

The Site of the Sacrifice of Isaac.

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ABRAHAM proposed sacrificing his son somewhere in a district described as 'the land of the Moriah' (הָאֶרֶץ הַמֹּרְיָה, Gn 22²), and in Isaac's stead he offered a ram at a place in that district which he named Jahveh-jireh (יְהוָה יִרְאֶה, Gn 22¹⁴). The ordinary name of the place—if it had one—is not given; the new name Jahveh-jireh never again occurs in Scripture; was not, so far as we know, used by Abraham's descendants; and has not been discovered as now or formerly belonging to any spot. As it affords us so little help in determining the locality, we may leave it for the present and turn to the name of the district. 'The Moriah' as the designation of a district occurs but this once, and any other reference to it has perished. This has led scholars to try and find in it a more familiar name slightly altered. The Peshito reads האמורי, meaning 'of the Amorites';¹ an impossible reading. 'Get thee into the land of . . .' clearly indicates a definite direction in which Abraham was to travel. The Amorites at this time were scattered through Palestine,² and so, whether Abraham was in Philistia (Gn 21³⁴) or in the neighbourhood of Beer-sheba (Gn 22¹⁹), the words 'get thee into the land of the Amorites' would afford no definite idea of direction, and would thus be meaningless. Cheyne³ proposes to read מְצָרִים (which he would identify with Musr or Musri (יְרִמְסָאֵל)); a not very helpful suggestion. Mr. R. A. Stewart Macalister⁴ proposes to read מְרִינִים or מְרִינִים 'Midian' or 'the Midianites,' but is so little pleased with his own suggestion that he says 'the difficulty can be avoided only by invoking the usual *Deus ex machina*, the hypothesis of an interpolated gloss.' This is indeed the solution of Professor G. A. Smith, who says⁵: 'There is every reason to believe that

Moriah is not the original reading, but a gloss of late origin and inserted in order to give the Temple at Jerusalem the credit of the Patriarchal narrative.' Unwilling to accept this view, except in the last resort, we ask, Does the name itself help to indicate the district? Here we must be careful to avoid what may be termed fanciful derivations. One of the Tell-el-Amarna tablets gives the name of the local Baal of Jerusalem at that time as Marru; and Sayce⁶ thinks 'it possible that the name of the God may throw light on that of Moriah, the mountain on which the sanctuary was erected.' We will see, in a little, how unlikely, if not impossible, this is. The exact meaning of הַמֹּרְיָה is admittedly obscure. It has generally been taken as a contraction for מְרִיאָה or מְרִיָּה, meaning 'shown of Jah,' or 'vision of Jah,' but Driver⁷ says 'it is at least certain that it does not mean' either of these. The obscurity may be seen, and yet the general meaning inferred, from the translation of the Septuagint, εἰς τὴν ὄψιν ὕψηλῆν. Evidently the translators inferred that the district was conspicuous because of its height, and took הַמֹּרְיָה to mean 'seen' because of height. This indicates that in the name there is a reference to something or some one seen or appearing there. The article shows that הַמֹּרְיָה was originally a descriptive name. If, as Professor Smith believes, the word is corrupt, it is impossible to determine its exact meaning, but evidently the word indicates something appearing, and the words 'the land of the appearing' may bring us as near the meaning as possible. We will see how well such a meaning fits in with the narrative.

Before the sacrifice Abraham was camping 'in the land of the Philistines' (Gn 21³⁴), and after it 'he went to Beer-sheba; and dwelt at Beer-sheba' (Gn 22¹⁹). The sacrifice evidently took place when Abraham was wandering either in the Negeb, or the Philistine country, more probably the latter. If the limits of Philistia were in his day similar to those in the age of Joshua (Jos 13²), then the western boundary was the sea from the brook of

¹ This is the reading adopted by Fripp, *The Composition of the Book of Genesis*, pp. 60, 63.

² I hope to prove this in another paper dealing with the Amorites in Palestine. The expression 'land of the Amorites' occurs nowhere else in Scripture except in Jos 24¹⁶, where it is used for the whole of Palestine.

³ *Encycl. Bibl.*, art. 'Moriah.'

⁴ THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, xv. p. 141.

⁵ *H.G.H.L.*, p. 334, n. 2; *Jerusalem*, i. p. 267.

⁶ *Records of the Past*, new series, iv. p. vi.

⁷ *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, iii. p. 437.

