

# JOSEPH, TYPICAL OF CHRIST.

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE,  
AS SHADOWING FORTH THE REJECTED  
AND GLORIFIED CHRIST, AND THE WAYS OF  
GOD'S GRACE THROUGH HIM.

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# JOSEPH.

## HIS PRESENTATION.

**J**OSEPH was the eleventh son of Jacob. His name signifies "Adding." His mother's name was Rachel, whom God remembered, and to whose prayer He hearkened. And when her son was born she called his name Joseph, and said, "The Lord shall *add* to me another son" (Gen. xxx. 22-4). We have no account of Joseph's early life beyond a passing reference to Jacob's children on his journey from the home of Laban, his father-in-law, in the land of the people of the east (xxix. 1) to Canaan, where his father Isaac was a stranger. The first recorded incident is in Genesis xxxvii. 2-4. It is introduced in a very striking manner: "These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Now *Israel loved Joseph* more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours [margin, pieces]. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him."

One cannot fail to remark, that whilst the narrative speaks of the generations of Jacob (and we know that he had in all twelve sons), yet Joseph is the only one who is here brought into

prominence, the others being simply viewed as his brethren. And any spiritual mind acquainted with the New Testament will perceive at once a striking analogy between that which is recorded of Joseph, and that which is revealed of a far greater than he, Jesus the Son of God. Unquestionably, as so often noticed, we get in him and in that which befell him a most lovely foreshadowing of Christ. Though without this key one might read the history of Joseph with a mere passing interest, like any other, with it the Spirit unlocks unsearchable treasures for our consideration and for the blessing of our souls. In short, it prefigures Christ in His life on earth, in His death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of God.

Whilst endeavouring to avoid defining too sharply that which is thus so beautifully presented in shadow in this deeply interesting and instructive story, we would seek to bring before our readers the chief points which appear to us to foretell of Christ, His blessed words and His wondrous works. As He is ever before God throughout Scripture, if we have Him also before our souls, we cannot fail to discover priceless spiritual treasures for our enrichment at every step.

Joseph, then, is introduced to us as feeding the flock with his brethren, and bringing to his father their evil report. And they perceived that he was the favourite of his father Israel, loved by him more than all his children (for he was the son of his old age); and he was clad with a coat of many colours. Moreover, God gave to Joseph remarkable dreams, which he narrated to his brethren, and which clearly showed that ere long he would rule over them. All this produced envy

and hatred in their hearts, and they could not speak peaceably to him. But his father observed the saying.

In the gospel narrative we find Jesus in the midst of His brethren (Israel after the flesh) feeding the flock of Jehovah. But the ways of the mass were of grievously evil report. More than once the heavens were opened upon Him, and the voice of the Father from the excellent glory declared of Him, as He walked in perfect obedience under His eye: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17). And more than once we are told in the Gospel of John that the Father loveth the Son (John iii. 35; v. 20; xvii. 23). Joseph's coat of many colours is probably emblematic of the varied moral glories and excellencies which characterized that blessed One as He walked in perfection among men. And as He ministered among them, He set forth, in parabolic and other teaching, that He was the rightful Heir and King, and that He would appear in glory, and that all should make obeisance to Him.

But though He came to His own, His own received Him not; and though in the world, and the world was made by Him, the world knew Him not (John i. 10, 11). Men loved darkness rather than light, and hated the light. Their deeds were evil. As in the case of Joseph, both His person, His words, and His works provoked the enmity of their dark and evil hearts. There was no beauty in Him that men should desire Him. He was despised and rejected of men. They could not speak peaceably to Him. They took counsel against Him. And they sought to entangle Him in His talk. And it came to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that was written

in Israel's law, "They hated Me without a cause" (John xv. 25).

#### HIS REJECTION.

Now the sons of Jacob were feeding the flocks at Shechem, which signifies "Portion," and *Israel* sent Joseph to see how they fared. (Israel was the new name given by God to Jacob: xxxv. 10.) A certain man who found him wandering in the field said to him, "What seekest thou?" And he said, "I seek my brethren," etc. (xxxvii. 12-16). And he went after them till he found them as directed in Dothan. But when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him, saying one to another, "Behold this dreamer (or master of dreams) cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams" (vv. 18-20).

And when God sent His Son Jesus to His brethren in the land of their portion to see how they fared, seeking their good, He was met with the "What seekest Thou?" of unbelief. Such was the deep-seated enmity against the Sent One of God, that when they saw Him afar off (for there was an immeasurable moral distance in their hearts from Him), and ere they came in touch with Him and the message of His love and grace, they conspired against Him. The chief priests and the elders and scribes of Israel took counsel to put Him to death. "Behold this dreamer cometh" was the language of their hearts.

The wondrous living words which fell from Christ's blessed lips, telling of His kingdom and

glory, were treated as the imposture of a master of dreams. "Come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours," was the language of His enemies, when they beheld God's Heir (Luke xx. 14). The character of their master, Satan, came out in his dupes. He was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. And just as Joseph's brethren sought to shed his blood and to cover their wickedness with a lie, so also the Jews not only sought the life of Jesus, but shed His innocent blood, coupling their awful deed with mocking and lying.

But *conscience* is a powerful monitor, and works even when the deceitful heart of man is bent on treachery and wickedness. This is forcibly illustrated at this critical moment by the conduct of Reuben. He seeks to hinder his brethren from shedding Joseph's blood, and would rid him out of their hands, to deliver him again to his father (xxxvii. 21, 22). We find a striking instance of it in the case of Pontius Pilate, who sought to dissuade the Jews from their fell purpose to crucify Christ; but, alas for him, deceived by the great enemy of souls, his conscience steeled, he ceded to the rabble cry, backed by the religious leaders, and delivered up the Just One to a felon's death.

"And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; and they took him and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread," etc. (vv. 23-5). In Matthew xxvii. 28-31, we read that "they stripped Jesus and put on Him a scarlet robe," and having crowned Him in mockery, bowed before Him, spat upon and

smote Him. Every mark of dark dishonour was heaped upon the Son of the Blessed. And they crucified Him betwixt two thieves.

Upon the cross the waters of God's holy judgment against sin overflowed. All its billows passed over the holy soul of Jesus, the Son of God. Atonement was made through the one offering of the unblemished Lamb of God's providing. Having cried, "It is finished," He rendered up His spirit and His precious blood was shed. And He was buried in the grave. But there was no water in that pit, for all had been exhausted in His death. And as the brethren of Joseph, with utter indifference to his misery, sat down to eat bread, so also we find it recorded of those guilty of the crucifixion of Christ that "sitting down, they watched Him there" (Matt. xxvii. 36).

Additional details of the sinful and heartless conduct of Joseph's brethren are afforded us in the following verses, which further illustrate the gospel narrative. A company of Ishmaelites pass by, on their way from Gilead to Egypt, with camels laden with spices, etc. Judah seizes the opportunity to save Joseph's life, and to sell him instead as a slave. The covetousness of the human heart once aroused, his brethren are content to agree to Judah's proposal. "*What profit* is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him," etc. (Gen. xxxvii. vv. 25-7). So they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold him for twenty pieces of silver. And his purchasers brought him into Egypt.

In connexion with the betrayal and rejection of Christ covetousness also plays its solemn part. Jesus was estimated at the price of a slave,

betrayed and sold by Judas for thirty pieces of silver, according to the prophecy of Zechariah: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord" (Zech. xi. 12).

But whilst Joseph was cast into the pit, and again lifted out of it, and thus in figure entered into death and life out of death, Jesus was actually delivered unto death and lives again beyond it for ever. His precious blood *was* shed, and it is impossible for man to conceal this solemn fact. Israel, with the world's concurrence, is guilty of His blood. Herod and Pilate were made friends over the rejection of Christ. And the blood of Christ, shed at Calvary, calls aloud for judgment upon Israel and the world. The day of vengeance is at hand (Isa. lxiii. 4), though mercy for the moment rejoices against it, and grace abounds. The blood of Christ, prefigured by the blood of Abel, slain by his brother Cain, cries to God from the ground. It cannot be concealed. But happy indeed is that man who learns the value of the precious blood of Christ for his own soul, and who is cleansed from all sin by its infinite efficacy, instead of remaining exposed to the world's judgment on account of the guilt of His death, etc.

"And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit. . . . And he returned unto his brethren, and said, the child is not; and I, whither shall I go?" (vv. 29, 30). Reuben for the moment appears to have been



ignorant of what his brethren had done with Joseph. He fears the worst, and is filled with dismay. He had proposed that they should put him in the pit in order to save his life. But now Joseph has disappeared, and Reuben in his distress cries, Whither shall I go? He has no idea how God was overruling all for His own glory, and for his and his brethren's blessing. So likewise when Jesus died, many "that came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts, and returned" (Luke XXIII. 48). Others, when they found that His grave was empty, were filled with wonder and dismay. The resurrection of Christ and all that it involved was not yet apprehended by any. And again, others were rebuked by the Lord, saying, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" (Luke XXIV. 25).

But Reuben's cry passes unheeded. Utterly heartless, his brethren cover their sin with deceit. Dipping Joseph's coat in the blood of a kid, they send it with a lying message to their aged father, who, thinking that his beloved son had been rent in pieces by some wild beast, was filled with mourning and distress. And the purchasers of the youth sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, king of Egypt, a captain of his guard.

Now the Lord was with Joseph, and made all that he had to prosper in his hand. And he rose in the confidence of his master. And he was a goodly person and well favoured (Gen. XXXIX. 1-6). But being subjected to a grievous and false accusation, he was put into a place in the prison, where the king's prisoners were bound; but twice we are told that the Lord was with him (v. 21-3).

Here, in the inscrutable ways of God, Joseph is used of Him to interpret the dreams of two of his fellow-prisoners, Pharaoh's chief butler and baker. He told the former that his dream signified that he would be released from prison, restored to the king's presence, and again privileged to hand the cup of wine to Pharaoh. And the latter, that instead of again making bake-meats for the king he would be hanged upon a tree, and that the birds would eat his flesh from off him (XL. 1-23).

In the first of these interpretations we appear to get a picture of resurrection and its results, in the latter of the vanity of the works of the flesh, ending in death. The presence of Christ, the true Joseph, innocent and holy, who had done nothing wrong (*v.* 15) in the prison of this world, falsely accused and treated as a felon, brings about two things. It is here (to use the figure) that He interprets the dreams of fallen men. On the one hand, men under the displeasure of God through sin are delivered by His grace, on the ground of Christ's finished work, and are restored and reconciled to Him, henceforth to bear fruit, and to serve and minister to Him to the joy and refreshment of His heart. On the other hand, men who have sought to serve with their works and to bring *their* baked meats to God, only prove the truth of His word, that they that are in the flesh cannot please Him. It is "not of works." The end of such is death and the judgment of God.

