

No sooner has God thus revealed his purposes to the children of Abraham, "according to the flesh," than the type of this generation is immediately brought before us; and "Hagar, the bond-maid," is given to Abraham by the impatient Sarai, that, as she says, "that I may obtain children by her." Now, there was a purpose in all this, as we shall presently see, when the Apostle unfolds what he calls the "allegory," or type, attached to the history of these two women and their two sons. But, let us observe the first part of this allegory. For, as the bond-maid is the first to give birth to a son, and that in the ordinary course of nature, so "this Agar, which is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem THAT NOW IS, and is in bondage with her children" (Gal. iv. 25), has precedence in point of development over the offspring which is by promise; because the order is—first, that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual. In other words, the purposes of God concerning the Jewish nation had a prior manifestation to the purposes afterwards revealed concerning the Church, or heavenly people, as I have shewn above. And as it was the especial purpose of God to manifest this in the descendants of Abraham, he is represented as the Father of the Circumcision, or Sinai family, whose covenant was in the flesh, and the Father of the Children of Faith; so that he might represent, in type, "THE FATHER OF US ALL." And from him proceed the two great families,—the Earthly and the Heavenly. The Heavenly Bride, and the Earthly Queen; the former adorned with heaven's spotless purity,—the "white robe," "which is the righteousness of saints"; and the latter with earth's magnificence,—the Queen shall stand in gold of Ophir; "she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework; her clothing is of wrought gold" (Ps. xlv.)

Ishmael, the type of the Jewish nation, being born, the 17th chapter opens with another most gracious manifestation of the LORD to Abram, who reveals himself as the Almighty God, and calls on the patriarch to "walk before him and be perfect" (LXX., *ameiptos*, "blameless"; see Luke i. 6; Phil. ii. 15, iii. 6; 1 Thes. iii. 13). "And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him." How instructive is this! The ground of communion with God is holiness. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie" (1 John i. 6). The terms of communion with God are not altered; it is still "Walk before me and be blameless." "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." So we see that the word "blameless" does not mean "sinless," but rather, as the margin renders it,