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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1: 16.

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

SEEKING A WIFE.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis St. Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, April 22nd, 1923.

(Stenographically reported)

"And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."—Genesis 24: 49.

THIS verse is a part of a very interesting and instructive chapter in the life of Abraham. "Abraham was old, and well stricken in age," and he greatly desired to see his son Isaac married before he died. Marriages, apparently, were strangely made in that day. Abraham was afraid that Isaac might make a mistake, and he was particularly fearful that he might select a wife from among the people of the land in which he dwelt. And so he summoned Eliezer, the steward of his house, and he commissioned him to go to far-off Mesopotamia and from among his own people to select and bring back a woman who should become the wife of Isaac. And Eliezer, after enquiring further, particularly as to the limits of his responsibility—and in that I think he was very wise—undertook this delicate mission. And he went to the far country, praying God to direct his steps, asking for certain evidences of divine direction which in our study will later appear. But he came at length to the family and into the presence of the woman whom he believed God had appointed to be the wife of his master's son. And when he had made known his errand and carefully delivered himself of his master's message, he said, "And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

The Apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, tells us that the story of Isaac and Ishmael is an allegory; by which he does not mean that it was not true to historic fact; but he means that being history it had a special spiritual significance, and that the events of history were providentially ordered, even as the record of those events was written by divine inspiration. And I think we are justified in taking this Old Testament story to illustrate the methods of grace, and the principles which underlie the operation of the Holy Spirit in bringing out of darkness into light those who are appointed to be members of that body which is described as the Bride of the divine Bridegroom.

I shall speak this evening of the servant's commission, the master's proposal, and the messenger's urgent appeal.

I. FIRST OF ALL, I ask you to examine with me, for it has illustrative value THE COMMISSION WHICH ELIEZER RECEIVED, that we may thereby learn something of the commission of those who are sent to preach the everlasting Gospel.

To begin with, Eliezer was informed that it was his master's supreme desire and purpose that Isaac should have a wife. Abraham had many interests. He was a man of affairs; he was a rich man; he passed as a prince among his fellows. But all the interests of life in Abraham's thought were subordinated to this one master purpose: "that the purpose of God according to election might stand"; he desired that Isaac, who was himself a child of promise, who had come to him as a gift of God—he desired to see Isaac married. And I venture to believe that it would help us in the interpretation, not only of history, but of the events of the present, whether we view the world at large, or only our own personal experience—it would help us, I say, if we could clearly understand that the teaching of Scripture is that God's great master purpose in this dispensation of grace is to gather to Himself that company of people who shall become the Bride of His Son. He is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name. We are quite justified in looking for the hand of God in the affairs of the nations. I do not doubt at all that God's hand is upon the statesmen of the world; that it is still true that "promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another." "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" God is even now working out His purposes. All the events of our time, and of the times that have preceded us, and the events that shall yet succeed the history of our day—all these are part of God's great purpose that His Son shall have a Bride. Do not make light of such a service as this, and the work, perhaps, of some little mission hall. God is supremely interested in all these things. It was for this that Saviour died. This was that which He planned from before the foundation of the world; and He is resolved, He is sovereignly determined that His Son shall have His Bride. That is His purpose to-day; and they, I believe, make the largest contribution to the world's weal who concern themselves, as Eliezer did, with the execution, so far as they may be permitted to be instrumental in its accomplishment, of the Lord's great purpose to bring sinners to Himself. But the devil would turn us aside to a great many other matters. He seems to have engaged a very large part of the Christian Church in some other ministry than that of bringing poor sinners to the feet of Christ. Anything and everything may command attention but the one great matter which is dear to the heart of God. You will find the churches of to-day led aside into all sorts of so-called "social" ministries instead of keeping to the main track. Now our Lord Jesus was similarly tempted when He was upon earth. They wanted to turn Him aside to other activities. "One of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And He said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" He refused to interfere in that matter. Somebody may say, "Was He then unmindful of the ills from which men suffer? Was He indifferent to the conditions under which men live? Did He have no interest in social order, in social justice, in the correction of economic wrongs? And do you mean to say that the church is to go on independently of all these things; that it is not to concern itself with social and moral reform?" No, I do not say that. I do say that we are to do that indirectly: that is a by-product; it is not the main purpose. Let me give you another illustration. Jesus came to a place called Jericho, and saw up in a sycamore tree a man who was little of stature, and who had climbed up to see Jesus as He passed by. "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, 'That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.'" Some of them might have said, "The first thing the prophet of Nazareth ought to have done would have been to make this man put certain things right; to have established different laws, compelling men to live honestly. He is gone to be guest with a man who has been robbing people right and left, and He does nothing at all about it." Ah, didn't He? When He came into the house of Zacchaeus, "Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man in false accusation, I restore him fourfold." And so you see by coming first of

the heart and home of Zacchaeus, he made him an honest man and made him liberal toward the poor and made him just toward those whom he had wronged. And that is the programme of the Gospel, to bring men to Christ, to bring them into right relationship to God, to teach them "to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their mind"; and then they will, as a matter of course, love their neighbor as themselves. Therefore, the great purpose of God is that His Son should have a Bride.