Pharaoh did as Joseph had foretold. The butler was restored, the baker hanged. "Yet did *not* the former *remember* Joseph, but *forgat him.*" Alas, how many act likewise to-day, who, once under God's displeasure in this prison-world

of sin, instead of dying under the judgment of God, have been the objects of His great grace. Introduced into the highest privileges, they remember not, but forget the One who down in this same world spake the living words, which tell of the Christian's blessing in life out of death.

Joseph, forgotten for the moment, remained in prison, and the word of the Lord tried him. But God was surely, though slowly, carrying out His blessed purpose. The Psalmist David sums up in lovely language that which God did with His faithful servant. To the latter part of this we are about to turn, setting forth as it does in such a wonderful manner the exaltation and glory of Christ. We read: "Moreover He called for a famine upon the land: He brake the whole staff of bread. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron [margin, his soul came into iron]: until the time that His word came: the word of the Lord tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: to bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom" (Ps. cv. 16-22).

#### HIS EXALTATION.

Our attention is next called to two remarkable dreams of Pharaoh himself. God has many ways of carrying out His purposes, and even the hearts of kings are in His hand. The first dream was concerning seven lean kine devouring seven fat kine. The second concerning seven thin ears devouring seven fat ones. The reader can ponder over the detail in XLI. 1-8. God was showing

beforehand, in visions of the night, what should shortly come to pass in His ways with men. Pharaoh awoke and his spirit was troubled; and all the magicians and wise men of his kingdom were at fault. There was not one who could interpret his dream.

At this juncture the chief butler remembered Joseph, and told the king of his interpretation of his and his companion's dreams when in prison, and how it was fulfilled. Pharaoh sent for him, and told him he had heard that he was an interpreter of dreams. Joseph answered, saying, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace" (vv. 14-16). Having narrated the dreams, Joseph, taught of God, said, "The dream of Pharaoh is *one*: God hath shewed Pharaoh what He is about to do" (vv. 25-8). And again, "For that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass" (v. 32). The interpretation was that seven years of great plenty were about to come throughout all the land of Egypt, succeeded by seven years of great dearth and famine. And Joseph gave Pharaoh counsel to look out a man discreet and wise, and to set him over the land of Egypt to administer it, so that a great store should be gathered in the years of plenty in order to meet the great need in the years of scarceness.

All these things are written for our instruction and admonition upon whom the ends of the age are come. And as we consider the revelations of God, one cannot fail to perceive how forcibly the dreams of Pharaoh, looked at in a dispensational way, illustrate His boundless grace at the present moment, and in the hour of trial and judgment which is imminent. Consequent upon the death

of Christ, God has made known that a boundless store of grace is prepared for man to-day. But after this perfect period of grace, set forth in the seven years of plenty, has run by, it will be succeeded by a period of trial, moral famine, and judgment, unparalleled in the history of the world (Matt. xxiv. 21).

Or if we look at it from a moral standpoint, applicable immediately to ourselves, as having felt the terrible pinch of famine in our souls, we shall find in turning to God that He through the true Joseph has prepared abundant grace for us, so that our every possible need is met and satisfied. God's store of grace is inexhaustible. It is reigning and abounding through righteousness, where sin once abounded. But the period of grace, illustrated by the seven years, is limited, though already protracted to nearly nineteen centuries. It is clear that we are now on the very eve of its close. Hence the deep importance of the present moment for every famishing soul to participate in it without delay.

Now Pharaoh said to his servants when he had heard the interpretation of his dreams and the wise counsel of Joseph, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?"\* And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shalt all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou" (vv. 38-40).

Now if Pharaoh could use such language of Joseph, how much more can it be used of Jesus! Where can we find such a one as He? Who

\* Or, the spirits of the gods, for Pharaoh was an idolater and knew not the God of Joseph.

can compare with the Man of God's eternal counsel, His well-beloved Son? Who is like unto *Jesus of Nazareth*, despised and rejected of men? Who is like the One anointed by the Holy Ghost, who went about doing good, and whose delight was the will of God? Where can such discretion and wisdom be found as in the blessed, holy Man, Jesus, who ever walked under the eye of God and whose heart was perfect before Him? Where is there one who can be compared with Him upon whom the heavens could open, and the voice of the Father declare of Him, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? All the manifold wisdom of God shone out morally in the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, in Him who, whilst ever dwelling in His bosom, declared Him on earth. "Great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. III. 16). During His whole pathway, the Son of the Blessed walked in the power of the Spirit as a perfectly dependent and obedient man. Can we find such a one as this is? Impossible.

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck: and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name, Zaphnath-paaneah;

and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-phera priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt" (vv. 41-5).

What a lovely picture of the exaltation of Christ, drawn by the master hand of the Spirit of God! Pharaoh exalted Joseph to power, arrayed him with glory, called upon all to bow to him, gave him a new name, and bestowed upon him a wife. Each of these acts of the king sets forth one of the varied glories bestowed upon the true Joseph, as set forth in the pages of the New Testament. Let us enter somewhat further into the details.

Joseph, raised from the dead in figure, was set at the right hand of power of earth's greatest potentate. And in the first chapter of Ephesians, verses 20-2, we read of the working of God's mighty power, "which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (or age), but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet," etc. And again, the Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John v. 22), and "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also," etc. (John v. 27). And again, the Lord Himself said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). All power and authority and judgment have been committed to the hand of Jesus, God's Son, the One who glorified Him. He has been exalted to the right hand of power nearly nineteen centuries ago, and is still seated there. That power is now exercised in a hidden way. Shortly He will be manifested in power, and all will be compelled to

submit to Him, the Man of God's everlasting counsel, the second Man (in contrast to the first, who fell), the Lord out of heaven.

And not only has God raised and exalted Him, but He has covered Him with glory in the place of exaltation. "Thou makest Him a (some) little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet" (Heb. II. 7, 8).

Where glory lights the courts on high,  
With highest glory crowned,  
Thee, Lord of power and majesty,  
Celestial hosts surround.

The blessed brow of God's Beloved, once mocked with a crown of thorns, is now crowned with glory of honour. It is thus that we behold Him, although we see not yet all things manifestly put under Him (Heb. II. 8, 9). In spirit now, and soon in actuality in the glory, His saints sing, "Thou art worthy," etc. And all the angelic hosts, who were called upon to worship Him when as the First Begotten He was brought into the world (Heb. I. 6), shall say with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12).

And, further, in Philippians II. 9-11 we learn of Him who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth (or heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings); and that every



tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Pharaoh had doubtless many chariots, and he made Joseph to ride in the second chariot which he had. He passed through the multitudes of his great capital city with heralds crying before him, "Tender father! Bow the knee." (See margin.) And one cannot imagine any daring to refuse this mighty potentate's behest. But the chariots of God are twenty thousand (Ps. LXVIII. 17). And, speaking according to the figure, the blessed Man, Christ Jesus, the true Joseph, God's exalted One, rides in His chariot. His blessed and everlasting word, heralded by the Holy Ghost and the many tongues of His myriad saints, calls upon all to bow to the name of Jesus.

Every one who bows becomes one more in the vast ranks of the heralds of God. Strange that any should refuse to bow to the name of the Man whom God delighteth to honour! No angel in heaven refuses. Alas, thousands on earth, rebels in heart and mind through sin, refuse. But a moment is rapidly approaching when all will be compelled to bow. The apostle, led by the Spirit, says that all should, but the prophet foretells that all shall. "I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto Me every knee *shall* bow, every tongue *shall* swear" (Isa. XLV. 23). Grace waits now on men, but in that day it will be compulsory, and every being, heavenly, earthly, infernal, shall bow to the lordship of Jesus, the Son of the living God.

#### HIS NEW NAME AND HIS BRIDE.

"And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah" (Gen. XLI. 45), which in the Coptic

language signifies "a revealer of secrets," or "the man to whom secrets are revealed." How wonderfully applicable to Him who is greater than Joseph! He it is who makes known to us all the mysteries (or secrets) of God. In Deuteronomy we read: "Things secret belong to God; but things revealed to us and to our children" (Israel). But when we come to the pages of the New Testament we find that God, being glorified in Christ, discloses the secrets of His heart of love to us through Him. The hidden things and the deep things of God are now made known. He has fully revealed Himself in His Son. And the Spirit being bestowed upon His people, Christians, from a glorified Christ, we have the capacity to enter into them. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things (or the depths) of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10).

It is remarkable the number of mysteries, or secrets, unfolded in the revelation of God's ways in Christ. They form quite a study in themselves. The careful searcher of Scripture will discover in them an outline of the ways of God from the incarnation of Christ down to the end of all things. They are no longer hidden secrets, but revealed ones. Each is carefully unfolded, and the Spirit delights to take of these precious things of Christ and to show them unto us. Unfathomable spiritual wealth is to be found therein (1 Tim. iii. 16; Matt. xiii. 35; Eph. v. 32; 1 Cor. xv. 51; 2 Thess. ii. 7; Rev. xvii. 5, x. 7; 1 Tim. iii. 9; Rom. xi. 25; Eph. i. 9).

And Pharaoh gave Joseph to wife "Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On." The rejected but exalted Joseph, lord over all the land of Egypt, receives an Egyptian wife. Jesus, the Lamb of God's providing, despised and re-

jected of men, but raised from the dead, and exalted by God as Lord of all at His right hand, receives a bride from out of the world, soon to be presented glorious to Himself as His wife, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The church of the living God is this heavenly bride. God exalted Christ to His own right hand, and "gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 22, 23). This is the great mystery (or secret) of God. "I speak," says the apostle, "concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. v. 32).

All who form this heavenly company, the body and bride of Christ, the true Asenath, were set apart for this glorious destiny according to the eternal purpose of God. The Spirit of God, given from the glorified Christ on the day of Pentecost, dwelling in the saints of God on earth, forms this wondrous assembly. All who receive the Spirit from that day till the Lord shall receive His saints to Himself on high (John xiv. 3), form part of the church, His heavenly bride. Little is said of Asenath. She is lost to view in the glory of Joseph, with whom she is one. And the church of God, formed by the Spirit, is one with Christ, a partaker of the glory bestowed upon Him, and will be displayed with Him in the day of His public manifestation and glory so rapidly approaching.

