

# THE MARRIAGES

When a Man Marries. The International Sunday School Lesson for March 23 is "Isaac and Rebekah," Gen. 24.

(BY WILLIAM T. ELLIS.)  
When the Bagdad railway, which is now building, has got the way to Babylon, we may be sure that passengers from Europe will show more interest in the stop at Haran and Rebekah's Well, which is there, than in many of the ruined cities of antiquity passed on the way. About Rebekah's Well lingers the spirit of the term romance. It has a touch of the human that means more to people than the vast movements of ancient empires. The guide-books will give more space to Rebekah's Well than to the tomb of Sennacherib. For the beautiful idyl of Rebekah is dear to the heart of all who read.

This is the fourth chapter of Genesis which is one of the most intrinsically beautiful and interesting stories in the Bible, does not deal with fable or fiction. It has a touch of the human reality. In some form or other it is being lived over again in every part of the world. Older than the Well which the traveler meets in Mesopotamia still may see, is the sentiment which it represents; the quest of a life for its complement.

Since the match between Rebekah and Isaac has been going to wells, and about the other humdrum daily tasks, dreaming beautiful dreams of a possible lover from out of the past. It is a bit of romance, but the fact is that it was while about her day's duties, and not when arrayed in festive finery or displaying "company manners," that Rebekah commended herself to the representative of Isaac, seeking a wife. Nobody knows around what corner fate awaits. At the unexpected time and place there may be the meeting which determines all of one's future.

How One Woman Got a Husband. The best things in life come by direction. The person who goes mooning through the days, longing for a lover, is likely to fall in the search and to become a pitiable, and silly creature. They who go straight on in life's highway, busy about the usual duties, taking time for the great dreams, find that life's richest treasures are met on the way. Neither happiness nor husbands come for the seeking. Rebekah, like uncounted millions of young women before and since, was minor her share of the family work by filling the water jars at the village well.

How many times I have seen the young women of Mesopotamia and other parts of the Near East, on this daily pilgrimage to the well, chatting sociably as they traveled, or as they gathered waiting on another's turn. It is no light task, this carrying of a huge water jar on the head or shoulder. The eastern woman is trained to bear burdens blithely of an evening to the well outside Haran. The day did not seem different from other days. She little dreamed that the empty jar on her head, that destiny was sitting on the well-curb waiting for her. The wayfarer who wanted drink, the wayfarer who wanted a nurse, the wayfarer who had often obligingly served. She commended herself to Eliezer, who had been commissioned to find a wife for Isaac, because of her quick helpfulness and wholesome good nature. He saw that this ready and efficient woman was the very wife for his master's going home.

Let us not cry shame upon Isaac that he did not do his own wooing. Aside from the fact that he was not that sort of man, being of that type that lets other men do for him. It was the usage of the land and the time—a usage which still persists in the same region—for marriages to be arranged by intermediaries. The "shadchan" of the East side of New York are still engaged in the same business. The wife for Isaac was of his father's providing. We may be sure that he would accept whatever was given to him, for he was a negative character, whom somebody has called a "valley between two hills."

When Abraham was dying he commissioned his servant to find a wife of his own people for his son Isaac. The long years, and the communion with God had taught Abraham that wise marriages are made within the faith and within one's own racial group. He would not thwart the plans of God by mixing the blood of the chosen people with the heathen of Canaan. That way always comes trouble. The persistence of the children of Abraham in pure Jewish faith through the centuries since is one of the marvels of time. The truth thus early taught by Abraham has been well learned by his descendants.

A Wife or a Mission? Knowing somewhat of human nature, and feminine nature at that, the canny servant Eliezer raised a question with his dying master. What if none of the daughters of Abraham's kindred up in Mesopotamia should be willing to make the long journey south to the land of promise? Should Isaac return to Mesopotamia? The answer was clear; the family mission came before the wife. Isaac's work in the world was to carry out the covenant of his father with Jehovah, and to possess the land of promise. If the wife would not share that lot with him, then she should not be his wife. The divine call and commission take precedence of all human relationships.

The problem is an ever-recurring one. What if a woman will not marry a man because she has decided not to be a minister's wife, or not to go to the foreign mission field? There is but one course open. It is as clear as Scripture. She may stay behind, but the man must go. No woman is fit to be wife who will not share her husband's life, going wherever his call leads him.

