
GENESIS 24:1 Abraham was old, and well stricken in age. The LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

Abraham, being solicitous to get his son Isaac property married, calls his confidential servant, probably Eliezer, and makes him swear that he will not take a wife for Isaac from among the Canaanites, Gen 24:1-3, but from among his own kindred, Gen 24:4. The servant proposes certain difficulties, Gen 24:5, which Abraham removes by giving him the strongest assurances of God's direction in the business, Gen 24:6, Gen 24:7, and then specifies the conditions of the oath, Gen 24:8. The form of the oath itself, Gen 24:9. The servant makes preparations for his journey, and sets out for Mesopotamia, the residence of Abraham's kindred, Gen 24:10. Arrives at a well near to the place, Gen 24:11. His prayer to God, Gen 24:12-14. Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, comes to the well to draw water, Gen 24:15. She is described, Gen 24:16. Conversation between her and Abraham's servant, in which every thing took place according to his prayer to God, Gen 24:17-21. He makes her presents, and learns whose daughter she is, Gen 24:22-24. She invites him to her father's house, Gen 24:25. He returns thanks to God for having thus far given him a prosperous journey, Gen 24:26, Gen 24:27. Rebekah runs home and informs her family, Gen 24:28; on which her brother Laban comes out, and invites the servant home, Gen 24:29-31. His reception, Gen 24:32, Gen 24:33. Tells his errand, Gen 24:34, and how he had proceeded in executing the trust reposed in him, Gen 24:35-48. Requests an answer, Gen 24:49. The family of Rebekah consent that she should become the wife of Isaac, Gen 24:50, Gen 24:51. The servant worships God, Gen 24:52, and gives presents to Milcah, Laban, and Rebekah, Gen 24:53. He requests to be dismissed, Gen 24:54-56. Rebekah, being consulted, consents to go, Gen 24:57, Gen 24:58. She is accompanied by her nurse, Gen 24:59; and having received the blessing of her parents and relatives, Gen 24:60, she departs with the servant of Abraham, Gen 24:61. They are met by Isaac, who was on an evening walk for the purpose of meditation, Gen 24:62-65. The servant relates to Isaac all that he had done, Gen 24:66. Isaac and Rebekah are married, Gen 24:67.

Verse 1

And Abraham was old - He was now about one hundred and forty years of age, and consequently Isaac was forty, being born when his father was one hundred years old. See Gen 21:5; Gen 25:20.

GENESIS 24:2 Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please put your hand under my thigh.

Verse 2

Eldest servant - As this eldest servant is stated to have been the ruler over all that he had, it is very likely that Eliezer is meant. See Gen 15:2, Gen 15:3.

Put, I pray thee, thy hand - See note on Gen 24:9.

GENESIS 24:3 I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live.

Verse 3

I will make thee swear - See note on Gen 24:9.

Of the Canaanites - Because these had already been devoted to slavery, etc., and it would have been utterly inconsistent as well with prudence as with the design of God to have united the child and heir of the promise with one who was under a curse, though that curse might be considered to be only of a political nature. See the curse of Canaan, Gen 9:25 (note).

GENESIS 24:4 But you shall go to my country, and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”

Verse 4

My country - Mesopotamia, called here Abraham's country, because it was the place where the family of Haran, his brother, had settled; and where himself had remained a considerable time with his father Terah. In this family, as well as in that of Nahor, the true religion had been in some sort preserved, though afterwards considerably corrupted; see Gen 31:19.

And take a wife unto my son - A young man in Bengal is precisely in the same circumstances as Isaac; he has nothing to do in the choice of a wife; parents employ others to seek wives for their sons. Those who leave their homes in search of employment always marry their children in their own country, and among their acquaintance at home; never among the people with whom they reside. In Asiatic countries this custom has prevailed from the infancy of the human race. See Ward's Hindoo Customs.

GENESIS 24:5 The servant said to him, “What if the woman isn't willing to follow me to this land? Must I bring your son again to the land you came from?”

Verse 5

Peradventure the woman will not be willing - We may see, says Calmet, by this and other passages of Scripture, Jos 9:18, what the sentiments of the ancients were relative to an oath. They believed they were bound precisely by what was spoken, and had no liberty to interpret the intentions of those to whom the oath was made.