Egypt—the Wady-el-Arish—to Ekron; the northern ran by Ekron; the eastern, passing Bethshemesh (1 S 6^o), became less exact as it struck southwards, while the southern boundary ran by the Wady-el-Arish. From some place in this southern region, this confusion of desert and pasture-land, Abraham started to go into the region in which he was to offer the sacrifice. Where exactly was this district? Note, to begin with, its extent. That is indicated by the fact that after journeying through it for three days, Abraham could only discern the place of sacrifice afar off, so far off that he had to allay the fears of his two retainers by assuring them that from this land he would ultimately return. The rate of travel would be about thirty miles per day, for the Patriarch was not on pleasure but on serious business bent.¹ From any place in Philistia, if he travelled westward, by the second or third day the sea would arrest his progress. If he journeyed towards the rising sun, he must have penetrated far into the Arabian desert, and we cannot think of any spot² in that wilderness at which Jahveh would desire, or Abraham wish, sacrifice to be offered. It is still more abundantly clear that Abraham did not travel north. If, as has been suggested, his camp was at Beer-sheba, three days would have taken him past Jerusalem, past Gerizim, and near the plain of Esdraelon.³ From it the prominent places seen afar off would be some of the Lebanons, and why Abraham should journey thither it is impossible even to imagine.

But that he did not go north is made quite clear by statements in the narrative. In Palestine trees were numerous⁴ and wood abundant. Abraham carried wood with him, a precaution which indicates that the offering was to be made in a place where it was practically certain that it would be impossible to sacrifice, because in it

¹ A friend, who has recently made the journey from Sinai to Jerusalem, writes: 'If a Bedouin were in a hurry he would certainly go not less than thirty miles on foot, on a donkey very much the same, whether he has a little luggage or not.' Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, ii. p. 289, writes: 'Jidda, more than 400 miles, were for Khalaf and his Bedouin no more than twelve swift camel journeys.'

² Though I do not discuss, I do not overlook the claims of Petra; nor of Sinai, if that mountain be situated, as Sayce would have us believe, 'on the borders of Seir and Paran towards Teman and the southern part of Edom' (THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, xiv. p. 330. (See also Schmidt, *The Hibbert Journal*, vi. p. 338.)

³ Fripp, *The Composition of the Book of Genesis*, p. 50.

⁴ Trees are mentioned in Gn 12⁶ 18¹.⁴ 21³³ 23¹⁷ 35⁴.⁸

no wood could be got. This was the nature of the district, for 'the thicket' עֲבֵטָה (v. 13) was an outstanding feature in its dreary waste. Abraham also burdened himself with fire, a further proof that the place of sacrifice was an unpeopled solitude where fire could not be obtained. That such was the character of the district is clear from these additional particulars. There were in it no flocks, and therefore it was impossible for a person wishing to sacrifice to purchase even a single lamb, so that to take thither wood and fire and to omit to take a lamb seemed to Isaac an absurd proceeding. In this no man's land a ram was a straggler, which so little belonged to any one that it could be appropriated by him who caught it. It was a place also which had no altar, for Abraham had to build one, and this indicates a place which he had never previously visited. Further, this desert district was distinguished by mountains rising on its further edge, on one of which (but which one Abraham did not know) the sacrifice was to be made. Though the word הַר may mean 'hill'⁵ as well as 'mountain,' still the narrative leaves the impression on the mind that the district was noted for its mountains as distinct from mere hills. The sacrifice had to be offered on a mountain. The reason for this is clear. The Semites in their earliest home conceived of their gods as dwelling on, and being worshipped at, mountains. In the Babylonian plain they found no such place for worship. But just as the so-called 'Hanging-gardens' were erected to represent a mountain land, so to imitate the mountain peaks, the proper place for sacrifice, they reared zikkurates, tower-temples, on the top of which, reached by a winding way representative of a mountain road, was the shrine in which the god resided.⁶ In this connexion the names of many of the temples are significant: Marduk's temple in Babylon was E-sagila, 'the lofty house'; that of Bel at Nippur was E-kur, 'the mountain house'; and Ishtar's sanctuary at Erech was E-anna, 'the house of the sky' or 'the lofty house.'⁷ Abraham naturally thought of Jahveh as having his seat on a mountain, and there sacrifice must be offered to him. Notice, further, that Abraham took

⁵ See art. 'Mount' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, iii. p. 451.

⁶ Herodotus, i. p. 181.

