

# SERMON III.

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ON THE LORD'S CALLING OF ABRAM, WITH THE  
REVELATION AND PROMISE OF CHRIST TO  
HIM.

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GENESIS xii. 1, 2, 3.

*“ Now the Lord had said unto Abram, 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, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”*

IMMEDIATELY upon the fall, it was declared by the Lord God to Adam, that “ the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.” This great and most blessed revelation of Christ, who was set forth by God as a propitiation through faith in his blood, with the cherubic emblems of the three in Jehovah, whose will, covenant, and decree, it was to save an innumerable

company of the sinners of mankind from sin, satan, death, and hell, by the incarnation, obedience, and death of the only begotten Son of God, was the gospel which the antediluvian patriarchs were favored with. Noah, on his coming out of the ark, offered his burnt-offerings to Jehovah, in the faith of Christ's one efficacious oblation of himself in the fulness of time. And hereon the everlasting covenant is afresh proclaimed and established, with a fresh renewal of the revelation concerning the promised seed; the Almighty Conqueror of sin, satan, death and hell. These words, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," for in the image of God made he man, refer to Christ, the woman's seed. A learned writer says, the word whoso, is not in the original, it is, "he who sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." So that it is from the mouth of Jehovah, a fresh declaration concerning Jesus Christ, that Omnipotent One, who should destroy satan, who was the original cause of introducing the shedding of man's blood, and of propagating sin and death amongst mankind. It was God's immutable will that he whose trade and business it had been to shed man's blood, and bring him under the power of death, should be completely conquered by man, by the God-man, who is the image of the invisible God. The reason given, why the shedder of man's blood should be

destroyed, shews, that the attempting his destruction, must be the most enormous crime a creature could commit, and deserved the most exemplary punishment; namely, that he, the murderer of man, should be destroyed by the man who was his perfect image; or that seed of the woman who should finally bruise the head of the old serpent, called the devil.

Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood, and saw the inhabitants of the new world, almost as corrupt as those were who lived in the old world. He conveyed down the true knowledge of the essence and personalities of Jehovah to the times of Terah, the father of Abraham, and died but two years before the birth of Abram, in the year of the world 2006, and lived to see the tenth generation after him before his death. Shem stands on the list of the generation of the new world, or, the world after the flood, without father, or mother, as to any mention of them, or beginning of days, or end of life. Hence some have affirmed him to be Melchizedeck. He was the beloved of God; an elect vessel of mercy. He was truly blessed, because he had Jehovah, the three in covenant, for his God. In the account given of him, it is recorded, that his father, in a prophetic manner, pronounced what would be the case and circumstances of his other sons in their posterity, and of him, and his also, saying, "Blessed be the Lord

God of Shem." Or rather, says one, as there is neither verb nor tense in the original, "Blessed is Shem of the Lord his God." His name was in the book of life. He begat Arphaxad the second year after the flood, which was in the year of the world 1658. Selah, his son, was born in the year of the world 1693. Eber, the son of Selah, was born in the year of the world 1723. He was the longest liver of all born after the flood, and they who came after him lived not half so long: he outlived Abraham. Ainsworth says, Adam and all the patriarchs spake in the Hebrew tongue: and it was used by all the world for the space of 1715 years, till Peleg, the son of Eber, was born, and the tower of Babel was building, which was one hundred years after the flood. After which it was in use among the Hebrews, and was conveyed down to Abraham by Eber, the oldest man born since the flood. Peleg, the son of Eber, was born in the year of the world 1757. In his days the earth was divided. By which Dr. Lightfoot understands the confounding of the languages at Babel: and as this happened about the time of his birth, his name was given as a memorial of it. And the age of man from that time was shortened. He died the first of the postdiluvian patriarchs, to shew the Lord's displeasure with that rebellion against his majesty and worship; which broke forth in the year of his birth. The original of

idolatry, which began at Babel, in the land of Shinar, or Babylon, or Chaldea, where a city and tower was begun to be built to the names, or to the heavens, seems to be this. Men began, from their observations, to see and know, that fire, light, and air, the three great agents in nature, had a universal influence in carrying on all the operations in nature, and that their effects were manifested throughout the whole of our system. They, therefore, began to ascribe divinity to them, and worship them under the idea of various attributes which they gave them, from the effects which were seen to be produced by them.

Adam, in paradise, understood that the Lord God had created the heavens into a machine capable of supporting themselves mechanically by perpetual motion and circulation, in imitation of perpetual life, and of communicating motion, and so life, to animal bodies, as a type of the life that he, the incomprehensible Jehovah, is the fountain of, and as a memorial of the life the essential Three in the one Jehovah have to give to the soul. So that hereby, in the state of purity Adam was in before his fall, the great mystery of the Trinity was made clear to his understanding by sense.

