

THE BIBLE FOR EVERYMAN
From Genesis to the Exodus
by
ROSALIE S. MAAS

THE FOUNDATIONAL BOOK COMPANY LIMITED
84 QUEENSWAY, LONDON, W.2
ENGLAND

First published 1951 Printed in Great Britain by
Unwin Brothers Limited
Woking and London

The substance of this book originally appeared in serial form in
"Metaphysical Notes," February, 1950-February, 1951

TO
MY MOTHER
WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE

CONTENTS

Chapter One

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

A Manual of Spiritual Power—The Method of the Bible is Symbolism— The Bible is One Ordered Whole—The Need for a Key—The Nature of the Key—Humility the Passport—The Days of Creation as a Simple Order— Corroboration in the Old Testament—Jesus Lived the Days of Creation

Chapter Two

ADAM AND EVE

The Days of Creation Summarized—The Sequel is a Contrast—The Exposure of a Fraud—A Mist Waters the Ground—Man Made of the Dust of the Ground—Man Put into the Garden of Eden—Woman Taken Out of Man and Approached by the Serpent—Man and Woman Eat of the Tree— Fallen Man is Cursed—Cain Excluded, But Enoch Translated—A Summary

Chapter Three

NOAH

The Thousand-Year Periods of Bible History—The Sons of God Wed the Daughters of Men and Beget Giants—The Building of the Ark—All Flesh to be Destroyed—By Sevens and By Twos—Noah Enters the Ark and the Flood Begins—The Ark Rests—The Raven and the Dove—Noah Removes the Covering of the Ark—The Bow in the Cloud—Ham, Shcm, and Japheth—The Story of Babel—A Summary

Chapter Four

ABRAHAM

"Get Thee Out of Thy Country, . . ."—"Thou Shalt Be a Blessing"— Abram in Egypt Disowns His Wife—Abram Separates From Lot—"Look From the Place Where Thou Art"—Abram Rescues Lot and Is Blessed by Melchizedek—Abram Promised His Own Heir—Abram Takes Hagar to Wife—God's Covenant with Abraham—Three Men at Abraham's Tent—Sodom To Be Saved Even For Ten Righteous—The Two Angels and the Last of Lot—The Birth of Isaac—"Cast Out This Bondwoman and Her Son"—The Temptation to Sacrifice Isaac—A Summary

Chapter Five

ISAAC AND JACOB

Eternal Law—The Key to the Bible—The Stories of Isaac and Jacob—A Bride for Isaac—The Birth of Jacob and Esau and the Selling of the Birth-right—Isaac Blesses Jacob—Jacob's Ladder—Rachel and Leah—Jacob and Laban—Jacob's Struggle—Jacob's Meeting with Esau—The Rape of Dinah—The Birth of Benjamin—A Summary

Chapter Six

JOSEPH

Joseph the Dreamer Sold into Egypt—Widow or Harlot?—Potiphar's Wife—The Way Out of Prison—The Way to Forestall Famine—Joseph's Two Sons—Joseph Demands Benjamin—The Price of Corn—Joseph Provides and Cares for Jacob—Jacob's Blessing on Joseph

Chapter Seven

MOSES AND THE EXODUS

Thinking About God—The First Three Thousand Years of Bible History—
The Children of Israel in Bondage in Egypt—The Birth of Moses—Moses
Kills an Egyptian—Moses at the Burning Bush—"I Am That I Am"—The
Three Signs—"I Am Slow of Speech"—First Encounters with Pharaoh—
The Plagues—The First Plague: Water Turned to Blood—The Second
Plague: Frogs in the Bedchambers—The Third Plague: Mosquitoes and
Gnats—The Fourth Plague: Cattle-Plagues and Boils—The Fifth Plague:
Hail—The Sixth Plague: Locusts and Darkness—The Seventh Plague: The
Slaying of the Firstborn—The Plagues: A Summary—The Departure From
Egypt—The Crossing of the Red Sea—Spiritual Education

CHAPTER ONE

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

A Manual of Spiritual Power

WHY is it that the Bible goes on being a best-seller year after year? Why is it that even the professed unbeliever will, in times of acute distress, when all other supports are failing, find himself strengthened and comforted by the 91st Psalm or some other Scriptural passage? Because it is natural to appeal to the spiritual the material and human, and because the Bible might be described as a manual of spiritual power, as yet only dimly understood.

What are the Old Testament stories which spring most readily to mind? Daniel in the lions' den, David overcoming Goliath, the Israelites crossing the Red Sea—all illustrations of the practical appeal to spiritual power. The fact that we do not generally avail ourselves of spiritual power no more proves that such a thing does not exist than the fact of a child's ignorance of arithmetic proves the non-existence of arithmetic. We are children in this matter of spiritual power, but the Bible offers us an understanding of its nature and how we too can use it individually, beginning in a humble way, to overcome more and more of the mortal and material. It is not, therefore, a collection of abstract truths, but shows us how spiritual facts have been actively woven into the stuff of ordinary experience and have operated as healing and transformation. That is why the Bible has practical value for you and me today.

The Bible lays open to us the individual and collective experience of men and women who exalted thought to the spiritual—think of the Psalm which begins, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help"; who felt the spiritual coming to them as Immanuel, "God with us"—Isaiah wrote of God, "before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear"; who availed themselves of spiritual power to conquer material limitations—the Psalmist sang, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"; and who discerned the certain and eternal nature of the spiritual—"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations."

What is the spiritual? It is not cloudy and evanescent; it is that which is intelligent, infinitely good, unchangeable, operative, present here and now, replete with dominion and with fulfillment.

One of the glories of the Bible is that it does not balk at the difficulties and dangers of existence. It squarely faces every issue which could possibly confront any one of us. It does not meet catastrophes with easy platitudes, but indicates the victorious way to deal with the Pharaohs, Goliaths, Jezebels, and Herods in our own experience. That is why the Bible is our "strong tower."

The Method of the Bible is Symbolism

How does the Bible tell us of spiritual power and its availability? Not in a dry, academic way, but through an enormously rich variety of illustrations,—through straightforward realistic stories, through myths and

legends, through poetry and parables, through letters and sermons, through historical records and eye-witness accounts. Its method is not only to show the right way, but also to make clear the disastrous consequences of taking the wrong way. It constantly tells of those who ignored or forsook or resisted the spiritual and its manifestation in human experience.

Few intelligent people to-day believe that such Bible figures as Noah actually existed. But this heightens rather than lessens for the seeker after fundamental truth the interest of the myths centering round them, because it forces him to turn his attention from dim and distant historical personages to the great spiritual facts symbolized. Noah becomes of vital importance for each one of us when we recognize him as a symbol of that state of thought which is able to preserve all that is good from the flood of destructive evil which would try and overwhelm it. The Scriptural writers called that particular state of thought by the name of Noah so that it should not be an abstract conception; in the same way, the British character has for some time been symbolized by a figure called John Bull, and the American by Uncle Sam.

The method of the Bible in bringing home spiritual power, then, is predominantly symbolism, focusing countless individual experiences all down the ages, including ours today. Jesus Christ, of course, not only lived the spiritual for himself, but is the example of all men for all time.

The Bible is One Ordered Whole

Modern research has made it obvious that as a historical record the Old Testament is highly unreliable, full of inconsistencies and outrageous assertions as to dates. The generally accepted critical theory is that a body of Hebrews in the prophetic age of Israel molded the various writings of their nation into a whole, with the primary purpose of illustrating their great theme of the eternal relationship of God to man. They imposed order on the wealth of vision and experience embodied in those writings, and the Old Testament was the result.

The Bible really tells one continuous and progressive story from the first chapter of Genesis in the Old Testament to the stories of the patriarchs, — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph; from the early history of the Hebrew nation (brought together by Moses), and its songs and stories, to exhortations of its major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) and its minor prophets. Then the story is continued and beautifully expanded in the New Testament, which records the supreme example of Jesus Christ in the demonstration of spiritual power; the struggles of the early Christians to follow his example; the wise counsel of the apostles, especially Paul; and the exact and detailed summary of the message of the entire Bible in Revelation.

The wonder is that such a vast story should undoubtedly unfold one theme,—the dominion of man when he turns to the perfection of the spiritual to redeem the human.

The Need for a Key

Some reader may now say, "Well, I've heard all this kind of thing before and it may be very true; but if the Bible really is a manual of spiritual power, couched for the most part in symbolism, is it possible to learn about this spiritual power intelligently? Naturally I'd like to avail myself of it, but I haven't the time or, to be quite honest, the inclination to tackle hundreds and hundreds of pages, and then find that I just have a few comforting quotations for emergencies and only a vague sense of what it's all about. It's a bit overwhelming, and it's rather hard in lots of cases to see what the symbolism means. What I need is a kind of Baedeker so that I don't miss the high-spots and their subtleties. Even that wouldn't really be enough, because I should probably find myself surfeited with wonders. Is there any way of getting at the basic elements, so as to make the whole thing easier to grasp?"

It is quite true that the Bible does not give any direct explanation of the Principle of spiritual power which it so amply illustrates in operation. A key to the Scriptures therefore becomes necessary in order to decode the symbolism into understandable modern terms and to build up an orderly sense of what the Bible teaches.

To take an analogy: snatches of a symphony played by an orchestra might appeal to you very much, but until you had a sense of the symphony as a whole and were able to understand something of its composition, you certainly could not appreciate it fully. Until you learnt that it was all built on the octave, manifesting tone, given rhythm, formed into a melody, and harmonized, you would not understand its very basis. So it is with the Bible;

until you grasp its key, its ABC, you cannot properly understand it as a whole and so use it as a manual of spiritual power.

The Nature of the Key

Where is the key to the Bible to be found? At its beginning,—not unnaturally. The Bible is a unity because it is all based on the seven Scriptural "notes," which are initially struck in an ascending scale in the first chapter and the first three verses of the second chapter of Genesis. As with music, the possibilities of composition based on combinations of these notes are infinite, and the Scriptural writers were really playing, in one ordered composition moving to its majestic fulfilment, variations on the theme announced at the beginning of the Bible. But, more than that, they were symbolizing a symphony of ideas which is unending, and is still being played today.

What is Genesis 1:1-2:3 about? It is the story of the seven days of creation,—again, not a historical narrative about a material set of events, but a symbolic map for the human traveler of the entire spiritual territory. It might also be likened to the introduction of the main characters at the beginning of a play; later you see them in action, playing their parts in the unfoldment of the story. Or you might describe it as the overture—preparatory and stimulating—to the Bible. It gives the story of the Scriptures in a nutshell.

Humility the Passport

The man who wishes to dig into the many-layered soil of the beginning of Genesis needs, more than anything else, humility. The Bible itself is a

monument to humble gropings after the spiritual,—not with a sense of human sufficiency in this direction, but rather with the assurance that all inspiration is the outcome of a divine impulsion. The individual receives this impulsion only through a sincerely unselfed longing for the spiritual, and a conviction that the spiritual is the only abiding substance; "for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Humility is the first step to the understanding of "the things which are not seen." Because the Bible was written by inspired men, it needs an inspired sense to be properly appreciated in its order and Science; it needs something like the patient but certain waiting of a mother for the birth of her child in due time,—not the intellectual arrogance of materialistic thought. A practical understanding of the Science of the Bible is certainly not dependent on race or class or flair or birth or education. As Isaiah wrote, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." The challenge of the Bible is direct to the individual; and the individual's ability to meet it does not necessarily come through religious organization,—in fact, it is usually in spite of it that the individual can shoulder his own responsibilities to God, to the Principle of the universe.

The Days of Creation as a Simple Order

The story of the seven days of creation is a marvelously universal symbolization of spiritual unfoldment. The symbols chosen to represent the coming to fruition of an eternal truth are all of them basic,—not difficult or private. Every "day" takes up the story from where the preceding "day" left it and on a higher tone of the scale. Each stage reveals a more living

conception of that which is fundamental reality,—that which is the truth about you and me and everything we are conscious of.

The story begins, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"—since this is not an account of material occurrences, this must symbolize the infinite cause and its infinite effect,—namely, the spiritual universe. We could never say of a material world, including within itself the vileness of a Belsen and the death of innocent children in earthquakes, that any God worth having had created it.

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep"—there is mental darkness and vagueness before we begin to appreciate this infinite creative power and its creation. "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"—the spiritual makes itself clear to us.

That is how the stage is set for the first of the seven steps to be taken in exploring the spiritual universe.

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Light is what we see by; when we have light, we can see where we are and how we can go forward. Figuratively, we often say, "He threw some light on the subject," or "I could see what he meant." So light is an immediately understandable symbol of our first glimpse of an intelligent idea, which comes in spite of the limited and fearful human brain, and which comes directly, dispelling the darkness of ignorance. The first day, therefore, symbolizes illumination by the spiritual. The comforting thing about that is that it makes us realize that,

whatever our difficulty, light is present and available for us in the form of ideas of the infinite creative Mind, which cannot help but reveal the very thoughts we need, since it is the source of all ideas. To take an example: it may be an idea of happiness which we need, and which suddenly dawns on us.

The second stage is, "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." The firmament was the name for the sky. It was believed in those days that the earth was flat and that above it was the sky, and above the sky, waters; beneath the earth were more waters. The earth has not yet been created in this record, but after light the next thing to be created is this firmament to separate the waters at the extremities of the universe. Symbolically, when the light of a good idea has come to us, it then proceeds to separate in our thinking that which is like it from that which is not like it. We often say of things totally unlike, "They're poles apart." So the light shows us that the spiritual has nothing whatever in common with the evil and discordant. When the factory hand has rejected the shoddy components, the good ones alone remain; that gives some idea of what happens in the unfolding of a spiritual idea in our thinking—it shows up and rejects the elements foreign to its purity, and so we have it in its undiluted strength. For instance, we see that happiness is not material, but in its essence entirely spiritual.

The third day of creation sees the gathering together of the waters to one place so that dry land may appear; then the dry land is called Earth, and it begins to bring forth vegetation. People say, "I'm all at sea," when they feel perplexed and vague, and they say of someone whose certainty is taken

from him, "The ground was cut away from under his feet." So this third day would quite naturally be recognized as symbolizing the appearing of definiteness in orderly thinking. Ideas of perfection are not vague and visionary, but certain and identifiable, and they bring forth tangible fruit of themselves. To take a human analogy of this wholly spiritual process: when a child has used his intelligence to separate out the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle, he fits them all together to form one picture, and he can then see clearly the picture for what it is—perhaps an engine. Or think of an expedition which sails out to some unexplored territory, identifies it and names it, and then uses its knowledge to make a map, which carries within itself the seeds of accurate instruction and future exploration. On the third day of our spiritual exploration we become definite, and our understanding of the essential truth of everything begins to put forth encouraging shoots. For instance, we begin to feel a definite sense of happiness within us.

The fourth day introduces the sun, the moon, and the stars. The solar system is used as a symbol of unfailing universal operation, government and harmony. Symbolically the fourth stage in the order of spiritual unfoldment is when we see that a spiritual idea which has come to us (first day), which has separated pure from impure in our thinking (second day), and which has become definite (third day), is not an isolated phenomenon, but part of the universal Science of ideas. These ideas are all perfectly interrelated and unfailingly operative according to their divine Principle. Every child knows that if he reckons correctly, he is bound to arrive at the right answer in working out a sum. Just so, the fourth day illustrates that a spiritual idea operates irresistibly to produce harmony and that it is universally available. It is not a matter of a few privileged persons being

able to placate a personal and whimsical Deity, but of intelligent obedience to an impartial Principle. Even in a storm the navigator can rely on his scientific calculations, because they are backed by a principle; and because there is a principle behind aircraft construction, pilots can be trained by teaching and practice to fly airplanes. This record in Genesis, therefore, is putting forward a revolutionary idea, —that there is system in the spiritual universe, and that we can learn its Science and allow it to bring out harmony, the music of true being, in our own human experience. For example, we see that happiness is an idea established in its principle and cannot help but promote harmony when we understand it.

With the fifth day comes the creation of birds to fly in the open firmament of heaven, and of fishes, and the command to be fruitful and multiply. Birds are an obvious symbol of thought uplifted spontaneously to the limitless realm of the spiritual; we talk about "giving wings" to our imagination, about limitations "clipping our wings," about "rising above" disagreeable things, or about "getting on top" of anything which tries to depress us. Fish have always been types of abundance and prolific multiplication, and the old saying is, "There's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it." When the fourth day has shown us the Science of spiritual ideas, we can then avail ourselves of it to outsoar in ever-increasing measure the restrictive element of matter, time, and place, the downward drag of failure and regret and tiredness, and experience the abundance of enjoyment and the continual expansion which a sense of the spiritual brings us. That abundance destroys impoverishment and deterioration of every kind. For instance, we see that happiness is infinite, that there is no end to it and no limit to it except what we ourselves impose.

The sixth day is the climax of creation because it introduces for the first time the cattle and then man, who is made in God's image and is given dominion over the whole of creation. In our present state of existence we see this ideal man "through a glass, darkly," in Paul's phrase, but sometimes we catch clearer glimpses of this man in the lives of reformers, of pioneers, of leaders in every sphere of life, or in the compositions of the greatest poets, musicians, painters, sculptors. When we say of someone, "He's a real man," we mean that he measures up to our ideal of courage and integrity and intelligence, that he is in command of himself and therefore can help others; his manhood is displayed in dominion over animal instincts and tendencies,—over fear and greed and envy and beastliness. When the spiritual idea, whose unfoldment in our thinking we have been following, has passed through its first three stages till we have seen that it is part of universal Science (the fourth stage) and we have let it overcome mortal limitations (the fifth stage), it then achieves the full stature of manhood—it is enthroned as the victor and none can gainsay it. For example, we see that happiness has full command of the situation for us and gives us dominion over all opposing suggestions.

The record of the seventh and, last day of creation begins like this: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." The purpose of creation is now fulfilled in all its infinitude and perfection, and that divine rest and peace is open to every one of us as we work and win through the dominion of true manhood (the sixth day). The New Testament says, "And of his fullness have all we received." Rest is symbolized for us by the

leisure and satisfaction after a good day's work, a good job done, a fine purpose achieved. But to enjoy the peace of God is to be always conscious of the full loveliness of all God's creation,—and that state of thought has power to annihilate all imperfection. If we love someone very much, we accept their lovableness and are always being grateful for it; we feel that our longings for perfection are stilled. On a divine plane, we can accept the unblemished, complete beauty and goodness of fulfilled ideas. Full perfection is to be found only in the spiritual; the material is liable to chance and change and disruption of every kind. Humanity requires a Saviour, and that Saviour is the perfection of the infinite, able to meet our every need and silence our every fear. For instance, we accept the full blessing of happiness; and when we acknowledge the motherhood of God, we lose all fear that happiness will leave us.

There ends our first orderly exploration of the nature of the spiritual. Those seven days, every time we ponder them, enrich immeasurably our concept of God and man made in God's likeness. They introduce us to the "light" of infinite wisdom; the "firmament" of infinite purity; the "dry land" of spiritual certainty; the solar system, indicating divine government and harmony; the "birds" and "fishes" of inspired and multiplying ideas: the man of God's creating, with conscious dominion: and the peace and rest of fulfilled realization.

Corroboration in the Old Testament

The exact spiritual values of the seven days of creation were so familiar to the Old Testament writers that they constantly illustrated them at work in particular situations.

For instance, an understanding of the first day of creation—"Let there be light: and there was light"—was used by Elisha at Dothan (see II Kings 6:8-17), and this story is a living symbol for us today. The king of Syria sent horses and chariots and a great host to encompass the city where his enemy Elisha, the great prophet, was to be found. The story goes: "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." The Bible symbolizes in that wonderfully simple way the fact that spiritual ideas are always present and powerful, active and available. In the night of ignorance we are afraid of the inimical forces holding us at their mercy, but when we see by the light of the first day we see the universe filled with mighty ideas of God.

An illustration of the firmament in operation, and one which helps us to a better understanding of the second day, is given by the story of Balaam and his ass in Numbers 22. Balaam wanted to do something which was displeasing to the Lord and so an angel was sent to prevent him. Balaam didn't use the light of the first day, and so he never saw this angel standing in front of his ass with his sword drawn to forestall repeatedly his attempt to choose the wrong path,—Balaam couldn't distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad. The ass, on the other hand, symbolizing humble service, accepted the divine decision. The story shows that we only have to

let the firmament establish itself through purity of purpose, in order to bring about good.

The short Book of Ruth exemplifies beautifully the third day, with its appearing of the dry land called Earth and the bringing forth of vegetation. This Book of Ruth has a lovely quality—full of grace and serenity, humility and faithfulness. Keats speaks of "the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home, She stood in tears amid the alien corn," but that gives a false picture of Ruth, who never wavered in her certainty that the dry land in her experience would appear and bring forth fruit. She identified herself with her mother-in-law and with the God of Israel, and then waited patiently, but with unfaltering hope, for the purpose of her life to appear in her marriage to Boaz and the birth of a son, who was in the direct line to Jesus. Each one of us is a Ruth when we long to identify with that which satisfies our spiritual longings, and that desire inevitably reveals our definite and complete spiritual identity, which bears fruit for us in our lives.

Elijah proved the truth of the fourth day, symbolized by the sun, the moon, and the stars, when he defeated the prophets of Baal in what might be called an "exhibition match" to determine the true God. This story is told in I Kings 18. Elijah said to the people, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God [the fundamental Principle of the universe], follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." The prophets of Baal called upon their god without response, because they were making frantic appeals to a personal god; Elijah's sense of God was as an unfailing Principle forever in operation, and he knew that he had only to appeal to that intelligently and obediently. The result was proof in human experience of the power of God.

We never have to take a chance on good, if our God is the eternal foundation of all things.

The fifth day of exaltation and abundant life was symbolized in the story (Jeremiah 38) of Jeremiah's rescue from a dungeon, to which he had been committed because of his fidelity in prophesying as God told him. "And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire," and was "like to die for hunger." How often we sink in the clogging mire of depression and apathy, starved of inspiration. But Jeremiah was rescued out of this dungeon through the good offices of a well-wisher, just as the abundance of full living returns to us when we have the birds of uplifted thought, outsoaring the limitations of mortality, and the fishes of prolific inspiration, multiplying ideas which supply and sustain.

Nehemiah rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem in the face of tremendous odds exemplified the man of the sixth day of creation,—the man given dominion over all the earth. His enemies were full of wrath, mocked him, ridiculed his every effort, and then plotted to pull down the wall by force. Nehemiah's answer was to arm his workers—they were to work on, but carry a weapon as well; the result was that the attack never materialized.

This story in the opening chapters of the Book of Nehemiah is a challenge to you and to me to build up a positive consciousness, capable of withstanding attack, of the man of God's creating, and to use it to forestall any attempt to force down that standard.

Finally, let us see how the Shunammite woman touched in thought the seventh day of creation,—the day of rest. It is told of her in II Kings 4 that when her only son died suddenly, she "went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out." Then she hurried to Elisha, the "man of God," who saw her coming and sent his servant to ask her, "Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?" She answered, "It is well." That was not a facile lie; this woman had enough consciousness of the perfection of the spiritual universe (as symbolized by the seventh day) to rest in the understanding that that was the only fact, even in this desperate situation. Her assurance was perfectly justified and it impelled the resurrection of her son; when Elisha had done his work, "the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes"—the whole story of the seven days of creation was focused in its perfection in that experience, and it was the irresistible answer to the human argument of death. We need the true motherhood of that Shunammite woman in order to conceive of the perfection of the spiritual universe and to be unwaveringly sure of it in the face of completely opposite testimony, presented by the physical senses. Our assurance of the divine purpose fulfilled operates in our experience to bring to pass whatever is in accord with that supremely loving purpose.

Jesus Lived the Days of Creation

Jesus was obviously very familiar with the Old Testament, as all Jews were. But his understanding of it was as something alive and to be used, whereas most of his contemporaries neglected the living spirit of the Old Testament by concentrating on its dead letter.

Jesus Christ not only understood the first day; he identified himself with it by saying, "I am the light of the world." And because he was so aware of that, he was able to heal a blind man (John 9). His certainty of infinite light was bringing enlightenment at every level.

Again, the firmament of the second day of creation was so real to Jesus that his understanding of it was a dynamic separator of the true from the false. He often cast out unclean spirits and cleansed lepers—he healed by eradicating the belief in impurity. In Luke 4 there is an instance of a healing of this kind. The story runs: "And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not." Jesus brought about the separation of that individual from the infiltrations of impurity and evil, and the result was that manhood stood forth in its pure goodness.

The parable of the prodigal son in Luke—probably the best-known of all the parables—was Jesus' way of putting the third day of creation into other words. He knew that the dry land of our identity as sons of God can never be lost, though it may seem to be lost to sight through sin. Man just cannot lose his place as the beloved son of the Father, who bestows on him all good, and thus removes any desire to seek material means of satisfaction. The sinner must always return home to the basic truth about his spiritual

selfhood, and Jesus was constantly showing that in his ministry and allowing the “dry land” to bear fruit.

We saw that the fourth day of creation, introducing the sun, the moon, and the stars, symbolized a harmony and spiritual power, available to anyone who understands its divine Principle; all sense of personality yields when thought perceives that which is forever in operation. This is clearly brought out in the story told in John 4 of Jesus' healing of the nobleman's son, who was dying. The father besought Jesus to heal his son, and Jesus said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" —he saw that the nobleman regarded him as a man with a flair for performing miracles, instead of as the obedient servant of Principle. "The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way." Afterwards he found that at the moment Jesus had said, "Thy son liveth," his son had recovered. The operation of Principle is instantaneous and impersonal, wherever thought is attuned to it. Jesus was attuned to it because he was continually pondering its operation. No material circumstances, therefore, could make conditions for him.

The fifth day of creation, with its symbols of birds and fishes, represents a tone in the ascending scale which Jesus was perpetually striking. Think how often he said, "Rise up," and how often he lifted up, and of how he resurrected from the dead: consider the healing of the man sick of the palsy, of Peter's wife's mother, of the woman bowed together who "could in no wise lift up herself," of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, of the

raising of Jairus' daughter and of Lazarus. Then think of Jesus' sense of the abundance of true living; he said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," and he fed the multitudes and showed the riches of inspiration.

