almighty hand. Then we can stand with Him on the mountainside, and plead for Sodom; then God Himself will draw us on to ask for more and yet more, till, when our faith gives out, He will do something far in advance of all that we asked or thought.

PRAYER - Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, Worm without end. AMEN. (**F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk**)

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19

Genesis 19:27 (Our Daily Homily)

Abraham got up early to the place where he stood before the Lord, and looked

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

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

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

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

20

Genesis 20:6 (Our Daily Homily)

I also withheld thee from sinning against Me

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

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

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

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

21

Genesis 21:19 (Our Daily Homily)

And God opened her eyes, and she saw

Poor Hagar! There was no help for it; and she, who a little before had thought she was giving Abraham his heir, found herself and her boy homeless wayfarers on the desert sands. Their one need was water; they little deemed it was so near. No need to create a new fountain, but to open their eyes. We need the opened eye to see:-

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

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

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

Genesis 22:14 (Our Daily Homily)

Jehovah-Jireh; In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided

Related Resource: Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide

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

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WHERE IS THE LAMB? BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!

Genesis 22:7, John 1:29

(From F B Meyer's book online at Google - [Through Fire and Flood](#))

AN old-world story, which comes from the calm, meditative Eastern life -- can it help us in these great Western cities, with their swift and arrowy currents, always rushing so fast and bearing us with them? Yes, because it is ever the same heart, which beats alike under the flowing robes of the Arab sheik and the broadcloth of the European or American man of business; the same agony of hope and fear, the same passions, the same marvellous mystery of life. This is why the Bible, which deals with these deepest questions, can never grow old. Every generation looks into its calm depths and sees its own face.

It was a great joy when that little child budded on the old tree of Abraham's life. He had suffered much: when he left Charran, tearing himself from kith and kin -- when Lot chose his own path -- when he denied his wife, and knew that he had acted ignobly and meanly -- when he saw the plain of Sodom smoking as a furnace. But his greatest trouble for years had been that there was no childish prattle in his tent which he could recognise as the absolute fulfilment of his hope and love. The tent had many treasures, all but the treasure he desired most. And, though it was promised, it was hard to wait. Surely it is harder for men to wait than for women. Somehow we expend ourselves more in sitting still than in strenuous action. This waiting cut the furrows deep in that brow. But when the child came, the aged pair, for different reasons, called him Isaac, i.e., laughter. Sarah remembered her laugh of unbelief, Abraham forgot his sorrow, and his mouth was filled with laughter and his tongue with singing. He grew young again; his features softened and mellowed with an unearthly light. And when the little feet could toddle, the old man could go nowhere without taking the child. That touch of baby fingers on his withered hands -- how exquisite! Those incessant questions -- how delicious! That trust which nestled to him -- how absolutely satisfying!

Often as he saw the Canaanites around engaged in their horrible religious rites, offering up their children to Chemosh, Ashtaroth, Milcom, or their equivalents, he must have said to himself, "I could never do that, I shall never be asked to do it, I should never live through it; Thou wilt never ask it of me, wilt Thou?" But God did: "Take now thy son, thy only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell thee." Did not his heart stand still, as though transfixed and petrified? Did it not seem as though it were impossible to go through the ordeal? Did not the Gethsemane cry break from those strong lips: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me"?

Men say that God had no right to issue this command; but we have no right to disconnect the beginning of the story from the close; it is imperative to take it as a whole -- the call to offer Isaac with the arrest, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad." God gave His servant the opportunity of showing that he loved Him as absolutely as the idolaters around their deities, and then stepped in to teach him that He did not require the last terrible act of immolation. It was enough that He was first in His servant's loyalty and affection, and he might take his beloved Isaac back again to be the light of his old age. God does not want to take His laughter-making gifts away from us; He only desires for our own sake as for His own that we should hold them in Him, making Him first; giving them to Him to receive them again from His hand, through the altar of sacrifice, with the added lustre of resurrection and immortal bloom.

I. ISAAC'S NATURAL INQUIRY.

They had often been on similar errands before. When the old man went to worship God he loved to take the lad with him, and he always carried the wood, so soon as he was able, whilst the father's hand bore the fire and knife. On all other occasions also the father carried a lamb in the bosom of his dress; but on the present occasion it was lacking. It suddenly occurred to the quick-witted lad as a strange omission, and he turned to his father with the words, "My father;" When God spoke to Abraham he was wont to answer calmly: I am here where Thou hast put me; and so he replied to the challenge of his son: "Here am I." It is well to possess our souls in patience, to dwell deep; to let God's peace sentinel our hearts, so that we may not be perturbed or disquieted by any sudden alarm. Then Isaac said, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?"

That cry, articulate or not, has in every age arisen to human lips. The Jew asked it as he brought hecatombs of lambs and slew them till their blood flowed in crimson streams. Where is the Lamb which is to make these lambs needless, the Substance of which these are shadows, the Reality of which these are types? The blood of these can never take away sin. Where is the Lamb whose one sufficient sacrifice and oblation shall suffice once and for ever?

We all instinctively repeat the inquiry -- Where is the Lamb? It is not enough to tell us of the Divine clemency which forgives our sin, and remits its penalty; we want to know how it is done, how such treatment consists with the demands of a broken law, with the claims of outraged justice, with the asseveration that the soul which sins must die. The forgiveness which is to appease our conscience, calm our fears, answer our questions, must stand foursquare with justice, must be consistent with equity and truth. God must be shown to be just, whilst He is the Justifier of the ungodly.

Yes; when you and I are met with the memories of past sins, we shall need the Lamb; when we tread the verge of Jordan, we shall need the Lamb; when we soar to worlds unknown, we shall need the Lamb; when we stand in the presence of the Eternal God, we shall cry as Isaac did, Where is the Lamb? where is He whose blood shall atone, whose mind and sacrifice can avail to cancel the past, to give peace to the conscience, and to answer the challenge of the Divine order of the universe?

II. THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

"God will provide Himself a Lamb."

Fear strove with faith in that aged breast; but faith would not give back a single inch. God would provide; somehow God would show a way, which was consistent with His promise, with the parental love He had inspired and permitted, and with the present demand, that seemed so terrible and forbidding. There must be some solution of the whole, which would be perfectly satisfactory when once it was revealed. It might not be unveiled till the last moment, but as certainly as God was God it would emerge.

He probably did not tell Sarah, when they started in the early dawn, of the tragedy which seemed to threaten them. Why should he? It were useless to give her pain; they would most certainly return together. And when he uttered a brief farewell to his young men, he simply said, that the lad and he were going forward to worship, and would presently come back to them. He distinctly used the pronoun we, because he was so sure that God would provide, though how he could not tell, but the Lord would provide.

On the floor of the mosque, which now crowns Mount Moriah, the marble in one place is broken by a piece of the limestone rock, the summit of the hill which juts above its level surface. This is said to be the identical spot where the angel of the Lord arrested Abraham's uplifted hand; and if so, it is the identical spot where God stepped in to provide for His servant's dire extremity.

Probably no creature has ever entered so closely into the experiences of the Great Father's heart in the supreme act of Calvary; but even Abraham stopped Short of the final extremity of anguish: he was spared, but God spared not Himself, in as-much as He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.