#### HIS ADMINISTRATION.

Now God began to bring about in His wondrous ways that which had been communicated to Pharaoh in his dreams and interpreted by His servant Joseph. Seven years of great plenty

succeeded each other. The earth brought forth by handfuls. "And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number" (XLI. 47-9). *How forcibly this shadows forth the abundant provision of the God of all grace on behalf of man's need! And all is prepared and ready beforehand.* But ere we read of Joseph's distribution of the corn, the Spirit of God records the birth of his two sons. "And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction" (vv. 51, 52).

And Jesus, the rejected and crucified One, ascended in glory, left all His toil behind (being separated from all the circumstances and relationships in which He had moved ere He went to the cross), and as the true Corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died in the land of His affliction, has brought forth much fruit (John XII. 24). "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John I. 10, 11). He was cast out and crucified, and in dying ended His toil, and broke with every link which for the moment He had taken up in grace, in order that the inscrutable purpose of God might be fulfilled, the many grains (Christians) be produced and harvested for the garner of God on high, as well as an innumerable company blessed for the earth.

Then the seven years of plenteousness being ended, the seven years of dearth began to come. And the dearth was in all lands. But there

was a mighty store of corn under the hand of Joseph awaiting the need of the famishing. "And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread, and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do" (Gen. xli. 55). And there is a great moral dearth to-day. The world is famishing. There is a great famine in this far-off country (Luke xv. 14). But there is a great and inexhaustible store of grace in the gospel for man's deep need. There is bread enough and to spare on high for all. For Christ is there. For hundreds of years famishing souls have cried to God, and thousands are crying still. And to Whom does He point them? To Christ. The word of the glad tidings for the hungry soul is, "Go to Jesus; what He saith to you, do." And none shall go in vain, for He hath said, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37); and "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (John vi. 35).

"And the famine was over all the face of the earth. And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands" (vv. 56, 57). Now Joseph, who had the keys, opened all the stores, and sold the corn to all who came.

The Lord Jesus, who administers the abounding grace of God to perishing man, has through His death and resurrection opened all the stores. God sent His Son to this end, and being glorified in Him, His heart is wide open towards all. There is naught but grace for every one who comes.

All are invited. All are welcome. No famishing soul is sent empty away. Joseph sold to all who came. And Jesus does likewise. But what are His terms? "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isa. LV. 1, 2).

The grace of God is waiting on perishing men. It brings salvation, full, free, and everlasting for all. Pharaoh said to the Egyptians, "What Joseph saith to you, *do*." And what did he tell them to do? To bring their money. But Jesus bids all to come without money. He tells us to leave off doing. The day of doing is past. We cannot do anything to please God till we have first become the recipients of His bounteous grace. There is nothing to do *for* salvation, for

Jesus did it, did it all,  
Long, long ago.

Doing is on the principle of law. But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. And grace now reigns through righteousness.

#### HIS WAYS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND GRACE.

In the following chapters, we get a most interesting sequence of events in connexion with the need of Joseph's father and brethren on account of the famine, and with the exercises through which they pass before their need is fully met and his brethren are reconciled with him.

This may be taken up in a twofold way, as illustrating the exercises of an individual soul awakened to a sense of its need before it is brought into the enjoyment of peace and reconciliation, and also as typical of the forgiveness and reconciliation of the spared remnant of Israel in the future, when they will recognize and believe on their formerly rejected Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us seek to apply it in connexion with the former to the profit of each exercised soul that may read these lines.

"Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt" (CXLII. 1-3). Famine stared Jacob and his sons in the face; and there was nothing but death before them. Looking one upon another was useless. Vain was the help of man. But the report of plenty in another land had reached Jacob's ears. And he believed the report. He perceived it was the only way of escape, the only way to live. But his thought was to purchase that which should meet their need.

There is a widespread moral famine to-day; death also reigns. And no man can by any means aid or redeem or save his brother. Vain indeed is the help of man in the solution of this grave matter. But the gospel report has gone forth. Plenteous grace is stored for all who come. The grace of God brings salvation and delivers the perishing. Faith cometh by hearing (or by report); and the believer passes out of death into life. But as Joseph's brethren had to go down

into Egypt to humble themselves in the presence of the one whom as yet they knew not, so also the famished soul, the perishing sinner, must be brought down and humbled in the presence of Christ, before being brought to know Him as Saviour and Lord, and to be at home and happy in His presence.

"But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him" (*v.* 4). Benjamin was Jacob's favoured youngest son, and enjoyed a special place in the heart of his father. And hence, whilst Jacob's need compelled him to seek for corn by sending his sons to Egypt, he holds back the object dearest to his heart. So likewise in the first exercise of the needy soul, compelled to turn to God and to Christ for that which alone can satisfy, we naturally cling to the dearest objects which engage our hearts, and thus are hindered from obtaining true satisfaction and joy.

In the narrative which follows we find how many and how deep were the exercises through which Joseph's father and brethren had to pass, and how necessary they were that the repentance of the latter might be deep and lasting, and their reconciliation effectual and complete. Their consciences needed the ploughshare, that they might learn the gravity of their sin in having got rid of Joseph and deceived their father. They had been guilty of conspiracy and deceit, and would have added murder but for the plea of Reuben. They had done Satan's work, who was a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies (*John VIII. 44*). God had overruled their wickedness, and was turning all to His own glory and for their good. But the root of the evil had to be reached



and judged, everything that was dear being let go, and God's severe but merciful lesson fully learnt.

Every soul at peace with God, and in the enjoyment of reconciliation, cannot fail to perceive in all this the transcript of his own exercises, and of the faithful but gracious ways of God with him ere he arrived at that blessed consummation. We are all disposed to treat sin lightly, and are only too ready to slur over our shortcomings and failures, and to be satisfied with a provision of blessing far short of the riches of God's grace and of the depths of His love unfolded in the gospel. We have our Benjamins and other idols filling our hearts and holding us back. But God is faithful, and must probe the wounds of sin to the bottom, that all its poisonous working may be utterly frustrated. He will have us let our most precious idols go, that we may continue our path, not with an aching void in our hearts, but rather filled with Christ. He seeks our lasting and eternal good. Hence He deals with us in faithful love as He only can, that every hindrance may be removed, and that we may enjoy not only His full pardon, but solid peace, perfect liberty, and reconciliation, and that He Himself may be our heart's boast and joy. And what pains He has taken in this deeply instructive history of Joseph, written for our admonition, to show how we may enter into and enjoy these rich blessings!

"And Joseph was the governor over the land . . . and Joseph's brethren (the sons of Israel, *v.* 5) came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth" (*v.* 6). Thus commenced to be fulfilled the dreams of Joseph which they had despised, and which helped to rouse their hatred against him (xxxvii. 5-11).

"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them (or hard things with them); and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him."

Joseph saw and recognized his brethren at once, but as yet they knew not Joseph. A deep conscience-reaching and heart-searching work must precede that. They fell to the ground in obeisance before an unknown stranger, the governor over the land; but they little knew what was in his heart, and its deep yearning after them when he perceived who they were, notwithstanding their guilty conduct towards him. He remembered his dreams. And at once he brings an accusation against them. "Ye are spies," said he. "Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons: we are true men; thy servants are no spies." Then, passing over their sin with the brief word that of twelve brethren one is not, and the other, the youngest, was with their father, they themselves being ten, they hoped to be clear and to get some corn. But Joseph appears to be unconvinced, and persists that they are spies and must be put to the proof. And he put them all in prison for three days.

Many to-day make obeisance externally in the presence of the Lord, professing to be true men, but whose hearts are far from Him. As He said, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, but do not the things which I say?" Thousands are saying, "We are Christians; we serve God; we are not heathen," etc. But how about *the One that is not*. How about Christ? The world has got rid of

Him. The guilt of the rejection and death of Christ lies at its door.

The explanations of the sons of Jacob are all in vain. Joseph will go to the root of the matter. "That is it," said he, "that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else, by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies" (*vv.* 14-16). And he put them all together into ward three days. This was searching work, a deep ploughing of consciences, that produced the intended effect. Instead of getting their needs satisfied, they are deprived of all liberty and plunged into still deeper distress. Until the source and spring of evil is reached in the soul, all our own efforts to extricate ourselves from sin and its consequences only plunge us into deeper and deeper distress, till we find ourselves in utter bondage, deprived of all liberty and joy. The root must be reached and judged. God touches the tenderest spot, and the dearest objects of our idolatrous hearts must be let go if we would enjoy true satisfaction and liberty in His blessed presence.

But on the third day (which reminds us of the resurrection of Christ), Joseph said unto them, "This do, and live; for I fear God: if ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: but bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so" (*vv.* 18-20).

All this sets forth the first taste of grace in the midst of the legality of souls seeking to clear themselves before God by their own righteousness. Though *they* had no fear of God before their eyes, Joseph had, and the rays of hope spring up in their hearts as they listen to his words. He points out to them the way of life, frees all but one from imprisonment, and his lot is ameliorated (he is bound in the house of the prison); he gives them corn for the famine, a little relief of their deep need; and tells them that if they bring their youngest brother they shall not die. But it illustrates only the beginning of the ways of God's grace. Though most blessed in its place, it is but a foretaste of the fulness and richness of the grace that is found in Christ. But to enter upon and enjoy all this, there must be still deeper exercises and ploughings of consciences. See the effect of Joseph's words.

## SOUL EXERCISE.

"And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, *behold, also his blood is required.*"

The combination for the moment of righteous requirement with a measure of grace on the part of Egypt's governor does its work. Their consciences are sorely convicted in his presence, and a deep sense of guilt fills their souls. All the terrible scenes of the rejection of their brother—his innocence, his anguish of soul, his beseech-

ings—their own hard-heartedness, their covetousness, and, for aught they know, their actual *blood-guiltiness*, crowd through their minds. They are compelled to confess one to another, “We are *verily guilty*.” Their own hearts upbraid them that they would not hear. And Reuben reminds them how he said, “Do not sin against him,” bringing home the awful verdict, “*His blood is required*.”

Dear reader, where does all this find *you*? It is the common experience more or less of every soul that is brought back to God. His blessed Spirit creates a need in the soul which only the true Joseph, Christ Jesus our Lord, can satisfy. Deep are the exercises through which each soul must pass ere it comes out into the enjoyment of pardon, liberty, peace, and reconciliation in His blessed and glorious presence.