No one has risen to the full stature of manhood as Jesus did. He was able to say, "I have overcome the world." He allowed himself to be tried and crucified in order to furnish the proof of his indestructible spiritual being, and that is why he said to Peter when he was arrested, "Thinkest thou that I can not now pray my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be!" Jesus' everlasting victory over "the world the flesh, and the devil" was the proof of his understanding of the sixth day of manhood, with dominion over all things.

Jesus had a conscious awareness of the seventh day of rest no less than of the other days. Did he not say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"? He could say that, because he had identified himself with every one of the seven days of creation, symbolizing the nature of God and therefore of His man. Jesus also said, "Say not ye, 'There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.'" He constantly proves that the "harvest" is here, by using his sure understanding of the perfection of the spiritual creation to heal even the desperately ill or dying. He demonstrated true womanhood as well as manhood, because he loves and cherished the spiritual above all else and used his understanding of it with the deepest compassion.

Jesus evidently meant us to follow his example ; he said," He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also." How do we "believe on him"? By making our understanding of the seven days of creation and their illustration throughout the Bible as exact and natural as his was. We start in very small ways, but our dominion inevitably increases, and it is the Bible which gives us the greatest of all joys, —the joy of watching the perfection of the spiritual transform human life and bring to it health and happiness.

CHAPTER TWO

ADAM AND EVE

The Bible (especially in the Gospels) embodies a wealth of illustrations of how thought which is intelligently attuned to what might be called spiritual laws of harmony can readjust all that is out of tune in human life. No one can deny what a desperate lack there is of that class of thought and also that there is the greatest possible need for it in individual, national and world affairs. But in order for thought to be in exact accord with that which is fundamental reality, it is surely not strange that it must be prepared to investigate carefully and humbly the definite spiritual values symbolized in the Bible; they are symbolized there in such a way that they can be understood and proved practical.

The Days of Creation Summarized

In the foregoing chapter we considered very briefly the eternal facts summarized in universally appreciable symbols at the beginning of Genesis. The story of the days of creation — days measured in terms of thought, not of hours — reveals the light of intelligent ideas; the firmament of separation from everything unlike them; the dry land of definiteness; the sun, moon and stars of ideas; divinely governed; the birds and fishes of uplifted and multiplied ideas; man aware of dominion; and rest in the full perfection of being. In the thirty-four verses which open the Bible we have the basic "scale" of the Scriptures, composed of seven individual notes, here struck in an ascending order, but later used in countless

combinations, all designed to educate and inspire the student of essential truth.

The Sequel Is a Constant

What follows immediately on the majestically simple story of the days of creation is quite a different story, telling of a questionable God (called the Lord God) and a wretched man. The God of this second record is so far removed from the intelligent creative Principle of the first record, and the sinner of the second from the man of the first, that it would be absurd to consider the second record as an expansion of the first. It must have been placed where it was to afford an obvious contrast at every step.

The second story was written hundreds of years before the first, but deliberately made to follow it by the prophetic writers; when they formed the sacred writings of their nation into a whole, they placed their story of the days of creation at the beginning, as a compass to guide the reader through the whole Bible. It is as if they next thought, "We have stated the true facts of the case as best we can; now let's give the opposing theory a chance to construct its view of the situation. After that the reader can decide for himself."

So now we have for our consideration a scrupulously accurate and logical analysis of the distorted view of God and man, — that is, a distorted view of the first record, — which obtains almost universally and which has molded the material universe as we know it. This embraces a mist of misrepresentation over everything; man made of the dust of the ground; man confined in a body and with animal propensities; man incomplete in

himself; man disillusioned in his search for happiness; man guilty and victimized; and man without hope of ever attaining perfection. No wonder Isaiah wrote," Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

The Exposure of a Fraud

One of the thorny questions of the ages is the nature and origin of evil. This second record in Genesis, placed side by side with the first and contradicting it at every stage, like a constantly faulty working out of the same sum in arithmetic, shows that like any mistake in arithmetic, evil is a misconception of fact; it has no principle of its own and therefore no permanence. Of course, it would only be foolish and cruel to underestimate the enormous and tragic hold it has on men's minds in its multifarious forms. If a misconception goes undetected, we are undoubtedly its deluded and suffering victims. But the second record exposes for all time the gigantic fraud practiced on every one of us by thousands and thousands of years of accumulated misrepresentations. This fraud robs us of our divine right to be man in possession of dominion, health, and happiness.

But once we recognize the fraud for what it is, we can bit by bit stop being defrauded. Jesus demonstrated the truth of this throughout his earthly career. Just as it is a matter of course for us to take reasonable precautions against being burgled, so we urgently need the habit of watching that we are not constantly deluded in every detail by the time honored mesmerism described in the second record. When his disciples failed to heal the epileptic boy, Jesus said, "This kind" can come forth by nothing, but by

prayer and fasting.” By “prayer” he meant conscientiously pondering the basic spiritual facts first presented in the days of creation; and by “fasting” he meant constantly rejecting the mistaken notions set out in the false record of creation and repeated in our lives. Without that intelligent two-fold process we have no hope of helping ourselves or our fellows to a less chaotic way of life. If we try to retain our misconceptions whilst trying to grasp the spiritual, or if we airily deny the existence of those misconceptions, we fail.

A Mist Waters the Ground

The second or false account of creation begins by stating that there had been no rain upon the earth, but “there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.”

This mist symbolizes the incessant uprising of misconceptions of fundamental truth. They impose themselves on our thinking and make us lose sight of the facts symbolized in the story of the days of creation. Primarily, they contradict the great truth of the first day, in which God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light - this symbolizes that the divine intelligence is forever revealing ideas which banish the darkness of fear and ignorance in our thinking. The false record presupposes the power of an opposing so-called intelligence to “cast on” for us it’s lying stitches and knit them up in our mentality. Thus reason is befooled into accepting a distortion of the real facts, just as a child allows a mistake to enter its calculations in arithmetic, although the mistake itself has no underlying intelligence to create it or support it.

The mist can never for one moment stop the light from shining, nor prevent it from breaking through intermittently; but if we let it, it hides from us the presence and power of the light, and keeps us in obscurity, apathetically putting up with the creations of the mist as if they were established facts. “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”

The purpose of the mist was to irrigate the dry ground, and so cause things to live and grow in it. Thinking which is based merely on what the physical senses announce is always building itself up before our eyes, as both cause and effect. It acts on itself and reacts to itself. For instance, it acts on you, and says, perhaps, “You have a cold,” and you react “Yes, so I have.” The mist has thus created a condition for you and implanted it in your mind. It has indicated the character of your circumstances. The whole complexion of your existence may be thus altered, and in entirely undesirable ways, yet the monstrous tyranny of the mist goes for the most part unchallenged. But, instead of blindly submitting to its tyranny we have the divine right to enter our protest against its pronouncements, knowing that the only creative power is the light of ideas. Ideas are quite apart from belief based on the testimony of the physical senses, which is always temporary, changeful, and uncertain; an idea is that which is perfect, eternal, and indestructible, and what else can possibly be regarded as absolute fact? Any other so-called creative power has only so much power as we give it – usually we give it as much as it asks for. Once we admit that it can bring conditions into existence, we admit that those conditions can develop and establish themselves along their own lines. Thus do we allow the formation of formidable mountains out of nonexistent molehills. That is the simple fact about the vast conglomeration of apparently solid evils, which throng our

world; and yet because of the crushing weight of centuries of false education, this simple fact has to be faithfully proved in specific instances in the teeth of opposition. It demands consistent effort to make material belief surrender its claims.

Elisha was once with a school of prophets who were cutting down trees in order to make a new dwelling-place for themselves (II Kings, 6), and as one of them was felling, his axe dropped into the water. He was especially worried about this, because it was a borrowed axe – a symbol indicating that a mortal is not master of his own fate. When a mortal tries to improve his lot, any accident may impede his efforts, because so many factors are beyond his control. But Elisha asked him where it had fallen, cut off a stick and threw it in at that very place, and made the iron float, so that the man was able to rescue it. Elisha had refused to dignify unintelligent material belief as law, and he had handled specifically the fear that man is powerless to deal with conditions forced upon him by his own lack of alertness. It seemed like a miracle, but Elisha was really just introducing a higher law, which dispelled the helplessness induced by the mist masquerading as law. The light of the divine Mind constitutes the only basic law, and this gives man all the intelligence he needs in any situation.

As Isaiah says, “come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.” Otherwise, there is no sure way of going forward, and all our judgments are unsound, watered by the mist, which goes up from the earth.

Man Made of the Dust of the Ground

The second stage of the false record tells how the Lord God made man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a living soul. This false God also placed before man's eyes the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is the lie that man is inherently both a spiritual and material being. Man as we know him is certainly a fantastic contradiction living in a world of contrasts. For instance, he may be willing to die for an ideal at one moment, indicating that he is a spiritual being, and at another he may be blown up in an explosion, indicating his materiality. Great poets may be cut off in their prime; the most beautiful flowers may suddenly be blighted. Man born of human parents is bound to be a mixture of good and evil, and he starts off on an existence full of these opposites. However good he is, he may suffer the most terrible misfortunes; and if he has good fortune, his fear that it is too good to last is frequently confirmed. Finally, he returns to the dust from which he was made. So this delusion of the mingling of opposites permeates our whole existence, making us see in ourselves and in every condition a mixture of good and evil, both equally real.

What is the remedy? The only hope of permanent improvement is to turn to the fundamental substantial fact, as symbolized in the second day of creation. There we are told of a firmament to separate absolute reality from "the things that are seen." A creative intelligence, which is purely good, cannot produce a hybrid creation. Habakkuk said of God, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." Therefore the sole reality of being is spiritual man, living in a universe where nothing but good can come his way.

In our present state of existence such a conception may seem hopelessly transcendental, and yet it is the only logical conclusion, and the Bible emphasizes throughout that to turn to the spiritual with pure desire for substantial good results in improved human conditions. Without that pure desire there is no lasting improvement, but the desire for more Godlikeness brings the human nearer to the divine fact. Take, for instance, the story of Naaman the leper in II Kings, 5. Naaman was a highly successful general, a mighty man of valour, but he was a leper. A "little maid" from Israel whom the Syrians had captured said that Naaman could be cured if he were with the Hebrew prophet, Elisha. The "little maid" in us all is that which is willing to turn to the spiritual, and so eventually Naaman agreed to go. Elisha sent a message to Naaman when he arrived near his house, and merely told him to go and wash seven times in Jordan. Naaman was furiously angry, as he had expected a great fuss to be made of him and a spectacular healing to be effected before his eyes; at first he refused to obey the command, but when he was persuaded to do so on account of the simple thing that was asked of him, "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." He was forced to see that it is no good looking for improved matter, because the very thing we need to get rid of is the material belief, this we do by "washing seven times" in the perfection of the spiritual, symbolized in the seven days of creation, which tell the ordered story of reality.

Jesus made the same point when he said to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" the realm of perfection in operation. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a

man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" - Nicodemus took Jesus quite literally. Jesus answered, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"-Elisha had made Naaman face this very issue. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Jesus went on to say that this rebirth comes about quite naturally. It is not the happening of a moment, and it is not a matter of putting new wine into old bottles; it comes about because of the purely spiritual origin of man, and involves a constant process of purification from the "old man," made of the dust of the ground. That is how the "firmament" operates practically in our thoughts.

"Man Put into the Garden of Eden"

So far this false record has exposed, first, the lie that material belief is an intelligent cause; the only creative power is God. Secondly, it has exposed the lie of a permanent mixture of good and evil; the sole reality is substantial good.

The third section into which the false record falls begins with the putting of man into the Garden of Eden to till it and look after it. This picture of man confined in a garden, which he has to keep going, is a symbol of mortal man living within the confines of a material body which he has to see to and care for. Mortals are slaves to their bodies. From their earliest years they take an enormous interest in them - looking at them and discussing them and displaying them to the best advantage; consulting them at every moment of the day as to their consciousness of pain or painlessness,

hunger or satiety; and judging them by fashionable and racial standards of physical beauty.

The third day of the true record symbolized that there is a “dry land” of definite spiritual identity for each one of us, and that it is a living and growing thing, bearing fruit. The opposite of this is the corporeal mortal. Our bodies claim to be the real “us.” Yet there can be no “dry land” of definiteness about mortal selfhood. It is one thing at one moment and to one person and under certain circumstances and quite a different thing at another moment and to another person and under other circumstances.

Isaiah expresses the need for continuous cultivation of our god-given spiritual selves when he says: “My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.” Jesus uses the same symbolism in his parable of the householder demanding fruit from his vineyard: when he sends servants with this demand for fruit, the husband-men kill them, and finally kill even the son of the owner and plan to seize the vineyard for themselves – mortal selfhood tries to usurp spiritual identity. But when the owner comes, he “miserably destroys” the husbandmen and lets out the vineyard to those who will render the fruits in their seasons, – who will cultivate their God-given selves. How could the selfhood defined for each one of us by the infinite identity be less than beautiful and fruitful in every way? And yet we try to thrust it aside at every turn, to our own loss, and we accept a very poor substitute.

John records that Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” and adds that it was not understood at the time that “he spake of the temple of his body.” When Jesus resurrected his body in the tomb, he proved that the real man is not confined by a material body and that he doesn’t think spiritually with his brain. He proved that his conscious divine identity was never dead and that it was this, which restored his body to normality. His material body did not disappear (as he did when he ascended) until he had proved that it was unassailable even by extreme physical suffering. The Bible certainly does not demand that we become ascetics. Paul writes, “I beseech you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” We are only asked to translate our sense of body into an infinitely higher and more satisfying one – the individual embodiment of specific spiritual ideas. This is bound to reproduce itself in our physical, bodies, because as a man “thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

When the Lord God has put man into the garden of Eden, he tells him that he may eat of all the trees of the garden, but that if he eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he will die. As corporeal mortals we necessarily absorb the evidence of the five physical senses, and it makes us acutely aware of pain or transient pleasure, and yet the notion of sin and penalty is at the same time foisted on us. We are punished for doing what it is all too likely that we do. But if we want to stop eating of those trees of the garden and paying the penalty for it, we can obey the Psalmist’s demand, “O taste and see that the Lord is good” - we can use our spiritual senses

constantly to enjoy the beauty of spiritual ideas. The Bible is full of the expression of this beauty. So if we turn away from the contemplation of corporeality, – if we become “absent from the body,” and “present with the Lord,” – we lose nothing. Rather we gain the unalloyed satisfaction of beholding and enjoying eternal beauty, far surpassing the greatest loveliness of the world of the senses. The grace and beauty of flowers, for instance, in form, colour, expression, and poise, is but a hint of the lasting definiteness and joyousness of the beauty of spiritual ideas in operation.

The Lord God also comments at this point that man needs “an help meet for him” – he needs some extraneous satisfaction. He is dissatisfied with his own little personal identity and has the urge to possess materially. We can identify ourselves in thought with all the good there is, but if we seek satisfaction through merely physical channels, even the sweets we seem to find eventually lose their savour and begin to taste of the dust. In I Kings 21 we read of how Ahab was covetous of Naboth’s vineyard and was persuaded by his wife Jezebel to resort to treacherous murder in order to have it for himself, but he couldn’t even enjoy it when he did get it through these means.

All the animals are next brought to Adam to be named by him. This symbolizes the unreasoning passions, which are attendant upon the possession of a body, and which we find defined in our mortal makeup. Paul wrote, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” These animal qualities are the strong impulses always ready to spring into action,

putting us off our balance and making us do what we wouldn't otherwise dream of doing. Under the sway of some violent physical excitement, any crime is possible. But the Bible points to the sinlessness of spiritual man, who has no desire nor means to sin, because he is infinitely satisfied: the Psalmist says, for instance, "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men... shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures."

Woman Taken Out of Man and Approached by the Serpent

The inevitable outcome of man encased in a body and given animal instincts and feeling dissatisfied is that he regards himself as an incomplete being. So we next hear of the Lord God hypnotizing Adam into a "deep sleep," and then removing one of his ribs, – something inherently part of him. Out of this rib he makes a woman, whom he brings to, the man in order that they may be one in flesh.

In the first record of creation we read that God created man in His own image and created him male and female; if God, to, be complete, must include both manhood and womanhood, both fatherhood and motherhood, then man, to be God's image and likeness, must logically also include both masculine and feminine qualities and therefore be complete in himself. It is only natural to desire completeness, but for that sense of completeness to be a permanent happiness it must be found in the individual. In that way he can always draw upon it, and he is not radically dependent upon external barriers against a sense of helplessness and loneliness. Nothing, which is not part of individual consciousness, can be lasting, because it may be lost

through accident, change, decay, or death. Marriage, for instance, can never be the final answer to the search for completeness, although for most people it may be a good steppingstone; both Jesus and Paul indicated this. All happy and productive relationships are only “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,” which is the achievement of completeness in every individual, – through the intelligence and strength of manhood, and the tenderness and service of womanhood. When our own manhood creates spiritual ideas by reflection, and our own womanhood responds by accepting them, then we can face every situation with the certainty of being able to work it out, and so behold the fruit of our own individual spiritual marriage.

The fourth day of creation introduced the sun, the moon, and the stars as a symbol of the universal relationship of ideas, all operating according to their Principle. John in Revelation uses this same symbol when he declares that he saw “a Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars;” what a wonderful association of spiritual affection (“a woman”) with unflinching harmony, and in that association lies the only hope of reuniting the cracking relationships – between men and women, parents and children, capital and labour, nation and nation – unhappily so prevalent in the world. Right relationship begins with the individual; it has a shaky foundation if the individual is still lying hypnotized in the “deep sleep” of belief in his own deficiency.

In the Book of Judges it is related how the Philistine lords said to Delilah, the wife of Samson, “Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to

afflict him.” Samson deceived Delilah three times, but finally she drove his patience to such extremities that he revealed to her the secret of his strength, – the fact that a razor had never passed over his head. Delilah then proceeded to do to Samson exactly what the Lord God did to Adam in the false record: “she made him sleep upon her knees.” Then she got a man to shave off “the seven locks of his head,” – to rob him of him of his sense of completeness, – and his strength went from him so that the Philistines could put out his eyes, bind him with fetters, and make him grind in the prison house.

Just as the appearance of the woman clothed with the sun was followed in Revelation 12 by the appearance of a great red dragon, who tried and failed to impede her in every way, so this fourth part of the Adam record follows the picture of falsified relationship with the introduction of the serpent, who is in this case to be victorious. The serpent, “more subtle than any beast of the field,” says to the woman, “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” The serpent symbolizes every suggestion, which insinuates to us that perhaps all is not for the best in the fundamental ordering of things. These cunningly subtle suggestions creep into our minds when the “deep sleep” has robbed us of our “whole armour of God.” They come arrayed with all innocence and they exude a superficial reasonableness. The result is that, like Eve, we listen to the serpent’s misleading suggestions, heed its implanted doubts, and reckon as if the infinite were a pettifogging official of some outmoded institution, depriving us of our rights.

The serpent has no fundamental principle behind its pronouncements – all it has is what power of suggestion we choose to allow it. The purpose of these suggestions is a malicious and deadly poisoning of our minds against spiritual facts. Jacob, speaking prophetically of Dan, one of his sons, said, “Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward” – a good picture of the insidious designs of the serpent, always devising new and more hideous methods of infiltration. Until those hidden methods of accomplishing evil are exposed and held in check there can be no peace from the serpent’s machinations that which exposes them and renders them powerless is the action of the divine Principle of the universe, which makes its intentions clear to the obedient servant of this Principle.

Man and Woman Eat of the Tree

Adam and Eve, disabled by their personal deficiencies and thereby with their resistance to the serpent’s subtlety weakened, now proceed to be inveigled by the serpent into eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent lies to Eve and tells her that God has forbidden them to eat of the tree because he knows that when they do their eyes will be opened and they will be “as gods, knowing good and evil” Eve thereupon decides that to eat of the tree will have desirable results and so she eats of it and gets her husband to do the same. The outcome is that they know that they are naked – that is the only “eye-opener” they have, and it so disillusioned them that they hide from their Maker.

The serpent is always insinuating to us that we cannot enjoy a full and interesting and adventurous life by thinking in terms of spiritual facts. It

virtually denies that those truths can win and hold our affection permanently. It suggests that we are happier if we absorb ourselves in a chaotic life of good and evil intermixed, – a life apart from infinite Life. So we cut adrift from that in which we fundamentally “live, and move, and have our being,” and our restlessness makes us sail off into treacherous waters. We do this only because we fail to realize what the Psalmist expressed: “in thy presence (the presence of abundant ideas) is fullness of joy.”

Like the prodigal son in Jesus’ parable, we imagine that we are deprived of happiness in the present, separated from it by time and space, and so we too leave our Father’s house for a far country. And yet we soon find only emptiness, and like the prodigal we return once more to the Father, who heaps abundance upon us, – abundance which could always have been ours if we had been content to find it fully expressed in the “here and now” which is true being.

The mortal is always trying to inflate his own importance to impossible dimensions. For instance, it is told in Acts 12 of how Herod was struck dead by an angel “because he gave not God the glory” and set himself up as a god. Jesus, on the other hand, was always subordinating his human self and his human yearnings to his divine sonship – “not my will, but thine, be done” – and the result was greater, not less, glory of individual achievement. Both Judas in his betrayal of Jesus, and Paul in his persecution of the early Christians, tried to “kick against the prick” and found it unrewarding. They were both asserting their “free will,” but that kind of free will is as if “two” should decide to have the right to be interchangeable with “three” because of the boredom of always being “two.”

The fifth day of creation, through the symbol of the birds and fishes, emphasized rising above the burdens of material existence, and also the sense of multiplication, but here we have the taking on of the burden of material existence, and the ensuing conviction of barrenness.

When Adam and Eve realized the nakedness of mortality, – that it is a disappointing sham, – they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. Mortal belief is tireless in its efforts to cover up its basic poverty by theories and codes of living, which make a good show of being watertight and securely respectable. It tries to give the appearance of continuity and to prevent its emptiness from becoming apparent. A rich young ruler once asked Jesus, “Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” Jesus replied, “Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God,” and he went on to enumerate some of Moses’ commandments. The young man answered, “Master, all these have I observed from my youth;” he had clothed himself with moral respectability all his life, and yet it was merely a superficial goodness. The story goes on: “Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.” We cling tenaciously to the mortal world and its various organizations, instead of exchanging mortal beliefs for the abundance of spiritual ideas and using them with compassion to bring genuine riches to the poor in spirit. The leaves of the tree of life are “for the healing of the nations,” and not for temporarily disguising their poverty. The

rich young ruler was like a would-be mathematician who covers up a mistake instead of eradicating it.

Fallen Man is Cursed

When mortal man has elected to bring about his own downfall, there is nothing left to him but to make his uncertain way through the complex jungle of a hostile world, pursued by curses and victimized by the general perversity of things. This is what we hear of in the next portion of the story, and it is a complete opposite of the sixth day of creation, which describes man's dominion over all the earth.

This section opens with the Lord God calling to Adam and asking "Where art thou?" Adam replies, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." That "voice in the garden" is the voice of conscience; in mortal man the engrained feeling of guilt and fear is the basic element of consciousness. But think of Jesus' healing of the man sick of the palsy – the first thing Jesus said to him was, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Hidebound theological belief immediately called this blasphemy, and yet Jesus was asserting the essential fact of manhood, which is unfallen, which has never been in subjection to sin. Again, when Jesus saw the man born blind, his disciples asked him, "who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus' reply was, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

The Lord God now carries his cross-examination a stage further by asking Adam, "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree,

whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” Adam then blames the woman whom the Lord God has given him – he puts his sin two removes from himself, and thereby takes refuge in self-justification. “Quis’ excuse s’accuse.” Today we would say, “I’m just made that way,” and shrug our shoulders, but self-justification is a blind alley, as Job found out.

The woman is then questioned as to what she has done, and she answers, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” She has the wisdom to see her sin as a victory of the serpent. The Lord God then curses the serpent and institutes a perpetual warfare between the “woman” and the “serpent;” such warfare is constantly illustrated in the Bible – for instance, in the story of Daniel in the lions’ den, where Daniel’s purity and faithfulness rendered harmless the cunning malice leveled against him. Judas, too, played the “serpent” to Jesus’ patient “woman,” and true womanhood gained the final victory.

The curse on the woman is that she shall bring forth children in sorrow. This is reflected in the birth-pangs of all progressive; ideas the pioneer always has a bitter fight before his new idea is accepted. That which is to be the cornerstone of a new structure is still rejected by the builders. Just so in ourselves, if we resist spiritual ideas as applying to ourselves and as necessarily displacing old beliefs, and so their birth in our thought is attended by pain. The first chapter of Luke tells of how Zacharias suffered because he wouldn’t accept that his own womanhood (his wife) could possibly bring forth a son for him. And so whenever we resist progress we bring forth our “children” in sorrow, whereas we can learn to bring them forth in joy.

The curse on Adam is that the prospect before him is nothing but blood, sweat, and tears, and finally extinction. Mortal man is to a large extent in subjection to the forces of nature, and condemned for the most part to drudgery, to a ceaseless, unrewarding struggle for existence. As the disciples said, “we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.” But Jesus could say, “my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Manhood as Jesus demonstrated it was a matter of dominion: The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”

The third chapter of Genesis ends with the Lord God ensuring that man shall never be redeemed; he drives man out of Eden in case he shall eat of the tree of life. This is indeed a God made after mortal man’s image, and a jealous mortal at that, willing to render his creation “strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” Here again Jesus acted and healed on quite different assumptions, saying for instance, “fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”

Adam and Eve next bring forth Cain and Abel, but Abel, the better of the two, is slain by the worse. Cain (which means “spear”) is a “tiller of the ground,” a gross materialist; whereas Abel is a “keeper of sheep,” a man with his eye on his thoughts. Cain offers to the Lord God the fruit of the ground, – a parade of his gross materialism, – whereas Abel offers some of the firstlings of his flock, – the gift of his own thinking. Cain thereupon slays Abel. Today it is the brute force of the physical, which the materialist parades, and his envy of the independent thinker makes him liquidate him as a nuisance. The well-meaning idealist cannot stand up against an

enemy armed with bombs and untroubled by scruples. The only thing that can stand against so-called physical power is scientific understanding of the spiritual, because that is based on fundamental universal power. Pilot paraded before Jesus the power of Rome: “knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?” But Jesus’ answer was; “Thou couldst have no power against me, except that were given thee from above,” and he went victoriously through that whole experience of trial and crucifixion with the deliberate intention of showing that man is indestructible.