Do not be afraid of God: dare to obey Him; dare to lay your precious Isaac into His arms; be sure to trust Him utterly with your dearest and costliest. He has not wished to despoil your life of its grace and joy, only to see whether He is first and best. He will provide for you. Do not look to the right or left, but to Him only; you may have to come to the mountain top, with its limestone-ledge, but in the mount of the Lord the deliverance shall be seen: He will provide Himself the Lamb.

This was the message of all the prophets. They told in varying tones and metaphors of speech that God would certainly provide a Lamb. The noblest of them said that One would be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and would stand as a dumb sheep before her shearers. And the heart of man received and certified their predictions; so sure was it that God could not leave man's soul in the Hades of corruption and disappointment, but would somehow show the path of atonement and redemption, and at length justify the prophetic instincts of those whom He had taught to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

III. THE ANSWER OF THE BAPTIST.

"Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." I conceive of John the beloved speaking thus: --

"In my youth I was the disciple of the greatest of woman born; strong, sinewy, with flashing eye, and trumpet-voice, he never lowered his glance or quaked before any -- no, not even before Herod -- till one day, as a few of us were gathered near him, we saw him suddenly change colour, as a simple, peasant-like stranger passed across his vision, at a little distance. He pointed towards Him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God.

"We did not particularly regard Him then; but on the following day the incident was repeated. Again our master indicated this simple, lowly Man as the Lamb of God, and we followed Him, saw where He lived, and left all to identify ourselves with His cause.

"Three years after, I saw Him hanging on the cross, His brow wreathed with thorns, His body rent with wounds, His soul broken with anguish: it seemed to me as though He were burdened by a weight that was not His own, and were dying for sins which He had never done; and there came back to my mind the words of my master, Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

"Years after that, when in Patmos, with no sound to break the stillness but the scream of the sea-bird and the break of the wave along the coast, the azure veil of heaven was rent, and I beheld the jasper throne and heard the chant of the seraphim; then in the midst of the throne, and of the living creatures, and of the angel-throng, I beheld the Lamb, as it had been slain, and again recalled the words which I heard on the other side of the Gulf of Tears, Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!"

It is a true witness. God had laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Himself the Priest and the Victim, He transferred to His own head the curse and penalty of our sin; He was made sin for us; He bare our sins in His own body on the tree; He was accounted accursed because He represented those whose sin had brought them under the flown and curse of Divine justice; He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. God forgives the penitent believing soul, not simply as an act of Divine clemency, but of justice. His pardon is based on righteousness. The just claims of His holy and righteous law have been met, nothing more can be asked or required. He is faithful to His Son and just to His claims on our behalf when He pardons and accepts all those who come unto Him in faith.

Behold Him! little child, and mature man; trembling penitent, and dying saint; youth with hope, and age with regretful memories! Behold the Lamb of God! Look, and look again! Let life become one prolonged and steadfast look, till the transforming beauty of Jesus pass into your features, as His peace shall guard and keep your heart. Then eternity will unfold still new delights in Him, in whom all that is lovely in character, all that is strong and just and righteous, blend in perfect harmony. (F. B. Meyer. [Through fire and flood](#))

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23

Genesis 23:4 (Our Daily Homily)

I am a Stranger and a Sojourner

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

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

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

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

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

24

Genesis 24:12 (Our Daily Homily)

My Master Abraham

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

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

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

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

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THE PROVIDENCE OF THE TRIFLE

Genesis 24:12, 13, 14

AUGUST 17- Our Daily Walk

"O Lord, the God of my Master Abraham, send me, I pray Thee, good speed this day.., thereby shall I know that Thou hast shewed kindness to my master."---Genesis 24:12, 13, 14.

FROM THIS beautiful incident we can learn much of God's guidance of the soul. Evidently Eliezer, the faithful servant, had absorbed something of his master's faith and method; so that, as we read this artless narrative, we can realize some of the principles on which the entire camp was conducted. Four times he speaks of "the God of my master Abraham." When he had been taken into Abraham's confidence, he entered into the plan with as much zeal and interest as if it were his own private concern. Would that we were equally intent on our Heavenly Master's business, and that those who are our dependants and associates were equally impressed by the reverence and prayerfulness of our lives!

Each step was taken in fellowship with God; but that did not prevent him from exercising his own careful management of the successive steps for ascertaining the disposition of this young girl who was so suddenly summoned from the obscurity of Haran to become a link in the Messianic chain. Eliezer's faith in the Providence of a trifle is most interesting and instructive. He held his peace as the girl drew the water; then, in the assurance of faith that his prayer for guidance had been answered, without further hesitation he placed the bracelets on her arms. Be on the outlook to see God's hand in everything!

Count up the number of times in which this worthy man contrives to bring in the two words, "My master!" We may learn from him how to speak of our Saviour, whenever we get the opportunity--"Rabboni, which being interpreted, is, My Master!"

When asking for good speed to be sent to himself, he alleged as his plea that it would be showing kindness to his master Abraham. So when we ask great things from God, we can plead in the Name of Jesus and be sure that He will show kindness to us for His sake (John 15:16). This old-world story is a beautiful lesson for those who call Jesus Master and Lord.

PRAYER - Send me, O Lord, I humbly ask, good speed this day. May I know when to speak and when to be silent; when to act or refrain from action. In all details of daily life may I faithfully serve Thee, my Master and Friend. AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

25

Genesis 25:33 (Our Daily Homily)

And he sold his Birthright

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

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

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

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

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

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DIGGING WELLS

Genesis 26:22

AUGUST 20 - Our Daily Walk

"He removed from thence, and digged another well... and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." --Genesis 26:22.

ISAAC SEEMS to be rather a disappointing character, and we sometimes wonder that he should be classed with Abraham, the father of all who believe; and Jacob, who prevailed with the Angel and became a Prince! He was passive, quiet, given to thoughtful meditation (Gen. 24:63). God's purpose includes all sorts and types of men, and Isaac dug wells of which men have drunk for thousands of years.

He was constantly pursued by enmity, jealousy, and strife, as the names of his wells attest. But each time he consistently retired from the conflict, and yielded his well to dig another. Finally, his enemies had to confess that he was mightier than they (Gen. 26:16). Best of all, God appeared to him "the same night," and promised that He would be with Him and bless him.

Let us learn to sublimate our resistance to evil, and lift it from the physical to the moral and spiritual level. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty" (Pr 16:32). Go on digging wells--the wells of Family Prayer, of love for the Bible, of holy exercises and habits! You will find spring water (Gen. 26:19). That is God's side of your life. You are called to dig wells, but God's Holy Spirit will rise up in your soul, and in the souls of others, like the geyser-springs in Arctic regions (John 4:14). Let us present to Him ourselves---our souls and bodies, to be the wells and channels, along and through which His eternal God-Head and Power, arising from the fathomless depths of His own nature, may reach this thirsty and parched world!

God is Love: Love is Self-Giving: but God depends on the co-operation of us, the well-diggers, to make outlets for the outflow of His Love and Goodness.

