

# SERMON IV.

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ON THE APPEARANCE AND MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST TO JACOB, IN THE REPRESENTATION OF A VISIONARY LADDER, AT LUZ; WHICH, FROM IT, HE NAMED BETHEL, *i. e.* THE HOUSE OF GOD.

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GENESIS xxviii. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

*And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold 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 thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with you, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land: for I will not*

*leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*

**AFTER** the flood, when the ark had rested on the mountains of Armenia, Noah and his family, and with them the church and true religion, settled in the countries adjoining to the Euphrates; the quarter where paradise, according to the sacred account, had been placed at the first peopling of the world.

After the deluge, the rainbow was appointed by God, as a token of the purifier, whom he would raise up; and was given as a sign to Noah and his descendants, that God would no more cut off all flesh, nor destroy the earth, as he had done by the waters of a flood. The learned Mr. Parkhurst says, as the bow, or light in the cloud, wonderfully refracted in all its variety of colors, was, in its original institution, a token of God's mercy in Christ, or, more strictly speaking, of Christ the real purifier, and true light. We see with what propriety the throne of God, in Ezek. i. 28. and in Rev. iv. 3. is surrounded with the rainbow, and likewise how properly one of the divine persons is represented with a rainbow on his head. Rev. x. i.

At the dispersion at Babel, the sons of Noah inhabited the world thus:—the posterity of Ham, moved southward; carrying with them the false religion of idolatry, which seems to have been

begun at Babel, or Babylon, and the farther they strayed from the residence of the church and true religion, the deeper they sunk into ignorance. Wherever they went, whether to Africa, or to the Atlantic continent, they propagated the impious and sanguinary rites of human sacrifices. The whole continent of Africa was peopled principally by the children of Ham. Japhet's posterity possessed all Europe, and also the lesser Asia, Media, part of Armenia, Iberia, Albania, and those vast regions towards the north, which the Scythians anciently inhabited, and now the Tartars inhabit; and it is not improbable, says bishop Newton, that the new world (I suppose he means America,) was peopled by some of his northern descendants, passing thither by the straits of Anian. Shem, and his posterity, possessed a part of Asia, and in it those four great monarchies, the Assyrian, Babylonian, the Median, and Persian, were seated. And in this quarter of the world, also, the church of Christ was first settled; and the Hebrew nation, who had Abraham for their patriarch, or great father, rising, by degrees, till the reign of Solomon, formed a wise, wealthy, and splendid kingdom, long before the powers of Greece and Rome were heard of. From Abraham two very extraordinary nations descended, the Ishmaelites and Israelites; concerning whom there are some remarkable prophecies in the book of God.

Abraham had the honor to be singled out and called by grace; and his calling out of Ur, of the Chaldees, into the land of Canaan, is the most remarkable era and event recorded after the confusion at Babel. The promise to him, which we before treated of, contains the foundation of the Jewish nation, priesthood, kings, and glory. He lived in the land of Canaan twenty-five years before Isaac was born. He saw in him, in the promise of him, in his birth, in the command given to sacrifice him, and in his deliverance from death, Christ's day, and rejoiced.

Abraham, in his walking with God, as his reconciled father, received many singular tokens of his everlasting and covenant love. The Lord blessed him in all things. It was promised to him by God, who cannot lie, before he entered Canaan, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." After he had been in Canaan ten years, Hagar bore Ishmael. To prevent all mistake, the Lord God is pleased to renew the former promise, and to limit it to Isaac: "For in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Gen. xxi. 12. Isaac, when, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, he was about three and thirty years old, was, by God's express command, to be offered for a burnt-offering. By which command, his son's compliance, and his being tied, bound, and laid on the altar, the glorious Mediator was most solemnly set forth, his death divinely realized in this figure to Abraham's