When the Lord God discovers Cain’s crime and is met with a rude repudiation of responsibility, he sentences him to become a fugitive and a vagabond. Cain says that this punishment is more than he can bear, because he is sure to be killed. The Lord God then forbids anyone to kill Cain; mortal man is a perversion of the real man, and so it is bound to return eventually to its own nothingness. It condemns itself, and therefore the poor mortal does not need our condemnation.

Cain Excluded, But Enoch Translated

The final scene of the Adam drama finds Cain going out from the presence of the Lord and dwelling in the land of Nod, which means, “wandering.” So the seventh stage of the false record is exclusion, instead of the seventh day consciousness of complete perfection. Mortal man is “beyond the pale,” cut off from the perfection of the spiritual universe and doomed to wander in mortality, but only until he sees that material existence is doomed to extinction and he recovers his connection with the divine. Then the end of the wrong road becomes the beginning of the road back home.

Adam and Eve have another child to replace Abel, and this is Seth, who is to be in the direct line to Jesus, whose mission it was to show us how to set about working our individual passages home – not haphazardly, but in an ordered and intelligent way. Finally, Enoch is translated – he “walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” Enoch’s transition from the human to the divine came about perfectly naturally, as Jesus’ ascension did, because he had victoriously taken all the intervening steps.

The parable of the good Samaritan illustrates the new hope that is given us in exchange for the ashes of despair. It describes how a certain man fell among thieves and was stripped of his clothes, wounded, and left half dead – this is the state to which the false record reduces us. A priest and a Levite (representing the outworn notion of man as a miserable sinner deserving only suffering) passed him by on the other side; but a certain Samaritan “came where he was:” – the Psalmist said, “if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there” – “and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” Mortal man is restored to the right path, because at the heart of things is the divine motherhood, shepherding us back to the one fold, – the spiritual universe. As Paul says, “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

A Summary

The false record, then, is a masterpiece which lays bare the methods which belief adopts in order to get itself accepted as truth. It asserts:

1. That it has power to pull the wool over our eyes, - to impose misconceptions on us.
2. That it is a confusion of good and evil.
3. That we are kept acutely aware of it through our five physical senses.
4. That we have no adequate power of defense against it.
5. That we should use material means to deal with it, though these bring only disillusion.
6. That we need expect nothing but blood and sweat and tears.
7. That we might as well give up hope and resign ourselves to it.

Yet beneath the tones of the false record may forever be heard the true tones of the first account of creation, proclaiming with divine clarity against the temporary background of discords that the light of ideas is purely good, definite, powerful, ever-present, victorious, and “altogether lovely.”

The Mary Baker Eddy Science Institute

June 2010

This month, we present chapters three and four of THE BIBLE FOR EVERYMAN by Rosalie Maas.

Enjoy!

CHAPTER THREE

NOAH

NOAH is a delightfully fantastic fairy-tale figure to most people— a venerable patriarch with a large zoo on his treble-decker houseboat. Most people are familiar from their childhood days with the story of Noah in some form, but they do not take it seriously as something which could apply to us to-day. Yet upon investigation the story proves to be a most exact symbolic account of how to save ourselves, and everything which is worth saving, from the self-destructive processes of the material,—how to steer constantly clear of the wreckage of materialism. It gives a wonderfully wise and detailed picture of the orderly steps we can take in order to find our way out of "deep waters, where the floods overflow" us. So we cannot be too grateful for its place in the Bible, and whenever gratitude enters into our Bible studies they are much enriched.

To take the story literally involves a great strain upon credulity, and robs the story of its present and universal significance. The record may well have been based on some actual happening, but it is a well-known myth

embodied in several primitive cultures. Symbols derived from the story of Noah are used all through the Scriptures, and to the student of the Bible it is clear that when the Psalmist, for instance, says, "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea," he is thinking primarily of a great spiritual fact and not of a physical deluge. The Bible is profoundly consistent in its symbolism.

The name "Noah" means "comfort," and when we find ourselves overwhelmed with trouble, an understanding of what Noah illustrates offers us the comfort, not of emotional sympathy, but of an intelligent, constructive method of putting things right from the highest standpoint. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn [who are unhappy at being deprived of that which they still hold dear]: for they shall be comforted [blessed with a sense of substantial and abiding good]."

The Thousand-Year Periods of Bible History

The record of Noah and the flood occupies the greater part of the second thousand-year period of Bible history. That is according to the reckoning made in the seventeenth century by Archbishop Ussher, who by putting in order all the years and ages given in the Hebrew text arrived at a chronology. The Bible begins with the story of the seven days of creation, which symbolizes the way in which thought works its way up by logical stages to a realization of the perfection of God's universe. Then the theme of each day of creation is developed and expanded in the corresponding thousand-year period of Bible history—"one day is with the Lord as a

thousand years." That is what gives the Bible its basic structure, its marvellous unity, its definite progression; that is what enables us to study it intelligently and without being overwhelmed by its vastness. Each day of creation is like a bud, with all the characteristics of its species latent but undeveloped; gradually it comes to full flower through its respective thousand-year period, and through its illustration in every part of the Bible. Each period is of course rich in detail drawn from symbols of all the days of creation, but it has one great and unmistakable spiritual hue.

The following gives a bird's-eye view of the thousand-year periods of Bible history and how they illustrate their respective days of creation:—

DAY OF CREATION

1st. Light—intelligent thinking.

2nd. Firmament between the waters above and beneath—purity.

3rd. Dry land appearing and bringing forth—definiteness and identity.

4th. Sun, moon, and stars to give light on the earth—one all-embracing divine system.

5th. Birds and fishes—inspiration and multiplication.

THOUSAND-YEAR PERIOD

Creation stories.

Noah saved from the universal deluge by his ark.

The focus shifts to semi-historical figures (Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses) and to the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness to the Promised Land.

History of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel and of their captivity and return. Learning by painful experience that disobedience to fundamental Principle brings punishment; also learning through the basic teaching of the prophets how to understand that Principle.

Jesus' mission ("I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"), and the beginnings of Christianity, with abundant healing.

Bible history ends after five thousand-year periods, although its prophetic range extends far beyond them to embrace all periods. We ourselves are now nearing the end of the sixth thousand-year period since the beginning of Bible history, and our scientific age corresponds to the sixth day of creation (in which man was given dominion). That reckoning, however, is only from one limited point of view, because when Jesus came he showed that the days of creation are so much more than the basis of Bible history;

he lived the truth of each one of them, thereby proving that they represent ever-present values, eternally available and practical to those who understand them with the head and with the heart, and who live by their standard.

The first thousand-year period of Bible history consists of the creation period, and is represented by the true and false accounts of creation, which we have already briefly considered. The light of the first day of creation not only illumines the truth of creation, but also exposes the baseless error of a false conception of creation. Now the second day, in which the firmament is introduced, is given dramatic illustration in the story of Noah. The symbol of the firmament means so much more to us immediately it is shown as it appears in operation, saving Noah from the flood. That firmament, erected between the waters above and beneath, symbolizes firm separation from all which is not Godlike and which is therefore fundamentally unreal; through erecting just such a firmament by means of his ark, Noah was able to find refuge from the destructiveness of the flood.

The Sons of God Wed the Daughters of Men and Beget Giants

The sixth chapter of Genesis opens by saying that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." That is a clear symbol of choosing to divide our affections between two opposites.

The "son of God" in each one of us is all that is faithful to enduring good. To be more explicit: the son of God in us has a sense of the light of the first day of creation, and therefore is wise—he appeals to the source of all

wisdom and lets this direct his steps; he has a sense of the second day with its firmament—he can discern between the eternally real and mere temporary belief, and stand by the first; he has a sense of the dry land of the third day—he has a definite understanding of the reality he discerns, and feels that understanding growing up within himself to become his own, and inevitably bringing forth fruit; he has a sense of the sun, moon, and stars of the fourth day—he knows something of that which holds every definite detail within its system, and which operates with power when understood; he has a sense of the fifth day with its birds and fishes—he has a real love of spiritual things, which constantly lifts up his thought afresh to them, so that he feels here and now the abundant blessedness of being; he has a sense of the man of the sixth day, made in God's image, and so he is in command of every situation, because he can exercise dominion over the animal element in the world he beholds; and he has a sense of the fulfillment and rest of the seventh day—he feels that he is wedded indissolubly to the perfection of all things.

When we think that the "daughters of men" are fair, we feel the attraction of things below the standard of the son of God in us, and we choose to wed ourselves to them,—to make them our intimate companions in thought, to trust them and support them. If we do not gain a strong and pure sense of the sole reliability and reality of spiritual things, we are mesmerized by what seems superficially desirable, or the easiest course to adopt, but which is a fool's paradise, a reed "shaken with the wind,"— a merely material sense of health, wealth, and happiness. If we look for happiness in earthly things, we are looking for it in things which are perishable and liable to any accident. That is why Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,

where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Happiness is a spiritual possession, and one to which everyone is entitled. If we have an enduring idea of what happiness is,—the blessing of our true status as the beloved son of God, as the developing expression of impartial and universal good,— then we can never be even bruised by the inevitable disappointments of earthly hopes, and our tenure of happiness will be a lasting and ever-expanding one. Leaning on the material for happiness is a poor shift which we try repeatedly until we learn our foolishness by being brought up sharp by its ruthless treachery.

The story goes on to say that giants were born to the sons of God whenever they had intercourse with the daughters of men. So the mistake of our apparently harmless marriage is magnified until it issues in a Goliath,—an evil of abnormal proportions, which appears beyond our control. For instance, humanity has largely wedded itself to physical science, and the outcome is the H-bomb.

"And God [the highest concept of good, which exposes its opposite] saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually ... the earth was filled with violence ... all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." We begin to be appalled at the chaos, rottenness, perversion, or cruelty which has developed.

Peter's denial of Jesus when the latter was arrested and brought before the high priest is a good instance of how the son of God in us defiles himself by being attracted by a "daughter of men" to such an extent that he temporarily allies his thought to hers. Like us, who so often fail to stand by the highest we know when it seems engulfed by overwhelmingly adverse tides of general mortal opinion. Peter did not have the courage to let himself be associated in people's minds with Jesus,—with him who constantly proved that he was the son of God. When questioned on two occasions by a woman, Peter thought it so desirable under the circumstances to be of the same opinion as the herd that he denied any such association. He was warming himself by the fire,—the fire of conventionality and false security. When he was again challenged, he cursed, and swore that he had nothing to do with Jesus; Peter had protested before that he would never forsake Jesus, but in the moment of trial he just as impetuously denied him. He would not "come out from among them," and be "separate." Jesus had said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword"—to all mortal beliefs. Peter wept bitterly when he realized his monstrous infidelity, but he was able to redeem his mistake later. That is what this story of Noah proceeds to show us how to do.

The Building of the Ark

In spite of the corruption and violence which were widespread, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. . . . Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Where there is Noah in our thought, there is always a way out from the inevitable havoc caused by

materialistic thinking. Noah acquaints himself with God, instead of with the "daughters of men."

Noah is now told to make an ark to save himself and his family from "the end of all flesh." Whenever we are disillusioned by the fickleness of the things of the flesh,—any belief of life or substance in matter,—it is a significant stage in our development, for there is born in us a great desire for substantial and unshakable good, for that which will not perish or let us down. And so we turn unreservedly to the spiritual, where alone can we find such a thing. If we are wise, we begin at that point to build up our understanding of spiritual facts,—the right conception of everything we seek, whether it be health or happiness or supply. That is our ark.

The directions which Noah is given for making the ark are quite explicit. The Bible is always definite when it comes to describing spiritual structures — think of the exact account of the city foursquare in Revelation, for instance. When we want to find refuge in fundamental truth, it is no good setting about it vaguely, and yet the general tendency of religion has been to think that one can find in an emotional belief in God lasting spiritual strength in the face of gathering floods. That which is based merely on emotion can be swept away if the tides of disaster are fierce enough. But the strength which is based on an intelligent understanding of the spiritual, and which has stood the test of experience's challenge, because in every detail of life its standard has not been forsaken—that strength is impregnable. Jesus said, "whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain

descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

So our construction of a place of refuge has to be intelligent and orderly. Noah is first told, "rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." The rooms in a building make provision for specific requirements; our spiritual thinking is not to be vaguely vast, then, but is to take account of all our individual needs. Also, "pitch" is to make it proof against all possible infiltrations of fear or doubt or discouragement; that is to say, we must stoutly uphold in our lives (the without) the truth we proclaim (within).

Noah is next given measurements for the length, breadth, and height of the ark. The length symbolizes the line of orderly spiritual reasoning which we have to follow. One essential fact must lead to another in logical sequence, as in the days of creation, and this disproves the false logic of reasoning from material premises. The Psalmist says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." The breadth symbolizes that width of outlook which is the outcome of looking beyond personal limitations in order to become an individual channel for fundamental good; again, the Psalmist says, "Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip." The height symbolizes the inspiration which must uplift our thinking to receive the full consciousness of perfection: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

Then the ark is to be given a window and a door. The window in our ark is to let in the light of divine intelligence, and to allow us to look out and see

everything in the light of that intelligence, instead of "judging after the flesh." The door is to enable us to shut ourselves safely in while the storm is on, and to come out when the storm is over; Isaiah says, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

The ark is also to have three storeys; that is, our understanding of spiritual truth in any situation rises in three stages. First of all, it causes us to see that "the flesh profiteth nothing." Then we take refuge in our understanding of spiritual truth, while the error of belief in the flesh destroys itself; "a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." And finally we rise to the height of seeing that "I am the Lord; and there is none else;" at that point the error has no place and no memorial. This essential threefold process is very clear in the story of Noah, and appears in several forms.

All Flesh To Be Destroyed

When the instructions for building the ark have been given, Noah is told: "behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee." This may seem a harsh judgment on all flesh and also favouritism to Noah, but it symbolizes the wonderful fact that the material and evil element in our present experience has to go, but the good does not have to be swept away with it. The end of every error is inevitable, however inextricably we seem to be involved in it, but if we have the

spiritual strength to separate ourselves from the things of the flesh, then all that is good (all that reflects the divine nature, as outlined in the days of creation) remains alive with us.

Jesus illustrated this in the healing of the maniac of Gadara, as recorded in Mark 5. This man had an unclean spirit and behaved like a wild beast; "but when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. . . . Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand ;) and were choked in the sea." The "devils" which try to enter into each one of us may be rejected by our advancing sense of good, but they also ask to be allowed a definite home in the swinish element of human nature. Jesus, however, saw that they must be allowed no medium whatsoever, and the result was that the swine themselves "ran violently down a steep place into the sea," and were choked. The man was then seen "sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind." All that is impure and evil in any situation is doomed to destruction,—not just to be relegated to a corner as highly undesirable but inevitable in the order of things. Its nature is nothingness and it must return to nothingness. But the inherent good remains.

By Sevens and By Twos

Noah is told to take in with him male and female of every kind of creature, in order to "keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth." Into our ark we have to take our individual sense of everything and maintain its essential nature. We have to take "clean beasts" by sevens (the measure of perfection) and "unclean beasts" by twos. The "unclean beasts" in our experience are our selfish desires and ambitions, our hates and enmities and jealousies, our lingering diseases, our unsolved problems, our undesirable traits of character—all these have to be brought into our ark in order to be purified. If we try to leave these temporary evils out of our spiritual reckonings,—out of our ark,—we are not thorough-going and not even honest. But it is no good trying to force conditions to achieve the ideal in a moment; if we understood as much as Jesus, and manifested his love, unhealthy conditions would naturally surrender to the ideal immediately we came across them. But while our understanding is still immature, we can only strengthen that understanding systematically as best we can, and then let it bring forth fruit in its own due order, and as our worthiness increases.

Jesus made the same point in his parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13. He told of a man who "sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." When the tares appeared, the man's servants asked if they should go and gather them up. But they were told, "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." With our enthusiastic but

meagre understanding of spiritual ideas, we sometimes make violent and wilful attacks on some evil and expect its immediate collapse without more ado. Experience soon teaches us the vanity of this, and wisdom substitutes the uncompromising patience which waits for the "harvest" of mature and fully realized understanding. This waiting is not giving in to evil, nor does it ever countenance evil as really substantial, but through its pure and steadfast sense of the reality it takes one progressive step (however small) at a time and consolidates its position constantly until the goal is slowly but surely reached.

Noah Enters the Ark and the Flood Begins

"Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth." Whenever we too have dominion over every element in our consciousness, we can face the flood with the authority of the sixth day of creation.

"And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him,"—our "family" consists of all the right ideas we associate with ourselves,—"into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. . . . And it came to pass after seven days,"—after the assimilation of what we know of the perfection of spiritual things,—"that the waters of the flood were upon the earth . . . the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." The truth of the second day of creation seemed to be disproved at this point, because the firmament had been erected for the specific purpose of restraining the waters above the heaven and under the heaven, and yet now they were flooding the earth. Chaos had taken the place of order. That often seems to be the case

in our experience, and we can either let self-pity submerge us, or else we can be like Noah and get into the ark to disprove for ourselves that the divine order ever can be repudiated. Malachi says, "prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." We can always regard a flood of trouble as a blessing, rather than as a catastrophe, if we look upon it as an opportunity to prove the supremacy of spiritual fact in the teeth of fierce opposition.

"And the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth." The challenge of the flood keeps our thought up, from a determination not to be overwhelmed by the sense of defeat and failure. That is true of any time of crisis in human affairs, but mere human will may crack under this strain, whereas divine ideas can stand endless opposition because they are by their very nature unopposable. In Revelation 12 the great red dragon "cast out of his mouth water as a flood" in order to swallow up the woman who had brought forth the man child; but the earth swallowed up the flood, and the woman was given "two wings of a great eagle," in order to fly into the wilderness, where she had "a place prepared of God," and where she was "nourished . . . from the face of the serpent." So the flood serves only to give wings to our understanding, and causes us to experience the tender provision of infinite good for our well-being.

"And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." What we understand of spiritual perfection very often brings the opposing evidence of physical sense down upon us in torrents of abuse. This evidence screams that a certain evil is an inescapable material fact before our eyes;

that it paints itself forcibly in our own consciousness, so that we feel its unpleasantness; that our animal instincts accept it and expand it; and that it has foundations, which give it continuity and perpetuity. For instance, someone may appear hateful; you agree as to their hatefulness; you indulge in hating them; and you do not see how you can stop hating them. The children of Israel had to face a similar fourfold barrage of materialism when they were in the wilderness for forty years, and Jesus faced and overcame it when he was in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights. Noah, too, proved the substancelessness of this flood of assertion: we read that all flesh was destroyed and that "Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

The Ark Rests

"And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged"—the power of God forced the waters to abate. The wind set all opposition at nought. Isaiah says, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him;" that standard irresistibly arrests the development of every flood.

"And the ark rested in the seventh month . . . upon the mountains of Ararat." "Ararat" means "holy land." There we have an echo of the seventh day of creation, the day of divine rest in the "beauty of holiness." The ark could rest because it had fulfilled its purpose, and so it brought a sense of heaven on earth.

The Raven and the Dove

"And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth." Noah wanted to know whether the flood had really gone down; and we can never leave our ark until we do know that the floods of trouble have ceased to leave any trace whatsoever.

Sometimes, like Noah, we make the initial mistake of sending out a raven,—an unclean, predatory bird, and an object of superstition,—but he brings no reliable information and never returns. His opinion as to how things are going is swayed only by the changing face of circumstances. The raven state of thought is haphazard, not founded upon the certainty of rocklike fact, and therefore may be full of cheerfulness at one moment and full of depression the next. It may muddle through, but no credit is due to it if things come right in the end.

At other times we have the wisdom to send forth a dove, a symbol of that state of thought which acquaints itself intelligently with God, and is then at peace, waiting for the fulfillment of the divine purpose. The first time we send her forth, she finds "no rest for the sole of her foot,"— she cannot find any tangible evidence of the divine fact in some condition, but she still retains her hope and faith. So Noah pulls her back into the ark (he lets his peace return to him) and waits "yet other seven days;" just so, when we first meet with no response, we resolve to add quietly to our understanding of the spiritual. Next time she is sent forth, the dove comes back in the evening (when thought is at rest) with an olive leaf in her beak, showing

that the flood has subsided a great deal; this time some improvement is definitely manifest. This is not the moment to relax our efforts, however, with the hope that everything will go on improving of its own accord, and so we wait yet another period of "seven days," while we seek the spiritual with renewed sincerity, and then we send the dove forth the third time. She does not return to us now, because she can find a place for the sole of her foot—human consciousness and fundamental spiritual fact have coincided.

We can see in very small compass the same three stages in Jesus' healings—for instance, in the story of the healing of the blind man, recorded in Mark 8: "And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly." The man's blindness corresponds to the dove finding no place for the sole of her foot. His partial restoration of sight, so that he can see "men as trees, walking," corresponds to the return of the dove with the olive branch—a greatly improved state, but still not perfectly healed. Finally, the man sees "every man clearly"—the dove does not have to return. This is the only recorded occasion on which Jesus was not at once wholly successful, and it is encouraging to us, because it shows in slow motion, as it were, the method which Jesus used and which is available to each one of us. These sendings forth of the dove require great patience and perseverance, but there is no achievement without unremitting effort and unselfed love.

All the symbols in this story of Noah are marvelously exact. The fact that they are picturesque puts them at a discount in our rather prosaic age, but in this very quality lies their memorableness and their universality.

Noah Removes the Covering of the Ark

At last the flood is over: "the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry." At this point spiritual strength can lay down its weapons and enjoy the peace of victory. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

Then Noah builds an altar and sacrifices to the Lord, who "smelled a sweet savour." That is a primitive way of indicating that gratitude for deliverance brings an atmosphere of blessing into our lives.

The Bow in the Cloud

God next blesses Noah and his sons, and tells them: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." A covenant is then established with Noah, and the symbol of it is a bow which is to appear in the cloud; this is to betoken that God will not again bring a flood of waters upon the earth. The rainbow is made up of seven distinct colours, and "seven" was always used as a symbol of perfection by the Hebrew writers. So there is always a bow in the cloud if we look to the seven days of creation, those "seven pillars of wisdom," upon which all reality is founded. If we are only alert enough to keep our gaze steadfastly on that bow whenever a cloud of trouble appears on our horizon, then we can forestall the trouble, and we need never be overwhelmed by it—it will prove abortive. As Paul says,

"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape."

If a cloud creeps up on us, it is only because we have failed to see the bow in that cloud. The bow is always there for those who have eyes to see it. Again and again this story of Noah brings out the necessity for watchful discernment, immediately separating from all that is not purely good and abiding in the ark until the flood dies down.

Ham, Shem, and Japheth

Noah did not always see the bow in the cloud, because we next hear of his relapse: he got drunk and was "uncovered within his tent." The little story that follows brings out very plainly the characters of Noah's three sons,—Ham, Shem, and Japheth,—and those three sons again represent three stages of thought in Noah's experience. We have already seen this three-tiered symbol in the story of Adam, appearing as Cain, Abel, and Seth. We might call it the "bad-better-best" strain which runs throughout the Scriptures in various forms.

Ham, which means "heat" or "black," saw "the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without." This unpleasant state of thought prides itself on "not glossing over the facts," though all it is ever doing is subscribing to mortal belief as fact. The Ham state of mind in us can only see the bestial in others and then loves to talk about it.

But then Noah's other two sons, Shem and Japheth, came along and adopted a very different method. They "took a garment, and laid it upon

both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness." They were looking "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," and they were reflecting in some measure the profoundly important fact that God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and [cannot] look on iniquity." Shem and Japheth represent that which is able to see beyond the temporary evil to the underlying good in every individual. On the human plane the qualities of compassion, affection, and tolerance achieve this, but within limits; even the kindest heart or the sternest sense of duty can be faced with conditions which seem beyond the power of redemption by human love. But love of the caliber of Jesus' is rooted not merely in nobility of sentiment, but in an unshakable understanding of that universal Principle of good which reflects itself and proves that the real man can be used only as a channel for good and can never be induced to act as a medium for evil.

Jesus may be said to have "gone backward" with a "garment" on his "shoulders" when he was confronted by the woman taken in adultery, just as Shem and Japheth were confronted by Noah's backsliding infidelity to his ideals. Jesus "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them [her Ham-like accusers] not." He forced them to withdraw from their condemnation, because he himself saw, not barefaced impurity, but womanhood clothed with purity, and he saw it so fully that he was able to say, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more," knowing that she would justify his scientific compassion.

The Story of Babel

The story of Babel in Chapter 11 also forms part of the second thousand-year period. "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech." The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "language" as "A vocabulary and way of using it;" is not that what the Bible offers us—the ability to learn the meaning of spiritual ideas and how to use them? What more could we ask? Yet what we next read of is the grandiose attempt to make a city and tower on earth to ape the grandeur and order of spiritual ideas in their infinite relationships. No organization for world peace can hope to be successful if merely founded upon community of material interests, instead of upon the common God-given rights of man.

The first fatal mistake made by the builders in this story of Babel is the use of brick (made from clay, and so symbolizing Adamic beliefs, which can never be erected into a unified structure), instead of stone (symbolizing substantial spiritual facts). The second mistake is the use of slime instead of mortar; no abiding harmony comes about if there is any taint of hypocrisy, but only through the unselfed love which sees that every man has his place and function in the divine order. The result of these two fatal mistakes is confusion (the meaning of "Babel"), misunderstanding, and division.

The obvious contrast is afforded by the picture in Acts of the apostles all working together in mutual understanding and love, without any self-aggrandizement, because although they had "diversities of gifts," they recognized that it was "the same Spirit" which had implanted these gifts individually.

Today we can see that no organization for world peace can hope to be successful if it is founded merely on human egotism, but if it is based on a humble recognition of the common God-given rights of man and of each nation's unique contribution to the whole.