PRAYER - Most Merciful Father, give us grace that we may never be drawn to do anything that may dishonour Thy Name; but may persevere in all good purposes, and in Thy holy service, unto our lives" end. AMEN. (**Our Daily Walk**)

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Related Resource: Messages on several chapters of Genesis beginning in Genesis 25

[Israel, a Prince with God, — The story of Jacob - Online](#)

([Another source - In Pdf](#))

Index to Israel, a Prince with God:

[Genesis 25: First Impressions](#)

[Genesis 25: The Sale of the Birthright](#)

[Genesis 27: The Stolen Blessing](#)

[Genesis 28: The Angel Ladder](#)

[Genesis 28: The Noble Resolve](#)

[Genesis 29: The Education of Home](#)

[Genesis 30: The Mid-Passage of Life](#)

[Genesis 31: The Stirring-Up of the Nest](#)

[Genesis 32: The Midnight Wrestle](#)

[Genesis 33,34: Failure](#)

[Genesis 35: Back to Bethel](#) ([Illustration of Jacob's Well](#))

[Genesis 35, 42: The School of Sorrow](#)

[Genesis 47: Glimpses of the Israel-Nature](#)

[Genesis 49: Rest and the Rest Giver](#)

[Genesis 50: Home: At Last](#)

[Psalms 46: The God of Jacob - This chapter ends with a charge to...](#)

[\[1\] Cultivate a Holy Ambition](#)

[\[2\] Make a Complete Surrender to God](#)

[\[3\] Be Careful Not to Thwart God's Good Workmanship](#)

[\[4\] Seek the Fulness of the Spirit](#)

Meyer in the preface makes a very intriguing statement

It will also be a great pleasure if these pages will serve to show some of my fellow-workers, weary with the incessant demands of their congregations, how they may find a constant well-spring of freshness, variety, and interest, in the glorious biographies of Scripture. To recruit a dwindling congregation; to sustain interest in a crowded one; to awaken new devotion to the Bible; and to touch the many chords of human life--there is nothing to be compared with a reverent re-telling of the stories of Bible Heroes and Saints. ([Preface of Israel, a Prince with God](#))

26

Genesis 26:5 (Our Daily Homily)

Because that Abraham obeyed My Voice and kept My Charge

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

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

The blessing of his prayer. - It is impossible to over-estimate the effect of a good man's prayers; they are as streams or trees, which go on flowing and bearing fruit long after they were originated. The legacy of a good man's prayers is of priceless worth. He may have long since passed to his rest; but God remembers them, and answers them in blessings to the next generation. How often in this chapter we read that "God blessed Isaac."

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

27

Genesis 27:34 (Our Daily Homily)

Esau cried with an exceeding great and bitter Cry

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

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

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

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

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

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

We are called on to reckon ourselves dead in sin (Ro 6:11) - The nearer we live to God, the more sensitive we shall be to the most distant suggestion of evil, closing doors and windows against its entrance, reckoning ourselves "not at home" to it, and yielding our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

28

Genesis 28:12 (Our Daily Homily)

Behold a Ladder set up on the Earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven

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

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

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

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

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

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THE LADDER TO HEAVEN

Genesis 28:12.

FEBRUARY 22 - Our Daily Walk

"Behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it."--Genesis 28:12.

"Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.--John 1:51.

BETHEL WAS a bleak moorland in the heart of Canaan. The hill-sides and level downs were strewn with huge boulders. As he fled north wards, Jacob suddenly found himself overtaken by the swift eastern night while he was traversing this desolate moor. There was nothing for it but to lie down on the hard ground, taking one of the big stones as a pillow for his head. As he slept, he dreamed; and in his dream his mind wove together his last waking thoughts in fantastic medley. It seemed as if the big slabs of limestone came together, and built themselves into a gigantic staircase, reaching from where he lay to the starry heights above him; and on that staircase angels came and went, peopling by their multitudes that most desolate region, and evidently interested in the sleeper who lay beneath.

Let us think of that mystic ladder which is Jesus Christ our Lord, by which He descended to our humanity and ascended to the Throne of God. He is "the Way" by which "the sons of ignorance and night" can pass upward to the eternal Light and Love. Where are you? It may be on a moorland waste, in a ship's cabin, a settler's hut, in a humble cottage, in the crowded city, lying on a bed of pain in the hospital ward! Wherever you are, Jesus finds you out and comes just where you are. The one pole of the ladder is the gold of His Deity, the other the silver of His Manhood, which is placed against your life. Transmit to Him your burdens of sin and care and fear. "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." "We have a Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." None of us is outside God's loving thought and care. There is always a linking ladder between ourselves and Heaven, and God's angels still pass to and fro, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. Let us see to it that we wait at the foot of the ladder to claim our share in the blessings which they bring to earth.

PRAYER - We thank Thee, O Father, that from whatever place Thy children seek Thee, there is a ladder reaching up beyond the stars to Heaven; that Jesus is the Way to Thyself, and we may come to Thee in Him; nay, Thou dost come to us, and dost send Thine angels to minister to our need, that Heaven is near to earth, with sympathy, help, and succour. AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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29

Genesis 29:20 (Our Daily Homily) But a few days, for the Love he had

That touch is enough! We can fill in all the rest. This old-world love was of the same quality as our own. Oh, blessed God I what a priceless inheritance this is! Time itself never tedious, but always too short; labor never hard; distance never long; sacrifice unheard of, the word almost in disuse - where Love is queen. This is how we would feel to our dear Lord: so that the missionary away from home and friends, as well as the invalid suffering for Jesus, might feel years of loneliness and pain but a few days, for love of the beloved Master. We may acquire such love thus:-

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

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

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

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

30

Genesis 30:27 (Our Daily Homily)

The Lord has blessed me for thy sake

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

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

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

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

31

Genesis 31:24 (Our Daily Homily)

Take heed to thyself that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad

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

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

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

God will lay an arrest on the power of the evil one. - We shall not be tempted beyond that we are able to bear. There is always a thus far and no farther. "The Lord maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters." The Only-begotten of the Father keeps the sheep whom His Father has entrusted to Him. Not one of them can be devoured by the lion of hell. If only we believed this, we should be calmer, happier, even though circumstanced as Jacob. No need to altercation with Laban, but to look beyond him to the "Fear of Isaac."

32

Genesis 32:25 (Our Daily Homily)

He touched the Hollow of his Thigh

Related Resource: He Touched My Hip and Made Me Whole - My Testimony to God's Grace

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

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

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

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

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

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THE MIDNIGHT WRESTLE

Genesis 32:1, 24

APRIL 22- Our Daily Walk

"Jacob went on his way, and the Angels of God met him... And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."--Genesis 32:1, 24.

SUCH IS our mortal life! We meet angels before we encounter our Esaus! Their unseen squadrons must be counted on as one of our permanent assets.

"Oh purblind souls! We may not see our helpers in their downward flight, nor hear the sound of silver wings, slow beating through the hush of night?" But they are surely present (Ps. 34:7; Heb. 1:14). If we accustom ourselves to their presence and help, we may presently come, like Jacob, to an experience of the Eternal, before which all else will dwindle into insignificance. When our Rachels and Leash, the babble of the children, the lowing of the herds are away; when the only sound is the low murmur of the brook, or the sigh of the night wind; when the sense of loneliness steals over the spirit, and the starry hosts expand overhead, it is then that we may come into personal contact with One, whose delights from of old were with the sons of men. He is the Word of God, but He is also the Saviour, the Lover and Friend of man.