In a remote village along the Inland Sea of Japan, I one time ran across one of the common tragedies. The man was in the employ of a great American corporation. He had been promoted to a position of responsibility. His feet were on the ladder and mounting upward. But his wife pertinaciously and childishly said that she would not live in Japan. Either the home had to be wrecked or the man's future had to be sacrificed, all for a woman's whim.

back to the southland. She had the quality of decision which many a man since has wished for her sisters. She knew her mind; she knew her hour; she had the courage to turn her back on the past, for the mysterious future to which she had heard the call.

Some old fogies used to wall a great deal in public about the modern young people's societies, because they said they were just "matchmaking organizations." They complained that each other in Christian Endeavor and romance, it has a touch of the human that means more to people than the vast movements of ancient empires. The guide-books will give more space to Rebekah's Well than to the tomb of Sennacherib. For the beautiful idyl of Rebekah is dear to the heart of all who read.

The two most important hours in a person's life are his first conscious meeting with God in personal relationship and his first conscious meeting with the life that is to be his soul's inheritance for the rest of time. Even as Eliezer prayed for the success of his matrimonial mission, so young men and young women should pray for the guidance of God in this greatest choice upon which the future of the nation and the world depends.

Any light and frivolous and unconsidered notion of marriage is not only contrary to a realization of one's obligations to the world, but also contrary to the spirit of the Scriptures. God planned from the beginning that man and woman should become one in His fear and in the service of mankind. It is not unreasonable to believe that they who have solemnly rejected marriage will be held accountable in God's time of reckoning. There are thousands of men and women who, from shortsightedness, cowardice or selfishness, have turned their backs upon the wedded life. In so doing they have repudiated God's program.

The world progresses according to the old Persian legend of the juffak, a bird with one wing, but the male has a wing on one side and a hook on the other; and the female has a wing on the opposite side, and a hook to match the hook; and when the two were linked together they could fly, and only then.

The Bride's Homecoming. This old story is suggestive of human nature. Isaac was a quiet, stay-at-home, negative character, fond of meditating in the garden in the cool of the evening. He could easily be outwitted by those who had other people crowded with him as a rule. Even Rebekah, when he grew old, deceived him in the matter of the inheritance for her favorite son, Jacob.

We may not be hard on Rebekah, as we see her journeying with caravan and carrying with her as a retainer only her nurse with her as a retainer of her old home. She was a helpmeet for Isaac. The promised inheritance from the patriarch had it not been for her positive character. She made up, like a good wife, that Isaac lacked. If she had more than her share of aggressiveness, it was because he had less than his portion that was expected of a man. The two together, complementing each other, carried out God's idea for society.

Every marriage is a matter of gravest interest to the world, for it is at the point of marriage that the future of the race is determined. There should be three parties, the man, the woman, and God.

The Life Triumphant. Terse Comments for March 23, "Vital Living," The Lesson of Easter," II Cor. 4:3-13.

(BY WILLIAM T. ELLIS.)  
Yesterday our friend was here; today he is not here. Where is he now? The mystery of death has intervened. Faith assures us that all is well with him; but still a host of unanswered questions throng us. Is he still himself? How conscious is he now of this world and of us who are left behind? Has his personality passed over the great gulf with him? Shall we again have the peculiar relationship of personal friendship? These are the mysteries hidden even to faith, and unsolved by reason. The only source of light that shines upon the mortality of the soul streams from the open grave of the risen Christ. Were it not for the light of His resurrection, all would be dark.

The full truth of the life beyond the grave is known only to those who have passed through the straight gate called death. We dare not lend ourselves to idle speculation concerning it. But this we know, that life here and now may be enriched and enlarged and made glorious by the resurrection of the risen Christ. His resurrection was not merely for use in eternity. The triumphant experience of the resurrection life was meant for every one who could say, with the apostle, "I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

They who live as if life were a noble, conquering, joyous possession, are a constant Easter message to an ever-widening circle.

We call death the great divider, whereas, really and finally, it is the great uniter. All love knit souls, severed here on earth, are at last brought together in the life to which death is but the portal. Florence Earle Coates beautifully expresses the thought:

"Reproach not Death, nor charge to him, in wonder,  
The lives that he doth separate awhile,  
But think how many hearts that  
Death-pitying Death—doth join and reconcile!"

saved for this world of today. Their souls are starved and joyless; they are slaves to petty cares; their eyes are never lifted up to the heavens; they know nothing of the hilarity of life, full, bubbling and overflowing, such as the sure portion of those whom Christ has delivered from bondage. If religion is anything at all vital it is a present experience.

