

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns surrounds the text.

**JESUS
SEEN
IN THE
LIFE OF
JOSEPH**

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These writings were originally published separately in a publication entitled “The Remnant” of which Elder James Poole was the editor at the time. For convenience sake, they have been placed together in this e-book. The reference for each “Number” is at the end of the section. I don’t believe that he completed the series but I hope and trust that what is here will prove to be a blessing to you the reader as it has been to me!

Tom Adams

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Number 1

“And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.” (Gen. 37:16-18)

Throughout the whole of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament there are many beautiful historic stories or accounts, such as the life of Abraham, and the life of Jacob, of Moses, David, Samuel, and countless others; but none come near to portraying the great depth and fullness of the coming Messiah, Christ Jesus our Lord such as does the story of Joseph. The life of Joseph is singular in many respects. One of the chief points to consider is that from Genesis 37 to the conclusion of the book in Genesis 50, the whole of it is taken up (with the exception of Chapter 38) with the life of Joseph. The reader will see too, that not one word or statement is recorded as a blemish on his character. His conduct is without recorded blemish. We doubt not that Joseph too was a sinner like we all are, yet there is nothing recorded against him, even in the slightest, and the only other person in scriptures that can be said of is Daniel. There are displayed across the pages of God’s word many other points of great interest concerning his intriguing life which must be passed over at this time, for the sake of brevity, as we compare Joseph and his anti-type, Jesus Christ; a comparison that we believe will be extremely beneficial to the reader.

The record of the life of Joseph begins thus with the second verse of Genesis 37. “These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren.” This is the very first thing the Scriptures say of our grand subject, Joseph. It is indeed very, very striking to see that the generation of Jacob takes us directly to the lad, Joseph, who was at that very moment feeding his little flock as would any good and faithful shepherd. He at once then, is a figure, or type of our Lord the Good Shepherd. Could anything be clearer than the typification here set forth? As Joseph feeds the flock according to the will of his father, so our dear Redeemer has ever led His little flock, according to the will of His Father too; and so the history will go, when we view Joseph, step by step in the exacting progression of his life. Each incident, with a very few exceptions, brings out in vivid detail, a preview of the Life of our Lord and Saviour. Joseph’s life clearly portrays to us the coming of our beloved Messiah in His life of service to and for His children, who are the lambs of His flock.

It is written that old Father Israel, or as he was first known, as Jacob, loved Joseph more than all his other children, because he was the son of his old age. It must be remembered however, as we consider the train of events, that though it was not mentioned in the text, Benjamin also was the son of Jacob’s old age, and he will figure prominently in the account of Joseph’s life later on. Old Father Israel made for Joseph a coat of many colors, and his brothers despised him for this, as well as other obvious shows of affection toward him. The text says “they could not speak peaceably unto him.” It surely was not a question of their inability to speak peaceably from the physical, or natural standpoint, but rather they could not converse normally with him because they hated him in their heart, particularly when they saw Joseph as the favored one of their father. And so, because their malice was directed toward him from their heart, they were rendered helpless to conduct themselves toward him in a warm, or brotherly fashion, as should become kin. And cannot we see from this episode of enmity something of the relationship between the Saviour and His brethren before they become reconciled to Him by the renewing of the Holy Ghost? Is there any possibly way they can sit down in harmony and peace with

Him, or have sweet fellowship with the Redeemer, until such time as He was manifested Himself to them; humbling them before Him, that they might begin to see themselves as the great sinners they are? And then they will see Him as the great Saviour of sinners that He is. Neither they nor Joseph's brethren, have power to speak peaceably to Him who is exalted above others by the will of the Heavenly Father, until such time as there is a spiritual work wrought in them.

“And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren; and they hated him yet the more.” (Verse 5) And again in this verse, as in the previous ones, we see how the wrath of man is vented against those, such as Joseph, naturally, and against the Saviour in the spiritual sense. As long as there is a Lord, there are those wicked underlings who will despise Him; and so long as a sinner remains unhumiliated, they will have no affection or kind feelings toward the Saviour of sinners. Joseph's brethren lived their early days in a very malicious and vehement behavior toward their younger brother, even though their father loved him to such a degree that he would display open shows of affection towards him before them. When Joseph related his peculiar dreams to his brothers, and spoke to them of the coming superiority he would possess over his family, the brothers were incensed and bitterly enraged. The scriptures say the brothers also envied him, but Father Israel simply observed his sayings. The time came, then, that his father sent Joseph out to observe the brothers welfare, and to see how they did. And so, Joseph goes; this being the incident in the chain of events that leads us to the text above.

In verse 16 we find first recorded the words of Joseph where he says, “I seek my brethren”. Could there be anything more spiritually associated with these words than the clear intent of the Son of God to come from glory to seek His brethren in a manner like Joseph sought his? From the far and lofty regions of Heaven in eternity past, Jesus the Saviour stood in covenant relation with the Father for, and in behalf of His brethren, and in their behalf he would seek them out, just as Joseph sought out his brethren. He would come to seek them out as the sheep of His pasture, and in so doing fulfill the figure of Joseph, who centuries before sought his brothers according to the will of his father. Joseph's brothers would ultimately fall into a terrible morass of transgressing by thinking evil against him. So too, the elect would fall in the horrible pit of sin; and Jesus (our Joseph) is dispatched on a mission by His Father, to lift them up, and establish their goings; to set their feet upon the solid rock; and to deliver them from the wrath to come; to cleanse them; to wash them white as snow; to make them whole, from the crown of their head to the sole of their feet; to give them a new song to sing. All of these things were done for His brethren because it was His good pleasure to seek them out. The type then, is thus far plain to the eye of faith.

When man first fell in Adam's original transgression there was no seeking out God for mercy or grace; there was no looking to a Redeemer for relief or cure; but rather, Adam and Even hid themselves in the garden, foolishly and feebly attempting to cover themselves and their nakedness with fig leaves. And so has man ever since in his sinful propensity sought refuge in fig leaf religion as a result of the darkness of his mind. He will seek to hide himself in the clefts of the rocks, the caves, or wherever else he might be able to hide himself from the Righteous Judge. Not one then, and not one since, has ever sought after their God for mercy or deliverance. Rather, Jesus has come to seek and to save that which was lost. May we never lose sight of this truth, that we seek not Him, but rather, He seeks His brethren. We fully believe that all with spiritual eyes can see then in this text, that Joseph seeking his brethren is a beautiful emblem and figure of Jesus coming to seek and to save His lost sheep, and to redeem them from their sins.

We see next in the text these words, "They are departed." And truly, as the brethren of Joseph had departed, so have all the brethren of Jesus. They have departed from the presence of God; from that which is high and holy, from the law of commandments, from the precepts, and from all other things that are just, to seek out their own considerations, and to consume themselves in their own lusts. We make reference previously to Adam and Eve in the garden, how they seemingly departed the fellowship and openness God had provided them, to seek a refuge in hiding from the face of their creator. And have not all their offsprings done the same? Yes, they have departed in their sins. They attempt to hide out from the presence of God in their shame, ignorance, blindness and carnality. And were it not for the kind mercies of their Heavenly Father, who has chosen them in Him from the foundation of the world, they would not only depart in this life, but eventually, at that last day, hear the terrible words of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords saying, "Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity." They would thus depart everlastingly. Departing is the nature of sinners. Leaving their first estate; always unstable; they are every shifty. As with Joseph's brethren, so with us today. The sad and doleful testimony concerning them and us, is "They are departed."

Thirdly, the text says they conspired against him to slay him. How complete the figure is, then. Not only did Joseph seek his brethren, and they departed, but their evil mind was to destroy him for their own satisfaction and carnal peace. And so, poor sinners, (though their names were written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,) have ever sought to be rid of their spiritual Joseph, in whatever fashion they could; even if it meant that he himself must be slain. There can be no question that among that mob that cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him", there were some of the Lord's chosen there. For even in the book of Revelation it is recorded, "They looked upon him whom they have pierced." So, though all cried against Him, a remnant was saved. Though they would seek to slay Him, and seek to bring Him to a final ruin in the grave, He came forth conquering and to conquer, that His slayers and crucifiers would find plenteous grace; even His great redemption at His feet, when He calls them by name, and makes Himself known to them. Though they would evilly design to slay Him; in the eternal wisdom, and wise plan of the Heavenly Father, all these things would work together for good to those who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. Joseph's brethren could have no knowledge that their plans against him, would at some future date bring about their deliverance, and bring about also a restoration of the family ties. Their thoughts and intents were only evil, and self serving in the extreme. Their purpose was to be rid of Joseph, little knowing that the ridding themselves of Joseph would work in such a marvelous fashion years later down the road for their good.

So Joseph's brethren did the terrible deed. They took him, and put him in a pit; and but for the pleading of Reuben they would have killed him outright. But rather, in the superintending providence of God, they stripped Joseph of his coat of many colors, and they put him in a pit where there was no water. They spread blood upon his coat; Ishmeelites came by at that particular time, (in God's perfect order and time) and the deed was done! How sweet, however, to see that it was no passing chance that this company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead at this particular time. It was not simply "lucky circumstances" that Joseph, on this very day, was taken by his brethren to be slain. No! No! We rather see the grand providence of God in all things, to bring Joseph, and his brethren, and the Ishmeelites on their way to Egypt, together at this place, at this time, with such exacting detail and precision. None of the pieces of this great circumstances could go wanting. All must work out their appointed lot as God had before determined. The greedy Ishmeelites see an opportunity to turn a profit. Joseph's cruel brethren see the prospects of being rid of one who shamed them, and discomforted them with his presence. But Joseph, certainly having no knowledge of what his dreams portended, and what his future

would be, was but the pawn in their hands. And yet, God viewed all this with infinite wisdom, and exacting purpose; and all of these circumstances and details, evil as they appeared, were but the fulfilling of the deep designs of God. This so great a deliverance would bring His people up as a great nation from that dark land of Egypt many centuries in the future.

If the Lord wills, in future numbers we should like to trace out the events that follow Joseph's early days, after he has been sold into Egypt. We shall view the unique circumstances this young lad endured in the house of Potiphar and with his wicked wife; how he was cast into prison, though innocent; and, how under an unusual and unique circumstance he was delivered therefrom to later be exalted as head over all Egypt; only Pharaoh being his superior, and view then ultimately the reunion of Joseph and his family, and the great redemption that is seen in the types and shadows that follow.

The Remnant

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Number 2

When we previously wrote of Joseph it was pointed out that with infinite precision and total exactness Jehovah God ordered (Absolutely Predestinated) all of those seeming incidental incidents, and brought them together to fulfill His deep, yet Holy design. And what a wondrous design it was, that He would deliver His people first down to Egypt, then centuries later mightily rescue them from Egypt, and Pharaoh's bondage, to make of them a great and populous nation for Himself. As we concluded our last article we observed Joseph as he was being sold by his brethren into the hand of the Ishmeelites to be taken to Egypt for what, they knew not. And their attitude toward him was what? We find in Genesis 37:27 this expression, "And his brethren were content." How despicable an attitude, and yet how revealing. They were content with their gain, and they were content with being rid of Joseph. But, little did they know their contentment would be short lived, and that their vile actions would bring such grief and sorrow to others, and to themselves as well.