This, which may well be called bible philosophy, was communicated to those patriarchs he was cotemporary with. Noah was well ac-

quainted with it, and it served to exhibit ideas of what men could not otherwise arrive at; the mode of existence, and manner of acting of the persons in Jehovah. The unity of the incomprehensible essence, is exhibited by its unity of substance; the Trinity of persons by its trinity of conditions, fire, light, and spirit, or air. Thus the heavens in its one substance, in its three conditions, shews the Unity in Trinity, and its three conditions in or of one substance, the Trinity in Unity.

Thus true philosophy was a real foundation to support and give testimony to what was revealed concerning the mode of existence, and manner of acting, in which the eternal Three were engaged by an everlasting covenant, to display and express their grace towards an innumerable company of the sinners of mankind. But men mistaking God's design, in giving them in their heavens and the three conditions, an illustrious proof of his own essence and personality; and perceiving the influence of the heavens, in and over all things in our world, worshipped the visible and material trinity, in the room and stead of the essential, incomprehensible, and uncreated Three, who bare record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. The divine economy of the eternal Three in the covenant of grace, was exhibited in the cherubim which Jehovah placed at the east of the

garden of Eden; which was the antediluvian oracle. We read not of the primary cherubim after the flood; but we read of Nimrod, the rebel, as his name imports, who is considered by some learned men, to be an apostate, who set himself against the appointed way of salvation; persecuted the children of God; and, as the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, or Babylon, it seems probable he was at the head of those who joined in building a city, and a tower, to worship the heavens; which the Lord put a stop to, by confounding their speech, and scattering them over all the earth, so that they left off to build the city.

Reu, the son of Peleg, was born in the year of the world 1787. Serug, the son of Reu, was born in the year of the world 1819. Nahor, the son of Serug, was born in the year of the world 1849. Terah, the son of Nahor, was born in the year of the world 1878. Nahor died the year after Peleg, to shew the displeasure of God, says Dr. Lightfoot, against the idolatry which was begun in that line. Abram, the son of Terah, was born in the year of the world 2008.

We have a solemn testimony concerning the personalities in Jehovah given us, in what is recorded concerning the building the city and tower of Babel. Nimrod, being a powerful prince, had, doubtless, a great lead and influence with the people in that affair. They,

coming to the plain of Shinar, were unanimous in their speech and talk, and this plain being very delightful, they intended all to settle there. They, therefore, encouraged one another to build a city and tower, or temple, to prevent their separation; but the Lord God miraculously interposed. This was a very suitable time for Jehovah, when men were turning apostates, and setting up the worship of the material trinity, to give his elect in that age, a further evidence of his mode of existing, as Three in One and One in Three, in the essential Godhead. Hence we read, that the Lord, taking a view of what was doing by the sons of men, said, "Let *us* go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." Gen. xi. 7. Here is the language of *us*, which is consecrated by the Holy Ghost, as in use with the persons in the infinite essence, and used by each of them to each other, and therefore recorded in the old and new testament as pronounced by each of them. By the Father, in Gen. i. 26.—iii. 22. Here, I think, in the person of the Son, to whom all judgment is committed, John v. 22. In Isaiah vi. 8. the Holy Ghost speaks personally in the language of *us*; and our Lord uses it in his address to his Father, in John xvii. 21. One in the infinite and incomprehensible essence, speaks to others in the same Godhead, who must of necessity be co-equal

and co-eternal in the one incomprehensible Jehovah.

It was the work of God to confound the language, as it was the work of God alone to bestow the gifts of divers languages on the day of Pentecost. By this confusion of speech, the people were scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. Shem's posterity, possessed Asia; Ham's descendants, Africa; Japhet's posterity, Europe. Thus Shem was witness to two most solemn and wonderful dispensations, viz. the deluge, and the dispersion at Babel. He stands on the holy line, and is stiled the father of all the children of Eber. That is, says the learned Mr. Parkhurst, the father of all those who were passengers and pilgrims, who were passing from one line to another, as the holy line were, till their settlement in Canaan, and who also when in it, confessed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and hereby plainly declared, that they sought a better, that is, an heavenly. According to Dr. Lightfoot, Shem lived seventy-five years after Abram came into the land of Canaan, and died six hundred years old, in the year of the world 2158. Eber, his great grandson, from whom Abraham and the jews derived the name of the Hebrews, preserved the Hebrew tongue, and with it the true knowledge and worship of God, notwithstanding the general apostacy of the times he lived in: he was the