Observe, however, that *Eliezer was not charged with the responsibility of selecting a wife for somebody else*. And I think in that he is to be most heartily congratulated. I know there are some people who think they have made such an admirable success of the matter in their own case that they are thereby qualified to be the champion match-makers of their community. But wise people will prefer to let other people make their own choice. And I think, if you read the story at your leisure in the twenty-fourth chapter, you will find that Eliezer was a little bit anxious as to how far he was to be held responsible for the success of his mission. I say, he showed himself to be a very wise man in recognizing that there was a realm into which he could not safely venture. And before he would go forward he wanted it clearly understood that he was not charged with making the choice. "No," said Abraham, "the Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house. The Lord has made his choice, Eliezer. He has appointed a woman to be the wife of Isaac. You are not to bother about it. You will be just His instrument in finding her. It is none of your business to make the selection."

I am glad that that limitation is placed upon the Gospel minister, that I have not to choose who shall be the bride of my Lord; for I do not know where I should find anybody fit to be mated with Him. Where should I go to look for such an one? Where should I find one worthy to be the consort of the King of kings? But the Lord has relieved us of that responsibility, the choice is with Him. He said to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." It would be a strange thing, would it not, if every man and woman were permitted to make his or her choice in this special matter, and that the Lord of glory should have a bride chosen for Him. I am not at all surprised that the King of glory should have said, "I will choose My own bride," because He knows that sort of a bride he wants. And I am very glad, I say, as I preach the Gospel that I preach with that conviction that the matter has been settled by somebody else, and all I can do is to be the Lord's instrument in finding His own elect. Somebody says, "Why, sir, you are altogether out-of-date. You preach that antiquated and outworn doctrine of election. You do not believe that, do you?" I do; and I rejoice in it. And that somebody replies, "Well, I don't." Yes I do, but you do not know it. I wonder why you were not born in the heart of China? I wonder why your skin is white instead of yellow? Who determined to put your soul in a white tabernacle instead of a black one? Go back to your life's history and count the good things and the perfect gifts that have come into your life. Did you choose them? If you look back over your life you will discover that you have been doing your very best at every turn to spoil it, to ruin it, and if there had not been a hand of grace upon you, you would have been ruined long ago. And the very best things that have come to you have come, not by your choice, but by God's determining purpose. If you realize that, you will go down before Him in humble gratitude and praise for ever that you are what you are, that you are here in this place of opportunity to-night, even if you are not a Christian, and have still an opportunity to yield yourself to Christ. "Well," you say, "that limits the Gospel, doesn't it?" O no! It makes it just as wide as it can possibly be. I had a friend some years ago to whom some people of rather high doctrine said, "You know, Pastor, we can understand you sometimes when you preach; but at other times when you give your broad invitations to everybody, we do not understand it. Surely we know that when souls are saved they are saved by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that they are really chosen of God. And you ought to preach to that effect." "Well," he said, "I believe all that, but I do not know who they are. If I will just go around through the congregation and put a ticket on them, I will preach to them. But," he said, "we do not know them; and I give the broad invitations of the Gospel and leave it to God to find those whom He would save." And, my friend, I am glad that the Lord has appointed somebody to be the bride of the Lord Jesus. I am glad, if I may reverently say so, that I am completely assured from the teaching of the Word that Jesus is not going to be

left without a bride. I am rejoiced that the marriage of the Lamb will come some day; and when the marriage of the Lamb is come, it will be "His wife hath made herself ready." There is no perhaps or peradventure about it. I would give up the preaching of the Gospel at once if I had to make selection; because I do not know whom I would select, or whom I could persuade to come. Only last week, when I was in New York—that pagan city that seems to have gone mad in its rush away from God—I said to myself, "I am glad the Word of God teaches me that this is no surprise to my Master, and that He is still equal to all this situation, and that He will ultimately have His way." Thus Eliezer went forth knowing that the Lord would lead him and would bring him at last to the place and to the person to whom his message was to be delivered.