Consider the lamentable condition of Jacob in all of this family turmoil. "His sons and daughters rose up to comfort him." (Verse 35) But he refused comfort. And he said thus, "For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him." Gen. 37:35. How sad it is to see the grief that so often others bring to the innocent. Jacob knew concealed the horrible deed as best they could lest the wrath of their father come upon them. All the while, they were content. What a great contrast this is to the expression of the Apostle Paul in I Timothy 6:6, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." The spiritual eye sees great gain in Godliness, and they are made content with their wickedness. And so will it ever be with us too, unless or until God is pleased to intervene, opening our eyes to see what wretched creatures we are when left to follow the dictates of the flesh. While Jacob weeps, and his self-starving sons are contented, the Midianites take poor Joseph to Egypt and there they sell him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of his guard.

The family ties, such as they were, had been rent. Joseph was no longer at home with his father and his beloved surroundings. He was now in an alien and strange land, and all alone; or so it seemed. It can be seen in this again, a portion of the beautiful type, that as Joseph left his happy climes to eventually deliver his brethren, so Jesus, our Joseph, left the glorious realms of Heaven and His Father's presence, to lay aside all His royal glory that He might dwell awhile in this Egypt world to save His people from

their sins. “And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.” (Genesis 39:1) Look at the first expression, “Joseph was brought down”, and such a downward spiral it was; from everything he was comfortable and happy with, to adversity, trial, temptation, discomfort, and grief. All of this because of his brethren’s sin; or again, as we have before pointed out, so it seemed. Joseph was brought down, but not nearly to the extent our dear Redeemer Jesus was brought down when He was made lowly, born in a manger, and walked the shores of Galilee and the deserts of Judaea for His lifetime, that HE might fulfill the law, die on the cross, go to the tomb, then come forth victorious for our deliverance.

Let us look, however, at another interesting point in Genesis 39. Joseph, though despised by his brethren, and bereaved of his family ties, clearly had the full sanction of God His Father in heaven, despite what men, devils or friends might have proposed. All the while that he was in this terrible temptation and trial he was a man of great calmness, serenity and composure. This was nothing more or less than the presence of his God with him. Everything he turned his hand to prospered, as we note in the following. “And the Lord was with Joseph and he was a prosperous man.” (vs. 2) “And Joseph found grace in his sight”. (vs. 4) “that the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake.” (vs. 5) “And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.” (vs. 6) “But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.” (vs. 21) “and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.” (vs. 23) There can be no question; in all of his dealings and doings, day in and day out, the hand of God was upon him for good, and not evil. God superintended his every affair (as well as all others too). He preserved him, kept him, prospered him, and attended to all that was necessary that Joseph might become the great rich type of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. We have no apology to make in saying that our God rules all events, even to the lighting of a gnat on a camel’s nose in a sand storm. The history of Joseph makes this conclusion inescapable to any honest soul, and we doubt not that even the unblushing conditionalist feels somewhat taken back by this account.

Somber as it is, we dare not fail to mention that despite the great blessings of God, and His favor at any and all times, this will not prevent temptations befalling us. Despite the many benefits of God’s favor and presence with Joseph, we find that at a certain time, (God’s appointed time) he was very sorely tried, as the scriptures record; “And it came to pass after these things, that his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.” (Gen. 39:7) It should be recognizable that no temptation could have been more severe to a young lad in the circumstances that Joseph was in than this lure of adultery. He had been favored to occupy a position in Potiphar’s house second only to the master himself. Everything had been placed in his hands. Nothing was denied him. He, no doubts, had normal passions like any man would, and especially at this juncture in his life. Then suddenly as strong a temptation as could be imagined beset him. This passionate and shamelessly unfaithful woman says, “Lie with me.” And how did Joseph, as the type of Christ act in this alluring confrontation? “But he refused.” (vs. 8) How blessed then to see that in an instant, yes, at once he hesitated not to refuse the vile offer of seduction. He swiftly declined, and a great and profitable lesson this is for us.

Does it not in a great sense remind us that our dear Redeemer at a most important juncture in His life also was beset with the most extreme temptation that could possibly be imagined (though of a different nature) and, if possible, even far more severe than that which Joseph endured. The time was just after His baptism when the full sanction from Heaven by His Father was announced; the Spirit coming down in the form of a dove descending on Him. Then Satan pitched upon Him furiously there in the

wilderness after the forty days of fasting, offering all sorts of inducements if He would fall down and worship him. How blessed though to see that our Saviour was as swift to refuse as was Joseph many centuries earlier. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)

So Joseph is once again beset with a trial originating out of the sinful minds of others. First his brethren, and now his master’s wife. “And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.” Gen. 39:10 Notice how Joseph avoided the protracted temptation as best he could. And so it is for our well being, as we have been admonished; “Abstain from every appearance of evil.” It is not enough to simply say no. It is wise that God’s children at all cost flee from every sort of allurements, irrespective of how trifling it might seem. Thus did Joseph. But in the process of time, as the story goes on, she snatched his garment from all him as he fled her. She then lied about him to her husband and falsified her report, putting the blame on poor Joseph rather than herself. Joseph’s enraged master then took him away, putting him in the prison.

And so once again, Joseph is at a low point in his journey; facing a life of exile for a crime he didn’t commit. How consistent however, with the great doctrine of God’s preserving His people to see, as is recorded in the 21st verse, “But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.” And do what they will, our enemies cannot make void the purpose and plan of God to bless and keep His people, anymore than they could in Joseph’s circumstances. Even though it may foster the question, “Why did not God keep this from happening?” we can only say, as our dear Lord said, “Even so Father, for it seemed good in thy sight.” How blessed it is to acquiesce to His will, and bow submissive to every incident and be still and know that He is God.

God’s kind providence again brings Joseph to a new circumstance. He was sold from his home by his brothers, carried to Egypt, tempted by a seductive woman who seeks vicious revenge on him, and then he is cast into prison. Yet still the blessings of God are at once again seen to be manifestly upon him. The Lord was with him as before. All that he did the Lord made to prosper. Now the kind and gracious providence of God brings Joseph and Pharaoh’s baker and butler together. “And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the King of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.” Gen. 40:1-3 How lovely to see that the hand of the Lord brings Joseph and the two officers of the king’s court together at this appointed time. Joseph must go to prison that he there might come into contact with the butler and the baker. There the further purpose of God would be worked out in their dreams and Joseph’s interpretation of them. Joseph’s ultimate elevation under Pharaoh is the result of this series of events.

And so the three of them, Joseph, the butler, and the baker were there together in the dungeon. While God’s providence secretly brought them together, none of the three had even the least knowledge of what was taking place. No doubt the butler and the baker sorely lamented their terrible circumstances; their fall from grace, or the King’s favor, so to speak. But there humble Joseph is, awaiting with only hope in His God, the moment when the need would arise for the blessing which God had conferred upon him. And so it was that “They dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt which were bound in the prison.” (Gen. 40:5) It was no accident that they dreamed, or that both of them

dreamed “each man his dream in one night”. It was no accident that they dreamed “according to the interpretation of his dream”; for they could have dreamed nothing else, or at any other time. They did not have a dream and an interpretation was attached to it, but they dreamed according to the interpretation that God had already assigned to the dream. “And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.” (vs. 6) No doubt but they felt they had room to be sad. They had once enjoyed the presence of Pharaoh, and now they were in the lowest dungeon. They had each just had a dream which disturbed and troubled them exceedingly. They had no notion of what these things meant. And as they expressed to Joseph in verse 8 “and there is no interpreter of it.” But how blessed to hear the words of Joseph, “And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.” (vs. 8) We would pause here for just a moment to advise our brethren that we would all do well to heed these words of Joseph. “INTERPRETATIONS BELONG TO GOD.” It is greatly worthy of our consideration to observe that neither here, nor anywhere else in the Bible did those who had a dream attempt to interpret it themselves, but in every instance someone else rendered the interpretation for them. Interpretations do not belong to the dreamer of dreams, but to Him who gives them; which is God. May we ever be guided and advised by such scriptural import as this, for it will save us many sorrows and confusion in time to come. So they each, without delay, told Joseph their dream. The one who dreamed of the cup; the other who dreamed of the baskets. We will not here occupy the space and time to give the full context of the two dreams, but rather say that for the chief butler, his dream and its interpretation was “a savour of life unto life.” And so it was that after Joseph had interpreted his dream for him, he asked the favor “But think on me when it shall be well with thee and shew kindness”. (vs. 14) How blessed to see that this Joseph, who was a servant to prisoners, and was soon to be above them desired that when it would be well with them that they would think upon him. (And conversely, in this connection compare how that when our Saviour hung upon the tree of the cross the thief asked of Him to be remembered.) We realize that man cannot, for all his striving and boasting, do for others beyond what God has intended, and so however much the butler might have desired to think well for Joseph, he did not. But on the other hand, as previously alluded to, the dying Lord did indeed remember the thief when such a desire was asked of Him. The butler forgot Joseph, but Christ remembered His petitioner. With the other, the baker, his dream and the interpretation of it was “a savour of death unto death.” And so it was that as Joseph interpreted the dreams, shortly the chief butler on the third day was elevated by Pharaoh, and he was lifted up to his previous position and he was restored again. But for the baker, he was hanged, according to Joseph’s interpretation of the dream.

We must mention in this connection that it was Pharaoh’s birthday when he made this feast; and that he lifted up the head of the chief butler for good, and the chief baker for death. In all of the Bible only two places do we read of a birthday celebration; Pharaoh here in this text, and King Herod in the New Testament! Startling it is to see that on both occasions someone was arbitrarily murdered; the baker by Pharaoh, and John the Baptist by Herod. This certainly does not speak well for birthday celebrations, does it? But in concluding this piece, notice the last verse of the chapter (vs. 23) “Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him.” It would not have done him any good to have tried to remember him, for Divine providence would have prevented such until the appointed moment. As in all else, God was in the matter. Joseph remains behind; the baker has been hung on the tree; the butler has been restored to his position, now only God’s good time intervenes between the dreams and the deliverance of Joseph.

(To be continued, the Lord willing.)