GENESIS 24:6 Abraham said to him, “Beware that you don't bring my son there again.

GENESIS 24:7 The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house, and from the land of my birth, who spoke to me, and who swore to me, saying, 'I will give this land to your seed.' He will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.

Verse 7

The Lord God, etc. - He expresses the strongest confidence in God, that the great designs for which he had brought him from his own kindred to propagate the true religion in the earth would be accomplished; and that therefore, when earthly instruments failed, heavenly ones should be employed. He shall send his angel, probably meaning the Angel of the Covenant, of whom see Gen 15:7.

GENESIS 24:8 If the woman isn't willing to follow you, then you shall be clear from this oath to me. Only you shall not bring my son there again."

GENESIS 24:9 The servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

Verse 9

Put his hand under the thigh of Abraham - This form of swearing has greatly puzzled the commentators; but it is useless to detail opinions which I neither believe myself, nor would wish my readers to credit. I believe the true sense is given in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, and that called the Jerusalem Targum. In the former it is said, Put now thy hand בגזית מהולתי bigzirath mehulathi, in sectione circumcisionis meoe; in the latter ירך קימי techoth yerech keyami, sub femore foederis mei. When we put the circumstances mentioned in this and the third verse together, we shall find that they fully express the ancient method of binding by oath in such transactions as had a religious tendency. 1. The rite or ceremony used on the occasion: the person binding himself put his hand under the thigh of the person to whom he was to be bound; i.e., he put his hand on the part that bore the mark of circumcision, the sign of God's covenant, which is tantamount to our kissing the book, or laying the hand upon the New Testament or covenant of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2. The form of the oath itself: the person swore by Jehovah, the God of heaven and the God of the earth. Three essential attributes of God are here mentioned:

1. His self-existence and eternity in the name Jehovah.
2. His dominion of glory and blessedness in the kingdom of heaven.
3. His providence and bounty in the earth.

The meaning of the oath seems to be this: "As God is unchangeable in his nature and purposes, so shall I be in this engagement, under the penalty of forfeiting all expectation of temporal prosperity, the benefits of the mystical covenant, and future glory." An oath of this kind, taken at such a time, and on such an occasion, can never be deemed irreligious or profane. Thou shalt swear by his name - shalt acknowledge and bind thyself unto the true God, as the just Judge of thy motives and actions, is a command of the Most High; and such an oath as the above is at once (on such an occasion) both proper and rational. The person binding himself proposes for a pattern the unchangeable and just God; and as He is the avenger of wrong and the punisher of falsehood, and has all power in the heavens and in the earth, so he can punish perjury by privation of spiritual and temporal blessings, by the loss of life, and by inflicting the perdition due to ungodly men, among whom liars and perjured persons occupy the most distinguished rank. Our ideas of delicacy may revolt from the rite used on this occasion; but, when the nature of the covenant is considered, of which circumcision was the sign, we shall at once perceive that this rite could not be used without producing sentiments

of reverence and godly fear, as the contracting party must know that the God of this covenant was a consuming fire.

GENESIS 24:10 The servant took ten camels, of his master's camels, and departed, having a variety of good things of his master's with him. He arose, and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor.

Verse 10

Took ten camels - It appears that Abraham had left the whole management of this business to the discretion of his servant, to take with him what retinue and what dowry he pleased; for it is added, All the goods of his master were in his hand; and in those times it was customary to give a dowry for a wife, and not to receive one with her.

GENESIS 24:11 He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time that women go out to draw water.

Verse 11

He made his camels to kneel down - To rest themselves, or lie down, as the Septuagint has very properly expressed it, *Και εκοιμισε τας καμηλους*.

The time that women go out to draw water - In Bengal it is the universal practice for the women to go to pools and rivers to fetch water. Companies of four, six, ten, or more, may be seen in every town daily going to fetch water, with the pitchers resting upon their sides; and, on their return from bathing, women frequently bring water home - Ward.

GENESIS 24:12 He said, "The LORD, the God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham.