longest liver of all born since the flood. He outlived Abraham, and died, according to Dr. Lightfoot, in the year of the world 2187, aged four hundred and sixty-four years. Abraham was the seventh generation from this great prophet and patriarch, as Enoch was from Adam. There were ten generations from the creation to the flood; and Abraham was the tenth generation from the flood. Shem lived to see Abraham's beloved son Isaac, who was fifty years old when Shem died. His long life was a blessing both to himself and them. In both these genealogies, that of Adam to Noah, and from Shem to Abram, we have the lineage of our Lord Jesus Christ, who came from them according to the flesh. In consequence of the dispersion, it seems to me, that Shem and Eber dwelt in some part of the land of Canaan, and Nabor dying, Terah lived in Mesopotamia; he and Abram lived at Ur, in Mesopotamia, when the Lord first called Abram, see Gen. xv. 7. Nabor, Terah, and it may be Abram also, were fallen into idolatry; they lived in an idolatrous country. Ur, signifies light and fire. The Chaldeans had consecrated this place to the worship of light and fire, and named it accordingly. Nimrod having raised a monarchy at Babel, or Babylon, in the land of Chaldea, continued his worship of the material trinity; and the tower built by him and his associates, which we commonly call the

tower of Babel, continued to the time of Nebuchadnezzar, who converted it into a temple to his god Bell, who was no other than Nimrod, the rebel. This latter was his Hebrew name, and the former was his Babylonish one. See Dr. Prideaux's connection, part. I. vol. I. page 143, 144, 145. Chaldea, or Babylon, is said to be the land of graven images. Jer. l. 38. That Nahor and Terah were idolaters, is expressed by Joshua; who says, in his last address to the tribes of Israel; "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood, (*i. e.* of the river Euphrates) even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods." Joshua xxiv. 2. This might be the consequence of the persecution raised by Nimrod against those who rejected the worshipping of the agents in nature, and in defiance of him worshipped the three in Jehovah.

It is clear, that the Lord called Abram out of an idolatrous country. On being called, he leaveth his idolatry, and obeyeth the Lord's call, and so also doth his father Terah. And they, with the rest of their family, depart from Ur, and go to Haran, where they dwell; at which place Terah dieth, and Nahor, his son, continues at. Terah being dead, the Lord giveth Abram another call to leave it, which he did, and he was seventy and five years when he departed out of Haran. This is Dr. Lightfoot's account of it. Ur, in

Mesopotamia, seems to be that part of Asia, in which Padan-aram lay. It was situated between two rivers, viz. Euphrates and Tigris, or Hiddekel. Haran seems to be the same with Padan-aram; this was the place where Abram was, when he received this call, which is recorded in the text before us.

I will now enter on my text, which reads thus; "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, 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; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

In which scripture we have the following particulars.

First. The Lord's calling of Abram out of Ur, of the Chaldees, to leave it, and his father's house, and follow the Lord's call into a land which he would shew him.

Secondly. The Lord's promise to encourage him; he engages to make of him a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great, and to make him a blessing.

Thirdly. The Lord's declaration, by way of encouragement, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."

And, fourthly. A glorious unfolding of the everlasting gospel unto him, saying, "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

These are the particulars of the words before us; and I shall aim to speak upon, and open each, according to the order and division given. And to proceed, I will first speak concerning the Lord's calling Abram out of Ur, of the Chaldees, to leave it, and his father's house, and follow the Lord's call, into a land which Jehovah would shew him. This for the more clear and easy apprehension of, I will aim to set forth each and every particular thereof, and also will aim to include and connect with it the principal outlines of what is recorded concerning this great patriarch, and father of the faithful. I will mention the words of my text afresh, which belong to my first particular. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee of."

It is clear from hence, that Abram was born in sin, and also remained dead in trespasses and sins, and lived with idolaters and in an idolatrous country, until he was effectually called by grace. God's elect are all in a state of sin by their first birth. Abram was chosen in Christ before the world was, as the object of the Father's everlasting love. The essential Word and Son of the Father, had, in the everlasting covenant, un-

dertaken to redeem him from all iniquity; and the eternal Spirit, in the same divine covenant, had engaged to be the breath of spiritual life to him. And according to this stipulation, it pleased him to inspire the mind of Abram, and quicken his soul, with spiritual, supernatural, and eternal life; by which he produced in him a real spiritual birth. Thus Abram was, through the divine agency of the Holy Ghost, born again, and created anew in Christ Jesus, and made a partaker, to use the apostle Peter's expression, of the divine nature; that is, of such a spiritual and supernatural principle and faculty, as fitted him for communion with God: and having thus been regenerated by the Holy Ghost, he was called out of darkness into marvellous light; and called to leave his country, kindred, and his father's house. In what way this call was given, is no further expressed than thus. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram," &c. I conceive that Jehovah the Spirit, having wrought effectually within him, Jehovah the Savior might assume a human form, and in a visionary way appear to and with an audible and articulate voice address him. This I rather apprehend to be the medium of his conversing with Abram; and after this time it seems from various accounts, and especially from what is recorded Gen. xxxii. 24. that this was his method of shewing himself, and conversing with his saints under the patriarchal dispensation. Be

this as it may, the Lord's voice was heard: it was powerful, and attended with the demonstration of the Spirit, so that Abram had undoubted evidence that it came from God. And he immediately attended to what was commanded him. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee."