Number 3

The events covered here will be found recorded in Genesis, Chapter 41, and will be contemplated in chronological sequence. At the close of our last article, Joseph was in jail for a crime he did not commit. He rightly interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker, and requested the butler remember him on his deliverance. He had, however, been quickly forgotten by the chief butler, and now could only await for his appointed time; the wondrous time when the Divine Hand of God would deliver him from his extended and unjust imprisonment. There can be no doubt but the patience of Joseph was sorely tried. His enemies had triumphed over him, and he was a stranger in a strange land, and a prisoner too. Yet from what we have learned from him in the past chapters of Genesis, he clearly was guided and stayed by the unerring wisdom of his God. He had no other anchor than the trust which God had granted him. And so, in the steady march of time, (then a full two years later) Pharaoh dreamed a most troubling dream. (Genesis 41:1). It is always a marvel to see the detail in Scripture; and how that the Spirit of God directs that every necessary point of truth be covered for our edification and learning. And so it is here; that at the appointed hour, as did the butler and baker, Pharaoh dreamed his dream. If he was like the rest of humankind he had dreamed many times before. But on this precise occasion, his uncanny dream had been Divinely sent. This was a dream which God had given him for a specific reason, and a designed purpose. The purpose from God was that Pharaoh, without knowing why God willed it, would release Joseph from his prison and elevate him to his right hand. From Pharaoh's view of things he would release Joseph for the benefit of the Egyptians, never knowing the Divine Will was at work. This proved to be, however, but one more link in the chain of Divine providence in bringing God's children finally into the land of promise as a great multitude and nation.

Pharaoh's dream was extremely unique. In that time of sleep he had been shown in his two-fold dream something unlike anything he had ever seen before. In the first part of this mysterious vision, there was arrayed before him seven ill favored and leanfleshed kine which devoured up seven well favored and fat kine. Upon dreaming this, Pharaoh awoke and then slept again, and dreamed a second time. This time the dream took a different nature – seven ears of corn on one stalk, rank and good, and seven thin ears, blasted by the east wind. As with the leanfleshed kine, the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. After this, as might be expected, "Pharaoh awoke and behold it was a dream." (Verse 7) Pharaoh was more than a little troubled. The Scripture says that his spirit was so troubled that he called for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt; note – all that there were. This was obviously a moment of extreme emergency to his well being. His interest was in determining the meaning of this two-fold dream. Yet none of these wise men could interpret for Pharaoh. Obviously they dared not even try to fake an interpretation for the Pharaoh. How this failure to divine the dreams of the King must have debased these frauds. And, should not this teach us, that despite the rank and elevation of men of supposed letters and learning, none of them can see into Divine things; which clearly this dream was, for God had sent it as surely as He dwelt in the Heavens. The wisdom and magical capabilities of the Wise men and Magicians was reduced to mere nothing as the King sought for an honest revelation for his dreams. Our knowledge of human nature in all its frailties suggests to us that at that moment poor Pharaoh was saddened and sorely disappointed, for none of his Sages could perform for him what he at

this time desperately wanted; and that was give him the interpretation of his dreams. Can we doubt that God stirred up this sense of urgency?

Had Pharaoh lived in this day, no doubt but some of our modern wise-man preachers (religious hucksters) would say that he had been under a lot of stress; that he needed to rest and possibly take a vacation, or some other fleshly activity to get his weary mind off of his troubles. But we know from many places in the Scriptures that this troubling of spirit would not go away. God alone could relive it for him, and God alone would relive him; but He would do it as Pleased Him. Not as Pharaoh, or the would-be wise men, or the sages would have it be, but as God would have it be, so it was.

At this very time the butler, who had been in prison with Joseph, remembered his faults, and so he stated the incident to Pharaoh. He related, apparently without fear, the circumstances pertaining to his dream while he was in the dungeon with this young Hebrew slave. It was no moment of “good luck” that the butler just “happened” to remember this matter. It was not a “chance” that his brain brought forth this tidbit of information, but rather this was nothing short of the secret workings of our God Almighty in this individual to further the train of incidents that would bring this day Joseph’s sudden elevation and distinction. Thus the butler freely discloses all he knew at this time. It would be well for us to recall that the butler had soon forgotten Joseph while this matter was yet fresh on his mind. Pharaoh had freed him, and Joseph then slipped from his thoughts. In digressing, are we not much like the butler? Our Joseph (Jesus) is often forgotten until some great need arises and then our memory is refreshed. To return to the subject, however, had he remembered earlier, it would have sustained no good purpose for Joseph. But now at the predestinated moment, when Pharaoh needed an interpreter, and Joseph needed deliverance, and God’s purpose was to be fulfilled, all of the events came together for this exact time. And so it was that Pharaoh, being obviously excited about this matter, called for Joseph. The text says, “Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph,. And they brought him hastily out of the dungeon.” (Verse 14) Notice carefully the word “then.” Pharaoh had no need of Joseph until “then.” Until “then” Joseph was just another forgotten foreigner in his jail. Had Pharaoh earlier been informed of Joseph’s capabilities as an interpreter of dreams he no doubt would still have preferred his own wise men and magicians above him, and would not have given him a second thought. But now, the test had come. His wise men, his magicians, and his soothsayers could afford him no good whatever. His dreams remained shrouded in mystery. But there was not one hope, and Pharaoh turned to it. This was the diviner of dreams the forgetful butler recommends; young Joseph the innocent prisoner. Thus he was brought swiftly from the dungeon to appear before the monarch. And the text says, “Joseph shaved himself and changed his raiment and came in unto Pharaoh.” (Verse 14) See here one very worthwhile item for our learning. Joseph had no notion of going before the great Pharaoh in his shabby dungeon garments, nor with an unshaven visage, but rather as best he could, with what time was allotted him, he cleaned himself up and presented himself in a capable a fashion as he was able to for the moment. Such an excellent example that can be for us now. Irrespective of the wickedness, or the power, or character of leaders, kings, potentates and presidents; it behooves us as those called and chosen to stand in our Master’s Name in as good appearance as possible.

When Joseph stood before Pharaoh, the anxious old king related to him that he had a dream that none could interpret, but he had heard that this Joseph could understand and interpret dreams. Humbly, and in a spirit reflective of the Lord, Joseph declined to accept the credit for himself. And how magnificently he here exemplifies our Redeemer in saying, “It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” (Verse 16) See carefully, “It is not in me,” as if he was saying with the voice of our Saviour in centuries to come, “Not my will but thine be done. To God be all the glory.” Our beloved

Lord, in all of His walk, and in all of His ministry ever sought to exalt His Father. And so here Joseph would seek to exalt his God before this Pharaoh. Here in Verse 16 he tells Pharaoh that God would give him an answer of peace, as if to immediately console the troubled mind of Pharaoh that this dream was not a message of distress, but rather peace. And so again in Verse 25, “The dream of Pharaoh is one: God has showed Pharaoh what he is about to do.” Verse 16 says, “God shall give Pharaoh an answer.” And then in Verse 25, “God hath showed Pharaoh had recited his dream unto Joseph. The young Hebrew in turn explained to him that the dream was one, and that this was God Himself revealing to Pharaoh what was to come to pass. And so Joseph interpreted the dream thus; the seven kine and the seven ears represented seven years of plenty and in the land which were yet to come. The seven lean kine and the seven blasted ears represented the seven years of famine. And so again in Verse 28 he says, “This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh. What God is about to do He showeth unto Pharaoh.” There can be no question that Joseph sought the glory of God in this matter, and asked for no credit to himself whatever.

Joseph then rendered his sage advise which, no doubt, God had given him as he stood before Pharaoh. He determined that Pharaoh should seek out a man discreet and wise to be set over all the land of Egypt because this matter had been established by God, and would be shortly brought to pass. He said, “Let Pharaoh do this and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.” (Verse 34) This was a plan so simple, and yet so profound that when Pharaoh and all his servants heard such it was good in their eyes. They were well pleased with his advice, because God was in the matter. Human nature being what it always is, there can be little doubt that Joseph would have been quickly moved out to make room for some more worthy Egyptian, but for Divine intervention. Why would they accept this stranger to rule over them, except the Lord had stirred their hearts to look on him with favor? Joseph was thus, under the providence of God, moment by moment, being exalted in the eyes of these leaders and rulers, and they could not do anything to prevent their feelings, or the sense of excitement that this dream was from the God that ruled the universe. They were now satisfied that Joseph had answered wisely and judiciously, and that there was none so discreet and wise as Joseph, for God had showed him all of these things. And too, even as extraordinary, God secretly stirred their hearts to approve him without dissent.

From Verses 39-44 we see the acknowledgement of Joseph’s wisdom by Pharaoh, and his elevation to ruler over all of the land of Egypt. In verses 40 and 41 there is recorded what seems to be a three-fold rule conferred on Joseph by Pharaoh. 1. Joseph was to be over Pharaoh’s house; 2. he was to rule all of the people by his word, and 3. he was to be over all of the land. The vastness, and the extent of Joseph’s authority and rule was without end regarding the territory of Egypt, as it was known at that time. All of the rule, and all of the reign of the whole of Egypt was then in his hand; the throne excepted. When Pharaoh told Joseph that he had set him over all of the land of Egypt, no doubt he meant it for the good of his own people, but in the secret providences of God, it was chiefly for God’s people Israel that the lad Joseph was not in this strange land being at that very moment promoted to the position of ruler beside Pharaoh. Pharaoh then, in a sweeping show of approval, gave Joseph his ring, clothed him with fine line, and placed a golden chain about his neck. Despite any private feelings that might have been entertained towards Joseph, no one could dare question his authority. Certainly Joseph had come up in the world from where he was just a few moments before. From the dungeon to the throne in one fell swoop. Was not all this because the purpose and plan of God must be fulfilled in every detail? We surely then can see in Joseph as a type of Christ, the rise of a far greater Saviour and Redeemer centuries later. As Joseph rose from the dungeon to the throne to deliver the people, Jesus ascended

from the manger to the mountain to save His people from their sins. And yet, the type departs there as the Redeemer must suffer the agonies of the cross, while Joseph was spared further harsh trials.

Even as Joseph was being publicly elevated, he was also empowered with great dignity, and what amounted to absolute authority over the whole realm. Reflect then, as he rode in the second chariot beside Pharaoh, how they cried before him those superlative words, "Bow the knee!" How profitable to the inner man it is when he is blessed to contrast the jurisdiction of Joseph with that of our Saviour, "Let every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Christ to the glory of the Father." So we read in Philippians 2:9-10 and Ephesians 3:14. "Bow the knee" was a suitable plaudit for one whom God had blessed; this one who had been promoted to the highest position of supremacy and authority; this one who would shortly with his wisdom and power (which God had given him), deliver those who must certainly die without his salvation. "Bow the knee" was a fitting tribute then, and "bow the knee" is a fitting tribute today. What a hallowed thing it is for the little children of God to see the beloved Redeemer with the eye of faith, as He passes by in the glorious chariot of Eternal redemption. They hear the comforting sound of the herald trumpet proclaiming, "Bow the knee." And a certain truth it is that all the elect host have no desire to bow to anything else. When their Redeemer is before them, they all, in holy submission, hasten to "bow the knee." "Bow the knee" is a most suitable and pleasant declaration for those who live their Lord in truth.

"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." (Verse 44) Joseph was extended absolute authority in the fullest. No man could move, no man could work, no man could either come or go, without the explicit authority of the newly-crowned saviour of all the land. Joseph was in total and complete control. Yet, we see too, that under his authority, the citizens were free to go about much as they had before. But, the jurisdiction and power of Joseph could not be questioned, for he had been promoted by the Highest authority.

