

Joseph
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Preface

The history of Joseph in detail, here brought before us, only carries us to Gen. 47: 12, where his father Jacob is presented to Pharaoh, for at this point the Author's closing days of his pilgrimage were rapidly being fulfilled. His pen was now laid aside, and he has since passed away to abide in the presence of a greater than Pharaoh or any earthly potentate — yea, of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords,

Intermitting therefore any comment upon the deeply interesting account of Joseph's skilful administration of the land and people of Egypt given us in the remainder of the chapter of the inspired record, as also the two following chapters (Gen. 48, Gen. 49), which the Author has already treated in his history of "Jacob," we may be allowed to pass on to the closing chapter of this first book of the Bible, and add here the following words thereon by the same pen, which appeared many years ago:

"The last chapter gives us the conclusion of the book, the burial of Jacob, the reappearance of his sons left with Joseph, and at last Joseph's own death, as lovely as had been his life. He who stood on the highest pinnacle in the land, next to the throne, type of Him who will bold the Kingdom unto the glory of God the Father, — that single-eyed saint now breathes forth his soul to God. "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones." His heart is out of the scene where it enjoyed but a transient and at best typical glory. In hope he goes onward to that which would be lasting and true unto God's glory, when Israel should be in Emmanuel's land, and he himself be in a yet better condition — even resurrection. He had been exalted in Egypt, but he solemnly took an oath of the sons of Israel, that when God visits them, as He surely will, they will carry up his bones hence. He had served God in Egypt, but to him it was ever the strange land. Though he dwelt there, ruled there, there had a family, and there died fuller of honour than of years, an hundred and ten years old, he feels that Egypt is not the land of God, and knows that He will redeem His people from it, and bring them into Canaan. It was beautiful fruit in its season: no change of circumstances interfered with the promise of God to the fathers. Joseph waited as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Earthly honours did not settle him down in Egypt." (*Lectures Introductory to The Pentateuch*).

"Now unto the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

INTRODUCTION.

Of the many biographical sketches in the Bible none for interest exceeds that of Joseph. It therefore attracts those of tender years not yet hardened by intercourse with the world, or sophisticated by the spirit of the age. It is distinguished even among the patriarchs by domestic affections no less than hatred of evil, by personal purity sustained and guarded by faith, by the favour of Jehovah that communicated His secrets to one that feared Him from youth, throughout an unusually diversified life and the extremes of slavery, of prison, and of the highest position next to the greatest throne then on earth without a cloud, the most prudent and kind of viziers in times of abundance no less than of famine, the most skilful of statesmen for his master's interest. Again what can one think of his filial honour to his father? what of his gracious returns to his envious and spiteful brethren (only short of his blood)? And though for a believing Israelite he seems to have gone far in complying with the words of a heathen, and to have risen up to the airs of a great lord as to the manner born, his heart sustained the divinely given hopes of Israel, as evinced by his punctual heed to his father's burial, where lay Jacob's

father and his father's father.

Nor did his earthly rank in Egypt dim his own faith before his death, that God would surely visit his brethren and bring them into the land promised by His oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He too took their oath when that day came to carry up his bones hence along with them.

The long desired son of his mother Rachel, - herself his father's first and tenderest love, he derived a name from her (Gen. 30: 23, 24), Joseph *i.e.* adding; which pointed to another son, the son of his father's right hand, who was to be the occasion of her death. Sadly impatient with God's dealings in her case, grace opened her heart to Jehovah's goodness and gave her to look on through her son of unexpectedly wondrous destiny to another son, about to be born in Palestine, the little one who should become great both in the land and to the ends of the earth in its own season. For Benjamin figures in that day of earthly power and glory. Joseph is the vessel of divine wisdom in humiliation, despised by his brethren, suffering from them, and sold to Gentiles who punish him yet more; but, unknown to Israel, exalted to the right hand of power for unmeasured blessing to both, and married to a Gentile wife, the names of whose sons testify to his forgetting his past toil with his kin, and his fruitfulness in another land. Yet at the end like Christ he that was separated makes himself known to his brethren whom he established in the best of the land. Even from this brief summary the reader will gather how hard it would be in all O.T. scripture to find so rich a mine of typical wealth, so varied and comprehensive a figure of the Lord Jesus.

Hence the history of Joseph abounds in the forecasting of the lights as well as the shadows of Christ, and thus is singularly instructive in the ways of God. This is all the more striking, because it is found in an unvarnished and perfectly reliable history, when man's annals, or even monuments, afford but a flickering gleam. But all that these remains tell us goes to prove the perfect accuracy of that which the closing chapters of Genesis disclose of that land which was to be the nursery of Israel. There they were led on from a family group to become a people, Jehovah's people, waked up under oppression to the knowledge of their peculiar relationship to the Eternal, and at length from the furnace of affliction to that deliverance, which had His blessed dwelling in their midst, of which the second book of the Pentateuch treats so copiously.

It appears (for we must not say more when we go outside scripture) that the ordinary succession of native rulers was interrupted for more than two centuries by the invasion of Shepherd Kings from Syria (Hittite or Khita); and that the sudden rise of Joseph occurred during the reign of Apepi, the last of this foreign or Hyksos dominion.* If this be so, it accounts in a great measure for the rupture made with the set ways and jealous forms of an old civilization, in the exalted place to which Joseph was advanced, in his long continued rule, and his marriage with the daughter of Potipherah the priest in On (Heliopolis); still more perhaps for the readiness with which a shepherd people were given a quarter so valuable as Goshen, not far from either the royal residence on one side or the frontier of Palestine on the other. The abomination of a shepherd lay in the native eye, not in those who favoured Joseph and his brethren, but in the, restored native rulers, who soon after regained the upper hand, knew not Joseph, and proceeded to persecute the chosen people. This providential concurrence we leave. God is above circumstances, though His wisdom is often shown in His availing Himself of them on behalf of His plans.

* So says George the Syncellus in his *Chronographia*, Script. Hist. Byz. 48 c. folio, Ven. 1729: ἐπὶ γὰρ πᾶσι συμπεφώνηται. This, long doubted, has been conclusively established by recent research.

But whatever be the worth of these thoughts as to the then circumstances of Egypt and its rulers, there is certainty of God's directing hand, in His allowance of all the unworthy ways of Jew and Gentile in Joseph's early history, to bring about that very position of lofty distinction which, when

foreshadowed, drew out the hatred of his brethren. His duty changed its form from his father's house to that of a foreign master, and from shame, even in the keep of a prison, to the highest rank in the realm.

But it was everywhere the same obedience in the sight of Jehovah, the same prosperity for all that he touched. He was tender even to tears as he was firm of purpose, clear of insight too, and resolute in execution, a man of mark and modesty, who rose to the command of every occasion without the least self-seeking. Jehovah was with Joseph, as Joseph was subject to Jehovah: a rare man among the Jewish people or any other, look where and when you will.

JOSEPH

CHAPTER 1.

JOSEPH'S EARLY DAYS

Gen. 30: 22-25, Gen. 33: 2, Gen. 37: 2-11

Joseph, it appears from comparison of clear dates in scripture, was born in his father's ninety-first year. He was the elder son of Rachel, long desired by his mother, and at length given of God, when her impatience had met its just rebuke. Leah had her six sons already born; and a daughter followed who later became the occasion of shame and grief to her kin, of a reckless and revengeful desolation to a city of Hivites, far beyond the demerit of the one that wronged her.

We need not repeat the tale of Joseph's birth, and of the remarkable utterance of his mother with the name given and the anticipation of the one, who was to be son not of her Sorrow only but of her death. In Jer. 31: 15-17 is a very touching reference to Rachel and a connection with the affliction of "her children" in the day of the captivity to Babylon, but looking to the blessed time of gracious reprisal when Jehovah will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. "Thus saith Jehovah, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, bitter weeping: Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are not. Thus saith Jehovah, Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears; for thy work hath a reward, saith Jehovah; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope for thy latter end, saith Jehovah, and thy children shall come again to their own border." Between the prophecy and its fulfilment in the coming days of Israel's restoration and national blessing, it is applied to the murderous onslaught, in vain meant for Jesus, which Herod brought on all the boys from two years and under that were in Bethlehem and in all its borders. In all their affliction was He afflicted, though exempted from that blow for the anguish of His rejection unto death, under the hatred of His own people and the infinitely deeper suffering in atonement at God's hand for their sins, and ours.

Not only was the birth of Joseph an epoch for the spirit of his mother (elsewhere dilated on), but we find Jacob thereon awakening to his due place and to his country associated with the promises of God. And it came to pass when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, Send me away that I may go to my place and to my country." The needed discipline was not ended: Jacob had yet to learn more of himself under the good dealings of God. There was still a sadly mingled crop to be seen. But thence we see his heart turned toward the land from which he had been long an exile through his mother's devices and his own. If he served Laban longer, God took care to bless his own portion so conspicuously that the sons of Laban wished him gone, and the word was given which decided him to

flee. Then the return by God's grace, notwithstanding his crippled weakness, became no less an epoch for Jacob.

Next, we turn to chap. 37, "The generations of Jacob," where Joseph, young as he was, becomes the leading figure, with his brothers a dark background, and God at work in a remarkable way.

"Joseph, being seventeen years old, was tending the flock with his brethren; and he was a youth with Bilhah's sons, and with Zilpah's sons, his father's wives; and Joseph brought their evil report to his father. And Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was his son of old age; and he made him a sleeve-coat of many colours. And his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, and they hated him and could not speak to him peaceably. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and told his brethren, and they hated him yet the more. And he said to them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. And, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and bowed down themselves to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed rule over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more, and, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down themselves to me. And he told [it] to his father and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said to him, What. [is] this dream that thou hast dreamed? shall I indeed come and thy mother and thy brethren, to bow down themselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying" (vers. 2-11).

The witness of their evil ways and his father's love made Joseph hateful to the sons of the servile mothers. Nor did the distinctive robe which Jacob gave Joseph soften their asperity, nor yet his two dreams. "Fury is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before jealousy?" Whether it was wise or comely to rehearse his dreams to those who had no love for him may be a question; but the dreams were of God, as the effect on his brethren was of the enemy. Even to his father the second was distasteful, though he kept it in mind. But as all that is recorded stamps Joseph as a pious youth, of moral courage, of faithfulness toward the erring, of a lowly mind that wondered at the dreams as much as any or more; so he too like his father could hardly shut put from his spirit that God betokened some singular exaltation in due time; and the strengthened repetition could not but confirm, as indicating, that they were not casual, but from above. This however always provokes adversaries to madness and revenue, while, strange as it may be in their eyes, God turns even their spite and wicked ways to the accomplishment of His purpose, as we shall see beyond fail in the history.

But we may not doubt on the one hand, that God had His gracious purpose of exercising Joseph's spirit and strengthening his heart for the distress and manifold troubles which were to be his portion before those remarkable prefigurations were to be fulfilled. On the other hand, it is no less plain that his fleshly-minded brothers, as they hated his piety and dreaded his moral judgment of their evil ways, were stung to mad malice in hearing of his dreams, which they were quick to interpret rightly enough. And we may hope that in the end God turned to their soul's profit what Joseph was given to tell them in the days of his youth. Thus, if they could not easily forget dreams so simple and striking that nearly touched all the family, the sufferer still less could not but remember in the midst of many a grief and shame the visions of strange dignity that awaited him in his and their life-time.

CHAPTER 2.

JOSEPH AND His BRETHREN

Gen. 37: 17-36

The dreams of Joseph were God-sent, and as real in the event, as realities of others are but daydreams. And what a mercy it was for his half-brothers, who were not in heart brothers, that their cruel purpose took effect but in part, and was turned in divine goodness, wisdom, and power to bring about the elevation which they hated as much as they envied. Cain-like their intent was to slay their brother. And wherefore? Because, at the bottom of all, their works were evil, and their brother's righteous.

"And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. And when they saw him afar off, and before he came near to them, they conspired against him to put him to death. And they said one to another, Behold, there cometh that master of dreams! And now come and let us kill him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, An evil beast devoured him; and we will see what becometh of his dreams. And Reuben heard, and delivered him out of their hands, and said, Let us not take his life. And Reuben said to them, Shed no blood; cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness; and lay no hand on him (in order that he might deliver him out of their hand, to bring him again to his father). And it came to pass, when Joseph came to his brethren, that they stripped Joseph of his coat, the coat of the colours that [was] on him; and they took him and cast him into the pit. And the pit was empty: no water [was] in it. And they sat down to eat bread; and they lifted up their eyes and looked; and, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, and their camels bearing tragacanth and balsam and ladanum, going to carry [it] down to Egypt. And Judah said to his brethren, What profit [is it] if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he [is] our brother, our flesh. And his brethren hearkened. And Midianitish men, merchants, passed by; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph for twenty [pieces] of silver to the Ishmaelites, who brought Joseph into Egypt. And Reuben returned to the pit, and, behold, Joseph [was] not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. And he returned to his brethren and said, The child [is] not; and I, whither shall I go? And they took the coat of Joseph, and killed a buck of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent the coat of the colours, and had [it] brought to their father, and said, This we have found: discern now whether it [is] thy son's coat or not. And he discerned it, and said, My son's coat! an evil beast hath devoured him. Surely torn in pieces is Joseph! And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and said, For I will go down to my son mourning to Sheol. Thus for him wept his father. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt to Potiphar, a chamberlain [lit. eunuch] of Pharaoh, captain of the executioners (or, lifeguard)" (vers. 17-36).

Such is the simple but most touching account Moses was inspired to give of the atrocious wickedness on the part of Joseph's brothers, heads though they were of the tribes of Israel. Who but God would have told the tale, with whatever difference in Reuben and Judah? How evident that in Jehovah alone can one boast, and that the objects of His choice are in themselves nothing and worse than nothing! Yet in the midst of heartlessness toward the guiltless sufferer and the father who had sent him in love rises the fore-shadow of Him that should come, a greater infinitely than Joseph. He too was the Beloved of His Father, and sent as Son of man in quest of the lost. It was His to arouse the enmity of His brethren after the flesh and beyond all as the Faithful Witness who drew out man's evil by divine

good, and in all things pleased God the Father.

But in how many soever ways of love, enough was done and is written to show how the, Holy One of God was before His eyes who knows how to effectuate His deliberate counsel and foreknowledge, not only in spite but by means of the apostate unbelief of the Jews, and of the hands of lawless Gentiles, in their blind pride alike knowing not what they did, yet knowing more than enough to make both utterly inexcusable. O, what a Father! O what a Son, given up by His brethren after the flesh, Messiah and withal Jehovah, ready to die for their sins, as none other could or would! For His price too was silver paid, as in the case of another Judah: a goodly valuation for the Lord of all! O what is man, be he Jew or Gentile! and what is God but the God of all grace! And what Jesus, full of grace and truth, who if He drew out by His perfection, as God to man and as man to God, the causeless and uttermost evil of man as a whole, died as the efficacious propitiation to purge every sin in those who repent and believe the gospel of God in His Son's death!