How long many of us would not hear! How long we sought to cover our sin and to justify ourselves! How slow we were to realize that we were part of the world which cast out and crucified the Lord of Glory! How terrible was the discovery that God had the charge of blood-guiltiness against us! The world (we all) passes on its way, celebrating even the birth of Christ, utterly oblivious that *His blood is required* by God! Have you then accepted God's verdict against yourself? Have you pleaded, “*Verily guilty*”? To reach that point in the soul is the sure way to blessing, for whilst, on the one hand, the death of Christ brings all under the judgment of God, on the other, it is the channel through which the abounding grace of God reaches us. It is the basis on which God's righteousness is revealed, which is unto (or towards) all, and upon all them that believe (Rom. III. 22).

Now "they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes" (*vv.* 23-4). We little know, when first conscience-stricken before God, how thoroughly the Lord understands us. Although He too acts through an intermediary (as Joseph through an interpreter), that is, through the Holy Ghost, in His dealings with us, yet He knows and understands us perfectly, far better indeed than we know ourselves. He not only hears our words, but understands the deep secret thoughts and intents of every heart. And the deep secret chords of His heart are also touched as He watches from on high the godly sorrow of true repentance wrought in those on whom His heart of love is set, whom He is bringing back to Himself, and whose souls are filled, under the gracious but faithful workings of His Spirit, with alternate hope and fear.

"Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence" (*vv.* 25-6). Mingled joy and sorrow fills the awakened soul that has had to do with God and with Christ. Filled sacks of corn, so to speak, are found in the glad tidings. Christ is a full portion, and there is a moment when the soul begins to realize it and to start homeward. But there are often unsettled questions which mar the first joy and cause deep sorrow of heart. Joseph's rejection, the binding of Simeon, and the obligation to give up Benjamin! How is all this to be

met? How shall we satisfy God as to the rejection and death of Jesus? How shall we get free from the legal bondage still so strong in our hearts and minds? How shall we give up the dearest natural idols of our hearts? How indeed? Ah, many a still deeper experience must be gone through, before unclouded peace and perfect liberty are the abiding portion of our souls. How full are the scriptures of truth! And how painstaking are the ways of God with us for our good!

Hitherto Joseph's brethren have only realized their guilt through its consequences *for themselves*. Now they must learn the deeper lesson, that sin against our neighbour is also *sin against God*. As one of them by the way opened his sack, he espied his money (*v. 27*). And having told his brethren, their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, "What is this that *God* hath done unto us?" (*v. 28*). Sin again asserts itself. It follows us and distresses us. There is no getting away from it. It is there, notwithstanding our good desires. And the holy law of God is there too, to which is attached the solemn word, that if any man offend in one point he is guilty of all. How shall we escape? The heart fails for fear. We are brought to the sense of having to do with God. We begin to learn the gravity of sin in the sight of the Holy One. But the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

Then, returning to their father, they tell him all that befell unto them, each brother as he emptied his sack finding his bundle of money. And they were all afraid (*vv. 29-35*). "And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin away; all these things

are against me" (v. 36). Reuben seeks to assure him as to Benjamin, but he said, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave" (v. 38).

We are very slow to enter into the thoughts of grace. Corn without money is outside the world's creed,—Christ, the bread of life, without money and without price, is outside the range of every heart and mind untaught of God. The natural man rebels against the very idea of salvation without works (Rom. iv. 5, 6). "*We must do something*" is scored deep in every heart, when it first seeks to be right with God.

And further, the language of Jacob shows how deeply our own interests are bound up with our very existence, and how slow we are to perceive the hand of the Lord working for our blessing. Things that are really working for our good, if we only look beyond them to the Lord, seem to the natural sight to be working against us. "*Me have ye bereaved of my children. All these things are against me. My son shall not go down. Then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.*" Poor Jacob! It is all me and my, all against, and sorrow and the grave. No ray of light or hope breaks into his heart or mind. The corn is there, and the money is there, but the idols are there too. As yet there is no bowing to the hand of God, no perception that that which on the surface is so untoward is really His gracious but inscrutable way for the blessing of them all. Benjamin the favourite must be given up, as well as Joseph and Simeon, all three to be restored in a higher way, and for the full joy of his heart.



"And the famine was sore in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food" (XLIII. 1, 2). Self-will is not given up in a day, and it may lead us to hold fast to the very idol which hinders our blessing. So long as we do so we shall still suffer from soul hunger. We cannot live on our first experiences. We need Christ as a daily portion. Hence the renewed craving for a little food.

Judah repeats to his father the words of the man in Egypt. The ploughshare must go down deep. Benjamin must be yielded up. There is no deliverance for us without letting our heart's idols go. "And *Israel* said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?" (v. 6). He little knew who Joseph was, and that he already knew all. Judah pressed him to send the lad with him, saying, "And we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones," etc. (vv. 8, 9). "And their father *Israel* said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds: and take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight: take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved" (vv. 11-14).

All this is full of instruction for us, setting

forth the exercises of the soul, in connexion with our yielding to the claims of God, our deep lack of the sense of grace, our ignorance of the heart of Christ, and the innate but false feeling through sin that God is against us and must be propitiated by us! It is a blessed moment in our history when we are brought to say, "I will arise and go." To remain where we are is to perish. Famine and death reign in this world. We must leave it to enter upon life. But we are naturally very reluctant. *Jacob* would not yield, but *Israel* does so, though it is only by necessity. "If it must be so now, do this." And then he is careful to send a present, and that his sons should take double money, etc. He thinks the return of the money at their first visit was an oversight! Our souls are so legal we think we *must* do something. What we need must be paid for. The foundation truth of the finished work of Christ is foreign to all our natural thoughts. The grace of God seems to our poor reasoning an oversight! We have been so accustomed to look upon Him as hard and exacting. *Israel* closed with "Take also your brother," and "God Almighty give you *mercy*." The dearest idol goes last, and mercy was his highest thought.

"And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph." What a meeting! Have *you* ever been face to face with the true Joseph—Jesus the Son of God? Have you had to do personally with Him who knows all about you, all the sad and evil past, who knows you through and through, far better than you know yourself? There was no hard thought about them in the heart of Joseph, nothing but grace and love.

And there is no hard thought in the heart of Jesus, nothing but abounding grace and infinite love.

"When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon" (v. 16). This was an entirely unexpected favour. The one they so dreaded to meet invites them to dine. Instead of harsh words and reproaches and further claims, they are welcomed to his presence to participate of his bounty. But their hearts were full of mistrust, and their consciences ill at ease on account of the returned money. Hence they are filled with fear, thinking that Joseph sought occasion against them. A taste of God's favour, when sin is on the conscience, fills the exercised soul with similar distrust and fear. How can it be possible, it reasons in the midst of its distress, that it can participate in favour without having made some amends for sin?

Fearing to approach Joseph with the question of the money unsettled, though again losing sight for the moment of the root sin of the rejection of Joseph, they turn to the steward of his house. They seek a go-between, an intercessor. Christendom is full of this character of things. Tens of thousands are troubled about this sin or that sin, but lose sight of the crowning act of man's wickedness, the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God. Hence, fearful of Him through a bad conscience, and ignorant of the love and grace of His heart, they dare not approach with confidence and boldness, but vainly bring their case before Mary or one of the saints, and seek their intercession on their behalf, pleading often their good intentions and deeds like Joseph's brethren (vv. 19-22).

But listen to the precious words announced by Joseph's steward in his master's name: "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 unto them." Four things were announced to them: they were to be at peace, to have no fear, to enjoy the treasure, and to begin to enjoy liberty (v. 23).

What a blessed moment in our history when such words fall upon our ears and sink into our hearts! All four things are found in the gospel of the grace of God. He has made *peace* by the blood of the cross of His dear Son, and He came forth in resurrection to proclaim it (Col. i. 20; John xx. 19). The precious words "*Fear not*" fell again and again from the Lord's lips, and are still sounded forth from the glory above. God's perfect love casteth out fear (1 John iv. 18). The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is the believer's *treasure* (2 Cor. iv. 6, 7). And God gives us His Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is *liberty* (2 Cor. iii. 17). But many are the hindrances to our enjoyment of these blessings, and several will come before us in figure and shadow as we continue to follow the narrative.

Next, their feet being washed, they offer their present to Joseph and bow down and make obeisance to him. And he asks them of their welfare and of their father. But as yet they know him not. And our feet must be washed if we would stand in the presence of the true Joseph, our ascended and exalted Lord, and would bow before Him. To begin to purify our walk and ways, and to bow down in heart in the

light of His glory are sure signs that repentance has commenced in our souls. And surely the further we advance in the knowledge of Himself, the deeper it will be. The fuller the light flows in, the greater will be the abhorrence of the flesh, and the more complete the judgment of ourselves.

#### HIS RECEPTION OF HIS BRETHREN.

It is beautiful to trace in the next verses the yearning of the bowels of Joseph over Benjamin, and his assuring words, "God be gracious unto thee, my son" (vv. 39, 30). There is no further thought of binding. How blessed, indeed, it is to get away from our own thoughts to the Lord's, and to see His heart yearning over the objects of His love, notwithstanding all our failure and shortcoming and sin. Every part of this wonderful history seems to teem with the wondrous and gracious ways of our blessed Saviour God! Joseph sought where to weep. And has not Jesus wept in the days of His flesh?

"And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, *Set on bread*" (v. 31). And Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (John vi. 35). And again, "*This is the bread* which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (John vi. 50, 51). Set on bread. Have you partaken of it? It is for the Gentile as well as for the Jew. In the Father's house to-day, as for the prodigal in Luke xv., there is bread enough and to spare, with fatted calf besides.

Then follows the feast. "And they set on for him (Joseph) by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians which did eat with him by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank and were merry with him" (*vv.* 32-4).

What a lovely picture of the rich provision of grace and of divine order as regards those who are in relation with Christ! Firstly, Joseph has his portion by himself, then his brethren by themselves, and lastly the Egyptians by themselves. In the Christian economy Christ has His feast, whilst His brethren, all who are in relation with Him, feast on the riches of His grace. There is also a provision for the world. But Joseph took and sent messes unto his brethren, and Jesus Himself ministers directly to the objects of His love. They sat before him according to the order of their birth, and they marvelled one at another. We too have a place of rest in Christ's presence. His work is done, and He has sat down, and consequently we can sit down also before Him. Born of God, we have a place in His presence which He orders. And how oft have we marvelled one at another as we have meditated upon the grace of His heart, the bounty of His hand, and the wisdom of His ways. Mess after mess, the dainties of His lordly store have been dealt out to us by Him, filling our souls with joy and gladness.

