

THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES

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CHRIST IN ISAIAH
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EXPOSITORY PREACHING
JOSEPH
SAVED AND KEPT
THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES

The Five Books of MOSES

*A Devotional Commentary on each Chapter from
Genesis :: Leviticus :: Exodus
Numbers :: Deuteronomy*

F. B. Meyer

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The Five Books of Moses
A Devotional Commentary on each Chapter from Genesis,
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THE BOOK OF GENESIS

THIS venerable Book is unrivalled among the religious records of our race. The Vedas of the Hindoos, the Zendavesta of the Persians, are very ancient: but they consist of hymns and philosophic speculations, or addresses to the elements of nature; and do not profess to be what this Book is—a narrative of man's religious history for more than five-and-twenty centuries; written with devout belief in one God, and in a style of grave, archaic, artless simplicity. In Luther's judgment, there was nothing more beautiful or more useful than GENESIS. It is the befitting portico to the temple of Truth. It is the seed-plot of the Bible; because there is nothing in all the subsequent revelation of which the rudiment or germ may not be discovered here. To master Genesis is to hold the key of Scripture.

¶ *As to its name:* the Jews called it by its first word—*Bereshith* (in the beginning). The Greeks called it *Genesis* (origination). We may well regard it as the Book of Beginnings; because we may here discover the source of many streams—some turbid; some crystal—which are flowing through the world. (1) The origin of the heavens and the earth; (2) of the human family; (3) of marriage and the home; (4) of sin and death; (5) of sacrifice; (6) of nations and tongues; (7) of the Hebrew race; (8) of the rite of circumcision, and the covenant which it sealed; (9) of the heavenly priesthood.

Amongst the Jews, *its authorship* was always ascribed to Moses—a belief authenticated by Christ (John v. 46, 47). Moses probably wrote it after the name JEHOVAH had been revealed to him (Exod. iii. 14; vi. 2, 3); since he often uses the designation. But he also almost certainly interwove into his story many hallowed narratives of the past, which had been orally transmitted from father to son in the patriarchal tents; which he had learnt in boyhood from his mother; and in which the Almighty was designated as God, *Elohim*, the Strong. This is the explanation of the difference between the Jehovistic and the Elohist portions, which are clearly marked in the Hebrew, and to some extent in our own version. The first are due to the direct penmanship of Moses; the second to the incorporation of holy tradition; each beneath the Divine inspiration and teaching of the Holy Ghost.

We must not forget *the design* of this Book: to prepare for the story of God's dealings with the Hebrew people, of whom the Saviour of the world was to come. All is made to converge and taper to that fact. Much that would have been interesting, but not relevant, is dropped out of view,

or mentioned in the slightest manner. Attention is focused on the Hebrew people, and those incidents which needed to be explained as a preparation for the understanding of all that was to follow. They mistake, therefore, who come to this Book for treatises on geology, ethnology, or archaeology; though, when all the truth is known, nothing in any of these branches of knowledge will have been discovered inconsistent with the general broad outlines of this book.

The divisions of this Book are clearly marked by the recurring phrase, *these are the generations*: of the heavens and earth, ii. 4; of Adam, v. 1; of Noah, vi. 9; of Noah's sons, x. 1; of Shem, xi. 10; of Terah, xi. 27; of Ishmael, xxv. 12; of Isaac, xxv. 19; of Esau, xxxvi. 1; of Jacob, xxxvii. 2: and at each division our attention is fixed on a narrowing area, until from the creation of the heavens and the earth it is left with one sad object of contemplation—an enslaved race, and “a coffin in Egypt.”

CHAP. I. The Creation

This chapter presents a sublime contrast to the legends of Creation passing elsewhere as current coin. It bears on its front the stamp of Divine inspiration and truth. No attempt is made to prove the existence, or describe the origin, of God. These are assumed as being universally confessed (Rom. i. 20). Without introduction we are brought face to face with Him who, “before the mountains were brought forth, or the earth was formed, from everlasting to everlasting,” is God (Ps. xc. 2). Is not this a suitable inscription to put on the forefront of every new enterprise or epoch of time?—“IN THE BEGINNING, GOD” (1).

There is no trace of the doctrine of the plurality of gods which was taught in other religions, and so inveterately held by the Jews themselves. Alone, among its rivals, this Book recognizes the one only living God: though in the plural of the Hebrew word (Elohim), and in the resolve, “Let *us* make man” (26), there are traces of the blessed Trinity, and of the presence of the Son, through whom, as the organ of creation, all things were made (John i. 3; Col. i. 16). Let us pause, and worship!