Verse 12

And he said, O Lord God, etc. - "The conduct of this servant," says Dr. Dodd, "appears no less pious than rational. By supplicating for a sign, he acknowledges God to be the great superintendent and director of the universe, and of that event in particular; and at the same time, by asking a natural sign, such as betokened humanity, condescension, and other qualities which promised a discreet and virtuous wife, he puts his prayer upon such a discreet, rational footing, as to be a proper example for all to imitate who would not tempt the providence of God, by expecting extraordinary signs to be given them for the determination of cases which they are capable of deciding by a proper use of their rational faculties." This is all very good; but certainly the case referred to here is such a one as required especial direction from God; a case which no use of the rational faculties, without Divine influence, could be sufficient to determine. It is easy to run into extremes, and it is very natural so to do. In all things the assistance and blessing of God are necessary, even where human strength and wisdom have the fullest and freest sphere of action; but there are numberless cases, of

infinite consequence to man, where his strength and prudence can be of little or no avail, and where the God of all grace must work all things according to the counsel of his own will. To expect the accomplishment of any good end, without a proper use of the means, is the most reprehensible enthusiasm; and to suppose that any good can be done or procured without the blessing and mercy of God, merely because proper means are used, is not less reprehensible. Plan, scheme, and labor like Eliezer, and then, by earnest faith and prayer, commit the whole to the direction and blessing of God.

GENESIS 24:13 Behold, I am standing by the spring of water. The daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.

GENESIS 24:14 Let it happen, that the young lady to whom I will say, 'Please let down your pitcher, that I may drink,' and she will say, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink,'—let her be the one you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

GENESIS 24:15 Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher on her shoulder.

Verse 15

Behold, Rebekah came out - How admirably had the providence of God adapted every circumstance to the necessity of the case, and so as in the most punctual manner to answer the prayer which his servant had offered up!

GENESIS 24:16 The young lady was very beautiful to look at, a virgin, neither had any man known her. She went down to the spring, filled her pitcher, and came up.

GENESIS 24:17 The servant ran to meet her, and said, "Please give me a drink, a little water from your pitcher."

GENESIS 24:18 She said, "Drink, my lord." She hurried, and let down her pitcher on her hand, and gave him drink.

GENESIS 24:19 When she had done giving him drink, she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they have done drinking."

Verse 19

I will draw water for thy camels also - Had Rebekah done no more than Eliezer had prayed for, we might have supposed that she acted not as a free agent, but was impelled to it by the absolutely controlling power of God; but as she exceeds all that was requested, we see that it sprang from her native benevolence, and sets her conduct in the most amiable point of view.

GENESIS 24:20 She hurried, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again to the well to draw, and drew for all his camels.

GENESIS 24:21 The man looked steadfastly at her, remaining silent, to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

Verse 21

The man, wondering at her - And he was so lost in wonder and astonishment at her simplicity, innocence, and benevolence, that he permitted this delicate female to draw water for ten camels, without ever attempting to afford her any kind of assistance! I know not which to admire most, the benevolence and condescension of Rebekah, or the cold and apparently stupid indifference of the servant of Abraham. Surely they are both of an uncommon cast.

GENESIS 24:22 As the camels had done drinking, the man took a golden ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold,

Verse 22

The man took a golden ear-ring - נֶזֶם זָהָב nezem zahab. That this could not be an ear-ring is very probable from its being in the singular number. The margin calls it a jewel for the forehead; but it most likely means a jewel for the nose, or nose-ring, which is in universal use through all parts of Arabia and Persia, particularly among young women. They are generally worn in the left nostril. The word is very properly translated *επιρρινθιον*, an ornament for the nose, by Symmachus.

Half a shekel - For the weight of a shekel, See note Gen 20:16.

And two bracelets - וּשְׁנֵי צַמִּידִים usheney tsemidim. As tsemidim comes from צָמַד tsamad, to join or couple together, it may very properly mean bracelets, or whatever may clasp round the arms or legs; for rings and ornaments are worn round both by females in India and Persia. The small part of the leg is generally decorated in this way, and so is the whole arm from the shoulder to the wrist. As these tsemidim were given to Rebekah for her hands, it sufficiently distinguishes them from a similar ornament used for the ankles.

