

Genesis 24:1-67

by John Calvin

John Calvin's sermon on Genesis 24 emphasizes the importance of divine guidance in marriage through the story of Abraham's servant seeking a wife for Isaac.

Scripture: Genesis 24:12-67

Topics: "God's Providence", "Faithfulness"

Description

John Calvin preaches about the faithfulness of Abraham's servant in seeking a wife for Isaac, highlighting the importance of seeking God's guidance in all matters, the necessity of prayer and thanksgiving, and the providence of God in orchestrating events for His purposes. The servant's diligence, humility, and reliance on God's direction serve as a model for believers in fulfilling their duties and making important decisions in life, trusting in God's faithfulness and provision.

Transcript

1. And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

1. Abraham autem senex venit in dies, et Iehova benedixerat Abraham in omnibus.

2. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

2. Et dixit Abraham ad servum suum seniore[m] domus suae, qui praeerat omnibus qui erant ei, Pone nunc manum tuam sub femore meo:

3. And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

3. Et adjurabo te per Iehovam Deum coeli, et Deum terrae, quod non capies uxorem filio meo de filiabus Chenaanaei, in cuius medio ego habito:

4. But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

4. Sed ad terram meam, et ad cognationem meam perges, et capies uxorem filio meo Ishac.

5. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

5. Et dixit ad eum servus, Si forsitan noluerit mulier venire post me ad terram hanc, numquid reducendo reducā filium tuum ad terram unde egressus es?

6. And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.

6. Et dixit ad eum Abraham Cave tibi ne forte reducas filium meum illuc.

7. The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

7. Iehova Deus coeli, qui tulit me e domo patris mei, et e terra cognationis meae, et qui loquutus est mihi, et qui iuravit mihi, dicendo, Semini tuo dabo terram hanc: ipse mittet Angelum suum ante te, et capies uxorem filio meo inde.

8. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.

8. Quodsi noluerit mulier pergere post te, mundus eris ab adjuratione mea ista: duntaxat filium meum ne reducas illuc.

9. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

9. Et posuit servus manum suam sub femore Abraham domini sui, et iuravit ei super re hac.

10. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

10. Et accepit servus decem camelos e camelis domini sui, et perrexit: quia omne bonum domini sui erat in manu ejus: et surrexit, et profectus est in Aram-naharaim, ad civitatem Nachor.

11. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water

11. Et genu flectere fecit camelos extra civitatem ad puteum aquae, tempore vespertino, tempore quo egrediuntur mulieres, quae hauriunt.

12. And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

12. Et dixit, Iehova Deus domini mei Abraham, occurrere fac nunc coram me hodie, et fac misericordiam cum domino meo Abraham.

13. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

13. Ecce, ego sto juxta fontem aquae, et filiae virorum civitatis egrediuntur ad hauriendam aquam.

14. And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou

hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

14. Sit ergo, puella ad quam dixero, Inclina nunc hydriam tuam, et bibam: et dixerit, Bibe, et etiam camelis tuis potum dabo: ipsam praepraveris servo tuo Ishac: et per hoc sciam quod feceris misericordiam cum domino meo.

15. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

15. Et fuit, antequam ipse complevisset loqui, ecce, Ribca egrediebatur, quae nata erat Bethuel filio Milchah uxoris Nachor fratris Abraham, et hydria ejus erat super humerum ejus.

16. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

16. Puella autem erat pulchra aspectu valde, virgo, et vir non cognoverat eam: quae descendit ad fontem, et implevit hydriam suam, et ascendit.

17. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

17. Itaque cucurrit servus in occursum ejus, et dixit, Potum da mihi nunc parum aquae ex hydria tua.

18. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

18. Et dixit, Bibe, domine mi: et festinavit, et demisit hydriam suam super manum suam, et potum dedit ei.

19. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

19. Ubi complevit potum dare ei: tunc dixit, Etiam camelis tuis hauriam, donec compleverint bibere.

20. And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

20. Et festinavit, et effudit hydriam suam in canale, et cucurrit adhuc ad puteum ut hauriret: et hausit omnibus camelis ejus.

21. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

21. Porro vir stupebat super ea tacens, ut sciret utrum secundasset Iehova viam suam, an non.

22. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;

22. Et fuit, quum complevisset cameli bibere, protulit vir in aurem auream, semmissis pondus ejus: et duas armillas, et posuit super manus ejus: decem aurei pondus earum.

23. And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

23. Et jam dixerat, Filia, cujus es? indica nunc mihi, numquid est in domo patris tui locus nobis ad pernoctandum?

24. And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

24. Et dixerat ad eum, Filia Bethuel sum, filii Milchah, quem peperit ipsa nachor.

25. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

25. Et dixit ad eum, Etiam palea, etiam pabulum multum est apud nos, etiam locus ad pernoctandum.

26. And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

26. Et inclinavit se vir, et incurvavit se lehova.

27. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.

27. Et dixit, Benedictus lehova Deus domini mei Abraham, qui non dereliquit misericordiam suam et veritatem suam a domino meo. Ego in via, duxit me lehova ad domum fratrum domini mei.

28. And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things.

28. Et cucurrit puella, et nuntiavit domui matris suae secundum verba haec.

29. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.

29. Et ipsi Ribca erat frater, et nomen ejus Laban: et cucurrit Laban ad virum foras ad fontem.

30. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.

30. Fuit autem, quum vidisset in aurem et armillas in manibus sororis suae, et quum audisset ipse verba Ribca sororis suae, dicendo, Sic loquutus est ad me vir: venit a virum, et ecce, stabat juxta camelos, juxta fontem.

31. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.

31. Et dixit, Ingredere benedictae lehovae, ut quid manes foris? et ego paravi domum, et locum camelis.

32. And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.

32. Et venit vir ad domum, et solvit camelos, et dedit paleam et pabulum camelis, et aquam ad lavandum pedes ejus, et pedes virorum qui erant cum eo.