In our first meeting, He will wrestle with us to break down our stubbornness; He will touch the sinew of our strength till we can hold out no more; He will withdraw from us till we insist that we cannot let Him go; He will awaken a mysterious longing and urgency within us, which He alone can satisfy. And as the memorable interview ends, He will have taught us that we prevail best when we are at our weakest, and will have whispered in our ear, in response to our entreaty, His own sublime Name, Shiloh, the Giver of Eternal Peace!

Why should you not meet that Angel,

and let Him make you a prince?

PRAYER - Be not weary of me, Good Lord. I am all weakness, but Thou art Almighty, and canst put forth Thy strength perfectly in my weakness. Make me truly to hate all which Thou hatest, fervently to love all which Thou lovest--through Jesus Christ. AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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A NEW NAME!

Genesis 32:28

DECEMBER 18 - Our Daily Walk

"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel."--Genesis 32:28

"He that overcometh, I will write upon him Mine own New Name."--Rev. 3:12[note](#)

THROUGH THE Bible, name stands for nature. In those wise old days, names were not given because of their euphonious sound, but as revealing some characteristic trait. Shepherds are said to name their sheep by their defects; in some cases Old Testament names seem to have been given on the same principle. It was so with Jacob. When the Angel said: "What is thy name?" he answered, "Jacob," supplanter: Never shrink, in your dealings with God, to call yourself by your own specific title, whether it be the least of all saints, the chief of sinners, or the dissembler and cheat!

The first condition of losing our old nature is to confess to its possession; the next is to yield to God. Be conquered by God, yield to Him, submit to His Will, especially in that one point where His Spirit presses thee hard. Life is full of the approaches of the wrestling

Angel, only we rebut instead of allowing ourselves to be vanquished by Him. Each time we allow God to have His way in some new point of our character, we acquire the new. name. In other words, a new phase of character is developed, a new touch of the Divine love passes into our being, and we are transformed more perfectly into His likeness, whose Name comprehends all names. Jacob becomes Israel; Simon becomes Peter the Rock-man; Saul becomes Paul the Apostle.

When God calls us by a new name, He communicates to us a new Name for Himself. In other words, He gives us a deeper revelation of Himself. He reveals attributes which before had been concealed. The Apostle in the Apocalypse tells us that every time we overcome, God gives to us a white stone, in which His new name is written, in evident reference to the pure diamond of the Urim and Thummim, by which He spoke to Israel, and on which Jehovah was engraved (Ex 28:29, 30; Rev 2:17-note). Each victor over sin has his own stone of Urim, knows God's will at first hand, and has revelations of God's character, which only he knows to whom they are made (Matt. 11:25).

PRAYER - Give unto us, O God, the white stone with the new Name written on it, that he only knows who receives it. Manifest Thyself to us as Thou dost not to the world. AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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GOD WRESTLING WITH MAN

Genesis 32:28

MARCH 17 - Our Daily Walk

"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."--
Genesis 32:28

THIS STORY of the angel wrestling with Jacob is an instance of God's earnest desire to take from us all that hinders our best and highest life, whilst we resist with might and main. There was much evil in Jacob that needed to be laid aside, and so the love of God drew near to him in the form of an angel to wrestle with him. At first he held his own, but whatever it is that enables a soul whom God designs to bless to stand out against Him, God will touch. It may be as natural as a sinew, but if it robs us of spiritual blessing, God will touch it; it may be as small as a sinew, but its evil influence will compel the Almighty Lover of our souls to take notice of it, to cause our scheming to miscarry, and the sinew of our strength to dry up.

Then Jacob abandoned the posture of defence and resistance, and clung to his Adversary. It is good when we come to this attitude, for there is nothing which God will not do for the soul that clings to Him in absolute weakness (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

Three things happened: The changed name, which indicated a changed character. Israel means "prince with God." The supplanter, cheat, and weak vacillator became royal! There is only one road to royalty, it is the path of self-surrender and faith. Power: as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men thou shalt prevail. (R.V. marg.) He who would have power and authority with his fellows must first secure it by yielding to God. The Beatific Vision: "I have seen God face to face." Our moments of vision come after the night of wrestling. The price is high, but the vision more than compensates. Our sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed. Such is life! As the dawn of heaven breaks we see the Angel of Love, and as Christ meets us we awake to the royalty of the sons of God.

PRAYER - We thank Thee, O God, that our backslidings and transgressions, our failures and inconsistencies, cannot turn aside Thy compassionate love. We would yield ourselves to Thee. Make us as rock to the seducing influences of the world and of the flesh, but soft as clay to the least touch of Thy hand. Strive mightily in us by Thy Holy Spirit, and perfect that which concerneth us. AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

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33

Genesis 33:14 (Our Daily Homily)

I will lead on softly, Until I come unto my lord unto Seir

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

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

burned in.

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

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

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

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

34

Genesis 34:30 (Our Daily Homily)

Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the Inhabitants of the Land

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

Dinah. - Little did she realize all the evil which that visit of hers would bring on her people and on those whose guest she was. What took her there? Had her upbringing been unnecessarily strict, and did she want a little more freedom? There is an inevitable rebound with young people to the other extreme, if needless severity has been brought to bear on them in their early days.

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

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

There is encouragement and warning here.

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

35

Genesis 35:1 (Our Daily Homily)

Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there

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

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

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

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

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

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Genesis 35:1

Arise and Go to Bethel

Chapter 1 in the book [Back to Bethel separation from sin, and fellowship with God - Read the entire work online](#) ([Another source in Pdf](#))

You will find the verses from which I am to speak in Genesis 35:1

"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there, and make thee an altar unto God. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods from among you, and be clean."

Bethel is not more than ten or fifteen hundred feet above the sea, a waste moorland, as we should say in our country, strewn with great boulders. The name means the House of God. How did it get that name?

Thirty years before the words of my text were spoken, Jacob, fleeing from his father's house to avoid the anger of Esau, came there on the first night of his absence from home. You must think of him as a pilgrim exile, with his staff in hand, no escort, nothing of household gear, coming upon that moorland, making what bed he could upon the heather, and lying down to sleep, with the stars above him and the wild wind beating across the waste. His last vision was of those stones that lay strewn around him; and as he slept these were piled one upon the other until from his couch there arose the ladder up and down which the angels trooped, coming down to him in blessing and going up to God in prayer. There he heard the voice of God, and as the morning broke and the vision faded and the sunshine lighted up the world, he vowed that from that moment God should be his God and he His faithful servant.

I want to carry you back to days long gone by, it may be thirty years ago, when you left your father's house in some country district as a young man or girl, and entered into some great city. Do you remember your first night there, and the tiny bedroom in which you knelt to say your evening prayer, and felt so lonesome and solitary? As you remained in the attitude of devotion it seemed as though the God of your old father and mother came very near you and spoke to your heart, and you promised from that night to be His faithful servant, so that until you died He would always find you ready to do His will. I want to know whether those vows have been kept? Has not that angel vision faded from your eyes? Has not that ladder died back into the dark? Have you not forgotten, or at least evaded, your solemn covenant?

That young woman got a situation. She soon found herself beloved by one who could make a home for her. She and he together have climbed the ladder of prosperity, and she is now at the head of a beautiful home, and the angel ladder that linked her with God has faded away. She has drifted upon the current of fashion and worldliness. She is further away from God tonight than she was that other night so long ago.