As this divine command came with power, so he immediately complied with it, and it was the obedience of faith. So saith the apostle. "By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went," Heb. xi. 8. The Lord did not name the land, that there might be the greater room for the exercise of Abram's faith. It was the land of Canaan which was possessed by the sons of Canaan, the grandson of Noah, who was under the cursed power and influences of sin and satan; which was evident by the prophecy denounced by Noah, as expressive of the case of his posterity. Abram's call to leave his country, kindred, and father's house, may serve to shew, and remind us of the marvellous change made by effectual calling, in the heart, state and life, of such as are called out of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of

God's dear Son. Canaan was to Abram a figure and type of the heavenly inheritance.

The Lord to encourage Abram, does, secondly, most graciously engage to make of him a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great, and to make him a blessing. Thus it pleases Jehovah to open his heart and make known the good pleasure of his will concerning him. He had chosen Abram out as an object of his electing love, whom he would distinguish in a very peculiar way, by making him one of high renown; the greatest patriarch next to Noah. The original promise of a Savior, which was the foundation of all that faith and hope in God, which had been found in the church of the living God, from the fall, down to the deluge, and which was professed by Noah when he came forth out of the ark, and Shem, who had Jehovah for his God, was also a partaker of, was now again repeated, and as the highest blessing and dignity which could be conferred, it is promised to, and limited unto Abraham and his descendants. Thus God himself preaches the gospel unto Abram, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." Gal. iii. 8. Abram was to enter into Canaan, which was to be the seat in which the church was to be for a season. From him, through successive generations, the Messiah was to proceed. For this end his posterity were to be a peculiar people, distinct from all the world

beside, and were blessed with peculiar laws and ordinances, respecting their civil and ecclesiastical state, which served to point out and keep up the faith of believers in the incarnation of Christ. What the Lord revealed concerning Christ, and promised Abram, most certainly belongs to all believers, with this distinction, only that to him many temporal promises were also given, such as personal blessings, a numerous posterity who were to descend from him, and especially a peculiar seed, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. The Lord says to him, by way of encouraging him to forsake his own country, kindred, and father's house, and come into the land of Canaan, "And I will make of thee a great nation;" which was most fully accomplished by the numerous tribes of Ishmaelites and Edomites, and also by the sons he had by Keturah, together with the posterity of Jacob, the chosen line, and all this Jehovah declared, when as yet he had no child; and he was now seventy-five years old, which fully proves the truth of Paul's assertion, that God "calleth the things which be not, as though they were." Rom. iv. 17. The Lord adds to this, by saying, "And I will bless thee." The blessing of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, lies at the foundation of all, and extends to every thing which God can bestow on his people in time or eternity. Under this term is included

and comprehended all the Lord God is by covenant relation to his church and people, and all which it is the good pleasure of his will to bestow on them in earth or heaven. And in this blessing all the people of God are personally and equally interested. The Lord God in these words opens his good treasure, and gives his servant a vast view of his everlasting love, and of those transcendent blessings which flowed from it, and would continue to flow from it world without end. The Lord further adds, "And I will make thy name great;" which has been eminently fulfilled. His name is great throughout the whole scripture. He is stiled the friend of God, the father of all that believe. His name was great as the patriarch of the people of the jews; as the great and only one, to whom the promise of the Messiah that he should descend from him, was given; and he had also a great name among the heathen nations, kings, and princes, who were cotemporary with him. To all which the Lord adds, "and thou shalt be a blessing:" which he was, as by him the true knowledge of Christ Jesus, was conveyed to his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob, and down to the twelve patriarchs of the jewish nation: whose greatest glory was, that of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ was to come, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." These were most divine excitements and encouragements indeed.

And, thirdly, the Lord adds to all this, by way of encouragement, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."

God's blessing includes all good, as God's curse includes all evil. This seems to be spoken to encourage him, to expect all necessary good from such as he might sojourn among, and to arm him against all fear of evil from those who might be his enemies. And thus the Lord undertakes to guard, keep, bless, and defend him, and gives observers to see that he was the blessed of the Lord. This was very necessary, seeing he was to be a pilgrim and wanderer, consequently he must be subject to the good and ill will of such as he should converse with.

And, fourthly, the Lord God unfolds to him, the everlasting gospel, saying, "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Thus the great Mediator, and Almighty Jesus, who had been revealed and promised immediately upon the fall, as the seed of the woman, the serpent bruiser, and whose death had been shadowed forth in Abel's oblation, and also in Noah's, who was the object and foundation of Shem's faith, and also of Eber's, is here afresh proclaimed and revealed to Abram, as the fountain and spring of all spiritual and temporal blessings; to shew, that with Christ, the Father freely gives all things; and also to suggest, that all the Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity can bestow, and

convey to the elect, is treasured up in the person and fulness of the God-man, and flows down upon them most freely, and abundantly, through the incarnation, salvation, and mediation, of our most precious Lord. The apostle Paul quotes these words, and thus explains and applies them. "And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all the nations be blessed." Gal. iii. 8. Thus Christ, and the gospel, is expressed in this comprehensive word blessing. And all the blessings of the eternal Three which will be bestowed on the church and people of God is contained in Christ. It is in him all the families of the earth, that is, all that know the Lord, shall be blessed. Their blessedness is in Christ; and they are blessed in him beyond description and conception: being saved in him from all evil, and entitled in him to all good. They are heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ to all spiritual and eternal blessings.