In different parts of the sacred writings there are allusions to ornaments of various kinds still in use in different Asiatic countries. They are of seven different sorts. 1. for the forehead; 2. for the nose; 3. for the ears; 4. for the arms; 5. for the fingers; 6. for the neck and breast; 7. for the ankles. See Gen 24:22, Gen 24:47; also Eze 16:12; Pro 11:22; Isa 3:21; Gen 35:4; Exo 32:2, Exo 32:3; Job 42:11; Jdg 8:24. The principal female ornaments are enumerated in the third chapter of Isaiah, which are very nearly the same that are in use in Persia and India to the present time.

GENESIS 24:23 and said, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me. Is there room in your father's house for us to lodge in?"

GENESIS 24:24 She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor."

GENESIS 24:25 She said moreover to him, "We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in."

GENESIS 24:26 The man bowed his head, and worshipped the LORD.

Verse 26

Bowed down his head, and worshipped - Two acts of adoration are mentioned here;

1. Bowing the head, יִקְּוֹד yikkod; and
2. Prostration upon the earth, וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה vaiyshtaehu.

The bowing of the head was to Rebekah, to return her thanks for her kind invitation. The prostration was to Jehovah, in gratitude for the success with which he had favored him.

GENESIS 24:27 He said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his loving kindness and his truth toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the way to the house of my master's relatives."

Verse 27

The Lord led me - By desire of his master he went out on this journey; and as he acknowledged God in all his ways, the Lord directed all his steps.

GENESIS 24:28 The young lady ran, and told her mother's house about these words.

Verse 28

Her mother's house - Some have conjectured from this that her father Bethuel was dead; and the person called Bethuel, Gen 24:50, was a younger brother. This is possible, but the mother's house might be mentioned were even the father alive; for in Asiatic countries the women have apartments entirely separate from those of the men, in which their little children and grown-up daughters reside with them. This was probably the case here, though it is very likely that Bethuel was dead, as the whole business appears to be conducted by Rebekah's brothers.

GENESIS 24:29 Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban. Laban ran out to the man, to the spring.

GENESIS 24:30 When he saw the ring, and the bracelets on his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, "This is what the man said to me," he came to the man. Behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring.

GENESIS 24:31 He said, "Come in, you blessed of the LORD. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels."

Verse 31

Thou blessed of the Lord - Probably a usual mode of wishing prosperity, as he that is blessed of the Lord is worthy of all respect; for, enjoying the Divine favor, he is in possession of the sum of happiness.

GENESIS 24:32 The man came into the house, and he unloaded the camels. He gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.

Verse 32

Provender for the camels - These were the first objects of his care; for a good man is merciful to his beast.

Water to wash his feet - Thus it thus appears that he had servants with him; and as the fatigues of the journey must have fallen as heavily upon them as upon himself, so we find no distinction made, but water is provided to wash their feet also.

GENESIS 24:33 Food was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told my message." He said, "Speak on."

Verse 33

I will not eat until I have told - In Hindoostan it is not unusual for a Brahmin to enter a house and sit down, and when meat is offered, refuse to eat till he has obtained the object of his errand. Here is a servant who had his master's interest more at heart than his own. He refuses to take even necessary refreshment till he knows whether he is likely to accomplish the object of his journey. Did not our blessed Lord allude to the conduct of Abraham's servant, Joh 4:34 : My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work?

GENESIS 24:34 He said, "I am Abraham's servant.

GENESIS 24:35 The LORD has blessed my master greatly. He has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, and camels and donkeys.

GENESIS 24:36 Sarah, my master's wife, bore a son to my master when she was old. He has given all that he has to him.

Verse 36

Unto him hath he given all that he hath - He has made Isaac his sole heir. These things appear to be spoken to show the relatives of Rebekah that his master's son was a proper match for her; for even in those primitive times there was regard had to the suitableness of station and rank in life, as well

as of education, in order to render a match comfortable. Persons of dissimilar habits, as well as of dissimilar religious principles, are never likely to be very happy in a married life. Even the poor and the rich may better meet together in matrimonial alliances than the religious and the profane, the well-bred and the vulgar. A person may be unequally yoked in a great variety of ways: Bear ye one another's burdens is the command of God; but where there is unsuitableness in the dispositions, education, mental capacity, etc., of the persons, then one side is obliged to bear the whole burden, and endless dissatisfaction is the result. See at the end, Gen 24:67 (note).

