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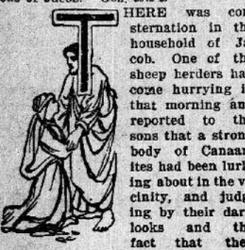
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On the Way to Bethel

OUR BIBLE STORY by the "Highway and Byway" Preacher (A Vision Between the Lines of God's Inspired Word.)

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Scripture Authority.—"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments; and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed; and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob."—Gen. 35:1-5.



HERE was consternation in the household of Jacob. One of the sheep herders had come hurrying in that morning and reported to the sons that a strong body of Canaanites had been lurking about in the vicinity, and judging by their dark looks and the fact that they were fully armed there was reason to expect trouble. It was now a week since the massacre of the men of Shechem and the spoiling of the city, and the awful passions of hatred and revenge which had stirred Simeon and Levi and their brothers and made them like madmen had subsided, and with the reaction had come forebodings of trouble. The boldness of unreasoning rage and passion had been succeeded by the weakness and fear of an accusing consciousness of guilt and crime, and now the alarming news of that morning had created a panicky desire to flee. In this spirit they sought out their father and appealed to him to strike their tents and steal away as quickly and quietly as possible.

"We may be attacked this very night," Simeon exclaimed, apprehensively. "Let us flee at once. Today."

"But whither?" Jacob asked. Though uneasy over the disquieting reports he maintained his self-control, and was disposed to move with caution.

"Whither?" queried Reuben, the eldest son, in surprise. "Where can we go but back towards the land of our mother's father? If we go forward or flee on either hand we but plunge ourselves more surely into the power of our enemies."

"To this speech there was ready and emphatic assent by the rest of the sons, and they waited for their father to speak. It was plain to see that a conflict was going on within his heart. He sat with bowed head, but his lips moved as though in prayer. At last he looked up and, speaking slowly, but with emphasis, he said:

"We cannot go back, my sons. And then noting the dark looks of disapproval and disappointment on the faces before him, he added:

"In obedience to God's word we have come into Canaan. He has promised us the land. We may not depart, except at His word. He is able to deliver us from the present peril."

"But we cannot stay here while our enemies are gathering to destroy us," Simeon cried, impatiently. He had been largely responsible for the attack upon the city of Shechem, and he now realized that as the leader of the movement, he must do his best to find a way of escape.

"Ah, my sons," sobbed Jacob, overcome by the thought of his own fallure, "mine is the sin that we have tarried so long in this place. Had we but continued on to Bethel instead of pitching our tents before this city, all that has befallen us here would have been avoided."

He was silent for a few moments, and then continued, more cheerfully:

"But if we have sinned in thus lingering along the pathway God would have us travel, let us not commit the greater sin of rushing headlong, whither He does not lead. Let us await God's word in the present extremity."

And as he finished speaking he arose and left them. It was evident his words had had some effect, for the brothers lingered in a dispirited manner, no one seeming bold enough to take the lead and counsel a move contrary to their father's will, though it was very apparent that they were entirely out of sympathy with his attitude. But there seemed nothing for them to do but to wait, and sullenly and silently they one after another departed.

That night the flocks and the herds were all driven in and the camp made as secure as possible. The flashing signals from the surrounding hills did not tend to quiet the fears of the people, for that they guided and directed the gathering of the Canaanites they felt sure. The presence of the women and children of the men slain, and the rich booty they had seized were constant reminders of the danger that threatened them now, and they found the hours of the night filled with anxiety and dread. The sense of the haste and wickedness of their bloody deeds grew upon them as they kept vigil, not knowing what minute the enemy might burst in upon them.

And the unexplained absence of Jacob did not tend to lessen their apprehension. They had searched for him all through the camp, but had found him not, and no one seemed to be able to tell why he was missing or where he was to be found. No one had seen him since the afternoon before, and then he was going in the direction of the place where he had erected the altar to his God. That he had been there was evident from the report of the servant who had been sent there late in the evening, and found the fire still burning on the altar, and the last remnants of the sacrifice being consumed, but search in the vicinity had failed to discover the

missing man. Had he been captured and killed by the lurking Canaanites? He sons asked themselves, and deep remorse filled their hearts at the thought. That was a night which brought them face to face with their inmost selves and when, as the light was breaking in the east, their father returned to the camp, they eagerly welcomed him, ready to listen to what he would have to say and willing to follow his advice.