Nor is it only that peace was made through the blood of Christ's cross for believers, who once were alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, by which and nothing less it could be. But in virtue of the same death He will at His appearing reconcile all things, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heaven. God's blessed work of gathering out His heirs, the joint-heirs with Christ, to reign with Him in that day must first be completed. Then man's and Satan's accursed work of the apostasy and of the man of sin, the spurious Messiah set up in God's temple and worshipped as God by Jews and Gentiles, will bring down summary judgment by the appearing of His coming. But the manifestation of the Son of God, and of the sons of God in the same glory, is followed by the deliverance of the whole creation that now groans together and travails in pain together unto now. The work that followed Joseph's elevation over Egypt, so striking for its beneficence not only to the heathen but to all the Israel of that day, how small in comparison of a deliverance worthy of His person and of His reconciling work wrought in the cross, wherein God was glorified even as to sin for ever; for there met face to face man's sin in its height and God's love in its depth! But where sin abounded, grace more exceeded; and God could send His glad tidings, yea His best, to the worst of men, "beginning," as the Lord Jesus told them, "with Jerusalem."

CHAPTER 3.

JOSEPH PROSPERED IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE

Gen. 39: 1-6

It is not without a profoundly moral purpose that, before Joseph's history is continued, the Spirit of God, in Gen. 38 discloses the debased state of Judah. We have already seen that the sensual Reuben was the only brother to show the least natural affection, or at least pity, to Joseph. It was he who suggested the pit, from which their offending brother could not escape, in order to bring him to his father again. But Judah, in Reuben's absence, took the lead in taking him out and selling him to the Ishmaelites, who in turn sold him to an Egyptian master. What a presage of Christ, suffering first from a faithless Judah; then too from the Gentile world! Divine history is as truly predictive in the types of the law as in the heart-breathing of the Psalms, or the more direct prophets. And so all must be, if scripture be God revealing His grace in Christ, His own delight, and the only salvation for wretched guilty man.

Judah, about to be not only the pre-eminently royal tribe but the progenitor of the King of kings, is

to take profanely to himself a daughter of Canaan. No wonder that wickedness slew his firstborn, and infamy his brother. No wonder that the widow had no regard from the third. But how shocking her shameless and incestuous vindication of right! how self-righteous Judah's readiness to burn the mother of babes unconsciously his own, one of whom is carefully marked out in Messiah's direct line! Such is man, and such Judah; but such too is God. Where heinous sin abounded, grace much more exceeded. Let us now turn to what follows.

"And Joseph was brought down into Egypt; and Potiphar, a chamberlain of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian man, bought him of the hand of the Ishmaelites who had brought him down thither. And Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man, and he was in his master the Egyptian's house. And his master saw that Jehovah [was] with him, and that Jehovah made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found favour in his eyes, and served him; and he made him overseer over his house, and all [that] was his he put into his hand. And it came to pass, from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that was his, that Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Jehovah was on all that was his in house and in field. And he left all that [was] his in Joseph's hand, and took cognisance of nothing with him save the bread which he ate." (vers. 1-6).

Little did the Egyptian anticipate the treasure one small purchase brought to his house. But the explanation is not far to seek, and it makes all clear. "Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man." Never before was the word so emphatic. Not that Jehovah had not been with him at home or abroad hitherto. Jehovah was with him when he gained his father's confidence and love. Jehovah was with him when by his fidelity he earned the envy and hatred of his brethren. But now of him, a bondman in a strange land, it was said with marked force. Yet who but one inspired of God would have so written of one torn from his father's house, and this by his own brothers, who sold him for a slave, instead of taking his blood or leaving him to perish of hunger. But Jehovah was with him all the more because the need was greater. The favour of divine light shone on him even then; and it made him hateful in the eyes of wicked kinsmen who ought to have loved him, if they understood not but only disliked what seemed to his honour, besides the rancour for their evil report which he felt bound to carry to the father for their good.

In the Egyptian's house he recognised a new sphere of duty, and looked to Jehovah that he might serve Him and thus best serve his master. His eye was single, and the whole body full of light. Delivered from a cruel death which seemed imminent, he humbled himself under the divine hand, and sought to do diligently and conscientiously what lay before him day by day to please the Master above. Hence the prosperity that surrounded him and made him master of the situation. Never had Potiphar or any other such a slave: in him was neither self-seeking nor eyeservice. "And his master saw that Jehovah was with him, and that Jehovah made all that he did to prosper in his hand." One cannot wonder that things went wrong under such a mistress, when no Joseph was there, only, the bondmen. But now there was a force for good at work with the most marked results of blessing which the discerning eye even of a heathen did not fail to see. "And Joseph found favour in his eyes, and served him." Not heart only, but faith was in his work; and this gave a new character and power, which a shrewd master with large experience of human deceitfulness and incompetence made him appreciate all the more.

As he was faithful in the least, his master promoted him to greater tasks and much more honourable. And he set him over his house, and all that was his he put into his hand." This was no small sphere of service, and involved the administration of an immense establishment. For there is ground to accept the view that Potiphar had command of the White Castle at Noph (or Moph) of the

prophets, the Memphis of Greeks and others of later times. But extensive, varied, and new as it was to him who had been so lately and singularly introduced, "Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Jehovah was on all that was his in house and in field." For "A wise man's heart is at his right hand," says Solomon.

At a later day, when Israel had become a kingdom and so rebelled against Jehovah that even Judah was carried into captivity to Babylon, we have like faith and allegiance to Jehovah in Daniel and his three companions. On them too for their separateness to His honour the favour of Jehovah rested; and, in a way similar to that of Joseph yet to come, Daniel rose to the highest elevation in the empire of Nebuchadnezzar, and the rest also to high honour. But they knew no such sufferings as fell to Joseph, nor were they proved in such experience of slavery from its lowest form as was his lot. For there was all the difference possible between the house of Potiphar, to say nothing of the dungeon to which he was afterward assigned, and the palace of the first Gentile world-kingdom wherein they were tried. Yet the trial of faith and its bright results were beautiful in their case as in Joseph's before he rose to his great eminence. Here it was manifest blessing in his servitude, and his master's trust at last without limit. "And he left all that was his in Joseph's hand, and took cognisance of nothing with him, save the bread which he ate." Corruption was in that house, as it came out soon in a shameless guise; but till then "Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake."

How wondrous His grace then shown! how much more now, if the eye of faith were not dim! Beyond doubt the splendours of the coming Kingdom under Messiah and the new covenant will exceed all that the earth has ever witnessed; when Zion shall have the first dominion, and the nations shall not only submit but rejoice, and this for a thousand years unbrokenly, while the very beasts renounce their fierceness, and the earth shall yield her increase. Yet that day of righteous power and blessing is really and far transcended by the heavenly glory into which the risen Christ has already ascended, where He sits on the throne of God, and whence He is coming to gather to Himself on high the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Himself, the Head over all things to the church, which is His body. Only for the present it is a work of faith for those who are His on earth; and the Holy Spirit, sent forth from heaven at Pentecost after He went above, still abides to carry it on to the glory of the Lord Jesus. When He and they appear in glory, then shall the nation long blind see Him whom they pierced, He shall reign to the joy of a restored universe. It will be sight then, and not faith as now. Because Israel shall see, they will believe: blessed they who had not seen and believed!

CHAPTER 4.

JOSEPH SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Gen. 39: 6-18

Every reader of the book of Genesis can see the larger space given to his life than to any of his fathers, even to the first and greatest of them all. We may profitably ask why; nor is the answer doubtful, for it is the key to all the O. T. No one in these early days was in so striking and varied ways the type of Christ. Nor did any other arise till David was given pre-eminently that place, both in humiliation and on the throne, to say nothing of his own inspired outpourings in the Psalms.

As seeing Him who is invisible, Joseph repelled the temptation, through which he passed unsullied, and meekly suffered under the false imputation of the shameless lady who sought his seduction. It is evident that he, a young man, not only resisted her importunities, but was careful not to

wound his master by the proof of the wife's guilty passion and still guiltier revenge on the blameless. For lust, whether gratified or not, soon turns to hatred: so we see in Amnon, as in this depraved woman.

"And Joseph was beautiful of form, and beautiful of countenance. And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife raised her eyes on Joseph, . . . But he refused and said to his master's wife, Behold, my master takes cognisance of nothing with me: what is in the house, and all that he hath, he hath given to my hand. None [is] greater in this house than I; nor hath he withheld from me any thing but thee, because thou [art] his wife. And how should I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, and he hearkened not to her, . . . And it came to pass about this time that on a certain day that he went into the house to do his business, and none of the men [was] there in the house. And she caught . . . and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and ran outside. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled outside, that she called to the men of her house, and spoke to them, saying, See, he hath brought in to us a Hebrew man to mock us: he came in to me . . . , and I cried with a loud voice; and it came to pass when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and ran outside. And she laid up his garment by her till his master came to his house. And she spoke to him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant whom thou hast brought to us came in to mock me; and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled outside" (vers. 6-18).

Egypt, a land of strange anomalies, was remarkable for the combination of a very high standard of morals in theory with extremely lax practice. If one cannot accept the exaggeration of Brugsch (*Histoire d'Egypte*, 17), we may safely receive Prof. Rawlinson's statement that "the Egyptian women were notoriously of loose character, and, whether as we meet with them in history, or as they are depicted in Egyptian romance, appear as immodest and licentious. The men practised impurity openly and boasted of it in their writings," etc. (*Hist. of Ancient Egypt*, I. ch. iii. 104-107, 147, 292, 552; II. 361, 362, 404). There is extant "The Tale of the Two Brothers," which experts believe to have been written near the age of Joseph, which tells the tale of female dissoluteness from an Egyptian witness, a romance or novel seemingly written to warn of the ruin to which such courses lead. Herodotus, as is well known, charged them with no less immorality at a later day (ii. 60, etc.).

Another remark may here fittingly be made. Learned sceptics have too hastily objected to the freedom which the incident supposes for the mistress of the house, apart from anything wrong. But such men only betray their prejudice, and, it must be added, their ignorance of Egyptian domestic life in that day. The very monuments bear testimony to the liberty which women, and especially the wife or mother, then enjoyed; but these objectors are as ready to credit that testimony as to distrust the Bible. Yet we need not labour so small a point.

Here then we have the holy youth resisting the tempter, and enduring grief, suffering wrongfully. And this is grace in the day of trial. For what glory is it if, when ye sin and are buffeted, ye shall take it patiently? But if when ye do well and suffer, ye shall take it patiently, this is grace with God. For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow His steps; Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; Who when reviled reviled not again, when suffering threatened not, but gave [it] over into the hands of Him that judges righteously; Who Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, in order that, being dead to sins, we may live to righteousness; by Whose stripes ye were healed. Of the atonement Joseph could be no real type; but of Christ's suffering unjustly and in grace he was a blessed foreshadow.

CHAPTER 5.

JOSEPH BLESSED IN THE TOWER-HOUSE

Gen. 39: 19-23

We can readily conceive the difficulty for Joseph's master created by the wife's perfidy. On the one hand was the proved unimpeachable trustworthiness of his slave; on the other a wife capable of such solicitation must have long betrayed her evil character in many ways if not in that, so as to make her credit dubious. Still she was his wife; and whatever her bold, impudent, and malicious fraud, we hear of no effort on Joseph's part to vindicate himself by exposing her wickedness. A simple denial of the evil she laid to his charge would not avail against the natural indignation of a husband unwilling to search narrowly into the terrible alternative.

"And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife which she spoke to him, saying, After this manner did thy bondman to me, that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him and put him in the tower-house, a place where the king's prisoners [were] confined; and he was there in the tower-house. And Jehovah was with Joseph, and extended mercy to him, and gave him favour in the eyes of the chief of the tower-house. And the chief of the tower-house committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that [were] in the tower-house; and whatever they were doing there he did. The chief of the tower-house looked not to any thing under his hand, because Jehovah was with him; and what he did Jehovah made to prosper" (vers. 19-23).

Unnatural as was the cruelty of his brothers which ended in his slavery, baser still was the fresh trial through a woman's guilty race. In them both Joseph suffered, for love and for righteousness' sake. In both Jehovah stood by His wronged servant, and caused His favour to rest on him even during the time of his sufferings. Never had his master a slave so efficient and prosperous. Never had chief of the tower-house such a prisoner. Which of the king's grandees in disgrace had ever so won his confidence? In both cases the secret of all was that Jehovah was with Joseph. Brothers, strangers, or jailers made no difference. Violence did not overcome him, any more than corruption: he overcame evil with good; and the heathen recognised it, if the evil state of his brothers blinded them for a while. It was hard enough for a free man to be sold into slavery; it was harder still for a pious man to be condemned for a crime, to which the false accuser had invited him in vain. But Jehovah was with Joseph, and extended mercy to him, and gave him favour where it might least have been expected. Slaves and felons do not as such approve themselves in the eyes of their guardians, as everyone knows.

But God abides the same for ever, and in fact now reveals Himself more endearing still as Father to all that believe since the Son came thus to reveal Him. The enmity of the world was even more pronounced when the true Light shone, and made the darkness visible universally, and the ancient people of God deeper in their enmity than the blind Gentiles. In Christ was no sin; and thus He, the righteous One, convicted them as only the guiltier sinners, because of their blasphemous unbelief along with religious pretension. And what were Joseph's sufferings compared with His? Jesus died for our sins according to the scriptures. Once (and it was ample) He suffered for our sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God, cleared of all charge or condemnation. None but Christ could thus suffer for us; for all others had sins to be atoned for. He alone who knew no sin could be made sin for us, as God made Him on the cross. His sacrificial suffering there furnished the efficacious ground for God's righteousness, not only in raising Christ from the dead, but in justifying all that believe on Him. Thus, where sin abounded, did grace all the more surpass; and man's total failure in righteousness is answered

in the cross which lays the necessary, adequate, and blessed ground for God's righteousness which we become in Christ.

But though none but Christ could suffer for sins, we who believe on Him are called, when doing well, to suffer and take it patiently, as grace with God. So the apostle suffered the loss of all things, and went on counting them but refuse to win Christ on high, and be found in Him, not having his righteousness that is of law but what is through faith of Christ, the righteousness of God on faith: to know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed to His death, if anyhow he might arrive at the resurrection from among the dead. This was undoubtedly the bright personal experience of the apostle; but it is divinely communicated to us for our like edification, and open to every saint in the power of the Spirit Who alone can make it good in our spirit and conversation. See how his faith shone in what he wrote at the last to Timothy, when with a slight exception all those in Asia turned away from the apostle, "ashamed of his chain." Yet looking for the punishment of death, he sees the crown of righteousness laid up for him, and tells how, when no man stood with him, the Lord did, and should deliver him from every wicked work, and preserve him for His heavenly kingdom.