⁷ See *The Evolution of the Aryan*, by Rudolph von Ihering, p. 124; Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. v. p. 577. The Hebrew עֲבֵטָה means both 'high and sanctuary.'

with him as an escort two of his young men, whom he left behind on the third day. Palestine was at that time a country with a large population and numerous cities, and through it, a few years afterwards, Jacob passed in safety. In such a country two men would be of no use as a protection, but in the desert they would be of immense service to one who, like Abraham, was in friendly relations with the tribes, but subject to attack from small irresponsible wandering parties. When the limit of the pasture land was reached they too could be dispensed with, and the Patriarch could penetrate the desert practically alone. All these things indicate that Abraham travelled not north, but south towards the desert, at the extremity of which were ranges of mountains.

Yet places in Palestine have actually been suggested. Sentiment favours Jerusalem.¹ Further on we will see the mistake through which a tradition to that effect originated, but it is clear that the capital of the Jebusites could not have been the place; for, as we know, it was sacred to El Elyon (Gn 14¹⁸), and sacrifice to Jahveh could not be offered at the shrine of another god. A Samaritan tradition names Gerizim as the spot, and Stanley with gracious perversity supports a tradition which being late is valueless, with arguments which being fanciful are worthless.² The Samaritan Pentateuch reads המורה, which has been taken as referring to Moreh,³ a sacred place near to Shechem (Gn 12⁶). More could indeed be said for this site than for either of the former places, for it was at Shechem Abraham entered the territory of Jahveh, there He, the God of the land appeared to him, and there the Patriarch reared his first altar to the deity who was the proprietor of the land. But the fact that an altar to Jahveh was there would have prevented him rearing another. Had the spot selected been

¹ Henderson, *Palestine*, p. 61, though not approving, voices the feeling when he says 'naturally one would incline to suppose that the act of Abraham giving his well-beloved son ought to be placed at Jerusalem.' The 'typical' aspect of the question, as stated, e.g., by Mr. Birch (*Palestine Exploration Fund*, Quarterly Statement for 1907, p. 74), is one that has no real bearing on the question.

² See *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 251; *Palestine Exploration Fund*, Quarterly Statement for 1880, p. 103.

³ Moreh most probably is not a place at all, the true rendering of the phrase being 'the terebinth of the Director' (Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, iii. p. 436; J. G. Fraser, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, in *Anthropological Essays* presented to Edward Burnett Tylor).

any of these, had it been in any district in Palestine, through which Abraham had travelled, it could have been named. But the locality was so far distant and so utterly unknown to Abraham, that the particular mountain could only be indicated after he had gone three days' journey towards it. Further, the district was so destitute of any well-known or recognizable feature, as a city or river, by reference to which the exact spot could be described and found, that this had to be 'shown' to Abraham. We may feel sure, then, that the Patriarch sought the place of sacrifice in the south.

The narrative leaves us in little doubt as to the spot. We must guard ourselves from reading into the narrative a haste which is only seen towards the climax of this great act of faith. A Bedouin is never in a hurry except when dire necessity forces. Further, a nomad like Abraham rarely if ever travels alone, not the man but the camp moves. When, no doubt after serious and prolonged thought, a period of proving and trying (Gn 22¹), Abraham determined to offer his great sacrifice in the far south, he would choose for the journey thither the right time immediately after the season of rain, when the wadies would afford the largest amount of nourishment for his flocks. Moving from some spot in the Philistine territory he would work his way further and further up the Wady-el-Arish. Sustenance would be found as far as the Wady Garaiyeh.⁴ At that point, the tribe would, in ordinary circumstances, return northward by the Wady Lussan, where Palmer⁵ found 'considerable signs of former cultivation, admirably constructed dams, and cultivated patches of ground'; and from that to move onwards to 'Ain Moilahhi, which if we accept Rowland's identification is the fountain Beer-lahai-roi,⁶ and finally, fifty miles further north, reach Beer-sheba. Here then, if Abraham was to penetrate further south, he must leave his tribe to return by the route indicated, and proceed practically alone. Selecting two young retainers, who, if purchased in the Negeb, may not have been unacquainted with the desert, loading his ass with wood and provisions, and taking the fire and knife, probably of flint, used

⁴ On the route indicated, see the passages in *The Desert of the Exodus*, by the late E. H. Palmer; and on the conditions of travel in the desert, Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*. For the fertility of the Wady-el-Arish, see Schmidt in *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. vi. p. 334.