GENESIS 24:37 My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live,

GENESIS 24:38 but you shall go to my father's house, and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son.'

GENESIS 24:39 I asked my master, 'What if the woman will not follow me?'

GENESIS 24:40 He said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with you, and prosper your way. You shall take a wife for my son of my relatives, and of my father's house.

GENESIS 24:41 Then will you be clear from my oath, when you come to my relatives. If they don't give her to you, you shall be clear from my oath.'

GENESIS 24:42 I came this day to the spring, and said, 'The LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you do prosper my way which I go—

Verse 42

O Lord God of my master - As Abraham was the friend of God, Eliezer makes use of this to give weight and consequence to his petitions.

GENESIS 24:43 behold, I am standing by this spring of water. Let it happen, that the maiden who comes out to draw, to whom I will say, "Please give me a little water from your pitcher to drink,"

Verse 43

When the virgin - העלמה haalmah, from עלם alam, to hide, cover, or conceal; a pure virgin, a woman not uncovered, and in this respect still concealed from man. The same as בתולה bethulah, Gen 24:16, which, from the explanation there given, incontestably means a virgin in the proper sense of the word - a young woman, not that is covered or kept at home, the common gloss, but who was not uncovered in the delicate sense in which the Scripture uses this word. See this interpretation vindicated on Isa 7:14 (note).

GENESIS 24:44 and she will tell me, "Drink, and I will also draw for your camels,"—let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.'

GENESIS 24:45 Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. She went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.'

Verse 45

Before I had done speaking in mine heart - So we find that the whole of this prayer, so circumstantially related Gen 24:12-14, and again Gen 24:42-44, was mental, and heard only by that God to whom it was directed. It would have been improper to have used public prayer on the occasion, as his servants could have felt no particular interest in the accomplishment of his petitions, because they were not concerned in them, having none of the responsibility of this mission.

GENESIS 24:46 She hurried and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink.' So I drank, and she also gave the camels a drink.

GENESIS 24:47 I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her hands.

GENESIS 24:48 I bowed my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter for his son.

GENESIS 24:49 Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. If not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

Verse 49

That I may turn to the right hand or to the left - That is, That I may go elsewhere and seek a proper match for the son of my master. Some have imagined that Eliezer intimated by these expressions that if he did not succeed in obtaining Rebekah, he would go and seek for a wife either among the descendants of Ishmael or the descendants of Lot. This interpretation is fanciful.

GENESIS 24:50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "The thing proceeds from the LORD. We can't speak to you bad or good.

Verse 50

Laban and Bethuel - These seem both to be brothers, of whom Laban was the eldest and chief; for the opinion of Josephus appears to be very correct, viz., that Bethuel, the father, had been some time dead. See note Gen 24:28.

Bad or good - We can neither speak for nor against; it seems to be entirely the work of God, and we cordially submit: consult Rebekah; if she be willing, take her and go. See note Gen 24:58.

GENESIS 24:51 Behold, Rebekah is before you. Take her, and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the LORD has spoken."

GENESIS 24:52 When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself down to the earth to the LORD.

GENESIS 24:53 The servant brought out jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and her mother.

Verse 53

Jewels of silver, and jewels of gold - The word כלי keley, which we here translate jewels signifies properly vessels or instruments; and those presented by Eliezer might have been of various kinds. What he had given before, Gen 24:22, was in token of respect, what he gave now appears to have been in the way of dowry.

Precious things - מגדנת migdanoth. This word is used to express exquisite fruits or delicacies, Deu 33:13-16; precious plants or flowers, Sol 4:16; Sol 7:13. But it may mean gifts in general, though rather of an inferior kind to those mentioned above.

GENESIS 24:54 They ate and drank, he and the men who were with him, and stayed all night. They rose up in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master."