faith, and he had a most complete spiritual and intuitive view and apprehension of Christ, in his person, as the Son of his Father's love, as set apart by his will, counsel, and covenant, to be the Lamb slain for sin, and as raising himself up from under the power of death, as the Almighty conqueror of it, and blessing his people with an everlasting blessing, having saved them in himself with an everlasting salvation. Abraham lived one hundred years in the land of Canaan. Isaac was an elect vessel of mercy, and also a very peculiar and personal type of Christ. The everlasting love and covenant of the eternal Three was made known to him, and the same promises renewed to him, which had been given to his father. The Lord appeared to him, probably in a human form, as a pledge of the incarnation of the essential Word, and said, with an articulate voice, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This was pronounced to him by the Lord after Abraham's death, see Gen. xxvi. 4. The land of Canaan, which was promised to him and his seed four hundred years before they took possession of it, was promised to Isaac also, Gen. xxvi. 3. He had two sons, whose families grew up, and were separated into two different nations. The blessing and promise of the glorious Messiah, was bestowed on Jacob, the youngest: to him blessings temporal, and also spiritual, the promise of the land of Canaan, and the promise

of the seed, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, were entailed; which promises were first made to Abraham, then repeated to Isaac, and then confirmed to Jacob; which the psalmist takes notice of, and celebrates the Lord's praises, saying, "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac: and confirmed the same unto Jacob, for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: saying, unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance." Psalm x. 5, 8—11. Jacob, a little before his death, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, as the spirit of prophecy, bequeaths the same blessing to his twelve sons, as the distinct heads and representatives of the twelve tribes which proceeded from them. The inheritance of the land of Canaan was to be shared and divided amongst them; but the blessed seed could only descend from one of them. And Jacob, on his death-bed, assigns to each of them a portion in the promised land; but limits the descent of the Messiah to the tribe of Judah. So that we have, though it be indeed in a brief way and manner, in the revelation and promise of Christ to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the whole substance and epitome of all contained in prophecy, and the original foundation and glory of God's people Israel set before us.

Many express scriptures testify the Lord's appearance to Isaac, of his blessing him; and they also fully testify that Isaac was a true believer in Christ Jesus, and depended wholly on him for life and salvation. This is very evident from his building altars, which were to offer sacrifices on. And doubtless, he had a most glorious season of grace on mount Moriah, when the angel Jehovah called out of heaven to his father, and swore by himself, saying, "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 16—18.

The words of my text, which are now before us, very particularly concern what is related in the account which the Holy Ghost has been pleased to give us of the life of Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. I will here recount the following particulars concerning dates, that we may see how time run on and run out with these great patriarchs. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran and entered Canaan. From the confirmation of the covenant to him, as recorded in the fifteenth of Genesis, and his taking Hagar to wife, to the birth of Isaac, was fifteen years. From the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob, was sixty years.

And Jacob was, when he had this vision, related in the text before us, seventy-seven years old, according to Ainsworth. From the birth of Jacob to his going down into Egypt, was an hundred years. From his going down to Egypt to his death, seventeen years. From the death of Jacob to the death of Joseph, in Egypt, fifty-three years. From the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses, seventy-five years. From the birth of Moses to the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt, and the giving the law, was eighty years. The whole number cast up into one sum total, is four hundred and thirty years.

The occasion of Jacob's journey from his father's house at Beer-sheba to Haran, a distance of near five hundred miles: and Beer-sheba was from Bethel about forty-eight miles, which was his resting-place, was having obtained his father's patriarchal blessing, and the promise of the Messiah devolving by it on him, his father is truly concerned that he should marry into his mother's family, who retained more knowledge of the true Jehovah, the covenant ones, the Three in Jehovah, than others out of Isaac's family did. The nations had fallen away from the supreme Alehim, by whom Abraham was chosen, and his race set apart for a peculiar people, to keep up in remembrance the true doctrine of the essential Three in one Jehovah. Some

learned men suppose that the form of the cherubim set up at the east of the garden of Eden, was preserved downwards in private families with anxious diligence, by Laban, Jacob, Micah, and David, who called them Theraphim, the healers of their maladies; that Abram was priest before the faces, or emblems, of the great ones; and that when Isaac was superannuated, Esau exercised the office of priesthood, until Jacob obtained the blessing, and then by a transfer of the right of primogeniture, Jacob acted as a priest.