33. And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

33. Et positum est coram eo, ut comederet: et dixit, Non comedam, donec loquutus fuero verba mea. Et dixit, Loquere.

34. And he said, I am Abraham's servant.

34. Dixit igitur, Servus Abraham sum.

35. And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.

35. Iehova autem benedixit domino meo valde, et magnificatus est, et dedit ei pecudes et boves, et argentum, et aurum, et servos, et ancillas, et camelos, et asinos.

36. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

36. Et peperit Sarah uxor domini mei filium domino meo post senectutem suam, et dedit ei omnia quae sunt ei.

37. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:

37. Et jurare fecit me dominus meus, dicendo, Non capies uxorem filio meo de filiabus Chenaanaei, in cuius terra ego habito:

38. But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

38. Sed ad domum patris mei perges, et ad familiam meam, et capies uxorem filio meo.

39. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

39. Et dixi domino meo, Forsitan non perget mulier post me.

40. And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house:

40. Et dixit ad me, Iehova, in cuius conspectu ambulavi, mittet Angelum suum tecum, et secundabit viam tuam: et capies uxorem filio meo de familia mea, et de domo patris mei.

41. Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath.

41. Tunc mundus eris ab adjuratione mea, si veneris ad familiam meam: et si non dederint tibi, eris mundus ab adjuratione mea.

42. And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go:

42. Veni igitur hodie ad fontem, et dixi, Iehova Deus domini mei Abraham, si tu nunc secundas viam meam, per quam ego ambulo:

43. Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink;

43. Ecce, ego sto iuxta fontem aquae: itaque sit, virgo quae egredietur ad hauriendum, et dixero ei, Da mihi potum nunc parum aquae ex hydria tua:

44. And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son.

44. Et dixerit mihi, Etiam tu bibe, et etiam camelis tuis hauriam: ipsa sit uxor, quam praeparavit Iehova filio domini mei.

45. And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

45. Ego antequam complem loqui in corde meo, ecce, Ribca egrediebatur, et hydria ejus erat super humerum ejus, et descendit ad fontem, et hausit: et dixi ad eam, Da mihi potum nunc.

46. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

46. Et festinavit, et demisit hydriam suam desuper se, et dixit, Bibe, et etiam camelis tuis potum dabo. Et bibi, et etiam camelis dedit potum.

47. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

47. Et interrogavi eam, et dixi, Filia cujus es? Et dixit, Filia Bethuel filii nachor, quem peperit ei Milcah. Et posui in aurem super nares ejus, et armillas super manus ejus.

48. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.

48. Et inclinavi me, incurvavique me Iehovae, et benedixi Iehovae Deo domini mei Abraham, qui duxit me per viam veritatis, (vel certam fidem,) ut acciperem filiam fratris domini mei filio ejus.

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

49. Et nunc si facitis misericordiam et veritatem cum domino meo, indicate mihi: et si non, indicate mihi, et vertam me ad dexteram vel ad sinistram.

50. Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.

50. Et responderunt Laban et Bethuel, et dixerunt, A Iehova egressa est res: non possumus loqui ad to malum vel bonum.

51. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.

51. Ecce, Ribca coram to, accipe, et vade: et sit uxor filio domini tui, quemadmodum loquutus est lehova.

52. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth.

52. Et fuit, quando audivit servus Abraham verba eorum, incurvavit se super terram lehovae.

53. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.

53. Et protulit servus vasa argentea, et vasa aurea, et vestes, et dedit ipsi Ribcae, et pretiosa dedit fratri ejus, et matri ejus.

54. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.

54. Et comederunt, et biberunt, ipse et viri qui erant cum eo, et pernoctaverunt: et surrexerunt mane: et dixit, Dimitte me, ut vadam ad dominum meum.

55. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.

55. Et dixit frater ejus et mater ejus, Maneat puella nobiscum per dies, vel decem: postea ibis, (vel ibit.)

56. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.

56. Et dixit ad eos, Ne retardetis me, quando lehova secundavit viam meam: dimittite me, et ibo ad dominum meum.

57. And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth.

57. Et dixerunt, Vocemus puellam, et interrogemus os ejus.

58. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

58. Et vocaverunt Ribcam, et dixerunt ad eam, Numquid ibis cum viro isto? Et dixit, Ibo.

59. And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.

59. Et dimiserunt Ribcam sororem suam, et nutricem ejus, et servum Abraham, et viros ejus.

60. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

60. Et benedixerunt Ribcae, et dixerunt ei, Soror nostra es, sis in millia decem millium, et haereditet semen tuum portam odio habentium illud.

61. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

61. Et surrexit Ribea et puellae ejus, et ascenderunt super camelos, et perrexerunt post virum: et tulit servus Ribcah, et abiit.

62. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.

62. Ishac autem veniebat, qua venitur a Puteo viventis videntis me: et ipse habitabat in terra Meridiana.

63. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.

63. Et egressus erat Ishac ad orandum in agro, dum declinaret vespera: et elevavit oculos suos, et vidit, et ecce, cameli veniebant.

64. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.

64. Tunc elevavit Ribcah oculos suos, et vidit Ishac, et projecit se de camelo.

65. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.

65. Iam autem dixerat ad servum, Quis est vir iste, qui ambulat per agrum in occursum nostrum? Et dixit servus, Ipse est dominus meus: et accepit velum, et operuit se.

66. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.

66. Et narravit servus ipsi Ishac omnia quae fecerat.

67. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death

67. Et introduxit eam Ishac in tabernaculum Sarah matris suae, et accepit Ribcah, fuitque ei in uxorem, at delevit eam: et consolatus est se Ishac post matrem suam.

