

of them. He will bless us for their sake as he did Jacob. - Read Ps. 103: 17. Do not despise the heritage of God's blessing. 14. Note the four things promised; (1) the land of Canaan, Gen. 13: 15; 35: 12. (2) A numerous posterity, Gen. 13: 16. (3) A blessing for the world, Gen. 12: 3; 18: 18; 22: 18; 26: 4. (4) His personal protection and guidance. The last seems to be the one which Jacob feels just then to be the most precious. **To the West**—lit. "seaward" i. e. to the Mediterranean sea. Canaan was the home of the Hebrew language and anyone who wrote it, although he might live in Egypt or Arabia, would use the Hebrew terms for the points of the compass. The use of this word is no evidence that the writer of Genesis lived in Canaan. "Ultramontane" means "beyond the mountains," and was first used contemptuously, by the Italians, in reference to the nations north of the Alps. It now means the extreme view of papal rights held by the pope and Jesuits at Rome, south of the Alps, and one living in Italy would use it in this sense. The word would give no hint of the residence of the writer. **In thy seed**—(ch. 12: 3, 18: 18, 22: 18, 26: 4). "It would not be difficult to show that Jacob's descendants have been the very salt of the earth in all ages, a source of blessing to the successive generations. Kings and Chronicles show that they were bad enough under the late monarchies, but, bad as they were, they were the best the world then had. When held captives in Babylon and Persia they became a fountain of moral health and intellectual vigor. When the temple was rebuilt their saving power was centralized and intensified. And though they did not in mass accept the Saviour, they in a very true sense passed Him on to the Gentiles, for the lofty conceptions of God contained in the Holy Scriptures had already awakened the attention of the heathen world, and Jewish synagogues became the first preaching places of the gospel. In an even directer sense the gospel came through them, for of Jacob's seed, according to the flesh, Christ came." (Doherty). See Gal. 3: 16. 15. Against his fourfold cross there is a fourfold comfort. (1) Against the loss of his friends, "I will be with thee." (2) Against the loss of his country, "I will give thee this land." (3) Against his poverty, "Thou shalt spread abroad, &c." (4) Against his solitariness, angels shall attend thee and "thy seed shall be as the dust, &c." (Trapp). Any Israelite indeed would be willing to take up with Jacob's pillow, provided he might have but Jacob's dream. (Matthew Henry). As children of believing parents, with covenant blessings claimed for us in baptism, we may serve ourselves heirs to these gracious promises (Gal. 3: 27). How blind the folly, how deep the ingratitude, how deserved the doom of those who refuse to accept this birthright of divine favor. If we will not make Jacob's vow, we reject our covenant God. "I am with thee," ch. 26: 24; 31: 3. "I will keep thee," ch. 48: 16, Ps. 121: 5, 7, 8. "I will bring thee again" Twenty-eight years afterwards ch. 35: 6. "I will not leave thee," Deut. 31: 6, 8. Josh. 1: 5; 1 Kings 8: 57, Heb. 13: 5. Refer to these passages and endeavor to impress the scholars with their need of such a steadfast Friend (Num. 23: 19).

III. THE VOW. 16. Jacob could not have been so ignorant of the attributes of God as not to know that he was omnipresent (ch. 24: 3, 14-22, Ps. 139). Nor does he speak as if he shared the superstitions of the heathen regarding sacred places. God might manifest himself to his worshipper at one place as readily as at another, but every local theophany created a "Bethel" and the spot was necessarily hallowed henceforth by sacred associations. That God would appear on the rocky hills of Luz was entirely unexpected by Jacob, and his exclamation expresses grateful surprise and reverential awe. This is the first time that God has spoken to him, hence his profound emotion. "All the world wears a new glory and awe to him. The world that has been so bleak and empty is filled with a majestic vital presence. Jacob is no longer a mere fugitive from the result of his own sin, a shepherd in search of employment, a man setting out in the world to try his fortune; he is the partner with God in the fulfilment of a divine purpose." (Dods). **17. He was afraid**—Jacob's fear was not terror but reverential awe. Read Ps. 34: 11; 111: 10. Ecc. 5: 1, and shew the propriety of preserving the sacred associations of church buildings, without allowing ourselves to fall into superstition. Also the duty of a reverent demeanor in God's presence. See Ex. 5: 5; Josh. 5: 15. Heaven draws very near the devout, spiritually minded worshipper in "the place where prayer is wont to be made." **18. Set it up as a pillar**—Jacob wished to mark the spot for future recognition. The oil consecrated it as a sacred memorial. This act of the patriarch is not to be compared to the idolatrous veneration paid to stones by heathen nations. This stone is never worshipped, indeed we never read of it again in the Bible or authentic history. In erecting this monument Jacob obeyed a wise instinct. "Human nature needs external reminders, presentations to eye and ear of central religious truths and facts. By fixed hours of worship, by rules and habits of devotion, and especially by the monumental ordinance of the Lord's Supper, must we cherish the memory of known truth, and deepen former impressions." (Dods).