In answer to their inquiries as to where he had been he explained that after he had offered sacrifice on the altar, he had gone to the towering terebinth tree which overlooked the site of Shechem that he might more fully view the surrounding country and contemplate their future course.

"And while there the Lord met me, and said unto me: 'Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.'"

"Let us go at once, then," exclaimed the brothers, to whom every move now seemed better than staying in that place.

"Nay, but we cannot go until we have prepared ourselves to meet our God," Jacob declared, solemnly. "The place to which we have been told to go is Beth-El—the house of God—it is the place where God met me nearly 30 years ago, when I fled from home; it is where God gave me His promises of blessing. And He hath kept me and blessed me and returned me to this land; but before we go up to Bethel we must needs purge ourselves. We must put away the strange gods that are among us, and put off from us the garments which were seized with the spoil of Shechem."

The sons moved uneasily and looked guiltily down upon their fine raiment. They remembered how zealously and with superstitious awe they had gathered the idols of the people of Shechem and had set them up in their tents. Their prolonged stay near Shechem and their presence at many of the heathen feasts had familiarized them with the worship of these idols, and they had thought to preserve them and worship them. They had seen in Rachel's tent the gods which she had brought with her from Syria, and, anxious for images in their own tents, they had eagerly possessed themselves of those which they found in Shechem. But Jacob's words—his positive command—that they must be cast aside aroused them.

"Bring them all here to me," he concluded. "Both the images and the garments, and the ornaments which are the symbols of thy idolatry."

The command of Jacob created no small stir among the people of his household and among the servants, but there were none who dared to disobey, and one after another they came bearing the idols big and little, the garments, and the earrings and ornaments. Even the women and children of the Shechemites caught the spirit of the movement and brought the images and ornaments which they had concealed about them. The heap grew until it stood level with Jacob's head, and the people all stood about observing him and wondering what he would do. Mounting the pile and stamping the idols under his heels, he cried:

"These gods are no gods at all, for there is but one God, the God of Heaven, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. See that ye utter just these things away from you, and turn to the true God, for it is only as you seek and follow Him that He will be near you to deliver you."

Rachel standing with the rest heard the words. She remembered the images of her father which still rested within her tent. During all these years she had kept her secret from Jacob, not daring to let him know that she had been guilty of taking them. But must she—could she, give them up? As she stood there the conviction was strong upon her that the welfare of all depended on the action she took. She had kept them hid from Jacob, but could she keep them hid from God? But how could she bring them out? How could she let Jacob know? What would he say? What would he think of her?

"Is there one who is withholding aught of that which is displeasing to God," she heard Jacob say.

She felt that the words were meant for her. She dare not look up, but she was certain his eyes were searching her out, and would learn her secret. With a nervous, frightened cry she fled to her tent and soon appeared with the images in her hands, and while the eyes of all were fastened upon her she brought them and threw them upon the pile. Then her confusion and shame overcame her and she fell in a helpless heap to the ground. Jacob was first at her side, and as he bent over her he whispered:

"My love, even the gods of Laban could not save us. Come, let us bury these abominations at the foot of the sacred tree of the Shechemites where God appeared unto me last night," and lifting her to her feet he led her towards the distant spot, first placing in her hands the images she had just brought, and he himself selecting others. And the sons and all the rest, inspired by their example, also filled their hands from the pile until not an image, or ornament or garment was left. Thus laden, the long procession led by Jacob and Rachel wended its way towards the terebinth tree, where with solemn ceremony and fresh pledges to the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob they cast them into the pit which eager hands soon dug; and the amazed Canaanites, beholding the strange proceedings from afar, became panic-stricken with superstitious fear, and fled to their various cities, spreading the report that the God of Jacob had seized and destroyed all the other gods of the land, and that any who molested Jacob or his people would fall under the devouring wrath of the great God. And so it came to pass as they journeyed that the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

A Step Downward.
An Italian paper, commenting on the fact that barmaids have been introduced into several hotels in Rome, says that the innovation is the "advance agent of the Prince of Darkness."