"But Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs." He was Joseph's favoured brother. Now if we turn to Deuteronomy XXXIII., where we get the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel, we find in verse 12 that Benjamin is called "The beloved of the Lord." May we not take, then, the fivefold mess bestowed upon Benjamin to picture the fulness of the blessing of Christians, as set forth in Ephesians I. 6, He hath made us accepted (or taken us into favour) in Him the beloved"? Christ is the Beloved of God, and we are in Him. We need to enter in the power of the Spirit into the delight of the heart of God in the Beloved, in order to enter into His delight in His people who are in Him (Eph. I. 6, 7).

"And they drank and were merry with him." "If any man thirst," said the Lord, "let him come unto Me and drink." Living waters flow from Him, and all who drink live. The soul that yields wholly to Him is filled with the Spirit. The Spirit produces holy merriment and joy. When the prodigal came back to the father, they began to be merry. And we are privileged to make merry in our souls in communion with Christ. We feast with Him. Joy fills His heart as He ministers to us the riches of His grace, and His desire is that there may be a full response in ours and that our joy may be full.

But again the scene changes. The Lord is faithful, and in His ways with His people probes our wounds to the bottom, that they may be thoroughly cleansed and healed, and that our peace and joy and reconciliation may be solid and complete. Hence we find further dealings and experiences. "And Joseph commanded 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 his sack's mouth. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken" (XLIV. 1, 2). Joseph's steward is commanded to *fill* the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry.

The Lord's servants have received a command to minister food in due season to those who are the subjects of His blessing. His word entitles them to as much as they can carry. Every one individually has to learn a lesson that we are very slow to make our own, namely, that the whole blessing is without payment in any way whatever on our part. Neither our pleadings nor our works in the past, in the present, or in the future, are in any way whatever the ground of our blessing. It is all administered in the purest and richest grace, wholly and solely on the ground of the finished work of Christ. And it is the apprehension of this grace that brings us a salvation so full, rich, and free, which teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, etc. (Titus II. 11, 12).

And then, "Put *my cup, the silver cup*, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money." Surely none can fail to see in this a special mark of favour. Unknown as yet to Benjamin, he is marked out by Joseph to be the recipient of his cup, *the silver cup*. Silver in figure in Scripture often sets forth redemption, and Joseph's cup, from which he drank his wine, would be figurative of that which ministered joy to his heart. This act, then, appears to set forth the additional truth, that the joy of full and eternal redemption is our rich portion according



to the secret and eternal purpose of God in Christ before the world was. We are predestinated (or marked out beforehand) to this transcendent favour, before our souls, in the working of His grace and by the power of the Holy Ghost, are brought into the knowledge and enjoyment of it. That which has long been the joy of His heart becomes ours. We are brought to share it, although at first, as we shall see, our consciences being still ill at ease, we have such a feeble sense of God's way of grace, and such a confidence in ourselves and in our own ways, and in the uprightness of our intentions, that we cannot come to the acceptance of His verdict, that there is no good in us, nothing but short-coming, failure, and sin. It is only when we come, so to speak, to an end of ourselves that we are fully alive to the fact that all is grace on God's part from first to last, and that, apart therefrom, we have no hope and can receive no blessing from Him whatever.

#### THE END OF SELF.

Now, as soon as the morning was light, they were sent away. But Joseph commanded his steward to follow them, and to say, "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?" charging them with the theft of his lord's drinking cup. They take God's name to witness to their innocence, and express their willingness that, should one be found guilty, he should die. They too would be willing bondmen. How searching is the holy word of God! It is sharper than any two-edged sword. If we are to enjoy grace, it is not as innocent ones, as though we had never sinned, but as those who have fully earned sin's wages, which is death, and who deserve bondage for ever.

Sin comes up under the most unlikely circumstances. Where one would have last expected it, there it is.

There was no escape from the search, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. The most blameless man has to be convicted of sin, of robbing Christ of His joy. Yes, notwithstanding our first tastes of the goodness and grace of God, something more is needed to enjoy His great salvation. Sin is deeply rooted in us, and cannot be eradicated. We may get a start, and have a certain supply of corn, i.e. an apprehension of Christ for the present and for the future, *and yet not be delivered from the mastery of sin.* The deep experience of Romans VII. must be passed through, in more or less intensity, before we can enjoy liberty through Christ and our all in Him. We must learn, like the apostle, that "in me, that is, my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. VII. 18). Our natural goodness is no more acceptable to God than our badness. There must be the discovery comprised in the words, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then, and then only, shall we be able to add, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. VII. 25).

The cup did its work. Joseph made no mistake in this. It brought them with deep conviction to his feet. With rent clothes they came to Joseph's house, for he was yet there (v. 14). And they fell before him on the ground. "And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine [or make trial, margin]? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear our-

selves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found" (*vv.* 13-16).

The goodness of God leads to repentance. He so works, that finally we are without excuse. All the shuffling and wriggling and slurring over of the flesh must be brought to an end. The soul that desires deliverance must come out in its true colours. Each must learn not only that "all have sinned," but that "all are under sin" (*Rom.* III. 9). We must come to our true level before Him.

O tossed soul seeking peace and liberty, Jesus is yet there! You have known what it is to have to do with Him, and have tasted of His goodness, but fresh sin has cropped up. Why? Because sin still dwells in you. But Jesus is *yet there*, and you can go to Him. At His feet, in the dust before Him, you will find what you need. He it is who says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (*Matt.* XI. 28). It is true He will search and probe you yet again, but all is for your lasting good. He will say to you like Joseph, "What deed is this that ye have done?" and "Wot ye not that such a Man as I can certainly divine?" Yes, He knows all about you, better than you know yourself; he will bring sin home to you in all its grievous heinousness, in the light of God's thoughts about it all. He will let you learn that you have to do with One very different from yourself, One who knows the deepest secret thoughts and intents of every heart. And when His all-searching word has done its preparatory work by the power of the Spirit in your soul, then He will reveal Himself to you in all the fulness of His love.

Has the effect of His sovereign act of grace and faithfulness been the same for you, dear reader, in connexion with eternal things, as in the case of Joseph's brethren? Have you ever uttered from the heart the language of Judah? "What shall we say unto my Lord? What shall we speak? How shall we clear ourselves? God" (mark that) "hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." And then, "Behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found." As the Scriptures saith, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God (or become subject to the judgment of God)" (Rom. III. 19). All self-justification ceases. It is guilt before God. All hope of clearance has vanished. They are in the light. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John I. 5). The repentance is real; the judgment of self is deep. And they own they deserve judgment. Their sin had found them out, and they realized that it was God Himself who had brought it about.

And Joseph said, "God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant: and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father" (v. 17). The probe had reached the bottom. How could they go home in peace to their father with Benjamin a prisoner and bondman in Egypt? Impossible. Judah takes up the word and pleads for mercy. He seeks to show to Pharaoh's chief ruler that the giving up of Benjamin means death to the old man, their father. He tells him that the life of Jacob is bound up in the lad's life, and that not to take him back would bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. His thought is to spare the old man by the preservation of Benjamin

To give up the best seems to him to be the way of death. It was really the way of life. This led Joseph to reveal himself to his brethren (XLIV. 18-34). Till the question of our goodness, as well as that of our badness, is settled, there can be no going forward in peace. We need not only to learn that we have sinned, but that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isa. LXIV. 6). It is only on the ground of God's righteousness that we can enjoy peace with Him. Benjamin must be yielded up, but it is then that Joseph becomes known.

#### RECONCILIATION.

"Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph: doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence" (XLV. 1-3). What a moment! What a meeting! Joseph alone makes himself known to his brethren. What a revolution of thought must have filled their hearts and minds, as weeping aloud he said, "*I am Joseph*," etc. No wonder that their voices were hushed and that they were troubled. A guilty conscience had long burdened them, and now they stand with their mouths fully stopped in the presence of the one they had sold and cast out, the exalted ruler of the house and kingdom of Pharaoh!

And what a moment when the sinner, long

troubled with a guilty conscience and a burdened soul, after having passed through deep exercises with glimmers of light and occasional tastes of grace, is finally fully manifested in the presence of the true Joseph, the despised and crucified Jesus! What a meeting to find himself face to face with the One whom God has exalted at His own right hand as Head over all things, and who reveals Himself to him. The brethren of Joseph had been filled with wonder again and again at his ways with them, and now at last they learn who he is. Another, at a later day, smitten to the ground when a light above the brightness of the sun shone round about him, heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and cried "Who art thou, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, Whom thou persecutest," etc. (Acts IX. 1-9).

But in neither case was there one hard thought, notwithstanding all the guilt and evil of the past.

Joseph's heart yearned over his guilty brethren; he wept over and spoke kindly to and comforted them. "Come near to me, I pray you," were his words of welcome. "And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life . . . and God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now, it was not you that sent me hither, but God," etc. (XLV. 4-8).

Now God reveals His Son in the believer in pure grace. He reconciles us to Himself by His death (Rom. v. 10-11). Brought in true self-judgment into the light of the presence of the risen and glorified Son of God, we are not

even reproached. Nothing but words of grace and expressions of love meet us. Our sins are put far away on the ground of His finished work, and He says to us, "Come near to Me." We who sometimes were far off are made nigh in Him to God. Having reaped the benefits of His work, we are brought to know Himself. He draws us into His company. He exercises our consciences, touches our hearts, pours words of comfort into our inmost souls, wins our confidence, and draws us tenderly in love to His own blest side.

And then with wonder we learn how it has come about. To our deep surprise, we discover the inscrutable ways of God, and learn how things, to us incomprehensible, meet in His infinite mind. We find out how man's (and our) wickedness in the crucifixion and death of Christ has been overruled in the sovereign ways of God, and that the delivering up of Christ was in the counsel of God. "Who, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts II. 23). The death of Christ, which was the consummation of man's wickedness, is the ground on which God comes forth in righteousness to give life and salvation to men. Joseph said, "God sent me to preserve life, to preserve a remnant for a great deliverance." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John III. 16). And "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John III. 17). The result of the death of the Sent One of God is that many now receive His priceless gift of everlasting life, and are brought to enjoy His

great deliverance from the power of Satan, sin and the world, etc., whilst a remnant of His own chosen earthly people, and others too, will be blessed in the future.