The great argument for full and abundant life is not that death draws on apace, but that Christ lives and shares his conquering life with his friends. A happy, holy life is the best testimony that a Christian can bear to his Master.

Arise, O Soul, this Easter Day!  
The Lord is risen!  
Forget the tomb of yesterday;  
The Lord is risen!  
And thou from bondage art set free,  
Thou sharer in his victory,  
The Lord is risen!  
The life eternal is for thee,  
The Lord is risen!  
—Sarah Louise Arnold.

Professor William James did the world great service by his essay wherein he showed, by the analogy of the runner's power to get his "second wind," that every one of us has unsuspected reserves of life which ordinarily are unused. His summons was to larger and more vital living; to the life more abundant, physical, mental, social and spiritual. Science echoes the message of the Master, "I am come that ye may have life, and that ye may have it more abundantly."

They multiply life—who live in other lives. The art of sympathy and cooperation, of giving self to others and sharing others' lives, is Christ's own secret of vital living.

We are too stupid about death. We will not learn  
How it is wages paid to those who earn,  
How it is the gift for which on earth we yearn,  
To be set free from bondage to the flesh;  
How it is turning seed-corn into grain,  
How it is winning heaven's eternal gain,  
How it means freedom evermore from pain,  
How it untangles every mortal mesh.

We are so selfish about death. We count our grief  
Far more than we consider their human nature,  
Whom the great Reaper gathers in the sheaf,  
No more to know the seasons' constant change,  
And we forget that it meant only life,  
Life with all joy, peace, rest, and glory rife.

Their Lent is over, and their Easter line might have suffered shipwreck had it not been for her positive character. She made up, like a good wife, that Isaac lacked. If she had more than her share of aggressiveness, it was because he had less than his portion that was expected of a man. The two together, complementing each other, carried out God's idea for society.

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gels and ministers of His most paternal love.—Robertson.

There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees.—Victor Hugo.

## BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

### A PECULIAR MARRIAGE.

Genesis 24: 58-67—March 23.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."—Proverbs 3:6.  
When Abraham was one hundred and forty years old, Sarah had been dead three years, and Isaac was forty. Then Abraham directed Eliezer, his steward, to go with ten camels to the neighborhood where Abraham was born and where Nahor still lived. There he found a suitable bride for Isaac.

The story is told with beautiful simplicity. The characters described are neither savages, nor victims of monstrosities, nor grotesque, as we think. Only recently have Bible Students learned that this unique procedure was evidently arranged to illustrate the Bride of the Lamb's process of accomplishment for more than eighteen centuries.

The type fits well to its antitype. Abraham typified the Heavenly Father; Isaac, the Lord Jesus; and Eliezer the Holy Spirit. In due time, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to gather the elect Company, which will constitute the Bride of the Lamb's wife. As Abraham did not take a wife for his son from amongst the heathen, so God did not select the Bride of Christ from the heathen. As Eliezer went to Abraham's relatives, believers in God, so the Holy Spirit was sent only to believers, to select from these the Church of the Bride of the Lamb.

The Bride class originally was Jewish. The Jews were in fellowship with God under their Law Covenant, and to them alone the Holy Spirit went. Later, the Gentiles were permitted to hear the Gospel, in order that such as responded might join the Bride class when they fully consecrated themselves to God.

Rebecca at the Well. Eliezer, loyal to his commission, sought earnestly the proper person, that Isaac might have a suitable helpmate. When he came to the city of Haran, he found a suitable person, Rebekah at the well, caring for the sheep. Those called to joint-heirship with Christ are usually found giving service, in the service of the Bible and its "water of life."

First Rebecca was tested as to willingness to give the water. Here she manifested the meekness and humility necessary for the Bride of Christ. Then Eliezer gave her jewels, symbolic of spiritual blessings. Eliezer was revealed to the house. Rebecca's friends, representing the Household of Faith, rejoiced with her.

Eliezer then explained that Abraham was very rich, that Isaac was his heir, and that he himself had come to find a bride for his master's son. He believed Rebecca to be the Lord's choice for Isaac. Rebecca was then asked to accompany him to the land of Canaan. Her prompt answer was, "I will go."