1. And Abraham was old. 1 Moses passes onwards to the relation of Isaac's marriage, because indeed Abraham, perceiving himself to be worn down by old age, would take care that his son should not marry a wife in the land of Canaan. In this place Moses expressly describes Abraham as an old man, in order that we may learn that he had been admonished, by his very age, to seek a wife for his son: for old age itself, which, at the most, is not far distant from death, ought to induce us so to order the affairs of our family, that when we die, peace may be preserved among our posterity, the fear of the Lord may flourish, and rightly-constituted order may prevail. The old age of Abraham was indeed yet green, as we shall see hereafter; but when he reckoned up his own years he deemed it time to consult for the welfare of his son. Irreligious men, partly because they do not hold marriage sufficiently in honor, partly because they do not consider the importance attached especially to the marriage of Isaac, wonder that Moses, or rather the Spirit of God, should be employed in affairs so minute; but if we have that reverence which is due in reading the Sacred Scriptures, we shall easily understand that here is nothing superfluous: for inasmuch as men can scarcely persuade themselves that the Providence of God extends to marriages, so much the more does Moses insist on this point. He chiefly, however, wishes to teach that God honored the family of

Abraham with especial regard, because the Church was to spring from it. But it will be better to treat of everything in its proper order.

2. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant. Abraham here fulfils the common duty of parents, in laboring for and being solicitous about the choice of a wife for his son: but he looks somewhat further; for since God had separated him from the Canaanites by a sacred covenant, he justly fears lest Isaac, by joining himself in affinity with them, should shake off the yoke of God. Some suppose that the depraved morals of those nations were so displeasing to him, that he conceived the marriage of his son must prove unhappy if he should take a wife from among them. But the special reason was, as I have stated, that he would not allow his own race to be mingled with that of the Canaanites, whom he knew to be already divinely appointed to destruction; yea, since upon their overthrow he was to be put into possession of the land, he was commanded to treat them with distrust as perpetual enemies. And although he had dwelt in tranquility among them for a time, yet he could not have a community of offspring with them without confounding things which, by the command of God, were to be kept distinct. Hence he wished both himself and his family to maintain this separation entire.

Put, I pray thee, thy hand. It is sufficiently obvious that this was a solemn form of swearing; but whether Abraham had first introduced it, or whether he had received it from his fathers, is unknown. The greater part of Jewish writers declare that Abraham was the author of it; because, in their opinion, this ceremony is of the same force as if his servant had sworn by the sanctity of the divine covenant, since circumcision was in that part of his person. But Christian writers conceive that the hand was placed under the thigh in honor of the blessed seed. 2 Yet it may be that these earliest fathers had something different in view; and there are those among the Jews who assert that it was a token of subjection, when the servant was sworn on the thigh of his master. The more plausible opinion is, that the ancients in this manner swore by Christ; but because I do not willingly follow uncertain conjectures, I leave the question undecided. Nevertheless the latter supposition appears to me the more simple; namely, that servants, when they swore fidelity to their lords, were accustomed to testify their subjection by this ceremony, especially since they say that this practice is still observed in certain parts of the East. That it was no profane rite, which would detract anything from the glory of God, we infer from the fact that the name of God is interposed. It is true that the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham, but he is adjured by God, the Creator of heaven and earth; and this is the sacred method of adjuration, whereby God is invoked as the witness and the judge; for this honor cannot be transferred to another without casting a reproach upon God. Moreover, we are taught, by the example of Abraham, that they do not sin who demand an oath for a lawful cause; for this is not recited among the faults of Abraham, but is recorded to his peculiar praise. It has already been shown that the affair was of the utmost importance, since it was undertaken in order that the covenant of God might be ratified among his posterity. He was therefore impelled, by just reasons, most anxiously to provide for the accomplishment of his object, by taking an oath of his servant: and beyond doubt, the disposition, and even the virtue of Isaac, were so conspicuous, that in addition to his riches, he had such endowments of mind and person, that many would earnestly desire affinity with him. His father, therefore, fears lest, after his own death, the inhabitants of the land should captivate Isaac by their allurements. Now, though Isaac has hitherto steadfastly resisted those allurements, the snares of which few young men escape, Abraham still fears lest, by shame and the dread of giving offense, he may be overcome. The holy man wished to anticipate these and similar dangers, when he bound his servant to fidelity, by interposing an oath; and it may be that some secret necessity also impelled him to take this course.

3. That thou shalt not take a wife. The kind of discipline which prevailed in Abraham's house is here apparent. Although this man was but a servant, yet, because he was put in authority by the master of the family, his servile condition did not prevent him from being next in authority to his lord; so that Isaac himself, the heir and successor of Abraham, submitted to his direction. To such an extent did the authority of Abraham and reverence for him prevail, that when he substituted a servant in his place, he caused this servant, by his mere will or word, to exercise a power which other masters of families find it difficult to retain for themselves. The modesty also of Isaac, who suffered himself to be governed by a servant, is obvious; for it would have been in vain for Abraham to enter into engagements with his servant, had he not been persuaded that his son would prove submissive and tractable. It here appears what great veneration he cherished towards his father; because Abraham, relying on Isaac's obedience, confidently calls his servant to him. Now this example should be taken by us as a common rule, to show that it is not lawful for the children of a family to contract marriage, except with the consent of parents; and certainly natural equity dictates that, in a matter of such importance, children should depend upon the will of their parents. How detestable, therefore, is the barbarity of the Pope, who has dared to burst this sacred bond asunder! Wherefore the wantonness of youths is to be restrained, that they may not rashly contract nuptials without consulting their fathers.