Another point: *Eliezer was not charged with the responsibility of making the woman willing.* I think he is to be congratulated on that, too. I remember thinking there is a little history between the lines there, for when Abraham told him what he was to do he seemed to be filled with alarm, and the very thing he said was, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing." What a difficulty it is difficult to get her to be willing, although some people say it is not so difficult as it is generally supposed to be. I do not know much about that; but I do know that in the spiritual realm it would be impossible to persuade sinners to be willing to come to Christ. Oh, the difficulty of it! Don't you remember Eliezer came to talk to this woman about a man whom she had never seen, a man living in the distance, and he had to lead her to fall in love with some man upon whom her eyes had never rested. And that difficulty inheres in the Gospel. How shall we get sinners to fall in love with our Master? How shall we get them to yield themselves to Him? How shall we make them willing to become the bride of the Lord Jesus? Well, we have not to do it. Abraham said, "The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and the Lord will make her willing, Eliezer. Don't you worry about that. The Lord will open your understanding; the Lord will help her to see where her interest lies. Just as the Lord directs you, and all will be well." And I am glad of that element in the Gospel: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Some of us can say, "Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We have actually fallen in love with a Bridegroom Whom we have never seen. Beyond and the day of the marriage will come. And some day He will be coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory to take His bride unto Himself. And then, for the first time, upon the marriage occasion, we shall see Him as He is, and we shall love Him too. But who taught us to love Him? It was only the Spirit of God Who could open our understanding, enlighten our minds, and help us to see that Jesus was "the chiefest among a thousand" and the One altogether lovely. Haven't you read the Word? I do it often, but let me put these two scriptures together: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." He has drawn down the blinds lest the image of Christ should appear to them; they are blinded and do not know Him. And as for others it is said, "For those 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. And we have seen Him by faith, not with these bodily eyes, but we have loved Him and "we know whom we have believed, and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day." And those of us who are Christians are getting ready for that happy marriage; that is certainly coming by and by. And the Spirit has power still to make people willing. When the Apostle Paul went to Corinth and spoke to the woman who resorted to the place of prayer, it is said that "a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira which worshipped God, was with them; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." At His girdle swing the keys of all doors, and when we would get into a human heart He has the latch-key and He can quicken our understanding, and enlighten the mind, and engage the affections and lead us to fall in love with the absent Bridegroom. O may He do it this evening!

There was one thing, however, for which Eliezer was responsible: he was responsible for putting himself at the Lord's disposal and allowing Abraham to be led to Isaac's Rebekah. And he said, "I being in the way, the Lord led me."

the house of my master's brethren." Eliezer carefully watched and asked for the same direction. / I hope you will read this twenty-fourth chapter to-night, every word of it is full of spiritual suggestion. Eliezer went off at Abraham's direction, and he asked the Lord to lead him. And he said, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water; and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and whereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master." The damsel came out to the well and he approached one of them and made his request. "And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also." And as she was letting down her pitcher into the well, the man stood there wondering, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. He said, "Lord, is it possible that I have been led step by step until I stand at last in the presence of the woman whom Thou hast appointed?" And later when he came into the house of Bethuel and he told his story, told about how he prayed, this is what he said, "Before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came." There she was. Ah, you who would be soul-winners, let me commend to you that story if you want to be led to the people whom God will prepare and bring to the feet of Jesus. Speak in your hearts and He will lead you. And that is the measure of our responsibility, of my responsibility this evening. I trust that God has brought us together in His providence, and that there is somebody here to-night appointed to be a member of the bride of Christ. The Holy Spirit is here to take this word and to apply it to your hearts, to break your heart, and to bring you in humble penitence to the feet of the Lord Jesus.

II. Now, then, WHAT WAS HIS PROPOSAL? First, it was made to a particular person, and to one of whom it is said that she "was very fair to look upon." And I am not surprised that Eliezer should have gone looking for somebody who "was very fair to look upon," for he was much in love with his master. He must have said, "Where shall I find a woman who is fit to be his bride? I must look for the fairest of all the daughters of the land. And even she will scarcely be worthy to become the consort of so princely a soul as Isaac."

I delight in the contrasts as well as the comparisons of Scripture. I wonder where we should go to look for a bride for Christ? I went to speak in a certain college out of New York last week, spoke to between four and five hundred students. And after the meeting I saw a number of the young men about, and one man said, "Do you see that man climbing the hill yonder? He is one of the most devoted disciples of Christ I have ever known. He is all on fire for the Lord. He seems to desire nothing in the world but to glorify Him. How do you know where he was converted?" I said "No." "In Sing Sing prison: while he was serving a long term in prison, he was saved." Who would have thought of going to Sing Sing prison to look for a bride for Christ? Why, we should have expected to find her among the cultured people of the land; among the people of social position, people of wealth, people of education, people of refinement. Oh, what blunders we should make if we were left to make our choice! We should never think of finding a bride for Christ in a moon, or among the outcasts of the land. O yes, going yonder to India, we could have said, "Where can the Lord find His bride in India? Oh, it will be among the Brahmans, among the high caste people. Nobody would ever think of finding a bride among the lowly." But that is what the Lord Jesus does. That is the wonder of it all. He sets His love, not upon the fair and the beautiful, but upon the ugliest of all. Those who say, touching the righteousness of the law, I am blameless; those who look in the mirror and say, How beautiful I am!—there is no chance of your being a bride of Christ. No, No. He does not look for the beautiful people: He looks for the people whom sin has marred, who are disfigured and deformed and broken altogether—He comes to seek for them. But you say, "Is that the sort of bride He will have?" O no, it is blessed be God, this Master of mine can make the ugliest beautiful; He makes us over again. He transforms us into His own image and likeness; and some day when the marriage occasion shall come, and while myriad worlds stand in wonder while He brings His bride into the presence of His Father, He will

"present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy"; shall be "without blemish and without spot"; we shall be "holy and without blame before him in love." And so I come to you this evening to tell you there is a chance for the worst of sinners, that there is a chance for the ugliest of mortals to become beautiful with the beauty of the Lord; and will make us at last fair, as He is fair.