It meant something for Rebecca to leave her father's house and all with which she was familiar; and so it means considerably for those who accept the call to become the Bride of Christ. Only whole-hearted love for the Lord and well-grounded faith in His "great and precious promises" will carry them through the journey's end. Rebecca types only those who will finally make their calling and election sure, and become members of "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife."—Revelation 21:9.

More Jewels for Rebecca. Then Eliezer gave Rebecca more jewels. So the Bride class receive an early and a later blessing. The graces of the Holy Spirit—faith, fortitude, knowledge, hope, joy, love—enhance their beauty of character.

Finally the camels brought Rebecca to her journey's end. The Bride class leave their father Adam's house after the manner of the camels, which are laden with their goods, and their journey's end. Rebecca types only those who will finally make their calling and election sure, and become members of "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife."—Revelation 21:9.

As Eliezer brought Rebecca safe to the end of their journey to Isaac at Lahai-roi, so the Holy Spirit will guide the Bride class safely to the presence of Christ. Following the custom of the time, Rebecca put on her veil and alighted from the camel to meet Isaac. So the Scriptures tell us that the church must pass beyond the Veil before she will be fully received by the antitypical Isaac.

Rebecca's maidens typify the consecrated class now following the Bride class, not fully living up to their privileges. The blessing pronounced upon Rebecca, "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions," represents the future of the Church. For as the Redeemer will, during His Millennium, become the Father, or Life-giver, to thousands with His own precious blood, so the Church will become the mother, or caretaker, to assist them to perfection.

## EVERYBODY'S BIBLE BOX.

Q.—What people borrowed garments of their enemies? (Manetho).  
Answer—The children of Israel had dwelt in the Land of Egypt for 215 years, and during a large part of this time had been in a condition of servitude. The Egyptians had placed heavy burdens upon them, and caused them all sorts and conditions of hardships and sufferings. The wealth of Egypt had been created almost wholly by the Israelites, and when the time came when they, in the Lord's providence, were leaving the land of Egypt to journey toward a land which the Lord had promised to give them, the Egyptians (as requested) of the Egyptians gold, and silver, and raiment. The most of these precious materials were reserved for use in the construction of the Tabernacle of the Wilderness. The Jews today are acquiring the gold and silver and raiment of the larger "Egypt," the world in general, and are preparing to journey towards the land of promise, which for many long centuries has been in the hands of the Gentiles, and by right it belongs to the Jews, and will shortly be given to them in the pawnshops, second-hand stores and banking institutions are favorite methods with the Jewish people of "borrowing" from the Gentiles, their "gold, silver and raiment!"

Q.—Name two important events which had taken place on the mountain which was the site of Solomon's Temple? (Quizz.)  
Answer—A tradition which first appears in a definite shape in Josephus, and is now almost universally accepted.

ed. asserts that the Mount Mariah of 2 Chronicles 3:1, is identical with the mountain in the land of Moriah referred to in Genesis 22:2. In the first instance it is said that the Lord appeared to David and in the second instance it is the place where Abraham is said to have offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice to the Lord. The design of God in commanding the sacrifice of Isaac was to institute a most vivid type of the one great sacrifice of Christ; Abraham typifying God and Isaac our Lord Jesus. How appropriate, then, that Abraham should be directed to the very spot on which the Temple afterward stood and in the vicinity of which the cross was erected! It may be that Jesus was crucified in exactly the same place where Isaac 2200 years before had been typically sacrificed. The tradition of the Jewish people and the universal belief of Christianity, on such a point as this, are likely to be right, by placing a hallowed place in now in the possession of the Mohammedans.

Q.—Who is the first person mentioned in the Bible as wearing a ring? (Cleo.)  
Answer.—In ancient times it was the custom to indicate a special and dignified office by placing a ring upon the finger of the one toward whom the esteem and honor was manifested. When the ring contained a signet, it became the official symbol of authority. Thus we read of Joseph being honored by Pharaoh, king of Egypt, after he had interpreted the dream of Pharaoh, and this was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, "Can we find such an one as will place a ring upon the finger of the one toward whom the esteem and honor was manifested. When the ring contained a signet, it became the official symbol of authority. Thus we read of Joseph being honored by Pharaoh, king of Egypt, after he had interpreted the dream of Pharaoh, and this was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. 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