Verse 54

And they did eat and drink - When Eliezer had got a favorable answer, then he and his servants sat down to meat; this he had refused to do till he had told his message, Gen 24:33.

GENESIS 24:55 Her brother and her mother said, "Let the young lady stay with us a few days, at least ten. After that she will go."

Verse 55

Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten - The original is very abrupt and obscure, because we are not acquainted with the precise meaning of the form of speech which is here used; עשור ימים או עשור yamim o asor Days or Ten, probably meaning a year or ten months, as the margin reads it, or a week or ten days. This latter is the most likely sense, as there would be no propriety after having given their consent that she should go, in detaining her for a year or ten months. In matters of simple phraseology, or in those which concern peculiar customs, the Septuagint translation, especially in the Pentateuch, where it is most accurate and pure, may be considered a legitimate judge; this translation renders the words ἡμερας ὡσαι δεκα, about ten days. Houbigant contends strongly that instead of the words עשור ימים או עשור yamim o asor, days or ten, we should read חדש ימים chodesh yamim, a month of days, i.e., a full month; without which emendation he asserts, locus explicari non possit, "the passage cannot be explained." This emendation is supported by the Syriac

version, which reads here yerach yomin, a month of days, or a full month. The reader may adopt the Syriac or the Septuagint, as he judges best.

GENESIS 24:56 He said to them, "Don't hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master."

GENESIS 24:57 They said, "We will call the young lady, and ask her."

GENESIS 24:58 They called Rebekah, and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will go."

Verse 58

Wilt thou go with this man? - So it appears it was left ultimately to the choice of Rebekah whether she would accept the proposals now made to her, unless we suppose that the question meant, Wilt thou go immediately, or stay with us a month longer? She said, I will go - It fully appears to be the will of God that it should be so, and I consent. This at once determined the whole business.

GENESIS 24:59 They sent away Rebekah, their sister, with her nurse, Abraham's servant, and his men.

Verse 59

And her nurse - Whose name, we learn from Gen 35:8, was Deborah, and who, as a second mother, was deemed proper to accompany Rebekah. This was a measure dictated by good sense and prudence. Rebekah had other female attendants. See Gen 24:61.

GENESIS 24:60 They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and let your seed possess the gate of those who hate them."

Verse 60

Be thou the mother of thousands of millions - לאלפי רבבה lealphey rebabah, for thousands ten thousand, or for myriads of thousands, a large family being ever considered, in ancient times, as a proof of the peculiar blessing and favor of God. Similar addresses to a daughter, when she is going from her father's house to live with her husband, are very common among the Hindoos; such as, "Be thou the mother of a son," "Be thou the wife of a king," etc. See Ward.

GENESIS 24:61 Rebekah arose with her ladies. They rode on the camels, and followed the man. The servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

GENESIS 24:62 Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he lived in the land of the South.

Verse 62

And Isaac came - Concerning this well see Gen 16:13, Gen 16:14, etc. As it appears from Gen 25:11, that Isaac dwelt at the well Lahai-roi, it has been conjectured that he had now come on a visit to his aged father at Beersheba, where he waited in expectation of his bride.

For he dwelt in the south country - The southern part of the land of Canaan. See Gen 12:9.

GENESIS 24:63 Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the evening. He lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, there were camels coming.

Verse 63

Isaac went out to meditate - לשוּח lasuach, to bend down the body, or the mind, or both. He was probably in deep thought, with his eyes fixed upon the ground. What the subject of his meditation was it is useless to inquire; he was a pious man, and could not be triflingly employed.

GENESIS 24:64 Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel.

GENESIS 24:65 She said to the servant, "Who is the man who is walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." She took her veil, and covered herself.

Verse 65

She took a veil - הַצַּעִיף hatstsaif. This is the first time this word occurs, and it is of doubtful signification; but most agree to render it a veil or a cloak. The former is the most likely, as it was generally used by women in the east as a sign of chastity, modesty, and subjection.

GENESIS 24:66 The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

GENESIS 24:67 Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife. He loved her. Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Verse 67

Sarah's tent - Sarah being dead, her tent became now appropriated to the use of Rebekah.