Thus the original revelation of Christ receives, as it were, a new edition; and Abram has such a view of it set before him as could not fail of enlightening his mind, gladdening his heart, and drawing his whole soul after Christ, and fixing all his affections supremely on Jesus, the blesser of his people and heritage. Thus the original promise, or declaration, that the woman should have a seed which should bruise

the serpent's head, and shed the blood of him who had shed man's blood, who brought in and propagated death among men, as promised to Noah, is now renewed to Abraham, under the notion of a seed, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

Having thus briefly opened the particulars of the text, I proceed to make some general observations on them; and will also aim to include and connect with it the principal outlines of what is recorded concerning this great patriarch and father of the faithful.

Observation 1. It is plain, from attending to Abram's descent, that he belonged to the high and holy line of election; and effectual calling is the fruit of it. Being called by divine grace, he obeys it; and, like a true penitent, leaves his idolatry, father's house and family, and country. Just so all who are born again, forsake their former evil courses, walk in new ways, forsake their sinful companions, turn their backs on the world, and follow Christ in the regeneration. Abram sets out from Haran, where his brother Nahor remained. Abram was called, and had the promise of Christ in the scripture before us, in the year of the world, according to Lightfoot, 2083.

Observation 2. When the Lord called Abram, he so suited his revelation and promise of Christ

to him, as most effectually suited his case, and comforted his heart. He was to go into the land of Canaan. All God's promises concerning Christ, and the numerous personal and various blessings which were to be conferred on him, and his, were to be fulfilled in that land. This was to be the grand scene where Jehovah was to act his wonders, and display his grace. The Messiah was here to dwell in the tents of Shem, and manifest forth his glory. The temple was to be a memorial of him, and a pledge of his incarnation. Abram, with Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all belonging to them, went forth from Ur, and Haran, in Mesopotamia, to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they all came. As Abram entered it in faith, so being in it he expressed his faith. He builded an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him, probably in a visible human form, as a pledge of the incarnation of the essential Word, and said unto him, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Jehovah speaks in the stile of a sovereign proprietor. This must greatly confirm the faith of Abram, the Canaanite being then in the land. Doubtless, the patriarch's heart must have been greatly refreshed with this appearance of Christ, and his fresh promise. And he removed to Bethel, as it was afterwards called, and built an altar unto the Lord, and called on the name of the Lord.

It is worthy our remembrance, that the first thing recorded of Abram, upon his entrance into the land of promise is, his building an altar unto Jehovah. The altar was to offer sacrifice on. This was the way in which Christ from the beginning, on his being revealed and proclaimed as the seed of the woman, the Almighty Conqueror of sin, satan, death, and hell, and the Savior of his church and people, had been exhibited in an ordinance way to the faithful. And in their observance of this mode of instituted worship, prescribed by the Lord, they expressed their faith in the person, covenant engagements, and future incarnation, sacrifice, and salvation of Immanuel. It must be remembered, and ought ever to be kept on the mind, that although Jesus was, on his being thus revealed to Abram, his all in all, yet this was not a new revelation of Jesus Christ; no. He was revealed first, immediately upon the fall; he was, by the same revelation, known to all the elect antediluvian patriarchs, and was worshipped by Shem and Eber, both post-diluvian patriarchs, and now he was revealed to Abram in a further and also a fuller manner, as to some particulars relating to him; as that he was to be the seed of Abram, who was to proceed from him and his descendants. Abram is the first man in the world of whom it is recorded that the Lord appeared to him; this was astonishing grace! Stephen says, "The God of glory

appeared unto our father Abram when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charan, called in the old testament Haran. The cherubim, the substitute of the God of Israel, is called by the apostle the cherubim of glory. Heb. ix. And Stephen calls Jehovah, who appeared to Abram, "The God of glory." From hence I conceive the appearance of the Lord to Abram in Haran, and also at his entrance into the land of Canaan, was something like the appearance and manifestation made of himself in the cherubic emblems, which he inhabited at the east of the garden of Eden. Or, rather I conceive that the second person in the self-existing essence, who was pointed out in the cherubic figure, as the substitute and sacrifice of his church, and who at this time was pleased to assume a human form, as a pledge of his future incarnation, and shone forth with majesty, lustre, and glory, in the view of Abram; so as that he knew him to be Jehovah Jesus, and worshipped him as such. He built altars again and again as he removed from one place to another, and called upon the name of the Lord. He was led through divine light, and supernatural teaching, to worship Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; as co-equal and co-eternal in one incomprehensible Godhead, through the one Mediator Christ Jesus: and that according to the divine rule of instituted worship, which was by sacrifices, as solemn and expressive

memorials of Immanuel's most precious and efficacious blood-shedding and death.