The sacred record informs us, that Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, “Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-Aram, to the house of Bethuel, thy mother’s father, and take thee a wife from thence, of the daughters of Laban, thy mother’s brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people: and give thee the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.” Gen. xxviii. 1—4. In these words, the aged father opens his heart, proves himself to be full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, confirms the patriarchal blessing before bestowed, and solemnly invokes the blessing of the holy and essential Trinity on

his son and his posterity, and thus sends him away to seek a wife in the same family from which he obtained his. Here is great grace, faith, and spiritual simplicity. Having received this instruction, blessing, and direction, Jacob left his father's house, and went towards Haran, in Mesopotamia; and thus, to use the prophet Hosea's words, he "fled into the land of Syria for a wife, where, for a wife, he served and kept sheep." By the providence of God he came to a certain place, where Abraham had, in his time, built an altar, and called on the name of the Lord, and which, from the vision, and manifestation of Christ to him, he named Bethel; it was eight miles from Jerusalem, and having travelled forty-eight miles, he tarried here all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and laid down to sleep. And thus being brought to my text, I will repeat it. "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold 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 thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and

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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, and will bring thee again to this land: for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

In these words, we have the following particulars. Here is,

First, the supernatural dream and vision by which Christ was pleased to reveal and manifest himself to Jacob.

Secondly, the Lord’s pronouncing himself to be the Lord God of Abraham and Isaac.

Thirdly, the renewal of the promise given then to Jacob concerning the land of Canaan, and the multiplication of his seed; with a particular recital of the promise of the Messiah, “And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” And,

Fourthly, the Lord’s promise to be with, to keep and bring Jacob back again into the land of Canaan, which he was now going out of into Padan-Aram, in Mesopotamia, assuring him that he would not leave him until he had accomplished his promise to him.

My first head of discourse, and that which I shall particularly treat of, is concerning Jacob’s supernatural dream, in which he had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a revelation and manifestation of him. “And he dreamed, and

behold a ladder set upon the earth; and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." Jacob was now flying from his incensed brother, and journeying towards a country where the agents of nature were worshipped instead of the true Alehim, the essential Three in the One incomprehensible Godhead. To invigorate his faith in the uncreated Trinity, in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep had fallen upon him, as he lay exposed to the open heavens and air, having stones for his pillow, the Lord was pleased to present to his mind, and shew him, "a ladder set upon the earth." The account is introduced with the word behold! to point it out as an extraordinary appearance; and indeed it was so. This visionary ladder was an emblem of the communication between the uncreated Trinity and the elect: if Jacob lay down with spiritual desires, to consult the Most High by dream, then his desires were indeed granted, and the emblematic ladder was a proper means of his exalting his thoughts to things high, above, heavenly, and divine. The ladder reached from earth to heaven. It was expressive of Christ, who was to be the seed of the woman, the seed and son of Abraham, according to the flesh, and by his mysterious incarnation, was to descend from heaven and tabernacle with men on earth, in an earthy human nature, and converse with men. Its

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reaching from earth to heaven, signified Christ's descent from heaven, and that by his assuming the nature of man into personal union with himself, and so becoming God-man united in one Christ: in whom, by this mysterious and inexpressible union, would dwell all the fulness of the Godhead personally. The essential Word being by essential union with the Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal in the incomprehensible essence, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in whom, therefore, as personally considered, all the fulness of the divine nature, with all the perfections of Deity, as eternity, immensity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, immutability, necessary and self-existence reside, by a necessity of nature, would become incarnate, and dwell in and inhabit the human nature, assumed and advanced into union with his person, and thus become Immanuel, God personally dwelling in our nature, and be the ladder of salvation, the one alone way and medium of access to the Father, through the Spirit. This, as in the instance of Abraham, in the command concerning Isaac, and offering him as a burnt sacrifice, led him into the mystery of redemption, and shewed him, in the best manner the patriarch was capable of conceiving, the divine goodness, in not sparing his only begotten Son, but delivering him up freely for all the elect, to die in their room and stead, and making his soul an offering for sin. So the Lord God is here

pleased in this visionary representation to Jacob, to convey to his mind clear and spiritual ideas concerning the person and incarnation of the Savior. We may also consider, how exceedingly suited all this was to keep Jacob in the true faith and worship of God, and to prevent him from falling into the worship of the agents in nature, and thereby renounce the essential and ever-blessed Trinity.