⁵ *Desert of the Exodus*, ii. p. 347.

⁶ Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. p. 264.

for sacrifice, Abraham and his son started. The first day would bring them to Cala'at Nakhil. The second and third day would see them safe through the Wilderness of the Wanderings, and at the famous Pass of Jebel Emreikneh, from which he could see rising far to the south the heights of Sinai. All use for guards had now ceased, so here at the pass the two youths were left, and Abraham and his son pressed on to Sinai. It would take time to reach the sacred mountain to prepare for and carry out the sacrifice. When that was over, father and son returned to the pass, and with the young men pushed on till they overtook the tribe on its way to Beersheba.

The reasons which led Abraham to sacrifice to Jahveh at Sinai were dictated by the religious conceptions of his age. A great god, like Jahveh, had his seat, his land, and his worshippers.¹ His seat, generally speaking, was the spot where his worship originated or was centralized, where he resided, and where his worshippers could depend with certainty on meeting with him.² His land was the territory in which he was the supreme god, and in which his worshippers dwelt. Though the people living in a land must, it was felt, worship the god of the land,³ yet, when by emigration or conquest the worshippers of a god possessed or largely possessed a land, it was legitimate to introduce the worship of that deity.⁴

How, when, where, and among what people Jahveh's worship originated are all things hidden from us by the mists of ages, and the same veil obscures the origin of the connexion between Jahveh and Palestine. If we endeavour to answer the questions such problems suggest, our starting-point must be within the historic period. In Abraham's time, and we may presume considerably before it, Jahveh was worshipped in Babylonia.⁵ His worshippers there looked on Palestine as his land, so unquestionably his, that he could and would give it to his followers.⁶ At the time of the Exodus, and we may presume long before that period, Jahveh's seat was Sinai.⁷ But Sinai is the Mountain of Sin, the moon god. How

¹ An earlier phase of this relationship is thus described: 'The god has a district or beat to which his wanderings are usually confined, and within it again he has his lair or camping-place' (*Religion of the Semites*, W. R. Smith, p. 111).

² Job 23³

⁴ 2 K 17²⁴.

⁶ Gn 12⁷.

³ Ru 1¹⁶, 1 S 26¹⁹.

⁵ Gn 12¹.

⁷ See such passages as Ex 3².

then, we ask, did it come to pass that Jahveh was worshipped in Babylonia, possessed Palestine, and had as his seat a mountain in the peninsula of Sinai named after another god? The discovery of the history of eras unknown to us would alone satisfactorily explain these strange facts. But we can conceive the course of history to be something like this. From the earliest times Sinai was a sacred place and the home of the gods.⁸ Amid the deities dwelling on it two attained eminence; Sin, the moon god, important to a people who like the Bedouin of the desert travel generally at night, and Jahveh whose voice was heard in the thunder, and whose power and beneficence were seen in the storm and the rain. At first Sin was the more important of these deities, and gave his name to the mountain. The salubrity of the desert made it a cradle, as its sterility prevented it becoming a home for an increasing population, and so from the desert swarms pushed out to more fertile lands. A considerable section of the nomads, who regarded Sin⁹ as their special deity, moved in a far distant period into Babylonia.¹⁰ Their departure made the worshippers of Jahveh supreme, and thus Sinai, though retaining its name,¹¹ became recognized as his seat¹² and the

⁸ It is called 'the mountain of the gods,' Ex 3¹ 4²⁷ 18⁵ 24¹³, 1 K 19⁸. On the ancient sanctity of Sinai, see *The Religion of the Semites*, by W. Robertson Smith, p. 111; *Egypt Exploration Fund*, Archaeological Report, 1904-5, p. 11; paper by the present writer in *THE EXPOSITORY TIMES*, vol. xvii. p. 382; and *Researches in Sinai*, by W. M. Flinders Petrie.

⁹ Sin is a nomadic deity. 'In a general way it may be said that the moon cult is co-existent with the nomadic grade of culture' (Jastrow, jun., in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iv. p. 541). An ancient legend ascribes the invention of bricks, and consequently the construction of cities, jointly to Sin and Ninib (Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization*, p. 753).

¹⁰ That Sin was not one of the older gods of Babylonia is clear from two things. His place is after the triad of the great gods Anu, Bel, and Ea, and after Ishtar. Jastrow, jun., in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iv. p. 541; *Babylonian Religion*, L. W. King, pp. 14, 17. Again in Ur and Harran Sin was looked upon as Creator and Ruler, but outside these he was simply the moon god (Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization*, p. 655).