Observation 3. In this call and revelation of Jesus Christ, made to Abram, the whole of Christ is contained, and all which follows upon it, both promises and appearances, manifestations and deliverances, is but an opening and unfolding what was hid and contained in the words before us; so that in this call of Abram we have the foundation of the Jewish nation, and a right view and understanding of it would cast great light upon a great part of the holy scripture. Many great and pregnant proofs are given in both the old and new testament proving Abram to be the father of all them that believe, and that they who believe are blessed with faithful Abram. The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, proves that Abraham was justified by faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and was pronounced by the Lord a justified person upon the footing of Christ's righteousness imputed unto him. In his epistle to the Galatians, he points out the faith of Abraham as that which evidenced his interest in the promised blessing, and suggests the early and original publication of the gospel to him, which he makes to consist in this, that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in his seed; and that none might imagine, that any nation, or people, descending from him, was to be such a general blessing, he observes, that

in the very terms of the promise, the seed is limited to one person, which is Christ, see Gal. iii. 6, 7, 8.

I will take a general survey of the trials, faith, and death of this great patriarch, and so conclude.

He entered the promised land, being called by the Lord so to do, in faith. Soon after he was in it, though the Lord had appeared unto him, saying, "Unto thy seed will I give this land," yet a famine is brought upon it, and he goes down into Egypt to avoid it. Here he falls into a denial of his wife, saying, she is my sister, which was a means of deceiving the Egyptians, who were greatly taken with her beauty, and she is taken into the king's house; but through the interposition of divine providence her purity is preserved, and she is returned to her husband. Upon this he leaves Egypt, and returns back to Canaan, which was the glory of all lands. It had fountains, springs, depths, and water brooks, mountains, and vallies, mines, corn, wine, oil, honey, and various fruits, and was watered with the rain of heaven, and cared for by the Lord whose eyes were always upon it, from the beginning even to the end of the year. We may from hence consider the blessed change made in the state of a renewed person in a day of the Lord's power, when he delivers from a state of darkness, and translates into the kingdom of his

dear Son. When Abram came again into Canaan, he revisited the place where he had first erected an altar to the Lord, raised a fresh one, and offered sacrifices again, and called on the name of the Lord. This place was afterwards called Bethel, the house of God. His raising altars, and offering sacrifices on them, was expressive of his faith in Christ, and the sense he had of the mercies bestowed on him. There being a long space of time, near two thousand years to intervene between the giving and the accomplishment of the promise, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In the incarnation of Christ Jesus there was therefore several intermediate promises given, all tending to this great and ultimate issue. Temporal blessings were heaped on Abram to confirm his faith and confidence in God. Many divine repetitions of the promise concerning Christ, and Isaac, as the type of him, with many appearances of the Lord, are made, that Abram might go on, and abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. These many great and precious promises were given, not as a reward to his obedience, but to excite and encourage it; and his free and cheerful obedience, was a fruit and evidence of a strong faith in the promiser. When four kings came against the five kings in Canaan, and carried them and Lot captive, Abram hearing of it, arms himself, and his allies, and overcame them, and re-

stored the kings of Canaan, and his kinsman Lot, and his and their goods. On his return from the slaughter of the kings, he was met by Melchizedeck, who blessed him. This illustrious person was a type of the person and priesthood of Christ. He was, says Dr. Owen, the only type of the person of the Son of God, which was ever given, who is to his church and people both their king and priest; he is also the bread of life, and the wine of everlasting consolation. And like as the king of Salem met Abram on his return from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, hereby confirming his right to the land of Canaan, bestowed on him before by promise, and now obtained by conquest, so the Lord Jesus is pleased to meet and bless his people, as their king and priest, and confirms their title to the heavenly inheritance. When the Lord called Abram, he said to him, "I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing." And in the course of his divine procedure he opens, explains, and applies it to his heart. Though Abram obtained victory over Chederlaomer, king of Elam, who was the eldest son of Shem, and so heir of Canaan, by Noah's prophecy, yet it seems as if some fears arose in Abram's mind, lest they, though vanquished, might recover strength. It pleased the Lord, therefore, who knew what passed in the mind of his servant, to appear unto him in a vision, as God-man, and by an audible

voice addressed him, saying, "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Abram had now been some years in the land of Canaan, and as yet he had no son. Therefore on this occasion, he replies, "Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" In answer to him, the Lord is pleased to give him further assurances that he should have an heir, one that should come forth of his own bowels, and that of him there should descend such a numerous issue, as should be like the stars in heaven for multitude. To all this Abram gave full credit. "He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." The word of God was the ground and foundation of Abram's faith. The Lord Jesus Christ was the object of his faith. The righteousness of Christ, apprehended by his faith, was imputed to him: and thus he was justified without works, and when he was in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also." Rom. iv. 10, 11. On this occasion, the Lord gives him a divine command to take an heifer of three years old, a she goat, and a ram, each likewise of three years old, and also a turtle dove, and a young pigeon, and having divided them, and laid one half opposite the other, except