4. But thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred. It seems that, in the choice of the place, Abraham was influenced by the thought, that a wife would more willingly come from thence to be married to his son, when she knew that she was to marry one of her own race and country. But because it afterwards follows that the servant came to Padan Aram, some hence infer that Mesopotamia was Abraham's country. The solution, however, of this difficulty is easy. We know that Mesopotamia was not only the region contained between the Tigris and the Euphrates, but that a part also of Chaldea was comprehended in it; for Babylon is often placed there by profane writers. The Hebrew name simply means, "Syria of the rivers." They give the name Aram to that part of Syria which, beginning near Judea, embraces Armenia and other extensive regions, and reaches almost to the Euxine Sea. But when they especially designate those lands which are washed or traversed by the Tigris and Euphrates, they add the name "Padan:" for we know that Moses did not speak scientifically, but in a popular style. Since, however, he afterwards relates that Laban, the son of Nahor, dwelt at Charran, (Ge 29:4,) it seems to me probable that Nahor, who had remained in Chaldea, because it would be troublesome to leave his native soil, in process of time changed his mind; either because filial piety constrained him to attend to his decrepit and declining father, or because he had learned that he might have there a home as commodious as in his own country. It certainly appears from the eleventh chapter Ge 11:1 that he had not migrated at the same time with his father. 3

5. And the servant said unto him. Since he raises no objection respecting Isaac, we may conjecture that he was so fully persuaded of his integrity as to have no doubt of his acquiescence in his father's will. We must also admire the religious scrupulosity of the man, seeing he does not rashly take an oath. What pertained to the faithful and diligent discharge of his own duty he might lawfully promise, under the sanction of an oath; but since the completion of the affair depended on the will of others, he properly and wisely adduces this exception, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me."

6. Beware that thou bring not my son thither again. If the woman should not be found willing, Abraham, commending the event to God, firmly adheres to the principal point, that his son Isaac should not return to his country, because in this manner he would have deprived himself of the promised inheritance. He therefore chooses rather to live by hope, as a stranger, in the land of Canaan, than to rest among his relatives in his native soil: and thus we see that, in perplexed and confused affairs, the mind of the holy

man was not drawn aside from the command of God by any agitating cares; and we are taught, by his example, to follow God through every obstacle. However, he afterwards declares that he looks for better things. By such words he confirms the confidence of his servant, so that he, anticipating with greater alacrity a prosperous issue, might prepare for the journey.

7. The Lord God of heaven. By a twofold argument Abraham infers, that what he is deliberating respecting the marriage of his son will, by the grace of God, have a prosperous issue. First, because God had not led him forth in vain from his own country into a foreign land; and secondly, because God had not falsely promised to give the land, in which he was dwelling as a stranger, to his seed. He might also with propriety be confident that his design should succeed, because he had undertaken it only by the authority, and, as it were, under the auspices of God; for it was his exclusive regard for God which turned away his mind from the daughters of Canaan. He may, however, be thought to have inferred without reason that God would give his son a wife from that country and kindred to which he himself had bidden farewell. But whereas he had left his relatives only at the divine command, he hopes that God will incline their minds to be propitious and favorable to him. Meanwhile he concludes, from the past kindnesses of God, that his hand would not fail him in the present business; as if he would say, "I, who at the command of God left my country, and have experienced his continued help in my pilgrimage, do not doubt that he will also be the guide of thy journey, because it is in reliance on his promise that I lay upon thee this injunction." He then describes the mode in which assistance would be granted; namely, that God would send his angel, for he knew that God helps his servants by the ministration of angels, of which he had already received many proofs. By calling God the God of heaven, he celebrates that divine power which was the ground of his confidence.

10. And the servant took ten camels. He takes the camels with him, to prove that Abraham is a man of great wealth, in order that he may the more easily obtain what he desires. For even an open-hearted girl would not easily suffer herself to be drawn away to a distant region, unless on the proposed condition of being supplied with the conveniences of life. Exile itself is sad enough, without poverty as its attendant. Therefore, that the maid might not be deterred by the apprehension of want, but rather invited by the prospect of affluence, he ladens ten camels with presents, to give sufficient proof to the inhabitants of Chaldea of the domestic opulence of Abraham. What follows, namely, that "all the substance of Abraham was in the hand of his servant," some of the Hebrews improperly explain as meaning that the servant took with him an account of all Abraham's wealth, described and attested in written documents. It is rather the assigning of the reason of the fact, which might appear improbable, that the servant assumed so much power to himself. Therefore Moses, having said that a man who was but a servant set out on a journey with such a sumptuous and splendid equipage, immediately adds, that he did this of his own accord, because he had all the substance of Abraham in his hand. In saying that he came to the city of Nahor, he neither mentions the name of the city nor the part of Chaldea, or of any other region, where he dwelt, but only says, in general terms, that he came to "Syria of the rivers," concerning which term I have said something above.

12. O lord God of my master Abraham. The servant, being destitute of counsel, retakes himself to prayers. Yet he does not simply ask counsel of the Lord; but he also prays that the maid appointed to be the wife of Isaac should be brought to him with a certain sign, from which he might gather that she was divinely presented to him. It is an evidence of his piety and faith, that in a matter of such perplexity he is not bewildered, as one astonished; but breaks forth into prayer with a collected mind.

But the method which he uses 4 seems scarcely consistent with the true rule of prayer. For, first, we know that no one prays aright unless he subjects his own wishes to God. Wherefore there is nothing more unsuitable than to prescribe anything, at our own will, to God. Where, then, it may be asked, is the religion of the servant, who, according to his own pleasure, imposes a law upon God? Secondly, there ought to be nothing ambiguous in our prayers; and absolute certainty is to be sought for only in the Word of God.

Now, since the servant prescribes to God what answer shall be given, he appears culpably to depart from the suitable modesty of prayer; for although no promise had been given him, he nevertheless desires to be made fully certain respecting the whole affair. God, however, 5 in hearkening to his wish, proves, by the event, that it was acceptable to himself. Therefore we must know, that although a special promise had not been made at the moment, yet the servant was not praying rashly, nor according to the lust of the flesh, but by the secret impulse of the Spirit.