Another product of this circumstance that has intrigued the minds of many readers is recorded in Verse 45 where Pharaoh "gave him to wife, Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On." It has been believed by most, and it is probably the truth, that this is an emblem, or figure of Christ taking a Gentile bride. We have no desire to extend our remarks on that point, but simply observe that it is in all probability a very consistent view. Both Joseph and Jesus, in the zenith of their ministry, took to themselves a bride. In each case it was under the direction of their head and master. In Joseph's case Pharaoh gave him a bride from the daughters of Egypt. As regards the Lord, Jehovah, His father in heaven, gave Him a bride from the daughters of Jerusalem. It is also interesting to see that Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh; exactly the same age as our Redeemer was when He began His public ministry, when John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." This is more than just circumstance. It is, to our mind, clear proof again of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

So Joseph went about for this period of seven years of plenty, gathering a fifth of the abundance of the land each year. He accumulated corn as the sand of the sea, as the text says until it was "without number." Joseph was making preparation for all the people, not just part of them. Everyone would, at a future day, benefit from the wisdom and direction of Joseph's efforts. There is little doubt too, that probably many curious minds were busy at work when they saw him storing the bounty during this seven years of plenty. "Why," they would ask, "would anyone want to lay up corn when the land is obviously so productive; when the gods are pleased to give us abundance?" There is a very great similarity in circumstances seen here, and with those when Noah built the ark in preparation for the

flood. Surely there were multitudes then who concluded the man Noah was insane. To prepare for something as unlikely as a flood was beyond belief. Who could ever believe a flood would occur? So then, Joseph prepared for a famine. Who could believe a famine was imminent with the land producing in such abundance? Only by the moving of God in their lives could they perceive what was in store. And while Pharaoh, in his wisdom appointed Joseph to this position, he never would have done so had it not been for the direction of God. So Joseph toiled. His appointed task was to bring about the purpose of God over the land. In this Pharaoh also was but an unknowing actor in the Eternal Plan.

And then the moment came. Sure and certain, the predestinated event unfolded. “And the seven years of plenteousness that was in all the land of Egypt were ended.” (Verse 53) As the wise man Solomon said, “To every thing there is a time and a purpose.” There was time for plenty, but it had ended. Now the time of famine came on apace. How easy it is to believe when we are in the prime of life, and good health, with things going well, that things will never change for the worse. But rest assured, dear readers, that as certainly as we have sunshine, we’ll have nightfall as well. As certainly as there is plenty, there will also be famine in our lives. But blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for He has enabled us to see that we have a greater than Joseph to deliver us when our trials come. And this hope, though often small, continues to sustain us.

And so, the people began to cry to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh thus informed them all, “Go unto Joseph. What he saith to you, do.” (Verse 55) How comforting and sublime to read such language as we are comparing Joseph with Jesus. Is not this the very message of Heaven itself? “Go unto Jesus,” for He alone has the word of eternal life. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) We need not go to Pharaoh, or to rulers, or would-be leaders. There is only one that can deliver the starved soul in spiritual famine, as but one could deliver the Egyptians in the time of their famine. We must go where authority is. Joseph then; Jesus now; and none can come except the Father which has sent Him draw them.

So the famine was over all the land, and Joseph opened the storehouses and sold unto the Egyptians. It is a contrast beautiful beyond description to see here Joseph selling to the Egyptians, and in later chapters refusing the money from the hands of his brothers. Their money was worthless. They could not buy, for the grace of Joseph would provide for them. His mercy and compassion to his kinsmen would be their benefit, and their deliverance, when they sought food and refuge.

The Remnant

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Our last article on “Jesus seen in the life of Joseph” ended with the several events recorded in Genesis 42. The seven years of plenty and abundance had soon enough passed, and the once fertile land now brought no yield. So, according to the directions of the Pharaoh, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold unto the Egyptians as their needs arose. The famine had immobilized the normal life of everyone, and as it waxed sore in the land, and throughout the known regions of the world, those who would live must come to Joseph to buy corn. There was simply nowhere else a poor citizen could go. Go to Joseph

or perish. Thus we see in the outset of this apparent calamity, a figure of our Lord is clearly displayed in Joseph. As Joseph was the only person the starving could turn to, so we, as starving sinners, have nowhere else to go, but to the Saviour of sinners. There was corn aplenty in Egypt, but no one could obtain it except through Joseph, the absolute Governor of the whole realm.

And so at this same time, Jacob and his sons experience the difficulties of the famine upon themselves: In the passing of time, old Father Jacob asked his sons why they looked one upon another. (Genesis 42:1) They no doubt seemed to him to be perplexed Starvation, possibly death, for all their families and their flocks faced them if the circumstances weren't shortly remedied. And, as none had any suitable answer, they gazed one upon another. They were then too, in a figure, much like the troubled sinner who sees his desperate condition, but has no idea what to do about it. Until, in the providence of God, a sinner is directed to go to Jesus, he will be as perplexed as the sons of Jacob were about going to Joseph to buy food. This is a simple truth the Arminian has never learned, and never will, but for the Grace of God breaking in upon his blinded soul. But Jacob had heard something that was to be the good news leading to their deliverance. He heard that there was corn in Egypt. The Scriptures do not inform us how he learned of this; or how that this message of salvation came to him; but suffice it to say, in God's good time, at the appointed hour, when it was His pleasure to deliver His people, the message of life came. "There is corn in Egypt; there is deliverance for all who will bow the knee to the Sovereign of the realm" is somewhat the message Jacob received. So now, Jacob must act on the information he obtained. The nature of the case demands it. Even so, a stricken sinner is made willing in the day of God's power to heed the message of life. Does he do it in his own strength? Never. He is compelled to arise and begin his journey to Spiritual Joseph because the Holy Spirit moves him as surely as God is on His throne. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44) Jacob thus sends his sons to the only place he knows of where they can obtain com. It is to be at the hand of Joseph the brothers obtain the provision of life-giving substance.

So Joseph's ten brothers went down to Egypt to buy corn. Little did they know that this journey would forever alter their lives, and all their seed after them. As is recorded in Gen.42:4, Benjamin, Joseph's only full brother went not with them because Jacob was fearful that some mischief would befall them, and he desired to protect the only remaining son by his beloved Rachel. The text then says that Joseph's brothers came among those that were there to buy com. How interesting to see that the brothers of Joseph were no better off in the famine than were the rest of the sons of Adam. All alike stood in need. All alike were in dread of perishing for want of food, and but for Joseph who now ruled with absolute power and wisdom in Egypt, there was no hope whatever. So his brethren found themselves in the food line just like the others. They were there to obtain as might seem good in Joseph's sight. They knew nothing about their brother now ruling the whole of Egypt. Though they were brethren, they thought that Joseph was long dead. They knew not that it was their kinsman who held the reigns of life and death. Nothing could have been anymore unlikely than them realizing who controlled their affairs, and, held their lives in the balance. Neither do we as sinners now have any knowledge of our Lord ruling our affairs until He makes Himself known unto us by His grace. Until then, we are as blind as Joseph's brothers were. Nevertheless they went to Egypt, for their father had sent them, and because of their compelling needs.

When they arrived in Egypt, like all of the others around them, they bowed down unknowing and reverently before Joseph, their brother. Some, with only natural sight, might see this event as a great coincidence. Or a piece of good luck. An item of chance. But can we not see the very hand of Divine

providence, and the guidance of God's eternal wisdom directing Joseph's brethren there at that time? And was it not the blessed plan of the Almighty that they might come at that exact moment to buy corn directly from the hand of Joseph? We cannot conceive that all of the sales, or transactions of corn that transpired during that extended period involving all of the peoples of all of the lands, including Egypt, was transacted by Joseph alone. He no doubt had many who superintended this business only from time to time, as might seem good in his sight. As he was governor, and second only to Pharaoh, he saw to it that others performed the more menial chores. But, pursuant to the good will of God, Joseph was here at the graineries at this specific time when his brethren came. No, there was no luck about it. This was no chance meeting played out in the arena of blind fate. But rather, by God's grace the family was brought together at this time, and the world could have popped wide open sooner than they could have failed to meet here at this precise moment. Devils may rage, and Hell may fume at the thought, but the predestination of our God arraigned these brothers before Joseph. God, who had declared the end from the beginning, had set these consequential events in motion by the word of His power. Even so are the elect members of the body of Christ assembled before Him in the proper time, and that consistent with the eternal decrees. As for Joseph's brothers, there they were, bowing their faces, and fulfilling the very dreams that Joseph had before recited to them in years past. We full well believe the weakest babe in Christ can see something here of the working of God's holy will, and those who see not could create a moon quicker than they could enter into the secret of the matter.

“And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them and he said unto them, whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.” (Gen. 42:7) “And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them.” Immediately, with no apparent pause, when the brethren bowed before Joseph, he observed them, gazed upon them, and he knew them. Can we not see in this grand story that our Joseph too, the Lord and Saviour, ever knows His people in all of their circumstances? And though their eyes are prevented from discerning him, and His countenance is withheld from their understanding, nevertheless, He sees His brethren and He knows them. Very often the Lord might, like Joseph did, make Himself strange unto his brethren. Nevertheless, all these things are working together for good, bringing about the grand moment that God would reunite all of the family in the unsurpassed joy and happiness of union with Him such as could not be known previous to such an experience.

“And Joseph saw his brethren.” And why was it they could not see him and he could see them? Joseph and his brethren had been apart for many years, and yet the years had not diminished his memory, but it had theirs. No doubt they could not have imagined that this great man was Joseph; that this man who controlled the destiny of all humans was their brother. But immediately upon his seeing them, he knew them. Yet in his wisdom, and for reason not directly revealed here, he withheld his knowledge of them, and spake roughly to them. Baffled and confused, they no doubt had no notion at all of what was taking place. Joseph however, was preparing them for the moment when he would see fit to reveal himself to them. And so we reading Verse 8, “And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew him not.” This verse very well sums up all there is to know about the relation between our Lord and His family. As Joseph could know his brethren, but his brethren did not know him, so our Lord from all eternity has know us, when we knew Him not. (And we would here emphasize that the Lord did not simply know about us as the Arminians presume, but He knew us.) Joseph's brethren had sinned against him very grievously. As far as they were concerned they had murdered him. Now they had forgotten their trespasses in a great measure, but Joseph had experienced all of the bitter consequences of their evil disposition toward him. Coming now to buy com they cannot perceive who this magnificent governor is, but he knows them well. Joseph in all points was superior to his brethren, and it must be so, for God willed it. Comparing

the relationship then between Jesus and His brethren, we discover the same. Supreme in all areas and all ways, He is all wise, all powerful, ever knowing. We, on the other hand are ignorant, dumb, and weak; foolish, cold, and dead; and insensible of all things until such time as He is pleased to draw us out and give us life, light, and liberty. Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew him not. The situation could never change until such time as Joseph was pleased to make it different. They had no power to recall, but from the beginning, he knew all, and at the appointed hour, he would reveal himself; but not now.

