

Does then inspired history give us a law of advance fitly represented by the ploughman patiently plodding on in his furrow, one step after another, or has there been some law of selection manifest in the matter? Even from the first, when God laid a foundation in one family for a church against which the gates of hell should not prevail, He did not confine himself to the spiritual education of that one family. Why was Abraham chosen, that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed? (Gen. xii: 3.) God tells us why, when he says, on another occasion (Gen. xviii: 19): "I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, to the end that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." Here is not merely the training of Isaac, the heir of the covenant, but of Ishmael also, and the children of Keturah. Yea, the record speaks not of children only, but also of "a household" in addition, and few readers of the Bible notice how large that household was. On one occasion we are told that he armed three hundred and eighteen trained servants, born in his own house (Gen. xiv: 14). "This," according to one of the latest commentators on Genesis (Murphy, p. 286), "implies a following of more than a thousand men, women and children." Then that large household was gathered from among the heathen, and trained to keep the way of the Lord, as well as to fight against oppression. In fact, it was the first missionary training-school recorded in history, and such continued to be the character of the households of his children after him, both as to numbers and training. Thus, when Israel went out of Egypt, we are told that "a mixed multitude went up also with them." (Ex. xii: 38.) We know not how large that mixed multitude was, but we know that it also was from among the heathen, and, in being joined with Israel, entered a training-school for spiritual profit to themselves and others. We pass over individuals, such as Jethro and Rahab, Ruth and Jonathan, son of Rechab, to emphasize the fact, that while the evil example of heathen outside of Israel corrupted the less spiritual of the chosen people, the good example of such elect souls as Jochebed and Naomi, Moses and Joshua, together with multitudes of unrecorded names, told with immense power on the consciences of the more thoughtful among the heathen. And if these things are true of the time of preparation, what may we not expect to find in the period for which it was the preparation? For all this was only laying a foundation for the command to preach the gospel to every creature. Even in his prayer offered at the dedication of the Temple, Solomon did not forget to make mention of "the stranger that is not of thy people Israel, when he shall come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and pray toward this house" (II.