CHAPTER 6.

JOSEPH WITH THE DREAMERS IN PRISON

Gen. 40: 1-8.

It is the way of God to give prophecy in a time of present ruin, that those who sin may be finally warned, and those who believe may be sustained by the hope of "some better thing" in His grace superior to all the powers of evil. Such it was in the midst of His earthly people when He was mocked in His messengers, and despised in His words rising up betimes and sending, because He had compassion on the Jews and on His dwelling-place, till there was no remedy. As His wrath arose and fell upon them was exactly the time when the prophets, not content with oral predictions, wrote more formally and fully. Such is the plain matter of fact in the O.T. Here too we find the same principle in the first book of the Pentateuch, given through Joseph the witness of supernatural light in very dark circumstances, and of divine interest. even in the comparatively insignificant changes of man; as He had already both gloriously and graciously intervened in announcing for faith the Second man, on the fall of the first in a lost paradise.

"And it came to pass after these things, the cup-bearer of the king of Egypt, and the baker, offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth with his two chamberlains, with the chief of the cup-bearers and with the chief of the bakers; and he put them in custody, in the captain of the life-guard's house, into the tower-house, the place where Joseph [was] imprisoned. And the captain of the life-guard appointed Joseph to them, and he served them; and they continued for days in custody. And they dreamed a dream, both of them in one night, each his dream, each according to his dream's interpretation, the cup-bearer and the baker of the king of Egypt that [were] imprisoned in the tower-house. And Joseph came in to them in the morning, and looked on them, and, behold, they [were] sad. And he asked Pharaoh's chamberlains that [were] with him in his lord's house of custody, saying, Why [are] your faces sad to-day?" (vers. 1-7.)

Joseph had served as a bondman in Potiphar's house. Now he served as a criminal in the tower-house, falsely accused of what was true of his accuser. But his faith remained simple, peaceful, and

bright; and we note its effect on those who had no faith themselves, yet highly valued faithfulness. Joseph was charged by the captain with the care of the king's chamberlains. As before in the house of his master, so now in the governor's state-prison, he became the responsible agent: whatever was to be done there, he did it. Jehovah was with him in each place of trial; and what he did, Jehovah made it prosper.

But it is in God's hand to work out His purpose. And as in Joseph's dreams much had been divulged, while he was a young freeman in his father's house, which drew out the envious spite of his brethren, grace gave him now the opportunity of light from above on the dreams of his fellow-prisoners. So little were they instructed by their having each a suited dream the same night, that their visage presented similar sadness to their gracious and sympathetic attendant the next morning. His soul entered into the iron; but love rose superior to evil, and flowed out readily.

In all this Joseph typified Christ who shone to the eye of faith in His humiliation with a grace even beyond glory. He was manifestly the wisdom of God, where human wisdom proved itself utterly weak, foolish, and malicious. He was the prophet raised up from among His brethren, like to Moses, yet greater and with the highest authority. The deeper the enmity, the more He opened things to come, as not only the Christ for Israel, but the still more glorious if rejected Messiah, the Son of man, that all the peoples, and languages should serve Him: a day not come yet though fully revealed, when He shall be displayed as the power of God.

How awful the portion of those bearing His name who help the world to despise His words which will surely be accomplished to the ruin of all His adversaries! Christendom is even more guilty and pretentious than His poor blinded people who cried, His blood be on us and our children; as alas! it is till they repent, as they surely will in God's mercy. But this is not to be now while the church is here; yet the church should be a city of refuge for the homicidal Jew while he is out of the land of his possession, if peradventure he may be cleansed from his guilt by the blood of Him whom he blindly slew; till the priesthood on high closes, and the day comes for the manifested kingdom, and Israel repentant shall be saved and enjoy the new covenant under their long ignored Messiah.

"And they said to him, We have dreamed a dream, and [there is] no interpreter of it. And Joseph said to them, [Are] not interpretations God's. Tell me [them], I pray you" (ver. 8).

As they had a presentiment that their dreams were pregnant with significance for themselves, Joseph had faith, and not in vain, in Him who had once sent to him also dreams, though he had comparatively long to wait for their fulfilment. And with faith God gave him wisdom and patience. "But hope seen is not hope; for what one seeth, why doth he also hope? But if what we see not we hope, we expect with patience."

CHAPTER 7.

THE CHIEF CUP-BEARER'S DREAM

Gen. 40: 9-15

God had tried His dear child, and would try him longer. Yet this was an honour to Joseph, who was given not only to believe but to suffer for His sake. But the chain of providential links was being forged which would raise the suffering Israelite from the dungeon to the highest position in Egypt next to the throne. The dream of the chief cup-bearer was an important link in that chain.

"And the chief of the cup-bearers told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine [was] before me; and in the vine [were] three branches; and it [was] as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, its clusters ripened into grapes. And Pharaoh's cup [was] in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said to him, This [is] the interpretation of it: the three branches [are] three days. Within yet three days will Pharaoh lift up thy head, and restore thee to thy place; and thou shalt give Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his cup-bearer. Only have me in thy remembrance when it shall be well with thee, and deal kindly with me, I pray thee, and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon" (vers. 9-15).

God works often by simple means, as here by such a dream as fell very naturally to this official of Pharaoh's court. Yet was it truly prophetic; and only a prophet was enabled to give its unequivocal meaning. Here the wisdom of God was as evident as in sending the dream. No one looks for the unities of time and place in such a vision. The events of months, or years, might be crowded into a single transaction, as in the vine budding and blossoming and yielding grapes, and wine fit for a monarch's cup. Nobody ever heard historically of so rapid a result in the hands of a cup-bearer, without a winepress or vat, or the storage in jars, seen on the monuments and some tomb-walls dating even before the Hyksos. For wine-drinking to excess is known to have prevailed, especially at certain festivities. So that it is without warrant to assume that the liquor pressed out into the king's cup was meant to imply literally mere grape juice from the cluster rather than the fermented issue. But this is an insignificant point, save to a teetotaler's mind.

The remarkable point which Joseph was given to seize is the precision of the three days indicated by the three branches. No priestly interpreter in Egypt would have ventured to say, as Joseph did at once, "The three branches are three days. Within yet three days will Pharaoh lift up thy head, and restore thee to thine office." it might, if a guess, have been more probably three months; but no. The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear Him; and even more was given here, the exercise in Joseph's spirit, and the divine wisdom that sent the vision to the Egyptian official, with a sadness at its arrival so soon to end in his joyful reinstatement. Interpretation of what God says or does belongs to God, who communicates it as He will, and as the rule, to those whom He loves, even in circumstances of the deepest humiliation. For in this Joseph aptly figured what was verified in the blessed Lord Himself here below.

We too may have dreams; and one may not say that all spring from the busy working of the brain, or that God may not deal thus as of old in slumberings on the bed, to withdraw man from self-will and hide pride from him. But we have as believers, and especially as Christians, far better than such comparatively vague intimations. We have the scriptures in all their fulness, revealing God, His counsels, work, will, and ways, from eternity to eternity. We have also the Holy Spirit sent from the Father and the Son in heaven, never to leave but to abide with us and in us; Who when come undertakes to guide us into all the truth, and declare to us the things to come, glorifying our Lord Jesus in both. He is the standing, intimate, and ready interpreter, not like one among a thousand, as Elihu says, nor even as Joseph supernaturally endowed, but a divine Person dwelling in us. May we have grace to abjure all that grieves and hinders, and to cultivate what is of Himself so as to enjoy the privilege and the fruit more and more. For though God was ever faithful from the earliest days, no saints ever had this wondrous privilege till the Saviour died, rose, and ascended, whom the Holy Spirit thus honours.

CHAPTER 8.

THE CHIEF BAKER'S DREAM AND THE ISSUE

Gen. 40: 16-23

The fellow-chamberlain ventures to rehearse his dream after the chief cup-bearer. How little did he anticipate its dread import!

"And when the chief of the bakers saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, I also [was] in my dream, and, behold, three baskets of white bread [were] on my head. And in the uppermost basket [there was] all manner of victuals for Pharaoh that the bakers make; and the birds ate them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered and said, This [is] the interpretation of it: the three baskets Care] three days. In yet three days will Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and hang thee upon a tree; and the birds will eat thy flesh from off thee."

"And it came to pass the third day, Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast to all his bondmen. And he lifted up the head of the chief of the cup-bearers, and the head of the chief of the bakers among his bondmen. And he restored the chief of the cup-bearers to his office of cup-bearer again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And he hanged the chief of the bakers, as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief of the cup-bearers did not remember Joseph but forgot him." (vers. 16-23).

It is clear how far the chief baker was from seeing anything to discourage his telling his dream to Joseph. But God gave Joseph the discerning ear which perceived the immense difference of the cup-bearer's action that Pharaoh should drink, from that of the birds (not the king) eating out of the basket upon his head. In no way is the credit given to mere natural intelligence. The secret of Jehovah is with those that fear Him. Joseph was one whose faith was habitually in exercise; who knew that God remains the same in the midst of heavy trials, which had changed only from each great sorrow into a greater. In his lowest abasement he looked up for wisdom to its only source, and was called by His power to solve the enigma for good or for ill in the cases which came before him. For if he confided in Jehovah, his love too went out in compassion to fellow-sufferers whose countenances without a word betrayed the anxiety which their dreams cost them. Was it not faith working by love?

That both should have dreamt characteristic dreams in one night he did not impute to what men call chance. If they were sad because there was no interpreter to explain what they instinctively felt to be of the nearest interest to themselves, Joseph as simply reckoned that interpretations belong to God, the giver of every good gift, and of every perfect giving. So He is the answerer of faith's cry to Him, though unheard by any other ear.

Yet Joseph could not but know the serious and speedy fate that hung over the chief baker. We may notice therefore that he made no appeal to him for remembrance. To the chief cup-bearer only did he say, "Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, to me and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house." There was nothing random in his words; nor was there any selfish desire for such royal favours as men expect. He sought simply to be delivered from the strange parody of judgment inflicted on the righteous one through disappointed lust and falsehood.

In both cases the time was short, as indicated by the dream and interpreted by Joseph. On the third day the two chamberlains had each his head lifted up by the king, on his birthday; but the chief cup-bearer rose to his office near Pharaoh's person, the chief baker to the gallows. It became the cup-bearer

to remember the striking service rendered by the prophet in the dungeon. But as far too commonly occurs in this world of sin and self, the spiritual benefactor was quite forgotten. For we are expressly told, that two full years passed away to try the faith of Joseph, when God wrought in His providence to make the same difficulty felt in the royal court as in the tower-house. Thus was rebuked the ingratitude of the cup-bearer, oblivious of him who had been stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and who also had done nothing why they should put him into the dungeon. "They hurt with the fetters his feet; into iron went his soul, until the time his word came [to pass]. Jehovah's saying tried him." Yet he that sowed in tears would in due time reap with rejoicing. Joseph was but matured for the vast and difficult task to be assigned him without the least ambition on his part. How this was brought about the chapter that follows explains with all simplicity.

It may be noticed that Joseph is ever the interpreter, if not also the mouthpiece, of God's mind, and this in the future far off or near, beyond all creature prognostication. He was now at his lowest point of humiliation (as a dead man out of mind among the Gentiles, as before doomed to death by his own brothers), yet here the herald of restoration on the one hand, and of extreme judgment on the other. Little his brothers knew that they in their envious hatred were only the means of bringing to pass his exaltation for their own homage and preservation. Little could the Gentiles anticipate that the punishment so unjustly inflicted on him the guiltless was the necessary link in God's wonderful chain to have the administration of the world-kingdom committed to his hand! Yet from the prison which he endured for years, as an evil-doer of the worst imputation, he was about to pass at one step to the highest dignity and the largest power. "Only in the throne," as the king said, "will I be greater than thou." "Without thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt."

CHAPTER 9.

PHARAOH'S DREAM

Gen. 41: 1-7

God however did not forget, but kept Joseph in mind. Faith is tried to our profit (ver. 1), and never disappointed in result.

"And it came to pass at the end of two full years (years of days), that Pharaoh dreamed; and, behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, well-looking and fat-fleshed; and they fed in the reed-grass. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-looking and lean-fleshed; and they stood by the kine on the bank of the river. And the ill-looking and lean-fleshed ate up the seven well-looking and fat kine. And Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed a second time; and, behold, seven ears of corn came up on one stalk, fat and good. And, behold, seven cars, thin and parched with the east wind, came up after them. And the thin ears swallowed up the seven fat and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, [it was] a dream" (vers. 1-7).

We may notice how appropriate the dreams were, as ordered of God throughout for each case. In Gen. 37 what more simple and suited to those in view than Joseph's sheaf rising up and continuously standing, whilst the other sheaves came round about and bowed down to his sheaf? or the even more emphatic vision of the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowing down to Joseph? A dream so plain, vivid, and startling as to need no interpreter, and to incur the rebuke of his dearly loving father. Darker and more adapted to an Egyptian were the dreams of the chief cup-bearer and of the chief baker in Gen.

40, and as matter of fact beyond any interpreter among the experts of their race, the lack of whom they lamented. He who owned a living God alone was enabled to expound its prophetic meaning, soon to be punctually verified as he said. But here in the chapter before us, how wild and strange and portentous the double dream sent to arouse the king! Yet the "river" is expressed by a word pointing beyond question to the Nile, and so is the marsh-grass on its brink which cattle loved to browse. But egregious as dreams may often be in confusing the proprieties of person or object, of time and place, here it is heightened to the utmost, first by the ill-looking and lean kine eating up the fine-looking and fat ones, next by the thin and parched ears of wheat devouring the fat and good ears that grew on one stalk.

Who that believes God's word can doubt that the wonders so opposed to nature were all the more evidently of divine purpose? But that purpose was worthy of His goodness and compassion. In a world of sin, and suffering, of death and moral ruin and wretchedness He works alike by uncommon bounty and by the hard pinch of want; and for the good of souls yet more by the pain than by the prosperity, that in his anguish the heart might consider why such an affliction came from such a God. The teaching of the two dreams was enigmatic in their forms, but identical in the aim; abundance to the fullest followed by the most abnormal consumption. But why the seven kine and repeated? why the seven ears of corn no less repeated? This needed His interpretation who sent the dreams. Man's power was powerless to open the lock. Wisdom was essential, not that which is earthly, sensual, demonish, but what comes down from above.