So what was the first thing that came to the mind of Joseph when he saw his brethren? “And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them.” (Verse 9) His mind went back to his youth when he visited them in the field, related to them the dreams he had, and how, despising him, they said, “Behold the dreamer cometh.” And so this was all vividly before him as if but only a moment had passed since his dream. With seeming sternness he addressed them thus, “Ye are spies, to see the nakedness of the land ye are come out.” (Verse 9) Some have thought that from the outset Joseph was filled with compassion for his brethren. We are constrained, however, to think somewhat differently. It is our observation here that Joseph in his humanity felt a sense of anger, and within his bosom there was kindling the fires of animosity that had lingered with him over the years. It was not until several encounters later on with his estranged brethren that he began to be melted, and manifested compassion towards them. Though a type of Christ, Joseph was as capable of hard feelings as any other son of Adam. But at this time, he dealt with them as spies, and accused them of seeking out the nakedness of his land. They, of course, denied this and sought to placate him with what they believed was the truth; that they were only there to buy food as his servants. The brothers’ conduct was much like the poor sinner who is brought up before the Lord and knows not what to say against the severe accusations of the law.

So they related the nature of their journey as best they could, and explained to Joseph the circumstances of their family; how they were the sons of Jacob, and that one brother was left at home. And so again they were accused by Joseph as he stated to them that by the life of Pharaoh they would not go forth except Benjamin would come to Egypt (Verse 15). So Joseph put them all together in a ward for three days, being a prison-like place that they might be secured from escaping. After Joseph had put them in the hold, he says to them, “This do and live for I fear God” (Verse 18) Herein we find the first suggestion from Joseph of his true character as he commands his ignorant brethren what they must do. He expresses to them the nature of his wisdom, for truly the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and he stated to them, “I fear God” There seems to be in this expression an accusation to them that they did not fear God as he did, which obviously in a great measure they didn’t. They had sold their brother, and given him up for dead. They seemed to have no fear of God before their eyes in the matter. But now, to quote the old proverb, “Their chickens are coming home to roost.” These sinful brothers experienced in a great measure the pangs of a previously dead and dormant conscience. All of these things were suddenly bursting forth in their conscience and the experience of an awakening of things long forgotten put them in complete consternation. Is not much of our experience set forth here? Were not we perplexed when our past transgressions were hauled in against us by the fiery law and the working of the Holy Ghost? The dismayed transgressors were brought up suddenly before the judgment of reality. Their crimes could not go unpunished. This appeared clear as the noon day sun now. There was no mention of what they had done; there were no accusations made; but these dormant trespasses revived as though they were just freshly committed. Astonished, they were made to cry out, “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.” (Verse 21) One might ask, “what caused such

an outcry as this?" We can only answer the time had come that they must stand before the great law giver to answer for their past crimes. And it was him, the great Joseph, whom they had trespassed against. As much as anywhere else in the Scripture, this portrays how that all of the brethren of Jesus must some day, like Joseph's brethren, stand before Him to acknowledge their trespass. It is the sweet hope of those made alive by the work of the Holy Ghost that they will hear the comforting word, "Come ye blessed of my Father." Though the elect have lived during all centuries of time, each one at the last day shall stand before Him. The sheep will be secure, but the goats will be driven away. At that time every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God. And we verily believe that in this confession there will be in the breast of every one called by grace the sense of guilt, the acknowledge of trespass, and the owning up of their sinful and vile condition. The very first light that beams across the troubled sinner's breast reveals to him his wickedness, his vileness and his need of redemption and cleansing. This has never changed since the first sinner was brought before their Joseph. They all say, "We are verily guilty." In the case of Joseph's brothers they were guilty of sinning against their brother. In our case, we are guilty of sinning against our Lord. The contrast and the comparison are vividly beautiful and harmonious to the last degree. And may God bless us always to see and behold it.

It is interesting and almost amusing to see in Verse 22 how that Reuben, the senior brother, attempted to escape the responsibility of the trespasses in a measure by saying, "Did not I speak unto you, saying, Sin not against the child." How often we hear those that would resolve themselves of the trespass, and like unhumbled arminians they seek to lessen their crimes by saying, "I'm not as guilty as you are." Nevertheless, Reuben stood as guilty as the others. In all of this ordeal, as they were conversing among themselves and attempting to thrash out the details of their terrifying experience, Joseph listened and understood. They knew not the tongue of Joseph, but Joseph knew their tongue, and so we read, "And they knew not that Joseph understood them, for he spake unto them by an interpreter." How plain again that shows us that our Joseph understands all that transpired in our lives and conduct though we know so little of Him. He spake to them by an interpreter. And so, our Lord often speaks to us through another medium, be it an interpreter, or in the things of life about us, He brings His message home as suits Him in His sovereign way.

"And he turned himself from them and wept." (Verse 24) While we will not attempt to analyze this statement at this time to its fullest extent, we would mention this is the first of seen times in the life of Joseph that he wept concerning his brethren. And in those seven times we see his royal compassion and holy feeling for his family, his brethren. And we see, as well, the intensity of his devotion to his family even when he would not reveal himself to them. In this instance he turned himself from them before he wept that they would not see the emotion and the agony he suffered in this issue. We would note as well there is nothing stated in this first instance of his weeping that would lead us to conclude that he was weeping for joy, but rather it appears that Joseph, again in his humanity, was saddened by their conduct.

So next Joseph instructs his brethren to return home. He commands them to fill their sacks with corn. He restores every man's money in the sack and he gave them provision for the way. (Verse 25) Notice first the expression, "their sacks". More and more throughout the next several chapters the relationship of Joseph's brethren and their sacks will be mentioned. The word will be used over and over again and if God wills, we shall observe their conduct in this matter and their relationship to their sacks, as we shall describe it later as their "sack religion". Every man bears about in his life those things which are most valuable and accommodating to them. And so the bulk of the life of Joseph's brethren, at this

time, was bound up with their sacks. They were preparing now to return home with their sacks full of corn, unknowing that their money would be restored in their sacks, and that this would bring them back to Egypt as criminals. Their sacks contained their provisions, their utensils, and other things necessary for their daily activities. Truly it might be said that without their sacks they would be in a desperate condition. So we find, spiritually, that everyone carries about with them those things which they most tenaciously cling to in their “sack religion”. As well as restoring their money in their sacks and giving them their corn, Joseph gave his brethren provision for the way. No doubt all of those who have eyes to see can make the comparison of the provisions for the way. Our dear Lord has given us provision for “our way.” We refer to the spiritual way in which we must go, all the way our Saviour leads us. As the Scripture relates, “He will guide us with His eye.” He gives us hope for the way. He gives us courage for the way. He arms us with the sword, and with shoes, and with the shield of faith. Any other necessary provision for the way He also provides. And while we journey as pilgrims and strangers in the land unknown to us, full of dangers and terrors, all of the provisions we could ever want or need will be provided for us by Jesus who is our Joseph. Joseph’s brethren carried their provisions in their sacks, and these sacks represented the necessities of their journey. Our provisions are bound up in our inward being, in these vessels. The Lord has provided oil in our vessels that our lamps will not go out. He has provided a witness so that we might have a recall of all things He has done for us. And so on and on we might number these things that He has given us as provisions for the way. “And thus he did unto them.” It was not so much what he did for them, but what he did unto them. And so it ever is with our Lord He does unto us such things as are necessary that we might not perish in our journey.

And the brothers depart. They are on their way home, and they no doubt believe that they have accomplished their mission. Their minds are eased; their consciences are once again salved, and they believe they have escaped the perils that they suspected in the brief hours before might ruin them. But when one of them opened their sack, there they discovered the sobering reality that their money had been restored. It was in their sack. Their hearts fainted, and they were afraid. They knew not; they understood not; and terror had seized them. It appeared that these things going contrary led them to erroneous conclusions. Without knowing that Joseph’s hand was in the matter, they believed that certainly they must be at some point brought up as guilty thieves because they could not explain this. How this shows us the frailty of our understanding, the lack of our wisdom in Spiritual things. Like the brothers, we attempt to buy; we attempt to gain, (in the Spiritual realm that is) even as Joseph’s brethren did. We swiftly discover that our Lord returns our money in our sacks. We cannot buy; we cannot barter; for all comes at the hand of Joseph by free grace. He gives and we receive; and that is the end of the matter. Yet these things make us afraid. We wonder, “is it so, Lord, can it be us?” And we are made to cry out often, as Joseph’s brethren did, “What is this that God hath done unto us?” There was nothing in having the money in their sack that should have terrified them, and yet it did. They felt that the hand of God had gone out against them in judgment for they verily believed that this incident would bring about their destruction; little knowing that all of this was an issue of the grace of Joseph unto them. And so they return home in terror and consternation, fearing the worst, and barely able to hope for anything better. They apprised their father, Jacob, of what had occurred, and how they were afraid. After this, Jacob could only say this, “All these things are against me.”

Dear Brethren, are we not like Jacob when we see that which we understand not, the beginnings of the working of our Lord and Saviour? We cry out “All these things are against us,” little knowing the truth of the text, “All things work together for good to them that love God.” Jacob was as terrified as his sons, and Jacob was no better than any of the rest of us to console them in their grief for he equally shared in it. The terrors of the Lord had seized upon him, though he was not guilty of the same crime

they were. And though he had no answers, he could but join them in their misery and say, “These things are against me.” And so they sit, with their corn, their confusion, their money in hand, their minds in turmoil, awaiting for the next episode when they must once again confront Joseph.

Them Remnant

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Number 5

Joseph’s weary and disconcerted brethren had returned home from their sojourn to Egypt. Jacob had sent them to purchase corn that the family might not perish. On their return home they had discovered their money had somehow been bundled in their sacks. They were for the moment safe, but in a state of consternation. The fearful brothers related these perplexing events to their father, Jacob, and he had retorted, “All these things are against me.” And so what seemed to be a mission of deliverance had soon turned to a mission of despair. They are at home in Canaan; the famine continues to consume the land, and they know not what to do. Thus, in this historical sequence of events we find a figure of the lamentable condition of all the poor starving saints of God through the centuries. They seek deliverance in their own ignorant devices, and know not what to do when they are confronted by their spiritual Joseph. The simple plan of deliverance they attempted leaves them with too many unanswered questions for them to unravel. The spiritual famine, similar to the one Joseph’s brethren endure, continues unabated and they face apparent starvation of the soul, until God rules otherwise.