This symbolical vision might be somewhat like the light and fire which irradiated the cloud in which the Lord dwelt, and guided the Israelites through the wilderness. The angels of God are said to ascend and descend on this visionary ladder; to which a behold! is prefixed. "Behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascended and descended on it." By angels, some understand the sent ones; those who vouchsafed to be employed for our sakes. The Alehim ascending and descending, and Jehovah standing close (not above the ladder, but) in, or upon himself, insinuating as clearly as can be, the near conjunction of all the Alehim in one essence existence. This, says a very learned man, is confirmed by what follows, I am Jehovah, the Alehim of Abraham, &c. It is generally conceived that these angels were Jehovah's ministering spirits, who wait on Christ, worship him, and desire to pry into the mysteries of his per-

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son, God-man, his love, which is altogether wonderful, and his salvation, which lays a foundation for perpetual praise and joy. Our Lord himself refers to this vision, when he said to Nathaniel, and other of his disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." John i. 51. Which confirms the interpretation given of it, that it was an outward and visible representation of Christ in his person as God-man; who, as God, was in heaven, whilst, as man, he was on earth; and it pointed out his office as Mediator between God and man, who made peace by the blood of his cross. It shewed forth, also, how elect angels minister to him, and to his elect body, the church.

Some understand the ascent and descent of the angels not upon the ladder, but upon Jacob. Christ is the head of all principalities and powers, and the elect angels are sent forth by him to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation. See Heb. i. last verse. Some consider in this wonderful dream and vision, Christ realized to Jacob's faith in the rounds of the mystical ladder, in his person, in whom all is wonderful. God and man united in one person, his incarnation, his life of obedience, his passion, resurrection, ascension, and session at the right-hand of God.

I will conclude this head of my discourse, with saying, that we may here view the most blessed and promised Messiah, as revealed to Jacob in this supernatural vision and dream, as one in the self-existing essence, who was to be incarnate, in whom all the elect in heaven and earth were to be reconciled, who was to make peace for them by his own blood, and by whom they were to have access unto, and divine fellowship with, the Father. It gave, also, to the mind of the patriarch, a blessed evidence of the eye and heart, watchful care and providence, which Jesus, as God-man, Mediator, and Savior, is pleased to exercise towards and upon his church and people here below ; and this brings me,

Secondly, to consider what the Lord said on this occasion to his servant. He pronounces himself to be the Lord God of Abraham and Isaac. I will afresh recite the former part of the words concerning the dream and vision, which will serve to introduce properly this second head of our discourse: “ And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold 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.”

It is very pleasing to observe, in all the revelations of Christ made to the saints of the Most

High God, such declarations of the covenant relation which the Lord God stands in to his beloved people; and that in these manifestations of Christ, the whole of that covenant is opened unto them, and Christ, the Head and Mediator of that covenant, is set forth to the view of their minds, and represented in symbols and shadows exactly suited to their cases and circumstances. Shem, the son of Noah, is the first person in the book of God, who is pronounced blessed, as having the Lord for his God. Blessed be the Lord God of Shem. By the God of Shem, may be meant Christ, says holy Ainsworth, who came of Shem, according to the flesh: and who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Melchisedeck when he met Abram, addressed him, saying, "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth." The Lord himself said unto him, "I will bless thee:" and it is recorded in Gen. xxiv. 1. "That the Lord had blessed Abram in all things." It was so visible that he and his son Isaac, an heir with him of the same promise of Christ, were the blessed of the Lord which made heaven and earth, that Abimelech, the king of Gerar, addressing Isaac, says, "Thou art now the blessed of the Lord." Gen. xxvi. 29. The Lord God had said, and in it had opened the eternal purpose and counsel of his will, "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 unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Gen. xvii. 7, 8. This he had confirmed by an oath, Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18. On the foundation of all this, the Lord is said to be the God of Abraham; because he had revealed to him that holy covenant in which the Three in Jehovah were engaged before the world was; and by which they decreed the salvation of an innumerable company of sinners, from sin, satan, death, and hell. This covenant Jehovah glories in, and makes a revelation of it to Abraham and Isaac, in the promise of a seed in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. And this is now confirmed to Jacob by the Lord God; which shews the peculiar care and attention which the Lord God is pleased to exercise towards his people, how he hears their prayers and grants their requests.