FARMER AND PLANTER. THE EXPERIMENT STATION.

The Farmer's Interest in the Experiment Station is Greater Than Many of Them Imagine.

The real purpose of the experiment farm and its relation to the farmers of the state do not seem to be clearly understood. There seems to be in the public mind a confusion of the experiment farm with a model farm. The two are by no means the same; but that no distinction is made is evident from the expressions you hear in a crowd going through an experiment farm. "That sure is a good one," says one, or "John, you can beat that cotton." Such comparisons show that the speakers think the crops grown at the experiment farm are intended as models for the farmers of the state.

This is a mistake. What then is the purpose of the experiment farm? It is to test the value and adaptabilities of new crops or new varieties that have been originated in other sections or are recommended by individuals to develop useful crops from native weeds or grasses, to test methods of culture and fertilization, and to submit the results to the farmers of the state in a form that will be practically useful.

It is clear that since the greater part of its work is really experiment, that there must be many failures—more failures than successes. The fact is that the advantage of the experiment station is just this: To save the individual farmer the time and expense of making these experiments and necessary failures himself. It is cheaper to appropriate money to the purpose and let them be made once for all than for each of us to do this work for himself. It is unreasonable to expect all the crops we find on the experiment farm to be successful and useful as models for our farming. What we have a right to expect is a clear statement of the methods, etc., which have been tested, and the results of the test, so that we may avoid those that are not good and make use of those that are.

To illustrate: The mappox is perfectly familiar to us all, as a weed, and most of us have enjoyed sucking the seed while we were boys. It is quite possible that from this weed may be developed a fruit that would be a source of pleasure and profit. On the other hand, it is possible that an attempt to develop such a fruit would only end in failure. Certainly the average farmer has no time or money to spend on its development. Right here comes in the experiment station. Through it we all combine to make the test. The cost to each of us is very small, and if the attempt is successful we shall all share the benefit.

Or again, our woods are full of wild legumes. Some of these with proper handling may prove equal in feeding value to clover and alfalfa and, being native to our soil, will be easier to grow. But no individual has the time and money necessary to make the test, with the possibility of failure that has always to be reckoned with. And so we should look to our experiment stations to do this for us. Their services in regard to testing new varieties and methods of cultivation and so forth is similar. Let us judge them by their real purpose, and we shall not only be more just to them, but we shall be in a better position to get good from them.

On the other hand, the experiment stations are sometimes at fault in estimating their obligations to the farmers, by whose will and for whose advantage they have their existence, as secondary to their obligation to pure science and scientific men. That they can and ought to make contribution to science is not to be denied. But the lines of investigation that they pursue and the form in which the results of their investigations are published should be determined by the needs of the farmers in their section. The bulletin issued should be written in a popular and interesting style, and should be eminently practical in their treatment of the subject. Furthermore, they should not consist generally in statistical tables, etc., which are hard reading. They should state and interpret results in the most simple, clear and popular style possible. In order to do this the men engaged in this work should come frequently and intimately in touch with the people for whom they work and understand the manner of thought and the problems that meet them.

When the people expect only what is legitimate from the station, and the station realizes its relation to the people, we may expect the best results for agriculture.—B. M. Drake, in Southern Cultivator.

DOING IN THE GARDEN.
Don't Plant a Garden and Then Allow the Weeds to Choke Down All Growth.

Many farmers work hard all summer and raise fine crops and have fine gardens, but as soon as crops are reaped they stop all manner of work. In a short time all vegetables are overgrown with grass and weeds and brush for want of attention. I know farmers now (and unfortunately their name is legion), who have from this sort of neglect lost all their vegetables, and ornaments are put to it to find something to cook. Now this ought to be so. Work while you work; play while you play, is the way to be cheerful, happy and gay, but too much of it will put you on short rations.

No one likes to see the young and old folks enjoy themselves more than I, but there should be moderation in all things. Have hours to work and hours to play.