Moreover, the general law, by which all the pious are bound, does not prevent the Lord, when he determines to give something extraordinary, from directing the minds of his servants towards it; not that he would lead them away from his word, but only that he makes some peculiar concession to them in their mode of praying. The sum of the prayer before us is this: "O Lord, if a damsel shall present herself who, being asked to give me drink, shall also kindly and courteously offer it to my camels, I will seek after her as a wife for my master Isaac, just as if she were delivered into my hand by thee."

He seems, indeed, to be laying hold on some dubious conjecture; but since he reposes on the Providence of God, he is certainly persuaded that this token shall be to him equivalent to an oracle; because God, who is the guardian of his enterprise, will not suffer him to err. Meanwhile this is worthy of remark, that he does not fetch the sign of recognition from afar, but takes it from something present; for she who shall be thus humane to an unknown guest, will, by that very act, give proof of an excellent disposition.

This observation may be of use to prevent inquisitive men from adducing this example as a precedent for vain prognostications. In the words themselves the following particulars are to be noticed: first, that he addresses himself to the God of his master Abraham; not as being himself a stranger to the worship of God, but because the affair in question depends upon the promise given to Abraham. And truly he had no confidence in prayer, from any other source than from the covenant into which God had entered with the house of Abraham.

The expression "cause to meet me this day," 6 Jerome renders, "meet me, I pray, this day." But the verb is transitive, and the servant of Abraham intimates by the use of it, that the affairs of men were so ordered by the counsel and the hand of God, that the issue of them was not fortuitous; as if he would say, O Lord, in vain shall I look on this side and on that; in vain shall I catch at success by my own labor, industry and various contrivances, unless thou direct the work. And when he immediately afterwards subjoins, show kindness to my master, he implies that in this undertaking he rests upon nothing but the grace which God had promised to Abraham.

15. Before he had done speaking. The sequel sufficiently demonstrates that his wish had not been foolishly conceived. For the quickness of the answer manifests the extraordinary indulgence of God, who does not suffer the man to be long harassed with anxiety. Rebekah had, indeed, left her house before he began to pray; but it must be maintained that the Lord, at whose disposal are both the moments of time and the ways of man, had so ordered it on both sides as to give clear manifestation of his Providence. For sometimes he keeps us the longer in suspense, till, wearied with praying, we may seem to have lost our

labor; but in this affair, in order that his blessing might not seem doubtful, he suddenly interposed. The same thing also happened to Daniel, unto whom the angel appeared, before the conclusion of his prayer. (Da 9:21.) Now, although it frequently happens that, on account of our sloth, the Lord delays to grant our requests, it is, at such times, expedient for us, that what we ask should be delayed. In the meantime, he has openly and conspicuously proved, by unquestionable examples, that although the event may not immediately respond to our wishes, the prayers of his people are never in vain: yea, his own declaration, that before they cry he is mindful of their wants, is invariably fulfilled. (Isa 65:24.)

21. And the man, wondering at her, held his peace. This wondering of Abraham's servant, shows that he had some doubt in his mind. He is silently inquiring within himself, whether God would render his journey prosperous. Has he, then, no confidence concerning that divine direction, of which he had received the sign or pledge? I answer, that faith is never so absolutely perfect in the saints as to prevent the occurrence of many doubts. There is, therefore, no absurdity in supposing that the servant of Abraham, though committing himself generally to the providence of God, yet wavers, and is agitated, amidst a multiplicity of conflicting thoughts. Again, faith, although it pacifies and calms the minds of the pious, so that they patiently wait for God, still does not exonerate them from all care; because it is necessary that patience itself should be exercised, by anxious expectation, until the Lord fulfill what he has promised. But though this hesitation of Abraham's servant was not free from fault, inasmuch as it flowed from infirmity of faith; it is yet, on this account, excusable, because he did not turn his eyes in another direction, but only sought from the event a confirmation of his faith, that he might perceive God to be present with him.

22. The man took a golden ear-ring. His adorning the damsel with precious ornaments is a token of his confidence. For since it is evident by many proofs that he was an honest and careful servant, he would not throw away without discretion the treasures of his master. He knows, therefore, that these gifts will not be ill-bestowed; or, at least, relying on the goodness of God, he gives them, in faith, as an earnest of future marriage. But it may be asked, Whether God approves ornaments of this kind, which pertain not so much to neatness as to pomp?

I answer, that the things related in Scripture are not always proper to be imitated. Whatever the Lord commands in general terms is to be accounted as an inflexible rule of conduct; but to rely on particular examples is not only dangerous, but even foolish and absurd. Now we know how highly displeasing to God is not only pomp and ambition in adorning the body, but all kind of luxury. In order to free the heart from inward cupidity, he condemns that immoderate and superfluous splendor, which contains within itself many allurements to vice.

Where, indeed, is pure sincerity of heart found under splendid ornaments? Certainly all acknowledge this virtue to be rare. It is not, however, for us expressly to forbid every kind of ornament; yet because whatever exceeds the frugal use of such things is tarnished with some degree of vanity; and more especially, because the cupidity of women is, on this point, insatiable; not only must moderation, but even abstinence, be cultivated as far as possible. Further, ambition silently creeps in, so that the somewhat excessive adorning of the person soon breaks out into disorder.

With respect to the earrings and bracelets of Rebekah, as I do not doubt that they were those in use among the rich, so the uprightness of the age allowed them to be sparingly and frugally used; and yet I do not excuse the fault. This example, however, neither helps us, nor alleviates our guilt, if, by such means, we excite and continually inflame those depraved lusts which, even when all incentives are removed, it is excessively difficult to restrain. The women who desire to shine in gold, seek in Rebekah a pretext for their

corruption.