the birds which were not divided, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp, passed between the pieces, and hereby the Lord gave Abram an answer to his question. The Lord had said, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it; and the patriarch replied, " Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" And by this vision he gives him a confirming proof. Here was a sign given to confirm his faith. And because it was a long time before the promise should be fulfilled, the Lord informs him of the circumstances of his posterity during that long interval. It was from this time to the Exodus from Egypt, four hundred years. There he gives a precise account of the land given by promise. Yet as Sarai his wife still remained barren, she being impatient for the accomplishment of the promise, in this despair of having a child, she gave Hagar, her handmaid, to be a secondary wife to her husband; she conceived, which made way for domestic jars, which gave pain and grief to Abram's mind; he had now been ten years in the land of Canaan, and was now eighty-five and Sarai was seventy-five years old: and Ishmael was born in the year of the world 2093.

Hagar on being with child, it is likely was pert to her mistress, who resenting it, she left her master's house, and in the wilderness of Shur, the angel Jehovah, stiled in the Chaldee

paraphrase, the angel of life, found her in the way between Canaan and Egypt, foretold the name, birth, and future circumstance of her child, and commanded her back to her master Abram's house, &c. This is the first time an angel is mentioned in scripture. The word angel signifies a messenger, or one sent. And this was Christ himself, whom Hagar worshipped, and gave a name to the well, where she was favored with this sight and vision of him. So that now, and afterwards, it was called the well where the angel of life appeared. On her return she told her master what had been seen by and declared to her; and having borne a son, Abram, in obedience to the angel of life, called his name Ishmael. To reprove Abram for his going aside to his bond-servant, it was fourteen years after this before the Lord was pleased to favor him with any appearance, but the time now drawing on for the birth of Isaac, Jehovah Jesus again appears, and with an audible voice says, "I am God Almighty, or all-sufficient; walk before me, and be thou perfect, or upright." He then renews afresh his gracious declarations of what it was his good pleasure to bestow on him, all which blessings were of such a nature as Abram had no right, or title to expect, but merely because the Lord had promised them.

All the promises made to Abram had their sole foundation in the faithfulness of the promiser:

what God calls his covenant, and which he promises to establish with him, is something different from, and of a higher nature than a numerous seed, and the inheritance of the land of Canaan. The grant is expressed in the same terms with that made to Noah, and both most evidently had a reference to the original promise or declaration, that the woman should have a seed which should bruise the serpent's head, and shed the blood of him who had shed the blood of man, who brought in and propagated death among mankind, as he had promised to Noah, and renewed to Abram under the expression of a seed in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. So that what God calls his covenant with Noah, Abraham, and with David too, was no other than a sovereign, free, and absolute promise, of that seed on which the faith and hope of all the patriarchs and their successors terminated for all the blessings they ever had to expect from God.

Abram's name is changed to Abraham; it was expressive of his state of favor with God, and is mentioned as a peculiar favor bestowed on him. Neh. ix. 7. Circumcision is instituted and commanded. Sarai's name is changed to Sarah, the promise of Isaac is again given, and the time fixed for his birth; and Jehovah Jesus saith to Abraham, the first man in the world whose name he changed, " And I will establish my covenant, between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in

their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee." In this consists all blessing, yea, the very essence of all blessedness. The essential Three stand in this relation to the whole church of elect men: the whole of this declaration, is founded on pure, free, and sovereign grace. The name Sarah signifies the multitude of her seed. She laughed on this occasion, and rejoiced with holy joy. Isaac's name signifies laughter, or joy; his father and mother, and all believers in that age, having great cause to rejoice at his birth.

As Abram was singled out by the Lord, and the promise of the Messiah limited to him, and Isaac foretold and promised, named before his birth, and born of a barren woman, as typical of Christ, and of his immaculate conception and birth of Jesus, who was born of a pure virgin; so the land of Canaan, where all these great events were to be transacted, was a typical land, and the ordinance of circumcision was a seal to confirm Abraham's faith in what the Lord God had revealed and promised. And it served until the coming of Christ, to keep the children as a distinct people, and separate from all others.