To whom did God give the key? To the humbled sufferer in the dungeon. The hour of his vindication was about to strike, and his exaltation at a bound from the deepest though unmerited dishonour to the highest position a subject could fill, always excepting the Antitype foreshadowed by both, yet with whatever resemblance beyond all comparison. But even then what a scheme of goodness while the evil day still dragged its slow length along! The abundance was not to be wasted in a luxurious and injurious waste; the famine was to be alleviated by a wise policy so as to consolidate the king's authority and power and means, instead of breeding discontent and despair and revolution. Joseph had the place of honour and administrative wisdom, after his long endurance of shame and grief at home and abroad; his father to be permanently comforted, and filled with joy overflowing after his life of trial and change beyond his fathers; and his brethren to be rebuked and humbled before his grace and glory, with verification of those dreams in his youth which then only increased their base envy and aggravated their hatred of his purity and love.

But if we may not run on longer in the anticipation of this great and sudden change, let us think of the deep and divine prophetic outlook which underlies even such a history as Genesis supplies. Let us abhor the blind and destructive incredulity, which perverts by false-named knowledge, or by the modern veil of "higher criticism" over real infidelity. Let us delight in the written word of God, which would and does unite a simple unvarnished and true tale, which even a child can take in and enjoy, with moral wisdom at the time and for all time. It is the Holy Spirit's vision of Christ's coming both in humiliation and rejection by Jew and Gentile, and in His administration of the Kingdom in power and glory to the blessing of both in the mercy of God at the end. Then He who chastised the unbelief of them all shall show mercy to all manifestly, and with universal confession of the once despised Jesus. O depth of riches both of wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For who know Jehovah's mind? or who became His counsellor? or who first gave to Him, and it shall be given to him in return? Because of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things: to Him be the glory for the ages. Amen.

CHAPTER 10.

FAULTS AND FORGETFULNESS CONFESSED.

Gen. 41: 9-14.

The trouble of the king, the failure of the world's resources, the magicians of Egypt and its wise men summoned in vain, touched the chief-butler's conscience and recalled to his memory what he ought never to have forgotten. He who still lay unremembered of man in the dungeon had been years ago used of God to interpret truly his dream and his fellow-prisoner's. The king's perplexity reminded him of their sadness before light from above came to his own immense relief and on his comrade's shameful end. Might not the same interpreter who so justly forecast the servants' future be enabled to help their king?

"And the chief-butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying, I remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, me and the chief-baker. And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And [there was] with us a young man, a Hebrew, servant of the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he interpreted. And it came to pass, as he interpreted, so it was: me he restored to mine office, and him he hanged. Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they hastened his exit [made him run] out of the dungeon; and he shaved, and changed his raiment, and came in to Pharaoh." (vers. 9-14).

Here as ever, man's extremity is God's opportunity. The chief-butler forgot Joseph's service, so rare, opportune and unremunerated, which no money could have bought, which God alone could have enabled the blackened but blameless prisoner to render. Was it not inexcusable that the sure fulfilment of his own restoration to honour, and of his companion's fatal degradation, awoke no speedy gratitude, not to say burning sense of justice, on behalf of the suffering prophet? But the patience of God is as instructive as His wisdom is reliable, and His love never fails. Who that weighs the fact can doubt, that, while man has every ground for humbling himself, God timed as well as wrought for the greatest good of His servant and for His own glory? Joseph was allowed still to endure grievous things, the chief-butler to confess his faults, the king to be as agitated as his imprisoned chamberlains, and Joseph to come forth in a lustre incomparably brighter than through any possible rehearsal of his predictions in the dungeon.

It was the Egyptian monarch that was now at his wits' end, and full proof afforded that the nation's boasted wisdom was as unavailing for its troubled king, as their help would be in vain for Israel at a later day against the Assyrian.

Repentance, too, is for sinful man the necessary condition of blessing to the soul. It is God's goodness that leads to it, wholesome and steady for him who really judges himself before Him and honestly owns it. "I remember my faults this day." It was no mere terror of consequences that confessed how much he was to blame. "Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, me and the chief-baker." He hides nothing of his shame or danger; and he tells how they two had dreams the same night, and repeated them to the young Hebrew (their fellow-prisoner in the state prison), who interpreted them forthwith; as they were fulfilled with a markedly different issue to each and no less surprising than distinct and immediate: "Me he restored to mine office, and him he hanged." The same God, who sent the dreams to the two Egyptian chamberlains, explained their prophetic bearing through Joseph, and accomplished them by Pharaoh in His

providence.

No wonder that Pharaoh was so deeply moved as to send and call the long and deeply wronged prisoner from the dungeon to the royal presence. No wonder that the officials lost not a moment in bringing one of whom such good things were attested by the best possible witness to the king. Gates and guards, bars and bolts, must yield him up without delay. Yet would and must he come with due care and respect for the proprieties of the court. There was strong and sound ground to expect the light which not the king only but all the sages of Egypt craved the more to receive, after a testimony so weighty and energetic as they had heard from the chief-butler. How little any then could anticipate God's gracious wisdom, when he came in to Pharaoh, by his means both to enlighten the anxious mind of the monarch, and to provide for the husbanding of the exceptional plenty about to come in, for aiding not only Egypt but those of other lands during the extreme dearth to follow! But God meant, and not least of all, to rescue the blameless Israelite from the shame and punishment he never deserved, to raise him at once to a higher honour which was only his due; and to make him as wise, just, and pious an administrator as any king ever appointed, and any realm ever enjoyed. Of a design yet nearer to His affections, in caring for those He had separated to Himself, as witness for the true and living God against all strange gods, we need not speak now. This will appear self-evident from Gen. 42 and onward, and, higher than all, as the fore-shadow He was giving of the Coming Anointed One, as to whom more remains to be said in its place; for God ever loves to speak of Him, if deaf and dead man may but bear and live.

CHAPTER 11.

GOD'S INTERPRETER.

Gen. 41: 15-32.

Long had been the trial of Joseph's faith and patience, and the keenest morally and physically at the close, though Jehovah was with him all the while. But then "they hurt his feet with fetters: his soul came into iron, till the time that his word came; the word of Jehovah tried him. The king sent and loosed him; the ruler of peoples, and let him go free" (Ps. 105: 18-20). How sudden the change from the king's tower-house to the perplexed king's court, and the baffled sages of Egypt!

"And Pharaoh said to Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and [there is] none to interpret it. And I have heard say of thee, thou understandest a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, [It is] not in me: God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood on the brink of a river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine fat-fleshed and fine-looking, and they fed in the reed-grass. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor, and very ill-looking, and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness. And the lean and ill-looking kine ate up the first seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had come into their belly, and their look was as at the beginning. And I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up on one stalk, full and good. And, behold, seven ears withered, thin, parched with the east wind, sprung up after them; and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears. And I told [it] to the scribes; but [there was] none that could declare it to me. And Joseph said to Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh [is] one. What God is about to do he hath declared to Pharaoh. The seven good kine [are] seven years; and the seven good ears [are] seven years: the dream [is] one. And the seven lean and bad kine that came up after them [are] seven

years; and the seven empty cars parched with the east wind will be seven years of famine. This [is] the word which I have spoken to Pharaoh: what God is about to do he letteth Pharaoh see, Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. And there will arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will consume the land. And the plenty will not be known in the land by reason of that famine which followeth; for it [will be] very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled to Pharaoh twice, [it is] because the thing [is] established by God, and God will hasten to do it" (vers. 15-32).

The king forthwith tells Joseph of his dream and of none to interpret it; of him he had heard as one that could. Joseph replies with modest and pious disclaimer for himself, but with faith in God's willingness and goodness in the matter. Thereon Pharaoh recounts it in yet more energetic terms than originally, the two-fold kine, the two-fold grain, the lean and ill-looking devouring the good and well-favoured, who came before. Joseph explains that both dreams related to one event, seven years of plenty, followed by as many of famine, beyond parallel. Both were of God's doing for extraordinary ends; as was His making all known to Pharaoh, outside the ken of man. The doubling of the dream indicated not only its certainty, but the speed of its accomplishment. God deceives not, nor is He mocked. Behind His good-will to man and those providentially set in authority, He cared intimately for the prophet who had suffered long for righteousness and His name's sake; as He had designs for humbling his brethren, chastising their evil ways, but eventually bringing them in the fourth generation into Canaan, with great substance, out of the land of their slavery, whilst He judges the nation that oppressed them. And this He did as punctually and plainly before the world's eyes, as He now wrought to save life generally and cause the wise dealing of His servant to be at once welcomed.

Indeed Joseph was the type of One incomparably higher, Who shall astonish many nations, and shut the mouths of kings on account of Him, and melt the proud heart of His ancient people; for in their self-will they esteemed Him not but despised Him. Yet it was the reality of His humiliation and of its infinite grace, not only in bearing their griefs and sustaining their sorrows, but far more deeply in being wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities. These gave the enemy occasion to aggravate their unbelief, as unwilling to allow their sins as to feel their need of a Saviour from God independently of themselves: at bottom the difficulty insuperable to all flesh, of Gentiles as well as Jews. But, strictly speaking, Joseph typified Him, first, in being "the Prophet that should come" and endure all griefs and shame, but be God's wisdom during His humiliation, rejected by His brethren, punished unjustly (though the righteous One) by the Gentiles, yet raised out of the depths to wield the authority of the kingdom outside Israel and the land, to the great relief of Israel and Egypt, before the day come to put the children in fulfilled possession of the promises made to the fathers.

It is intelligible that an ungodly reasoner like David Hume, or a dissolute sentimentalist like J. J. Rousseau should deny prophecy as well as miracle. One can understand too the trifling speculation of philosophers, who talk of alleged miracles or prophecies falling under a higher law which transcends the ordinary rule of natural causes and effects. The common and fatal defect of all such schemes is the sin that forgets and leaves out God, in a day particularly when there was neither the completed word of God or the scriptures, nor the presence of the Spirit imparted as the fruit of Christ's redemption. How sad that their erring and rebellious steps should be followed by men, who are not only professing Christians, but bound by their position to proclaim all revealed truth, and expound it faithfully in its fulness and precision to all disciples as well as opposers. It is both scandalous indifference and real hostility to God and His Son, and in fact less honest than those unworthy sceptics. But the apostasy must come before the day of the Lord, who will execute judgment on all evil among the living here below.

The Jews, once so stubbornly given to idol after, have long been remarkable for their incredulity and opposition to the word of truth, the gospel. And both the old evil will reappear, and the still more frightful unbelief will take the shape of accepting the man of sin, the lawless one, as both Messiah and God. But the apostasy of Christendom must be all the more shameless and desperate, as the rejected light of the gospel transcends the word of righteousness in the law. And who are the instruments most active in the preparatory work of Satan in our day? Beyond doubt those who call themselves the "higher critics." It is they who are now diligently destroying God's authority in the Bible by their vain theories miscalled "historical methods." And those who once trembled at God's word become increasingly dead to so great a sin in the critics, and so great a danger for themselves in listening. But so it must be as the end of worldly religion and life.

CHAPTER 12.

JOSEPH'S COUNSEL, AND PROMOTION.

Gen. 41: 33-14.

Nor was Joseph content only to interpret the dreams of the king, though this he did with a quiet simplicity and decision which so approved itself to Pharaoh's conscience, that he too had not the least doubt that God was in the matter. He saw that the case demanded the most energetic and prudent measures to turn to account the light given from above on the long super-abundant plenty against the no less long, sure, and extreme years of scarcity which were to follow. He therefore rose above all scruples which ordinarily would hinder one emerging from the obscurity and the shame of a prison from tendering advice to a king and his courtiers on affairs of state and of the most urgent and important kind. Confidence in the revealed mind of God took away the fear of slight, as it also drew out his heart in goodwill to the king and his people, not to speak of others, so intimately concerned. Otherwise they might soon forget the dream and its interpretation, as a nine days' wonder, and fall into the usual listlessness of unbelief, wasteful of the coming plenty, and heedless of the scarcity to follow. God indeed was not before the eye of the vast majority, ready on second thoughts to accredit Joseph with no more than ingenuity or, as even professing Christians would say, a lucky hit. The king at once was struck and solemnised, as the rest in measure; so that Joseph was encouraged to advise with prompt seriousness.

"And now let Pharaoh look himself out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do [this]: and let him appoint overseers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt during the seven years of plenty; and let them gather all the food of these good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and keep [it]. And let the food be a store to the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land perish not through the famine. And the word was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, Shall we find [one] as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God [is]? And Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since God has made all this known to thee, there is none discreet and wise as thou. Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word (mouth) shall all my people order themselves: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in clothes of byss, and put a gold chain about his neck. And he caused him to ride in the second chariot that he had: and they cried before him, Bow the knee (Abrech)! and he set him over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, I [am] Pharaoh: and without thee

shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt" (vers. 33-44).

Thus without an effort of his own was Joseph elevated from the unmerited depths of suffering and ignominy to be prime minister of the greatest kingdom then on earth. Who could deny that it was God's doing in His providence, though not without extraordinary means in His Spirit's power working in His servant? And how plain the type of a greater than Joseph, Who suffered first from His own people that received Him not, afterwards unto the death of the cross from Gentiles who knew Him not, yet in the midst of both the vessel of divine wisdom far beyond Joseph or any other born of women! For He was indeed the wisdom of God in the days of His humiliation, as He is now at the right hand of power while His people are estranged from Him, and blessing flows to the nations (little as they too know Him yet), besides the little flock of faith, the sheep out of both that do hear His voice and follow Him. All authority meanwhile is given Him in heaven and on earth, though He still waits for the kingdom and the restoration of His alienated people; when all the ends of the earth as well as Israel shall see the salvation of God, and the earth shall make a joyful noise to Jehovah, breaking forth and singing for joy, yea singing praises. For it will be manifested power and glory then when He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to Israel, no longer haughty and self-willed, but humbled by grace, self-judging and submissive at the feet of the crucified Messiah come to reign.

No, Christ is not yet on His own throne as it will be then. He overcame the world and its prince that adjudged Him the cross; and, rejected by Jew and Gentile, He is received up in glory to sit for the little while on His Father's throne, while the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ are being called out to await His coming to receive them to Himself for the Father's house above. To this end the gospel of God's grace goes out which the Holy Spirit, sent forth from heaven on the Son's ascension, uses to call them out. This done, the world question will be raised; for He is Heir of all things, and the Jew with Israel must come into the foreground for their deliverance, as distinctly as punitive dealings on His, and their, Gentile foes.

CHAPTER 13.

GOVERNOR OF EGYPT.

Gen. 41: 45-57.