A Summary

This second thousand-year period is so profound in its detail that it is impossible here to do more than just indicate its richness. But what are the outstanding points of this story of Noah and the ark, and how do they apply to us?

1. Every time we have enough spiritual strength and purity not to find the "daughters of men" fair, we see the basic unreality of some evil element in our experience; as soon as we see that, we separate ourselves from its inevitable self-destruction by constructing an ark of understanding.
2. By entering that ark we prove the supremacy and substance of spiritual fact in spite of the flood,—the worst forces that evil can muster against us.
3. This experience brings it home to us that there is always an orderly way out, which unfolds greater and greater spiritual good.

At first it may seem too difficult even to make an ark; it is not easy, but the alternative is victimization by the flood. As we make it a habit to enter our ark, it becomes progressively easier and more natural to us, and nothing brings greater blessing.

CHAPTER FOUR

ABRAHAM

THE Bible indicates the fundamental Science of being,—that which can be learned systematically and proved to be basic truth. The more we study it with humility and in an ordered way and thus let its Science unfold to us, the more we appreciate the Bible as embodying the answer to every questioning. It is a textbook for all time, because its symbols are irrepressibly fresh, and it meets our need whether we are looking for the most transcendent vision of spiritual things or for relief from some situation which seems desperately difficult.

In our opening chapter we looked at the basis of the Bible,—the story of the seven days of creation, which presents in a nutshell the nature of the infinite as it appears to humanity. Then, in the second chapter, we saw something of the significance of the Adam story, which occupies the first thousand-year period of Bible history. In the third chapter we considered the second thousand-year period, with the story of Noah's deliverance from the flood illustrating the second day of creation as a dynamic factor in our experience. Now we come to the story of Abraham, which ushers in the third thousand-year period; it illustrates the third day of creation, in which the dry land first appeared and brought forth vegetation. The appearing of dry land symbolizes the formation of definiteness in our thinking,—definiteness about spiritual facts,—and that must always bear fruit.

The story of Abraham is one which comes home to us very forcibly every time we find that our spiritual aspirations set us on a new and more worthwhile course. It describes the returning springtime in our lives, when

discontent with the old limitations pushes up the seeds of progress into strong young shoots. It is the story of the fulfillment of a great vision in spite of all handicaps and mistakes. The setbacks and temptations which Abraham encountered were always due to his own fear or laziness or impatience or sensuality. And so the record is useful for us in pointing out the dangers which beset a progressive purpose once it has taken its first definite shape in our thought and before it is fulfilled in its perfection.

"Get Thee Out of Thy Country, . . ."

We first hear of Abram (he was not given the name Abraham till later) towards the end of Genesis n; there we read of Abram's father, Terah, taking him and his wife (Sarai) and his nephew (Lot), and leaving Ur of the Chaldees for the land of Canaan. Ur was a centre of the cult of the Babylonian moon-god and the Chaldees were keen astrologers, and so it is as if we to-day should reject the current superstitions of our time and the systems of science, theology, and medicine offered by human intellectualism and set out to find some definite understanding of the basic Principle of our being. But instead of going forward into Canaan, the four of them went as far as Haran and then stayed there. There was no more progress till Terah died. "Terah" means "delay" or "wandering," and it is never until we lose the tendency to procrastinate and be indefinite that we can make real strides. If we say, "Oh, there's no hurry—let's be satisfied with the little progress we have made," then we soon settle down into carpet-slipper ways.

But it was a divine demand which had come to Abram, and so it had to be obeyed. That demand was, first, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy

kindred, and from thy father's house." The "country" in which we all find ourselves is mortality,—the universal belief that we are born into a physical body, live in it for a brief period of mixed pleasure and pain, and then die. What a pathetic notion of a being who can think about eternity and infinity, or who can love unselfishly without regard to his own survival! But the truth about man, as the Bible puts it, is that he is made in the image and likeness of God. That leads us to ask, What is the nature of God ? and the answer is first summarized in the story of the seven days of creation at the beginning of Genesis and then illustrated throughout the Scriptures. Jesus showed constantly that it is possible to use an understanding of man's relation to God to disprove the lie of mortality. So each one of us needs to see that in our true state of being we are not imprisoned in a corporeality and liable to a thousand ills, but eternally existent as incorporeal expressions of the infinite good. How could an idea of infinite good be confined to one place or have a beginning and an ending? To think that it could is as absurd as to think that $2 + 2 = 4$ suddenly came into being or is not always available.

Who are our "kindred"? They are the collection of beliefs which we have in common with some of our fellow-beings. Each of us thinks that we are of a certain race and colour and nationality; that we are either male or female, and of a certain social class and occupation; that we are a certain number of years old, and that we are living in a particular historical period. We believe that those classifications colour our whole lives and make us behave according to them. You hear people saying, for instance, "Mr. So-and-so is a typical elderly English professor." This kind of false label is highly adhesive unless we accurately identify ourselves as fundamentally quite apart from it.

Our "father's house" which, like Abram, we also have to leave is a symbol of our personal inheritance,—the belief that our particular bodies and characters have much the same advantages and disadvantages as those of our parents and ancestors. And yet if the fact of our being is entirely apart from the belief of having been born through sex into a physical body, then there is no necessity to pay the penalty for that belief. "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" says Malachi, and Paul writes, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him,"—prove our sonship in the face of all opposing evidence,—"that we may be also glorified together."

"Thou Shalt Be a Blessing"

So the demand on Abram was, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:"—the purpose of life is surely to let our own individual sense of things be such that it is a blessing:—"and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee:"—if we start from the right individual standpoint, then all things in our experience can only "work together for good," as Paul says:—"and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." What a majestic vision! Abram saw that to realize the truth about ourselves is to see our individual, collective, and universal significance. This, then, was the shining inspiration of all Abram's journeyings. We soon hear that he and his wife and nephew and household "went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

As we leave "country" and "kindred" and our "father's house"—and we don't leave them in a moment, but only through persistently rejecting them—we are ushered towards the "land" of our true selves. Instead of seeing ourselves in the light of the world's labels, we begin to see ourselves as God sees us,—as filled with the intelligent thinking symbolized by the light of the first day of creation; filled with the discernment of abiding good symbolized by the firmament of the second day; filled with the certainty symbolized by the dry land of the third day; filled with the sense of right relationship symbolized by the solar system of the fourth day; filled with the unlimited abundance symbolized by the birds and fishes of the fifth day; filled with the dominion symbolized by the man of the sixth day; and filled with the peace of perfection symbolized by "and he [God] rested on the seventh day." This new sense of ourselves is nothing less than revolutionary.

Abram in Egypt Disowns His Wife

Soon after this great vision, Abram "builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord;" his sense of God had become much more definite to him. But he allowed fear to get the better of him when a severe famine caused him to go down into Egypt: there he told his wife Sarai that she must pass as his sister, because she was so fair that the Egyptians would kill him in order to have her for themselves.

What does this signify to us in our journeying towards the "promised land" of our true identity? If we let there be a "grievous famine" of spiritual vision in our thinking, so that we see only the want and woe evidenced by the physical senses, then we go down into the paganism of "Egypt" and

become afraid to identify ourselves fully with our ideal. "Wife" in the Bible stands for the best to which a man is wedded in his thinking, – his highest sense of things. And so we sometimes haven't the moral courage to admit that we are intimately associated with our "wife", we imagine that we shall lose something if it is known we have a wonderful spiritual ideal, and therefore we minimize its relation to us.

The result in this case was that Sarai was taken into Pharaoh's house – and in consequence material riches were showered upon Abram; but "what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Pharaoh and his household were smitten by the Lord with diseases because of Sarai –their materialism couldn't stand the ever-present rebuke of a high ideal – and so eventually Pharaoh demanded of Abram why he hadn't told then that Sarai was his wife, and then he had them both sent away. They at length got back to the altar which Abram had previously set up; in other words, every time we falter in identifying ourselves definitely with our ideal, because we fear the consequences, we temporarily forfeit the respect we might have won and we only have to retrace our steps.

When blind Bartimeus wanted to attract the attention of Jesus (see Mark 10:46-52), he refused to put off (unlike Abram in this incident) he had the courage to be persistent in identifying himself with his highest vision of man and his God-given rights, although "many charged him that he should hold his peace," probably feeling that his was a hopeless case. This only intensified his appeals, until finally "Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called," and Bartimeus, "casting away his garment," – his sense of identity, –"rose, and came to Jesus." He then asked that he might receive

his sight, –a true perception of God and man and everything in the universe, – and he was healed.

Abram Separates From Lot

The next important step in our progress comes every time we separate from Lot, as Abram had to do." And Lot also, which went with Abram had flocks, and herds and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great." Abram decided that as there wasn't room for both of them they must separate, and so he invited Lot to choose which way he he would go. Lot chose the well-watered plain, be cause it looked like the " garden of the Lord" (the garden of Eden, is a symbol of the physical body, as we have already seen) and like Egypt (materialism and paganism again); he pitched his tent towards Sodom, the men of which were "wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly."

We find our spiritual progress constantly impeded y the easy-going "Lot",--a natural sponge for absorbing the evidence of the senses. Lot loves to gossip away the hours, filling our minds with his "flocks, and herds, and tents," – keeping our thoughts busy in mere speculation about pleasure or pain in the future, in remembering pleasant or unpleasant experiences in the past and in ruminating on our own or other peoples feelings in the present. This accomplishes nothing in the right direction and crowds out definite thinking based on God, but it appears so harmless that we don't really see the extent of the damage which Lot had done to our progress until we resolve to give our sense of fundamental realities the room it

needs. Then we see that Lot is not only just lazy, but is also heading towards the self-indulgence of Egypt and towards Sodom, or sensuality.

"Look From the Place Where Thou Art"

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." It was only when Abram had separated himself from Lot that he could rise to the point of seeing that he could inherit as much of the "land" of his true self as he saw clearly. Lot , keeps our vision of that "land" blurred.

How can we today look "northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward" from the place where we are in thought? The four points of the compass are a Biblical symbol of four profoundly important aspects of the infinite as it appear to us. By means of them we can always plot our course to a definite conclusion. The first impulse of any value in solving a problem is the search for an answer, the second turning-point is when the answer dawns on us individually; the third is our acceptance and use of that answer; and the fourth is when we forget that there was ever a question, or ever a search , ever a mental conflict of any kind. The Bible is full of wonderful natural illustrations of this fourfold process.

To take a simple example: in Matthew's story of the birth of Jesus there is first the diligent seeking of the wise men for the young child; the "the star which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was." Then the wise men "rejoiced with exceeding

great joy" at the sight of the star and offered gifts to the child, who was taken down into Egypt to avoid being slaughtered according to Herod's decree; and finally Joseph and Mary and the child could all go back to Israel because "they are dead which sought the young child's life." This symbolizes what happens every time we turn to the Science of reality when faced by some unhappy state of affairs. First we seek diligently for an answer in what we know of God; then the specific answer we need is shown to us as unmistakably as the young child's dwelling was identified for the wise men; then we not only rejoice in that answer, but we also use it in practical ways to overcome our difficulty—we take the young child into Egypt, and thus prove that the spiritual fact is supreme over materialism; and finally the spiritual truth we have learned becomes so normal and natural to us that there is no longer any opposition to it—"they are dead which sought the young child's life."

So Abram was to look "northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward," and he was further told to arise and travel the length and breadth of the land which he saw. When we have taken our bearings according to the highest that we know of God, we then have to familiarize ourselves with the new realm which opens out before us.

Abram Rescues Lot and Is Blessed by Melchizedek

Chapter 14 is concerned with a story of warfare between four kings and five other kings near the Dead Sea; in this warfare Lot (who was now living in Sodom) became embroiled and was taken prisoner. Abram then had to go with a body of men and rescue him by defeating the enemy kings.

We have seen that Abram stands for a clear vision of our true self, whereas Lot stands for a drifting, worldly sense of things. The Abram in us may separate himself from Lot but until he can finally repudiate Lot altogether as part of his make-up, he always has to rescue him by exercising dominion over the sorry conditions to which Lot falls victim. It is no use ignoring the plight in which our foolish complacency lands us; instead we have to face the issue decisively and turn the experience into a blessing.

This is exactly what happened with Abram, because as soon as he had delivered Lot, he was met by Melchizedek, king of Salem (which means "peace"), who brought him bread and wine and then blessed him. The writer of Hebrews describes Melchizedek as "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God." This writer saw that Abram realized at this point his own eternal spiritual selfhood, which is all that enables us to have dominion over the effects of the Lot state of thought.

Mark records that Jesus was once in a ship and "there were .also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Jesus himself was unworried by the storm, but he arose and rebuked it for the sake of those around him, just as Abram rescued Lot from being overwhelmed in the storm of sensual conflict. In the same way, we can begin to use our dominion as "children of God" to bring

peace into conditions stirred up by the wind,—by anything which seems overwhelmingly violent,—and moved by tides of fear.

Abram Promised His Own Heir

The story goes on that the Lord appeared to Abram in a vision and said, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Then Abram said, "Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir." But the answer came, "This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."

If we are alive to it, this is a promise which is fulfilled for every one of us. The promise is that the right idea of any situation will be born to us individually. So we need never imagine that we are not spiritually-minded enough to have our own "heir;" nor should we ever be content with someone else's right idea of the situation or with a merely intellectual sense of a spiritual truth which we don't yet feel within ourselves. When we are sincerely seeking the solution to some difficulty, we may first of all discern that we need to bring into our experience some particular aspect of the divine nature, but this is often an acknowledgment by the head of a truth which we don't at once feel with the heart. But always, if we are in earnest, the idea will be born to us in our own way and with a certainty and a joy which are unmistakable.

It is something like learning to ride a bicycle: at one time it seems to the child that he will never get the knack, although he knows what he is supposed to do, and then suddenly there comes the moment when he first

gets the feeling of it and can keep his balance as he goes forward. Then the ability to ride a bicycle is his for good.

To Abram the stumbling-block was that Sarai was barren; we are told that right at the beginning of the story. The symbol of a barren woman and a childless couple recurs throughout the Bible: think of the Shunammite woman and her husband (II Kings 4) and of the parents of Samson (Judges 13) and of Samuel (I Samuel 1) and of John the Baptist (Luke 1). To all these came the promise of a son, and its fulfillment in spite of every human impediment.

The Lord now said to Abram, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." Stars are a wonderful symbol of distinctness and infinity.

Abram's sacrifice of animals and birds at this point indicates that in order to inherit the "land" of our true identity we have to give up a merely physical sense of ourselves as endowed with animal propensities. He also had a vision of the four hundred years' oppression and bondage which his descendants were to endure—another symbol of the fact that the inheritance of good does not come about without a struggle. But Jesus said to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"—and individually we too have to overcome all mortal beliefs.

Abram Takes Hagar to Wife

Abram was still very conscious that Sarai had borne him no children, and so he accepted her advice to have a child by her Egyptian maid Hagar. The result was friction between Hagar and her mistress, and Hagar was told that her child would be a wild man with his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him.

Sometimes we cease to trust that our ideal can possibly conceive and bear us a "child," and discouragement and impatience turn us to some human expedient—with unsatisfactory results. We try to substitute a forced birth through dubious means—an Egyptian slave could have been a symbol only of a grossly material point of view—for the birth which always comes about in due order when we resist the temptation to forsake our ideal.

Jesus said to the Pharisees when they tried to get him to show them a sign from heaven, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." Because he prayed to the Lord, Jonah was vomited out onto the dry land after three days and nights in the whale's belly. If we look for a "sign," our affection for spiritual things becomes adulterous and we are really putting the cart before the horse. But if we have a pure affection for and understanding of the eternal foundations of health or happiness or whatever it is we long for, then we inevitably come out onto the "dry land" of definite salvation, both divinely and humanly. In other words, the cart comes after the horse of its own accord when our love for spiritual ideas is not just "cupboard love," and we trust those ideas to care for us, not necessarily as we outline, but in the way that is divinely right.

God's Covenant with Abraham

In Genesis 17 we read of the everlasting covenant which God made with Abram and his descendants; a sure sense of relationship was established between God and them. God promised that Abram would be "exceeding fruitful," and in token of this he was told that his name was no longer to be Abram ("exalted father") but Abraham ("father of many nations"). When we begin to see that there is a definite and ever-present relationship between ourselves and God (the fundamental Principle of our being), then our sense of our purpose in life expands immeasurably. Our vision of the truth about ourselves is bound to multiply, because it enables us to see more and more of the truth about all things.

It is interesting that Abram didn't receive his new name until he "fell on his face,"—until he had the genuine humility which is willing to give up every vestige of identity not based on the divine nature.

Abraham's obligation under this new covenant was to circumcise every man child, including all his slaves. Paul saw very clearly that this rite was only a symbol of inward purification; he said, "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter."

Sarai's name was also changed—to Sarah—and she was promised a son. Sarai means "Jah [Jehovah] is prince," whereas Sarah means "princess." Abraham was beginning to add womanhood to his sense of God, and that sense will always enable our ideal to conceive a son for us. Luke tells us in Chapter 13 of his Gospel that Jesus once healed a woman who had had "a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no

wise lift up herself." Jesus described her as "a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound," and he said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity"—he loosed her from any sense that her womanhood was unable to express itself fully. Abraham had the same sort of experience with his own sense of womanhood, symbolized by his wife.

God also made provision for Ishmael,—Abraham's child by Hagar. He was to be the father of a great nation. If we are in earnest, then even if we make a mistake, the consequences will be cared for and will finally prove a blessing.

Three Men at Abraham's Tent

As Abraham was sitting in the doorway of his tent at noon, he "lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My Lord, . . ." There were three men, but Abraham addressed them as "My Lord"—a wonderful symbol, as we shall see, of the threefold nature of the infinite, which is always the One. Abraham hastened to fetch his guests water and bread and begged them to rest themselves under the tree and to "comfort [their] hearts." He then set before them butter and milk and "a calf tender and good," which he had had dressed by a young man. All these are symbols of the fresh, young sense of motherhood which was coming to Abraham and which enabled him to welcome and nourish a full sense of God in his thought.

The purpose of the visit was to announce to Abraham that Sarah was indeed going to have a son, Isaac. Sarah laughed at this because it

seemed impossible on account of her age, but she was to find that God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Her bitter laughter was to turn into the laughter of real joy; "Isaac" means "laughter."

Why should the essential nature of the infinite be threefold? Because, in order to be complete, it must embody fatherhood, motherhood, and sonship. It must be creative and sustaining; it must be conceptive and a comforter; and it must have a perfect offspring. Think what a good symbol we have of this in every home where the father provides the income and the wise guidance, the mother cares for and loves unstintingly every member of the family, and the children respond to their parents' provision and care by being healthy, happy, and intelligent.

And so it suddenly comes to us as clear as the noonday as we meditate on the nature of the infinite—this is what happened with Abraham—that the only reason why anything good takes place in our experience is that the eternal Father is always revealing to the seeker useful ideas of Himself; that the all-loving Mother is forever fulfilling the divine purpose, which covers all human needs; and that the perfect Son is continually expressed in the acknowledgment of this Father and Mother. It is only the dense blindness of mortality which beholds all this so dimly that it sees for the most part lack, fear, and victimization.

Sodom To Be Saved Even For Ten Righteous

Next comes a little story of how Abraham interceded with the Lord for Sodom, the city notorious for sin. He begged that Sodom might be saved if there were fifty righteous men in the city; then if there were forty-five; then

thirty; then twenty; and then just ten. The Lord agreed each time to save Sodom for the few righteous. This symbolizes that whatever is of good in the worst situations will be saved, and that if we have only a very small understanding of spiritual things, it will never be unavailing if we use it.

We read in II Kings 4 that when a widow came to Elisha and told him that her husband (who had been a member of the prophetic order) was dead and that her sons were going to be taken as slaves by her creditor, Elisha asked her what she had in the house; she answered, "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil"—oil was used for cooking and for light. Elisha thereupon told her to borrow empty vessels from her neighbours and fill them with this oil when she had shut the door upon herself and her sons. She found that she could go on pouring the oil until she had filled all the vessels. Then Elisha told her to go and sell the oil to pay her debt and use the rest to live on. If only we will use what we already have in our consciousness of the oil we need! That oil signifies all that we have learned of God through reason and revelation, and the way to use it is to pour it fearlessly into our thoughts of everything around us. As we do that, we find that we have a regular income of ideas and can cancel all debts to what Peter calls our "adversary the devil," who "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

The Two Angels and the Last of Lot

"And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them." He persuaded them to stay the night with him, and did his best to keep at bay all the men of Sodom, who clamored for intercourse with the two strangers. Lot was

nearly overwhelmed, but the two angels pulled him into the house with them, shut the door, and struck the Sodomites with blindness. The only way they could get the still easy-going Lot to leave the city, which was to be burned, was to take him by the hand and bring him out themselves. All this was done for Abraham's sake, but even so Lot couldn't finally be saved. He was told not to look back towards Sodom, but his wife disobeyed and was turned into a pillar of salt. The last we hear of Lot is that he was duped into incest with his daughters, who made him drunk.

Now, this is a story of what happens in our experience as our ideal begins to bring forth for us. At this point we have to repudiate Lot; however anxious we are to avoid doing so, we are forced to see that his outlook is a completely stagnant one without a spark of real life, and finally that he is nothing but a mesmerized absorption in the things of the body.

We begin to see that Lot stands for all the manifestations of sex, which is basically the deep-rooted belief that man is imprisoned in a physical body and constituted in such a way that he seeks satisfaction through contact with other physical personalities. It is this belief which makes mortals full of self-consciousness and self-advertisement, full of loneliness and dissatisfaction, full of a sense of inferiority, and of resentment when they fail to draw attention to themselves in the way they would wish. The sex belief gives free play to the male instinct to be dominant and aggressive and to the female instinct to be subtle, seductive, and possessive. But the whole belief is one of blindness,—blindness to everything that the "two angels" represent.

The "two angels" are the right idea of manhood and womanhood. The more we entertain these angels, the more we see that it is our birthright to enjoy both manhood and womanhood; then we refuse to let the sex belief degrade us to the level of animals and blind us to the wonderful truth about universal manhood and womanhood, identified both in our individual selves and in happy relationships which bring deep and abiding satisfaction.

The Scriptural writers symbolize manhood and womanhood elsewhere by Michael and Gabriel, the two angels who appear in the Books of Daniel and Revelation and in Luke's Gospel. Michael represents true manhood; he strengthened Daniel and confirmed him in the truth, and in Revelation he led the victorious hosts of heaven against the great red dragon. Gabriel, on the other hand, represents true womanhood; he came swiftly to Daniel in order to give him "skill and understanding," and brought to Zacharias and to Mary glad tidings of birth and blessings to come and dispelled their fears. The vision and strength of manhood and the lovely tenderness of womanhood – both can be ours if we choose, because both are ours inherently, although hidden in varying degrees by the lies of the sex belief.

The Birth of Isaac

The next important incident is the actual birth of Isaac, the name which means "laughter." Sarah said, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me" – that which is divinely natural seems joyfully miraculous on earth . But it is divinely natural that there should be the birth of an Isaac for every Abraham, because the sincerely seeking thought must bear fruit. Isaiah writes, "For as the rain cometh sown, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it

bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

"Cast our this Bondwoman and Her Son"

When Abraham made a great feast at Isaac's weaning, Sarah noticed Hagar's son Ishmael mocking, and so she told Abraham, "Cast our this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwomen shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." Abraham was at first loath to do this, because Ishmael was his son, but God told him to obey Sarah.

Taken literally this would indicate great harshness, but its deeper meaning is that when a "son" is born to us in God's due time and through adherence to our highest spiritual ideal, then our proper course is to get rid of the mocking reminder of our past mistakes, The past always mocks us, but the remedy once we have profited by its lessons is to rejoice quite freely in our newborn "son" and see that our mortal history has nothing to do with our eternal being as immortal idea; then we cease to pay the penalty for a mere record of dreams, just as we never go on paying the penalty for a miscalculation in arithmetic once we have corrected it.

John wrote in Revelation, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." – symbolized here by Isaac, for what is our "son" but our sense of heaven and earth, created through our understanding of God? – "for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away," –Ishmael cannot be the heir alongside Isaac, our mistakes need never remain with us once we have

learned from them, – " and there was no more sea" – no more uncertainty, but only the flourishing "dry land."

Again we see in this story of Abraham how our mistakes are cared for, because when Hagar was banished with Ishmael and was weeping in the wilderness at the thought of her child starving to death, an angel told her, "fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise lift up the lad ... for I will make him a great nation." Then God opened Hager's eyes so that she saw a well of water and was able to give her son something to drink. So an understanding of God redeems every mistake, enables us to exalt our sense of it. And opens our eyes to the inexhaustible source of ideas (the " well of water") forever at hand to quench all dissatisfaction and regret.

The Temptation to Sacrifice Isaac

Now comes the story of a temptation; God (or rather, Abraham's sense of God) told Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, but just as he was about to do so , his hand was stayed and God told him that as he had not withheld his only son he must not sacrifice him. Instead Abraham sacrifices a ram which he saw caught in a thicket by his horns.

When we are perfectly willing to give up our highest human concept of good at this moment, because we love above all the spiritual fact which it represent, then we only find that we don't have to give up anything good .All w have to give up is our confused sense – a ram caught in a a thicket by his two horns – that the spiritual fact can ever be without a representative. If it could be, then there would be a vacuum, and we

should be subscribing to the notion that "God's in His heaven," but "all wrong with the world," and that that is how God wishes it to be!

Religious belief often makes people think that suffering is more holy than happiness, and that in order to show our love for God we must be patient martyrs and go with out affection or without love, or without health, or without gaiety or without adequate supply. We sometimes think that we should expect only a little bit of heave and a whole lot of hell, whereas we can always be expectant of infinite good when we see that divine ideas must be identifiable here and now at every level of experience, Our thought just has to be flexible enough – like Abraham's – not to cling desperately to our present sense of heaven on earth. Then we are never deprived of anything we need, because we see it as a good human expression of the divine fact – nothing more and nothing less.