Then she was invited to become *the bride of a very rich man*. Isn't that a fine story? If I could write a book, a real story-book, I think I would make hero of the tale a poor man, and I think I would leave him moderately poor, try to show that people could be happy though poor. But that is not how story-tellers do it. No matter how poor the bride may be, she always marries a rich groom; for that reflects our desire, because that is what we shall all like. And when Eliezer came to this woman, he said, "And the Lord has blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given me flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. All the wealth of Abraham, who is the richest man in all the country, belongs to Isaac. And he has made him his heir, and if you come to be the bride of my master's son, you will share in Isaac's wealth."

Oh, that is the Gospel story. I do not ask you to come to be the bride of a poor bridegroom. O no! God hath appointed Him "heir of all things." I read of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," of "the exceeding riches of his grace," I read, also, of "many mansions." You young people, haven't you dreamed of a dream like that, of having a fine town house where you could live in the winter and a country estate with servants to wait upon you, and surrounded with the things which wealth can buy? Yes, that is the kind of life we should all like to live. Well, this Bridegroom has many mansions: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." What is Jesus doing just now? Getting ready for the wedding. He is away preparing a place for His Bride. And when everything is in readiness and His hour shall come, He will come back to receive her unto Himself. If somebody goes around with a long face, and says, "I would like to be a Christian if it did not cost so much. But, you know, being a Christian means giving up everything." A young lady came to me, a reporter of one of the New York papers, and wanted to know my opinion about the question of worldly amusements—you know what they are, don't you? Well, she came to ask me about it and rather pitied me because I did not go to these things. But I said, "Don't waste your sympathy on me. I have some better occupation than that." "But," she said, "how do you live? how do you enjoy yourself? how in this world do you get on if you do not do these things?" What a conception of life that is! No; coming to Christ means being married to a royal Bridegroom. It means becoming the consort of a King; it means having the wealth of this world, but of all worlds at the command of faith, and being heir with Him of all things. I invite you to a real religion, to accept the wealth of the universe as the gift of the royal Bridegroom. It is not sacrifice, it is not giving up—it is receiving, when we come to Christ.

There was, however, a *condition*. Eliezer said, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land. Maybe she will say, 'Well, all right. Your master may be a very fine man; and if he is all you say he is, I do not mind becoming his bride; but, of course, I could not think of leaving my mother. Never ask me to do that. I should have to live at home. I could not get along unless I could see mother every day. And I have some brothers and a father, and this country where I live is very attractive to me. I will go back and tell your master if he wants me he will have to come to the house and live with my mother and take directions from her as I do.'" What about that? What do you think he would say? No, she did not say that. Eliezer was afraid it would be so, and he said to Abraham, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land. What then? Shall I give her any permission to meet her requirements, or shall I tell her that she will live half way so that it will be as near to her house as to his, and she can visit back and forth?" "No," said he, "you tell her she must leave her family, for Isaac is worth everything; and that if she wants to be his wife, then she must come to live with him, and she must recognize him as her husband, as the lover of her soul. Under no other conditions can she be his wife."

come." And Abraham said, "If the woman will not accept those terms, then you shall be clear from this my oath. I will absolve you of all responsibility." I would like to be a Christian; but you do not expect me to go all the way with Him, do you? You don't expect me to turn my back upon the world, the flesh and the devil and just divorce myself from my old life and live a new life with Him? You don't expect me to do that? The terms of the Gospel are just that: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." I call upon you to come to the Lord Jesus with an entire abandonment; and for everything you leave behind He will compensate you ten thousand fold. Rebekah may have left some things behind, but she received far more than she left. "And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah" as a love-token from his lord, as the earnest of the great wealth that was to be hers by and by. Nor do we have to wait for the marriage to begin to be rich: "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." There are some luxuries in the Christian life which may be enjoyed here and now. He gives us jewels and ornaments, and He makes life worth while here, so that some of us feel that if heaven were not any better than what we have here, we could get along very nappily, if only we had the presence of the Lord.

And then she was admitted to a *very exalted position*. Did you ever hear of anybody marrying for position? I have; and I have been told of members of the family who became united with some family of distinction. And you will get position if you come to the Lord Jesus. You marry the Lord Jesus and you will find that He will promote you to great honour. No; it is not all shame; it is not all dishonour. There is position. And then, *there is good society*. I have heard of people marrying to get into society. I remember some years ago having in my study a beautiful plant, a lily, one of the most wonderful plants I have ever seen. It was just a cluster of blooms. And one day some ladies called, and my wife brought them up to my study. They came in and sat down, and we had a very enjoyable visit. And they incidentally walked over to the window to examine the plant, and they said they had not seen anything like it. And I said, "It is very gracious of you to make this call on the pastor. It is not very often that a company of people come to my study like this." "Oh," they said, "you must not be too proud of yourself. We did not come to see you to-day, we came to see the lily." "Then," I said, "I shall have to be grateful to the lily for bringing me good company." You keep company with the Lily of the Valley and you will have all Heaven come to call on you.