Had Joseph been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, had he like Moses been trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, had he enjoyed the king's favour as fully as that of the princess his daughter, we could scarce conceive of a stranger acquiring such confidence with the king and his servants at court as to be made grand vizier earlier than his thirtieth year. Then he stood nearest to the throne. It was God's doing; and at once represented by Pharaoh's seal-ring put on Joseph's hand, by his array-the court attire of byss [the finest cotton], and by the gold chain put on his neck, and by his riding in the second chariot of the realm with the suited proclamation of the honour due to his office. And we hear more; yet his elevation was wholly unknown to his brethren after the flesh.

"And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah, and gave him as wife Asenath, daughter of Potiphra priest of On. And Joseph went out over the land of Egypt. And Joseph [was] thirty years of age when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and passed through the whole land of Egypt.

"And in the seven years of plenty the land produced by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food

of the seven years that were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; the food of the fields of the city which [were] round about it, he laid up in it. And Joseph laid up corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left oft numbering; for [it was] without number.

"And to Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came, whom Asenath daughter of Potiphera the priest of On bore to him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh (for God made me forget all my toil and all my father's house). And the name of the second he called Ephraim (for God caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction).

"And the seven years of plenty that were in the land of Egypt were ended; and the seven years of the famine began to come, according as Joseph had said. And there was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And all the land of Egypt was famished; and the people cried to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, Go to Joseph: what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth. And Joseph opened every storehouse [all in which was grain], and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was grievous in the land of Egypt. And the whole earth came into Egypt to Joseph, to buy, because the famine was grievous on the whole earth" (vers. 45-57).

Pharaoh gave Joseph a new name, as to which the learned question whether it means "Saviour of the world," or "Sustainer of life." Either way it points to the eminent service rendered, not in word only but in deed and truth, though the Rabbis and Josephus incline to "Revealer of secrets." But God had especially His purpose for the people of His choice, not Joseph only but the ungrateful and envious brethren, who led the way in his sufferings, and were yet to behold his glory and share his grace.

The two sons were born before the years of famine; and their names are the more remarkable as indicating the striking difference with those of the sons of Moses, notwithstanding a strong moral and typical resemblance between their respective fathers. Manasseh means "I causing to forget"; as Ephraim means "fruitfulness"; and they express their father's affections in his remarkable exaltation outside Israel for blessing. The names Moses gave his sons express, not his forgetting his brethren, but his sense of "strangership" in being separated from them, and counting on "God my help." Both meet in perfection in our Lord Jesus.

The details that follow reveal the admirable administration of Joseph. Exuberant plenty with most leads to prodigality and waste. But he knew in Whom he believed, and entered wisely into the duty which devolved on him more than on any in the land of Egypt, and provided accordingly for the years of excessive want. Thus all living on the soil were to benefit in the highest degree from the sovereign to every subject, and far beyond that land. The superabundance affixed the first seal on the prophetic truth afforded and divinely interpreted; the famine affixed the second, still more impressive to such as hardly credited a change so disastrous to comfort and increasingly dangerous to life. But the monarch had unbroken confidence in his prime minister and his measures. When the Egyptians, in their distress and fears, cried to him as the father of the country, his one answer was, Go to Joseph: what he saith to you, do."

Grievous was the famine, not only in the outside countries, but in the land which at a much later day became the natural granary for the Empire; the crisis passed without riot, still less a revolution rising against the government. Yet in a simple and righteous statesmanship, which none questioned, the people were fed throughout, and gave up their lands and all they had; so that royalty was thus beyond doubt set on the most favourable position, beyond the ruler's ambition, and with the nation's gratitude to Joseph as their best friend. In all the history of the nations is it possible to find a match for what came to pass under Joseph's ministry for crown or for subject?

Faith marked Joseph's policy throughout, and his wisdom which became increasingly apparent. And if this were so with the type, what is it with Him whom he represents on high? And what will it be when He takes the world under His sceptre, and all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah? None can expect, in a pious Israelite called to rule Egypt, the light which the Lord's death, resurrection, and ascension afford to the Christian, and the responsibilities which attach to his relationship as not of the world even as Christ was not. But, according to the measure then vouchsafed, Joseph was a bright witness of faith in that day, as incorrupt in his lofty charge as when a slave of the foreigner, and the persecuted of his brethren.

In scripture however we are entitled to remember its prophetic character habitually, and never to forget that the great function of its real Author, who ever may be the instrument, is to glorify the coming One, as ever since He came to take of the things of Christ and announce them to the Christian. How could it be otherwise if we believe what an unceasing object of delight the Son is to the Father?

This is the true key to all scripture, differentiates it from every other book, and indicates the folly and guilt of confounding it with any other. Nor could one who knows it to be divine, as none else, allow for a moment the impiety of man setting himself up as a judge of that will judge him at the last day. But fallen man, though he may be credulous, is essentially unbelieving and as slow to feel his own evil as to trust God's goodness in Christ, because his conscience is bad.

Yet the truth abides the same whether received to salvation or rejected to perdition; and love is active to bear witness of it that benighted man may hear and live, believing the testimony of God concerning His Son. Life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

CHAPTER 14.

JOSEPH'S BRETHREN BOW DOWN TO HIM

Gen. 42: 1-9.

How often God is pleased to use straits for His own purposes and in His ways for the good of all, saints and sinners! So it is here. The pinch of want fell on Jacob and his sons; "for the famine was in the land of Canaan."

"And Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, Why look ye one on another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt: go down thither, and buy for us from thence, in order that we may live and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn out of Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest mischief may befall him. So the sons of Israel came to buy among those that came; for the famine was in the land of Canaan. And Joseph, he [was] the governor over the land; he [it was] that sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brethren came and bowed down to him, the face to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and knew them; but he made himself strange to them, and spoke roughly with them, and said to them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren; but they knew him not. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said to them, Ye [are] spies; to see the nakedness. of the land ye are come (vers. 1-9).

The righteous Jehovah loves righteousness and had a controversy with those brethren of Joseph

who had wronged their faithful brother, and had not judged their cruel envy and evil deeds. But this must be for the very reason, that they were His chosen family for His earthly plans, as none other could pretend to be. If therefore they had sunk below natural equity, God in His admirable patience and wisdom knew how to deal with their conscience, vindicate fidelity, chastise self-will, and cleanse from a defiled state. This first meeting of the ten brothers with Joseph had its importance in the moral government of God; who, as He had exalted His wronged and abused servant, was about to break down the hardened, and to clear their hearts from old iniquity which falsified their relationship as bearing His name.

But it was also the first step in the accomplishment of His word to Abram in Gen. 15, "Know assuredly that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall oppress them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterwards they will come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. And [in a] fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (vers. 13-16). Of course ill-will turns what it does not understand to aspersion; yet all was made good in due time. God was faithful and accomplished as He spoke, but with His wonted patience toward the corrupt and hostile usurpers, as well as their hard taskmasters, whilst using both as a moral test of His stiff-necked people. It was His way now in progress to effect discipline for the past and present, and to increase family life into a national one under circumstances which soon changed to such as justified His intervention for His afflicted people, and gave a deep moral lesson to Israel when called to avenge His honour on the abominations of the Amorite. No forecast of man could have anticipated such a future. The God who made it known to Abram was now working in providence to bring it to pass.

Famine had wrought before in Abram's day, and not at all to his honour; but grace brought him back to his tent, and the altar as at the first (Gen. 13: 3, 4). Isaac was absolutely forbidden, under similar pressure, to migrate; he alone abides in Canaan: the instructive reason has been considered in its own place. But Jacob and all the family were expressly to sojourn there, and for a long though limited season: an altogether different lot from those before him as type of Israel, whose name he alone bore and remarkably represented.

Our chapter opens with the perplexity of the sons, and their father's proposal that they should go down into Egypt for supplies. Only Benjamin must not go lest mischief might befall him like his brother Joseph, for that burden though unexpressed ever weighed on his heart. How little he could foresee that ere long Benjamin must go too! But God was working out His good and holy design surely if slowly; man's will or intelligence had nothing to do with bringing all to pass according to His word (vers. 1-5). Things as yet were far from His mind. As it was said in Gen. 12: 6, "The Canaanite was then in the land," so now "The famine was in the land of Canaan." How different when Christ reigns in Zion, and Israel is under the new covenant!

Next we hear emphatically of Joseph as governor over the land, the administrator of the vast stores of corn against the predicted and now fulfilling years of famine. "And Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down to him, the face to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and knew them." This is all simple and true. The change in him, from a mere growing youth in their own lowly sphere, to be prime minister and a great deal more in the greatest kingdom of that day, must have seemed immeasurable in their eyes. They, grown men, remained much the same for his observant glance. Yet the fulfilment of his early dreams rolled out so unmistakably as must have brought no small emotion, even to him already familiar with God's relationship and their certain verification.

We need not wonder that one in his position, not in the least through pride or lack of affection, "made himself strange to them and spoke roughly with them." So he "said to them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food." He was entitled to prove them; as his conduct equally proved his prudence and goodwill. They deeply needed the moral probe, which lay with him above all else; especially as he "knew his brethren, but they did not know him," as is repeated here.

But there is another element which ver. 9 draws attention to. "And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamt of them; and he said to them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness (or, exposed parts) of the land ye are come." The reality of God's interest in those who honour Him was plain before him, and the humiliation too of those who slight Him by their unbelief. One might not expect such a measure or manner adopted by an apostle, or a spiritual Christian; but it was quite in keeping with the governor of Egypt, although a pious man, and albeit brother of those who had never fully judged their persecution of one who had given them no just ground of offence. It is not love to be indifferent to flagrant evil, even in a brother. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. In remembering his dreams Joseph had God before him, and sought the good of his brethren, who as yet remembered nothing as they ought.

But God is faithful, and so was Joseph in the main, notwithstanding the spiritually uncongenial air of Egypt. Yet the circumstances called for prayer, the guidance and blessing of God, filial consideration of his father, entrance into the feelings of his brethren, and due care for the prejudices of Egypt. It is plain from the history that Joseph was a man who weighed all the circumstances fully.

CHAPTER 15.

PROVES HIS BRETHREN

Gen. 42: 10-20

Here a quite different scene opens for Joseph, yet recalling his earliest associations and God's dealings with him since he last saw his brothers: he discerning the past, the present, and in his measure the future; they as yet nothing aright. In his natural home he told the true dream of the exaltation which God purposed above not only his brethren but his parents, which they were soon to own. In his rejection only short of death he was the interpreter of life for one man and of judgment for another. Out of prison he was called to interpret for the Egypt-world a full period of plenty followed by as long a period of dire want; and not predicting only, but chosen to administer in power, as he had wisdom to impart, according to God. How it was to probe the hardened consciences of those dear to him notwithstanding their baseness to Jehovah, to their father, and to their brother! We left off with his knowing his brethren who knew not him, his remembrance of his own early dreams, and his imputation that they were spies come to see the nakedness of the land.

"And they said to him, No, my lord; but to buy food thy servants are come. We [are] all sons of one man; we [are] true; thy servants are not spies. And he said to them, No, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said, Thy servants [were] twelve brethren, sons of one man, in the land of Canaan: and, behold, the youngest [is] this day with our father; and one [is] not. And Joseph said to them, That [is it] that I have spoken to you, saying, Ye [are] spies. By this ye shall be put to the proof: as Pharaoh liveth, ye shall not go forth hence unless your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you that he may fetch your brother; but ye shall be bound, and your words shall be put to proof whether the truth [[is] in you; and if not, as Pharaoh liveth, ye [are] spies. And he gathered them all into ward

three days. And Joseph said to them the third day, This do that ye may live: I fear God. If ye [are] true, let one of your brethren remain bound in the house of your prison; but go ye, carry grain for the hunger of your households; and bring your youngest brother to me, in order that your words may be verified, and that ye may not die. And they did so" (vers. (10-20).

Joseph had no thought of vengeance; nor would he invoke or trust process of law. He with grace in his heart does not spare profitable lessons for the conscience of the guilty. So he speaks like a governor as he truly was of Egypt, and makes himself strange to them for no other end than their real good. If God wrought by the pressure, he who had His mind would lead them, by his words and ways which troubled them, to awaken their long-slumbering conscience, that they too might fear God as he did. It is just so in principle that grace wrought with every one of us who has been truly brought to God. The affections are not to be trusted, unless conscience also cries out to God in a true sense of our own ruin and deep distress. We must approach Him about and in our sins, yet in the name of Jesus.

As they were all guilty, which no one on earth knew so well as Joseph, he committed them all to custody. But as underneath the frown of the governor lay compassion to them all, he on the good witness of the third day proposed that one only should remain in prison, and the rest, with the food he supplied them freely (though this they never suspected), should return to the comfort of their kin. But there was one condition, which for their sakes as for his must be stipulated: "Bring your youngest brother to me." No doubt such a word sent a pang into their hearts; for well they knew what Benjamin was to his father and theirs with the then difficulties. They had sinned against their father and especially about one brother, who to their conviction was not alive yet the very lord who now confronted them. But if the way of transgressors is hard, the way of grace is beyond all thought of man good or bad. Here is nothing but goodness from first to last, if we can rightly say last of that which shall have no end. Only the sinner must learn his own badness, all the more guilty in presence of the love of the Father who sent His Only-begotten into the world, not only that we might live through Him, but that He might die for us as propitiation for our sins.

CHAPTER 16.

JOSEPH'S BRETHREN IN SELF-REPROACH

Gen. 42: 21-28

On the third day we have seen the governor of Egypt relented; and instead of keeping all in prison while one was sent to bring Benjamin, he offers the terms of keeping one as the pledge in custody, while the rest convey back the grain which their households required. But he dropped a few words of great significance to the sons of Jacob, and to them also exceedingly unexpected from the great lord of a people so idolatrous as the Egyptians. And he uttered these words as the explanation of a proposal so just and considerate: "I fear God." Who can doubt that this following their serious position and the relief just proposed was calculated to act powerfully on conscience?

"Then said they one to another, We [are] indeed guilty concerning our brother whose anguish of soul we saw when he besought us and we did not hearken: therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them saying, Did I not speak to you, saying, Do not sin against the lad? but ye did not hearken; and now, behold, his blood also is required. And they did not know that Joseph understood, for the interpreter was between them. And he turned away from them and wept. And he returned to them and spoke to them, and took Simeon from among them and bound him before their

eyes. And Joseph commanded to fill their vessels with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way; and so it was done to them. And they loaded their asses with their corn and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the lodging place, he saw his money, and, behold, it was in the sack's mouth. And he said to his brethren, My money is returned, and, behold, it is even in my sack. And their heart failed, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What [is] this God hath done to us?" (vers. 21-28).