With pen of unerring truth the Spirit of Inspiration writes God's name on all things, excluding ATHEISM—for *God* created; POLYTHEISM—for *One* God created; THE ETERNITY OF MATTER—for all things began in God; and the word *create* clearly implies to make out

of nothing (Heb. xi. 3); and PANTHEISM—for God, the Builder of all, must be distinct from the work of His hands.

The objects of ancient idolatry are specially mentioned in the catalogue of creation—sun and stars; sea-monsters and cattle; as well as creeping things—as if to rebut foolish and ignorant superstition. Creation's progress is described as the eve and dawn of successive days, which are supposed by some to represent vast periods of time (the word *day* is so used: ii. 4). Many scientific men have expressed their belief that the general outlines are in complete accord with the discoveries of recent science.

Here follow a sublime series. The heaving chaos and brooding Spirit (2); light shining out of darkness (3, and 2 Cor. iv. 6); mists rolled up, and the clear expanse of air separating the clouds from the earth (6–8); the waters poured into their beds (Ps. civ. 6–9); earth carpeted with green and covered with vegetation (11, 12); the giving of light-bearers for day and night (14–18). So the palace stood complete. Then the ocean of air peopled with birds, and that of water with fish (20–22); and finally, on the earth, cattle and creeping things, and forest beasts (24, 25). Thus the royal retinue was prepared. Lastly, man, the king; moulded of red earth as to his body; made in the image of God as to soul and spirit; appointed to subdue and rule (26, and Ps. viii. 4–8). That royalty has been lost; the crown rolled in the dust. But it is restored in Christ (Heb. ii. 9): and we, through faith, being identified with Him, shall get all back and more; for this is the purpose of God (Rom. viii. 29; Rev. v. 10).

CHAP. II. **Paradise**

This chapter brims with interest.

The rest of God (1–3): not the rest of indolence or inaction; but of complacency with a finished work. “Behold, it was very good.” Christ also rested on the seventh day, lying in the tomb, because His work was done and redemption finished. And, if we believe, we too may share that rest (Heb. iv. 9–11): rest of soul, in His work for us; of heart, in His love to us; of will, in His rule over us. And where God rests, He sanctifies. Wouldst thou be a saint?—then see to it that God rests within!

The story of Paradise (8), which has long since vanished from the earth; though its memories, like threads of light, are interwoven in

the legends of all peoples. When men point to the vice and misery of our great cities, as a slur on the character of God, point them back to Eden, with its pleasant and wholesome trees; or forward to the City of Gold: these are God's thoughts and ideals. His enemy has wrought the devastation we see around. Man's history begins in a pleasant garden, and ends in a Holy City: but what an agony between!

We hear the murmurs of the waters of *the river* (10), of which there is frequent mention afterwards: which flowed in the desert (1 Cor. x. 4); made glad the city of God (Ps. xlv. 4); issued from under the threshold of the house (Ezek. xlvii. 1), bringing life wherever it came; and proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev. xxii. 1).

Here also (9) is the *tree of life*—one of heaven's exotics—which could not flourish in our cold clime; and has been taken back to bloom in perpetual summer (Rev. xxii. 2).

The forming of woman out of man (22): which reveals the intimate connection between the two in God's thought; and foreshadows the sacred union between Christ and the Church, which owes her being to His sleep in the tomb. Eve was made, "not from Adam's head, to top him; nor from his feet, to be trampled on by him; but from his side to be his equal; under his arm to be protected; and near to his heart to be beloved." God made the first home.

CHAP. III. The Fall

The frequent subsequent references to the story of the Fall forbid us to treat it as a parable or myth (2 Cor. xi. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 11-14). Why should not the devil possess serpents as well as men?

The temptation (1-5) followed the same stages as those which are familiar to us—the question about God's dealings; the suggestion that good is to be had outside the fence of His prohibition; the denial that any evil consequences will follow the act of disobedience; and the sly allusion to the advantages that would accrue.

And Eve's sin came about as do our sins (6). She listened to the tempter, instead of saying instantly, "Get thee behind me!"; she exaggerated the limits of the prohibition ("neither shall ye touch it"); she looked, and dwelt longingly on the pleasantness and desirableness of the fruit—till desire mastered the protests of conscience, and she took and shared the forbidden spoils.

