

III. Abram's Obedience, 4-9.

Vs. 4, 5. *So Abram departed* in obedience to the divine call, forsaking everything and venturing all upon the bare word of God. "Obedience under such conditions marks Abram as the hero of faith and the ideal of Hebrew piety" (see Heb. 11:8). *Seventy and five years old*. His migration was not the outcome of youthful restlessness, but of mature decision and settled purpose. *Out of Haran*. See Geography Lesson. *Sarai*; probably an old form for Sarah (ch. 17:15), which means "a princess." *The souls*; persons. See on v. 1. *Canaan*; originally the name of the strip of land along the sea coast between Gaza and Sidon, then of the Valley of the Jordan and later the whole of Palestine.

Vs. 6, 7. *Sichem*; that is, Shechem, afterwards an important city, between Mts. Ebal and Gerizim, in a fertile, well watered valley, just 30 miles north of Jerusalem. The district would furnish good pasturage for the flocks and herds of the immigrants. *The oak* (or terebinth) *of Moreh* (Rev. Ver.). Moreh means "soothsayer," and the tree was one to which the inhabitants of the land went for supposed revelations of the will of the gods. *Canaanite . . . in the land*; descendants of Canaan, son of Ham and grandson of Noah, ch. 9:18. The statement explains the use of the tree. The land was not without inhabitants. *The Lord appeared*. Abram had no need of a sacred tree; he hears the voice of God himself. *Unto thy seed*; although Abram had as yet no children. *Will I give this land*. Abram's faith is rewarded by a richer and more definite promise than those of v. 2. "A wonderful word! Abram was but a single person and yet he received the land for a possession," Ezek. 33:24. *There builded . . . an altar*; in this way (1) declaring his faith in God's promises; (2) renewing the consecration of himself to God; (3) taking possession of the land in God's name; (4) witnessing for God to the surrounding heathen.

Vs. 8, 9. *Removed from thence*; in nomadic fashion, seeking new pasture grounds. *Beth-el*, "House of God," 20 miles south of Shechem, then called Luz, but afterwards named Bethel by Jacob after his dream, Gen. 28:19. *Hai*; Rev. Ver., "Ai," somewhat more than 2 miles from Bethel and separated from it by a ravine. *There . . . builded an altar*. Wherever he went, his religion went with him; for it was real. *Called upon the name of*; worshiped. *Journeyed*; literally, "plucked up" (the pegs of his tents), "moved camp." *Toward the South* (Rev. Ver.); the Negeb, the "dry" region south of Judah.

Light from the East

By Rev. Professor E. Davidson, D.D., Toronto

"HE PITCHED HIS TENT" (v. 8)—As sojourners in the land, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob lived in tents. A traveler to-day is never far from the ungainly, widespread goats' hair tents of Bedouin. Nowhere in Canaan can you get away from them. The patriarchs (Abraham, for example) were desert men, too, and when they came to Canaan they brought their desert houses with them. You cannot get away from the desert in Palestine; it is always at your doors, west as well as east of the Jordan. I found that the ballads the old minstrels of Michmash delighted to sing in 1912 were tales of raids made by nomads and of exploits like Gideon's in driving the nomads out of the land. Like the patriarchs, the nomads to-day move about with sheep and goats and sometimes larger cattle; they have horses and camels. Occasionally they cultivate a patch of soil and wait long enough before journeying on for the wheat or barley to ripen. They live still the simple life of the desert. Hospitable women will give gladly of the sour milk that was offered to Sisera, or a high-minded sheik will entertain you as Abraham did the angels, or Ali Diab did me; or on the other side men will cheerfully rob you if they can do it without risk.

• THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

Get the scholars to imagine themselves traveling with Abram and his company on the journeys referred to in the lesson. We start from Ur (bring out all the facts about it mentioned in the teachers' and scholars'

Helps). From Ur we go northwestward up the Euphrates valley, past Babel, afterwards the great city of Babylon, to Haran, 500 miles from Ur, and a busy centre of trade, situated, as it was, at the meeting place of