Their sin against Joseph as well as their father, their sin against God too, after being hid for some twenty years, had now begun to be brought home to them. God would work not the grief of the world unto death, but according to His goodness repentance unto salvation, that the truth they had heard from their father might be no longer a mere theory but a living reality, as it was in Joseph's soul. Think how their confusion must have touched his loving heart, as he heard them acknowledge the sin of their heartless turning away from his agony when he besought them as his brethren in vain; first in leaving him to perish, and next in selling him as a slave! Who but God ordered the matter so that he should now hear their self-reproach who then conspired to their sorrow and shame in devising one mischief after another? If it was amazing to him that God was giving such a token for good in his hardhearted and envious brethren, how much more would it not have been to them had they known that Joseph was now listening to their penitence?

Reuben who had shown some compunction then recalls to them their wicked deed and his remonstrance. Altogether Joseph was so overcome that he could only turn away and weep. Those tears were not of selfish feeling but of gratitude to Him who had watched over all his sufferings and dangers. Now too he could see God's working not only to humble and to bless his brethren but to cheer his father's heart, both by his own restoration to him as one from the grave, and as to his other sons who had been so little a solace and so often a shame. Their distress must deepen yet, for God does not spare the flesh; but the profit would be all the greater at last.

Joseph soon rose above his emotion and returned to them, and before their eyes bound Simeon (not Reuben) on adequate ground. No chastening seems to be of joy but of grief; but the end is worthy of God, even if we have to wait and trust Him in the trials we need by the way.

But Joseph followed up what he began by directing the money of each to be returned in their respective sacks. He sought to deepen the work beyond the sense of retribution for their past evil toward himself. Provision for their journey alone might not have had any such effect; but the money restored would strike them as not at all the way of sale or of man. And it came on them by degrees. For in their halting-place one only opened his sack to feed his ass and saw his money in the mouth of his sack. And this he told the others, to the consternation of all, who could but say to each other, "What is this God hath done to us?" A bad conscience brought God before them; for why should the governor act so kindly who suspected that they were spies, had one brother in his custody, and imperatively demanded the one on whom their father doted? Surely it was God working for good, which they did not yet at all realise. Part of that good was that they should judge themselves thoroughly, still more that they should learn God's ways and end as they had never done.

CHAPTER 17.

JACOB RESISTS THE DEMAND FOR BENJAMIN

Gen. 42: 29-38.

The way of restoration is not easy when souls have got astray like the sons of Jacob. But conscience had begun its deep and wholesome work, however much might be needful. Joseph knew far better than themselves that God was really at work, and using their self-judgment for their blessing through the very trouble which pressed on them and resulted in Simeon's detention in Egypt, confirmed for one by the discovery of the money in his sack's mouth. Their heart failed through fear, and the question was raised, What is this God has done to us?

"And they came into the land of Canaan to Jacob their father, and told him all that had befallen them, saying, The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us, and treated us as spies of the land. And we said to him, We [are] true; we are not spies; we [are] twelve brethren, sons of our father: one [is] not, and the youngest [is] this day in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the land, said to us, Hereby shall I know that ye [are] true. leave one of your brethren with me, and take [for] the hunger of your households, and go and bring your youngest brother to me; and I shall know that ye [are] not spies but [are] true: your brother will I give up to you; and ye may trade in the land. And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man [had] his bundle of money in his sack; and they saw their bundles of money, they and their father, and were afraid. And Jacob their father said to them, Ye have made me childless: Joseph [is] not, and Simeon [is] not, and ye will take Benjamin! All these things fall on me. And Reuben spoke to his father, saying, Slay my two sons if I bring him not back to thee again;. give him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. But he said, My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he alone is left; and if mischief should befall him by the way in which ye go, then would ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to Sheol" (vers. 29-38).

The terror of the brethren was greatly increased by the evident purpose of the money in every man's sack. Even one case alarmed them, now that conscience was awakening. Yet this might have, seemed a singular accident; but not so the nine. Jacob too was afraid with them. It appears too that it was not mere goodwill on Joseph's part, but done in communion with God to work yet more in consciences so long scared. They were far as yet from understanding the way of the Lord with them; even Jacob was occupied with the wounds to his heart, and at once recalled the loss of Joseph and Simeon as a reason for utterly refusing to let Benjamin go.

Yet these blows which fell so heavily on his affections were the needed path for blessing and joy to all. And such is the end of the Lord for all that fear him, however trying the way. Joseph too had known it and far more deeply than any, in which he was rather typical of Christ, faithful amidst unfaithfulness; his brethren and even Jacob were buffeted for their faults, a very different alternative; and so it will be in the latter day for the Jewish saints during that hour of Jacob's sorrow.

But even for Joseph, and a far greater than Joseph, humiliation was the path to glory. And so with the Christian now. Our place is to suffer with Christ in a spirit of uncomplaining grace. But even the godly Jewish remnant will bow before the retributive dealing of moral government. They shall by sovereign grace "be saved out of it," and they shall look upon Him whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only one, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. And the answer will be, Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto

her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins. Yet without Christ's cross all had been vain: on Him Jehovah laid the iniquity of all that believe. But this does not hinder governmental dealings also on Jehovah's part with His people that they may learn His ways of faithfulness, and their own ways when they forget Him and confide most in themselves that they are righteous, whilst they have least reason for it.

CHAPTER 18.

JACOB LETS BENJAMIN GO

Gen. 43: 1-15.

The sons quietly left the difficulty till the family need forced Jacob to speak, which gave Judah opportunity to plead without impropriety. Feeling would yield to famine. Yet God was in Jacob's thoughts, and in a measure in those of the sons, as compared with the past. But the mercy that fails not would shine through the dark clouds.

"And the famine [was] grievous in the land. And it came to pass, when they had finished eating the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, Go again, buy us a little food. And Judah spoke to him, saying, The man did positively testify to us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, unless your brother [be] with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food; but if thou do not send [him], we will not go down; for the man said to us, Ye shall not see my face unless your brother [be] with you. And Israel said, Why dealt ye so ill with me, to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? And they said, The man asked very closely after us and after our kindred, saying, [Is] your father yet alive? have ye a brother? And we told him according to the tenor of these words. Could we at all know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And Judah said to Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and thou and our little ones. I will be surety for him: of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not to thee and set him before thy face, then shall I be guilty before thee for ever. For had we not lingered, we should now certainly have returned already twice. And their father Israel said to them, If [it is] then so, do this; take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a gift, a little balm and a little honey, tragacanth and ladanum, pistachio-nuts and almonds; and take double money in your hand, and the money that was returned to you in the mouth of your sacks, carry [it] back in your hand perhaps it [is] an oversight. Take also your brother and arise, go again to the man. And the Almighty God give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin "And I, if I be bereaved [of my children], am bereaved. And the men took that gift, and took double money in their hand, and Benjamin, and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph" (vers. 1-15).

It is in a world of evil and sorrow through sin, where grace works for good. As long as the food lasted, the dreaded condition remained in abeyance. But when their supply came to an end, facts must be faced, and God be found above their hopes as much as their fears, turning their faults to their profit, but abundant in suited mercy to His own glory. The sons left it to their father to propose a fresh visit to Egypt; and not Reuben but Judah states the case. They were absolutely forbidden to see the ruler's face without Benjamin. With him they were ready to go down and buy the needed food; without him they durst not go. Thereon Israel yielded to their complaint; for they could well plead the ruler's keen inquiry. It is indeed a vivid transcript of the situation, and of the agitated feeling on all sides growing out of iniquity, with God not only to exercise and chasten but to carry out His own way for blessing all

round.

So it will be with the generation to come of Israel's sons, guilty of far deeper dereliction and against an immeasurably greater than Joseph. Him "this generation" spurned in their blindness and consigned in their hate to a far more ignominious doom than their fathers ever conceived for their brother. And the repentance of the coming day will be proportionate, as the necessary trials through which they must pass retributively in God's government will be immense. But the end of the Lord will be rich in promised blessing, not only for Israel but for all the nations of the earth. And how deep and loud will be their thankful praise and joy and triumph in Him their own Messiah, to whom they owe it all in mercy without measure or end!

Here Judah again pleads with his father, with touching effect offering to bear the blame for ever. Now Israel yields, however it might wring his heart, and with careful instructions that all should be done honestly and with comeliness, he surrenders his beloved, the more beloved because of the missing link, recalling the proper patriarchal name of strength in their weakness. It was after a long interval, when God recalled it thus to Jacob, and along with El-Shaddai, the name of Israel (Gen. 35: 10, 11) with glorious promises yet to be fulfilled in Israel's sons. But this glory turns, as does their salvation, on their long, rejected, soon to be received, Jesus Messiah.

CHAPTER 19.

BENJAMIN WITH THE REST MEETS JOSEPH

Gen. 43: 15-34.

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. So it will be for Israel when existing shadows yield to the reality Christ's appearing will bring in to the glory of God. So it was for the dawn of heavenly light and blessing in Christ for the Christian; and so it will be when this age ends, and a new one begins for Israel and the nations of the earth.

"And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin, and they rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, Bring the men into the house, and slay, and make ready; for the men shall dine with me at noon. And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the, money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses. And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they spoke to him, at the door of the house, and said, O my lord, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food; and it came to pass, when we came to the lodging place, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, [every] man's money [was] in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; and we have brought it again in our hand. And other money have we brought down in our hand to buy food: we know not who put our money in our sacks. And he said, Peace [be] to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money. And he brought Simeon out to them. And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave [them] water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender. And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon; for they heard that they should eat bread there. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which [was] in their hand into the house, and bowed down themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of [their] welfare, and said, [Is] your

father well, the old man of whom ye spoke? [Is] he yet alive? And they said, Thy servant our father [is] well, he [is] yet alive. And they bowed the head and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes and saw Benjamin his brother, his mother's son, and said, [Is] this your youngest brother of whom ye spoke to me? And he said, God be gracious to thee, my son. And Joseph made haste, for his bowels yearned upon his brother; and he sought [where] to weep; and he entered into [his] chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, Set on bread. And they set on before him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians who did eat with him by themselves; because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that [is] an abomination to the Egyptians. And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one with another. And he took messes for them from before him; but Benjamin's mess was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank and drank largely with him" (vers. 15-34).

The inspired narrative in its own beautiful simplicity shows us God's working in the conscience of the sons of Israel. How little they yet understood that His goodness was leading them to repentance, and that the brother they had so deeply wronged and bitterly hated was but accomplishing their best good by the exercises they passed through! That they were invited into the governor's house filled them with uneasiness. "The men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses." Hence their eagerness to tell the story of their mysterious discovery, and to repay the money that was not theirs. But the steward assured them that all was right on that score without further explanation. God would work more deeply yet.

Meanwhile Simeon rejoins them; and all are treated with the kind attention due to guests, and their beasts of burden too. And they made ready the gift for presentation to Joseph when he should appear. And very graphic is the meeting, and the enquiries on his part out of the love which he felt, as they bowed down again and again in obeisance. "And he lifted up his eyes and saw Benjamin his brother, his mother's son, and said, [Is] this your youngest brother of whom ye spoke to me? And he said, God be gracious to thee, my son. And Joseph made haste, for his bowels yearned upon his brother, and he sought [where] to weep; and he entered into [his] chamber and wept there."

Who can fail to realise it as a scene of human feeling? But it has also a far deeper character to him who reads in faith, and knows the blessed import of grace to be held out by a far greater than Joseph in His restoring His guilty and long alienated brethren to the knowledge of Himself and of themselves. How glorious the consequences when the blessing shall be on the head of Jesus "in that day" which is coming, "and on the crown of the head of Him that was separate from His brethren!" No wonder that those who limit the language to the past think scripture hyperbolic. Christ is not only the key to, but the fulness of, the truth, which here so nearly concerns, not the church of the heavenlies, but the earthly people of God, who must be inwardly fitted for the place to which they are destined before all the nations of the earth, "the glory of Thy people Israel." For figuratively Benjamin, the son of his father's hand must be joined to Joseph, "the separated from his brethren," in order to the accomplishment of their glory which awaits to be fulfilled in its own time. It could not be at this time while the church is being completed in which is neither Jew nor Greek.

Nothing more deplorably hinders the due understanding of the scriptures, both the O.T. and the N.T., than confounding the church's portion, and duties with those of His people Israel. These have lost their place for the while because of their idolatrous apostasy from Jehovah even in Judah and the house of David. Next when a remnant was brought back after the fall of Babylon, they returned to

compromise His name especially under Antiochus Epiphanes, when the mass sunk into his guilty schemes, and into still more defiant rebellion against Jehovah in rejecting His Christ and demanding His crucifixion of the Romans, though the heathen procurator well knew His innocence and their spiteful wickedness. Wherefore wrath came upon them to the uttermost, and for a longer continuance. This further and more thorough rejection of the Jews gave occasion to the revelation of grace and truth in Christ, and to the call of the church into union with Him in the heavenlies as its Head, enjoyed even now on earth by the Holy Spirit's presence who baptised us into one body according to the promise of the Father and the Son.

It is the more important for the Christian to take heed; for it was overlooked and misunderstood by the earliest of the Fathers who more and more judaised till the so-called Catholic Church sunk in the darkness of the Latin and Greek rivals with other relies yet more heterodox. The Reformation more or less cast off the papal yoke by means of the Protestant powers who heard the cry for the Bible and justification by faith. But Lutherans and Calvinists never recovered the truth, least of all those who boasted most of tradition; and the Puritans earlier or later, who sought individual piety, wandered into greater darkness as they justified separate denominations without end.

CHAPTER 20.

THE CRUCIAL TEST APPLIED

Gen. 44: 1-17.

It was needed in the moral government of God that the brethren should be searched still more thoroughly; and Joseph is His instrument in devising a still more trying means, not only to carry out self-judgment to the uttermost but to prove their affections now sound and fervent to their father and their brother, after their deep guilt in both respects of old. Love joined righteousness in thus working for their best good.

And he commanded [him] that [was] over (or, the steward of) his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food as much as they can carry; and put every man's money in the mouth of his sack. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his corn-money. And he did according to the word of Joseph which he had spoken. In the morning when it was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. They were gone out of the city, not far off, when Joseph said to his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou overtakest them, say to them, Why have you rewarded evil for good? [Is] not this [it] in what my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? Ye have done evil [in] what ye have done. And he overtook them, and spoke to them these words. And they said to him, Wherefore speaketh my lord such words as these? Far be it from thy servants to do such a thing! Behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths we brought again to thee out of the land of Canaan; and how should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it is found, let him die; and we also will be my lord's bondmen. And he said, Now also [be] it according to your words: he with whom it is found shall be. my bondman, and ye shall be blameless. And they hosted and laid down every man his sack on the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched carefully; he began at the eldest, and left at the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and loaded every man his ass, and returned to the city. And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; and he [was] yet there; and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said to them, What deed [is] this which ye have done? Know ye not that such a

man as I can indeed divine? And Judah said, What shall we say to my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we [are] my lord's bondmen, both we and [he] also in whose hand the cup is found. And he said, Far be it that I should do so! The man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my bondman; but as for you, go up in peace to your father" (vers. 1-17).