That young man has become one of your leading citizens. He is making money rapidly, but the promises have died upon his lips, and he is now further away from the God of his father than on the night he commenced his lonely pilgrimage.

I am perfectly sure that I am speaking to some Jacobs that need to have the call of God addressed to them, saying,

"Arise, go up to Bethel! Get away to the moorland plain! Get back to where you were thirty years ago, and at the foot of God's ladder of fellowship again covenant yourselves to Him, and dedicate your life to His service."

From Bethel Jacob traveled forth to Padan Aram where he met Rachel. She became his beautiful wife. He had loved her at first sight, and stayed in Padan Aram, serving seven years for Leah, seven years for Rachel and six years for his cattle and flocks. But they were like a few days for the love he had for Rachel. Years afterwards he started to return to his father's house, with a large and wealthy following. He had difficulty in getting away from Laban, and you remember how the angels of God escorted him, though he had proved himself unfit to receive their help. This man who had seen the angel vision stooped to do things while in Laban's employ which were not worthy of a son of God. --Just as you who professed so much have been doing things which would not stand the scrutiny Of God's angles, and of which one day you must give account at the judgment seat.

However, God loved this man, and brought him down to Jabbok. I have been to Jabbok myself, not literally, but in spirit, for God cannot bear for us to live a low down life. Let us picture that scene!

The stars shining above, the brook rushing down to the Jordan, the trees and shrubs overhanging it! Rachel the beloved, Leah and the children, the flocks and herds had all gone forward, and Jacob was left alone. And the angel of God met him. (Genesis 32:24.) Too often that wonderful scene has been used as a symbol of wrestling prayer, but it is not meant to be taken only in that sense. It seems to me that it was not Jacob who wrestled with the angel, but the angel who wrestled with Jacob. It was as though God knew it was his only chance, He Wanted to lift Jacob up to a new royal life, and so He actually wrestled with him as though to compel him to yield to Him. Jacob was a proud man. He stood his ground and resisted the effort of the angel to humble him. He struggled: He antagonized the angel of God's love. It was only when the angel put forth his hand and touched the sinew of his thigh which shriveled as a cord in the flame, and the man was no longer able to resist, that he cast his arms around the angel and said, I yield, I yield! But I will not let thee go until thou bless me!"

The angel blessed him, and said: "What is thy name?"

He answered: "Jacob--supplanter, cheat, mean, crafty."

The angel said, "No more Jacob, but Israel! God wants you to leave all that behind and step up into a royal life.

Did you ever have that experience in your life? I had it twenty years ago, and I think many another can point back to some secret hour when God's angel came to lift him back into princeliness, and make him the servant of Gad. Perhaps when your wife lay at the point of death the angel came, and you vowed if God would spare her to you would live a worthy, godly life. You remember, woman, that time when your first babe was dangerously ill You sat at the bedside and lifted up your heart to God and said: "If thou wilt spare my child I will renounce my worldliness, my low living, and I will live a true Christian life." That was your Jabbok, and you left it resolved that God and you would be forever in close and blessed fellowship.

But what happened the next day?

It seems too awful to tell, because it is so true not only of Jacob but of ourselves. Esau met him, and instead of trusting God, Jacob gave him a lame excuse why he could not fro with him (Genesis 33:13). As soon as Esau's back was turned the crafty Jacob turned in the opposite direction and made for a fat valley and land of pasture where his cattle and sheep get all they needed whilst his sons and himself could do a big trade with the men of Shechem. We are told he pitched his tent toward Shechem, and worse than that, he bought a parcel of a field. He who had come of a pilgrim race, who ought to have trusted God and known that God would give him the whole land, became a freeholder and bought some real estate right over against Shechem, one of the worst cities of the country. For wealth and gain he threw himself and his wife and children into the closest possible contact With this city, and you will hear presently what came of it.

I always think that just here Rachel's influence came in. I am not going to absolve man and say that he does not care for the world, but I am quite sure women often drive their husbands into expenditures which they cannot afford, because they say: "We want to give our children a chance."

I always feel that Rachel's influence there was baleful upon Jacob's soul, and that she probably said:

"Husband, don't you think we ought to give our children some of the polish, some of the manners of our time? Don't you think it would be wise for them to come into contact with other people?"

Don't think that I am too hard on Rachel. Her own behavior is my justification. We know that when Laban came to Jacob and said somebody had stolen his household gods Jacob knew nothing about it, but as a matter of fact, Rachel had stolen them and hidden them with their goods. Rachel no doubt knew of God, yet she had these little gods to which she gave her worship; and I cannot but feel that her influence was affected by the idolatry she was practicing.

I want to speak for a moment to women. I want to ask whether in God's sight they are using for God that holy, religious influence which should pervade the home and mold the husband and the children. I want to ask girls to begin their relations with men upon such a basis that their influence over them may always be for good. If only girls would build up sweet and noble lives and refuse to do things which God would not approve, they would surely have an influence over their brothers and future husbands in all after time. Pledge yourself to God in all purity and chastity. Build up in good works a life so full of the jewelry of heaven that men will be compelled to seek you for your intrinsic worth. If any woman has idols--the idol of morphine, of worldliness or any other idol--in God's name put it away! Can you allow filthy novels to eat out the very core of your heart and blast the purity and virtue which are your chief graces? In the name of God, I ask you, whatever secret idols you are worshipping, that you tear them from their throne and open your heart to Jesus Christ, so that you may have no influence for evil, but every influence for good.

Rachel ought to have been Jacob's good angel. She should have said:

"Husband, don't go there! Remember the children!"

But they drifted together, and for four or five years they lived near that prosperous, idolatrous city.

And what happened next?

We are told in Genesis 34 that Dinah, Jacob's only daughter, went out to see the daughters of the land. Poor child! She had been put in the way of temptation, and like a gnat she began to flit around the candle flame. It may be that home was irksome, it may be there was quarreling there among her brothers, it may be that she lacked tenderness and sweetness from those who lived with her. 'So she took a step from which there was no stepping back. She lost her honor, and ultimately brought disgrace and shame upon her father's home.

Who was to blame for all that? Was not Jacob to blame for putting his children in that position?

"Listen, you men who are making money! There is a tendency on the part of the Christian man, when he begins to make money, to say: "I can now live in a larger house. I can go into better society." Too often acting thus, you place your children under that influence which is to them what Shechem was to Jacob. What is the result? Your children at once begin to get worldly notions. They go into balls and dances and theaters." You expose your sons and daughters to companions who will lead them to perdition. I don't say you ought to deny your children education or anything which makes life bright and happy for them, but I do say when you have given your family a house according to your means and provided for the education and pleasure and recreation of your children, you ought to look upon the increase of your prosperity as a talent from God. You should use anything that is over and above what is necessary for you and your family for the service of God, accounting yourself His steward and entrusted with His goods.

Six, seven years passed like that, and culminated in a tragedy that compelled Jacob to be gone. Oh, that I were eloquent! Oh, that I could paint for you where you are living! Oh, that I could compare the angel-haunted ladder of Bethel with Shechem! If I could make you see that contrast, you would not need an angel voice to say to you: "Arise, go back to Bethel," but, making all haste, you would get back to the glorious heights where God meets the soul.

When God spoke to Jacob he turned to his household and all that were with him, and said

"Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments; and let us arise and go up to Bethel.