Let us who believe challenge our hearts as to how far we appreciate and enjoy the Lord's blessed invitation to come near to Him. Naturally we shrink from it, because of what it involves. It means forsaking the world which lieth in the wicked one. He is not of the world. And His saints, even as He, are not of the world (John xvii. 14-16). Henceforth our life is bound up with His. This involves *nearness*. And nearness to Him means distance from the world in every phase, for the gulf between Him and the world is a very wide one. And we should appreciate above all, that the Lord invites us to come near Him for His own heart's joy. As has been said by another, He loves company. And His saints are His chosen companions. He loves to have them around His Person now, ere He surrounds Himself with them in glory; then shall He see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

We get in all this a lovely foreshadowing of the truth of *reconciliation*. Joseph's brethren were pardoned, received, reconciled, and brought to enjoy his company and all the rich blessing he delighted to bestow. They were treated on the ground of grace and love, as though they had never failed. And every believer to-day is treated in the same way. Having forgiven our sins, God saves us by a great deliverance, receiving us and reconciling us in Christ. He makes us at home in His presence, in nearness to Himself, in the enjoyment of all that He is and all that He delights to bestow upon His loved ones and His own.



## THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE.

In the following verses (XLV. 9-16) Joseph hastens the return of his brethren to his aged father with a wonderful message: "Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: and there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty."

When we are reconciled to God, He sends us with a message of glad tidings, fraught with rich blessing for those who receive it. The apostles themselves were ambassadors, and we in our day are privileged to announce the message committed to them. It is as serving the Lord that we can go out, speaking boldly on the authority of His word. We are privileged to tell how God hath made Jesus both Lord and Christ, to invite souls to come down to Him, and to bid them not to tarry lest it should be too late. We can tell them of a land of plenty where they may dwell in spirit, in blessed nearness to the Lord, the whole household of the believer participating in the blessing, and where abundant spiritual food is administered by the Lord Himself.

And then we read further: "Your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory. . . . And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and *wept*; and

Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed *all* his brethren. . . . And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well," etc. (*vv.* 12-16). Reconciled, our eyes opened wide, we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of the Divine Majesty, we hear words of grace and truth from His blessed lips and we delight to sound His glory forth. Tears of deep joy are ours as we become fully conscious that the everlasting arms are around our necks, and that His kisses are upon our cheek. The fame of our reception reaches the ears of many; Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren, and God Himself is well pleased. Wondrous indeed are the riches of His grace!

Then Pharaoh told Joseph to send his brethren with laden beasts to take their father and their households, and to come unto him, and he promised to give them the good of the land, and they should eat the fat of it. Also, said he, regard not your stuff: for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours. And God does not send His people on their way empty, but laden with provision for the path we are called to tread. He ministers to us the finest of the wheat (*Ps.* LXXXI. 16), and makes us abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house, and makes us drink of the river of His pleasure (*Ps.* XXXVI. 8). He crowns our year with His goodness, and His paths drop fatness (*Ps.* LXV. 11). It is a blessed thing indeed to come to God, the Giver of every good gift. And as we go on to experience the bounty of His heart and hand, we learn the truth of His word, that "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come;

all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. III. 21-3).

But what about *our stuff*? The things we so jealously heaped together and surrounded ourselves with in the natural state, and which we vainly imagined we could not do without, which seemed, as it were, to be part of ourselves, become as dross in the light of all the rich blessing of God! We discover such an inexhaustible fullness in Christ, that all else becomes valueless in comparison. In our little measure we enter upon the experience of the apostle when he wrote, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. III. 7, 8).

"And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way."

Two things strike one in this passage—the rich and free manner in which Joseph gave according to the commandment of the king, and the injunction not to fall out by the way. In Christianity it is all giving on God's side. God has come out as a giving, not as a demanding God. In the law He demanded from men; in

the gospel He gives to them. God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son. And, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom. VIII. 32). Joseph gave wagons, provision, raiment, money. God gives us all manner of spiritual blessings in Christ. Joseph's brethren went away laden with good things. And we walk the path appointed, not only enjoying the gospel of peace, but also the glad tidings of good things (Rom. x. 15).

But, said Joseph, "See that ye fall not out by the way." It was a parting injunction for their good. They are words fraught with deep meaning for Christians. How different would be the condition of the church of God to-day if we had only paid heed to them! Alas! before the apostles had passed away—yea, early in the church's history—the seeds of discord were sown by the enemy, and very soon produced an abundant crop of evil fruit (Acts v., vi., xv., etc.). And to-day what do we behold? The children of God again scattered abroad, rent and divided into a thousand pieces. Sects and parties abound. "See that ye fall not out by the way" has been forgotten. And thus we find the fruits of the falling out in the palliation and justification of the existing state of things. It may suit the careless and the indifferent, but what does God think of it all? "My people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. v. 31). Is there no remedy? Surely. What is it? To return in brokenness of spirit and self-judgment to the point of departure, and in loving subjection to the lordship of Christ and to each other, and in obedience to the Word of God, to seek simply to do His blessed will.

“And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto 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” (vv. 25–8).

Joseph’s brethren came to Jacob and announced the joyful news : Joseph is yet alive, and Joseph is governor over all the land of Egypt. It seemed too good to be true. Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not. How often since, that which is here prefigured has been met with the evil heart of unbelief ! How slow we all are to believe the God-sent testimony to a living Christ ! Tens of thousands too of Christian professors, who bow continually before crucifixes, have no perception of the gospel testimony to Him who, risen, said : “Fear not ; I am the First and the Last : I am He that liveth (or the Living One), and was (or became) dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell (Hades) and of death” (Rev. I. 17, 18). Few see its overwhelming importance. There is no salvation without it. “If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins.” But, as a well-known hymn beautifully expresses it,

The Lord is risen indeed,  
And all His work performed !  
The captive surety now is freed,  
And death, our foe, disarmed.

The Lord is risen indeed :  
He lives—to die no more ;  
He lives—His people's cause to plead,  
Whose sins, whose curse, He bore.

The Lord is risen indeed :  
And death has lost its prey ;  
And with Him all the ransomed seed,  
Shall reign in endless day.

Yes, blessed be God, Jesus lives. The One who went into death for the glory of God has come up out of it. It was not possible that God's Holy One should see corruption (Acts XIII. 35-7). He has triumphed gloriously. The Lord is risen indeed. He has passed through the heavens and taken His seat on high. God hath given to Him in highest glory at His own right hand to be Head over all things to the church, etc. (Eph. I. 20-3). Hidden for the moment from the eyes of men, He shall soon come forth in manifest glory as God's appointed Governor to rule over all.

#### SATISFACTION AND ATTRACTION.

But as they went on to tell Jacob all the words of Joseph, and he *saw* the wagons, he was convinced; his spirit revived. The wondrous tale continued to fall upon his ears, and as his eyes beheld the bounty of Joseph, his unbelieving heart was convinced. The sayings sank down into his ears, the words of truth worked in power in him. He believed with the heart; his spirit revived; and his lips confessed the truth.

At a later day, Thomas (figurative of the still future Jewish remnant) was unbelieving when he first heard the testimony to the risen Christ, but when he saw Him, with joy he confessed "My

Lord and my God." How blessed to-day for every heart which, hitherto steeled in unbelief, becomes melted under the powerful influence of the rich unfoldings of the gospel! Tens of thousands of rebel hearts, brought to listen to the joyful sound, have had their ears unstopped, their consciences reached, their hearts won, and their spiritual eyes opened, so that they have joyfully confessed Him in this wondrous day of grace. Of such He has said, before the day of His manifestation to Israel and the world, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John xx. 29).

And now hearken to the conclusion! Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." The message came to Jacob, a man marked by crooked ways, deceit, etc. But see the blessed ways of God coming out in what many a careless reader might pass over without a thought. The moment his faith is recorded, it is, so to speak, a new start. He is called by his new name, *Israel*, a name henceforth to be known on earth to the end of time. *Israel* said, "It is enough." A long life of sorrow and unrest is at an end. He believes the glad tidings concerning Joseph, and his heart is satisfied. "My son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." All he desires now is to behold him and to be in his company in the land where he dwells before he leaves this world for ever.

What a lovely picture of that which should characterize the believer in Jesus! Have *you* believed from the heart and confessed with the lips, "*It is enough*"? Are *you* satisfied with Christ, the risen Saviour, exalted at the right hand of God? "The misery of a man is great on him" (Eccles. viii. 6).

This world is a vale of sorrow and disappointment, a widespread scene of sin. No heart of man was ever yet filled by what it offers. One who had more than any other has left us a true estimate of it: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccles. ii. 11, 17). But Jesus, the Son, who is God, is enough the mind and heart to fill to overflowing.

Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus,  
I have rest ;  
Peace which passeth understanding,  
Oh how blest !

"It is enough." Then what is *your* desire? Have you the same as Israel? To behold Him, to be in His company, and to dwell where He dwells, not merely when you leave this world when your career has closed, but *now*. This is the blest privilege of every believer. "We see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour." He is presented to us as the Object of faith at the right hand of God. As we gaze upon Him, our hearts are filled and drawn to Him; we seek His company; we are no longer happy at a distance; we can only find a real home of rest and joy for our souls in His presence, by journeying in spirit to where He dwells. Christ becomes to us all and in all. Whilst waiting till He comes to take us where He is, in the Father's house, we enter now, in the power of the Holy Ghost, upon all that is ours, and which we shall enjoy with Him without let in the coming day.

"And Israel took his journey," etc. (LXVI. 1). "And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. And Joseph made ready his



chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him : and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive" (*vv.* 28-30).

Israel not only spoke of going to Joseph, but he went. The journey was far from easy for this aged pilgrim, but the joy of meeting the one who loved him, and whom he loved, sustained him by the way. In the fruitful land of Goshen they met, and Israel had Joseph's loving arms around his neck. Satisfied, he was ready to die. It is one thing to speak of coming into touch with Jesus, and it is quite another to do so—to reach Him experimentally. It involves a journey. It means leaving the scene where all our natural affections are centred, and which becomes almost part of ourselves. It means a pathway of faith, a pilgrim path, following hard after Him. Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to the things which are before, we press towards the mark for the prize of the calling on high in Christ Jesus. Enraptured with Him, the ascended One in glory, we are attracted to Him, and nothing deters the soul. Nothing can satisfy our hearts short of dwelling, to speak by figure, in the true and fruitful spiritual land of Goshen, with the everlasting arms around us. And satisfied, yea, more than satisfied with Him, all fear of death vanishes in the presence of perfect and everlasting love.

Then Joseph introduced his brethren to Pharaoh, and he asked them, "What is your occupation?" Instructed by Joseph, they told him they were shepherds. And Pharaoh told Joseph to make them dwell in the best of the land; and if any

men of activity were among them, they were to be made rulers over his cattle. And then, having also introduced his father, he placed them, and gave them a possession in the best of the land. And he nourished his father and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread (XLVII. 14). "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly" (v. 27).