And instantly *the effects* followed, which follow with ourselves (7-8). Their eyes were opened, and they saw. Temptation blinds us; satiety opens our eyes to see what we have done. And as they hid themselves from one another, so they tried to conceal themselves from God: sin ever breeds fear, which hath torment. Finally, each mistrusted and accused the other; for sin is the great separator of man from God, and man from man.

In the *penal clauses* blessing is marvellously blended with penalty (9-24). The ground is cursed; but it is for man's sake: and arduous toil has often *made* men; taxing inventiveness, and rousing dormant energy, to master difficulty. The woman was to suffer multiplied pain: but pain has been prolific in the discipline of human souls: what a noble progeny is hers! And though the great enemy of man might do his worst, yet the woman's Seed should bruise his head. On the cross of Calvary, and in the grave of Joseph of Arimathea, these words were literally fulfilled.

What pity also was there in God's search for His erring ones; His institution of sacrifice; and His clothing of their nakedness with the victims' skins! And though the flaming sword forbids our return to Paradise Lost, the cherubim point to Paradise Regained for us by the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven (Rom. v. and 1 Cor. xv. 22-45).

CHAP. IV. Cain and Abel

We notice: (I.) *The contrast between two different kinds of worship* (3-5).—Cain deliberately refused the Divine appointment of sacrifice, instituted in Eden; and brought fruit which, however fair and ripe, was only a confession of the Divine creatorship; and failed to acknowledge that he was a sinful man, needing sacrifice, atonement, and forgiveness. Abel, on the other hand, realized his sinfulness, and brought the goodliest of his flock, confessing, as he did so, that he deserved to die; but pleading for forgiveness in virtue of the lamb's shed blood: emblem of the richer blood, which was one day to bless the world (Heb. xi. 4). Still the distinction holds: the Rationalist may profess religion; but it is the religion of Cain, without blood. How contrary to Heb. ix.!

(II.) *The genesis of sin* (5-9).—When Cain saw the descending fire burn on Abel's altar, the evil of his nature flamed out; for he was of

the wicked one. Self-will led to disobedience; that to hatred and jealousy; these to murder; murder to lying, and the imputation of harshness and injustice to God. Beware of the first beginnings of sin!—they are like the first drops of an ocean trickling through a sandbank.

(III.) *The cry of a covered crime* (10).—Abel's blood spoke. It cried to God, as all innocent martyr-blood cries, "How long, O Lord, holy and true?" (Rev. vi. 10). And sin which has not been confessed to God always cries to God for vengeance; nor will that cry cease till the sinner has fled to the blood of Jesus, which cries for mercy in sweeter, louder tones (Heb. xii. 24). Shelter yourselves under that blood.

(IV.) *The beginning of the division between the world and the Church*.—Cain founded a city (17), where arts, and music, and all that pleased the taste, began to flourish. These were the chief objects sought by his children and their descendants. This was "the way of Cain," brilliant but godless; out from the presence of the Lord (16).

CHAP. V. From Adam to Noah

In this chapter we are permitted to walk through one of the cemeteries of the old world, and look at the time-worn monuments on which we can still decipher the ancient names, and the age at which the men died. But only the good people are buried here: those of the line of Seth, who in some degree took the place of the martyred Abel. It is sad, however, to notice that, though they were clearly divided from the Cainites, they were all tinged with Adam's sin, and its results. Adam was made in the image of God; but he begat Seth in his own likeness, after his image (3); and so was propagated that bias and tendency towards evil which has passed to every twig in the great tree of humanity. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John iii. 6).

Mark, *The monotony of death*.—Eight times the bell tolls out the solemn words, "And he died." However long the life, it always succumbed at last to the scythe of death. Methuselah himself at last must follow the generations of his race to the darkness of the grave. And there is one reason, amply sufficient: death passed on all, because all sinned (Rom. v. 12). "It is appointed unto men," *and to you*, "once to die" (Heb. ix. 27). Prepare to meet thy God!

The possibilities of faith (Heb. xi. 5).—It enabled a poor, weak man, like ourselves, to walk with God, and please Him, for over three hundred years, amid the growing darkness and impurity of his times. And if he could, surely *we* can. Why not resolve henceforth to agree with God, bringing our thoughts and ways into harmony with His? (Amos iii. 3). Then let it be the aim of our life to do always those things that please Him; and the Father will never leave us alone (John viii. 29). We shall walk with Him in holy and delightful fellowship (1 John i. 3); we shall be able, like Enoch, to give a bright testimony to the world (Jude 14); and we shall be ready to be translated, so as not to see death, if so be that Jesus comes before we die (1 Cor. xv. 51–57).