Now begin to cultivate your turnips. Those tomato vines that have fallen down and died with bushels of neglected tomatoes on them, can be cut off, cultivated, and maimed suckers will put up from the roots. These will bear a crop of late tomatoes. Some will get ripe before frost. Then take all green ones that are grown or nearly so, wrap them in paper and lay them on a shelf. They will ripen. In this way I have had ripe tomatoes on Christmas day. I have treated mine so two weeks ago, or a part of them, at least. They are now blooming.

Work out your celery and begin to cart slowly. Work your parsnips and carrots and beets. Look after your

Irish potatoes. If they are on the ground take up and put them in the house till cold weather, then keep them away for the winter. Look after your small fruit vines or bushes and flowers. Your cows should be fed now with plenty of succulent food and some grain, too, or they will lose their flow of milk.

That pork will be higher, goes without saying, so push your hogs, varying their food, using corn, peas and sweet potatoes alternately.

With plenty of fine fruit, vegetables—peas, beans, green corn—both fresh, canned and dried; poultry, eggs, pork and beef, with fresh and salt fish, well cooked and prepared, what more could the president of the United States or any of the crowned heads of the world ask—except the dower empress, who perhaps would like a few rats and some birds' nests for dessert?

No reason why the farmers who raise everything should not be the best-fed people on earth; so don't neglect your opportunities.—J. H. Parker, in Progressive Farmer.

The Cost of Ignorance.
"Ignorance and the lack of information has cost the southern farmer many dollars, and in many ways. First, because we have not had the practical, chemical knowledge of our soils. We have spent millions of dollars in supplying our land with fertilizing material that they were not deficient in. For instance, some of our lands are well supplied with nitrogen or ammonia, especially after certain crops have been grown the previous year. Others contain potash or lime, or acid phosphate. Still, as a rule, the farmer will buy a complete fertilizer for his crop, when only certain material is needed, thus spending large sums of money for material with which his soils are already supplied.

"We have wasted time and money in poor preparation of soils for our crops, and in the improper cultivation of same. "The lack of knowledge in judging live stock and the proper care of same has also been expensive to the southern farmer.

"Another thing that has cost the farmers sums of money is the habit we have of going from home to buy our mules, hays, corn, meat and other things we could so easily raise at home; for instance, Edgecombe county raised last year about 35,000 bales of cotton that sold for about one million dollars, and she spent the same year for mules, meat, hay, corn and fertilizers about three-fifths of this whole amount, or \$200,000. Not only did we pay out this large amount for something we could have raised at home, but the over-production of cotton cost us nearly an amount equal to this, the difference in price we could have gotten had the cotton crop been reduced sufficiently to have enabled us to raise these things at home.—E. L. Daughtridge, in address at Farmers' State Convention, Raleigh, N. C.

Fertilizer For Clover Fields.
There is no doubt in my mind of the effect of fertilizers applied to wheat upon the seeding of clover made the following spring. On my own farm, where I have shut off the drill in seeding wheat so as to sow no fertilizer, the effect was not only very noticeable on the wheat, but was even noticeable in the second growth of clover the following year. As a matter of fact, a great many people use fertilizer on wheat largely for the effect which this fertilizer will produce on the clover seeded the following spring. On a light, sandy loam, I would use a fertilizer that contains a comparatively high per cent. of potash, as most light soils are deficient in potash, and the clover plant is a large consumer of this element. Take a fertilizer that analyzes something like 1 per cent. ammonia, 8 per cent. phosphate acid and 5 per cent. actual potash, would, in my judgment, be a good brand for this light soil with the express idea of benefiting the clover seeding.—Cor. Orange Judd Farmer.

Keeping Sweet Potatoes.
As I have always had good success in keeping sweet potatoes, I will give methods of putting away. I built a small house, planking it up on the outside with plain lumber; that is, without tongues or grooves, and banking the earth around the house to keep the water out. I put oak leaves in the house to put the potatoes in. We cover the tubers all around and over with leaves, but not until there is danger of the weather becoming too cold for them without this. Until the approach of very cold weather we spread over them an old quilt or something similar, using the leaves when it becomes quite cold. South end of house is open all the time. By this method our potatoes are easily housed, they get thoroughly dry, are handy to get at, and are much sweeter and better than when kept in any other way. Have taken them up in mud, and had them kept perfectly.—Thomas L. Hinson, Monroe, N. C.

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