Brought to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we receive possessions. He gives us the best. He blesses us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. Moreover, we have the occupation of shepherds. Christians are now the flock of God. Christ is the good and great and chief Shepherd. And He has under-shepherds to care for His flock. We are also all privileged to care one for another. And God, like Pharaoh, does not want lazy shepherds. He wants men of activity. He does not want us to be running to and fro in the restlessness of our own spirits or in the energy of the flesh. But He would have us actively caring for all the interests of Christ in connexion with his people, tending both the sheep and the lambs of the flock, and striving according to His working. There is a sad tendency in us to be lazy. But God desires that we should be characterized by true spiritual activity. Satan is very active in the promotion of all that is evil. And the world is very active in the promotion of its own schemes of aggrandizement and pleasure. How much more then should those who know and enjoy the love of God be true men of activity in the promotion of His glory by the welfare of His people!

## POSSESSION AND FRUITFULNESS.

Enjoying their possessions, Joseph's brethren grew and multiplied exceedingly (*v.* 27). It is recorded of the early Christians throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria that they were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied (Acts ix. 31). And to-day it is our privilege, having accepted by faith the spiritual possessions that God has bestowed upon us in His grace, to enter upon and to enjoy them in the power of the Spirit, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, being daily nourished spiritually by Him, and to count upon Him to multiply us also exceedingly.

In chapters XLVIII.—XLIX. we get the blessing pronounced by Jacob upon the two sons of Joseph and also upon his own twelve sons. In the former case it is full of instruction to notice that Jacob, notwithstanding the wish of Joseph, guiding his hands wittingly, no doubt led by God, blessed Ephraim, the younger son, above his brother Manasseh. Later on in the history of God's people Israel, we find that *Ephraim* is the name constantly used in the historical and prophetic word to denote the ten tribes, as distinct from Judah (Isa. xi. 13). Then follows a prophetic utterance of Israel to Joseph: "Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again to the land of your fathers" (XLVIII. 21). And this was fulfilled (Joshua iii.) later on, in the exodus from Egypt and the entrance of the nation of Israel into Canaan. In chapter XLIX. "Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that

which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father." Then follows the blessing. "Every one according to his blessing he blessed them" (v. 28).

We cannot enter here upon the blessing of each, but must limit ourselves to that of the one whose history we are treating in this paper. In verse 22 we read: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

To understand this passage we must bear in mind that Israel is led by the Spirit to speak prophetically, in language full of oriental figure and colouring, of the blessing of the nation of Israel in the coming day. But now "Lo-ammi . . . not My people" is written upon them, and the nation is scattered among the Gentiles. But the Holy Ghost has come, and believers through Him enter spiritually upon the blessing, and in a far fuller and richer manner.

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the

wall." This is a lovely figure of Christ, the true Joseph, in the day of His glory. We have all gazed with pleasure upon the bough of a fruit tree heavily laden with fruit. And we can well picture one by a well, whose waters produce the greatest luxuriance, so that its branches not finding sufficient space around the stem, spread themselves out widely, and run over the neighbouring wall. So will it be in that wondrous coming age of which all Scripture treats. When Christ shall sit upon the throne of His glory, Israel, His earthly people, shall blossom and bud and fill the world with fruit (Isa. xxvii. 6). The Spirit shall work in mighty power, so that there shall not only be fruitfulness in the nation, but they shall be the means in His gracious hands of fruitfulness world-wide. Wondrous blessings shall flow to the nations at large, far beyond the middle wall of partition originally set up by God around His people, and which marked them off from the Gentile world. His word shall run and be glorified. The branches shall spread wide, running over the wall, laden with rich fruit for God.

In the interim, Christ is seated at the right hand of God, "a fruitful bough by a well." From Him the Holy Ghost is come. He takes up His abode in the believer. He is a well of living water in us. By the death of Christ, the middle wall of partition is broken down, and Christ in us, through the presence and power of the Spirit, is become a fruitful bough. Abiding in him and He in us, we bring forth fruit to God. Far and wide flows the living sap, so to speak, in Jewish or Gentile believers alike. The wall is gone, but the well is there, a wondrous well. For the Lord Himself has

said: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 14).

The next utterance of Israel carries us back: "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him." Ere Joseph comes out in the full sense as the fruitful bough he is the object of hatred. And Christ, ere He took his present place and before He comes forth in manifest glory, in each case fruitful to God, became the despised and rejected One, the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Where is there one so sorely grieved as He? Where is there one who has endured the bitter gibe, the scornful sneer, the biting sarcasm, as Jesus the meek and lowly One? Where is there one upon whom so many marks of dark dishonour have been heaped, or to whom such deep-seated and venomous hatred has been shown? And He, the spotless, unblemished holy One, is hated without a cause.

"But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob . . . even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee," etc. Joseph, a man of faith, dependent upon God, found his strength and help in the invisible One. He came to God; he believed that He is; he sought Him diligently; and he reaped his reward. And Jesus, dependent, obedient, delighting in the will of God, trusted in Him and was delivered. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. He prayed, not "Father, save Me from this hour," but, "Father, glorify Thy name." And the Father glorified it. Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying

and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from (or *out of*) death, and was heard in that He feared (or for His piety). Nothing harmed Him. The archers sorely grieved, shot at, and hated Him. But He patiently endured all and glorified God. He went into death and the grave, and was saved out of death. The guarded cave could not retain the incorruptible One. It was not possible that He should be holden of death. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. vi. 4). His bow abode in strength, so to speak. His arms were made strong; He was helped of God. The enemy received his death-blow at the very moment he exulted in victory. A dead Christ would have been the victory of Satan, who had the power of death; but in the risen Christ we see the eternal triumph of the living God.

#### CONCERNING ONE TO COME.

In the midst of that at which we have just looked we get a remarkable prophetic utterance in a parenthesis: "From thence is the Shepherd, the stone of Israel." Christ is constantly presented in this twofold character. Hundreds of years after Israel spake of this promise of God, He came into the midst of His people to gather them. Their long history is one of oft-repeated failure, bringing them under the rod of Jehovah, so that, at the first advent of the Shepherd, a remnant only of the Jews was found in the land. And this remnant received Him not. A few whose hearts were touched heard His voice, but of the mass it is written: "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not" (John i. 11). They got rid of the Shepherd. They cruci-

fied Him. And He was smitten of God. Hence it is written again: "Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones" (Zech. XIII. 7). In the coming day, He that scattered Israel shall regather them, and they shall be one flock, and the Lord their Shepherd in their own land.

Meanwhile, rejected by Israel and by the world, He continues His blessed shepherd-work. The few sheep of the Jewish fold, which heard His voice and followed Him on earth, were scattered at His death. Regathered after His resurrection, He increased them (Acts II. 41; VI. 7) and fulfilled His promise: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold (or flock), and one shepherd" (Acts x. 45). The "other sheep" are the saved from among the Gentiles in this day of grace. This is an entirely new flock—Christians. It is the flock of God, blessed and gathered on earth, to be folded in the heavens at Christ's return. He is the good Shepherd who calls, leads, gathers, and preserves them.

As soon as the flock is complete all who compose it will be perfected according to the eternal counsel of God. They shall be introduced by the great Shepherd of the sheep, who is risen from the dead (Heb. XIII. 20), into the glorious sphere where He Himself is already entered. And they shall be displayed with Him in glory in the day when He shall appear to regather His earthly flock Israel.

Israel also foretold, as we have seen, that from Joseph would spring the stone of Israel. In Acts IV. 11, we read: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders (the Jews),



which is become the head of the corner." And again, in 1 Peter ii. 7: "The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence," etc. The mass stumbled, but some, born anew in sovereign grace, tasted that the Lord was gracious (or good), grew up to salvation, coming to Him, as unto a living stone, disallowed of (or cast away as worthless by) men, chosen of God, and precious (*vv.* 2-4). Christ, the living stone, on the other side of death, is the One to whom, first believing Jews, and later believing Gentiles, became attached.

Consequent thereupon, a spiritual building has been formed, composed of spiritual stones of the same nature and character, as the following verse shows: "Ye also, as lively (or living) stones, are built (or being built) up a spiritual house," etc. All true Christians compose it. As soon as this building shall be completed, the last of the living stones having been set in its place, divine power will translate them to glory, and they will come out in the day of Christ's manifested glory as the holy city Jerusalem; and, when time shall be no more, as the tabernacle (or dwelling-place) of God in relation to men (*Rev.* xxi. 10; xxi. 2, 3).

What magnificent and far-reaching thoughts were in the mind of God in connexion with Joseph, the one with and through whom He wrought so wondrously in those early days of man's history!

And further, Israel added: "And by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb." God is almighty; He has all power in heaven and in earth. Israel had learnt this; and, taught

of God, he tells what shall happen in the future, through the exercise of that power. Through the risen and exalted Christ, the true Joseph, both heavenly and earthly blessing would be bestowed. Christians will enjoy the former and Israel the latter. We read in Ephesians i. 19, of "the exceeding greatness of God's power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power (or the might of His power), which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (or age), but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

Now Christ being exalted in heaven, and being given to be Head to the church, this latter, proceeding from Him and thus one with Him, partakes of the blessing into which He has entered. Hence Christians are viewed as "blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3). And again, He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit (down) together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (II. 6). And again in 1 Corinthians xv. 48 we read: "As is the heavenly (One), such also are they that are heavenly (or the heavenly ones)." And in Philip-pians III. 20: "For our conversation (or common-wealth, or associations of life) is in heaven." This is the glorious range of blessings in the heavens above.

Following upon the completion of God's work for the heavens, filling the heavens with a heavenly people, taken out from the nations for His name, the fruitful bough of Joseph, through

his great Antitype, will produce also a wondrously rich cluster of fruit on earth in the restoration and blessing of Israel. At present scattered among the nations, the ten tribes (Ephraim) lost, among other figures employed by the Spirit of God in relation to them we read of "the depths of the sea." When Christ shall return as the Deliverer of Zion, He will deliver His people, and turn away ungodliness from them. He will bring them "from the depths of the sea" (Ps. LXVIII. 22).

And restored to their own land, promised them of their God, "the abundance of the sea shall be converted (or turned) unto thee, and the forces (or the wealth) of the Gentiles shall come unto thee" (Isa. LX. 5, new trans.). And "Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (LXI. 6). And again, "I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, then thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel" (XLV. 3). "Thou shalt also suck the milk of the nations, and shalt suck the breast of kings" (LX. 16). And "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered: and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God" (Hosea i. 10).

Then will be fulfilled the promise to Abraham: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore," etc. (Gen. XXII. 17); and also the words of Israel to Joseph concerning "blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb."