The disappointment of human hopes.—An aged pair clasped in their arms an infant boy, and called him Noah (rest); but the nomenclature was premature. The Deluge was soon to sweep over the world of men; and the weary generations were yet to wait till One should come who would give forth a universal invitation, "Come unto Me, *all ye* that labour and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest." Our rest cannot come from within: it must come from above.

CHAP. VI. The Ark Constructed

God only hastened the results of sin.—Many terms are used to indicate the virulence of the disease (5, 6, 11, 12). So bad was it that ultimately it must have swept the world of men, as small-pox devastates some fair isle in the southern seas. Was it not better to hasten the inevitable result by one sudden act of judgment than let it run out its dismal course of agony? Yet how malignant is sin, that it could send its poison across the Flood in a selected household!

Every means was taken to divert man from his evil way.—God's Spirit strove with man; and though a limit was put to His tender pleadings, yet He plied men with yearning remonstrances, turning away disappointed and grieved at heart (6). There was also considerable delay: for 120 years the long-suffering of God waited (1 Pet. iii. 20), as it waits for you: though it will not wait for ever; there is a limit (Luke xiii. 9). And in the meantime the Ark was a-preparing, and Noah was preaching righteousness (2 Pet. ii. 5).

The character of Noah shines out for our admiration. Just towards man; perfect in wholeheartedness towards God; walking step by

step in heavenly fellowship; and yielding implicit obedience to each command (9, 22). This is the man to whom God tells His secrets concerning coming doom; with whom a covenant is established; and who is permitted to pass over into the world of resurrection; saved himself, and a means of salvation to others. Reader, let that character be thine!

CHAP. VII. The Deluge

What a flood was this! Men climbed to the highest storey of their towers in vain; then to the hills; but the greedy waters followed them in their flight, and hemmed them in, driving close together into smaller groups men, women, children, and wild beasts, that crouched with fear, or fought for the highest crag, till this also was covered, and all was still, as the last cry was lost amid the moan of the breakers and the pitiless downpour of rain.

Equally certain and unexpected shall be the final Judgment which shall close the present age.—"As IT WAS in the days of Noah, so SHALL IT BE in the days of the Son of Man" (Luke xvii. 26). In those days there was no sign of a millennium: sin and lawlessness held undisputed sway; one faithful heart alone beat true to God. Nor shall the Son of Man find it otherwise when He comes. His advent shall startle the children of the world at their wine-parties, their balls, their brilliant theatres, their studios of art and music. Men think this cannot be; they argue from the unbroken course of nature. But the course of nature was broken once by the baptism of water; and it shall be broken again by the baptism of fire (2 Pet. iii. 7).

The safety of the inmates of the ark.—God said, "Come in!" He was inside. The invitation included all Noah's household. God does not wish us to be saved alone. Seven days before the Deluge came they entered, amid the loud laughter and mockery of the world to which Noah had often preached. But no one, not even of the builders, went with them. And the Lord shut the door behind the last that entered. And when once the Master has shut the door there is no further hope of entrance (Luke xii. 25); neither shall any surge of trouble or judgment break through, though the roar of the billows be heard without (Rev. iii. 7). Are you inside God's Ark? If not, make haste! What saved Noah? The ark?—or his feelings about it? Certainly, the ARK. So are we saved: not by our feelings

about Christ, but by His free grace. And in the ark the mouse was as safe as the lion.

CHAP. VIII. The Raven and the Dove

Traditions of the Flood are found in every land, from the tablets of Babylon to the rude carvings of the Aztecs. Nothing has ever left so profound an impression on the heart of man as this stupendous act of judgment; and the universal tradition attests the truth of Scripture. Never since then have men been ignorant of the mind of God against sin.

The mindfulness of God (Ps. cxi. 4).—"God remembered Noah." The floods have been descending on your life; but He has not forgotten you, nor can He. He sees the peril, and counts the tears of His saints. Though He tarry long, He will interpose and deliver (Isa. xlv. 21; xlix. 15); and the tossing ark shall at last come to rest.

