

prompt. In the self-same day God commanded, he obeyed. 2.—It is *particular*, to the very letter. All is done as commanded. 3.—It was in *old age*, when men are naturally unwilling to engage in anything new.

LESSONS.

1. Nothing is to be hid for God.
2. Learn the happiness of communion with God. Our facilities for such communion greater than Abraham's. He had no bible; we have. He had a Saviour dimly revealed, in the distance; we have God manifest in the flesh.
3. In all our religious duties let us have strict regard to the revealed will of God. Let our enquiry be, What saith the Scripture?
4. We have the seal of the covenant, but have we given our own consent?

DOCTRINE TO BE PROVED.

Baptism and circumcision signs of the same covenant, (1) both rites represent moral cleansing or regeneration. Deut. xxx. 6; Col. ii. 10, 11; Rom. vi. 3, 4. (2.) Circumcision was the sign or seal of the Abrahamic covenant; and those who are baptized and receive the signified blessing, become Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promise. Gal. iii. 27-29.

FIRST SABBATH OF AUGUST.

SUBJECT: *Abraham entertaining Angels*. Gen. xviii. 1-33.

V. 1.—*Plains of Mamre*, so called from Mamre, an Amoritish chief and ally of Abraham,—Gen. xiv. 13; called also Hebron, from the town of that name that stood in the valley. Gen. xiii. 18. Hebron was a very ancient city, originally called Kirjath-arba,—Gen. xxiii. 2; and lay about twenty miles south of Jerusalem. In Num. xiii. 22. it is said to have been built seven years before Zoan, the ancient capital of lower Egypt. It was the house, and became the burial place of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and after the return from Egypt fell to the lot of Caleb. Josh. xiv. 13. Here David reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and here he was anointed king of all Israel. 2 Sam. 1-5.

Vv. 2-8.—To this incident reference is made in Heb. xiii. 2; from which it appears that these visitors were angels, and that, at first, Abraham was not aware of their rank and dignity; and from it the duty of hospitality towards strangers is enjoined.

In the conduct of Abraham towards these strangers there is much that is beautiful and commendable. Mark his *courtesy*. Though an old man, and very wealthy, and though the strangers are probably much younger looking, how respectful and deferential is his manner. Observe his *attention* to their

wants. He provides water for their feet, invites them under the shade of the tree, asks Sarah to make cakes, runs himself to the herd for a calf. Mark also the *delicacy* of his conduct. Some people, in shewing kindness, do it in such a way as to make you feel that they are laying you under great obligations. Abraham speaks as if they were doing him a favour, (ver. 3) and though he provided his best, yet he speaks of *a little water* and *a morsel of bread*.

Vv. 9-15.—*Where is Sarah?* Probably this question was the first thing to suggest to Abraham that his guests were more than men; for who could know that name except God, by whom it was given a little while before? This impression would be confirmed by the *subject* and *manner* of his speech. Ver. 10. This is so like what Abraham had heard a little before from God himself, that he now feels that he is standing in the presence of a divine being. In ver. 13, the speaker is called Jehovah, or, the Lord. The general belief is, that one of the three was God in human form,—the second person of the Trinity, who is again and again styled Jehovah, and who remained behind with Abraham,—while the other two, who were created angels, went on towards Sodom.

V. 12.—*Sarah laughed*, from scorn and unbelief, and not from joy like her husband,—Gen. xvii. 17; otherwise she had no need to be ashamed of it.

V. 16.—The three strangers leave Abraham's tent, and proceed towards Sodom, Abraham designing to accompany them a little way.

Vv. 17-19.—The one of the three called Jehovah, addressing, as it would seem, the other two, gives the reasons why Abraham should be informed of the doom awaiting Sodom. The reasons are: 1—Abraham is God's friend, and the *secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*. 2—The land is given to Abraham and his seed, and, in a sense, with the land, the inhabitants, so that Abraham has an interest in all that concerns Canaan and its people. 3—Abraham will make a good use of the information. Ver. 19. The destruction of Sodom would be to Abraham a solemn lesson, from which he would instruct and warn his household of the danger of sinning against God. He would hold it up to them as a warning.

Vv. 20, 21.—From what is here said Abraham gathered that it was God's design to destroy Sodom. *I will go down and see*. This is spoken after the manner of men, and indicates that God is just in all his ways, and does nothing rashly.

V. 22.—*And the men*, that is, the two angels, (Gen. xix. 1,) went towards Sodom; but the third, called Jehovah, remained with Abraham.

Vv. 23-33.—Regarding Abraham's pay-