But to return to the text: “And the famine was sore in the land.” (Gen. 43:1) The one truism in their circumstances to this point was that the purpose of God rolled on. Jacob and sons had probably given little thought to the hand of God in these matters. The matters of first importance to them was relief. But, there was no relief from the appointed famine, and appeared that they must finally perish, little knowing they were secure in the wise government of the Lord. The pressure of the circumstances now moved the little family to action. And so Jacob, though he had vowed not to set his sons back to Egypt and to Joseph again, was made to have another opinion. He says, “Go again. Buy us a little food.” (Verse 2) How this truly describes the vacillating of the poor ignorant worms of the dust as they seek deliverance in their own efforts, and purpose of mind. They vow they will not do this; they promise they will not do that; but soon enough their puny plans, their simple vows and their good intentions are brought to confusion. Then the ordained circumstances confronting them force them to relent. So, though Jacob had sternly purposed otherwise, he says, “Go again.” This certainly was not what Jacob wanted, but unknown to him and his sons, it was the holy will of God. It was God’s divine plan to bring them once again into the presence of Joseph. Now it must be pointed out that their only concern was to obtain food for their perishing bodies. A reunion with Joseph was not at all in their thoughts, as they had no notion this austere ruler of Egypt was their kin. But the holy plan of God was that they might find a better deliverance than their plans included, and a better home with the blessed son Joseph. And thus they prepared to go. “If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food.” (Verse 4) Recalling the obtrusive manner Joseph had dealt with them, the disconcerted brothers were eager to follow his instructions in this next audience in the courts of the Pharaoh. Observe there too the words “go down.” When one leaves the land of their inheritance, in this instance Canaan, to go unto Egypt, they must go “down.” And so in the experience of the saints they must in their journey to obtain spiritual food, go down to the lowest place, to the lowest point they have known. There they will be

stripped of all human boasting. “And why,” it may be asked? That all their creature strength may fail them, moving them to look outside of themselves is why. Sinners that seek deliverance must be bowed before their spiritual Joseph to receive from Him the life-sustaining food.

“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.” (Verse 11 and 12) It is more than interesting to see that old Father Israel wanted to do a little carnal bargaining with the governor of Egypt. He directs his sons to take of the best fruits in their vessels; “take the man a present, a little balm, a little honey,” etc. What pitiful prizes these would be to offer to Joseph; and yet to his brothers this little dab of earthly possessions were no doubt very valuable in their time of famine and want. Jacob also directs the brothers to take double in their hands, to return the money they found in their sacks. “Carry it again” was his language. It was but a meager total that they had amassed to offer to Joseph, and yet they verily believed that somehow or another Joseph would be pleased with these little tokens of their generosity. Can we not see how much we are like them, even now? When distresses arise, and troubles buffet us, our natural inclination is that we should try to render peace offerings to our spiritual Joseph. Our Arminian character directs us to believe that a little portion of the things we possess will prevent His fierce anger towards sin from going out against us in a consuming fury, if we but offer them up in a measure of sincerity. And yet it is needful that these lessons be learned again and again, for when we discover that double money and these pitiful gifts are worthless, we then begin to learn of the great wealth and possession our brother Joseph has treasured up in our behalf.

And they journeyed. Nothing of their venture back to Joseph’s presence is recorded in the Scriptures until they arrive in the land of Egypt once again. “And 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.” (Verse 16) So there they stand before their brother once again. They are as ignorant of the hand of God in the matter as they ever were. This time however, Benjamin, the full brother of Joseph, is with them. The searching eyes of Joseph immediately light upon his younger brother. When he sees him, and the others with him, he instructs his servant to “bring the men home.” “Bring them home.” What a sweet message that must have been, though little understood. Unlike the rest of the starving multitude, these brothers are treated with a special dignity, and for good reason. These are, and ever have been, Joseph’s brethren. They are kin! Poor ignorant, unhumiliated Arminians have never seen that God does make a difference in the love and care He bestows. This forceful request to Joseph’s home was not an offer to any that might “will” to go. Rather, it is the free expression of love for those special ones whose union has been broken by sin. The rest of those there seeking provisions never had a union with Joseph, and never would. This is a plain and simple truth, but far too profound for work-mongers to comprehend. This direction to call the brothers to Joseph’s home was intended for none but family. A heart prepared of the Lord knows that the overtures of the Lord are restricted to the family of God. The brethren were coming home, but as yet they didn’t know the mind of Joseph in the matter. “And slay.” They knew nothing about why this offering was to be made, but Joseph was full well intent on providing all things for them, without any explanation for the moment. It would appear that the sacrifice here sets forth the lesson of union and communion with our spiritual Joseph through the sacrifice He alone could initiate.

“These men shall dine with me.” Though they stood trembling, and in much fear, and totally ignorant of the meaning of these things, they were about to partake of a sumptuous fare in the presence of the

Supreme Ruler of the realm. Once more they began to reason about the actions of this one who alone had the power of life and death over them. “And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph’s house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.” (Verse 18) Yes, the brethren were afraid. How awful and terrible it must have seemed to them to stand before Joseph. They had been here before; they had stood here as criminals because (as they assumed) of the money in their sacks. Now they stand With Benjamin and they reason all the more within themselves that he would take occasion against them. They believed that certainly they must lose their lives. Again, here we see the beautiful figure of how a poor sinner, who as yet does not know the full nature of the circumstances, believes he must perish at the feet of his Joseph. Their past crimes, their sins and their trespasses rise up in their conscience and smite them. They verily believe that all this confusion will bring them to ruin. They cannot see the hand of God to this point, nor the Divine plane in its glorious fullness. And, even though conscience-smitten sinners may know a bit of this business in the letter, or as a doctrinal theory, in experience it is another and terrible matter. They see only the worst side of the controversy, and believe that it all must finally end in their doom. As for Joseph, his compassionate plans for them were entirely different than their carnal reasoning. And so it is with the saints of the Most High. Though we believe that we must stand before our Joseph to be judged and condemned, (if we are brethren, and we hope we are) then the worst of our fears will never be realized. All must end well at last, for we are the brethren of Joseph. The family is a unit; one in eternity; one now; one forever, and none of them shall ever be lost.

The brethren converse with Jacob’s steward on these perplexing matters, and they say this; “And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.” (Verse 22) How true the statement. “We cannot tell.” They had thus far experienced some very strange circumstances. They have seen it with their own eyes; they have felt the awesome impact of matters far above their mental capacities; and so they must confess, “We cannot tell.” This is a proposition too enormous, and too overwhelming for them. It cannot be fathomed, for it is too profound; it is wide and it is mysterious. This grand moment in time will affect their whole lives and very beings, yet they are speechless. It must be emphasized again that these brothers had absolutely no notion that they and Joseph were kin. The poor things must confess, “We cannot tell.” Have we not, to a great measure, experienced the very same things in our experience, as we have traveled as pilgrims and strangers? The hand of the Lord goes out in strange ways, and circumstances arise that are so baffling to us that we must bow in awe and say, “We cannot tell.” It is far beyond our capacity to even propose the slightest word of explanation as to how these things are falling out. We must stand in stunned submission, confessing our ignorance and inability regarding these matters.

“We cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.” (Verse 22) They would have told all, if possible, but it was not. In all their ignorance and fear they were forced to admit their lack of ability to explain these affairs. This is in complete contrast with the Arminian tribes dealing with such matters. Free-willers are never at a loss to paint their gloss on any and all of the deep mysteries of God. Joseph’s brethren, however, must articulate their ignorance, for this is a real experience to them, and not mere speculation. When the hand of God goes out against one there is a resulting honesty that the Adamic nature can not, and would not convey.

But the servant responded, “And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.” (Verse 23) How interesting it is to see the servant recount to them such things as we would

expect to fall only from the kips of our Lord. "Peace be to you." No doubt he could not say it with the power and the influence that Joseph could have, and yet it must have been reassuring to them to know that he knew enough about Joseph to tell them there was peace in store, and that they need fear not. The brothers needed a word of comfort at this time, and blessed be God, He stirred the servant to deliver one. This exactly comports with the way the gospel assures the elect even now. When the distressed lambs are nearly at their wits end the words of peace come. These are words the saints of God have received in due season through the centuries. Recall the moment the Lord stood with His little flock and said, "Fear not little flock, it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The very disciples had but a meager comprehension of those sweet words at the time they were spoken. They have, however, been a source of consolation ever since the gift of the Spirit came. So, with the brothers standing there nearly consumed with perplexity, they are calmed with the news that the God of their father had given them their treasures in their sacks. This could not be fully comprehended, but it could be received, and at the appropriate hour it would be unfolded to the glory of God, and to their comfort. And thus in the time of our deepest distress, the Lord, at His pleasure, sends His servants; our Joseph will dispatch a messenger to say to us, "Peace be to you, fear not: your God, the God of your father," etc. Those sweet words will blessedly sustain us, if not permanently, at least for the little season of distress.

"And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender." (Verse 24) And so they now have come once again to Joseph's house. Before they could stand in audience with him it was necessary that they be washed; that their feet be cleansed; that their animals be provided for. So we see how that all things come to pass in their good order. Before we may appear before our Joseph we too must be cleansed from our journeys, and washed from our defilements. As seems good to Him, He graciously provides one to come to us for such a time as this. It should be seen by the Spiritual eye that there is nothing lacking in the plans of our Lord; that when the ordained moment comes, we must stand before our Lord, and all things will be made ready.

The Remnant

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Number 6

THE SECOND TIME TO EGYPT – Brought before Joseph.

(It has been some time now since our last article on Joseph and his brethren appeared in "The Remnant." The general theme throughout has been a comparison of the experience of the brothers with that of ours. The common thread between our experience and that of Joseph's brothers is the offended brother, and how he deals with his kin.)

We take up the story again with the perplexed brothers of Joseph standing in the presence of Joseph's servants. They were disconcerted when their money was found in their sacks, and not one bit wiser than they were the first time they journeyed to Egypt. When we are brought into the presence of Jesus, our brother, we are much the same way. The Spirit often brings us into the presence of our Joseph,

especially in the early portion of our pilgrimage, and we know little of what is taking place. Being fools and slow of heart, our sins rise up to condemn us, and but for the free grace of God we would fall into complete hopelessness. This was the experience of Joseph's brothers naturally, and it is ours as well, but spiritually.

The brothers could find no answer for these trying circumstances. At that time Joseph had not made himself known, and they had no more power to discern him than they did to create a world. His dutiful servant had spoken to them words of peace, (Gen. 43.23) which no doubt could but barely satisfy their grievous confusion. Nevertheless, they are about to be brought again into the presence of their brother. He would attend to them in such a noble manner that they could have never dreamed it. They then prepared to give him their pitiable little presents they had brought with them (Gen. 43.11, 12). Their offerings were much like the little "duty trinkets" we attempt to render to the Lord whenever we are summoned to appear in His presence. Obviously unaware of the plenteous wealth and might of Joseph, they never realized that this Joseph possessed the abundance of the known world. Despite their attempts at "offering" of their substance to Joseph, nothing that they brought in their hands would be of any influence in the union with Joseph.

When a poor troubled sinner learns by grace the lesson these brothers were about to learn, they will then be wiser than all the religious "thinkers" this world has ever known. All the theological nonsense that might be dished up for the elect will never convince them to attempt to buy their way into the good graces of Spiritual Joseph as his brothers did. This knowledge is a covenant blessing, received only by those who are the kin of spiritual Joseph.

They stood then in Joseph's presence. He asked of their welfare (Gen. 43.27). It is exceeding wonderful to see in the type that Joseph's first question to them regards their personal welfare, rather than requiring of them an answer to their wicked conduct. Just so our Joseph has ever sought the welfare of His brethren though we have been aliens and enemies. He ever looks over the elect for good, and not for evil, though we know little of it.