Lastly Israel said of Joseph: "The blessings of

thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors (or parents) unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren" (Gen. XLIX. 26). As God developed His ways and His truth, richer and ever richer blessing was unfolded for His people. Thus Israel says: "The blessings of thy father have prevailed (or surpass) the blessings of my progenitors (or ancestors)." And he adds a remarkable figure to convey their vast extent. When Christ shall reign as the true Solomon, and Israel, regathered and blessed in the land, shall be the head of the nations and not the tail (Deut. XXVIII. 13, 44), "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" (Ps. LXXII. 8). His kingdom shall be world-wide. It shall extend to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills, and be characterized by all their stability and strength.

The whole of these rich and abundant blessings are pronounced as on the head of Joseph, the separated one. They are fulfilled in Christ rejected, crucified, exalted, the holy, harmless, undefiled One, separate from sinners (Heb. VII. 26). It is in Him, and in His inscrutable and wonderful ways with His people, that we discover the substance of the shadows, figures, and types of the touching and instructive story of Joseph. Let all the glory be poured upon His blessed head alone.

#### THE BLESSING OF MOSES.

Now "when Jacob (not Israel here) had made an end of commanding his sons (after he had pronounced the blessing), he gathered up his feet

into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people" (Gen. XLIX. 33).

The burial of Jacob and the death of Joseph close the book of Genesis (chap. L). But before briefly referring to them, we must add a little concerning the blessing pronounced by Moses upon Joseph. It is somewhat similar in character to Israel's blessing, but looked at from a different standpoint. The record is so rich, that we think it profitable to cite the whole passage. It is found in the account of the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death (Deut. xxxiii. 1).

And of Joseph he said: "Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush; let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim and they are the thousands of Manasseh" (Deut. xxxiii. 13-17).

That which strikes one most forcibly about this blessing is the stress laid upon its *precious* character. Somewhat similar, as already remarked, to the blessing pronounced by Israel, the word "precious" is employed no less than five times, thus enhancing to the highest degree the rich character

of the portion of Joseph. "*Blessed of the Lord* be his land, for the *precious* things of heaven . . . the *precious* fruits brought forth by the sun . . . the *precious* things put forth by the moon . . . the *chief* (or *best*) things of the ancient mountains . . . the *precious* things of the lasting hills . . . the *precious* things of the earth and the fulness thereof," etc. All serves to set forth the magnificent bountifulness of the Lord's blessing. He administers it with open heart and hand. He delights to bless. And it is in accord with His own good will (v. 16). In verse 17 there is a striking figure to show forth Joseph's glory: "*His glory* is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns," etc.

And if such language could be dictated by the Spirit of God concerning Joseph, how much more can it be applied in the very highest sense to One infinitely greater than he, even Jesus, crowned with glory and honour on high. Blessed indeed is the heavenly land where He dwells! Precious indeed are the spiritual blessings with which God has blessed His saints now and evermore in that heavenly sphere in Him! Precious indeed is the vast range of blessing which is the portion of the saints in light! (Col. i. 12.) Precious indeed also the earthly blessing (as well as the heavenly) which Christ shall inherit when He reappears with His heavenly saints!

To what, then, can we compare the glory of Him who is the Chiefest among ten thousand and whose glory is incomparable? He Himself could say, in anticipation of the accomplishment of the will of Him who sent Him, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify

Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him" (John XIII. 31, 32). How varied are the glories of Jesus, the Son of the Blessed! The Son from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, He came here in holy manhood and dwelt among us. Rejected by man, crowned with thorns, He endured a death of ignominy and shame, and covered Himself with glory. And having glorified God, God straightway glorified Him. He sits to-day at His right hand, crowned with glory and honour. Firstborn of all creation, as the Firstborn from among the dead, He sits in highest heavenly glory, the delight of the heart of His Father and God, the theme of praise of the innumerable angelic hosts, and the Object of the heart and worship of His beloved saints. With His glory none can indeed compare in the whole range of the universe of God.

And ere long God shall bring Him forth, the One into whose hands the Father has given all things (Rev. I. 7), as His appointed Heir. As King of kings and Lord of lords He shall claim the inheritance, and the heavens and the earth shall be filled with His glory. All kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him, yea, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Such is the great glory that comes upon the head of the true Joseph, upon the top of the head of Him that was separated from His brethren.

#### THE MISTRUST OF JOSEPH'S BRETHREN.

In the last chapter of Genesis, Jacob being dead, "Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father, and the physicians

embalmed Israel" (*v.* 2). And after the Egyptians had mourned seventy days (*v.* 3) Joseph requested permission of Pharaoh to bury him in Canaan, according as his father had made him swear (*v.* 5). So Joseph went up with a vast retinue of chariots and horsemen, and after a great mourning for seven days at the threshing floor of Atad beyond Jordan, his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which had been bought by Abraham (*vv.* 9-14).

Now "when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father" (*vv.* 15-17). Alas for the treachery and unbelief of the human heart! Although Joseph had given them every proof of his sincerity, and they had again and again and so recently enjoyed the bounties of his love and grace, dwelling in security and enriched with their families and flocks in the land of Goshen, for no less than seventeen years (*XLVII.* 28), yet after all their hearts are filled with mistrust, and they send a messenger to propitiate him. They plead a command of their late father, to which they add their own petition, that he would forgive their sin, in total forgetfulness that he had forgiven them long ago!

The same character of things abounds in Christendom to-day. Alas, many Christians are openly guilty of this evil. And if we challenge our hearts, where is there one of us who can



honestly say that we have been wholly free from it in our inmost secret thoughts, since God so freely forgave us in Christ (Eph. iv. 32)? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it" (Jer. xvii. 9). And though purified by faith in the true believer, how oft we are reminded, if unwatchful, of the depths of its evil. It is quite common for professed Christians to pray for forgiveness, and they would justify it as right; and no wonder if they still have the sense of sin, and lack that of forgiveness.

But there are very many others who go on repeating, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," whilst they are doubtless forgiven persons; they cry to God for forgiveness, as though He still had something against them, notwithstanding the repeated assurances of forgiveness contained in His blessed word. Even established believers, at moments when the conscience may be defiled through unwatchfulness and sin, are apt to mistrust God, and to harbour the thought more or less that He has still something against them, as if the questions that were once between them had not after all been fully and eternally settled.

How dreadful to mistrust the One who not only does not, but cannot lie, to think that He who is love, and who gave His Son to die for us, that our sins might be put away by His precious blood, and that we might be happy in His presence, may peradventure after all hate us (or be hostile to us, new trans.)! Or that He will certainly requite us the evil which we did unto Him, when His word so abundantly assures us that He has so fully entered into and weighed all, and has given us in the resurrection and glory of His Son such a wondrous pledge of His

perfect satisfaction as to all, and of His perfect delight in the One who glorified Him.

God shows in such a passage as this how thoroughly He knows what is in man. Where would any one of us have been, had He not found perfection in the person and work of Another, even Jesus, His beloved? There is absolutely no possibility of betterment in man after the flesh (Rom. VIII. 7, 8). All our perfection is in Christ alone.

When Joseph heard his brothers' words, he wept. And they, still mistrustful, "went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we are thy servants (or bondmen). And Joseph said unto them, Fear not; for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them (or to their hearts)" (vv. 17-21).

The fears of Joseph's brethren were utterly groundless. Though doubtless grieved at their mistrust, he takes pains in his grace to reassure them. In his love he would banish fear from their hearts. He repeats how God had overruled all for good, and for the preservation of many lives. He promises again to nourish them and their little ones. Thus he comforts them and consoles their hearts.

And the Lord to-day, whose heart has been so often grieved at the unbelief and mistrust of His people, assures us of His love. His perfect love, for ours is and can be only very imperfect, casts out fear. He that feareth is not made perfect in love (1 John IV. 18). He shows us plainly in

His blessed word how God has meant and overruled all that has taken place in connexion with the presentation, rejection, death, resurrection, and glory of Christ for His own glory and for our good, thereby saving and bringing from death to life thousands who had otherwise perished eternally. He assures us also of nourishment from Himself, our living Head, for every member of His body. And He has sent the Holy Ghost as Comforter to sustain, support, and comfort us so long as we remain down here. And He speaks kindly to us. He shows us the kindness of God, solacing our hearts, touching our deepest affections by His wondrous love, and drawing us closer and closer to Himself until the moment when we shall be with and like Him for ever.

"And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house : and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation," etc. (*vv.* 22, 23).

#### JOSEPH'S DEATH.

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die : and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence " (*vv.* 24, 25).

Wonderful as were the ways of God in the exaltation and glory of Joseph, the moment arrived at last when he had to face death and to depart to another world. His history closes with a prophetic confirmation of God's promise to his fathers. He died in full confidence of heart that God would surely fulfil His word and bring

the children of Abraham, etc., to the land of which He had sworn unto them. Twice he says, "God will surely visit you." And though he himself must be gathered to his fathers, he takes an oath of the children of Israel that they should carry up his bones from Egypt to the promised land. Israel, as we have seen, and Joseph, desired that their graves should be in that land, which now lies desolate on account of the nation's sin, but ere long shall surely be the centre of God's ways with men. For Christ shall reign, and out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. II. 3).

In due time God fulfilled His word, and Israel was brought out of Egypt and brought into the land (Joshua III). And when Joshua had settled the tribes of Israel in their inheritance, we read: "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph" (Joshua XXIV. 32).

The history closes with the record: "So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (Gen. L. 26). And in that wondrous list of God's worthies of old, given us in Hebrews XI., who were characterized by faith, without which it is impossible to please God, it is said of him: "*By faith* Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." This blessed answer on his part to the call of God is singled out by the Spirit, and shines

as the bright witness of his faith above all that is recorded of him, wondrous as is the history of his life, from the commencement to the close.

And now the man of faith apprehends that God has already visited His people in the person of His Son, and on the ground of His finished work delivers out of this Egypt world, by His Spirit, those who take Him at His word, introducing them in the power of that same Spirit to the heavenly land. Many, like Joseph, pass from this scene before the accomplishment of the purpose of God, but not one of them shall be forgotten. The Lord is coming quickly. God is about to fulfil all His promises: every one is Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. And soon, very soon, the whole of His heavenly saints shall be gathered home, to dwell with His Son Jesus, the true Joseph, in the light of His (the Father's) holy presence, in the home of love, and to be displayed in glory with Him in that wondrous coming age, when God shall head up all things in Him, in heaven and in earth. And then the world shall know that which, taught of Him, we know already in the secret of our hearts, that the Father loveth us as He loves Him. "Of Him, and through Him, and to (or for) Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever, Amen" (Rom. xi. 36).

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