And the best part of the story is that *this bridegroom was such a wonderful man*—his name means "Laughter," because at his coming Sarah, his mother, laughed with joy: first of all, she laughed in derision at the promise of his coming; but later she laughed with joy at this gift of a son. And Isaac was one of the outstanding characters of history, a quiet, beautiful, home-loving character. He was a prince. And I fancy there is a line there that is not told. Eliezer would say to her, "I have told you all about my master's wealth, I have told you about his position, and that he is a mighty prince; but I cannot tell you about him: you will have to see him yourself to know what he really is; he is one of the noblest men of all the land, and she is a fortunate woman who is chosen to become the wife of such a man." The best part of the Gospel story is just that. Salvation does not consist in the streets of gold. You know up there in *his City* the gold is where the Lord intended it to be, under our feet, just a cheap thing to walk on, that is where it ought to be; and the gates are made of pearl, and the walls are of jasper, and the mansions are very wonderful. And of that *bridal home*, we read, "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Salvation is not the many mansions, nor the streets of gold, nor the walls of jasper, nor the gates of pearl, nor even the robe of righteousness imparted from Christ, nor all the ornaments of grace: salvation is Jesus Himself—*that we may fall in love with Him*. That is what the Gospel offers—the *bridegroom of the soul*.

But there is a line in this story I do not like: "In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah . . . there they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife." So death terminated this marriage.

But, blessed be God, the marriage to which I invite you, death has no power to dissolve. We shall be one with Him for ever. "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: the former things are passed away." Don't you want to be married? Do you really want to be married? Don't you want to come to this Saviour Whom I speak?

III. "And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me, and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left." Eliezer had told his story, and now he said, "I want a decision, please. I want to know what you are going to do about it. I do not know whether you are the woman appointed for my master's son or not. The only proof of it will be that you come, and then I shall know that the Lord hath appointed you. You have to deal with my master, you cannot evade the issue. You have to make some answer to the proposal I make." You cannot say "Yes" to God unless you mean it. He knows when you deal kindly with Him and return the love that He lavished upon you. "If ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me."

And what did they say? The family got together, and they said, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord. Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go." But Eliezer said, "I want a decision now. If you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. But I must know about it because I have no time to waste. If you do not come, then I must turn to the right hand or to the left. I cannot wait ten days, I cannot wait ten hours, I will not eat until I perform my errand. It is an urgent business, and I must have an instant decision." I cannot promise you that the Lord will renew the proposal ten days hence; I cannot promise you that He will offer you all the glories of His house ten hours hence; indeed, I have no authority to promise that He will do it ten hours hence; indeed, I have no authority to offer it to you now. "Now" is the emphatic word of the text. The Bible is the most common sense book in the world. They said, at last, "All this is Rebekah's business." And when you are going to get married, it is your business and somebody else's. You have to make the decision. And so they said, "We will call the damsel, and enquire of her about it. We will let her make the decision." So they brought Rebekah in and Eliezer renewed his proposal, and they said unto her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" O what a critical hour! What a critical moment! Eliezer waited, wondering still if the Lord had made his way prosperous. It is all over now, the proposal is before her, and Eliezer has done all that he needs to do. The servant has made his appeal, and the family are all swept aside, and Rebekah stands there. And Eliezer said, "What is your answer?" And she said, "I will go." And I think in Eliezer's heart there was a great Hallelujah! And he must have said, "This has been a good day. It is all done, and my master is to have a bride."

I have married a good many people, and I would like, really, to be permitted, may I reverently say, to be God's instrument in the betrothal of you to the Lord Jesus Christ. You know what we say; first, to the man: "Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after the ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony?" And the same question is put to the woman, and when each has answered, "I will," they are married.

But let us come to the higher and holier things, and if I might reverse the order, say to Him, "Wilt Thou have this poor sinner to be Thy bride? Wilt Thou wash this soul in Thy precious blood? Wilt Thou clothe him with the righteousness of Thy righteousness? Wilt Thou receive him into Thy mansions? Wilt Thou have this soul to be Thine for ever?" What would the Lord's answer be? I think He would spread abroad His hands, and say, "What mean these wounds in My hands? or this wound in My side? or these wounds in My feet? What is the meaning of those wounds about My back? Do they not all declare that I am willing, that I died for this very thing? Yes, on that side, it is done. Now the question is, 'Will you have Jesus Christ to be your Saviour, your Lord, the Bridegroom of your soul?' If with all your heart you say, 'I will' to Him, then you are His for ever. How many are there of us, I wonder, who can say that to-night? I pray that the Lord will lead us every one, and lead us to a decision.

THE WHOLE BIBLE S.S. LESSON COURSE.

As Outlined by The Fundamental Committee.

It has been decided that our Bible School shall use the Whole Bible S.S. Lesson Course instead of the International Lessons. We print this week the lessons for October 21st and 28th. The comments on these lessons following we are venturing to reprint from the "Christian Life Missionary," and are written by Dr. W. Leon Tucker. We venture to do this for this week without even asking permission. But following this, the comments on the Sunday School lesson will be written by the Editor of this paper, and will be published a week in advance. Thus, the lesson appearing next week will be for use November 4th.

LESSON III.

October 21, 1923.

TRUE AND FALSE WORSHIP—Genesis IV.

We are now outside the Garden, and we look upon a world condition as it has been since then, till now and will be till He comes.