The mission of the birds.—Noah's window looked upward only, for fellowship; it had no outlook on the world: so he sent forth winged couriers to bear him tidings (7-9). The interval of seven days marks a Sabbath-keeping even in the ark (10). Surely if men kept the Sabbath there, its observance is possible anywhere. The unclean raven found its food and home amid the *débris* of the flood. But the gentle dove found no rest in such scenes; and in this is pre-figured the renewed heart which sighs for rest in vain, till the hand of Jesus takes it in unto Himself.

The descent on resurrection ground (18).—Through the waters of death and judgment Noah floated in the ark; and finally, when the face of nature emerged, green and smiling, beautiful as when Eden lay under the blessing of God, he stepped out into the "new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelt righteousness." Then, of the clean animals, which, for purposes of sacrifice, he had taken in larger numbers (vii. 2), he offered a burnt offering (20). We who believe in Jesus have in Him travelled across from the old world that lies under God's curse, the world of the flesh; we have passed to the windward of the storm; we are the "children of the resurrection." Let us live as such!

CHAP. IX. The Bow in the Cloud

It is very remarkable to meet here (4) the clear prohibition against the use of blood in food, which, both under the Mosaic economy and in the Christian dispensation, is afterwards repeated on the page of Scripture (Lev. xvii. 11, and Acts xv. 20). And the reason is clearly given—the blood is the life. Is not this what we mean when we speak of the precious blood of Jesus Christ—that He laid down His life for us? “The blood maketh atonement for the soul” (Lev. xvii. 11).

The value of human life (5).—If an ox gored a man, or any beast of prey killed him, the animal was to be destroyed (*see* Exod. xxi. 28). The brother of a murdered man was to require the blood of the murderer. The lower creation might be freely used for food* (3); but human life was surrounded by the most solemn sanctions. This would correct any thought begotten by the destruction of the Deluge that God was prodigal of human life. The new law (6), so specially protective of human life, was doubtless given to guard against the recurrence of the condition of things which existed before the Deluge, when “the earth was filled with violence” (vi. 11).

The covenant (11).—How much grace there was in it! It depended upon no condition on the part of man, but originated in and was maintained by the unmerited mercy of God. Its sign was the rainbow. When you see a rainbow, recall God’s pledge, so that you may think the same thing as God; then think of another covenant, true of the spiritual seed of Abraham (Isa. liv. 9, 10). We see only half here; the other half is in heaven, and completes the circle (Rev. iv. 3).

Noah’s sin (21) reminds us how weak are the best of men; liable to fall, even after the most marvellous deliverances. The love of drink will drag a preacher of righteousness into the dust. Let us see to it that we fall not into this temptation ourselves; and that we tempt not others (Hab. ii. 15). But if one of our brethren sin, let us not parade or tell his fault, but cover it with the mantle of Divine love: hating the sin, but seeking to save the sinner (Gal. vi. 1; Jude 23; *see also* Rom. xiv. 21; 1 Cor. x. 31).

* *Verses* 3: “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you.” This permission probably only applied to “clean” creatures; as the distinction between “clean” and “unclean” is clearly shown in Gen. vii. 2.

CHAP. X. Descendants of Noah

It is very necessary to read this chapter carefully, in order to understand the references to foreign nations made later in the Scriptures; and it will well repay the earnest student to trace, with the aid of Bible dictionary and map, the spread of mankind over the world. Over the whole let us write, "God loved the world."

GENTILES cannot but find a deep interest in this *first mention of their name* (5). And, in these old terms, learned ethnologists have found traces of much that exists around us still. Gomer stands for the Celts; Javan is Greece; Tubal is Tobolsk; Ashkenaz probably points to the Saxons; Tarshish is Spain; Kittim may even be the British Isles. These are those "other sheep" of which the Good Shepherd spake; and it is pleasant to feel that God keeps a list of His prodigal children.

In the enumeration of the children of Ham, we meet *the first mention of Nineveh*, and also of Babylon. From this point to Rev. xviii. the latter name continually recurs; and it always denotes hostility to the people of God. Babylon is Satan's counterfeit of the Church of God. She exists still in the world around us; and Babylonish garments tempt us, as they tempted Israel in the days of Achan; whilst many of God's children are betrayed into worse than Babylonish captivity. Note in 16-18 the progenitors of the seven nations of Canaan, so often referred to in Joshua. Nimrod was a mighty hunter, a fact noticed in contrast to the peaceful shepherd-life around; and in this combination of passions for the chase and war, he is the prototype of the Babylonish kings. It has been said that from being a hunter of beasts he became a hunter of men; and he may possibly have been the first man who made slaves of his fellow-men.

