

While new diseases are developing, new appliances for the discovery of their causes and cure are invented. A Frenchman has recently produced an instrument for lighting up the mouth, throat, stomach and other cavities of the body. It is called the Polyscope, and should be very useful in the investigation of diphtheria and other diseases which baffle the skill of the wise.

The N. Y. Graphic speaks of an acknowledgment from Mrs. Hayes, of the receipt of a letter from the anti-polygamist petitioners. We are afraid the Graphic has been deceived. A boast has been made of such an acknowledgment, but it turns out to be from a poor old lady without a particle of influence, whose middle name happens to be Hayes. Say no more on it, Graphic, the anti-polygamists don't like to hear the subject mentioned aloud.

The Chicago Times says: "It would not be an extravagant thing to assert that there are more murders committed any year in Chicago than in all the Island of Great Britain, more perhaps than in all continental Europe." We have heard no contradiction to this statement. And yet Chicago papers and preachers frequently go cranky over imaginary evils in the Territory of Utah, where law and order are better observed than in any other part of the country with equal population.

The Moffett register, which was to have wrought such changes in the liquor license system and raised revenues of such vast magnitude, is likely to be abandoned. It has proven a failure in Virginia, where it originated, and has been dropped from consideration in the several States where bills were prepared looking to its introduction. Toppers seem to object to drink to the sound of the bell, and hate to have every dram checked off as a reminder of their failings. The law is likely to be repealed, and the former system adopted, even in "Old Virginia."

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM.

Its Genuineness Established.

BY ELDER GEORGE REYNOLDS.

CHAP. III. — Abraham as a preacher of Righteousness. The testimony of Paul. His ministry in Ur and Haran. God's covenant with him based on the Gospel.

Paul, the apostle, in his epistle to the Galatians writes: "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed." The record of the covenant made by the Almighty contained in the Book of Genesis, conveys no intimation that the promise that in Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed, was in any way connected with the preaching of the Gospel; we must, therefore, conclude that the apostle quoted from some other authority, or that the Book of Genesis, as handed down to us in the Bible, has been mutilated or abridged. It is quite possible that both views are correct. Paul had unquestionably other sources of information with regard to God's dealings with the father of the faithful, than those possessed by modern Christendom; it is also exceedingly probable that the early Scriptures have not been handed down to us in their entirety. No matter, this does not affect the subject under consideration, the point to which we desire to draw attention is, that the book of Abraham sustains the apostle's statements that the covenant was based upon the preaching of the gospel, whilst Paul's testimony, on the other hand, confirms the veracity of Abraham's record.

The covenant, as given by the latter, is as follows: "And the Lord appeared unto me, and said unto me, arise, and take Lot with thee, for I have purposed to take thee away out of Haran, and to make of thee a minister to bear my name in a strange land which I will give unto thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession when they hearken to my voice. For I am the Lord thy God; I dwell in heaven, the earth is my footstool; I stretch my hand over the sea, and it obeys my voice; I cause the wind and the fire to be my chariot;

I say to the mountains, depart hence, and behold they are taken away by a whirlwind, in an instant, suddenly. My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning, therefore my hand shall be over thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and priesthood unto all nations, and I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father; and I will bless them, that shall bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy priesthood) and thy seed (that is, thy priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say the literal seed or seed of the body), shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal."

We would here ask, what salvation could be brought to the heathen, how could they be justified through faith by the preaching of the Gospel to Abraham, if power and authority were not given him to preach its glad tidings? and again, how could they be benefited thereby if he did not avail himself of the privilege thus given of becoming a preacher of righteousness to his fellow man? Furthermore, we ask, is it reasonable to suppose that he, who was to be father of that race in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed by the preaching of God's word, would not himself be a type of what such messengers of salvation should be? Is it supposable he would hold his peace and leave the work of regeneration entirely to his posterity, when it was promised that through the eternal truths revealed to him all mankind should regain the presence of their God? We think not, and further, we imagine that his record would lack consistency if some reference was not made to his ministry and labors. And several such references we actually find more or less direct and conclusive with regard to his acts as a priest of the Most High. In fact the whole of his writings are pervaded with this spirit, and are full of his anxieties to be a preacher of truth and righteousness. The opening paragraph of his book abounds with this feeling, indeed it contains nothing else: he writes "Finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same, having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace; and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers, it was confirmed upon me from the fathers; I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed." After the attempt of the priest of Pharaoh to take his life, the Almighty tells him, "Behold I will lead thee by the hand, and I will take thee to put upon thee my name, even the Priesthood of thy father, and my power shall be over thee. As it was with Noah so shall it be with thee, that through thy ministry my name shall be known in the earth for ever, for I am thy God." Still further on the Lord says: "I have purposed to take thee away out of Haran, and to make of thee a minister to bear my name in a strange land." Not only in Canaan was he to be a messenger of God's word, but the Almighty afterwards tells him, "I show thee things unto thee before ye go down into Egypt, that ye may declare all these words."