Isaac had, if I may so express it, bequeathed to him the promise of the land of Canaan, with a numerous seed, and the blessing of the Messiah, who was to proceed from him and his, according to the flesh; he had invoked the blessing of God Almighty on him, praying him to fulfil his promises, and bestow the principal good contained in them on this his son Jacob. And here at Bethel, in the

vision of a ladder, with the top of it in heaven, and the foot of it on earth, with the angels of God ascending and descending on it, Jacob beholds the Lord standing above it, and with an audible voice addressing him, and confirming all that his father Isaac had bestowed on him, saying, "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac." Abraham was fallen asleep by death in his body, yet the Lord calls himself, "The Lord God of Abraham." This shews that the patriarchs were acquainted with the existence of departed saints in a state of glory and blessedness. It shews also, that God was not ashamed to be called their God, and also proves that they had, whilst they dwelt here below, the same supports for their faith and hope in God, in life and death, with the assurance and prospects of future glory, that new testament saints have. God had given a pledge to the faith of his people concerning their resurrection from the grave and power of death, in the deliverance of Isaac, and his resurrection, as it were, from death; for he was under the sentence of it, and marvellously delivered from it: so that Abraham is said to have "received him even from the dead." Heb. xi. And here the doctrine of the resurrection of the just is preached by the Lord himself to Jacob: "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father;" he is with me, blessed beyond all expression and conception in my love. I am

the Lord his God; I have my covenant with him in remembrance. I am all to Isaac by covenant and promise that I was to him. "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac." Here was a revelation of the essence and personalities in Jehovah, and of their covenant relation to Abraham and Isaac.

When we read, "and behold the Lord stood above it," *i. e.* the visionary ladder, we are to understand some visible display of divine glory, such as cannot be described, which proved the essence, majesty, and glory of the self-existing Jehovah to be incomprehensible. And I conceive that the Second Person in the Godhead might take a human form as a forerunning shadow of his future incarnation; giving hereby a pledge to the faith of his ancient saints, that he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and that his delights were with the elect sons of men, and that he would, in the fulness of time, with infinite love and delight, become incarnate, and tabernacle with them. As the Second Person in the Trinity is, in the economy of the covenant, the head and representative of all the elect, and the revealer of that covenant to his church and people, we may consider him here as speaking in the name of his co-equal Father, and co-equal Spirit, and pronouncing himself in the name of the covenant Three, the Lord God of Abraham and of Isaac. For the eternal Three are united by an eternal

act of their immutable will, to the elect, as the Lord their God. And blessed are the people who have the Three in Jehovah for their God! In what is here expressed, every thing is contained to encourage Jacob's faith and hope in God; it was spoken for this purpose, it being a preparation for proclaiming the promise, and applying it to him. "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac." Observe this, the foundation of all faith and hope in God is founded upon the covenant relation he stands in to us; all his promises are the effects and fruits of his holy covenant. His greatest declaration of grace consists in proclaiming himself to be the Lord our God. It is his own act to reveal himself as a covenant God to his church and people, in his word; and it is he alone that can reveal and make himself known in our hearts as the Lord our God, and when he does, it is wholly by the supernatural inspiration of his Holy Spirit, who by the word reveals Christ to us, and enables us to believe on him for life and salvation. In our believing, he sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, and becomes to us the spirit of adoption, so that we call God, Father, our Father, my Father. I proceed,

Thirdly, to consider the promise given at this time to Jacob, concerning the land of Canaan and the multiplication of his seed; with a particular recital of the promise of the Messiah