As much as anything else, this line of questioning causes a poor sinner to reflect on his low estate. This is precisely the opposite to the brutish manner of work-monger religionists. They would demand of us "duty," "works," and "offerings" in abundance. But to seek our spiritual welfare would be as far from them as the east is from the west. Their questioning would only cause one to seek within himself something of value to respond with. No poor sinner, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, can find within himself anything but corruption; thus he shuns the voice of work-mongers.

Joseph speaks to them as well of their father, and he asks, "Is your father well? The old man of whom ye spake, is he yet alive?"(verse 27). Here we see again a lovely figure of our Lord as He seeks the knowledge of His Father from the family. Throughout the earthly ministry of our Joseph, communion with His Father was paramount. While we often lose sight of these things, it is a very truth that the Saviour's delight was always to be about His Father's business. Thus we see here that when Joseph has asked of the welfare of his brethren, he speaks of the prospects of uniting again with his father.

They answer in the affirmative regarding their father, and then bowed down their heads and made obeisance (verse 28). It was a sad plight they were in; they could but bow their heads and attempt to render homage. This is very different from the adoration and respect that Joseph deserved, but they knew no more, and could do nothing else. Vividly, it shows us again in a figure how wretched we are before our Joseph. Until He makes Himself fully known unto us we can, like the brothers of Joseph, but

go through the motions of reverence. We may bow and scrape, and go through the gestures of veneration, but true worship, and acceptable adoration can only be effected by spiritual revelation, and a holy uniting with Him through His will, and not our own. Few persons today see the imperative of spiritual revelation by the Lord to His chosen family. It is supposed by most that at the whim of sinners they may become acquainted with the Saviour. However, Joseph's brethren could not in nature; nor can the fallen sons of Adam in spiritual matters. Truly the natural man cannot receive these things, for they are spiritually discerned (I Cor. 2.14).

See here too that everything that transpired in this sequence of events was contingent upon the will of Joseph, and not his brethren. It was he who controlled the affairs of his brothers, and not they themselves. They awaited his sovereign word; they were totally passive. All that which befell them there was, without doubt, outside the realm of their control. So it has ever been with the children of the Heavenly King, for it is in Him that we live, move and have our being (Acts 17.28). Exactly as the brothers then anticipated the directives of the unknown ruler of Egypt, all that come before the Lord for deliverance today from their daily plights must be made resigned to His will. When they are not resigned, they soon enough will be. What truly enlightened saint of the Most High would ever have it to be otherwise? We may come in ignorance as Joseph's brethren did, or come in some measure of the full knowledge of Spiritual truth. It is a delight to know, however, that we come because we are not our own, we are bought with a price, and as He speaks and commands, so shall it stand fast. May we ever praise Him that it is so.

“And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son (Gen.43.29).” Observe that it says, “And saw his brother Benjamin.” He saw them all, but his keenest attention was fixed upon his brother Benjamin. There was a special place in his heart for Benjamin. While we are fearful to so state with any degree of certainty, we do believe that this incident sets forth the emerging beauty of the Lord's relationship to those who are His peculiar kindred. While some may be startled at that expression, we believe it is fully set forth in this text. Joseph's brother Benjamin, as the text recounts, is his mother's son. These brothers all had the same father, namely Jacob; but only Benjamin had the same mother as Joseph did.

We are made to think of that lovely text in Galatians 4:26, “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.” We are fully persuaded that all of the saints of God are embraced in the motherhood of spiritual Jerusalem, whether they lived yesterday, today, or tomorrow. They are one, and they are brethren. But, they are not all brethren in the same relationship as Joseph and Benjamin were, as we before mentioned. Joseph's brothers all had one father, but they had different mothers. And so the election of grace has brought together all the family, and yet they differ in their covenant relationships.

We are persuaded further that those the Lord calls to be baptized, and live in the church, are children of the same mother as our Joseph. Those redeemed, but not called to this relationship, have the same father, but a different mother. We state here in the firmest manner possible that this is all of grace, and no creature willingness whatever is involved.

He said to Benjamin only, “God be gracious unto thee my son.” A special beneficence was invoked upon Benjamin that was not given the rest of the brethren. And how we must bow in holy reverence at such conduct. Someone may say that it is not right for Joseph to feel more toward Benjamin than the others, and we would ask, “Has he not the right to do as he wills?” Even as our Joseph said, “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?” (Matt. 20.15).

We feel strongly that this point deserves special emphasis. Joseph's brethren were the sinners; Joseph alone was the deliverer. They stood before him condemned in their conscience, and condemned by his sovereignty. What could they do, or, what could they say? Must they not stand in expectation of his pronounced will? To emphasize the point again, they are the beggars; he is the regal Lord of the realm. Unknown to them they would all be freely forgiven, (in Joseph's own good time) but since it was then his pleasure to speak words of special grace to his mother's son only, who were they to dare reply against him? And indeed they did not, for their mouths were as surely shut by God as were the mouths of the Lions that were supposed to devour Daniel when he was plunged into their den. The brothers did not reply against Joseph, for they could not. "Nay but, O man, who are thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. 9.20).

When our dear Lord and Saviour ascended on high, and gave gifts to men, could then one who received a greater gift look in contempt upon the one who received the lesser? Or the reverse? Dare the recipient of the lesser gift rail on the possessor of the greater? Could the gift of healing say to the gift of discernment, "There is no room for thee"? These questions really need not be asked, for all who believe the truth know the answer. Joseph's heart goes out to his brother Benjamin in a special way, and yet the others were no less his brothers by his father than they were before, and they too would receive his mercies, as seemed good in his sight.

"And Joseph made haste" (verse 30). We see in the stirring of Joseph's emotions a little glimpse of what our Saviour was like in His earthly ministry. He hungered, He thirsted, He had feelings of anger, and there were the times of blessed manifestations when He publicly worshiped His Father. All these sublime activities displayed His most human nature. Yet in all of that, He remained, without exception, the Sovereign Ruler.

We believe that while Joseph was here firmly in control of the circumstances, a view of his brethren, (and especially Benjamin) wrought upon his frame a convulsion of compassionate feelings that hastened him in their behalf. For as it was stated, "His bowels did yearn upon his brother" (verse 30). What gentle feelings these must have been, though unseen by the brothers. Joseph saw, for the first time in many years, this one who had come from the same womb as did he. Now they are united again, though in afar country, and under widely different circumstances than that in which they grew up. Benjamin stood before him that Joseph might do with him as seemed good in his sight. Still, poor Benjamin knew not the truth of the matter. But Joseph knew; and what a grand truth this is. Joseph knew it all, but the brothers knew but a paltry little. "And he sought where to weep."

This is the second mention of Joseph weeping. The first time it was with some apparent reservations; this time he could scarcely contain himself, and so he sought where he may weep out his hidden feelings in private. For the time they must not observe his emotions. They must not know that their presence has moved and mightily stirred their brother Joseph. We might point out here again that all this emotion seemed to center on Benjamin more than the other brethren. The events that had just transpired seemed to be chiefly because of Joseph's love for his full brother Benjamin more than the others. And yet the others also would be beneficiaries with him as a result. Thus Joseph entered into his chamber, and as the text says, "And wept there." What stately feelings and tenderness he then displayed; but they saw it not.

Comparing this incident with our own relation to Spiritual Joseph, is it not so that we have but a meager idea how much the Lord is moved by the presence of His little ones? These things are for the most part hid from our eyes. His feelings gave way, but not before their eyes. The emotions built up

from years past now spilled forth, and yet it was as concealed from their view as if they were stone blind. Soon enough they would know; but it would be in Joseph's good time. So he washed his face and went out, and refrained himself saying, "Set on bread."

"Set on bread." The first order of Joseph's business for his brethren was to see that their bodily necessities might be met. Even before they were enlightened or instructed; even before he revealed himself to them, he knew their needs, and their weariness. They were gathered before him in hunger. Thus he set before them the natural bread of life. We believe this again represents our Joseph as He feeds His little children such things as are necessary to sustain them spiritually, as the Bread of Life that He gives from His Father above. This is the true Bread, the everlasting Bread, and Bread which strengthen them in the inner man. We are reminded of the text in John where our Lord prepared a meal for His disciples after His resurrection. He bid the disciples "Come and dine." The Saviour prepares the meal, bids His people eat, and blesses them to enjoy the fare. When He feeds the sheep there is given them the assurance that all will be well.

The Remnant

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Number 7

In our last article on the life of Joseph we related the events of the second trip to Egypt by the brothers of Joseph. They were sadly as ignorant of him, and who he was, on their second trip as they were the first, and so it would remain until it pleased Joseph to reveal himself. Until he drew the veil from their eyes, they may as well have been stone blind as to find him out. There is not even a hint in the Divine Record that any of the brothers had so much as a fleeting suspicion that they had known him before. All they knew of him was such as the natural eye could behold. It was with them as with the disciples on the road to Emmaus: "But their eyes were holden that they should not know him (Luke 24.16)."

Joseph's brothers seemed to grow more and more apprehensive, rather than feeling comfortable with their majestic, yet unknown brother. Is it not a truth as well then, that poor sinners saved by grace are generally the same with their relationship to Jesus? Though He knows them, and is ever guiding their course, they have no knowledge of what is really transpiring, except He make it known. Consider the twelve disciples that walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry. They were with Him constantly for over three years, yet all they knew was such as He revealed to them from time to time. On the occasion when He asked them who men said that He was, only Peter could answer properly, and even then Christ expressed that Peter's knowledge was of divine origin. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 16.17)." And what was it that the Father in heaven had revealed to Simon? That Jesus was the Christ (verse 16)! This then is the lesson of Genesis 43, and it compares very closely to the experience of the disciples as recorded in the New Testament.

In Genesis 44 we find Joseph totally in command of the lives of his brothers, and giving instructions for the events that would ultimately bring them before him again. It would again be a time of consternation and considerable perplexity when they were apprehended once more, but for the moment

they were making preparations to leave his presence, seemingly having obtained their original purpose in going to Egypt. To that moment the brothers preferred being gone from the company of Joseph, for knowing nothing of their relationship, or their fleshly ties, they had nothing in common; or so it seemed.

Joseph gave his servant instructions to fill the brothers sacks with all the food they could carry. (They had limits to what they could sustain, as well as we do.) He further required that once again their money should be returned. How clearly this should teach us that our material possessions cannot buy food or favor from the Lord, any more than they could appropriate sustenance with their currency at that time. Notice too, the departing brothers had all their worldly possessions in a simple sack. They were little better than vagabonds. Their poverty was real, and were it not for the mercy of Joseph they had scarcely anything at all, and yet what he gave them they could not appreciate.

The silver cup from which Joseph drank was, by his instruction, placed in the sack of Benjamin. This would prove to be the undoing of the brothers, and bring them to the end of themselves. It might be thought by some that Joseph was not “playing by the rules” in doing his brothers that way, but we are compelled to feel that he not only had the “right” to do so, but he was doing it for their ultimate good. Could we dare reply against the ways of the Lord today? Neither could they reply against their Lord then, even had they known what was transpiring.