But the main interest centres about Shem and his children: because there we strike the origin of that marvellous line of witnesses for the truth, which gave to the world an Abraham, a Moses, an Isaiah, a Paul; and, above all, Jesus Christ, as to His human nature (Rom. ix. 4, 5).

CHAP. XI. **Building of Babel**

The building of Babel.—Driven by the fear of another deluge, notwithstanding God's distinct assurance to the contrary (ix. 11)—and impelled by a common desire to "make a name" (4)—the descendants of Noah began to build on the plain of Shinar. Men seem to be born to be builders. They build houses, or fortunes, or reputations; systems, or societies—but how often atheistically! They reject God's foundation, and build on the sand of the alluvial plain. They think to secure themselves against any flood of misfortune or trouble that may sweep through the world. They are bent on making a name. Some men are always taking brick for stone and slime for mortar; but the work ends in disappointment and confusion. Oh, builders for eternity, get on God's Rock: build according to His plan, and for the glory of His name!

The confusion of tongues.—The whole world had been of one lip and one stock of words (1). But God came down: first to see; then to confound. He never confounds in judgment, unless He has carefully examined into the rights of a matter for Himself. He is always coming down to see what we are doing; and nothing can escape His searching eyes. And He can judge us by a very little thing. He touched the lip, and altered the whole method of pronunciation. This disunion prevails in the world: but in the Church God has given the true principle of union in the risen Jesus, and at Pentecost Babel was reversed (Acts ii. 1–11); whilst heaven will give all one lip again (Rev. vii. 9, 10).

The call of Abram (31).—We must not forget to compare Acts vii. 2 with the words before us. The movement of that little clan in the grey dawn of history from its original seat was the result of a Divine call to the youngest son. He carried with him the old father Terah, and others of his race; but their presence stayed his march and impeded his obedience, so that the exodus stopped short at Haran or Charran, instead of going forward to Canaan. Only when his father was dead did Abram carry out the Divine programme to the full. "Let us lay aside every weight." Let us do God's will to the uttermost, come what may (Acts xxi. 13, 14; Eph. vi. 13; Ps. xlv. 2, 3).

CHAP. XII. The Call of Abram

God's commands are always linked with promises. Count the six *shalls* and *wills* of this promise. God does not always give His reasons; but He is generous of His promises. The one cry of Scripture is for separation, to which we are graciously allured (Deut. xxviii. 1; Isa. lii. 11; Ezek. xxxvii. 21-28; Matt. xix. 29; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18; Eph. v. 11). The keynote of Abram's life was SEPARATION; not all at once, but step by step: until country, kindred, Lot, worldly alliances, fleshly expedients—were one after another cast aside; and he stood alone with God.

Abram's obedience.—"So Abram departed" (4, and Heb. xi. 8). His obedience was the result of faith in the bare word of God. He was not sure of his destination. The land had yet to be shown. Fierce nations were around. Trackless deserts lay beyond the Euphrates-flood. It seemed impossible that the world could be blessed through a childless man. But it was enough for him that God had spoken. Faith prompted obedience; and obedience reacted on faith (Rom. iv. 13-22). Immediate and scrupulous obedience is the secret of a healthy and useful life.

The tent and the altar.—"He dwelt in tents" (Heb. xi. 9). The tent life is natural to the man whose portion is God, and whose fatherland is the Land of Promise. "Here we have no continuing city; but we seek one to come" (Heb. xiii. 14). The tent is good enough for the pilgrim. God met His obedient child with a new promise, when he reached Canaan. "*This is the Land*" (7). And there Abram built his first altar; and afterwards, where he pitched his tent, he reared the altar of praise and prayer and consecration. Wherever we go, at home or abroad, however short our stay, we should rear an altar of testimony.

The famine.—In the way of obedience and faith there always will be difficulties (10). By these God tests and teaches us. A famine is no indication that we are wrong; but may imply that God is going to reveal some marvellous deliverance. Alas! Abram failed under the test, and went down to Egypt, which is always the Scripture symbol for reliance on an arm of flesh (Isa. xxx. 1-7). And one sin led to another, in his shameful denial of his wife (18). But God did not cast him off: He graciously protected and restored him (Ps. cv. 14, 15).