“And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”—“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 this seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” This is a recapitulation of all the promises, and a fresh confirmation of them, as they had been given to Abraham, the father of Isaac, and then to Isaac his son, and which were now renewed by the Lord, and engaged to be fulfilled to Jacob. And from henceforth, Jehovah Alehim sustains the title of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. A learned man says, after the sons of Noah went off in tribes, and separate societies, each subject to its respective chief, the bulk of mankind, with their governors, apostatized from Jehovah, and forgetting of whom they held their possessions, they became the abject slaves of ambitious princes. Yet one remained faithful: Abraham being heir of the eldest line from Noah, was chief prince, as well as chief priest, and is called, in his treaty with the sons of Heth, the prince of the Alehim: therefore the high privilege of producing the Purifier, the heir of all things, was strictly entailed upon his seed, so that there were the most

fit and equitable reasons for singling out the Hebrews from all the nations of the earth, for the progenitors of him who should be, and now is, the universal monarch. Our Lord says, in Matt. xxviii. 18. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Christ sits enthroned in the holy heavens, the capital of his dominions. His power is from the Alehim alone. He rules by the persuasive influences of the Holy Spirit, and by his own irradiating power. All judgment is committed to him, to be exercised in due time even upon the loftiest mortal kings, who will then have no claim to distinction, but according as they have used their authority to promote or frustrate his gracious designs upon earth. His kingdom is not indeed derived from this world; but what is much more glorious, it comprehends the whole circuit and system of created things.

The name Abraham, given him by the Lord God, signified, according to Mr. Romaine, the excellent, or father of many nations, even of all the nations, and kindreds, and people, who are the faithful in Christ Jesus; hence we may see the propriety of the Lord's revealing himself to Jacob, under the title of the Lord God of Abraham, thy father: it was to inform him that what he had been to Abraham he would be to him. Jacob was now above seventy, and a number of sons were to proceed from him. His grandfather Abraham was five and twenty years in the land of

Canaan before the birth of his son Isaac, and his birth was beyond all natural expectation; it was wholly the fruit of faith in God's promise, "Sarah shall conceive and bare a son." I conceive his being born of a barren woman, was a forerunning item, that the birth of the Purifier, the Messiah, the seed in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, was to be wholly supernatural. Isaac also was married twenty years, and his wife was barren, and he was sixty years old; yet, in God's time, he hath two sons, and one of them is the progenitor of the Messiah. And this I also consider as pointing out that the conception and birth of Christ would be singular, and wholly beyond nature. Isaac was blind forty years before his death, yet the eyes of his mind were spiritually illuminated to take in most glorious views of Jesus and his salvation.

Jacob was now on his journey to Mesopotamia for a wife, so that the renewal of these promises, which had been delivered to his grandfather, and father, must be as life to his mind. The land of Canaan, which was the land on which Jacob now lay, was typical primarily of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, also of gospel times, and of the rest from the dominion of sin which the people of God enjoy; and ultimately of the kingdom of Christ in heaven, the saints everlasting rest in glory. This land Jehovah promises to Jacob, together with a numerous

seed, "The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed." Observe, the Lord makes himself known first in his covenant, and covenant relation to him, and then out of the riches of the same grace by which he became the Lord his God, he promises to bestow all good things on him, "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." This was assuring him of success in his pursuit, and that he should be fruitful; yea, he was to have a numerous offspring. So it follows, "and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth," *i. e.* innumerable. "And thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south," and fill and inherit the whole land of Canaan. In which a prophecy of the spreading of the gospel and church of Christ in all parts of the world, may be implied and contained, and the patriarch's faith might be enlightened to view and conceive it in its utmost extent and latitude; for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were prophets, and the promises given them contained good things to come, which were to be fulfilled in the person and kingdom of the Messiah. Hence in their pilgrimage it is recorded, when they were but few, so as to be soon numbered: Abraham, and his family, three hundred and eighteen born in his house; this was their number when he armed them to battle

against Chedorlaomer, and the kings with him. They, doubtless, increased, but still Isaac's family was comparatively small; and Jacob's, though he multiplied into the number of threescore and ten persons, when he went down into Egypt, was soon counted. Yet when these progenitors of the Hebrew nation were very few, and strangers in the land of Canaan, it was given them by promise for an inheritance; when they went from one nation to another, up and down the land of Canaan, where were seven mighty nations, Deut. vii. and from one kingdom to another people, as Abraham went down into Egypt because of a famine in the land of Canaan, and after that to Gerah, to Abimelech, king of the philistines, on the same account; so did his son Isaac; and so also Jacob and his family were put on removing out of Canaan to Egypt, on account of a famine in it; yet in all their removals, the Lord "suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, touch not mine anointed, my separated ones, and do my prophets no harm." Here they are called prophets, Psalm cv. 12—15.