And took Rebekah, etc. - After what form this was done we are not told; or whether there was any form used on the occasion, more than solemnly receiving her as the person whom God had chosen to be his wife; for it appears from Gen 24:66 that the servant told him all the especial providential circumstances which had marked his journey. The primitive form of marriage we have already seen,

Gen 2:23, Gen 2:24, which, it is likely, as far as form was attended to, was that which was commonly used in all the patriarchal times.

In this chapter we have an affecting and edifying display of that providence by which God disposes and governs the affairs of the universe, descending to the minutest particulars, and managing the great whole by directing and influencing all its parts. This particular or especial providence we see is not confined to work by general laws; it is wise and intelligent, for it is the mind, the will, and energy of God; it steps out of common ways, and takes particular directions, as endlessly varied human necessities may need, or the establishment and maintenance of godliness in the earth may require. What a history of providential occurrences, coming all in answer to the prayer and faith of a simple, humble individual, does this chapter exhibit!

As Abraham's servant has God's glory only in view in the errand on which he is going, he may well expect the Divine direction. See with what simplicity and confidence he prays to God! He even prescribes the way in which the Divine choice and approbation shall be made known; and God honors the purity of his motives and his pious faith, by giving him precisely the answer he wished. How honorable in the sight of God is simplicity of heart! It has nothing to fear, and all good to hope for; whereas a spirit warped by self-interest and worldly views is always uncertain and agitated, as it is ever seeking that from its own counsels, projects, and schemes, which should be sought in God alone. In every place the upright man meets with his God; his heart acknowledges his Maker, and his Maker acknowledges him; for such a one the whole economy of providence and grace is ever at work.

Abraham's solicitude to get a suitable wife for his son is worthy of the most serious regard. He was well aware that if Isaac formed a matrimonial alliance with the Canaanites it might be ruinous to his piety, and prevent the dissemination of the true religion; therefore he binds his most trusty servant by a solemn oath not to take a wife for his son from the daughters of Canaan, but from his own kindred, among whom the knowledge of the true God was best preserved. Others had different rays of the light of truth, but Abraham's family alone had The truth; and to the descendants of this family were the promises made.

How careful should parents be to procure alliances for their children with those who fear God, as so much of the peace and comfort of the children, and the happiness of their posterity, depend on this circumstance! But alas! how many sacrifice the comfort and salvation of their offspring at the shrine of Mammon! If they can procure rich husbands and wives for their daughters and sons, then all, in their apprehension, is well. Marriages of this kind may be considered as mere bargain and sale; for there is scarcely ever any reference to God or eternity in them. The Divine institution of marriage is left out of sight; and the persons are united, not properly to each other, in the love, fear, and according to the ordinance of God, but they are wedded to so many thousand pounds sterling, and to so many houses, fields, etc. Thus like goes to like, metal to metal, earth to earth. Marriages formed on such principles are mere licensed adulteries. Let such contractors hear these awful words of God: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" Jam 4:4. See note on Gen 24:36.

Although under the patriarchal dispensation parents had a kind of absolute authority over their children, and might dispose of them as they pleased in general cases, yet it appears that in matrimonial connections they were under no compulsion. The suitable person was pointed out and recommended; but it does not appear that children were forced, against the whole tide of their affections, to take those persons who were the objects of the parent's choice. Wilt thou go with this man? was, in all likelihood, deemed essential to the completion of the contract; and by the answer, I

will go, was the contract fully ratified. Thus the persons were ultimately left to their own choice, though the most prudent and proper means were no doubt used in order to direct and fix it. Whether this was precisely the plan followed in primitive times we cannot absolutely say: they were times of great simplicity; and probably connections on the mere principle of affection, independently of all other considerations, seldom existed. And it must be allowed that matches formed on the sole principle of convenience might as well be formed by the parents as by any others; and in Asiatic countries it was generally so, for there the female seldom presumes to have a choice of her own.

In all cases of this kind the child should invariably consult the experience and wisdom of the parents; and the parents should ever pay much respect to the feelings of the child, nor oppose an alliance which may be in all other respects suitable, because there may be a lack of property on one side of the intended match. If parents would proceed in this way, God would pour his blessing on their seed, and his Spirit upon their offspring.