Why, therefore, do they not, in like manner, conform to the same austere kind of life and rustic labor to which she applied herself? But, as I have just said, they are deceived who imagine that the examples of the saints can sanction them in opposition to the common law of God. Should any one object that it is abhorrent to the modesty of a virtuous and chaste maiden to receive earrings and bracelets from a man who was a stranger, and whom she had never before seen. In the first place, it may be, that Moses passes over much conversation held on both sides, by which it is probable she was induced to venture on the reception of them.

It may also be, that he relates first what was last in order. For it follows soon afterwards in the context, that the servant of Abraham inquired whose daughter she was. We must also take into account the simplicity of that age. Whence does it arise that it was not disreputable for a maid to go alone out of the city, unless that then the morals of mankind did not require so severe a guard for the preservation of modesty? Indeed, it appears from the context, that the ornaments were not given her for a dishonorable purpose; 7 but a portion is offered to the parents to facilitate the contract for marriage.

Interpreters are not agreed respecting the value of the presents. Moses estimates the earrings at half a shekel, and the bracelets at ten shekels. Jerome, instead of half a shekel, reads two shekels. I conceive the genuine sense to be, that the bracelets were worth ten shekels, and the frontal ornament or earrings worth half that sum, or five shekels. For since nothing is added after the word ■■■ (bekah,) it has reference to the greater number. 8 Otherwise here is no suitable proportion between the bracelets and the ornaments for the head.

Moreover, if we take the shekel for four Attic drachms, the value is trifling; therefore I think the weight of gold is indicated, which makes the sum much greater than the piece of money called a shekel.

26. And the man bowed down his head. When the servant of Abraham hears that he had alighted upon the daughter of Bethel, he is more and more elated with hope. Yet he does not exult, as profane men are wont to do, as if the occurrence were fortuitous; but he gives thanks to God, regarding it, as the result of Providence, that he had been thus opportunely led straight to the place he had wished. He does not, therefore, boast of his good fortune; but he declares that God had dealt kindly and faithfully with Abraham; or, in other words, that, for his own mercy's sake, God had been faithful in fulfilling his promises. It is true that the same form of speech is applied to the persons present; just as it follows soon after in the same chapter, (Ge 24:49,)

"If ye will deal kindly and truly with my master tell me."

The language is, however, peculiarly suitable to the character of God, both because he gratuitously confers favors upon men, and is specially inclined to beneficence: and also, by never frustrating their hope, he proves himself to be faithful and true. This thanksgiving, therefore, teaches us always to have the providence of God before our eyes, in order that we may ascribe to him whatever happens prosperously to us.

28. And the damsel ran and told them of her mother's house. It is possible, that the mother of Rebekah occupied a separate house; not that she had a family divided from that of her husband, but for the purpose of keeping her daughters and maidens under her own custody. The expression may, however, be more simply explained to mean, that she came directly to her mother's chamber; because she could more easily

relate the matter to her than to her father. It is also probable, that when Bethuel was informed of the fact, by the relation of his wife, their son Laban was sent by both of them to introduce the stranger. Other explanations are needless.

33. I will not eat until I have told my errand 9 Moses begins to show by what means the parents of Rebekah were induced to give her in marriage to their nephew. That the servant, when food was set before him, should refuse to eat till he had completed his work is a proof of his diligence and fidelity; and it may with propriety be regarded as one of the benefits which God had vouchsafed to Abraham, that he should have a servant so faithful, and so intent upon his duty. Since, however, this was the reward of the holy discipline which Abraham maintained, we cannot wonder that very few such servants are to be found, seeing that everywhere they are so ill-governed.

Moreover, although the servant seems to weave a superfluous story, yet there is nothing in it which is not available to his immediate purpose. He knew that it was a feeling naturally inherent in parents, not willingly to send away their children to a distance. He therefore first commemorates Abraham's riches, that they might not hesitate to connect their daughter with a husband so wealthy. He secondly explains that Isaac was born of his mother in her old age; not merely for the purpose of informing them that he had been miraculously given to his father, whence they might infer that he had been divinely appointed to this greatness and eminence; but that an additional commendation might be given on account of Isaac's age. In the third place, he affirms that Isaac would be the sole heir of his father. Fourthly, he relates that he had been bound by an oath to seek a wife for his master Isaac, from among his own kindred; which special choice on the part of Abraham was very effectual in moving them to compliance. Fifthly, he states that Abraham, in full confidence that God would be the leader of his journey, had committed the whole business to him. Sixthly, he declares, that whatever he had asked in prayer he had obtained from the Lord; whence it appeared that the marriage of which he was about to treat was according to the will of God. We now see the design of his narration: First, to persuade the parents of Rebekah that he had not been sent for the purpose of deceiving them, that he had not in anything acted craftily, or by oblique methods, but in the fear of the Lord, as the religious obligation of marriage requires. Secondly, that he was desiring nothing which would not be profitable and honorable for them. And lastly, that God had been the director of the whole affair.

Moreover, since the servant of Abraham, though persuaded that the angel of God would be the guide of his journey, yet neither directs his prayers nor his thanksgivings to him, we may hence learn that angels are not, in such a sense, constituted the ministers of God to us, as that they should be invoked by us, or should transfer to themselves the worship due to God; a superstition which prevails nearly over the whole world to such a degree, that men turn aside a portion of their faith from the only fountain of all good to the rivulets which flow from it. The clause, the Lord, before whom I walk, (Ge 24:40,) which some refer to the probity and good conscience of Abraham, I rather explain as applying to the faith, by which he set God before him, as the governor of his life, being confident that he was the object of God's care, and dependent upon his grace.