The Lord promises Jacob that his descendants should be innumerable; should possess and inherit the land; should suddenly and swiftly spread abroad and fill it; and adds to all this, the blessing of eternal life, "And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Thus it was promised to him, that Christ should come of him, according to the flesh, who would bless his beloved ones, by turning them every one from their iniquities. This brings me,

Fourthly, to consider the Lord's promise, to be with, to keep, and bring Jacob back again into the land of Canaan, which he was now going out of to Mesopotamia, assuring him that he would not leave him until he had accomplished his promise to him: "And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Which promise is an application of the whole vision to him, and his peculiar case. God's covenant presence is an invaluable blessing, the promise of it is esteemed by saints to be such. And now Jacob was going to Padan-Aram, in Mesopotamia, so called, because it lay between the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris, it must have been a most acceptable promise to him; also what is added to it, "And will keep thee in all places whither thou goest:" this was a divine security to the patriarch. Jehovah Jesus engaged to keep him at all times, in all places, and to be with him in every case and circumstance which might befall him during the whole of his journey, and all the while he should be absent from his father's house, and out of the land of

Canaan. To all which, the Lord adds, "And will bring thee again into this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." So that all the Lord could be to his servant, in affording him his sanctifying presence, in being with him, in keeping him, in bestowing all good upon him, in bringing him back again into the land of his nativity, and fulfilling all he had promised, is spoken of and declared for the support of Jacob's faith, and for the comfort of his mind. He might well set forward with a cheerful heart, and go on his way rejoicing; the Lord having promised him to do him good, and having given him his word to be the ground of his faith, and the foundation of his hope in him.

Thus Jacob having been favored with the revelation and vision of the essence and personalities of the essential Three, and having been illuminated with a view, in a visionary manner, of the incarnation of the Second Person in the essence, who was one day to be made flesh, he was divinely refreshed in his mind, and satisfied. On awaking out of his sleep, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place: the glory of Jehovah dwelleth in this place. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven;" referring to the visionary ladder, which, as it had exalted his thoughts to things above, so it was

also a standing representation, on which he saw the angels of God ascend and descend, and by which the Lord had conversed with him. It was, therefore, to him, the house of God, and the gate of heaven.

Being thus confirmed in the faith of the unity of the Godhead, of the personalities of it, of their covenant transactions, and that one of them was the Prince of Life, and that his grandmother Sarai's name was changed to Sarah, to point her out as princess, or queen, mother of the Prince of Life; he set up a stone, or pillar, and anointed it, and called the place Bethel, the house of God. The stone represented Christ, the Rock of Ages; the anointing it with oil, was to shadow forth Christ, the anointed of God. The name given to the place, a learned man renders, ' a place of worship for the irradiator; and the patriarch vows, if he comes back in peace from the heathen country, to demonstrate his adherence to the Alehim, the eternal Three, who are engaged by will, counsel, covenant, word, and oath, to save all who believe on Jesus Christ. This place before had been called Luz, from hazel or almond trees, which grew there. Jacob lived to see all these promises fulfilled: he was preserved in the true faith and worship of God; had twelve sons, who became heads of the twelve tribes of Israel; returned from Padan-Aram to

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Canaan ; had a vision of Christ in human form, obtained of him the name Israel ; built an altar at Bethel, and called it El-Beth-El ; and entailed the blessing of the Messiah on the tribe of Judah. He lived to see his father Isaac, who died in the year of the world two thousand two hundred and eighty-eight, aged one hundred and eighty. Abraham was one hundred and seventy-five years old when he died, which was five years less than the age of Isaac ; and Jacob was one hundred and forty-seven years old when he died. May the Lord bless what is here laid before you. Amen,