Jesus constantly had to deal with a similar belief, – the belief that the Sabbath day was on of repression; healing on the Sabbath day was looked upon askance as too much like good to be justifiable or respectable! Yet the Sabbath day was instituted to commemorate God resting in the perfection of His creation. That is why Jesus restored a withered hand on the Sabbath day; his conscious resting in the perfection of God's creation set free a sense of God-given worth in the man, and this in its turn could not help but impel a healing of his hand, for the withered condition of the hand was solely an expression of the dried-up sense of manhood in thought, since the greater controls the lesser. The divine Motherhood of the seventh day sense of things meets our need for wholeness and

fulfillment at every level, as Abraham found in this incident. God is Love, not a being who strictly rations His kindness!

A Summary

After the account of the temptation to sacrifice Isaac, the story of Abraham merges into the story of Isaac. So if we now think of the story of Abraham as a whole, what is the main impression it leaves with us? That when we resolve to leave the mortal sense of ourselves in order to realize more of our true selfhood, then that resolve inevitably bears tangible fruit—in other words, the "dry land" of definite purpose begins to appear in our thought and then to bring forth. Even though we may become disheartened and make mistakes, that purpose cannot be frustrated if we are sincerely striving to follow the leadings of the divine demand, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee."

The Mary Baker Eddy Science Institute

July 2010

This month, we present the last three chapters of THE BIBLE FOR EVERYMAN by Rosalie Maas. Next month, will begin Gordon Brown's "Christian Science Non-Sectarian".

Enjoy!

CHAPTER FIVE

ISAAC and JACOB

MORE and more one appreciates the Bible as a teacher and guide and friend. It never loses the standpoint seven days of creation, which begins the Bible, we have something beyond all price: that which brings an understanding of God, the infinite, within our reach and so enables us to "take up serpents." Those "serpents" are the poisonous beliefs which bind all mankind so harshly to unhappiness, ill-health, fear of humanity. It never forgets the plight of man in a world which seems painfully contradictory, but shows him in a way he can grasp—that is, through illustration—how to educate himself out of that plight through understanding God.

In the story of the seven days of creation, which begins the Bible, we have something beyond all price: that which brings an understanding of God, the infinite, within our reach and so enables us to "take up serpents" These "serpents" are the poisonous beliefs which bind all mankind so harshly to unhappiness, ill-health, fear.

Eternal Law

The Psalmist says, "Blessed is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." The story of the days of creation might be called "the law of the Lord,"—the law of spiritual fact as it appears to humanity. If we are to meditate on that law "day and night," we have to ask ourselves constantly, "What do these seven symbols teach me about the nature of the infinite? What do they mean to me in my daily life? What tyrannical false laws do they annul?" Isaiah says, "And the Lord shall utterly destroy the

tongue of the Egyptian [materialistic] sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod." In proportion as we use the "mighty wind" of the seven days of creation to smite the "seven streams" of materialism, we can go forward unmolested.

The symbol of the first day of creation is light,—the light of wisdom. Why is it that we can let wisdom guide our thoughts and actions? Because the infinite is intelligence. As we ponder this fact in humility, we no longer let the darkness fool us into believing that some huge Goliath of a difficulty is holding us at its mercy; and instead of relying upon our limited human faculties to help us, we appeal to the one source of intelligence, with the result that wisdom makes itself heard. When one switches on the light in a room, the instrument receives and radiates light at once and without effort; Isaiah says, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come,"—we have only to let the light use our thinking. First, then, we have the law of wisdom, counteracting ignorance and belief in the brain.

The symbol of the second day of creation is the firmament between the waters above and beneath, representing that which separates between the Godlike and the un-Godlike. Why is it that we can have the strength to choose between that which is good and that which is less good or not good at all? Because of the absolute purity of spiritual reality, entirely un-contaminated by the material, the evil, the self-destructive. As we reflect upon this fact, we find ourselves increasingly choosing to be patient rather than impatient, refraining from frittering and criticizing, refusing to be taken in by the apparent substance and reality of some evil. In this way we become better men and women; we don't try to force our way fanatically towards the pure spiritual status which we know to be ours divinely, but we let our developing understanding of that status bring about our decontamination step by step and show us what is nearest good under the circumstances. Secondly, then, we have the law of discernment, of abiding good, nullifying the confusion of good and evil.

The symbol of the third day of creation is the dry land appearing and bringing forth, representing that which is definite and which grows up within us. Why is it that we never doubt that we have our own identity? Because of the definiteness of the infinite, which is always appearing in beautiful spiritual forms. As we think this out, we see that that which is essentially "us" must be permanent and lovely.

The result is that we become less and less absorbed in the physical body,—how it feels and how it looks; we become less self-centered, freer from either self-love or self-condemnation. We begin to see that the motley collection of beliefs which is labeled "us" is nothing more than a garment which no longer fits us or pleases us, and so we cast it aside for the "beautiful garments" which we are divinely entitled to enjoy. They are made up of the unique blending of spiritual qualities which forms the real "us." Thirdly, then, we have the law of definite spiritual identity, superseding corporeal selfhood.

The symbol of the fourth day of creation is the solar system, representing the one universal harmony. Why is it that we can understand anything of the infinite? Because there is only one infinite, which is perfectly systematic and always makes itself clear to the systematic seeker. The despotic so-called systems of the world, on the other hand, inculcate blind belief in and blind obedience to some personal authority. Again, why is it that we can enjoy happy relationships? Because there is one central Principle governing all its ideas in harmony. As we consider this carefully and humbly, we see that we are all "but parts of one stupendous whole." Then we stop trying to make things or people work together harmoniously; instead we try to harmonize our own individual understanding with the one Principle, and this brings about right adjustment. Fourthly, then, we have the law of system and harmony, disproving false authority and unhappy relationship.

The symbols of the fifth day of creation are the birds and fishes, representing the outsoaring of limitations. Why is it that we have a sense of existence at all? Why is it that we can have a sense of vitality and abundance? Because of the infinite I AM. When we let this fact inspire us, we see that we "live, and move, and have our being" in that I AM, and therefore we can go forward unburdened by fear of the future or regret for the past, and enjoying abundance of good here and now. Then life no longer descends pathetically into impoverishment of health and interest, but becomes enriched in every direction. Fifthly, then, we have the law of life, invalidating decay and deprivation.

The symbol of the sixth day of creation is man created in the image and likeness of God and given dominion over all the earth. Why is it that we can achieve anything worthwhile—whether it be in art, engineering, or character? Because of the fact that the infinite made man like itself and the infinite is conscious of all that is true. When we recognize this, however faintly, we begin to

have dominion, because we begin to be more conscious of the fundamental truth of things. That means that we can become masters of the situation, instead of victims of circumstances. The only way we can become masters is by using a full consciousness of God to quash, however much the resistance, everything which wars against the standard of man. Most of us let laziness prevent us from getting down to this work, but sooner or later we find ourselves forced to do it, and constantly. Sixthly, then, we have the law of dominion, setting at naught all subjection.

The symbol of the seventh day of creation is God resting, having fulfilled His purpose. Why is it that we manage to have moments of peace and entire satisfaction? Because of the completeness and perfection of the infinite. Whenever we have any gratitude for this fact, we have relief from fear. Instead of imagining that anything might happen and that it will probably be unpleasant or cruel, we rest in the fact that nothing can ever separate us from the infinite motherhood and that that motherhood will take care of every situation. Finally, then, we have the law of peace and perfection, forestalling fear.

These laws are eternal facts; we already catch glimpses of them in human experience, but we can bring them consistently into operation through "prayer and fasting,"—through affirming their truth and also rejecting the illegal beliefs which would oppose them by seeing their fundamental powerlessness. That is what Jesus did throughout his mission.

The Key to the Bible

The meaning of the seven days of creation is fresher than young leaves uncurling in the spring; more irresistible than a mighty waterfall; warmer than the sun ripening fruit on a garden wall; more firmly based than mountains. When we have a real understanding of it, we can use it as the key to the whole Bible. If we make no effort to think it out and assimilate it, we fail to recognize the illustrations of those seven days throughout the Scriptures, and we run the risk of being capricious and inconsistent in interpreting the various stories. When the fundamentals are clear to us, they enrich our understanding of everything we read in the Bible, and everything we read in the Bible enriches our understanding of those fundamentals.

A great deal of valuable and interesting research is being done into the historical aspect of the Old Testament. The more research there is, the more it is found that the Old Testament is a highly untrustworthy chronicle of historical events. But this only emphasizes the fact that when the prophets in captivity edited all the sacred writings of their nation, they regarded moral and spiritual truths as vastly more important than historical accuracy. Undoubtedly they were concerned with the history of their own nation, but their primary aim was to produce a textbook of life, not a historical textbook.

The Stories of Isaac and Jacob

Bible history is divided up into distinct thousand-year periods, each one illustrating its respective day of creation. The first four chapters of this book have given an outline of the first thousand-year period, where the "light" of the seven days of creation exposed the mistiness of the common notions of man's origin; the second thousand-year period, where the "firmament" enabled Noah to separate himself from the flood of disaster by building an ark; and the beginning of the third thousand-year period, where Abraham began to see the "dry land" appearing in his own experience and giving him a definite purpose. Now, in the stories of Isaac and Jacob, we see more of the third day sense of things. We begin to see something of the meaning of the verse in Genesis which describes what happens when the dry land has appeared: "And God called the dry land Earth;. . . and God saw that it was good." We begin to see that our essential selfhood is not only definite, but definitely good. Often we have as hard a struggle to prove this as Isaac and Jacob did, because good and evil seem so intermingled in our make-up. Jacob, for instance, was two-faced and sensual, and he suffered in consequence, but because he appreciated spiritual values he was blessed again and again. That is true of all of us, and the story shows quite plainly how we can bring into our lives more blessing and less suffering,—in other words, how we can stop sinning.

A Bride for Isaac

In Genesis 24 is told the story of how Abraham decided that a wife must be found for his son Isaac. He was determined that Isaac should on no account marry a woman of the Canaanites, who were idolaters, so he sent his eldest servant to the country from which he himself came, with instructions to bring back a bride for Isaac. Abraham said that God would send an angel before the servant to prosper his way.

The Abraham in each one of us is the fatherhood sense which wants the good that it has already achieved (symbolized by Isaac) to be carried even further, and it knows that the only way to ensure this is to find a bride for that Isaac. The "bride" is a sense of our ideal selfhood so beautiful that we never want to be without it. We therefore send out a servant to find that ideal selfhood, a servant who is willing to follow the definite leadings of the divine intelligence, without intruding human will.

Abraham's servant agreed to go on this mission and left with ten camels for Nahor. "And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water." This is one of those Biblical verses wonderfully rich in symbolic meaning. The ten camels symbolize a practical sense of spiritual fact; one's practicality is often measured by the amount one can do with one's ten fingers, and "ten" symbolizes a practical sense of things throughout the Bible, notably in the Ten Commandments. So we have to let our desire to improve our present sense of ourselves kneel down beyond the impatient hubbub of human demands ("without the city") and by "a well of water," whence we can draw fresh ideas of God; the time to do this is in "the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water,"—when thought is calm and quiet and ready to be refreshed and inspired.

The servant then prayed that of all the women who came out to draw water, the one who agreed to give him water to drink and also to give drink to his camels, should be the one destined to be Isaac's bride. "Before he had done speaking," Rebekah appeared. Rebekah was Abraham's great-niece; she was "very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her," and she agreed at once to let him and his camels drink of the water she had drawn from the well. When with real humility we wait on our understanding of God for a higher sense of ourselves as being like God, that higher sense comes to us spontaneously in all its beauty, bounty, and purity.

The servant then presented Rebekah with earrings and bracelets and asked if there was room for him and the camels and his men to lodge in her father's house. She said, "We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in." The servant was full of wonder at the divine provision, and when, on arriving at the house, he had told his mission and Rebekah's brother and father had said,

"The thing proceedeth from the Lord ... Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken," he was even more overjoyed at the certainty of God's workings. Rebekah's mother and brother wanted her to wait a few days before going with Abraham's servant, but when he said, "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way," they agreed to let the decision rest with Rebekah herself; she immediately said, "I will go."

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. . . she took a veil, and covered herself... And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." Isaiah says, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."

"Bride" is used in the Bible as a symbol of joy and gladness, the very opposite of sorrow and desolation, and as a symbol of virginity and loveliness; fine raiment and jewels are often mentioned in connection with the bride. Isaiah writes, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, ... as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Our spiritual self, the truth about us, is "altogether lovely," and "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." So, like Isaac, we can always lift up our eyes to behold the charms of our true being coming to meet us and to remain with us, bringing us tender comfort where before there has been a sense of emptiness. Rebekah never stops to wonder if Isaac is worthy of her— she comes in spite of every human deficiency. She comes to bring us "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Was ever symbolism so beautiful and so clear as that of the Scriptures?

The Birth of Jacob and Esau and the Selling of the Birthright

Genesis 25 records that Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac and then died and was buried with Sarah. "And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac." Rebekah was at first barren, but when Isaac entreated the Lord for her, she conceived, and bore twins. Before they were born, she felt them struggling together in her womb— struggling is a great feature of this story of Jacob—and the Lord told her, "Two nations are in thy

womb." When Rebekah first came to Isaac, she was veiled; our ideal self is often veiled to us, and that is why we seem to have "two nations"—good and evil—in our composition.

The first to be born was Esau, who emerged red and "all over like an hairy garment." Jacob was the second, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel. Esau stands for the Adam-man (made out of the red dust) with animal propensities—passion, revenge, fear, anger, hatred; Jacob for that which tries to hold them in check. The story goes on to bring out more of the contrast between the two brothers: Esau was "a cunning hunter, a man of the field," whereas Jacob was "a plain man, dwelling in tents;" Isaac loved Esau because he was fond of venison, whereas Rebekah loved Jacob. The Jacob in us is the progressive thinker, interested in the things of God; Esau is the lust for something to quench animal longings.

One day when Esau was faint with hunger and on the point of death, he agreed to sell his birthright to Jacob for the sake of some red stew; "thus Esau despised his birthright." The son who had the birthright was the son destined to fulfill the promise to Eve that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, and the promise to Abraham that all the earth should be blessed through his seed. The Esau element never can be permanently satisfied and it sets no store by a spiritual mission. It may appear to be satisfied, because momentarily it exchanges a belief of emptiness for a belief of something which feeds its hunger, but it can never enjoy the lasting satisfaction of fulfilling a spiritual mission. If we look for satisfaction outside that, we never escape for long the aching emptiness which is hell. When the Jacob sees that the Esau has a greedy hunger which can only be an agony and a self-destroying thing, it wrests from it the "birthright." For instance, we can begin to see that some fierce appetite for physical possession—for sex, power, money, or whatever it may be—is not the "firstborn" in us, is not native to our essential selfhood, because the only permanent and developing thing about us is our spiritual longings and tendencies. In proportion as we see that, we have dominion over the animal element until it is completely supplanted.

Ezekiel emphasizes the same point when he writes of a prince of Israel, "Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same:"—Esau is not to be left with the birthright:— "exalt him that is low,"—

our little sense of spiritual things, our Jacob,— "and abase him that is high"—the Esau. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." If we are in earnest, our spiritual selfhood is forever revolutionizing our present sense of ourselves and impelling it to come into line, till there is no longer any gap between what we eternally are and what we seem to be at the moment.

Isaac Blesses Jacob

Chapter 26 tells of how the promise which God made to Abraham was confirmed to Isaac, and also of how Isaac began well-digging; he re-dug his father's wells which had been stopped up, and he dug four of his own —the first two amid opposition from the Philistines, the second two without opposition and with joy. There again we have a symbolic digest of the whole story of Isaac and Jacob, showing how the strife of opposing elements finally yields to unity, satisfaction, and harmony.

The story in Genesis 27 of how Rebekah tricked Isaac into conferring his blessing on Jacob, instead of on Esau, is very well known. But what concerns us is what it signifies to us to-day.

It is the dim-sightedness of the Isaac which makes it want Esau to have the blessing; it is so absorbed in the physical senses and their short-lived pleasures that it cannot see beyond them to spiritual values. The Rebekah, on the other hand, knows that spiritual vision is all that enjoys perpetuity and blessing, and realizes that at all costs Esau must be prevented from having the blessing. The Esau feels that it deserves something positive in return for its frantic pursuit of physical satisfaction, and so its rage and bitterness is intense when it finds itself deprived of blessing. But that is the inevitable fate of the Esau element: it can never find either blessing or satisfaction.

In Numbers 22-24 is told the story of how Balak asked the prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites for him, because they were about to invade his kingdom. Balaam agreed to come to Balak, but said, "The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak;" the result was that three times he blessed the Israelites instead of cursing them. He said, "Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he [God] hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the

Lord his God is with him." So not only do we have to acknowledge a sense of spiritual things as "firstborn" in us, but also that that sense is the only source of blessing. Nothing can reverse this.

Jacob's duplicity—symbolized in Isaac's remark, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau"—was punished by Esau's murderous hate of him, from which Rebekah told him to escape. Like Rebekah and Jacob, we often turn the Esau into an enemy to dread and fear and avoid because we try to wrench it violently out of our lives instead of letting a higher sense of ourselves render the Esau quite inoffensive. Jacob put first things first, but his human character fell far short of the ideal. He was a combination of good and evil elements, and throughout the story we find that the good elements prevailed, but at a price, because the evil elements brought fear and struggle and strife. Jacob's spiritual vision finally had to be wedded to a practical moral sense, instead of divorced from it. Jesus was trying to wed Peter's spiritual vision (which had enabled him to proclaim "Thou art the Christ") to a practical moral sense when he rebuked him for cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant.

Jacob's Ladder

Rebekah persuaded Isaac that it would be a good thing to send Jacob to her brother's house to find himself a wife, so Jacob set off for Haran. On his way he spent the night at Bethel with a stone for his pillow, and he dreamt that he saw a ladder set up on the earth and reaching up to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. "And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; . . . and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest... I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." When Jacob awoke, he felt the presence of God as a living thing, but it made him afraid; he said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Then he took the stone which he had used as a pillow, set it up as a pillar, poured oil on the top of it, and made a covenant with God.

Every time we flee from a condition of strife and hatred, we can turn that "stone," that stumbling-block, into a pillow,—something we can rest upon,—when we see that there is a "ladder" between heaven and earth, and therefore that the

sorriest conditions can be transformed. Our upward strivings are always met by the downward-coming impulses from the infinite, and then we see that they bring us abundant blessing and guide us through "the wilderness of this world." The Psalmist says, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."

John tells in Chapter 6 of his Gospel of how Jesus came to his disciples walking on the sea. They were in a ship and it was dark, and the wind was raising the waves to great heights; then suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the sea towards them, and they were afraid. But he said, "It is I; be not afraid." "Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." What a wonderful symbolic picture of the operation of salvation as it appeared to Jacob and as it can appear to us whenever we set up the ladder of intelligent thinking about God and man. The answer comes to us, walking over the sea of trouble; we receive its blessing and it stays with us to revolutionize the situation; and finally we make it a pillar in our experience,—a pillar of demonstrated eternal fact.

Rachel and Leah

Jacob eventually reached Haran; Chapter 29 describes how he came to a well with a great stone upon its mouth which had to be rolled away before the sheep could be watered. He inquired after Laban, his uncle, and was told, "behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep." As soon as he saw her, Jacob rolled away the stone (in spite of the fact that it usually required several men to move it) and watered her sheep. Then he kissed Rachel and wept for joy, and Laban brought him to his house. No wonder Jacob could roll away the stone and release the waiting water of inspiration, after his vision at Bethel and when he beheld Rachel, his bride. When manhood finds womanhood,—when strength finds grace and acceptance in itself,—nothing can prevent the flow of the inspiration which is needed.

As his wages for serving Laban, Jacob asked for Rachel, and he said that he would work for seven years to gain her; "and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." One always has to work to win Rachel, and the way to win her is through the "seven years,"— through thinking out the spiritual meaning of the seven days of creation and trying to live in accordance with it,— but that is always a joy if we love Rachel.

On his wedding night, however, Jacob was tricked by Laban into lying with Leah, Rachel's older and less beautiful sister. Laban excused himself by saying that it was the custom of the country that the firstborn must be married before a younger sister. The result was that Jacob had to work another seven years for Rachel. Leah and Rachel are yet another symbol of the contention which haunted Jacob, for they were constantly jealous of each other.

Genesis 29:31-30:24 tells of eleven sons whom Leah and Rachel and their handmaids bore for Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons in all, but the twelfth, Benjamin, was not born until later. Some of his sons were good, others bad or even vile. They formed the twelve tribes of Israel, which constitute one of the main themes of the Scriptures. They symbolize the intermingled good and evil elements in each one of us and in the world; in proportion as the operation of God's nature is understood, the evil elements pass away, to make way for the perfect "twelve," symbolized in Revelation by the twelve gates of the city foursquare which were twelve pearls of pure perfection, with the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel written on them.

Jacob and Laban

Laban not only tricked Jacob into accepting Leah before Rachel, but also tried to take advantage of him whenever he could. Jacob undoubtedly suffered at his hands, although he succeeded in outdoing him when he had made a characteristically mean bargain over some cattle. So once again Jacob's spiritual vision, his sense that God was always with him, preserved him in a situation rife with greed and envy and suspicion.

In the account of the relations between Jacob and Laban are indicated profound truths as to the nature of sin. To sin is really to indulge any sense of that which is not of the divine nature. Because Jacob had by no means proved his own selfhood to be sinless, he constantly suffered for the evil elements not eradicated in himself by finding them very apparent in his experience with others. That is always so. If we allow meanness, for instance, to flourish unchecked in ourselves, we soon find meanness in those around us and find ourselves the victim of it. Eventually we cannot evade getting down to the job of realizing that the eternal law of infinite satisfaction forever precludes meanness and forbids it to attach itself to man. Mortals are so educated to accept the evidence of

material personality as solid fact—they believe, for instance, that someone is selfish or cruel—that it takes a great deal of patience to learn to untangle the poor sinner from the sin. That is only the first step, though, because the responsibility on us is always to go further and see the nature of sin itself as a mere spider's web; it vanishes at the touch of that divine law which allows only sinlessness to be permanent fact and shows that anything else is no more than a shifting label. Jesus said, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed,"—any understanding of the third day of creation, in which the seed first appears, showing that we can see reproduced within ourselves all that is divine,—"ye might say unto this sycamine tree,"—any deep-rooted sin,—"Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea;*"—the opposite of the dry land, and a name for the home of all evil;—"and it should obey you." We never get rid of sin by merely denying its possibility and trying to gloss over it, or by forgiving it in a rush of emotion, but only by specifically reversing it in particular instances and exchanging the sense of sin for some definite sense of God's nature. This always brings about genuine reformation. There was nothing superficial about the way Jesus forgave sin; when he said to the woman taken in adultery, "go, and sin no more," he knew that the sense of satisfaction he had introduced had shown her the pointlessness of sin.

The penalty for sin is really no more than the indulgence of sin, although theology has inculcated in most of us some such theory as that sinning on Monday is punished by suffering on Wednesday and Thursday! If you hate somebody, you are filled with feelings of disgust and irritation, and that dirt in your conscious being is the price you pay for hating. Immediately you lose the sense of disgust and irritation, because you learn to love, you no longer suffer. The suffering goes on only so long as we believe that anything which is not Godlike has definite identity. $2 + 2 = 5$ has no identity in arithmetic, and we pay no penalty for having allowed it into our calculations once we have corrected it with $2 + 2 = 4$.

In II Samuel 12 it is recorded that when Bathsheba bore a son by David, who arranged her husband's death in order to have her for himself, the prophet Nathan told David that the child would die, as a punishment. While the child was still alive, David fasted and wept; but immediately it died, he "arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and

when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat." The moment we have thoroughly expelled from consciousness all the uncleanness and misery of sin, we can anoint ourselves with the sweetness of being in God's presence again; with relief we can exchange our sin-filled sense for the "garments" in which we feel divinely at ease. Thus we are restored to the heaven of normality which is what sinlessness is. If we are wise, we never leave that heaven.

To return to the story of Jacob and Laban: when the tension between them was at its height, the Lord told Jacob, "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." Rachel and Leah agreed that Jacob must do as God directed, and in any case they felt themselves strangers to their father by then. They all left secretly, for fear of Laban, and Rachel (unknown to Jacob) stole her father's images. After three days Laban realized that Jacob had fled, and after seven days he overtook him. But God appeared to Laban in a dream and told him, "Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad," and so when he reached Jacob his main concern was with his stolen images; but he never found them, because Rachel sat on them. Finally, he and Jacob made a covenant not to harm each other.

Even the weeds of the relationship between Jacob and Laban could finally be rooted up, because Laban lost his false gods and Jacob lost his fear. They both saw that their real interests were the same, and not different, and that nothing was gained by trying to harm each other. It is basically the inferiority complex which produces division among mortals, because each wants to snatch as much as possible for himself and thinks he can fill his own bucket only by emptying someone else's, as it were. But that is all superseded when we learn to look away from materialistic reckonings and find our satisfaction in enjoying the things of God as free to all.

Jacob's Struggle

Jacob was now faced with the prospect of meeting Esau, and sent messengers to him to say that he hoped to find favour with him. But when the messengers returned, they announced that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men, and so Jacob was "greatly afraid and distressed." He decided on a policy of appeasement by gifts. Often when we have some condition to meet which is full of terror for us, because we feel sure it will get the better of us, we adopt short-term conciliatory measures out of desperation. But the situation is never

fundamentally dealt with until we work it out alone with God,—until we face the issue in all honesty, alone with our understanding of the divine Principle. After that, but not before, we can always take the right step to meet the human situation. Jesus could meet the crucifixion with dignity and calm because he had already worked out the whole issue alone with God in the garden of Gethsemane; after wrestling with himself in the garden he could finally say, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

So at this point in the story of Jacob we have one of the greatest passages of Scripture: "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." We have a sense of wrestling with evil only because materialism would tempt us to resist the coming of a divine idea to our consciousness. The thing which breaks down resistance is that this divine idea causes us to feel the weakness and helplessness of that which is in opposition to it. Spiritual truth is inherently unopposable,—a fact which shows our folly in resisting it. If we are sincere, the "day" always breaks, but it would break much sooner if we didn't fight it for so long. When the light had begun to break on him, Jacob determined to get hold so definitely of the divine idea he needed that its blessing would always be with him. It is always the first step when we see the weakness of some mortal belief, but we have to go on to accept a specific spiritual fact in exchange and to make this a permanent blessing.