Thus, we find that Abraham having sought for the privilege of becoming a preacher of righteousness, in answer to his desire the priesthood was given to him with the command to magnify it. It is not probable that such a man would fail in the hour of action. The friend of God and father of the faithful was one "who knew no

such word as fail," in carrying out heaven's commands. That he did proclaim the law of the Lord wherever he went, is evidenced by his statement that in his youthful home in Ur, his kinsfolk utterly refused to hearken to his voice. So earnest did he become in his advocacy of the truth, that his death was decided upon even by his own father, and he did not flinch from the issue, but the angel of God rescued him from the sacrificial altar; his work was not yet done. In another place he states, "I took the souls that we had won in Haran and came forth in the way of the land of Canaan." We shall presently discover by outside testimony that his ministrations were not alone confined to Ur and Haran.

We feel fully persuaded that Abraham was not only great in his unflinching integrity and his unswerving faith, but he was also great as a leader of men—he commanded his children and his household after him—and as a preacher of the divine word. We hold this opinion from the fact that his power in these directions is frequently referred to by ancient writers, and because the effects of the preaching of God's holy word can be traced in gospel ideas mixed with the follies of heathenism in the mythology and religions of almost every leading nation of antiquity.

We have shown from the Book of Abraham, that in early life the Patriarch desired to become a preacher of righteousness, that God conferred the priesthood upon him in answer to his desires, and commanded him to proclaim the truths He revealed, and furthermore, that Abraham joyously fulfilled his command. It is not to be supposed that strangers could tell the world much about Abraham's desires, or the Lord's covenants with him, but we can substantiate, from a multitude of sources, that as a preacher of righteousness the Patriarch has left his mark indelibly inscribed on the history of the world. That indeed as God promised so He has fulfilled and has made Abraham's "name great among all nations," and has also brought to pass His gracious promise "Through thy (Abraham's) ministry my name shall be known in the earth for ever."

To prove this will be our pleasure in the succeeding chapters.

* Abraham, in another place, states that "the records of the fathers, even the Patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in my own hands." By this means, amongst others, he no doubt learned that he was "a rightful heir."

CHAP. IV. — Abraham in Egypt. Confirmatory Statements of Josephus, Nicolaus of Damascus, &c. Abraham's influence on the Religions of Persia and Hindostan. Traces of Gospel teaching in the mythologies of the ancients.

The Book of Abraham states that God commanded the patriarch to show unto the Egyptians the things that He had revealed unto him. Josephus, in narrating this portion of Abraham's history—being only partially acquainted with the facts of the case from the authorities at his disposal—tells us that Abraham went down into Egypt to avoid the famine in Canaan, and to "become an auditor of their priests, and to know what they said concerning the gods; designing either to follow them if his own notions, proved the truest." After his arrival in Egypt, and the circumstances arising out of the attempt of Pharaoh to add Sarai to the number of his wives, the outcome of which placed the monarch under obligations to the Patriarch, Josephus states that "Pharaoh gave Abraham leave to enter into conversation with the most learned among the Egyptians, from which conversation, his virtue and his reputation became more conspicuous than they had been before. For whereas the Egyptians were formerly addicted to different customs, and despised one another's sacred and accustomed rites, and were very angry one with another on that account, Abraham conferred with each of them and confuting the reasonings they made use of, every one for his own practices, he demonstrated that such reasonings were vain and void of truth; whereupon he was admired by them in those confer-

ences as a very wise man, and one of great sagacity, when he discoursed upon any subject he undertook; and this not only in understanding it, but in persuading other men also to assent to him. In another place the Jewish historian states "He (Abraham) was a person of great sagacity, both for understanding all things, and persuading his hearers, and not mistaken in his opinions; for which reason he began to have higher notions of virtue than others had, and he determined to renew and to change the opinion all men happened then to have concerning God."

So far as Josephus' testimony, confirmatory of this portion of the Book of Abraham, is concerned we deem the above abundant. In later chapters we shall show the great political and religious changes that Abraham's visits to Egypt produced.

From Egypt we will turn to Persia, and from the writings of various modern authors adduce testimony to prove that Abraham's power as a religious teacher was felt, known and recognized in the faith and creed of that nation.

In the sacred book of the ancient Persians and modern Parsees—the Zend Avista—it is declared that the religion taught in it was received from Abraham; and according to Hyde, who supports his statements by quotations and references, this was believed by leading Arabian writers not only of Persian Magianism but of Indian Brahmanism. The same writer remarks: "The claims of Magianism to have been influenced by the revelations made to Abraham are far from being discounted by the laws of historical probability. For the war waged so successfully by Abraham in behalf of his kinsman, Lot, against the five kings, among whom was the king of Elam [i.e. Persia] is of itself a sufficient proof that the father of the faithful, Abraham, the Hebrew from Ur of the Chaldees, must have been as well known to the eastern kingdoms as Moses was in after times."