I would touch the harp of memory, the memory of those past days when you were near God. Won't you return to Bethel, where the angels go and come?

I remember once going to a meeting of the Salvation Army where they had advertised an exhibition of idols. I expected to see idols from India and Africa and the South Seas, but instead of that eight young men, at the appointed time, stepped to the rear of the platform and returned, each bearing a large piece of cardboard. One card was covered with pipes and cigars and tobacco; another with sham jewelry, feathers, ribbons and things of that sort. There were eight cards, each covered with things that had been idols to some.

A man sitting behind me pointed and said: "That was my pipe."

A woman said: "See my bow of ribbon?"

Those simple people felt that these things had become idols to them, and they had given them up.

I am not here to say that tobacco or jewelry is your idol, because if I did, a great many who are not tempted in these directions would say, "He doesn't mean me; I have no idol"; which would not be true. For a good many men the idol is money; for many women it is their beauty, or their skill in music, or perhaps their beautiful homes. You may depend upon it that unless you have gone through the purging process everyone of you is tempted to have some secret throne upon which is your idol. The Greek word for "idol" means "appearance." It is something which you trust in more than God whom you cannot see. If there is anything of that sort in your life, I pray you put it away!

But you ask, "How can you put these things away?"

There is only one way. "Take them as God's gift. As soon as you begin to look upon them as Arise, Go Up to Bethel

His loan, the fear of their hurting you passes away, if they are legitimate. Test yourself and say:

"Christ, from henceforth I treat this as Thy gift to me, to be used for Thee!"

And, my friends, be clean! Clean in your heart, clean in what you see, clean in every word you speak, clean in every act, clean in the whole body! Never allow an expression which is capable of a double meaning Never let a thought intrude which is not just what it should be. Don't look at those unclean pictures. Don't read those unclean books.

"Change your garments!" It may be you have dressed in polluted garments. I say to you, put off the old man and put on Jesus Christ, and say: "I am going to live henceforth as Jesus Christ would live were He in my place."

Jacob did it, and he went back to Bethel, and a wonderful thing happened. God said to him: "Your name shall no more be Jacob, but Israel." Then He added, "I am God Almighty"--as much as to say, "Jacob, you sought Shechem because you thought you would do better, and now you stand alone and wonder what is going to happen next. I am going to be with you. I am God Almighty. I will meet all demands. I will stand sponsor for you. Reckon on me. I will see you through."

Now look to Jesus! Open your heart to Him. Give Him your whole nature. Don't let there be any secrets. He will give you a new name. He will be to you God Almighty. He will make you fruitful and will multiply you. And may you and He live together in blessed fellowship until He makes up His jewels. ([Back to Bethel separation from sin, and fellowship with God - Read the entire work online](#))

36

Genesis 36:31 (Our Daily Homily)

The Kings that reigned in Edom before there reigned any King over Israel

Apparently Esau had the best and happiest lot.

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

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

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

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

37

Genesis 37:24 (Our Daily Homily)

They look him and cast him into a pit

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

38

Genesis 38:1 (Our Daily Homily)

Judah

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

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

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

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

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

The Spirit filleth: - "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and that ye are not your own?" (2Cor. 6:19).

God can take in hand the Judahs amongst us, and so deal with them as to produce such a character as is forthshadowed in Genesis 49:8.

39

Genesis 39:9 (Our Daily Homily)

How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

What a contrast between this chapter and the former: that, like a Rembrandt background, throws up the bright colors of this. Where the older brother fell, the younger stood victoriously; and the light of God shone on the young heart, so that even the dungeon gloom could not extinguish it. Who does not know what it is to be misunderstood, misrepresented, accused falsely, and punished wrongfully? Yet God reigns: and in His own time "He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday."

God allows strength to be tested. - We do not know what we are, or where we stand, till we are compelled to choose. Insensibly character is ever forming - unconsciously we are taking sides; but the testing-hour that compels us to declare ourselves causes the solution suddenly to crystallize, and we know ourselves in our choice. The man who has chosen the pure and good once, will choose them more easily next time; and at each choice will become stronger.

God allows virtue to be maligned. - In all Egypt there was not a purer soul, and yet Joseph lay under a terrible imputation; but he committed his cause to God, sure that He would not leave him in Hades; and the time came when the King's word cleared him, and he stood forth vindicated. "Fret not thyself. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."

God allows conscientiousness to be ill-repaid. - Of what avail that he had so well cared for his master's goods? Ah, but that dungeon was the subterranean passage to a throne; and through those fetters iron entered into that young soul. We all need more iron in our blood!

40

Genesis 40:7 (Our Daily Homily)

Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?

We may learn from Joseph the true method of bearing grief. Joseph might have become moody and sullen, absorbed in his own misfortunes, and pessimistic about the course of human life. How far removed from all this was his behavior!

He filled his time with ministry. - The captain of the guard charged him with two state-prisoners, and he ministered unto them. A new interest came into his life, and he almost forgot the heavy pressure of his own troubles amid the interest of listening to the tales of those who were more unfortunate than himself. Do not nurse your grief in lonely brooding: arise and minister to some one; do something in the world; exert yourself to alleviate the sufferings of those close by your side, who have not so clear a conscience or so bright a trust in God.

He was quick to sympathize and comfort. - Quick to notice traces of sorrow, because he had sorrowed; able to sympathize, because he had wept; adept at comforting, because he had been comforted of God. We gain comfort when we attempt to comfort. Out of such intercourse we get what Joseph got - the key which will unlock the heavy doors by which we have been shut in. Light a fire in another's heart, and your own heart will be warmed.

He kept his faith in God. - Depression, captivity, loneliness, separation from those he loved, could not quench his faith in God. Still God was near and precious to him. The stifling darkness and oppression of the prison were irksome to the free child of the camp; but God was as near as in Jacob's tent. There is no evil to them that love God; and the believer loses sight of second causes in the contemplation of the unfolding of the mystery of his Father's will.

41

Genesis 41:16 (Our Daily Homily)

It is not in me; God shall give

It is beautiful to notice Joseph's reverent references to God in his first interview with Pharaoh. When the heart is full of God, the tongue will be almost obliged to speak of Him; and all such references will be easy and natural as flowers in May.

These words might have been uttered by the Lord Jesus. They are so perfectly in harmony with the tenor of His life. He loved to say that His words, and works, and plans, were not His own, but the Father's. Once, when a ruler called Him good, He reminded him that only One was good, and that all goodness was derived from God. Men knew little enough of Jesus, because He sought ever to be a reflecting mirror for His Father, and to glorify Him on the earth. But the Spirit reveals Him to those that love.

These words might have been the Apostle Paul's. He delighted to say that he worked, yet not he, but the grace of God in him; that he lived, yet not he, but Christ in him; that he knew and spake the mysteries of God, yet not he, but the Spirit of God.

Thus we should speak. Our light must so shine that men may turn from us to Him from whom we have derived it. Whenever the temptation arises to revert on ourselves, to attract men to ourselves, to lead them to think that we can meet their need, let us count ourselves dead to the suggestion, saying, "It is not in me; God shall give" (Act 3:12). What strength and comfort come into our hearts, in view of demands which are too great for our weak nature to meet. "It is not in me; God shall give." If our hearts were inditing a good matter, they would boil over, and we should speak more frequently of the things that touch our King.