"And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, 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." "Jacob" means "supplanter" or "contender;" "Israel" means "ruling with God." After grappling with the belief in something opposed to the divine nature, we at last feel that our own identity is not basically a mixture of good and evil, and we feel that Godlikeness is that which holds sure sway in us. This gives us a divine poise which can withstand any storm.

"And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And

Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." When a spiritual idea blesses us, and we feel the balm of it, we can never fully put our finger on it humanly, because it is something which cannot be confined in any way, being of the nature of infinitude. All we know is that we have "seen God face to face," that we have known ourselves "even as also [we are] known" by God. The Psalmist says, "And as for me, thou [that is, God] beholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever."

Jacob's Meeting with Esau

When it came to the actual meeting with Esau (recorded in Genesis 33), Jacob could face it with dominion and find great joy in it. He "bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept." From his hard-won new understanding, Jacob could look out and behold even Esau in God's likeness; he said, "I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me."

When we have seen the nature of God as definitely as Jacob did, and felt the satisfaction of seeing ourselves aligned with that nature, then we see that the only truth about anyone we come into contact with is that he is like God and can only afford us joy, and moreover, we can prove it. Esau was transformed till he was no longer the old Esau; greedy animality gave way to "I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself" —the old Esau could never have felt that. Jacob had to urge him to accept a present—"because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." So both Jacob and Esau felt "abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house." Jesus said, "whosoever hath,"—in this case, whosoever hath a sense of divine satisfaction,— "to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath."

The Rape of Dinah

In Chapter 34 follows the story of how Jacob's daughter Dinah was raped by Shechem, the son of Hamor, who was prince of the country. When Hamor asked Jacob to give her to Shechem as his wife, Jacob's sons agreed, on condition that all the men of the city of Shechem were circumcised. But instead of keeping their side of the bargain, two of Jacob's sons by Leah, Simeon and Levi, slew all the men of the city while they were still physically unfit after being circumcised. When

he heard of the outrage, Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land."

Simeon and Levi were two of Jacob's vicious sons. When he came to review their characteristics on his death-bed, he emphasized their cruelty and exclusiveness, their anger and self-will. Simeon and Levi come into operation every time we hotly resent someone else's sins and demand revenge. Our sense of superiority is entirely without any justification whatever, because at the moment when we are gloating over the nastiness of the sin, and feeling self-righteous about it, we are infected with sin ourselves and inevitably suffer in the process. Resentment means the retaining of feelings about something unpleasant. What we need is to lose those feelings, instead of letting them continue to chafe us. The only way to get rid of resentment is to exchange the unpleasant feelings for sensitiveness to the spiritual fact of which the sin is a reversal.

The Birth of Benjamin

Chapter 35 records that God told Jacob to make an altar at Bethel, where God had already appeared to him; so Jacob told all his household, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean,, and change your garments:"—remove the "stink" of Simeon and Levi:—"and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." When Jacob had made this altar, and they left Bethel, Rachel's second son, Benjamin, was born. Rachel died in bearing him, but before she died she called him "Ben-oni," which means "son of my sorrow." His father, on the other hand, called him "Benjamin," which means "son of the right hand." The sense of sorrow and struggling and suffering passed away, and the sense of power was left to grow and prosper.

A Summary

At this point Joseph begins to take the stage, and the dramatic illustration of the third day of creation is carried even further. The Abraham sense of definite purpose,—the "dry land" appearing,—leads on to the Isaac and Jacob sense of finding one's essential selfhood to be sinless,—the "dry land" being called Earth and seen by God to be good. All the conflict of opposing elements is resolved into a sense of sinlessness and satisfaction. We shall find this in ourselves and

in our whole experience, in proportion as we understand and use the deep spiritual meaning of the third day of creation.

CHAPTER SIX

JOSEPH

JUST as the composer prolifically expresses specific ideas in musical language, so the Scriptural writers prolifically expressed their ideas of the Principle behind life and truth and love in the language of myths, songs, sermons, and historical records. Like the composer, the final compilers of the Old and New Testaments were able to give form to their copious inspiration, because they had a sense of the whole, with its one great theme of the relationship of God to man, developed in an orderly way. Again like a musical composition, the Bible is full of the beauty and warmth which speak to the heart as well as to the mind, and bring healing.

As we have seen in the first five chapters in this book, the story of the days of creation is the first announcement of the Science of the Bible, and its theme is developed through thousand-year periods of Bible history. The first thousand-year period, illustrating the "Let there be light" of the first day, was the creation period, in which the unenlightened view of creation was exposed in the story of Adam. Then the second thousand-year period, illustrating the "Let there be a firmament" of the second day, was the period of the "flood," from which Noah was saved by constructing an ark of understanding. The third thousand-year period, illustrating the "Let the dry land appear" of the third day, is a period rich in men with a purpose—Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua. Each was concerned with the journey to the "promised land" of true identity. Abraham sought a new country, which God promised should be his,—the "dry land" of definiteness about his God-given selfhood. Then Jacob wrestled victoriously with the belief of the dual nature of his identity (the dry land was seen as good) and was the father of twelve sons. Then Joseph, one of his sons, learned to define womanhood as well as manhood for himself and thus to bless his family. Moses then led those children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and gave them a code of law. Finally, Joshua led them into the promised land.

Joseph was the necessary link between Jacob and Moses, just as Jacob was the necessary link between Abraham and Joseph. Certainly Moses could not

have carried through his great lifework without the foundation of womanhood and motherhood which had been laid by Joseph.

Joseph the Dreamer Sold into Egypt

Genesis 37 tells us that Jacob loved best his son Joseph, because he was "the son of his old age,"—the offspring of his mature understanding of God,—and so he made him a "coat of many colours,"—clothed him with his own sense of God. Joseph, however, was hated by his brothers; he gave a bad report of some of them to his father, and they were jealous of their father's love for him, and they also hated him because he told them two dreams which indicated that he was going to have dominion over them.

One of Joseph's dreams took this form: "we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf." Here was an echo of the third day, in which the dry land was called Earth and brought forth; that third day symbolizes the realization that what we understand of God's nature (the "dry land" of definiteness) is the truth about ourselves and must reproduce itself in our conscious experience. A sheaf is a good symbol of how our identity takes shape for us as we gather together the elements of perfection in our individual way. Joseph saw that his ripened spiritual sense would one day assert itself and that his brothers would be in subordination to it. His brothers "hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words."

One day Jacob told Joseph to join his brothers, who were feeding the flock in Shechem; "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again." But Joseph was soon found "wandering in the field" by a certain man; this man asked him what he was looking for and told him where he could find his brothers. When his brothers saw him afar off, they plotted to kill him: "Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

Joseph here represents the idealistic dreamer who prophesies a rosy spiritual future, but is too vague to deal adequately with present circumstances. He is a Humpty Dumpty religionist sitting on a wall with a superior smile, both feet well off the ground as he admires the distant heavens, unaware of anything that could

possibly bring him to earth. Jesus was a spiritual idealist,—he said, for instance, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,"—but at the same time he was the most practical realist the world has ever known, because he proved his idealism completely. The story of Joseph is the story of how we have to make our idealism practical, or be engulfed. To disregard the general human predicament is to ask for trouble, and is in no way the ideal of Christianity. Our practice of Christlikeness will always be behind our ideal, but if we recognize this honestly it gives us humility and watchfulness.

Reuben suggested to his brothers that they should not slay Joseph, but cast him into a pit in the wilderness; privately he hoped to rescue him later. When Joseph reached them, they stripped him of his coat of many colours (if Joseph had made Jacob's understanding of God his own, he couldn't have been parted from it) and threw him into a pit, which had no water in it. Then they saw a company of merchantmen passing by on their way to Egypt, and they decided to salve their own consciences and at the same time make a profit on Joseph by selling him for twenty pieces of silver. They also had no scruples about dipping Joseph's coat in the blood of a kid and telling Jacob that Joseph had been devoured by an evil beast and without doubt rent in pieces. Jacob was desolated, and refused to be comforted.

If we choose to ignore evil, or the carnal mind (which includes every belief in a power opposed to God), it certainly doesn't ignore us; it soon casts us down into a pit of depression, cutting away the ground beneath our castle in the air. The pit is empty,—empty of the flow of inspiration. Then we are sold into Egypt as the slave of materialism. As we shall see, though, there was no need for Jacob to mourn Joseph as irrevocably lost, because spiritual sense is an irrepressible Jack-in-the-box; it profits by mistakes and turns what seems disastrous into a blessing.

Widow or Harlot?

At this point in the story (Genesis 38) comes an account of how Judah, another of Jacob's sons, had a son by his daughter-in-law. This son, Pharez, was in the direct line to Jesus, according to the genealogy given in the Gospels. The story goes that Judah's wife had three sons; the first son was married to a woman named Tamar, but was wicked and was slain by the Lord; the second son was then married to Tamar, but refused to give her a child, and so was also slain by

the Lord; the third son was withheld from Tamar by Judah, because he feared that he too might perish. But Tamar was determined to have a child, so she changed her widow's clothes for a harlot's and covered her face; when Judah saw her, he asked if he might lie with her, not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law. In return, he promised her a kid from his flock; Tamar then said, "Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? . . . Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand." He left these with her, but could not fulfil his promise because later she was not to be found.

Three months after, it was told Judah that Tamar was to have a child and he ordered her to be brought forth and burned. She said that the father of the child was the owner of the "signet, and bracelets, and staff" which she had in her possession. Judah then had to acknowledge that she was more righteous than himself, because he should have given her his third son as a husband. He never lay with her again.

One may ask why the compilers of the Old Testament inserted this story at this particular point. The Bible commentaries find it lacking in taste; one says that it seems "crude and indelicate ... to our Western sense of literary decorum," but the symbolism of it is clear and lovely. Among the Hebrews, widowhood was regarded rather as a matter for reproach; Tamar was therefore intent upon removing this stigma. If it had not been for her determination, Judah's name would not have been perpetuated and there might have been a break in the developing Christ-idea which reached its human fulfilment in Jesus. In lying with Tamar and later acknowledging his association, Judah became the means to an end far greater than he knew.

We often mistake the "widow,"—in this case that which longs for full expression,—for the "harlot,"—that which caters for and profits by the animal instincts in mortals,—and so we impute low motives to others and condemn a desire for some ideal just because it is crudely expressed. The time comes when we have to lift up that which we debased through misconception. The "harlot" is only womanhood perverted. Any sin is only an inversion of the longing, perhaps undefined, for some spiritual good. For instance, those who are sensual or dissatisfied are in their way blindly seeking to realize an ideal of satisfaction. When Judah sent a friend to find Tamar, in order to deliver the promised kid, he

asked, "Where is the harlot that was openly by the wayside?" The answer came, "There was no harlot in this place." Spiritual sense can always perceive that.

Jesus proved to perfection that point when he dealt with the woman taken in adultery, as recorded in John 8. He exposed the hideousness of condemnation, which from the highest point of view is always a case of mistaken identity. He himself wrote the woman's sin in the dust of nothingness, and he said to the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." This caused her accusers to go out one by one, until Jesus was left alone with the woman. When he "had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said . . . Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." Jesus used his spiritual understanding of sinlessness to lift up the woman to his own level; instead of condemning the sinner and making much of the sin, he proved that there is neither sin nor sinner in the Science of man. If we have Jesus' ideal of manhood and womanhood and live up to it ourselves as best we can, then we can lift others up to the same awareness and so heal them of the desire to sin.

What bearing has this story of Judah on the story of Joseph, which it interrupts? Joseph was to learn in Egypt what Judah learnt, to make the best of a bad job, to turn it into that which leads to a Jesus and so serves a spiritual purpose. Joseph was quick to translate the situation in which he found himself, and make it bear witness to the goodness of God. To the end of his life he admitted no causative factor but God. Later he was to say to his brothers, "ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." Similarly, Jesus said to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." God Himself doesn't institute or countenance evil, but an understanding of God translates everything into a blessing.

Potiphar's Wife

When Joseph was brought down to Egypt by the merchantmen, he was sold to an officer of Pharaoh's called Potiphar and soon began to make good. "And the Lord was with Joseph . . . And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand... and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field."

There was only one fly in the ointment: Potiphar's wife. She took a liking to Joseph and begged him to lie with her. Day after day she importuned him, but he refused either to lie with her or to be with her. One day she caught him by his garment and again said, "Lie with me;" Joseph fled, but left his garment in her hand. This was a trump card for Potiphar's wife, and she played it in such a way as to convince her husband that Joseph had tried to seduce her. Potiphar's wrath was aroused by this, and he had Joseph thrown into prison.

This was Joseph's second encounter with the so-called forces of the carnal mind. The first had pitchforked him, through his own vagueness, into a state of acute depression and emptiness; but he turned the experience into a positive blessing in Egypt, by actively using his sense that God was with him. Joseph's second encounter taught him the subtle, female persistence of evil, which makes itself attractive and hard to resist. But in making a bogey of it he gave it power, and so paved the way for it to rob him temporarily of his garment of Christlikeness and to imprison him in a sense of being unfairly victimized.

If we are all the time trying to maintain righteousness negatively, through steeling ourselves to resist wrong (and repression always breeds fear), we find that sooner or later our defences crack and we yield involuntarily to its malicious onslaughts. But as we accept the attractiveness of spiritual things, everything evil loses its power to attract us and we have no difficulty in making nothing of its blandishments. We are quite outside its apparent orbit of attraction. Every phase of evil is seen as a phase only of nothingness when we understand the divine nature, its actuality and allness.

The beginning of Acts 28 records that when a viper came out of the fire and fastened on Paul's hand, Paul just shook it off into the fire, and felt no harm. He didn't allow the "viper" of evil to cling to him in any way. How could the divine nature be touched by evil, infected by it, or poisoned by it? The third day teaches us that what is true about God is true about ourselves, so we need to shake the "viper" lightly but firmly into its own self-destructiveness; then we don't give it power to harm us and we feel no after-effects.

The Way Out of Prison

So Joseph found himself in prison, but once again, as recorded in Chapter 40, "the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper." The keeper of the prison recognized this and put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners. So Joseph once again turned a setback into a means of blessing, but this time he had to go further, in order to get out of prison.

In the prison were Pharaoh's butler and Pharaoh's baker, who had incurred their master's wrath. One night they both dreamed dreams, but were sorrowful because there was no interpreter of them. Joseph then said, "Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you."

The chief butler had dreamed of a vine with three branches; the vine budded and blossomed and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes; the butler took the grapes, pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup to Pharaoh. Joseph's interpretation was that the three branches represented three days, and that within three days Pharaoh would reinstate the butler. What a wonderful symbol of the practical operation of the third day of creation! When an understanding of the first two days of creation has led us to the "dry land" of definiteness about God, that definiteness provides the right soil for "buds" and "blossoms" and "fruit" to spring up—in other words, our ideal begins to take shape in gradually maturing ideas. If we let the inspiration (the wine) of those ideas overflow into our best human sense of things, then life is restored to normal. Isaiah writes in the same vein, "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose ... And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Jesus illustrated this practically when he restored the withered hand; he told the man to "rise up, and stand forth in the midst,"—to exalt his sense of himself as a son of God,—and then to stretch forth his hand, or exercise his God-given dominion, and the inspiration of his spiritualized consciousness naturally overflowed into the ability to use his hand normally.

The baker's dream was that he had three white baskets on his head; in the topmost basket were all kinds of bakemeats for Pharaoh and the birds were eating them. Joseph's interpretation was that the three baskets represented three days, and that within three days Pharaoh would hang the baker on a tree

and the birds would eat his flesh. The baker's mistake was that his sense of the first three days of creation was quite colourless, and his highest sense of them was as a means to material prosperity and security. Security in matter is a self-evident impossibility, and so if that is our first love it usually lets us down. Jesus gave a complementary sense in his parable of the man who sowed in his field a grain of mustard seed,— an idea of his real selfhood as being like God,—"which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air [uplifted thought, in this case] come and lodge in the branches thereof." A sincere desire to be Godlike grows till it is firmly based and becomes a resting-place (what would be called today a refueling base) for inspiration before it wings forward again.

How did these two interpretations help Joseph to understand better his own predicament and the way out of it? The baker's dream showed him that if his only motive in getting out of prison was to be restored to favourable material conditions, he was doomed to disappointment. But the butler's dream showed him that if his real love was his spiritual understanding and he let that bear fruit in consciousness and overflow naturally into his highest human sense of things, then he would find himself restored to normal happiness.

The Way to Forestall Famine

Chapter 41 records that Pharaoh dreamed two dreams which troubled him. In the first he saw "seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed" come up out of a river, to be followed by "seven other kine ... ill favoured and leanfleshed" such as had never been seen in all the land of Egypt for badness; the seven thin kine then ate up the first seven, but were just as thin as before. In his second dream Pharaoh saw seven ripe ears of corn springing up on one stalk, to be followed by seven thin ears blasted by the east wind; the seven thin ears then devoured the seven ripe ears. None of the wise men of Egypt could interpret Pharaoh's dreams, but the butler told Pharaoh of how Joseph had interpreted aright his dream and also the baker's dream. So Joseph was sent for out of his prison and his raiment changed. When Pharaoh said that he had heard of his ability in interpreting dreams, Joseph said, with the meekness which was his strength, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Joseph said that both dreams signified that seven years of great plenty were to be followed by seven years of grievous famine, so that all the plenty would be forgotten.

Pharaoh's dream represents the intelligent man's outlook when he is feeling pessimistic. He appreciates the fact that there would be no love if God were not Love, no life if God were not Life, and so on, but he also holds to the view that the forces of evil nullify the things which work for good, that barbarism outdoes civilization in every sphere. Human intellectualism cannot analyze or provide the answer to this conviction.

Joseph gave Pharaoh the answer: he suggested that Pharaoh should immediately appoint an intelligent man to store up corn in the seven years of plenty as provision for the seven years of famine. This plan commended itself to Pharaoh, and he asked, "Can we find such a one as this is [meaning Joseph], a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" So he decided that Joseph should be set over the whole land of Egypt and given supreme power under himself. Joseph immediately put his idea into operation. During the seven plenteous years "the earth brought forth by handfuls . . . And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number."

When thinking humanity, represented here by Pharaoh, sees that there is an intelligent method of forestalling disaster, it can then adopt it. Jesus said, "if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." If we see evil forces threatening the things we love, and even civilization itself, or if in a simpler way we just see that troubles will come our way and try to cause a famine of health or happiness, then our only sure course is to build up our understanding of spiritual values in the "seven plenteous years," and then we shall always have the necessary forces to deploy as the need arises, instead of being caught unawares. Our spiritual reservoirs will be full even in times of drought.

The seven fat-fleshed kine and the seven ripe ears of corn are a symbol of the seven days of creation, the basis of the Science of the Bible. In that story of the seven days of creation the earth (our definite spiritual understanding) certainly does bring forth "by handfuls." There is no limit whatever to the amount we can enjoy its ideas; we can have as much as we like of them, and there is no end to the steady and abundant spiritual income which they supply. Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

How do we store up the infinite facts about God, about the divine Principle of the universe? Through system. Without system and Science,— knowledge "reduced to law and embodied in system,"—our sense of God would be vague and stereotyped, instead of certain, exact, and inspired. System presents ideas in their inherent order and relationships, so that they can be learnt logically. Jesus was always ordering his disciples' consciousness of Truth—our biggest evidence of this is the Sermon on the Mount—and before he left them, he said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth;... he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you ... he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Only a sense of divine system can interpret and make forever available the Principle and rule of Jesus' life and works. That discernment of divine system is surely the Comforter and also the key to the Scriptures.

This key to the Scriptures was found by Mary Baker Eddy, who felt very deeply the spiritual power available in the Bible when she was healed of a serious injury by reading one of Jesus' healings. She then studied the Bible until she discovered its Science; she wanted to find in the Scriptures a positive rule, open to all. Her spiritual sense enabled her to discern the divine order of the Bible, and then she reduced her findings to system and embodied them in a textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, published in 1875. She epitomized her vision of the theme of the Bible in her answer to the question "What is God?" "God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love." Those seven names to define God summarize scientifically the teaching of the Bible as to the nature of the infinite. Mrs. Eddy's *Key to the Scriptures* consisted of an interpretation of Genesis and Revelation.

A key, however, is of use only when opening something. The Christian Science movement, founded by Mrs. Eddy, has tended to neglect the deep study of the Bible, although Mrs. Eddy's discovery was based solely on Scriptural revelation. The work of John W. Doorly, however, has done much towards remedying this position, and through his research into the Science of the Bible he showed *Science and Health* to be an indispensable help in interpreting the Scriptures. This research Mr. Doorly carried on individually, and not within the confines of any organization. His books, *God and Science*, in its exposition of the exact spiritual Science of the Scriptures, and *Christian Science Practice*, giving many examples

of its application, bring to light new fields of research for the spiritual seeker. By using the key provided by Mrs. Eddy, John Doorly opened the door for anyone to understand the Bible and prove for himself its practical value.

Mary Baker Eddy based her textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, on the spiritual meaning of the seven days of creation, which she realized underlay Jesus' words and works. *Science and Health* is not an easy book, because it is one which needs careful study, undertaken with humility and love. It is a book which will be studied for centuries before it is fully understood. One stands in awe before it, just as a mountaineer stands in awe before the mountain whose grandeur and beauty and inspiration he loves, even if he hasn't climbed to its summit and is still on its lower slopes. Mrs. Eddy's great achievement was that she took the spiritual ideas underlying the Bible and presented them as a coherent and comprehensive divine system of ideas, which she expounded in sixteen chapters. Anyone who wishes to judge *Science and Health* fairly and without prejudice does well to begin by finding out how Mrs. Eddy uses her seven synonymous terms for God—that is, what groups of ideas she associates with Mind, with Spirit, with Soul, with Principle, with Life, with Truth, and with Love. As he does this honestly, he will find how accurate her work was, and also how immensely flexible. A real lover of the Bible will find in *Science and Health* a most helpful complementary textbook, and will appreciate Mrs. Eddy as an exact thinker who was spiritually-minded enough to have revealed to her the Science of the Bible,—vast but ordered, absolute but so practical that it covers all human needs.

If we classify the ideas of the seven days of creation, as elucidated throughout the Bible and *Science and Health* we get something like this:—

1st Day. Light,—the divine intelligence revealing itself as true wisdom. Mrs. Eddy calls this aspect of God Mind.

2nd Day. The firmament between the waters above and beneath,—the purity of good enabling us to separate good from evil. This aspect of God Mrs. Eddy calls Spirit.

3rd Day. The dry land appearing and bringing forth,—the definiteness of the divine nature appearing to us as a growing sense of our real selves. Mrs. Eddy summarizes this aspect of God by the term Soul.

4th Day. Sun, moon, and stars to give light on the earth,—the divine system and harmony governing all teaching and practice and all relationship. Mrs. Eddy's name for this aspect of God is Principle.

5th Day. Birds and fishes,—the infinity of God felt in exploring the limitless realm of ideas, and in the multiplication of good in our lives. Mrs. Eddy epitomizes this by the term Life.

6th Day. Man,—God's awareness of Himself as a perfect whole, making us aware of our own God-given wholeness, bringing health and dominion. Mrs. Eddy calls this aspect of God Truth.

7th Day. God resting,—the fulfilment of God's ideal of perfection, causing us to lose fear and gain gratitude, peace, and compassion. This aspect of divinity Mrs. Eddy names Love.

The seven lean kine and the seven thin ears of corn are a symbol of the forms assumed by the carnal mind in its attempt to consume divine facts:—

1. Ignorance and belief in the brain.
2. Confusion of good and evil.
3. Corporeal selfhood, sinning and suffering.
4. Discord and false systems.
5. Depression, impoverishment, and death.
6. Disease and victimization.
7. Fear, hate, and war.

This famine is world-wide, but it is nullified in proportion as we bring out the specific spiritual facts needed to satisfy the world's hunger.

Joseph's Two Sons

Pharaoh gave Joseph a wife,—the daughter of a priest,—and she bore him two sons. Joseph called the firstborn Manasseh, which means "causing forgetfulness;" "For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." The second son he called Ephraim, which means "doubly fruitful;" "For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Jesus showed the importance of the Manasseh state of thought when he said to a disciple who asked to be allowed to go and bury his father before following Jesus, "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." We have to let go the burden and suffering of our past history,—let it return to its own home in

nothingness. If we think that we have something to bury, something to forget, we admit that that thing had existence at some time—which it never had in the light of the Science of being. "God requireth that which is past."

Jesus illustrated the Ephraim state of thought when he said, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."

Later, in Chapter 48, it is recorded that Jacob blessed Manasseh and Ephraim, but insisted on blessing Ephraim with his right hand, instead of the firstborn (Manasseh). When Joseph protested, Jacob said that he had done it deliberately, because Ephraim was to be greater than Manasseh and his seed would become "a multitude of nations." The Ephraim state of thought is positive, turning "affliction" into "fruitfulness," and therefore is greater than the Manasseh, "causing forgetfulness." Working out from the positive ideal and seeing one's experience transformed into blessing is always more potent than merely forgetting what lies behind.

Joseph Demands Benjamin

When the seven years of plenty ended, the famine "waxed sore ... over all the face of the earth." Then Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold the corn to those who asked for it. Among those who came seeking corn in Egypt were Joseph's brothers, with the exception of Benjamin, whom Jacob kept at home with him, for fear of losing him as he had lost Joseph. Joseph pretended not to recognize his brothers, and they didn't recognize him. He spoke roughly to them and accused them of being spies. As a proof that they were not spies, he demanded that they should fetch their youngest brother, Benjamin, and he kept one of the ten as hostage. When they heard this, the brothers said among themselves that this distress had come upon them because they had refused to heed the "anguish of his soul" when they cast Joseph into the pit. But Joseph sent them off with corn and provisions and also restored to them the money they had brought with them to pay for the corn; this generosity only made the brothers afraid, and they asked, "What is this that God hath done unto us?"