If ye will deal kindly 10 I have lately related the force of this expression; namely, to act with humanity and good faith. He thus modestly and suppliantly asks them to consent to the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah: should he meet with a repulse from them, he says, he will go either to the right hand or to the left; that is, he will look around elsewhere. For he places the right hand and the left in contrast with the straight way in which he had been led to them. It is, however, with fertile ingenuity that some of the Hebrews explain the words as meaning, that he would go to Lot, or to Ishmael.

50. The thing proceedeth from the Lord. Whereas they are convinced by the discourse of the man, that God was the Author of this marriage, they avow that it would be unlawful for them to offer anything in the way of contradiction. They declare that the thing proceedeth from the Lord; because he had, by the clearest signs, made his will manifest. Hence we perceive, that although the true religion was in part observed among them, and in part infected with vicious errors, yet the fear of God was never so utterly extinguished, but this axiom remained firmly fixed in all their minds, that God must be obeyed. If, then, wretched idolaters, who had almost fallen away from religion, nevertheless so subjected themselves to God, as to acknowledge it to be unlawful for them to swerve from his will, how much more prompt ought our obedience to be? Therefore, as soon as the will of God is made known to us, not only let our tongues be silent, but let all our senses be still; because it is an audacious profanation to admit any thought which is opposed to that will.

52. He worshipped. Moses again repeats that Abraham's servant gave thanks to God; and it is not without reason that he so often inculcates this religious duty; because, since God requires nothing greater from us, the neglect of it betrays the most shameful indolence. The acknowledgment of God's kindness is a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savor; yea, it is a more acceptable service than all sacrifices. God is continually heaping innumerable benefits upon men. Their ingratitude, therefore, is intolerable, if they fail to exercise themselves in celebrating those benefits.

54. And they rose up in the morning. On this point Moses insists the more particularly; partly, for the purpose of commending the faithful industry of the servant in fulfilling his master's commands; partly, for that of teaching, that his mind was inflamed by the Spirit of God, for he is so ardent as to allow no truce to others, and no relaxation to himself. Thus, although he conducted himself as became an honest and prudent servant, it is still not to be doubted that the Lord impelled him, for Isaac's sake, to act as he did. So the Lord watches over his own people while they sleep, expedites and accomplishes their affairs in their absence, and influences the dispositions of all, so far as is expedient, to render them assistance. It is by a forced interpretation, that some would explain the ten days, during which Laban and his mother desire the departure of Rebekah to be deferred, as meaning years or months. For it was merely the tender wish of the mother, who could ill bear that her daughter should thus suddenly be torn away from her bosom.

57. We will call the damsel. Bethuel, who had before unreservedly given his daughter in marriage, now seems to adhere, with but little constancy, to his purpose. When, however, he had previously offered his daughter, without making any exception, he is to be understood as having done it, only so far as he was able. But now, Moses declares that he did not exercise tyranny over his daughter, so as to thrust her out reluctantly, or to compel her to marry against her will, but left her to her own free choice. Truly, in this matter, the authority of parents ought to be sacred: but a middle course is to be pursued, so that the parties concerned may make their contract spontaneously, and with mutual consent. It is not right to understand that Rebekah in answering so explicitly, showed contempt for the paternal roof, or too anxiously desired a husband; 11 but since she saw that the affair was transacted by the authority of her father, and with the consent of her mother, she also herself acquiesced in it.

59. And they sent away Rebekah. Moses first relates, that Rebekah was honorably dismissed; because her nurse was given unto her. Moreover, I doubt not that they had domestic nurses, who were their handmaidens; not that mothers entirely neglected that duty, but that they committed the care of education to one particular maid. They therefore who assisted mothers with subsidiary service were called nurses. Moses afterwards adds, that Rebekah's relatives "blessed her," (Ge 24:60,) by which expression he means, that they prayed that her condition might be a happy one. We know that it was a solemn custom,

in all ages, and among all people, to accompany marriages with all good wishes. And although posterity has greatly degenerated from the pure and genuine method of celebrating marriages used by the fathers; yet it is God's will that some public testimony should stand forth, by which men may be admonished, that no nuptials are lawful, except those which are rightly consecrated. Now, the particular form of benediction which is here related, was probably in common use, because nature dictates that the propagation of offspring is the special end of marriage. Under the notion of victory (Ge 24:60) is comprehended a prosperous state of life. The Lord, however, directed their tongues to utter a prophecy of which they themselves were ignorant. To possess the gates of enemies, means to obtain dominion over them; because judgment was administered in the gates, and the bulwarks of the city were placed there.

63. And Isaac went out. It appears that Isaac dwelt apart from his father; either because the family was too large, or because such was the custom. And perhaps Abraham had already married another wife; so that, for the sake of avoiding contentions, it would seem more convenient for him to have a house of his own. Thus great wealth has its attendant troubles. Doubtless, of all earthly blessings granted by God, none would have been sweeter to Abraham than that of living with his son. However, I by no means think that he was deprived of his society and assistance. For such was the piety of Isaac, that he undoubtedly studied to discharge every duty towards his father: this alone was wanting, that they did not live in the same house. Moses also relates how it happened that Isaac met with his wife before she reached his home. For he says, that Isaac went out in the evening to meditate or to pray. For the Hebrew word ■■■■ (soach) may mean either. It is probable that he did this according to his custom, and that he sought a place of retirement for prayer, in order that his mind, being released from all avocations, might be the more at liberty to serve God. Whether, however, he was giving his mind to meditation or to prayer, the Lord granted him a token of his own presence in that joyful meeting.

64. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes. We may easily conjecture that Isaac, when he saw the camels, turned his steps towards them, from the desire of seeing his bride; this gave occasion to the inquiry of Rebekah. Having received the answer, she immediately, for the sake of doing honor to her husband, dismounted her camel to salute him. For that she fell, struck with fear, as some suppose, in no way agrees with the narrative. She had performed too long a journey, under the protection of many attendants, to be so greatly afraid at the sight of one man. But these interpreters are deceived, because they do not perceive, that in the words of Moses, the reason is afterwards given to this effect, that when Rebekah saw Isaac, she alighted from her camel; because she had inquired of the servant who he was, and had been told that he was the son of his master Abraham. It would not have entered into her mind to make such inquiry respecting any person whom she might accidentally meet: but seeing she had been informed that Abraham's house was not far distant, she supposes him at least to be one of the domestics. Moses also says that she took a veil: which was a token of shame and modesty. For hence also, the Latin word which signifies "to marry," 12 is derived, because it was the custom to give brides veiled to their husbands. That the same rite was also observed by the fathers, I have no doubt. 13 So much the more shameful, and the less capable of excuse, is the licentiousness of our own age; in which the apparel of brides seems to be purposely contrived for the subversion of all modesty.

67. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. He first brought her into the tent, then took her as his wife. By the very arrangement of his words, Moses distinguishes between the legitimate mode of marriage and barbarism. And certainly the sanctity of marriage demands that man and woman should not live together like cattle; but that, having pledged their mutual faith, and invoked the name of God, they might dwell with each other. Besides, it is to be observed, that Isaac was not compelled, by the tyrannical

command of his father, to marry; but after he had given his mind to her he took her freely, and cordially gave her the assurance of conjugal fidelity.

And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. Since his grief for the death of his mother was now first assuaged, we infer how great had been its vehemence; for a period sufficiently long had already elapsed. 14 We may also hence infer, that the affection of Isaac was tender and gentle: and that his love to his mother was of no common kind, seeing he had so long lamented her death. And the knowledge of this fact is useful to prevent us from imagining that the holy patriarchs were men of savage manners and of iron hardness of heart, and from becoming like those who conceive fortitude to consist in brutality. Only care must be taken that grief should be duly mitigated; lest it burst forth in impious murmurings, or subvert the hope of a future resurrection. I do not however entirely excuse the sorrow of Isaac; I only advise, that what belongs to humanity, ought not to be altogether condemned. And although it was culpable not to be able to efface grief from the mind, until the opposite joy of marriage prevailed over it; Moses still reckons it among the benefits conferred by God, that he applies a remedy of any kind to his servant.

Footnotes

1

Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born, (Ge 21:5,) and Isaac was forty years old when he was married, (Ge 25:20.) This makes Abraham's age a hundred and forty years. -- Ed.

2

Under my thigh. "A sign which Jacob also required of his son Joseph, (Ge 47:29,) either to signify subjection, or for a further mystery of the covenant of circumcision, or rather of Christ the promised seed, who was to come out of Abraham's loins or thigh." -- Ainsworth.

3

See Ge 11:31.

4

"Divinatio qua utitur." The word *divinatio* seems to be too strong for the occasion. The servant certainly sought a sign from heaven; and may seem improperly to have prescribed to God in what way his prayer should be answered. He might, however, be acting under a divine impulse, and the context would lead to such an inference. But if it was a weakness in this good man to be thus minute in his stipulations, it was one which God neither reprov'd nor condemn'd; and therefore it seems harsh to give it the name of divination. Calvin's object, however, is, in thus strongly stating the case, to meet it as an objection, by a conclusive answer. A method which, the reader will have observed, he frequently adopts. -- Ed.

5

Calvin's answer to the objection above stated begins here. -- Ed.

6

"Et dixit Iehova Deus domini mei Abraham, occurrere fac nunc coram me hodie, et fac misericordiam cum domino meo Abraham." Dathe seems to have taken the same view of the passage with Calvin. "O Iova

Deus domini mei Abrahami, fac pro tuo erga dominum meum Abrahamum amore, ut mihi jam quam quero, occurrat." "O Lord God of my master Abraham, cause, according to thy love towards my master Abraham, that she whom I seek may meet me." The English version is simply, "I pray thee, send me good speed this day." But probably the more specific meaning attached by Calvin and Dathe to the passage is the true one. Calvin properly objects against the translation of the Vulgate as being intransitive, whereas ■■■■ (hakreh) is transitive. -- Ed

7

"Non turpis lenocinii causa datum esse."

8

Some suppose that by the ear-rings is meant an ornament for the face or forehead, as appears in the margin of our version, and as Calvin here seems to intimate. But the increased knowledge of Eastern customs which recent times have furnished, has given weight to the opinion of older commentators, that a nose-jewel is here intended. This ornament was not suspended from the central cartilaginous substance of the nose, but from one side, which was bored for the purpose. Calvin's interpretation, that the weight of this ornament was the half of ten shekels, instead of half a shekel, cannot be admitted. Though, according to its weight, it might not be worth more than ten or twelve shillings; yet its workmanship might be costly; and if it contained some precious stone, which is not improbable, it might be of very great value. There can be no doubt that the presents generally were exceedingly valuable. -- Ed.

9

It was the custom of the ancients on occasions of this kind first to take their meal together, and when the wants of nature had been supplied, and the spirit had been exhilarated, to open the subject of communication; but Abraham's servant purposely reverses this order, to show his earnestness in attending to his master's business; and perhaps also his confidence of success, in consequence of the favorable indications which God had given in answer to his prayers. See Dathe and Le Clerc. -- Ed.

10

"Si facitis misericordiam."

11

"Vel procax juvencula maritum nimis cupide appeteret."

12

"Verbum nubendi." The original meaning of the word nubere is to veil, or cover.

13

"Isaac was walking, and it would therefore have been the highest breach of Oriental good manners, to have remained on the camel when presented to him. No doubt they all alighted and walked to meet him, conducting Rebekah as a bride to meet the bridegroom." -- Bush. -- Ed.

14

The time from the death of Sarah to Isaac's marriage was three years. -- Ed.

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