42

Genesis 42:30 (Our Daily Homily)

The man spake roughly to us

He spake roughly, but he did not feel so.-

When he had spoken in these harsh tones, he restored their money; turned aside to weep (Genesis 42:24); and did his best to alleviate the toils of travel. So sometimes God seems to deal harshly, and speak roughly; but there is no change in the tender love of His heart. It costs Him immeasurably more than it does us. Often when some unusual severity has been evinced, if we could but see His face, it would be full of pity, pain, and pleading on our behalf. He feels yearnings over us which He restrains, and dares not betray till the work of conviction is complete.

He spake roughly to awaken conscience. - It had slept for twenty years. They had almost forgotten that scene at the pit's mouth; but as he repeated their tones, and words, and treatment, it all came back again, and they cried, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother." There must be repentance and confession before God can take us to His heart. We must confess the wrongs done to

our Brother in heaven and our brothers on earth; and many of the roughnesses of God's Providence are intended to awaken us, and bring our sin to remembrance.

He spake roughly to test them. - How did they feel toward each other: was there rivalry, or bitterness, or angry feeling? Beneath his biting words, Joseph would mark their behavior! Would they disown each other, or cling to one another? There was an opportunity for their doing one or the other; and he was glad to notice how their love approved itself. So we are led over stony roads, that God may know what is in our hearts. He gives us opportunities of showing our real feeling toward our brothers, that He may test our love toward Himself.

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THINGS FOR AND AGAINST

FEBRUARY 19 - Our Daily Walk

Genesis 42:36

"Jacob said: All these things are against me."--Genesis 42:36.

"What shall we then say to these things: If God be for us, who can be against us? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."--Rom. 8:31-37.

THY COMPLAINT is very bitter, thou Prince of Israel! What ails thee so sorely? Is there none to comfort?

I do well to be sorrowful! The days of my years have been few and evil! Driven from my father's home; a stranger in a strange land for thirty years; in constant dread of my brother; compelled by the misdeeds of my sons to flee the country; bereaved of my beloved Rachel; lamed through my resistance to God's Angel--I had already suffered to the uttermost; but now we are straitened by famine and want; Joseph is not, Simeon is detained in prison as a hostage, and they are demanding Benjamin, the son of my old age and my right hand."

Let us beware of passing hasty judgments on God's dealings with us. He cannot work out His fair design without some cross-stitches on this side of the canvas. The black clouds are only His water-cisterns, and on the other side they are bathed in sunshine. Do not look at your sorrows from the lowlands of your pilgrimage---but from the uplands of God's purpose. No chastening for the present is joyous but grievous, nevertheless, afterward., dwell on that Afterward! If Jacob had not been led along this special path, he would never have come out on the shining tableland, where God Himself is Sun.

"In all these things we are more than conquerors!" (Ro 8:37-note) These are brave words, thou strenuous soul, how darest thou reverse the findings of the patriarch? Hast thou sounded the depths? Hast thou been in the pit?

"Ay! I have most certainly been there! I have experienced tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword; thrice beaten with rods, once stoned. In journeyings and perils, in hunger and thirst, in cold and pain. But nothing has succeeded in separating me from the love of Christ; and I am persuaded that neither life nor death, things present nor things to come., shall ever separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Yes! thou great Apostle and Lover of Christ, thou art right! In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him who has loved us--our Saviour, Jesus Christ!

PRAYER - Help me, O Lord, to believe that what seem to be my losses are really gains, and that each ounce of affliction is adding to the weight of glory, not hereafter only, but now! AMEN. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

43

Genesis 43:21 (Our Daily Homily)

Every man's money was in the mouth of his sack

Joseph, who gave corn to save his own brethren and the Gentiles from starvation, is a type of Him who gives the bread of life to Jew and Greek - to all that hunger and come to Him for supplies. And in this return of the full money in the sack's mouth, we are reminded that salvation and satisfaction are all of grace. They are without money and without price. Whatever we yield to Him, He returns in full weight.

We bring Him works of merit as a price of our pardon; but they are not noticed.

We bring Him emotion, tears, anguish of soul; but He will have none of them.

We bring Him our faith as a price, instead of as a hand that accepts; and He refuses it.

How many are our mistakes and misunderstandings! Yet He does not for that reason withhold His blessed gift. We get the corn as an act of His free grace; and afterward He explains why it was that our careful dues were not accepted.

There is bread enough in God to supply every mouth of desire and hunger in your soul. You may have it for the seeking. The law is - ask, and have. What if you have no money with which to purchase, no earnestness, no merit! Nevertheless the best wheat of heaven may be yours. Our Father's love is constantly devising means of expressing itself. It puts money into our sacks; it invites us to its home, and spreads banquets before us; it inclines stewards to meet us peacefully; it washes our feet; it takes a tender interest in those we love; it wishes us grace from God; it adjusts itself to our temperaments and puts us at our ease, so that gleams of light as to the love of Jesus strike into our hearts!

44

Genesis 44:28 (Our Daily Homily)

And I said, Surely he is torn in pieces

These are words caught from his Father's mouth by Judah; and here repeated, in his most pathetic intercession, with the hope of softening the Governor's heart, and moving him to spare Benjamin at least. They are very sad, and, without doubt, justified by the vision of that bloodstained coat. Yet there was another interpretation to the sad and dark suggestion which it made: Joseph was alive, and they were soon to know that it was he with whom they were dealing, and that he was conducting them through these strange experiences.

We are often tempted to judge hastily, and by appearances; by our own despondent, sorrowful hearts; or by the reports of others. We may say that certain things are against us, when, if we would only look beyond appearances and circumstances to God, we should find that He had been working, and was working, mightily on our be-half - that all was for our lasting good.

Do not say that you have lost your Joseph; he lives, and will yet be a comfort to you. He was taken from you for a little, to bring blessing to your whole family, but to be given back to you, more yours than ever.

Do not look on the sad, but on the bright side of God's Providence. All things are working for the best. "In all these things is the life of the spirit." Do not judge Him, or try to understand; be still and trust. You will some day be ashamed of your little faith.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain,
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

45

Genesis 45:5 (Our Daily Homily)

God did send me before you

There was great delicacy in Joseph's command, "Cause every man to go out from me." He did not want to expose his brethren; yet he wanted to say words which could not be understood by the curious courtiers. Then he made himself known, and said, "Be not grieved, nor angry, for God did send me before you." This was not only a kind way of alleviating their remorse and sorrow, but was the standpoint from which Joseph was wont to review his life-course. It was his habit to trace the working-out of God's plan, and the interposition of His Providence amid and through the malevolence and treachery of men (Genesis 1:20).

This was also David's habit, who, in the cursing of Shimei and the revolt of Absalom, saw the evolution of God's permissive purposes.

Thus also Jesus spoke, when anticipating the coming of Judas to betray Him. "The Son of Man goeth, as it was written of Him." "The cup that My Father giveth Me to drink."

It is one of the inexplicable mysteries of Providence that bad men subserve God's purposes and unwittingly execute His plans. It is not for us to explain it, but to consider the perplexities and disaster which we suffer at the hands of evil men as being permitted by God for the furtherance of some Divine and hidden purpose. Paul's prayer that he might preach the Gospel at Rome was fulfilled through the hatred of the Jews; and he went to Rome at the Emperor's expense. We may comfort ourselves whenever the storm is high, that God is at the helm, and is making the wrath of man praise Him, whilst the remainder of it shall be restrained. Yes,

Joseph, God is sending you through that pit and prison: but there is a way out into sunlight.