At first Jacob refused to send Benjamin with them, but was prevailed upon to do so when all the corn had been eaten up. The brothers still had such a guilty

conscience that when they arrived in Egypt and were invited to dine with Joseph they feared that he was going to take them as slaves because of the money which they had found in their sacks. But Joseph made them a great feast and was overjoyed to see Benjamin, whom he loved above them all. He still did not reveal his identity to his brothers and sent them away after the feast. He told his steward to fill their sacks with food, to return their money in the mouths of their sacks, and to put his silver cup into Benjamin's sack. Later he sent the steward to overtake the brothers and demand of them why they had taken Joseph's cup. They repudiated any notion of stealing, and so were much discomfited when the cup was found in Benjamin's sack; they all returned to Joseph, who cross-questioned them severely. Then Judah said, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." Finally Joseph could not refrain from revealing himself to his brothers; he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life ... And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."

It is very plain that the ten brothers stand for the sense of sin and penalty, the shackles of "the law;" this sense was inculcated in Jewish religious belief by the Ten Commandments. Paul said, "I had not known sin, but by the law." Joseph, on the other hand, represents the grace of the "gospel;" he had the love which is true womanhood, the natural affection which reaches out to forgive and bless. But Joseph needed Benjamin to unite him to his brothers; only the vision of spiritual man intact bridges the sense of sin and the human longing to forgive. The law has to be fulfilled, and this takes place not through glossing over sin, nor perpetuating it, but through eradicating it. The way the motherhood of God appears to forgive sin and imperfection is by causing that imperfection to be given up, unto the "uttermost farthing;" perfection can never countenance imperfection, but it operates to show mortals the way out of accepting imperfection. Mere human forgiveness on the part of Joseph would not have taught his brothers anything nor destroyed the belief in sin. But there was no need for them to suffer once they obeyed what Joseph stood for, as he had seen in his early dreams that they would.

Joseph had his divining cup put into Benjamin's sack in order to bring about a change in the attitude of his ten brothers. Both he and Benjamin knew that Benjamin hadn't stolen the cup, but the ten brothers did not know this. The effect which the incident had on them was that they gave up all self-justification and attempts to conceal their guilt and offered themselves as slaves to Joseph,—they became willing to work to redeem themselves. Joseph had said to them, "What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?"—they realized that the demands of divine Principle are imperative and cannot forever be evaded by mortals.

In his healing work Jesus constantly showed the necessity of the Benjamin—the power and grace of a spiritual "breakthrough" which impels of itself a genuine transformation. For instance, it is recorded in John 9 that when they were confronted with a man blind from birth, the disciples asked Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" The disciples had the same sense of sin and penalty as the ten brothers,—that if there is suffering it must be because of personal sin. Jesus had the Joseph, or motherhood, sense when he said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Joseph, too, recognized God as the only real Cause, and that the blessing of divinity must be made manifest in an improved human situation. But Jesus could not help the blind man without a Benjamin to bring the spiritual to the human,—without that full and complete acceptance of spiritual actuality which washed away the specific error of belief. So the record is that Jesus "spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent)." The man had to see that the blindness he was labouring under was not to be groveled before, but was just a phase of the belief that man can be conceived in blind lust. He had to wash away this belief in the full stream of realizing that man's real origin is in the Mind which is God and he is forever "sent" by this Mind with intelligent purpose. When this individual did so, he "came seeing" in more ways than one, as the rest of the chapter shows.

Again, when Jesus healed the epileptic boy, as described in Mark 9, the "Benjamin" was the spiritual influx which humbled the father. The epilepsy was due to the father's sin, but the father wanted to shirk his responsibility, and so first concentrated on blaming the disciples for not healing the boy at once. The

father then implored Jesus to save the situation: "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." He didn't see where he came into the picture. But Jesus turned the responsibility on to him when he said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Finally, the father said, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." When the father changed his attitude of mind, his son could be healed. The tears he shed symbolized that the spiritual inflow had touched his heart to self-knowledge, humility, and love.

Whether the mathematician is in a bad temper or whether he isn't, whether he loves his wife or whether he doesn't, he can still work out a problem in arithmetic, or put right a miscalculation, if he can think clearly according to the principle of his subject. But to work out a problem according to the Principle of divine Science demands the whole man, demands that he be one with his Principle in spirit, as well as conversant with the letter.

The Price of Corn

When the Egyptians came to Joseph to buy corn, they first of all paid for it with money. When they had no more money, Joseph demanded their cattle. When they had no more cattle to give in return for the corn, he demanded their lands and their persons for Pharaoh and gave them seed with which to sow the land.

Every time we want the bread of sustaining ideas, we have to give up more and more of our mortal beliefs. Higher and higher demands are made on us. First of all, we have to render our "money,"—give up regarding some difficulty as primarily physical, because we see that it is just an expression of mortal thought. Secondly, we have to give up thinking that our human behaviour can remain unaffected; cattle stand for such moral qualities as persistence and patience. Thirdly, we have to give up thinking that we can go on clinging to any sense of our real selves as being apart from God.

For instance, if it is home we are looking for, we begin to see that it is not a merely physical home we are seeking, because home is a desirable atmosphere of thought. Then we see that it demands the exercise here and now of the qualities of love and hospitality and unselfishness. Finally, it demands that we recognize that the eternal fact of home abides in our acceptance of God's love for us as His beloved sons; we see that we cannot ever lose that home, for it lies between us and God. In return, we get the ideas we need, symbolized by the

corn, in order to find a home which is a home physically and morally and spiritually. Jesus said, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children,"— his most cherished human beliefs,— "for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come"—the recognition of spiritual reality—"life everlasting,"—an under-standing of his immortal status.

Joseph Provides and Cares for Jacob

Joseph showed a wonderfully tender motherhood (and fatherhood as well) in his provision for Jacob's last days. He told his brothers to go and fetch Jacob down into Egypt and said that he would care for him and all his household in the five years of famine which were still to come. He sent presents with them for Jacob, and Pharaoh sent wagons to fetch him. When the lonely old Jacob, who thought he had lost so much and was afraid of losing more, felt these touches of love, his spirits revived, he was persuaded to believe that Joseph really was alive, and he agreed to join him in Egypt. On the way down, God spoke to him one night in a dream and told him not to fear to go down into Egypt, "for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes." Joseph came to meet him and established him in Goshen, where his needs were fully met and where he was nourished against poverty. He could die happily because he saw that the spiritual journey to the promised land was going forward, in spite of the fact that his children were in Egypt.

The motherhood of God always forestalls our prayers by its free bestowal of blessings, and it gathers everyone into a sense of home. Isaiah writes of this divine motherhood, "the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child [saith the Lord], that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

Joseph at this point was a real shepherd, for a shepherd is both fatherly and motherly to his sheep—he guides them and guards them and he also cares for them with the utmost patience and unselfishness.

When Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were afraid that Joseph would hate them, and so they begged to be forgiven. Joseph's answer was characteristic: "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good. . . . Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones." He then "comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." Like Jesus, Joseph never condemned poor humanity, but met its needs.

Jacob's Blessing on Joseph

Jacob's dying blessing on Joseph (Genesis 49:22-26) is a fit summary of Joseph's significance, of his motherhood and womanhood, based firmly on the understanding of the Science of being which experience taught him to acquire.

It begins: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:"—his source of abundance and abundant helpfulness was the bottomless well of divine ideas:—"the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:"—Joseph's persecution by his brothers and by Potiphar's wife served only to strengthen his sense of spiritual power and to enable him to become a real shepherd, and finally to show forth an abundant measure of motherhood. The blessing ends: "the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

And so does not Joseph represent particular qualities of character without which none of us can turn our human experience into a blessing?

CHAPTER SEVEN

MOSES AND THE EXODUS

Thinking About God

THE basic error of the centuries has been the failure to think deeply enough about God,—to think out the divine nature and thence to try to live in accordance with it. No one would deny that there have been great achievements and wonderful lives in the course of the years, but there would have been less of a price to pay for them if there had been more recognition of the impersonal nature of good as based on the infinite Principle of the universe.

From time to time there are prophecies of the imminent end of civilization. Recently a winner of a Nobel Prize for literature has said: "There are no longer any problems of the spirit; there is only the question, When will I be blown up?" But the spirit of man is always potentially greater than anything he may encounter by way of obstacles. The reason why a man's spirit is often defeated rather than victorious is that he generally thinks of his sources of strength as limited and personal, rather than as infinite and impersonal (although expressed individually).

No one else can do our thinking about God for us. The fact that others before us have used their acquaintance with the compass of spiritual thought to make their way through difficult country is something that we can be very thankful for and something that we can take full advantage of, but we are never relieved of our own individual responsibility for going forward. Jesus Christ's example is, of course, the supreme one, but it is of no avail to us unless we take it as our model individually.

What part does the Bible play in our individual journey towards a realization of man's dominion, as proclaimed in the first chapter of Genesis? It provides us with an opportunity of making our thinking about spiritual truth systematic and vital, instead of haphazard and stereotyped. Then it is up to us to put that thinking into practical operation in our lives.

The First Three Thousand Years of Bible History

In this book we have traced something of the majestic story of the first three thousand-year periods of Bible history. We have seen how it illustrates the

workings of the first three days of creation—the searching light of the first day of creation exposing the dark sequence of materialistic thinking; the purity of the second day of creation demanding separation in an "ark" from the "flood" of mortal beliefs; and the definiteness of the third day of creation impelling the journey to the "promised land" of true identity as the sons of God. Abraham was forced to be definite about leaving Ur and about producing an heir by his wife Sarah; Jacob was forced to be definite in eradicating the evil elements in himself; Joseph was forced to be definite about turning every experience into a blessing, not only for himself but for others as well. Now we arrive at that great figure Moses, who sometimes seems forbidding, but whose qualities of leadership were magnificent. We shall see how his vision of God as I AM THAT I AM was the mainspring of his mission.

Moses' finest achievement was in the spiritual education of the children of Israel. He was the first of the great teachers, and had the struggles and heart-burnings of every teacher. He taught the Israelites the nature of God through the plagues, which freed them from bondage in Egypt, and later he gave them the Commandments as a further guide to their thinking and practice. He paved the way for Joshua to lead them finally into the Promised Land, the climax of the third thousand-year period.

The Children of Israel in Bondage in Egypt

The Book of Exodus begins with an account of the bitter bondage which the children of Israel suffered in Egypt. The reason for this was that the Pharaoh of Egypt was afraid of them, because they were greater in numbers and in strength than the Egyptians; they were "fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." The Pharaoh in Joseph's time had been favourable to the children of Israel, but now there had arisen a new Pharaoh, who "knew not Joseph,"—who did not remember how Joseph had been the means of averting a terrible famine in Egypt. So the Egyptians made the lives of the children of Israel "bitter with hard bondage"; but in spite of this they still multiplied.

Pharaoh then thought that the only remedy was the desperate one of killing all the male Hebrew babies. So he asked the two Hebrew midwives to see that this was done. They, however, did not do as they were directed by Pharaoh, because

they "feared God,"—that is, they trusted in righteousness and eschewed unrighteousness. As a result they themselves were blessed.

The "midwife" in each one of us is that quality of womanhood which assists the birth of ideas. When ideas first appear to us, they need much tender welcoming and loving and encouraging if they are to fulfill their mission as strong and effectual. Without that initial cherishing they may die on us before they have a chance to mature. We need to "save the men children alive."

The Birth of Moses

When he found out that the midwives were disobeying him Pharaoh appealed to his people to cast every male Hebrew baby into the river. The story (told in Exodus 2:1-10) of how the child Moses was preserved is a charming legendary tale. When Moses' mother found that she had a "goodly child," she hid him for three months. "And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him." Pharaoh's daughter chanced to come down to the river with her maidens, and when she saw the ark she sent one of them to fetch it; when she saw the Hebrew child weeping, she had compassion on it. At this point Moses' sister ran up and offered to call a nurse for the child from among the Hebrew women. Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and so Moses' sister fetched their mother, who was paid to nurse her own child.

Moses became Pharaoh's daughter's son, and it was she who gave him his name, which means "drawn out;" because, she said, "I drew him out of the water." This is what we do every time we see the definiteness of some idea through our love for it.

Because Moses' mother was willing to give up her fear and to let her child go,—not unprotected, but in an ark,—she was rewarded with the opportunity to fill the office of mother still. We hide our "child" (an idea which has come to us and which we love) for "three months" when we think out its real identity according to the first three days of creation; we see it as an intelligent idea (first "month"), as a purely spiritual idea, uncontaminated by evil elements (second "month"), and as an idea which is definite and beautiful and safe (third "month"). We give up thinking of it as our own personal property, born of certain circumstances and

something for which we have personal ambitions, and instead we see it as something with an eternal life of its own. Then we put this child into a spiritual ark,—an ark of understanding of the spiritual fact as supreme,—and we put it by the river's brink,—by a sense of activity and progress. In this way the child is safe from all harm and can meet only more love and care, and we ourselves are not deprived of the joys of motherhood.

All motherhood is by reflection: it is a reflection of God's universal motherhood. A realization of this fact only makes better human mothers —less fearful, more encouraging of the good tendencies, more patient, more faithful to the spiritual ideal of sonship. A human mother is often separated from her child and therefore fears for it; but she need never fear if she sees that both she and it are inseparable from the divine Mother, who cares for all Her children with infinite tenderness.

When a wonderful idea is born to us, we mother it by appreciating to the full its perfection and completeness; that operates in human experience to give us the patience to make its appearing as unmarred by foreign elements as is possible. If we love the ideal, this gives us a quicker discernment of every approximation to it, however small, and also a quicker discernment of temporary imperfections in that approximation. The nature of true mother-love makes its effect as certain as the effect of $2 \times 2 = 4$ to dispel all notions of any other answer. This is why real mother-love for the spiritual ideal brings out the best in everyone and everything and literally makes nothing of flaws. If a mirror is dirty, it fails to reflect faithfully the picture in front of it. The sensible person doesn't rail at the dirt, but wipes it off, so that the mirror can fulfill its true function. A real mother does the same with the faults blurring the ideal image of her child which her love holds before her—she wipes them out in her thought as transient dirt, so that the image is once again perfect. The effect of this is that the child steadily advances towards the ideal.

Moses Kills an Egyptian

When he grew up, Moses became aware of the hard bondage which his countrymen were suffering at the hands of the Egyptians. One day he saw an Egyptian kill a Hebrew, so when he had made sure that there were no onlookers he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The next day he saw two Hebrews fighting and asked the one in the wrong, "Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?"

whereupon the accused man answered, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?" Moses was then afraid that his crime was known; and, indeed, when all this came to the ears of Pharaoh, he "sought to slay Moses."

So Moses fled to Midian, where he sat down by a well. The story goes on: "Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock."

If like Moses we try through violent human action to free our fellows from the bondage of "Pharaoh,"—gross materialism,—we lay ourselves open to the accusation of being mere self-appointed moral bulldozers. Then we are wise if we seek the well of God's ideas, sit down there, and let there come to us a receptiveness of spiritual perfection (symbolized by the seven daughters). This receptiveness appeals to divine sources of inspiration, but needs the vigor of manhood to protect and preserve it against all attempts to deprive it of this inspiration.

In the incident of the midwives we saw that the "men children" need the help of woman qualities to keep them alive, and here we see that the receptivity of womanhood needs the strength of manhood to stand up for it. We can never do without both the manhood qualities of courage and intelligence and the womanhood qualities of acceptance and faithful love.

The priest of Midian, father of the seven daughters, was so pleased to hear of Moses' helpfulness to them that he gladly offered him hospitality. Moses lived with the priest for a time, and was given one of his daughters in marriage. She bore him a son.

Moses at the Burning Bush

The turning-point of Moses' career came with his experience of the burning bush which was not consumed, as recorded in the third chapter of Exodus.

One day he had led his father-in-law's flock "to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." Then "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush:"—the creation of

bushes was included in the third day:—"and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

This experience of Moses symbolizes the point when the "desert" begins to "blossom as the rose" for us. The desert, or wilderness, is often used in the Bible as a symbol of a recurrent stage in our experience: a period when the outlook seems empty and drear and uncertain, but the doubtings eventually lead to a certainty which is deeply felt, rather than merely believed or accepted theoretically. The moment of certainty comes as we see that the eternal fact of our God-given selfhood, and indeed of everything, is indestructible, and remains intact in spite of the apparently consuming fires of sin, disease, or death.

Sometimes if we feel ashamed of things we have done or failed to do, we imagine that the good we have also accomplished is set at nought by our sins. But the truth is that our spiritual sense, which enabled us to accomplish that measure of good, is an eternal part of our essential selfhood, whereas sin is no part of it. A sense of sin is only a temporary, false view of our real identity, and that identity needs only to be discerned intact for the memory of sin or the desire to sin to disappear. The value which a coin represents remains the same even if the superscription becomes defaced or erased for any reason, and even if a new coin with the image clear once again has to be substituted for it in circulation.

Because our true selfhood remains untouched, in spite of all the nightmare storms which apparently sweep us away from it, we can always return home to it. That is why the prodigal son could be restored to his place in his father's house, in spite of his elder brother's theological sense that it was unfair that this sinner should be reinstated, although he had already suffered amply for his decision to leave home.

The well-known story in Daniel 3 of the three Hebrew young men who were cast into the burning fiery furnace, because they refused to bow down to a golden image, illustrates this same great fact. Nebuchadnezzar commanded the furnace to be heated "one seven times more than it was wont to be heated." The flames of the fire burned to death the mighty warriors who cast the three men bound into the midst of the fire, but soon Nebuchadnezzar got up in amazement and said, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They

answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God . . . And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." The story is a marvellous symbol of how true identity remains unchanged and untouched by all the pains of sense, and of how we shall enjoy safety and a great sense of freedom if we realize this fact fully.

"I Am that I Am"

God now called to Moses out of the midst of the bush, and told him, "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." God then announced Himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; in other words, Moses began to see that he personally had not stumbled on a new God, but that the understanding of God had been the inspiration of his predecessors. Moses saw that that understanding must now free the children of Israel from their afflictions and oppression in Egypt, and lead them into "a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey,"—not into a state of material ease and comfort, but into the joy and freedom of true identity. Moses saw that divinely everything is in line, in perfect accord, with the nature of God, but that humanly this has to be proved by exchanging the bondage of "Egypt" for the freedom of the "promised land."

The next thing was that Moses saw clearly his own God-given mission, —to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. But another suggestion intervened, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Then Moses' own sense of God answered, "Certainly I will be with thee. . . ."

Moses went on to ask by what name he should present to the children of Israel the God of their fathers. The answer came, "I AM THAT I AM." This has been translated, "I shall forever continue to be that which I am now being." It indicates the permanence of spiritual reality,—a haven from the noisy storms raised by physical sense. This great vision of God Moses elaborated through the plagues, which showed that the indestructible essence of all visible forms of good resides in God alone.

The Three Signs

Moses objected that the people would not believe him or listen to him, "for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." He was remembering his daunting experience with the two quarrelling Hebrews. But now he was given three "signs" (Exodus 4:2-9).

First, he was told to cast down his rod, and the moment he did so it became a serpent, so that he fled from before it. God now told him, "Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail." When he did this, it became a rod in his hand again. Moses was made to see in this incident that if he relied on his human capacities,—symbolized by the rod, which represented his shepherd's calling,—they might at any moment demonstrate the danger of this by letting him down. He had to take this "serpent" by the tail,—handle fearlessly the belief that his God-given identity and purpose was something allotted to him because of his human abilities. Human abilities regarded as personal gifts, due to accidents of birth and education, are subject to all kinds of changes and perversions. But when we recognize particular abilities as individual expressions of God in some aspect, then they cannot change or decay. When Moses had taken this insidious "serpent" by the tail, he could use the rod again,—he could use his individual gifts with a sense of power and certainty, and without fear of their deserting him, because he had seen them to be derived from God.

The second sign which Moses was to offer in evidence of his divine commission was that when he put his hand into his bosom and took it out, he saw it as leprous, and when he again put it into his bosom, it was restored to normal. This symbolizes very simply that any distressing condition, however hideous it may seem to physical sense, is nothing but the outcome of mortal mentality; the evidence of it has no foundation in truth and so it can be changed in a moment through divine influence. The sheer oppressive weight of false education is really all that impedes our seeing this proved more often; that weight has to be lifted off through showing both its powerlessness and also the glory of spiritual facts.

The third sign was that Moses should take of the water of the Nile and pour it on the dry land, where it would become blood. This is what happened in the first plague, and it represents showing the deadliness of materialism and the consequent vitalizing of interest in spiritual reality.

If we want to lead lives that are worth-while, we need to see the significance of these three signs. We need to see that our destiny is God-bestowed, not man-bestowed, and therefore cannot be perverted; that there is no substance to the mortal picture presented to the physical senses, and that it can be transformed by divine power instantaneously, as Jesus proved time and time again; and that we must have the courage to show the deadly nature of mortal mentality. So we need a right sense of our individual selves; a right sense of what it is that enables us to help our fellows; and a willingness to expose fearlessly the whole gamut of materialism. Moses thus saw the individual, collective, and universal aspects of his mission.

"I Am Slow of Speech"

Moses' next misgivings were about his lack of eloquence. "And the Lord said unto him, . . . Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Moses' sense of God showed him what Jesus was to show to his disciples: "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Moses, however, was still fearful, and so God pointed out to him that he could use Aaron, his brother, as a mouthpiece.

Like Moses, we sometimes keep our Aaron, our helpmeet, who shoulders responsibilities which are really ours to our Principle, for too long, and then it becomes harmful to us, as Aaron became to Moses when he encouraged the people in their worship of the golden calf.

Moses now left Jethro and journeyed back to Egypt with "the rod of God" in his hand,—armed with the sense that he could now act "as one having authority." He and Aaron gathered together the elders of the children of Israel, and Aaron "spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

First Encounters with Pharaoh

Moses and Aaron now went in to Pharaoh and courageously demanded, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." Pharaoh made the expected reply: "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Next he implied that Moses and Aaron were trying to

engineer a holiday and were preventing the people from working, and so he said, "get you unto your burdens."

The dictatorial "Pharaoh" element says, "Why should you imagine that you can be free to think about God and rejoice in God? It's nothing but an impossible Utopian dream. You've got more time on your hands than is good for you—that's what the matter is," and so "Pharaoh" imposes new burdens on us to keep our noses to the grindstone of mortality.

Pharaoh's instructions now were that the children of Israel should no longer be given straw to make brick, but that they must gather straw for themselves and yet at the same time produce the same number of bricks per day. This was, of course, impossible, and yet Pharaoh refused to lessen his demands. The officers of the children of Israel therefore blamed Moses, as they were to do many times in the coming years. Moses in his bewilderment asked God why his efforts to free his fellow-countrymen had resulted in a worse plight for them.

Moses' expostulations are not unknown to us, when our well-meant efforts seem at first to result only in an aggravation of the difficulty, and the physical burdens seem crushing. But, as with Moses, our understanding of God reassures us. The Lord told Moses to say to the children of Israel that He would certainly rid them of their bondage and save them "with a stretched out arm" and bring them into the Promised Land. The people were unimpressed by this, because of their "anguish of spirit" and their "cruel bondage." The Lord, however, still told Moses to speak to Pharaoh with authority, although Moses was now much discouraged and apprehensive. Moses was warned that Pharaoh would not allow the children of Israel to go until he was forced to do so by circumstances; in other words, the belief in materialism tries to stick to us for as long as possible. It yields only when we find ourselves forced to recognize the power and all-inclusiveness of spiritual facts, precluding the possibility of any real opposite, and this was to be the significance of the plagues.

In order to impress Pharaoh, Aaron was told to cast down his rod and let it become a serpent. But Pharaoh called in the magicians of Egypt and they did the same thing with their rods. Aaron's rod, however, swallowed up all their rods. Mere will-power can bring out "serpents" with ease, exhibit the subtleties of evil,

but it cannot get rid of them, because of its inherent powerlessness, since all power belongs to God.

But Pharaoh failed to be impressed, and refused to let the children of Israel go; the plagues were therefore set in motion.

The Plagues

What was the significance of the plagues? The general view of the commentaries is that they were events explicable as natural phenomena, but that the Biblical writers, recording the events hundreds of years after they had taken place, attributed them (in line with their didactic purpose) to the God of the Hebrews acting on behalf of His chosen people. The universal spiritual meaning of the plagues, however, far, far outshines their historical significance. They give a striking symbolic picture of how the "Pharaoh" element in thought, the tyrannical materialism, fiercely resists our entering into our heritage of freedom as the sons of God,—freedom from "Egypt" and freedom to demonstrate the Science of being,—but finally is forced to yield. "Let my people go, that they may serve me" was the demand made continually by the Lord through Moses, and it is the demand which our understanding of God is always forcing upon us.

Through the symbolism of the plagues we learn what man without God can expect. We see that the I AM of all good abides in God alone, that all the things we value in human experience come from God alone, because God is, and for no other reason. The very nature of matter renders it incapable of producing lasting health, lasting happiness, or lasting good, so a materialistic life-basis is necessarily a self-destroying belief.

On one occasion Moses told Pharaoh that the plagues came about that Pharaoh might "know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth," —the great central Principle upon which every manifestation of good depends. On other occasions the divine purpose was stated in these words: "that my name"—the identity of the divine nature—"may be declared throughout all the earth," and "that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's." The earth appeared in the third day of creation and brought forth grass, herb, and fruit tree; it is "the Lord's" for this reason, that good is brought forth solely because good is of God and must appear to us continually as the expression of the true selfhood of everything.

The "Pharaoh" holds out as long as it can. It clamps down on us again just when we have won some measure of freedom from materialistic thinking, and so we have to go on to acknowledge yet more of the divine facts. The initiative may appear to lie with "Pharaoh," but fundamentally it is always the spiritual which holds the initiative and impels us on to learn more of God.

The commentaries refer to the Ten Plagues, but some of them indicate that there were seven, rather than ten, because three of them were different versions of the same plague in another document. It is thought that the lice and the flies constitute one plague, rather than two; that the cattle-plague and the boils also constitute one plague; and that the locusts and the thick darkness constitute one plague, since the locusts darkened the earth as they traversed it. Thus the seven plagues point to the basic facts first symbolized in the story of the seven days of creation,—the foundation for all spiritual education. In the previous chapter of this book we saw that Mary Baker Eddy epitomized the nature of God revealed in those seven "days" by the terms Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love.