¹¹ As Zion did when Jahveh's seat was removed thither.

¹² See such passages as Ex 3¹² 19³, Nu 10³³, Dt 33², Jg 5⁵, Ps 68^{8, 17}. At a later period, when Jahveh was thought of as dwelling in the skies, the spot on which he descended when he visited the earth was Sinai (Neh 9¹³). As Zion rose in importance it was called 'the mountain of Jahveh's house' (Is 2², Mic 4¹), and even 'Jahveh's mountain' (Is 2³, Mic 4², Is 30²⁹, Zec 8³).

sanctuary for his worshippers. At a subsequent period, how long after we do not know, some Jahveh worshippers passed northwards through the Negeb into Palestine, largely possessed it, and established in it the worship of Jahveh.

Thus that narrow strip, stretching from Sinai to the Lebanon, protected on either side by a desert of sea and a desert of sand, became Jehovah's land. Afterwards Amorites¹ from the East invaded Palestine, bringing with them their own foreign gods, whose worship supplanted that of Jahveh. In some such way we can understand how Sinai became Jehovah's seat, and Palestine Jahveh's land.² Another and presumably a smaller migration of Jahveh worshippers took place to Babylonia. These settled at Harran and Ur. Though in these cities there must have been a tendency towards the syncretism of the cults of Sin and Jahveh, yet the devotees of Jahveh and their descendants maintained the traditional worship of their god and the conception that Palestine was his land. Abraham, a native of Ur, grew up a monolatrist, that is a polytheist who specially revered one god, Jahveh. Circumstances turned his thoughts, and finally his steps towards Jahveh's land. He realized that Jahveh wished, and wished through him, to regain possession of his inheritance, by establishing him and his descendants as his worshippers in it, and that he so strongly desired this that he laid it upon him as a duty to go forth and possess it. Abraham journeyed to the Far West, through Harran the sister city of Ur, and entered Jahveh's land at Shechem.³ There he took possession of the land for Jahveh by building an altar to him, and there Jahveh appeared to him and again promised to give him the land. Abraham passed through the land going on towards the Negeb.⁴ His duty as a loyal Jahvehist was undoubtedly to pass on to Jahveh's seat at Sinai,⁵ and therefore to sacrifice to him. But the dread of the desert, Oriental procrastination, the wrong satisfaction that comes from a duty almost accomplished, and which can at any time be fulfilled, conspired to keep him from discharging this necessary task. It is notice-

¹ I hope to prove this in the paper mentioned on p. 1.

² I have dealt at much greater length with the problem of Jahveh and his land in a paper which I hope soon to publish.

³ Gn 12⁶.

⁴ Gn 12⁹.

⁵ As did Elijah (1 K 19).

able that he is always hovering on the border of the desert,⁶ and that his wanderings—except when driven by famine into Egypt—are all practically confined to the Negeb. Indeed, on one occasion he actually penetrated as far south as Kadesh.⁷ Gradually the guilt of such delay, and the necessity for a special sacrifice pressed in on his conscience, and finally he determined to pass south and at Jahveh's seat sacrifice to Jahveh his choicest gift, his only son. But where exactly was Jahveh's seat? While the long absence of his ancestors from Sinai made Abraham ignorant of its exact position, he had, as his stay in the Negeb indicates, a knowledge of the locality in which it lay. The district was sacred owing to the appearances of Jahveh in it, and its name would in all probability be indicative of this. אֶרֶץ הַמְּאִירָה has some such meaning as we have already seen. Abraham therefore journeyed south into 'the land of the appearing,' and in that district the exact spot was shown him. There, in that to him thrice holy place, Jahveh revealed his character as a god who wished not 'man to give his first-born for his transgression, the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul,'⁸ a first step to the higher teaching that he 'delighted not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats,'⁹ leading up to the highest thought that the sacrifice the Father desires is the surrender of the will and the heart.