46

Genesis 46:3 (Our Daily Homily)

Fear not to go down into Egypt

Probably the old man, remembering the experiences of Abraham, was very fearful to adventure himself into Egypt. Besides, was it not as though, in going thither, he renounced the Land of Promise? Therefore this special bidding and assurance were the more necessary.

When our heart misgives us, let us look out for one of God's fear not's - His eye is ever upon the righteous, and His ear open to their cry. One upward glance or tremulous prayer will make Him ride on a cherub to our side, and whisper, "Be not afraid; fear not, I am with thee."

God's promises are fulfilled in most unexpected ways. - He had always foretold that the seed of Abraham should outnumber stars and sands; but who would have supposed that the promise would be realized amid the pressure and persecution of Egypt? Yet so it happened. "I will there make of thee a great nation." We must not judge after the sight of our eyes, nor act on what is known as our common sense; faith is led by very uncommon paths. Trust and obey!

God's presence in Egypt acted as an antidote to its evil, and delivered from its tyrant's grasp - Ah, my soul, thou mightest descend without fear into hell itself if God said, "I will go down with thee, and will surely bring thee up again." The Divine Presence is strength to the fearful - security and consolation in life, peace in death. It was probably thus that the Father spoke to the Son by the lips of the Angel in Gethsemane: "Fear not to go down into the grave: I will surely bring thee up again." Thus He speaks to us. He is with us, and will deliver.

47

Genesis 47:25 (Our Daily Homily)

Thou hast saved our lives: We will be Pharaoh's servants

Nothing less would have extorted such an acknowledgment from those proud Egyptians. They were willing to serve their saviour. No doubt, had there been no provision made by Joseph, the streets would have been filled by emaciated skeletons picking their way feebly amid the heaps of the dying and the dead. Gratitude brought them into the dust before him who held the keys of the granaries.

The kingdom of Christ is a matter of supreme importance to individuals and the world. - He is not ambitious of power for its own sake; but that He may be able to exercise it more fully for our benefit, and that He may finally render up the kingdom to God, even His Father, that God may be all in all. He will never, therefore, be perfectly satisfied till He has triumphantly entered all closed gates, as King.

His kingdom is given Him by the glad choice of those whom He had blessed and saved. - The song of heaven reflects this thought: "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain." His empire depends on the sacrifice by which He has saved a multitude whom no man can number. Meditate much on the love of Calvary, and you too will feel that His empire should begin with your heart, and hasten to subdue the kingdoms of the world.

When He becomes king, He still further blesses us. - The first hour of Joseph's supreme power was the beginning of Egypt's brightest days. The Egyptians could not do so well for themselves as he for them. We shall never know the real blessedness of living, its peace and joy and strength, till we have utterly surrendered to Christ's supremacy. To serve such a Master utterly is to drink of the river of perfect blessedness.

48

Genesis 48:2 (Our Daily Homily)

Behold, thy son Joseph cometh

How needful Joseph was to Jacob! The aged patriarch could not die without seeing him. His presence lit the dark valley. His hands closed the tired eyes of the aged pilgrim. And Joseph was as quick to come at the first intimation of his father's desire to see him. There was a perfect sympathy and reciprocity between them, just as there may be between Christ and those who owe all to Him.

Jesus is ever leading us on to new and deeper experiences. - In no true life is stagnation admissible. So the nest is constantly

being stirred up, and the trumpets sounded for the striking of our tents. But there is a Divine motive in it all. Jesus cannot rest satisfied with less than the best for those He loves, as Joseph could not permit Jacob to remain in Canaan whilst Goshen with its plenty awaited him.

In all the new experiences Jesus meets us. - When his father entered Egypt, Joseph was waiting for him. When he was summoned to stand before Pharaoh, Joseph brought him. When he lay a-dying, Joseph was at his side to receive his last commissions. So, trembling soul, if Jesus presses you into the unknown, He does not leave you there, but keeps coming again, meeting you at every point of anxiety and distress. Yea, He does what Joseph could not do. He stands, not on this side only, but on the other side, of death. Here to calm with His benediction; there to receive into His glory.

Jesus is careful for body as well as soul. - The dying man was anxious about the disposal of his body, and Joseph readily undertook to see it buried in Machpelah's cave. So Jesus cares for us. He is the Saviour of the body in this life and in the resurrection.

49

Genesis 49:10 (Our Daily Homily)

Until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the obedience of the peoples be

Old experience is said to attain to something of prophetic strain; but there is more than old experience here. From these aged lips the Holy Ghost is speaking.

The mission and work of Jesus are designated. - He is Shiloh - the Maker, Giver, and Bringer of Peace. The troubled conscience, smitten with conviction, finds peace when He reveals His all sufficient sacrifice and atonement. The discordant elements within us settle into a great calm when He enters to reign, bringing every thought into captivity to His rule. Nor is His work for individuals only; it is for man, for the world, the universe. Peace was made at His cross; it is proclaimed by His Spirit; and it will be consummated when God is All in all.

The time of His advent predicted. - Not till the Romans came and annexed Palestine as one of the provinces of the empire, did the semblance of the Hebrew monarchy expire. And it was then that the Shiloh came. Surely these words must often have been quoted by the pious Jews, with whom Simeon and Anna consorted, as pointing to the near advent of the Messiah. Let us be wise to discern the symptoms of His second advent.

The inevitableness of His dominion. - Ah, Saviour, it is predicted that all peoples shall obey Thee; and we know well that it is only through obedience that men can enter into Thy peace. Teach us to obey, to do all Thy commands, to bear all Thy burdens, to wait before Thee, that thus we may know the peace that passeth all understanding.

Ponder this well, O my soul; the Peace-giver must be obeyed. Only so can He give thee peace that floweth as a river.

50

Genesis 50:20 (Our Daily Homily)

God meant it for good

God's deeper meanings - We are apt to see a malicious meaning; are we equally apt to detect the Divine and benevolent one? Our enemies are many, and they hate us with perfect hatred; they are ever laying their plots, and working their unholy purposes. But there is a greater and wiser than they, who, through all these plottings, is prosecuting His Divine purpose. There is another and deeper meaning than appears to the short sight of sense.

Let us believe that there is a Divine and deeper meaning in the adversities of our lives.- Joseph might be forgiven for not doing so; but with his history and that of many others before us, we have no excuse for despair in the face of crushing sorrow. Whether it comes from man or devil, all creatures are under the Divine control, holding to our lips cups which the Father's hand has mixed. He has no complicity with their evil, but they unconsciously perform His will. Even if you cannot see the Divine meaning, dare to believe that it is there.

Await the disclosures of time. - Even here we sometimes reach an eminence from which we detect the meaning of the path by which we have been conducted. It may have been rough and circuitous, but there was reason in it all. Often God rewards patient trust by allowing us to see and know.

And for the full revelation of eternity. - One day God will call us to His side in the clear light of eternity, and will explain His meanings in life's most sorrowful experiences; and we shall learn that we suffered, not for ourselves only, but for others, and, as

part of His great remedial scheme, "to save much people alive."