

sending him away for a few weeks until Esau's resentment would blow over, but she did not remember that she was putting him in the power of a brother as cunning as herself, nor did she ever dream that he would fall so deeply in love with another as to forget her. (Dods). When Jacob set out he had nothing but his staff with him (ch. 32: 10). Yet that staff was the emblem of a shepherd. It meant that he could do one thing well. When the young set out in life, how vastly important that they know how to carry the "staff" on which they are to lean for a livelihood, and by which they are to glorify God and bless their fellow men. 11. He lighted upon a certain place—lit. "he fell upon the place." He had travelled about 15 miles, and this may have been his first night upon the road. The word indicates that he had aimed to reach this place; that he had purposely chosen, as his first resting place, the spot hallowed by Abraham's altar. The latter occupied two days and a part of a third in going to mount Moriah, but Jacob, fearing pursuit by his brother, would travel much faster. It may have been that the gates of Luz, like those of all Eastern cities, were closed at sundown and he was compelled to camp outside; or he may not have cared to associate with the heathen in his present state of mind. To him this was no great hardship. "The Syrians and Palestinians do it every night. Wrapped only in his *Abá*, or mantle, this native does not find fault with a bed in the open air" (Isaac Hall). No doubt Jacob felt very lonely and before he fell asleep would pray as he never prayed before (ch. 35: 3). He could not avoid the consequences of his conduct but he could seek pardon for his guilt. Worn in body and exhausted in spirit, the last look of the twilight landscape mingled with the heavenward longings of his soul to produce the most glorious dream that ever burst on a sleeper's vision. 12. He dreamed—God often made use of dreams for conveying messages to the minds of men, and it would be rash to say that he *never* does so now. Yet there is so much foolish superstition on the subject, that teachers would do well to speak a warning word here. Ordinarily we are left to govern our conduct by reason and conscience, and the common sense of wide-awake men and women. Whoever abandons these for dream interpreters will become the sport of his own fancies and an easy prey to deceitful and wicked men. A ladder—"The Hebrew word translated 'ladder' occurs but in this single passage, and so far as we can judge, would be more correctly rendered staircase—derived as it is from a verb signifying to raise or pile up. A towering elevation as of hill piled on hill, consisting of ledges of rocks, serving as steps by which it might be ascended, would correspond far better with the meaning of the word than a solitary, narrow, unsupported ladder, offering no seemingly footing for ascending or descending angels. In approaching Bethel, the hillsides presented frequently such an exact resemblance to the steps of a stair, that it may have been from them that the vision of Jacob's dream was borrowed." (Hanna). Jacob's consciousness of sin took away his sense of God's presence. The dream is a gracious answer to prayer. Communication is re-established between earth and heaven. Angelic ministries have not ceased (Heb. 1: 14). God has not forsaken him. The ladder is a striking type of Christ (John 1: 51). "The true staircase by which heavenly messengers ascend and descend is the Son of Man. It is he who really bridges the interval between heaven and earth, God and man. In his person the divine and human are united." (Dods). He has opened up a way of access to the Father by the atonement he has made. Through him as head over all things to the church the blessings purchased by his blood come down to men, and all our prayers ascend through him as the great High Priest and Intercessor. John 14: 6. The stairway may also represent human life; based on earth, it reaches up to God and heaven. Or it may stand for all the modes of communication between the seen and the unseen, such as God's revelation of himself in his Word, on the one hand, and the craving of the human heart as set forth in prayer, on the other.

II THE PROMISE. 13. I am the LORD God—"I am Jehovah the God, &c." The divine Person who appeared to the patriarchs expressly called himself "Jehovah" on but one other occasion (ch. 15: 7). His most common appellation is "God Almighty" (*El Shaddai*), while he gives the name "Jehovah" to the great and glorious Being whose Angel, or Messenger, he is. Since he has a right to call himself "Jehovah," yet is personally distinct from the One usually so termed, he can be no other than one of the Divine Trinity, that is, our Lord before his incarnation. The margin of the R. V. reads the Lord "stood beside Jacob." This dream is again referred to in ch. 35: 1-13. 3. God reveals himself in his covenant relationship and accepts Jacob as the heir of Abraham so far as the Messianic promises are concerned. These he specifies anew, and Jacob becomes the third in the triad of patriarchs (see Ex. 3: 6). If we have pious parents and grandparents we have more reason to be proud of our descent from them than if they had been kings and queens. Whatever the world may think of them "God is not ashamed to be called their God" (Heb. 11: 16), and he expects us to be worth