

**'FROM FAITH TO FAITH'.
MEDITATIONS IN SONNET VERSE
ON
THE SCRIPTURE BIOGRAPHIES OF
ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649329649

'From faith to faith'. Meditations in sonnet verse on the Scripture biographies of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by T. A. W.

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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T. A. W.

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"From faith to faith."



MEDITATIONS
IN
SONNET VERSE

ON THE

SCRIPTURE BIOGRAPHIES OF ABRAHAM,
ISAAC, AND JACOB.

BY

A BIBLE STUDENT.

"I versify the truth, not poetize."

Parker and Co.

OXFORD, AND 6 SOUTHAMPTON-STREET,
STRAND, LONDON.

1882.

147 f 132 .

PREFACE.

A SONNET being the form of verse frequently chosen by poets to express their thoughts as they may arise from occurrences of every-day life, an attempt has been made, by one who lays no claim to a dignity so exalted, to express in this form some thoughts suggested by a course of reading and meditation on the Scripture Biographies of the three great Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If Sonnets may be called the Diary of Poets, these may be described as extracts from the note-book of a Bible reader, who amuses himself from time to time with writing verses. Whether the thoughts expressed in the following Sonnets be worth expressing, and whether they be adequately and rhythmically expressed, must be left for others to decide. The Author fears that the form of verse chosen may be thought unsuited to the subject, but these fears were not so vividly felt till several of them had been written. Having begun, he ventured to finish at the risk of failure. The nature of the subject also he found in some parts to be incompatible with poetical treatment and diction, but he hopes, after kindly making allowance for this, that enough will still remain to edify and please the reader.

The Author is indebted for much herein attempted to "The Types of Genesis," by Mr. Andrew Jukes, as well as to Meditations on Genesis now in course of publication in "Our Work," the monthly periodical of the Church Sunday School Union.

DEDICATION.

To my dear kin departed, now at rest,
Waiting the coming and the day of God,
Who in the steps of His true servants trod,
And lie at peace secure on Abram's breast,
In hope with them to sup their fellow-guest,
Whose bodies sleep beneath the sacred sod,
Upheld the while by God's strong staff and rod
A pilgrim here by troubles much oppressed,
And most of all to one most dearly kin,
Longing with her by closer bonds allied
My soul athirst for God to satiate,
Home-sick amidst this exile's ceaseless din,
These pastime thoughts by pilgrims' faith supplied,
Sorrow's sweet solace song, I dedicate.

T. A. W.

Meditations on the Scripture Biographies
OF
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

I.

DARKNESS.

BLACK night is mother of fair morn. A tree
In wintry cold and darkness grows, its leaves,—
The clothing Nature self-protecting weaves,
Industrious worker for vitality,—
Cast off, like flesh at death,—sight sad to see!
In penury, not plenty, womb conceives.
Each year from last, at death bequeathed, receives
For embryo heirs a richer legacy.
Light out of darkness rises, life of death.
Through checks and conflicts faith advances, bare
Though trials seem to strip it. They preface
Scenes of more vigorous action. Underneath
Life energizes. Hindrances prepare
The way from faith to faith, from grace to grace.

II.

LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS.

Out of night's darkness dawned a fair bright morn :
 One tree from out the cold dark ground appeared,
 Gifted with quickening energy, leaf-gear'd :
 From Nature's barren womb, of fruit forlorn,
 An heir to rich inheritance was born,
 For blessings still more precious to be reared :
 Earth, winter-wasted, late so bare and scared,
 Scenes rife with spring-tide promises adorn :
 When on Chaldæa, shrouded dead in sin
 Of idol-worship, flashed a light Divine,
 And Ur, benumbed of heart as sapless oak,
 Was by some lifeful impulse stirred within.
 Sparkles of heaven-lit fire benignly shine :
 A Voice of strange unearthly sternness spoke.

III.

CALLED OUT OF DARKNESS.

"From country, kindred, father's house begone,
 And get thee whither shall be shewn thee ! I
 From idol-worship, Abram, bid thee fly.
 Bless thee I will, and make of thee alone
 A blessing and a nation mighty—one
 With whom in name and blessing none can vie.
 All them that bless thee I'll beatify :
 Curses thy cursers' heads shall fall upon."
 Of God, not man, begins the walk of faith,
 His call inspires the first steps on the road.
 Whence but from God to leave earth's joys behind ?
 His word the spring and strength of will. He saith,
 "Go forth !" Whene'er, where'er, whate'er the load,
 Go, get thee out assured His land to find.

IV.

THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD.

The calls of God contain both truth and grace—
Grace in the covenanted words, "I will,"—
Truth in the mandate, "Get thee forth until
Thou reachest wearied My appointed place,
And seest the royal beauty of My Face."
God calls from lures His purpose to fulfil
By work of faith and patient hope, not skill—
The birth and welfare of Salvation's race.
God calls not from thy country only. No!
He calls from father's house and kindred too.
Take not old Terah with thee, then, nor yet
Or son or child of Terah's kin. Forego
All ties of natural love. Obedience true
Leaves all, however dear, without regret.

V.

HEREUNTO WERE YE CALLED.

God asks in mercy sacrifice of all
To heart and soul as well as body dear.
Who knows the trials Abram had to bear,
The sharp soul-piercings felt, the bitter gall
Of sorrow tasted? Oh! what pangs befall
The severance of friends! What doubt and fear
Attend earth's partings! Many a sigh and tear
Accompanies release from love's sweet thrall!
Long doubtless was the conflict, flesh and blood
Striving against the spirit, till at last
His country's charm resisted, kindred's not
Fully and freely, staff in hand he stood,
Ere from the city God-accursed he passed,
He knew not whither, sad though grace-begot.

VI.

SUCH SHALL HAVE TROUBLE IN THE FLESH.

Kindred's not fully—No! else Terah old
 And kinsman Lot, his brother's son, had been
 Renounced as well as country. Much too keen
 For new-born souls such separation! Gold,
 Mixt with alloy, alloy doth so enfold,
 The base with pure, the precious with the mean,
 That nought but fire deep-burning can, I ween,
 Relax the close co-hesion of their hold.
 So he flesh-led, flesh-trammelled, flies from Ur
 And reaches Charran, where flesh-swayed he stays
 A settler, not a pilgrim, God's behest
 Misprized by conscience, slighted, then demur.
 Thus big with flesh-stored ills pass hours and days.
 The cost how costly of forbidden rest!

VII.

HIS WITNESSES UNTO THE PEOPLE.

O called out of the world in darkness lying
 To be frail earthen vessels of life's seed,
 Unflinching witnesses in word and deed
 Of quickening truth to souls around you dying!
 Feed not yourselves mere fleshly strength supplying,
 But famished souls with heavenly substance feed.
 Take to yourselves and to the doctrine heed:
 Be patient, active, faithful, self-denying.
 Self-comfort, love of kindred, worldly friends,
 Pleasant companions inside Charran's walls,
 Dislike of pilgrim's peril, toil, and fare,
 And what a perfect gentleman offends—
 Can ne'er fulfil the purpose of God's calls:
 For you no settled sojourn anywhere.