The First Plague: Water Turned to Blood

The first of the plagues indicated the same fact as the first day of creation, when the divine mandate was "Let there be light." The first plague (Exodus 7:14-25) was that all the water in Egypt, whether in the rivers or streams or ponds or vessels, was turned to blood. The Egyptians were unable to drink any water; also, the fish in the rivers died, and fish was a staple food.

This plague symbolizes the great basic fact that unless thought entertains ideas of God,—ideas which partake of the nature of the divine Mind that is infinite and perfect,—it can entertain nothing but harmful illusions. We imagine that we are thinking harmlessly when we entertain the common illusions of mortality; we are really laying up trouble for ourselves, because unless our thinking has its source in what God is, it is sooner or later productive of sorrow. Materialistic reckonings and conceptions are deadly, because matter involves death. The first plague showed that without the Mind of Christ, there is only mortal (symbolized by blood) mentality, which cannot sustain man.

Human intellect is arrogant, and likes to imagine that it can "think up" on its own a good idea, but no good idea is a personal creation because it must always

have existed in the Mind which is God. That Mind expresses itself universally, and so ideas are always flowing to us in the form which is most helpful. They flash spontaneously into thought (as every creative artist knows), when we have the humility to turn expectantly to the divine Mind.

In II Kings 2:19-22 we read of how the men of Jericho came to Elisha and complained, "The water is naught, and the ground barren." Elisha asked for a new cruse with salt in it and he cast it into the spring of the waters, and then said, "Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." By casting salt (a symbol of perpetuity) into the spring of the waters, Elisha symbolized that the source of ideas is unfailing. The flow of ideas does not depend on a personal flair or on educational background. The infinite intelligence supplies unceasingly that which really quenches man's thirst for something which will not leave him thirsty under any circumstances.

The water of thought is forever flowing, and it flows either towards illusions or towards ideas. Jesus made it flow towards ideas when he turned the water into wine at the marriage in Cana, as recorded in John 2:1-11. He transformed thought so that from being dull it became inspired. The marriage represented a good human condition, and so when he turned the water into wine Jesus was indicating that such a thing as marriage can always be "wine" if it is seen to symbolize a wonderful and enduring and vital idea of relationship, which exists in God. Then the human condition helps, instead of hindering, the journey up to the realization that the only real marriage is between God and His man, the divine Principle and its expression.

The newspapers try daily to quench the thirst of readers with "water" turned to "blood" whenever they "sensationalize" shortages, strikes, crime, divorce, the weather, rumours of war, fear and hate of other nations, and so forth. On the other hand, they quench thirst with "water" turned into "wine" whenever they direct it on to such ideas as intelligence, courage, individuality. For instance, they gave water turned into wine when they reported this from King George VI's 1950 Christmas message: "if our world is to survive in any sense that makes survival worthwhile, it must learn to love, not to hate; to create, not to destroy. We stand at the beginning of a new half-century. Man will have to decide between these two creeds—perhaps the most momentous choice that he has had to make in his whole history. It will be made not as a result of any abstract political theory, but

through the way of life, the way of thought, that each one of us practices at home."

Reading constantly about divorce, to take another example, thought unconsciously becomes more and more educated into thinking that an enduringly happy relationship depends on two personalities chancing to stay in a certain mood, and that whilst this may happen for a short period it will probably change and may deteriorate beyond repair. On the other hand, anything which points to the fact that happy relationships and happy homes are dependent on every individual's obedience to the great Principle of home and happiness, is water turned into "wine."

Instead of turning to the one God which Moses was showing to be the I AM, the Egyptians "dug round about the river for water to drink."

Mortals go blindly scratching around trying to build something out of illusions, when they can always appeal to the one great creative factor, the God who is Mind.

Pharaoh's heart was hardened when the magicians of Egypt also managed to turn the water into blood. The "magicians" of to-day, too, can show the power of illusion. For instance, hypnotists constantly demonstrate it, and dictators can turn thought into channels destructive of individual freedom and life. Again, if someone habitually thinks of certain people or places as characterized by unpleasantness of some kind, "water" turns to "blood" in that his thought acts as a destructive agent to destroy (so far as he is concerned) all the good elements. Any psychologist would recognize that, but what the psychologists do not generally do is to show the positive power of idea to turn "water" into "wine." It needs a Jesus sense to do that. The psychologists are so intent on investigating mortal mentality that they do not turn their attention to the study of spiritual ideas, which alone can help humanity.

"And seven days were fulfilled, after that the Lord had smitten the river"—the fact that God is Mind was made perfectly clear.

The Second Plague: Frogs in the Bedchambers

Exodus 8:1-15 records that when Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel go, a second plague came upon the land. This was an amplification of the second day of creation, when the firmament was made to divide the waters above from the waters beneath—the firmament of understanding by which to discern between the Godlike and the un-Godlike. The second plague consisted of frogs, which came out of the river and penetrated the houses, bedchambers, beds, ovens, and kneading troughs. Pharaoh was so distressed by this that he told Moses that he would let the Israelites go if Moses would remove the frogs to the river only.

This plague showed that if there is some semblance of order in human experience, it is only because God Himself is the Principle of order. Order has been defined as "a condition in which everything is so arranged as to play its proper part" (Webster). Clearly, frogs have a proper part to play in a river, but not in a bedchamber. Dr. Johnson said, "A cow is a very good animal in the field; but we turn her out of a garden."

There is no sense of order in our everyday lives if we allow our real progress—towards Godlikeness—to be interrupted at every turn by things unhelpful, by unimportant things crowding out more essential things, and so forth. Every element of good in our lives should have its fitting place. The Preacher said, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

If we love the great spiritual fact of order, then we shan't allow ourselves to be "run around" by circumstances, nor shall we confuse order with the rigidity of a human programme, but we shall make circumstances servants to our highest conception of order; this always involves discerning what will bring us nearer to that which is of God. If in our lives there is a sense of divine order reflected, then there can be smooth procedure, whatever happens or fails to happen. Without order, there is always scrambling and jerking, hurrying and fussing.

The housewife doesn't put one sheet on a bed, hurry off to peel a potato, and then dash back to the sheet, but deals with the bed before proceeding to the potatoes. If she is disorderly, she fails to appreciate the best sequence of work, and so wastes time and effort. In other words, she has "frogs" in her "bedchamber." There is no real sense of home without an atmosphere of

order,—if we cannot find what we want without turning everything upside down, if we do not know whether or when the next meal will be provided, and if everybody's interests clash. Just so, there is no order in our thinking if we do not think out spiritual facts in an orderly way so that they are readily available as we need them, and so that they give us a standard by which to discern that which is best under particular circumstances.

Jesus drastically restored a sense of order and fitness to the temple when he purged it of moneylenders, sellers of doves, and suchlike. He saw the "frogs" of impurity (corrupt motives) entering "the house of God" and making it a den of thieves. If in our own consciousness we "sell doves," that means that we value spiritual truths solely in terms of what they will do for us by way of material improvement. In that way we lose a sense of the purity of the things of Spirit, uncontaminated by materialism, and so our progress is impeded. A false sense of values always confuses and retards, and this the second plague showed.

The Third Plague: Mosquitoes and Gnats

The third plague (Exodus 8:16-32) consisted of swarms of mosquitoes and gnats,—as the modern translations render the "lice" and "flies" of the Authorized Version. On this occasion, as distinct from the first two plagues, the magicians of Egypt could not perform the same miracle, and they were perceptive enough to say, "This is the finger of God."

This plague symbolizes that without the impress of God as Soul in human experience there would be nothing but the belief of sensation in matter. Mosquitoes and gnats were regarded as parasites which annoy the senses and are conveyors of dirt and disease. When the dust of the earth was smitten, mosquitoes and gnats came forth, symbolizing that whenever we fear the body or accept its every report on its sensations, we are giving the power of sensation to that which is really just "dust." We make dust sentient.

As mortals we believe that we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell matter through five physical senses and that they afford us a certain amount of pleasure and a certain amount of pain. The term Soul, symbolized in the third day of creation by the appearing of the dry land, indicates the changeless identity of all spiritual ideas and also the appreciation of those ideas in full detail. Obviously one cannot

appreciate a spiritual idea through a physical sense of things, but only through a spiritual sense.

If we see ugliness and pain and sorrow around us, we are seeing materially instead of spiritually. Spiritual sense reverses the testimony of material sense and identifies the definite spiritual truth of a situation as permanent and as unchangeable into anything else.

If God were not Soul, there would never be moments when we feel free from self-centredness, from the confines of the body and its sensations, and yet we often have this feeling of being "taken out of ourselves"— for instance, when our attention is absorbed by a play or a film, by an interesting conversation or train of thought, or by a piece of music.

What we need, then, is not more acute physical senses, so much as a more accurate understanding of spiritual sense. Jesus showed that, every time he healed a blind or deaf or dumb man. He frequently spat in these cases, to show his contempt for the belief of senses in matter. Jesus knew that man has spiritual senses, which enable him to appreciate accurately the beauty of the spiritual universe, and that they are forever intact, and it was this which enabled him to reproduce the normal human sense of seeing, hearing, or speaking. For instance, with the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech (see Mark 7:32-35), one can see that Jesus opened and loosened that individual's thought, so that he began to use his God-given ability to listen for ideas and express clearly what came to him. This transformation of consciousness brought about a healing of what had appeared as a merely physical disability.

When the woman with the issue of blood came to Jesus (as recorded in Mark 5:25-34), she had to be healed of slavery to her body. She was seeking for healing and when she touched Jesus' garment "the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague." It was not the touch of a material thing which healed her, but the touch of the Christ-idea of man which Jesus habitually held. Those senses which she had been wrongly conceiving of as physical, and which informed her continually of pain in her body, now bore witness to the positive sense of health. Jesus felt the thought which had been reaching out and he knew that healing had taken place, but he wanted to make the woman see where her healing had really come from and the real

form it took, so he persisted in identifying her. Eventually she came up in fear and trembling, and "told him all the truth." Then Jesus said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." He did not want the woman to think that the healing had come about through his personal sense of man in God's image, but through her own individual apprehension of the wholeness of man. The issue of blood symbolizes the belief of lack of creative manhood, of the draining away of vitality and inspiration. Jesus showed her that she had discerned her own manhood, and thus regained her full identity. An interesting point about the third plague is that it affected only the Egyptians, and this was true of all the subsequent plagues. If thought is safe in a sense that man's real selfhood is of the same nature as his Principle, then there is no longer victimization while errors boil over.

In order to see an end of the plague of gnats, Pharaoh agreed to let the children of Israel go three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to their God, but as soon as the plague was removed he hardened his heart again. "Pharaoh" does not like us to leave the conventional tramlines of materialism and go too far afield in a definite cultivation of spiritual sense, because this denies the beliefs of mortality specifically.

The Fourth Plague: Cattle-Plagues and Boils

On the next occasion that the demand "Let my people go" was refused, the fourth plague took place (Exodus 9:1-12). There were two aspects of this plague: one was cattle-disease among the Egyptian cattle, and the other was boils on Egyptian men and beasts. They both indicate the plight of man without a sense of God as Principle. Principle is that aspect of God which is elucidated in the fourth day of creation through the symbol of the sun, moon, and stars. God as Principle governs all spiritual ideas in one system and harmony; they do not have to keep themselves operating systematically and in harmony. Jesus indicated this great fact both when he said "I can of mine own self do nothing," and also when he said "I and my Father are one." Man has no underived power, but when he does his best to let the one Principle impel him, he can do "good works," because he expresses supra-personal good.

"Cattle" represent desirable moral qualities, but if such qualities are not seen as the outcome of the one universal Principle of goodness, they are liable to victimization by the so-called forces of malicious evil. Tabitha, for instance, was a

woman "full of good works and almsdeeds," but we read at the end of Acts 9 that she fell sick and died, whereupon Peter was sent for. When he arrived, he was brought into the upper chamber where the body lay, "and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them." But Peter "put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive." Peter's task was to show that Tabitha was not a personal generator of good, but expressed the universal and unfailing Principle of good. Jesus said, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." Since that divine Principle could not suffer eclipse or misfortune, its representative must also be free from the onslaughts of what are called cruel blows of fate. Because of man's failure to acknowledge this fact, people who do a great deal of human good often suffer inexplicably. There is no need for that suffering if the sense of good is impersonated.

A certain woman once cried out to Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," to which Jesus replied, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." The woman was tying Jesus down to a personal goodness which had its origin merely in heredity and environment—many people try to do this to-day. Jesus turned her attention to the universal availability of "good works" to anyone who is obedient to their Principle.

The boils on man and beast materialized when Moses took handfuls of ashes and tossed them up in the air so that they became small dust which produced sores breaking into pustules on man and beast. This was a very clear demonstration of the workings of evil. Evil is fundamentally nothingness (ashes), because it postulates the existence of something contrary to infinite good, but it appears to personalize itself, to attach itself to people, who thereupon are used as instruments of malicious purposes. Whereas the cattle-plague showed that the belief of personal goodness brings unnecessary penalty, the boils showed that the belief of personal evil also brings unnecessary penalty. All evil is the expression of the one liar, and if we silence that liar by realizing its fundamental impotence, then it cannot use us as a mouthpiece. In arithmetic the only thing which makes us let $5 \times 7 = 37$ enter our calculations is our lack of understanding of the principle of arithmetic. In the same way, if we are not living in accordance

with the divine Principle of man, whether consciously or unconsciously, we let ourselves be used by miscalculation. Once we get back to working according to our Principle, however, the mistake goes and has no repercussions.

Jesus once said, "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!"—woe comes to anyone who allows himself to be used as a "carrier" of evil. We can be infected with evil only if we regard ourselves materialistically and not as ideas established in the divine Principle of goodness. Jesus said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth"—Principle loves to interpret itself to all who approach it with complete meekness and obedience, and the result is that they bring harmony into human affairs.

The Fifth Plague: Hail

The fifth plague (Exodus 9:13-35) was one of thunder and hail, and fire mingled with the hail. It was a direct opposite of the fifth day of creation, in which the fact of Life was symbolized by the soaring birds and the prolific fish. This plague "smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field." What a good symbol this hail is of the so-called inevitability of decay and death. Nothing can stand before it, so it is claimed. Mortals live "in the valley of the shadow of death" from the moment of birth. Nothing, however, can kill an idea that is eternally present in the one Being. Mortals who do not see this pay the penalty with such cheerless beliefs as old age and incurable disease.

Hail is icy cold. The sense of old age as deprivation and deterioration and loneliness is a cold and cruel thing, but it cannot come where there is a real love of life, of living spiritual values which are warm and abundant, because such a love looks forward to greater and greater good, instead of longing for the past and fearing an end of everything. One of the Proverbs is, "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold." The real ploughman keeps his eyes well ahead and works steadily forward, in spite of the weather.

Whenever life loses for us its warmth and interest and adventure, we yield to the influence of death (even if it merely takes the form of depression). We may at some time seem to go through what is called death, but it will not bring suffering

to us or to those whom we love if we have a view of Life which is fresh and progressive and always with us. Death has no meaning, no reality, and no power for thought which is striding forward in the realm of living ideas, which looks to the everlasting "hills" and to the dawn of wonderful new ideas. Such thought is always "creating" good, and so finds more and more to love and enjoy, more and more opportunities for friendship and attainment.

In II Kings 2:23, 24 there is a story of Elisha which is incredible if taken literally, but which in its spiritual meaning is most significant. Some little children mocked Elisha, saying, "Go up, thou bald head." They were taunting him with old age, so he cursed them in the name of the Lord and there came forth two she-bears, who ate them up. Elisha saw that if we keep the idea of Life as warm as a mother-bear keeps her young, then the mocking "laws" of either old age or youth will not touch us, but will be themselves consumed.

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? . . . He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

The Sixth Plague: Locusts and Darkness

Chapter 10 records that when Pharaoh heard that his refusal to let the children of Israel go would lead to a plague of locusts, he tried to make another compromise, but Moses was an "all-or-nothing" leader, and so the sixth plague took its course. This counterfeited the fact of God as Truth, epitomized in the sixth day of creation by man in God's image and likeness, having dominion over all things.

Moses stretched forth his rod again, and the Lord brought an east wind, which brought the locusts. They "covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened," and they ate up every green thing. After the locusts came a plague of thick darkness, darkness which could be "felt," so that the Egyptians couldn't rise up from where they were nor see one another for three days. Meanwhile all the Israelites "had light in their dwellings."

These two plagues, or two aspects of one plague, indicate again the plight of man without God. They show that without God as Truth,— awareness of the spiritual truth of everything,—man would be deprived of full consciousness. Consciousness is a whole and includes our continual awareness of our whole universe. It is a compound thing; it includes what we understand of God, and our whole attitude to our experience, and our whole attitude to the body. If the highest level of our consciousness is without a proper realization of God, then our habitual attitude to life is adversely influenced, and our sense of our body also. For instance, if one day we think of ourselves primarily as persons with a great number of things to do, then our outlook on life is tainted by irritability and rush, and the body soon reflects this in tension or tiredness of some kind. If our overlying consideration is the fact that "God hath done all things well," then this will enter our lives as a sense of intelligence, order, definiteness, and so forth, so certain that it will regulate quite naturally our attitude to everything, and the physical will be to us merely a useful servant. When we find our moral sense becoming wrongly influenced, or jaundiced, then that is our signal for bringing our highest level of consciousness into line again with the divine ideal.

The locusts symbolize that which consumes the "green things," or vigorous elements, which form part of a healthy consciousness, and the thick darkness also indicates that which prevents our consciousness from including everything rightly. Every part of consciousness is essential to the whole, and no part is unimportant, just as every member of an orchestra must function rightly in order to produce the right whole effect.

What are these "locusts" which consume the ingredients which are essential to a healthy experience? They are such things as apathy, cowardice, selfishness, which confine the action of the divine ideal to the intellectual stratosphere, instead of seeing that it has a healing effect at all levels of consciousness and that we must demand proof of this. The "locusts" tell us that our human behaviour is of no account so long as we know the truth about the Principle of the universe, or they say that healing the sick or redeeming the sinner is of no importance because it is the spiritual fact alone which counts. It is, but we deny the wholeness of Truth if we deny that it has its effect at every level. Jesus said, "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house,"—a sense of Truth permeates all that is included in consciousness.

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins at the beginning of Matthew 25 shows that unless we are faithful over the "few things," which serve to replenish the oil in our lamps, those lamps of spiritual understanding will go out, and we shall be left in darkness. If steadfastly and faithfully we keep the lamp burning, we enjoy the marriage with the true idea of man,—"the fullness of the stature" of God's man. And so the sixth plague indicates how to forestall the clouds of "locusts" or of darkness from obscuring our vision of that man of God's creating, who is "every whit whole."

The Seventh Plague: The Slaying of the Firstborn

Pharaoh now offered to let the people go, so long as they left their cattle. But Moses refused this further compromise, and the last plague (Exodus 11; 12:1-30) thereupon assailed the Egyptians. This was the slaying of all the firstborn of Egypt—"there was not a house where there was not one dead." The seventh plague points by reversal to the seventh day, in which God rested—a symbol of God as Love, of the completeness and fulfilment of every idea in God's universe.

The angel of the Lord was to "pass over" the houses where the Israelites were, and therefore elaborate instructions were given them for seeing that their houses were adequately marked out. Each Israelite household was told to prepare a lamb without blemish, sprinkle its blood on the doorposts and lintel, and eat it with sandals on and staff in hand.

This ceremony symbolizes a willing sacrifice of a materialistic sense of things. If we make such a "sacrifice" in our thinking, then we never need fear separation from that which we love. We can give up our deep-rooted materialistic habit of reckoning only when we really appreciate the full perfection of God's ideas—the seventh day sense of things.

Only the Egyptians lost their firstborn—in other words, only that which clings to the physical can lose anything worthy of love. If we have an understanding of God as Love, we can never be without the presence of that which we can love. Such an understanding shows us that the only reason why something or someone appears lovely and lovable to us is that we are basking in the reflected glory of Love itself. This glory of Love casts a glow on something in our experience so that we rejoice in it, are grateful for it, and quite naturally express our love for it. So it is not things or persons intrinsically that we love, but that

which we love and that which loves is Love itself, and Love without a present reflection would be as unthinkable as the sun without its rays.

Human love is much intermixed with fear, which is at bottom a fear that death will overtake the person loved; the only remedy for this deep-lying fear is a greater and greater appreciation of the motherhood of God, which cares for every idea throughout eternity and at every moment.

The story of the Shunammite woman whose only son died is a wonderful illustration of this. It is told in II Kings 4:8-37. Because of this woman's provision for the man of God, Elisha, she had been able to conceive and bear a son. But one day the child said to his father in the field, "my head, my head." The father had him carried to his mother, but he" died soon after. She laid him on the bed of the man of God in an upper room, and then shut the door on him and went out. She was sacrificing her "lamb" in that she was refusing to acknowledge as truth the so-called "hard facts" of the case. She insisted on going to the man of God in spite of her husband's objection that it was "neither new moon, nor sabbath." She said to her servant, "Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee."

Elisha sent his servant to meet her and to ask, "Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?" Her answer was, "It is well." She rested in the perfection of her family as a fulfilled fact in the sight of God, and she held faithfully to that, in spite of all the material evidence pointing to a most bitter loss and a tragic mockery of the promise which Elisha had made.

Elisha told his servant to go and lay his (Elisha's) staff on the face of the child, but the mother refused to be satisfied until Elisha agreed to come himself to the child, with the result that he was restored to her alive. She had held faithful to a spiritual ideal, and she knew that the divinity of Love embraces humanity and so allows no vacuum, no sense of bereavement, and nourishes no fear.

The Plagues: A Summary

The plagues illustrate a great sevenfold process which is always going on. We may summarize them by saying that they show that

1. without the fact of God as Mind, as the infinite source of intelligent ideas, thought could entertain only mortal illusions;

2. without the fact of God as Spirit, as infinite divine order and purity, there would be nothing but disorder and confusion;
3. without the fact of God as Soul, as the changeless identity of all ideas and as infinite spiritual sense to appreciate that in full detail, there would be nothing but ever-changing corporeal sensation;
4. without the fact of God as Principle, as the basis of spiritual Science and universal harmony, there would be nothing but vulnerable personal good and a basis from which evil could operate to infect men;
5. without the fact of God as Life, as ever-present Being, decay and death would be the inevitable end for all;
6. without the fact of God as Truth, as the infinite divine consciousness aware of its own wholeness, there would be nothing but inroads on health at every level;
7. without the fact of God as Love, as the infinite perfection and completeness of all ideas, there would be nothing but fear and insecurity, and no assurance that we might not be robbed at any moment of that which we hold dear.

When we look at the record of the plagues in this light, it brings out wonderful spiritual facts in a way that is both systematic and living. Of course, that is the great achievement of the Scriptures.

The Departure from Egypt

After the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt, it was Pharaoh himself who told the children of Israel to go and serve the Lord, and he no longer imposed any conditions on their departure. Before they left, the Israelites were told by their God to ask the Egyptians for gold and silver jewels and raiment. In other words, when we prove our freedom from some bondage, we go forward much richer than before,—richer in the joy of spiritual understanding and in intimate experience of its redeeming power.

The people had to leave with such speed that they were forced to take their dough with them before it was leavened. Afterwards this incident was perpetuated in an annual Feast of Unleavened Bread, lasting seven days. Paul wrote, "let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The learning of spiritual facts through the seven days of creation may seem to us at first heavy-going, but if our desire to understand them is sincere, they soon

become to us the "food" which we love above all and which we find the most sustaining.

On their journey out of Egypt God went before the children of Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. To-day this means to us that a scientific understanding of God acts as a guide and assurance both in the "day" of unimpeded advance and in the "night" of difficulty and doubt. It never leaves us unattended, whether things appear to be going well or badly.

The Crossing of the Red Sea

Chapter 14 tells the very well-known story of the crossing of the Red Sea. Pharaoh soon began to repent of having let the Israelites go, and so he hurried after them with horses and chariots and a large army, and overtook them just as they were encamped by the Red Sea. The children of Israel were "sore afraid," and complained bitterly to Moses: "Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." Moses' reply was magnificent: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

When some form of slavery from which we thought we were finally free makes its last stand, our only course is to stand firm by the divine facts which we have accepted, but which fear has temporarily blurred for us. Those facts do the fighting, and not we ourselves. God then said to Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea." What does this mighty command signify to us when we are trying to cross the "Red Sea" from a situation from which there is no escape except in going forward through spiritual understanding? It points to the process epitomized in the first three days of creation. It demands that we appeal to the power of divine ideas—"lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea;" that we use our understanding of the second day of creation to discern the supremacy of those ideas over all material conditions—"and divide it;" and that we allow those ideas to become absolutely definite to us—"and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground

through the midst of the sea." When that happens, the waters become "a wall" to us on both sides—they serve only to intensify our sense of safety.

The Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the midst of the sea, but the waters came rolling back on them at the divine command, and they were all drowned—"there remained not so much as one of them."

So if we really use our understanding of God in some situation, however formidable it appears, we shall see the destruction of the whole "Egyptian army," for the same power which gives us a safe passage also destroys utterly all that would impede our freedom. Then like Moses and the children of Israel we shall "sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously."

Spiritual Education

Moses' achievement of the spiritual education of the children of Israel is of vital interest to us, because the only thing which can effectually help humanity is education in spiritual facts. Many responsible people to-day proclaim that the answer to the world's problems lies in the realm of the spiritual, but very few understand what they mean, because "the spiritual" is a vague concept to them. Yet the Bible has shown for centuries beyond a doubt that spiritual things are not vague, but orderly and systematic, and that they can be learned and proved.

What Moses had to get rid of was the indoctrination of the children of Israel by "Pharaoh," and our task is essentially the same. Jesus' prayer was: "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was"—before the misconception of being temporarily gained the stage. Our "glory" is that we are the sons of God divinely, but we have to prove, as Jesus did, that "the prince of this world hath nothing" in us. This we can do only through a positive process of education in the eternal truths of God and man,—truths more wonderful and more powerful than anything which mortality can possibly offer.