It is generally admitted that in the days of Abraham the forefathers of the Persians and Brahmins were one people inhabiting one region of country. It is supposed that the ancestors of the latter race moved to India from 1500 to 1300 years B.C. That these two races are of common descent is urged from the close relationship existing between the Sanskrit, the language of the Brahmins, and the Zend or Persian; it is also said that the "remarkable identity between the Brahminical and Persian mythologies indicates, unerringly, the original union of the two." It may also be noticed that Hitzig, in his "Geschichte des Volkes Israel," reasons from the identity of certain practices observed by Abraham and the patriarchs of Israel on the one hand, and by Brahminical Hindoos on the other, that a community of some kind once existed between these people.

The two nations being thus admitted, by authors of research, to have been one people in Abraham's time, it is supposable that the Brahmins as well as the Persian branch of the family would exhibit some traces of Abraham's ministry. On this point it has been written "Abraham's influence extended to Bactria, and the most complete proof at once of its spread, and the spread with it of the name and renown of Abraham, is contained in the language and name of the Brahminical Hindoos."

"The name Brahma signifies he who multiplies, the name Abraham likewise means the father of a multitude." (Arabic, Rahama, a multitude. Gen. xxii, 5) The wife of Brahma was named Savitree. The wife of Abraham was named Sarai or Sarah."

Mr. Goodsir, remarking on this last extract, writes: "These coincidences appear to us to be well deserving of attention, though we are not aware that they have ever before been noticed. We leave them and the whole question of the identity of Brahma and Abraham to the judgment of our readers, merely observing in conclusion, that having found Adam and Noah and Ham to have been the father-gods of Egyptian mythology, and Japhet the father-god of that of Greece, there is abundant analogy as well as probability in our inference that the father-god of the Indian superstition was Abraham."

Admitting the truth of the following extract from the writings of Nicolaus of Damascus, referred to by Josephus, it is very easy to

understand when and how Abraham obtained his great influence in Persia; and we know of no conflicting testimony to render the statements unworthy of our consideration. He writes, in the fourth book of his history, "Abram reigned in Damascus, being a foreigner, who came with an army out of the land above Babylon, called the land of the Chaldees; but after a long time he got him up and removed from that country also, with his people and went into the land, then called the land of Canaan, but now the land of Judea." Now the name of Abram is even still famous in the country of Damascus, and there is shewed a village named from him, the habitation of Abraham."

We now come to the consideration of the traces, oft times scarcely discernable, found in the pagan religions of the ancient nations of the eastern continent, of a time when the worship of the true God was taught and understood in their midst; for we fully believe that having made of one blood all the nations of the earth, "God guided and ruled over pagan nations in a manner the same in kind, though much modified in degree, as in the case of the chosen people; and for the same great final end." Let it not be supposed, in the following pages, that we desire to extenuate the sinfulness, or to palliate the foulness of idolatrous, cruel, unclean and licentious paganism in any of its branches. Our desire is to exalt the goodness of God, as well as to show that under all the villainies, the indecency, the lust and cruelty of many of the forms of ancient paganism, could be found a substratum of pure revealed truth testifying to us that at some period the fathers of these peoples held intercourse with the servants of the true God, but had fallen away from the principles of righteousness aforetime taught them, and after their own peculiar ways and to suit their own peculiar notions and desires had heaped to themselves gods and demons, creeds and rites, ceremonies and mysteries, oracles and auguries, differing in different nations according to the force of circumstances and the direction given to them by master minds.

As a proof of the truth of our position, we have but to refer to the fact, that it has been demonstrated that the further we go back through the centuries to the primeval days, succeeding the dispersion of mankind at the Tower of Babel, the more frequent and more noticeable are the traces of pure religious truth found intermingled with the follies and vogueeries of man-made religions. As an example of this it is recounted by Levy, the Roman historian, that certain sacred books having been found at the burying place of Numa, the great religious legislator of early Rome, they were burned because they were not suited to the times in which they were discovered when Rome had added scores of gods to its Pantheon, though they were considered suited to the early era in which they were written, when Numa forbade images and their worship as well as the offering of human sacrifices.

* Josephus, Book I, chap. viii.
† Ibid, Book I, chap. viii.
‡ Ibid, Book I, chap. vii.
§ Ethnic Inspiration, by Mr. Goodsir, pages 75 and 80.
|| Ethnic Inspiration.
¶ Osburn's "Religions of the World."

To be continued.

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