Severe as the trial was, love dictated it in the fear of God, though we may feel that the mode adopted was in no way what the N.T. would suggest to the Christian. Unfriendly eyes ignorantly misapply the light of Christ to such as had not that light as we have, to disparage the ancient scriptures, and set the one against the other. Joseph acted according to his measure, impaired no doubt by the Egyptian life which surrounded him; and scripture tells us the facts as they were, without sanction or apology. So it is even in the N.T. when the true light was already shining: the record is not a divine sanction. But the written word is always the truth of things, be it what it may; and this is what God alone gives; and it is what we need and can find nowhere else. And the steward knew well what his master intended.

How blessed for us, and to God's glory that we have the unfailing and ever holy wisdom of God in Christ! Here the unbeliever may spy as he pleases; his carping malevolence may assail or pervert. But the wisdom abides without a flaw. By-and-by He will be reigning in power; but when He too suffered as Joseph never did, His every word and way was God's wisdom for us. And so it is when accepted on high and in the highest glory, though it be not yet His promised glory on His own throne, but exalted exceptionally as Joseph was with Gentiles in immediate view, not Israel under Him as when He reigns according to the prophets. He is God's wisdom alike in heavenly glory as in earthly humiliation, as the later revelation of God abundantly proves to our joy and blessing.

His type Joseph was here to carry out the necessary probe for the clearance of all the past mischief, and the forming of a new heart and a new spirit in his brethren. It was for God's sake and their sakes, rather than his own, that there might be the reality and the evidence of a divine work in their conscience and heart. This dictated the cup in Benjamin's sack. No doubt the shock of its discovery there acutely troubled the brothers. But so it must be where sin of the deepest kind lay at the bottom of all; and this was but a means that it might be duly felt and judged. After all, the pain of the means employed was very brief (not more than a few hours compared with what Joseph drank so deeply for years), and the same day followed with forgiveness and joy and tender love.

To reward the governor's good with such an evil as stealing his cup filled the brethren with all the more anguish that it was found with Benjamin. No wonder that they rent their clothes, and loaded every man his ass, and returned to the city heartbroken. And now more than ever they paid Joseph the fullest obeisance in unconscious accomplishment of his dreams, as they fell before him on the ground. In the latter half of the chapter we shall learn the depth of their renewed feeling for their father and their brother: the very issue which Joseph desired, as he on his part proved the reality and depth of his own love for all. But we need not say more now, as we have a pleading to hear which touched and delighted the heart of Joseph, as it has spoken to innumerable hearts since to our day. And what will it be when the type is fulfilled, and the Lord Himself appears to the Judah of the future day when they look on Him whom they pierced, and mourn as for an only son, every family apart, and the wives apart (Zech. 12)?

CHAPTER 21.

JUDAH'S PLEA

Gen. 44: 18-34.

What can be found more candid, and lowly, or more affecting, than the appeal to Joseph of the man once so hard and heartless?

"Then Judah came near to him, and said, Ah! my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou [art] even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said to my lord, We have an aged father, and a child born to him in his old age, a young one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother; and his father loveth him. And thou saidst to thy servants, Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him. And we said to my lord, The lad cannot leave his father; for [if] he should leave his father, he [his father] would die. And thou saidst to thy servants, Unless your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up to thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, buy us a little food. But we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother [be] with us. And thy servant my father said to us, Ye know that my wife bore me two [sons]; and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces, and I have not seen him since. And if ye take this one also from me, and mischief should befall him, ye will bring down my grey hairs with evil to Sheol. Now therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad [is] not with us, seeing that his soul is bound up with the lad's soul, it will come to pass, when he sees that the lad [is] not [with us], that he will die; and thy servants will bring down the grey hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. For thy servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, If I bring him not to thee, then I shall be guilty toward my father all the (or, my) days. And now let thy servant stay, I pray thee, instead of the lad a bondman to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren; for how should I go up to my father if the lad [were] not with me? lest I see the evil that shall come to my father" (vers. 18-34).

The immense change God had wrought in his brethren was thus made manifest to Joseph. Their envy and selfish cruelty had given way to tender love to their father and his affection for the younger son of Rachel. The old jealousy was supplanted to the root; and he who took the lead was ready to become a slave to the governor, that Benjamin might return to be his father's joy and consolation, instead of death if he remained a bondman. What Joseph had sought was given him, though none as yet knew what he realised. The fraternal guilt how gladly forgiven! the father about to taste comfort beyond all his hopes! Also his own pious heart recognised God's goodness and wondrous ways in bringing about all that was about to be the portion of the family of promise.

Good M. Henry casts about for reasons why Judah should be here so prominent. But those who favour either Patristic expositors or Puritans will pardon me if I point out the great loss which all sustain who do not study the dispensational ways of God in scripture. They consequently are too little versed in the prophets, who render invaluable and indispensable aid for apprehending the types. There is no real ground for conceiving Judah "a better friend to Benjamin than the rest were," or "more solicitous to bring him off." Nor need we think that "he thought himself under greater obligations to endeavour it than the rest, because he had passed his word to his father for his safe return; or the rest chose him for their spokesman, because he was a man of better sense and better spirit, and had a greater

command of language than any of them." I am not aware that anything is extant from Origen, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Cyril which treats of this, or from Augustine, Jerome or any ancient Latin father. For they too entered so little into the study of the purposes of God as revealed in scripture that we could not expect gleanings of weight on this score.

Yet to those who have profited any thing to speak of from prophecy, it is evident that to a romancer Reuben would have seemed from Gen. 37 the natural one to have taken up the case, and Judah far from promising, especially when we read the revolting figure which he cuts in Gen. 38. But the truth according to God is that Judah was the one whom grace had now fitted for the work. And this harmonises with the divine disposition of the land, where Benjamin had a special nearness in their respective lots. "Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of Jehovah-he shall dwell in safety by him; he will cover him all the day long, And dwell between his shoulders" (Deut. 33: 12). And so it was ordered of Jehovah, that notwithstanding the almost extermination of the tribe for their defiance of their brethren in a gross case of sin, and later still their natural repugnance to the anointed king of Judah who superseded Saul's line and their tribe, they became attached to Judah and the house of David beyond and unlike all the others.

So it will characterise the future and its bright hopes when the heart of Jerusalem is spoken to, and she will hear the cry that her time of toil and trouble is accomplished, and her iniquity is pardoned. The ten tribes will share the blessing later; but Judah and Benjamin precede. *They* rejected the true Christ; *they* will receive the Antichrist. Hence Judah here has a place with and for Benjamin quite peculiar; and He who inspired the scripture did not forget to point to this fact only known to God, which gives it a meaning full of interest to those who honour the word as truly His and not man's, all of it worthy of Him. As Joseph clearly prefigured Him that was rejected by and separated from His brethren, yet exalted in a sphere outside them now for the blessing of men in all the world, so Benjamin typifies Him in His tearing to pieces the enemies of the Jew in the day of retribution that is coming, not for blessing only like Joseph, but for power, executing divine judgment on the adversary.

One quite understands how few since apostolic days in the past or present exhibit a state to apprehend or enjoy the things to come. But this, thank God, does not enfeeble the truth, nor hinder faith's delight in looking beforehand to the glorious things for Israel on the earth then made ready for them. Our portion is with Christ for the heavens; for besides our individual blessing as Christians by faith of the gospel, we are by the gift of the Holy Spirit made members of His body whilst He is exalted as Head over all things at the right hand of God.

CHAPTER 22.

JOSEPH MADE KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN

Gen. 45: 1-15.

The dealing with the conscience of the guilty had done its work. So it will be with the righteous remnant of the latter day. The chastening seemed at the time grievous, but was really in love and for profit, in order to the partaking of God's holiness. After that grace can display itself freely.

"And Joseph could not control himself before all those that stood by him, and he cried, Put every man out from me. And no man stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brethren. And he gave forth his voice in weeping; and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard. And

Joseph said to his brethren, I [am] Joseph: does my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were terrified at his presence. And Joseph said to his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I [am] Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. And now be not grieved, and let it not be an occasion of anger in your eyes, that ye sold me hither; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine [hath been] these two years in the midst of the land; and [there are] yet five years in which [shall be] neither ploughing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance. And now [it was] not you sent me here, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and governor over all the land of Egypt. Haste and go up to my father, and say to him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down to me, tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near to me, thou and thy sons and thy sons' sons, and thy flocks and thy herds and all that thou hast. And there will I nourish thee, for [there are] yet five years of famine; in order that thou be not impoverished, thou and thy household and all that thou hast. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that [it is] my mouth which speaketh to you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept on his neck. And he kissed all his brethren, and wept on them; and after that his brethren talked with him" (vers. 1-15).

Judah's appeal gave full and conclusive proof that the means employed by Joseph had wrought its designed effect. What a true sense of their cruel wrong toward their guiltless brother! What intense feeling for their father, only less wronged of old than their brother Joseph, and now to be seemingly smitten in his old age by the loss of his beloved Benjamin! Judah craved as the greatest favour to remain instead of the lad as slave to his lord; for how could he go to his father without Benjamin? Joseph could not, would not, hold out longer, but without delay yields to his pent up affection; and, that he might do so freely and fully, charged every attendant to leave his presence. No stranger must intermeddle in such a scene. "And no man stood with him, while Joseph made himself known to his brethren" (ver. 1). All must be out now; and as in Gen. 42: 30 he sought to weep apart, and refrained himself, he now gave vent to his feelings without measure that they might be delivered from their fears and be assured of the love which was ever in his heart. For well he knew that the discovery must fill them with dread no less than astonishment. And he yielded to weeping so loud that the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard (2). And Joseph said to his brethren, I [am] Joseph: doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were terrified at his presence" (3). Who can wonder that they were mute? But his love would cast out their fear. "And Joseph said to his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near." And not content with divulging the great secret, as "he said, I [am] Joseph your brother whom ye sold into Egypt," so he at once seeks to remove their terror by the words, "Now therefore be not grieved nor angry, with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God sent me before you to preserve life" (vers. 4, 5).

Now what a lesson follows in rebuke of the shameless unbelief of prophecy that prevails among this generation of professing Christians! Joseph speaks with the calmest confidence to his brethren, as he had to the king and court of Egypt, of the five years of famine in addition to the two which had led his brethren to repair to the stores, which the years of exuberant plenty enabled him by his faith to provide against the years of want. Near or distant is alike easy to the revealing Spirit of God: both are beyond man's power. Incredulity would explain both away. All the more the grace of God which was pleased to make the future known in a veiled shape, that the sufferer in the dungeon should not only be vindicated, but become the witness that God gives wisdom to the wise, and reveals the deep and secret things as He sees fit, and on behalf of His people even in their lowest estate.

We can truly and rightly judge how low the fathers of Israel's tribes had fallen; and how calculated Joseph's words were to give them a new confidence in God's interest in them, far more intimate than His beneficence to Egypt's king and people and the lands which profited by His wondrous ways. "And God sent me before you to establish you a remnant on the earth, and preserve your lives by a great deliverance." Here was the true key, not merely the discovery to Pharaoh and the rescue of Joseph, and the provision generally in the singularly long plenty and the equally long dearth, but the accomplishment of His plans, long before divulged to Abram (in Gen. 15), whereby His ancient people should grow up from the family of Jacob in a stranger land of bondage and affliction, the oppressing nation to be judged, and themselves to emerge with great substance.

Who can fail to see that the prophetic powers for Abram, and now for Joseph, were equally from God, whether for centuries beforehand, or for running septads of years? What difference can this make to God, known to whom are all His works since time began, yea, from all eternity? It is only a question of His pleasure directed by wisdom and love. And if Israel were called to own and witness the privilege vouchsafed, how much more Christians who are entitled by the Spirit to search all things, yea, the depths of God! For we can discern a greater than Joseph herein and anticipate, the day when the Jews shall be brought to learn by grace their incomparably worse conduct to Him, who, though God over all, deigned to become their Messiah, Who died to save and will restore them as a people to their land, and to reign King not only there but over all the earth, equally Jehovah as Messiah. In that day shall there be one Jehovah, and His name one. Yea more, He shall have things in the heavens and the earth summed up and together under His headship of all the universe, and all the earth filled with His glory as truly as the heavens. We can read in Zech. 12 the recognition scene for the Jews when the long despised Jesus appears in glory to the confusion of their enemies and to their own everlasting salvation.

But to return to Joseph, what concern to console his brothers! "And now not ye sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and governor throughout all the land of Egypt" (ver. 8). Was not this the truth by grace to faith, not to the blinded sceptic? Thereon in vers. 9-11 he bids them go up to his father without delay, tell him all, and bring him down to dwell in Goshen near Joseph, both him and all his with flocks, herds and possessions. "And there will I nourish thee, for yet [are] five years of famine," lest all should come to poverty.

And what more touching than his final words? And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin that [it is] my mouth which speaketh to you. And tell my father all my glory in Egypt, and all ye have seen; and haste, and bring my father quickly hither." Not content with this, "he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept on his neck. And he kissed all his brethren, and wept on them; and after that his brethren talked with him." Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, not only he with them, but they with him. But what is even this compared with that which is yet reserved for Israel?

CHAPTER 23.

JOSEPH SENDS FOR JACOB AND ALL.

Gen. 45: 16-28.

Thus was Joseph led tenderly to care for his father and his brethren, as he was enabled to administer for the relief of Egypt and its surrounding peoples, that the exceeding and long plenty should not be wasted but turned to provide against the distress of the equally long famine which

followed. Thus those who heard the word of God could see the hand of God accomplishing what the divinely-sent dreams portended of the ruling place which Joseph was to fill, and this not only in patriarchal limits but far beyond, while accomplishing, God's ways with His choice line as made known to Abram in Gen. 15.

"And the report [or, voice] thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come; and it was good in Pharaoh's eyes and in the eyes of his bondmen. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, Say to thy brethren, Do this: load your beasts and depart; go into the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households, and come to me; and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. And thou art commanded — this do: take wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and fetch your father and come. And let not your eye regret your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt [is] yours. And the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. To each one of them all he gave changes of raiment, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred [shekels] of silver and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent this: ten asses carrying the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses carrying corn and bread and food for his father by the way. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed; and he said to them, See that ye fall not out by the way. And they went up out of Egypt and came into the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. And they told him, saying, Joseph [is] yet alive, and he [is] governor over all the land of Egypt. And his heart became numb, for he did not believe them. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had spoken to them; and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. And Israel said, [It is] enough; Joseph my son [is] yet alive: I will go and see him before I die" (vers. 16-28).