In this chapter we behold the Two Sons and the Two Seeds. Three times in this chapter "Adam knew his wife Eve" and she conceived (see 4:1, 2, 25). The three sons are: Cain, which means "acquisition;" Abel, which means "transitoriness," and Seth, meaning "substitution."

This chapter may be divided in the fourfold simple manner:

I. THE SIN OF CAIN—Chap. 4:1-8.

II. THE SENTENCE ON CAIN—Verses 9-16.

III. THE SEED OF CAIN—Verses 17-24.

IV. THE SUBSTITUTE: SETH—Verses 25, 26.

We shall develop these four in their order.

I. THE SIN OF CAIN—Verses 1-8. Cain's sin was his own "Way" rather than God's way (see Jude 1:11). When Eve gave birth to Cain she doubtless thought she had borne the Christ. She thought the promise of 3:15 was fulfilled. She cried: "I've gotten a man, even Jehovah." Instead of Christ she got an antichrist. Instead of Messiah she got a murderer.

Cain was a ground tiller. Abel was a sheep herder. There was doubtless a time and place for offering revealed by Jehovah. Cain brought first-fruits of the field instead of flock. He displaced the order and brought meal-offering before burnt-offering.

He wanted a Feast of Tabernacles before the Day of Atonement. He desired blessing apart from Blood. He gathered from the field instead of from the flock. He followed his fallen parents in choosing "fig leaves" or from the field, rather than from the flock. He sought the bloodless way. He is the first of a great company whose head is Satan. Satan is the first. That Satan inspired Cain to his action and attitude, is settled by Scripture. See I. John 3:12. All those who deny blood atonement are of the "Wicked One." Cain's sin was this: 1. He denied by this act, the moral distance between himself and God. 2. The need and necessity of atonement to bridge the distance. 3. He rejected the revealed will and Word of God and accepted the word and will of another.

There was "no difference" between Cain and Abel. (1) Both were sons of fallen parents. (2) Both were equally sinners. There was no difference between them in the flesh, it was in the faith. So it is to this day. Abel offered by faith. He took God's way (see Heb. 11:4; also 11:6).

Abel the Shepherd was hated by his brother just as Christ the Shepherd and hated by His Brethren. Cain slew Abel. Israel slew Christ. It was murder charged against them (see Acts 7:52). They got it from John 8:44. See also I. John 3:15; I. Thess. 2:15; Acts 3:15. (Verse 7 reveals that even after Cain's sin, there was a sin-offering lying at the door. He was offered remission even as Peter offered Israel remission at Pentecost.)

II. THE SENTENCE ON CAIN—Verses 9-16. (1) For killing his shepherd brother Cain became an outcast (see vs. 12, 14). So did Israel. (2) Cain became a wanderer over the face of the earth (see vs. 14). So did Israel. (3) He became the object of universal hate (see vs. 14). So did Israel. (4) He was a man bearing a mark of Divine displeasure (see vs. 15). This is true of Israel as a nation. (5) Yet he was under the Divine protection (see vs. 15). So also is Israel.

Cain's murder of Abel takes on great significance and there is a reason for the prominence given unto it in the Bible.

III. THE SEED OF CAIN—Verses 17-24. At Genesis 4:1 "Adam knew his wife." Now at 4:17 "Cain knew his wife."

The posterity of Cain built cities, and civilization. He named a city after his son Enoch (note the Enoch of 5:21). The names of his children and the children reveal not a little. Enoch—"Teaching or Initiation." Irad—"city witness." Lamech—"powerful." Jabal—"flowing." Jubal—"joyful sound." Tubal-Cain—"flowing from Cain." Naamah—"pleasant."

Here we find, cities and civilization, arts and agriculture, farms and ferg music and merry-making, polygamy and pleasure.

Lamech's Song to the Sword (see vs. 23, 24), is open defiance. He calls two wives as Adam to one (see Gen. 3:17). He sings the song of murder and vengeance. "Vengeance is mine, not the Lord's," says Lamech. "I can kill" is his slogan. This is the line of Cain. Compare the Seventh from Adam the Cain Line with the Seventh from Adam in the Seth Line. One sang of polygamy (see 4:23, 24), the other "walked with God" (see 5:24). One went out into civilization, the other went up in translation.

IV. THE SUBSTITUTE: SETH—Verses 25, 26. The meaning of Seth Substitute. There must be a substitute; this is the Divine way. Seth is the "Substitute." He is "appointed" in the stead of Abel. The Divine choice upon him. From him the Messiah or promised seed must come into the world. Israel killed the Shepherd sent to the flock, but God raised Him from the dead. Cain kills the Shepherd Abel, but God raises up another in his stead. (There is no defeat for the Divine purpose). Notice: The posterity of Cain comes under the "generations of the heavens and earth" (Gen. 2:4), and not under the book of the generations of Adam (see 5:1). The posterity of Seth commences with the generations of Adam (see 5:1). The two accounts are distinct and deal with different subjects. Genesis 5 leaves out everything prior to Seth as if there had been nothing. There were one hundred thirty years before Seth was born and substituted for Abel.

The genealogical river is again seen on its way to the sea. The Line of the Lord is again evident.