The knowledge of the true site enables us to see how mistakes about it arose, and to see that they are mistakes. We are not told that either Abraham or his immediate descendants ever revisited the spot; previous and later theophanies providing many sacred places in Palestine itself, where sacrifice to Jahveh could be offered.¹⁰ Such theophanies extending the range of Jahveh's appearances caused the title 'land of the appearing' to become inappropriate, while the long residence of the Israelites near Sinai made them accurately acquainted with Jahveh's seat. Further, the gradual ceasing of all such appearances caused the idea of sacredness to be associated not with a district which must have included all Palestine, but with the one mountain

⁶ The places mentioned in J as the Negeb, Gn 13¹, Bethel 13³, Hebron 13¹⁸, Mamre 13¹⁸, Beer-lahai-roi 24⁶²; those mentioned in E as Negeb, 20¹, the neighbourhood of Sodom 19²⁸, Kadesh 20¹, Shur 20¹, Gerar 20¹, Beersheba 21¹⁴.³² 22¹⁹, Philistia 21³⁴; and those mentioned in P, Hebron 23², Mamre 14¹³, Salem 14¹⁷, are all in the south.

⁷ Gn 21¹.

⁸ Mic 6⁷.

⁹ Is 1¹¹.

¹⁰ Gn 12⁷ 15. 17¹ 18¹ 21³³ 26².³⁴ 28¹³ 35³.

Sinai. Hence 'the land of the appearing' dropped out of use. It lingered only in the traditions of the past, and in the literature connected with the sacrifice of Isaac. As the descendants of Abraham became consolidated into a nation which looked on Jerusalem as its chief city, there grew up in the minds of the Hebrews the idea that the national deity should have his residence in the city of the nation, and some of the sacredness connected with distant Sinai began to be transferred to the new centre of the nation's life. During the visitation of plague, David saw¹ the messenger of Jahveh by the threshing-floor of a Jebusite, Araunah. Such an appearance caused the hill to become sacred, and to get a name indicative of such an appearing; hence it was called הַהֵר הַמִּזְבֵּיחַ 'the hill of the appearance.'² As Jahveh became more and more associated with Jerusalem and the Temple, he was the more completely disassociated from Sinai. The similarity of the names led to an identification of the places in the popular mind, and so a tradition arose that the intended sacrifice of Isaac was on the Temple mount.³ Josephus repeats this tradition. He says⁴ the place of Abraham's sacrifice 'was that mountain upon which king David afterwards built the Temple,' and of the ground bought from Araunah,⁵ 'at that very place' Abraham offered up Isaac. There can be no doubt that the

¹ 2 S 24¹⁷.

² 2 Ch 3¹.

³ Fripp, *The Composition of the Book of Genesis*, holds that Gn 22 is to be assigned to the compiler of the Priestly History Book, 'that he was a Judean,' and that the reading in v.² is an attempt to transplant Abraham's deed of faith from some northern shrine to Jerusalem.

⁴ *Ant.* i. 13. 2.

⁵ *Ant.* vii. 13. 4.

tradition is incorrect. The appearance on any occasion of any god—much more of Jahveh, on such an occasion as the sacrifice of Isaac—would make the place of such appearing sacred, and to a large extent public property. The site of the future Temple was a threshing-floor without any altar or sanctuary, and was the property of a private individual who was not a Hebrew but a Jebusite. Jahveh's Temple in Jerusalem was designedly placed on virgin soil, and for the best of reasons, for such disassociation of his worship from all local cults and traditional ritual gave it an environment most helpful to a purely ethical development. Josephus clearly repeats a late and inaccurate tradition.

Abraham called the name of the spot יְהוָה יֵרֵאֵה, Jahveh-jireh,⁶ 'Jahveh sees' or 'Jahveh sees to,' that is, 'provides.' A proverb⁶ subsequently arose 'In the mount of Jahveh he shall be seen' or 'it shall be provided.' But the true reading text is evidently preserved in the Septuagint, ἐν τῷ ὄρει Κύριος ὤφθη, 'in the mountain Jahveh was seen.' Such a memorable occurrence as the presence and subsequent sacrifice of a ram instead of Isaac would naturally give rise to such a proverb. The remarks on page 12 indicate the process by which the reference in the proverb would be transferred from Sinai to the Temple at Jerusalem.

The fixing of the site of this memorable occurrence raises many interesting questions, but it makes somewhat clearer one step in the wondrous history of the evolution of the worship of Israel's God.

⁶ Gn 22¹⁴.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF REVELATION.

REVELATION I. 17, 18.

'And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.'—R.V.

THE SITUATION.

John was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. That is to say, because he had been preaching the gospel. It reminds us of another John, John Bunyan, who found himself in Bedford Jail for the very same