No circumstances could be devised by man's wit so favourable for the entrance of Jacob and his sons into Egypt; and none could be conceived more simple than the plain facts of the case, to give Joseph the administration of the land, attaching to him alike the king and his subjects.

If they did not surpass fable, they were true; and they bear thus the clear impress of God's ordering, as they prefigure that which the prophets pledge in Jehovah's name of what a greater than Joseph was exalted to do when rejected by His brethren to sit on God's right hand in richer supplies to a famished world, and about to make Himself known "the second time" to His brethren with broken hearts and deep repentance, entering for the first time their real and unchanging history of obedience, when all the nations shall indeed be blessed in the one Seed, which is Christ as the apostle speaks in Gal. 3: 16.

Even in the world that now is, how rare to find a king and his servants united through respect for an alien governor to yield a hearty and harmonious welcome to his alien fathers and brethren! And Egypt had its strong prejudices then as it is known to have had for ages afterwards; and to none could it be so strongly opposed as to those who confessed God (unknown to them), who denied their gods, with that exclusiveness which ever must be where divine truth is consciously professed. So it was with the believers of Israel; and so it is with the faithful Christian. Neutrality in God's things condemns itself as false and evil to such as know Him.

Here at any rate they had special reasons showing no doubt that the Egyptians, king or people, could not deny how warm a reception was proffered to all the kin of Israel for Joseph's sake. The very wagons suggested by the king and left for Joseph to supply played their part in assuring the father to credit the tale, which made his heart fail at first, that Joseph still lived. "The Jews ask for signs;" and there it was in the means of going down into Egypt which his sons could not have provided, as indeed in much more which his loving and bountiful son gave for the whole of them, Benjamin in particular,

and his father yet more.

But we can recognise words, so characteristic of Joseph and so suitable to his piety, which Scarce one but he would have thought of at such a moment of excited wonder and self-judgment. "See that ye fall not out by the way" is the last thing for a forger to invent, the expression of godliness and affection in perfect keeping with him who uttered the words.

CHAPTER 24.

ISRAEL SETS OUT, AND GOD SPEAKS IN THE NIGHT VISION.

Gen. 46: 1-7.

Jacob had seen more changes than any of his fathers, and is especially in contrast with Isaac, who never left the land of promise; yet it was a great surprise and effort to one who after so many vicissitudes expected to die in Canaan. And if he remembered the word of Jehovah to Abram in Gen. 15, he might well hesitate, however great his longing to look once more on his beloved Joseph.

"And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-Sheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in the night visions and said, Jacob, Jacob! And he said, Here [am] I. And he said, I [am] God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also certainly bring thee up [again]; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, on the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their cattle and their goods which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his seed with him, his sons and his sons' sons with him, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his seed he brought with him into Egypt" (vers. 1-7).

Beer-sheba was a memorable spot to Isaac, who built an altar there, and called upon the name of Jehovah who had there appeared to him, some time after he had been forbidden, even under the stress of famine, to go down into Egypt, as Abraham had faultily done. But now God spoke to Israel in the vision of the night, after he had offered sacrifices to his father's God who called him by his name of natural weakness, and bade him fearlessly go down into Egypt. There in the land already pointed out as a furnace of affliction they were to sojourn, yet to come out with great substance and multiplied numbers. Till then their increase had been slow. Such were God's ways with His people, as well as with the peoples they ware to dispossess; for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. Jacob was not to hesitate. "I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will certainly bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes." God entered into the anxieties of his feeble servant and knew how to strengthen his tried heart.

"And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, on the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him." But they took their live stock also and their goods which they had acquired in Canaan, and came into Egypt. Jacob and his sons had no idea of entering that land as mere dependents on its prince, whatever his desire to show all honour to Joseph, and the promise that the good of all the land of Egypt should be theirs. They therefore took their "stuff" along with them and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his seed with him; "his sons and his sons' sons with him, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his seed, he brought

with him into Egypt."

It was a sorry spectacle to the eye of sense, not more than a troop of Gitanos in the estimate of Spaniards. Yet there was the nucleus of a people, to sojourn in a land not their own for a while, but to return and take possession of Canaan. Alas! first they accepted conditions of law, wherein they utterly broke down and suffered the penalty of their presumptuous unbelief in idolatry, as in the rejection of the Messiah later. At length they shall be restored on the ground of pure mercy, under the new covenant, with repentance and faith in the returning Messiah, who will set them at the head of all nations, when He will reign over all the earth in righteousness, power and glory. Never till then shall there be the days of heaven upon earth. Even Pentecost was no fulfilment, but the strong pledge of it to come. Compare Acts 3: 19-21.

CHAPTER 25.

THE NAMES OF JACOB'S SONS WHO CAME INTO EGYPT.

(Gen. 46: 8-27).

If we honestly wish to avoid serious mistakes and rightly understand Scripture, it is important to read the genealogies according to their aim, and not modern ideas. And it is plain on their face that they present difficulties, which no forger nor compiler would have left but have avoided with all care. The writer, on the other hand, knowing details which we might not, expresses simply what he knows to be true without stopping to clear them up. Special motives govern each case; and if this be under the direction of the Holy Spirit, as a Christian is bound to believe, the mistake must be in judging according to his own mind, and method, not after the divine design.

"And these [are] the names of the sons of Israel who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons; Jacob's first-born, Reuben; and the sons of Reuben, Enoch and Phallu and Hezron and Carmi; and the sons of Simeon, Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Saul son of a Canaanitish woman. And the sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath and Merari; and the sons of Judah, Er and Onan and Shelah, and Pherez and Zarah; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan; and the sons of Pherez were Hezron and Hamul. And the sons of Issachar, Tola and Puah, and Job and Shimron; and the sons of Zebulun, Sered and Elon and Jahleel. These [are] the sons of Leah whom she bore to Jacob in Padan-Aram, and his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and daughters [were] thirty-three.

"And the sons of Gad, Ziphion and Haggi, Shuni and Esbon, Eri and Arodi and Areli; and the sons of Asher, Jimnah and Ishyah and Ishvi and Beriah, and Serah their sister, and the sons of Beriah, Heber and Malchiel. These [are] the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and she bore these to Jacob: sixteen souls.

"The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, Joseph and Benjamin. And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath bore to him, daughter of Potiphera, priest in On; and the sons of Benjamin, Belah and Becher and Ashbel, Gera and Naaman, Ehi and Rosh, Muppim and Huppim and Ard. These [are] the sons of Rachel who were born to Jacob: all the souls [were] fourteen.

"And the sons of Dan, Hushim; and the sons of Naphtali, Jahzeel and Guni and Jezer and Shillem. These [are] the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob: all the souls [were] seven.

"All the souls belonging to Jacob that came into Egypt, that came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives: all the souls [were] sixty-six. And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt [were] two souls. All the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt [were] seventy." (vers. 8-27).

It is God's register of Jacob and his house, "seventy" souls including Jacob, and Joseph with his two sons, "sixty-six" without these. The Sept. cited by Stephen speaks of seventy-five, because it adds Manasseh's son Machir and grandson Gilead, and Ephraim's two sons, Shuthelah and Tahan with Shuthelah's son, Eran or Edom. The time approached when they should exchange the life of a family, already in Genesis enlarged into twelve families, for that of a people; and their growth is one of the initiatory facts of Exodus, the second book of the Pentateuch. Scripture reveals the interest God took in recording things little in man's eyes. Nature revels in what it counts great in its own eyes and before the world.

The fact is that the sons of Jacob were even less than would be reckoned in a modern census. For the principle stated in Heb. 7: 9, 10 seems to have been here applied to Judah's offspring, and to Benjamin's also, as we may gather from the previous history, but inserted here, as the heads of future families, as we see confirmed by the list in Numbers 26 of independent families of the tribes of Israel in the day when Moses and Eleazar were directed to take the sum of the whole assembly of Israel's sons from twenty years old and upward. This is a solution suggested by those versed in such genealogies; and it is but one of several. It was no mistake, but intentional, however outside ordinary thought. Thus the immense increase during the sojourn in Egypt became all the more marked, notwithstanding the cruel and murderous oppression which characterised its latter part, and gave the occasion for Jehovah their God to show Himself greater than all gods; for in the thing in which they acted haughtily He was above them.

CHAPTER 26.

JOSEPH MEETS JACOB AND ADVISES HIS BRETHREN.

Gen. 46: 28-34.

Now then the father was to meet the cherished but long-separated son; and his brethren also were to be settled in Egypt through the loving care of him whom they in their hatred had sold to be carried there. Not one of them probably had ever till now expected to meet there, not even Joseph. But God had spoken long before what was just beginning to be accomplished, with much to follow, which may before have not engaged their attention. It was a prophecy, all the more vaguely remembered because it was not yet written as in Gen. 15: a great favour to be spoken at all, a greater still to be read in the written word long after it was uttered in God's grace.

"And he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to give notice before he came to Goshen. And they came into the land of Goshen. Then Joseph got ready (yoked) his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen; and he presented himself to him, and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said to Joseph, This time let me die, since I have seen thy face, that thou livest. And Joseph said to his brethren and to his father's house, I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say to him, My brethren and my father's house, who [were] in the land of Canaan, are come to me; and the men [are] shepherds, for they are men of cattle; and they have brought their sheep and their cattle, and all that they have. And it shall come to pass that when Pharaoh shall call you and say, What [is] your

occupation? then ye shall say, Thy servants are men of cattle from our youth even till now, both we and our fathers; in order that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen, for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians" (vers. 28-31).

Civilisation was not what characterised the fathers, as it did the line of Cain in the antediluvian earth, and Egypt and Asshur and Babylon, to say nothing of others, after the deluge. But there was a dignity that accompanies the fear of God which is far better than any such worldly gloss, however pleasant to fallen nature. We see the pious sense of propriety as in Abraham and Isaac, here too of Jacob in sending Judah before him to Joseph to give good notice of his own coming to Goshen. Again, we may notice the faith and wisdom of Joseph who had already in Gen. 45: 10 sent the message as to Goshen, before he had said a word to Pharaoh. It was the outlying part of Egypt, where they could retain their old occupation best, and were least exposed to the idolatrous and moral corruptions of that land. Into Goshen accordingly they came. And Joseph on his part got ready his chariot and went there to meet Israel his father; and on presenting himself he fell on his neck and wept on it a good while. The affection was great on both sides, and Israel said to Joseph, Now (or, This time) let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou yet livest. Worldly splendour had not weakened that love which knit father and son together in the promised land.

But we also may remark the prudent administrator in his words to his brethren, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, My brethren and my father's house, who [were] in the land of Canaan, are come to me. And the men [are] shepherds, for they are men of cattle; and they have brought their sheep and their cattle, and all that they have. And it shall come to pass when Pharaoh shall call you and shall say, What is your occupation? then ye shall say, Thy servants are men of cattle from our youth even till now, both we and our fathers; in order that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen." Two things made this advice acceptable to the king, and even his people. For Pharaoh had already, as is stated in Gen. 45, declared his wish to give them the good of the land of Egypt, that they might eat the fat of the land (vers. 18-20). And as "every shepherd [is] an abomination to the Egyptians," there would not be the least objection to Israel's settling to this occupation on land most favourable to it, and from its site one farthest off from meeting their eyes day by day. Thus Joseph was enabled to advise his brethren from the start, so as to live where it was best for them, and least offensive to the Egyptians.

CHAPTER 27.

JOSEPH PRESENTS HIS BRETHERN AND HIS FATHER TO PHARAOH

Gen. 47: 1-12.

As yet however the king had not seen the kindred of Joseph. This now follows.

"And Joseph went in and told Pharaoh and said, My father and my brethren, and their sheep and their cattle and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and behold they are in the land of Goshen. And from among his brethren he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said to Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers. And they said to Pharaoh, To sojourn in the land are we come; for there is no pasture for thy servants' flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen. And Pharaoh spoke to Joseph saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come to thee: the land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell. And if thou knowest any men of activity,

among them, then make them rulers over my cattle. And Joseph brought in Jacob his father and set him before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Jacob, How many are the days of the years of thy life? And Jacob said to Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred- and-thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from the presence of Pharaoh. And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household with bread, according to their families" (vers. 1-12).

We read of Joseph's becoming attitude towards Pharaoh. On every point of view Goshen was the land most appropriate for his father and his brethren. The land lay nearest for sojourners in Egypt, for those who were destined by God to enter Canaan as the land He had promised long before when their father had not even one son (Gen. 15). Again, it was near Joseph, and the king also; and further, it was the least frequented by the people of the land, to whom herdsmen, shepherds and the like, were an abomination, as Joseph let them know. Even apart from this, we were already informed of their general objection to eat bread with foreigners (43: 32). Such was the severity of caste among the Egyptians, as we know it is among strict Hindus. But it was of moment that the king should come to the same conclusion as his minister of state, and decree freely without any pressure from one so near to the sons of Israel. The presenting of an adequate number of his brethren was ordered wisely. When they plainly stated their occupation, as handed down from their fathers, the king not only fell in with Goshen as the most fitting place for their dwelling, but gave hearty welcome. He also laid it on Joseph that he should set capable men from among them to undertake the charge over his own cattle there.

But another deeply interesting interview is next brought before us. "Joseph brought in Jacob his father and set him before Pharaoh." The aged patriarch was in no way abashed in presence of the world's most exalted monarch. "Jacob blessed Pharaoh." Never had the king of Egypt stood so high. Through his God-instructed administrator, he had been led to wise and equitable measures, which during years of super-abundant plenty provided for the years no less of famine, relieved the poor amply, enriched the sovereign beyond example, supplied the wants of adjacent lands, and especially for the chosen people, and brought them where they were to multiply, arouse the wicked hostility of their neighbours, and in due time furnish a wondrous spectacle of a deliverance from Jehovah, to declare His name throughout all the earth in plaguing the proud king of that day and vanquishing his false gods, as conspicuous as His mighty hand and outstretched arm on behalf of Jacob's seed in their most feeble and abject state.

"And Pharaoh said to Jacob, How many are the days of the years of thy life? And Jacob said to Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage" (vers. 8, 9).

"And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household with bread according to [the mouths of their little ones" (vers. 11, 12).

The humbled heart of Jacob felt justly in comparison with Abraham and Isaac, but rose up. without question of pride to bless the king. God was before his faith, and he could bless Pharaoh simply, out of a full heart. And beyond all gainsaying, the less is blessed by the better. (Heb. 7: 7).

[Left unfinished by the Author's death].