

The
Outlook

July 27, 1901

p. 712

The Study of Genesis

A correspondent asks us for an article or series of articles on the modern views of Genesis as a help to Sunday-school teachers in teaching the Book of Genesis in the course of International Sunday-school lessons.

We should advise him to use the story of the fall in order to show that conscience makes cowards of us all, that when we sin we desire to escape from God, that we are always wont to throw the responsibility of our transgression upon some one else, that we always have to meet the consequences ourselves, and that there is no deliverance from sin except through the discipline of expulsion from ease and the wrestling with burdens, difficulties, and troubles. We should advise him in teaching the story of the flood to show the certainty of penalty, and the impossibility of escape from God except by escape to God and finding refuge in him. We should advise him to interpret the story of Abraham as an incentive to faith, the story of Isaac as an inspiration to the prosaic virtues, the story of Jacob as an illustration of the hope which the mercy of God affords to the most unworthy, the story of Joseph as an illustration of divine providence and of human fidelity. These and kindred lessons are in the Book of Genesis, whether we regard it as a collection of historic incidents or as a collection of spiritually rewritten myths and legends.