Many think, and we are constrained to believe, that, the phrase, "Men began to call upon the name of the Lord" does not refer to Divine worship, but to the profanation of the name of the Lord. Many ancient commentators say that in defiance to God, men began to "call on the name of their gods." Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied against this "ungodliness" (see Jude 1:14, 15). There were many "hard speeches."

The substitution of Seth brought out this Satanic opposition. Enoch was raised up to prophesy against it. Ponder these things.

LESSON IV.

October 28, 1914

THE SECOND PERIOD:

NOAH TO ABRAHAM.

The First Division of Genesis we shall entitle: From the Creation to the Corruption of the World—Chaps. 1-6. The Second Division we shall name From the Deluge to the Defiance at Babel—Chaps. 7-11. We now consider the second division. Chapters VI.—XI. may be divided in the following manner fix it in the student's mind:

I. THE CORRUPTION AND CONDEMNATION OF THE WORLD—Chap. 6.

II. THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FLOOD—Chap. 7.

III. THE CONCLUSION OF THE FLOOD—Chap. 8.

IV. THE COVENANT AFTER THE FLOOD—Chap. 9.

V. THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE NATIONS—Chap. 10.

VI. THE CONFOUNDING OF THE TONGUES—Chap. 11:1-9.

VII. THE CHOICE OF THE HEBREW RACE—Chap. 11:10-32.

These divisions will help the student to take quick hold upon a lesson covering such an extent. We shall make a rapid survey of each division.

I. THE CORRUPTION AND CONDEMNATION OF THE WORLD—Chap. 6. Corruption, vs. 1-6. Condemnation, vs. 9-16. There are two causes: 1. Fallen angels. 2. Fallen Adam. Angels carried off in a former rebellion. Satan and Adam drawn into the rebellion at chapter 3. There is not only a rebellion here, but a demon outbreak of eruption. Jude 6, declares the fall of angels. This fall is given as having taken place "in the days of Noah" (see II. Peter 2:4). It may have been a prior fall caused the catastrophe to the "world that then was." For this sin they are reserved in judgment (see II. Peter 2:4) and are in prison (see I. Peter 3:19).

See how Christ characterizes "the days of Noah" (see Matt. 24:37-39).

entering the ark Noah condemned the world (see Heb. 11:7). (When one accepts Christ it is condemning the world as a place that is unsafe.) "Corruption," "Violence," "Lust and lawlessness." Noah's family was free from the seven sins afflicting the earth. "Perfect in his generations" may mean, free from a sin-affecting "procreation."

The proportions of the ark, vs. 15, 16. The promise to Noah, vs. 18-22.

II. THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FLOOD—Chap. 7. Forty days of rain! One hundred and fifty days of inundation! (All of the flood dates are Sabbaths except one, 8:5.) The occupants of the ark were two of all flesh and the Family with a total of "eight souls" (I Peter 3:20).

What a family! All nations are in the loins of the three sons of Noah. Chapter 10 will reveal this. What a log when the ark put to the sea of waters! Watch Ham, Shem, and Japheth! See 6:32; 6:10; 7:18; 9:25-27; 10:1, 32.

In Shem is the Saviour after the flesh. Also the Jewish race and the scriptures! (See Rom. 1:3 and 3:1).

The 7th chapter of Genesis may be summed up as follows:

1. The Occupation of the Ark.
2. The Preservation of Life.
3. The Inundation of the Earth.

III. THE CONCLUSION OF THE FLOOD—Chap. 8. This chapter is indeed rich in its contents. That the student may see the successive steps in the chapter and for sake of brevity we outline as follows: (1) The Remembrance of the Flood, vs. 1. (2) The Restraint upon the Rain, vs. 2. (3) The Return of the Waters, vs. 3. (4) The Resting of the Ark, vs. 4. (5) The Raven Sent Forth vs. 7. (6) The Return of the Dove, vs. 9, 10. (7) The Return of the Dove the Second Time, vs. 10, 11. (8) Remaining of the Dove, vs. 12. (9) The Removing of the Ark's Covering, vs. 13. (10) The Renewed Earth, vs. 15-19. (11) The Clearing of the Altar, vs. 20, 21. (12) The Recurring Seasons, vs. 21, 22. (Eight things are named in four pairs, vs. 22).

IV. THE COVENANT AFTER THE FLOOD—Chap. 9. In this chapter we see: (1) The command to Replenish, vs. 1. Meaning "fill" as 6:21. (2) The Commitment of Power, vs. 2, 3. Dominion again vested as at 1:24, 26. (3) A Charge Concerning Nourishment, vs. 3, 4. The foundation of atonement is here—"Life for life." (4) A Charge Concerning Punishment, vs. 5, 6. "I require the life of man." (The Cross is in view.) (5) The Covenant with Noah and His Sons, vs. 8-16. "My covenant," occurs three times. See vs. 9, 11, 15. It extends to me, you and every living creature (see vs. 15). It is an "everlasting covenant." This expression occurs thirteen times in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament. Total fourteen (see Gen. 9:16; 17:13, 19; Jer. 31:31; I Sam. 23:5; I Chron. 16:17; Ps. 105:10; Is. 24:5; 55:3; 61:8; Jer. 31:31; Ezek. 16:60; 37:26; Heb. 13:20). The bow is not a phenomenon but a sign of faithfulness (6) Canaan's Son, vs. 19-24. (7) The Cursing of Canaan, vs. 25-27. In these three verses the history of all nations is forecast. The three divisions of the race are in the prophecy.

V. THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE NATIONS—Chap. 10. Japheth was the youngest (see I Chron. 1:5; Gen. 10:21). Ham was second son (see 9:24). Shem the youngest. Japheth—"Enlargement." Ham—"Heat, Black." Shem—"Name Unknown." The divisions are plainly evident:

1. The Sons of Japheth—1-5.
2. The Sons of Ham—6-20.
3. The Sons of Shem—21-32.

At the close of each section we read of the fourfold division: "families, tribes, lands, nations," vs. 5, 20, 31. After the division under these three sons the nations classified (see 10:32). All peoples that dwell on the earth are Hamitic, Japhethic or Semitic.

VI. THE CONFOUNDING OF THE TONGUES—Chap. 11:1-9. Tongues were confounded here in judgment. Given in grace (see Acts 2) and united in mercy (see Rev. 7:9). The judgment resulted in a scattering. Deuteronomy 32:8 shows the Divine reason. The "Most High divided the nations their inheritance." He "separated the sons of Adam." This is where He does the "scattering" and "separating." Notice Genesis 11:9. There was a scattering also in the Book of Acts at 8:1. See the result: 1. The conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch (see Acts 8:26). Saul of Shem (see Acts 9). Cornelia of Japheth (see Acts 18).

The Choice of the Semitic Race. With the generations of Shem at 11:10, we return to the main purpose of the Book to fasten our eyes upon Messianic

development. With the generations of Terah the centre person of the we are introduced to Abram (see 11:27) and then Sarai. With the journey to Canaan from the Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham will be the prominent figure before us for a season. God will select and elect a nation of His own for His own purpose. With what joyful anticipation our studies will progress.

"WHEREOF WE ARE GLAD."

Every day brings Jarvis Street increasing reasons for blessing God. On September 23rd, twenty-one came forward in response to the invitation for evening service; October 7th, twenty-six responded to the invitation for the morning service; October 14th, thirty-four. Last Sunday fourteen were baptized at the evening service, and three were baptized at the Branch; and at the Communion service following forty-eight names were on the list, forty-one of whom received the hand of fellowship. This coming Sunday, October 21st, somewhere from fifteen to twenty, we expect, will be baptized. Thus the Lord is blessing us time to time, and we give God the praise.

OUR NEW BIBLE SCHOOL.

Last Sunday morning was really the first meeting of the School under its new organization. The School met at this hour the Sunday before, and the members were assigned their classes: many of them had for their classes only a few names. The intervening week the teachers were busily employed visiting prospective scholars. Sunday morning at the time when people would be looking for School, it was raining heavily. Notwithstanding, there were 410 present at the School. This was a great beginning, for the entire School remained there through the morning service; and we had the first opportunity of observing in Jarvis Street the possibilities of building the School into the Church, and the Church into the School, and making the Bible School in fact the teaching department of the Church. It was a great sight to see that band of about 150 teachers and officers lined up across the front of the church and down either side for a dedicatory service.

In this connection, the Pastor desires to express his great appreciation of the wonderful work accomplished by our brethren, the Rev. Louis and Prof. James Entzminger. Their gracious personalities; their emphasis upon the central verities of the faith; their strong insistence upon the necessity of the work of bringing souls to Christ the central and dominating purpose of the church's ministry; their plain, common-sense, practical methods; the thoroughness of all their work—and all this so manifestly accompanied by the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, have commended them to the entire Jarvis Street Church as brethren beloved, and as workmen needing not to be ashamed but evidently called to this great ministry by the Spirit of God for just as long a time as this.

In some years of pastoral experience it has been the Pastor's privilege and pleasure to be associated with not a few of the outstanding Baptist preachers and leaders of the world; and yet it is his firm conviction that of them he has never received assistance from any which was fuller of promise, of more lasting spiritual results, than that which has been rendered the Jarvis Street Church by these dear brethren who are still with us. We believe profoundly that their visit and work will be felt in Jarvis Street through all the years to come, and will in the near future multiply her usefulness thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold.

Although it is too soon for us to be able exactly to measure the immediate effect upon our church life of the new principle of Bible School organization, we are persuaded that it will be of such value to Jarvis Street that we shall never be able to pay these brethren the debt we owe.

Dorcas Society, Thursday, Oct 25th.—The first meeting of the Dorcas Society for this season will be held on Thursday, Oct. 25th, at 2 p.m. A very cordial invitation is extended to all the ladies of the church and congregation, and to new members, to come early and assist in this missionary ministry by making or repairing garments for our missionaries' boxes. Donations of clothing for repair, or garments that could be re-modelled for local use, will be most fully received. Supper will be served at 6.30, to which the gentlemen and their people will receive a hearty welcome. A collection is taken at the table for the expenses, and any surplus is used in the purchase of material.