The covenant which the Lord speaks of, when he instituted circumcision, is mentioned in the same chapter thirteen times, which is a good proof that the promise of Christ, and salvation by him, and the gift of all spiritual blessings, is

included in it, and that all who believe have their part therein; "Being circumcised in Christ with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Col. ii. 11. Sarai was now ninety years old, and Abraham ninety-nine. As Abraham received the promise, so he staggered not at it! The apostle Paul says of him, that "he being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able also to perform." Rom. iv. 19—21. Abram obeys the divine command, and he and all the males in his house were circumcised. The Lord again appears to him, renews the promise of Isaac's birth, and acquaints him with his purpose concerning the destruction of Sodom, and gives a high and great character of Abram for his family practical godliness. When the Lord called him, he said, "Thou shalt be a blessing." He was so to Lot who was rescued when taken captive, and was delivered out of Sodom on the intercession of Abraham. A famine is again in Canaan, which causeth him to go to Gerar, a city of the Philistines, where he falls again into the sin of denying his wife. The Lord delivers

her from being seduced; and she, with her husband, returns again into Canaan. Isaac, after the promise had been delivered out twenty years, was born at Hebron, in the month Abib, or Nisan, at which place and month circumcision was instituted. In which very place, and at the same time of the year, John the baptist was born. In this month also was the Exodus from Egypt, and the ever blessed Jesus at the passover celebrated in this month, made his soul an offering for sin. Abraham in the birth of Isaac, foresaw the supernatural birth of Christ and rejoiced. Isaac was not so named laughter, only because of Abraham's joy for him, but also for his joy in Christ. "Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad," says our Lord.

Isaac was born in the year of the world 2108, according to Dr. Lightfoot. On his being weaned, Ishmael, who was at least fourteen years old, began to mock him. Upon which he and his mother are rejected, and turned out of Abraham's house at the instance of Sarah, which the Lord confirmed, bidding him to hearken to what she had said concerning the expulsion of them.

One of the most remarkable instances of Abraham's faith, and which is mentioned in the epistle to the Hebrews, was his offering up his son. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the

promises offered up his only begotten son; of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Accounting that God was able to raise him from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure." Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19.

Isaac was an illustrious type of Christ, in his birth, sacrifice, and resurrection from the dead. The Mount Moriah was the place on which Isaac was to be offered, on it the temple was afterwards built, which was a memorial of the body of Christ, and the services performed on it were figurative of him, and his complete salvation. Isaac's bearing the wood, and then the wood bearing him, was very expressive of Christ's carrying part of his cross, to which he was to be nailed. Isaac's being bound hand and foot, was very expressive of Christ as crucified. His being under the sentence of death three days, whilst he and his father were going to the place which God had told him of, shadowed forth Christ's being under the power of death three days. Isaac's being delivered from death, the very moment when his father stretched forth his hand, and took his knife to slay him, was a shadow of the resurrection of the Messiah. Now Abraham saw Christ's day indeed: the angel Jehovah called to him out of heaven, and bid him desist; upon which Abraham called the place Jehovah-jireh, the Lord is seen, or, the Lord will see and provide. He now in the ram caught in the thicket

by his horns, which he took and offered up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son, had a blessed view of the Lamb of God provided by the Father's love, who would offer himself in the fulness of time as the burnt-offering, sacrifice, and atonement for all his people. Jehovah the Son, the Savior of his church, called unto him the second time out of heaven, and promised the multiplication of his seed, confirming it with an oath; and again repeats that original promise, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—It was first expressed thus, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xiii. 3. It was next expressed thus; "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." Gen. xviii. 18. and at this time, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 18. The apostle tells us, "Because God could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, surely blessing I will bless thee," &c. Heb. vi. And Zecharias, the father of John the baptist, in his solemn hymn of praise for the advent of Christ, takes notice of this oath; his words are, "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant: the oath which he swore unto our father Abraham." This fully proves, that the mercy, covenant, promise, and oath of God to Abraham, was nothing but an exhibition, revealing and making known to him, the eternal

transactions, and everlasting covenant of the Trinity, which receive confirmation from the use made of the oath of the covenant pronounced to Abraham when he was about to offer up his son. The apostle shews it was for the confirmation of all believers. "Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." Heb. vi. 17, 18.

Abram had, in the promises, sacrifice of Isaac, the interposition of Jehovah, with his oath affixed to his truth, a most glorious view of Messiah, in his incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection. Thus this great believer, to use the words of the apostle James, proved his faith and justification before God, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness unto him, by his works. After this, he gave another proof of his faith, for Sarah dying, aged one hundred and twenty-seven years, the only woman whose age is recorded in scripture, he purchased a burial ground, which was the first land in Canaan which Abraham had of his own: he had hope in her death. And as he lived with Isaac, his son, and Jacob, his grandson, sojourning in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in

tabernacles with them, as heirs with him of the same promise, so he walked by faith, triumphed in faith, and died in faith: perfectly satisfied with the goodness of God towards him, and filled with the prospect of being eternally satisfied with the vision and communion of God in glory. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. xi. 10. And the moment he left his body, he entered into it, and was gathered to his fathers, the spirits of just men made perfect in glory. He died in the year of the world, according to Dr. Lightfoot, 2183, aged one hundred and seventy-five; and was buried in the same grave with his beloved Sarah. May we be blessed with faithful Abraham! Amen.