“As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses (Gen. 44.3).” Though Joseph sent them away, it was to be for only a short period of time. No doubt but their minds were for the moment relieved as they headed for home, but their relief was to be brief. After they were but a short way off Joseph gave instructions to his steward to overtake them, and ask them, “Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good (Gen. 44.4)?” It would be difficult to imagine a worse situation for the brothers to be in, according to nature, and according to how they must have interpreted each succeeding occurrence. However dreadful they must have felt at being once again detained, their hopes of going home to Jacob being blasted, this was a golden link in the design of Joseph to convey them safely under his authority and benevolent care. We solemnly doubt that was the way, however, they observed it at the time. All their hopes of going back to the safety of their father’s house were once again interrupted.

Had someone suggested to the meandering brothers that this was one of the “all things that work together for good” they would have replied that exactly the opposite seemed clearly to be the case. “How can it be good to be buffeted about this way?” “This all looks very bad for us, and as far as good coming from it, that appears to be impossible.” Well we might ask ourselves, if we have not felt the same way in our trials and sad encounters in life.

The brothers of Joseph put up a good verbal fight with the steward,(verses 7-10) and concluded by every man taking their sack down and opening it up. We are made to wonder that they had not learned their lesson yet, since they had once before gone through this same dilemma (Gen.42.27,28), but like us in our encounters with the mysterious dealings of the Lord, they were yet dull of understanding.

Now the worst of all their fears was realized. There, for all them to see, and the servant of Joseph as well, was the cup of Joseph in Benjamin’s sack! Surely, matters could not have been darker, and off they went, back again, to face the stern master, Joseph. If they had eyes to see, they would have rejoiced; but this assuredly was like a death sentence to them; sudden vengeance had finally overtaken them, and almost any circumstance would have been preferable to this. Yet, what looked for all the world to be their gloomiest moment would prove to be a reunion with the benevolent one they had

sinned against so grievously years before. What a mercy it is that in like circumstance neither shall we get far from our Lord with His property until He graciously draws us again to His presence, to make Himself known.

“And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph’s house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground (Gen. 44.14).” Joseph was waiting for them, for they would as surely return as the sun would rise in the east every morning. Joseph was in complete command of the matters, and the brethren were in complete consternation. Many years before, Joseph, when just a lad, had recited to them his dream, and they hated him for it. “And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more (Gen.37.5).” When he had given them the substance of the dream they responded: “Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words (Gen. 37.8).” So now, at the exact moment God had decreed, the brethren, though unknowing, fulfill the dream to a man. Could any poor sinner, blessed to fear the Lord, fail to see how our God brings to pass all His purposes, even in our most trying circumstances? While the brothers all dwelt at home together, they could never have imagined such an event taking place. They hated Joseph. They could not speak peaceably to him; and yet God worked all the details together to bring them down at the feet of their brother. Every event, large or small, since the brothers had thrown Joseph in the pit until that moment, had been unfolding with Divine exactness to bring them to this place. “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain (Psalm 76.10).” Where now was all their bitter feelings of years past? Their very being was in such supposed danger that all their arrogant spite of years past dissolved. At the appointed hour God shall bring all His chosen rebels down to worship at His feet, as He did with Joseph’s brothers.

“And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord’s servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found (Gen.44. 16).” Ah, yes! it seemed to be all over in their minds, as was stated by Judah. They now confess their iniquity; not the particular crime against Joseph, but their whole condition. Is not this the very way in which our great God brings us also? We come to the end of ourselves. At the same time we are brought, just as surely as was Joseph’s brothers, to the Lord’s feet to confess our iniquity. The best we can describe ourselves is servants (and totally unprofitable ones at that) much like the prodigal did when the famine forced him to return home with his head bowed low. Yet in all the confession of Judah, it is sobering to see that they felt like God had just now learned what they were guilty of. “God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants.” How blessed it is to be shown at some later point in our experience that God sees all, and knows all, and that from eternity, and that this wisdom of God is established in His will, rather than in foresight.

From verse 18 to the end of the chapter, Judah recites the events as he knew them before Joseph. In all he said there was still not a trace of indication that the poor brothers knew as yet who Joseph was, or that this matter would resolve in their good, and not evil. Why? The Lord willing we shall discover in the next article on the subject as Joseph, like Jesus, makes himself known.

The Remnant

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Number 8

All the brothers of Joseph were now arrayed before him to await his will. Except for Benjamin, this was the third time they were there. The sons of Jacob originally came to Egypt at his direction to obtain food necessary to sustain the starving family. Now, however, they stood stunned before Joseph to await what they believed would be a sentence of condemnation. They had come to the end of themselves, not knowing the whole series of recent events were totally managed by their unknown brother. We fairly believe this is much the way the family of Jesus is brought before Him today. Our efforts to sustain us are all crossed, and we are brought, confused and shut up, before our Lord to hear the awful sentence upon us. And, but for the eternal love He has for His brethren, so it would be. Little do we know, like the brothers of Joseph, that all this is done by the wise direction of the Lord to bring us to Himself.

“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 (Gen. 45.1).” This was the culmination of a long trial for both Joseph and his brothers. They were at their wits end. As for Joseph, he could no longer hold back his tender feelings and growing emotions he felt towards his disconcerted family. As the text states so beautifully, “Then Joseph could no longer refrain himself.” Then indicates the ordained moment had come. The reunion was at hand. The rebels were to be subdued and reconciled; fellowship, based on family ties, would be restored. All was soon to be well, though for the moment it could not possibly look like such was to be the case. The text indicate too that the pent-up emotions were reserved for his brethren only. He could not refrain himself before all them that were before him. His full heart and tender feelings of mingled love and compassion could only flow forth in the presence of those, his kindred. The others, despite whatever standing they might have had in the court of Pharaoh, must be expelled. Was it for some particular crime or shortcoming they must be put forth? No, they simply were not his kindred. Joseph was desirous to both relieve his brethren and as well make himself finally known to them, and this privileged was something the eye of the Egyptian citizens could not observe. We might well say their “communion” was to be closed. Closed to members of the family, that is.

“Cause every man to go out from me.” This is a good example where the obvious governs the extent of the statement. Every man did not include the brothers. It was meant for those not embraced in Joseph’s fellowship. So, none of those men (the servants) stood with him as he grandly revealed himself. This imposing moment allowed none else to stand with Joseph lest there be some erroneous notion that he somehow needed the feeble assistance of servants. Joseph needed no one else to manifest his relationship to his beloved kindred. The rich breath of deliverance was about to be breathed upon his brothers and he must stand alone as sovereign. How very true it is that when the Saviour of sinners, typified by Joseph, reveals Himself to His little chosen ones, He comes alone. “And Jesus came and touched them, and said, arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only (Matt. 17.7,8).” “And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them (Luke 24.15).” Notice well, Jesus Himself. As foretold by Isaiah: “And I looked, and there was none else to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me (Isaiah 63.5).”

Thus, as the text reads: "...And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren." Had a servant foolishly thought to assist Joseph, what could he have done? They knew less about the relationship between Joseph and his brothers than the brothers did, and at the moment that was nothing! The great sovereign of Egypt alone could convince these pitiful pilgrims that all was well, despite their fears and apprehensions. And then blessedly he made himself known. Before, the brothers knew him as a stern master. Now they were to know him as their brother and saviour. Glorious deliverance was at hand. The sons of Jacob were to lose their burdens, their cares, and their self reliance.

The contrast of emotions here is so vivid it must be touched on briefly. Joseph was full with love and tenderness towards his kindred. His emotions must pass the bounds of containment and flow out to the sons of Jacob. Joseph was pitiful, and manifestly compassionate with his trespassing kin. To know and be known was his utmost passion. On the other hand, the brothers are in a dark brood. Horrendous guilt had steadily built up within them those past days, and their sins weighed heavily on their troubled consciences. Foreboding, dread, apprehension, and probably the agony of impending death stalked them. There was not found among them a trace of the characteristics exhibited by Joseph. Who would ever have suspected these were the long lost brothers of Joseph? But they were just that, brothers with him. It would take his revelation of self to them for this to be known, but it was the truth before it was known by them. Revelation or not, this was Jacob's family.

And here we suggest again a comparison. How much are we like these brothers until Jesus is made known to us by His personal revelation. It would have done no good for one of the servants to tell these fearful ones that Joseph was their saviour, had they known. It could not have been believed without the revelation. Had they not seen Joseph carried away by the roving band of Ishmeelites many years ago? Had not father Jacob given up his darling son for dead long since too? Living substance alone could clear the confused minds of the brothers. Joseph alone could open the eyes of these beleaguered sinners. Nor can we possibly know Jesus until He opens the eyes of our understanding to show Himself before us in a joyous display of eternal life. Jesus, Whom to know is life eternal.

"...Joseph made himself known unto his brethren." All the rapture of this moment was reserved for his brethren. All others, no matter their station, must depart, for this was a sacred scene. Here is ground for stumbling for all universalists and Arminians. Where is there the least room in this narrative for "whosoever will" or "come just as you are?" Unless one had previously been born kindred to Joseph they could never be embraced in the impending revelation. So, except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of our Joseph. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out (John 6.37)." Who then are the ones that the Father gave to Jesus? "And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me (Heb. 3.13)." God gave Him children. They did not become children later. They were children when they were given to Jesus in eternity.

"And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and 4 the house of Pharaoh heard (Gen. 45.2)." This is the third time, according to the record, that Joseph wept over his brethren. The previous two time he concealed his feelings from them. Now, however, the appointed time had come. From all eternity there had never been another moment when this revelation might have been made. But now it could. The brothers must then know the deep, abiding tie that bound them with this leader in Egypt. It might be interesting to observe here also that while Joseph was the exalted ruler of all Egypt, that was not his home. Like

Jesus in Jude a, he was only there to deliver his brethren, and then return to his home. And like Jesus again, he must die first before leaving his strange and temporary residence.

“And he wept aloud.” Turning for a moment from Joseph, consider his antitype Jesus. When Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus it is recorded: “Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him (John 11.35,36)!” This blessed scene was witnessed by the Jews. They saw as clearly as did His disciples, yet they had no notion whatever that which was in the heart of the Saviour. There lay His dear friend Lazarus, dead four days, and stinking from corruption. The wages of both original and practiced sin had taken their toll. The Master, however, with His word, banished death for the time, so that His loved ones might be together again. So Joseph, while his brothers are gathered before him, wept over his dear ones. He vented his feelings as he prepared to clear them of their bondage, bring them to his banqueting house, and calm their troubled breasts. As the Jews had heard Jesus groan, so the Egyptians heard the sighs of Joseph. To them it could be little more than noise. The secrets of this fellowship none could know but the few travelers from the house of Jacob. And know it they surely would! Had Joseph wept for hours on end it could not have touched the hearts of his servants to love him as a brother, for they were not. Eternity past, present, and future would never span the gulf between the two distinct families.

“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 (Gen.45.3).” “...I am Joseph”. There can be no mistaking the comparison here. At least seven times in the New Testament Jesus described Himself as “I am”. In most instances, as the Saviour took to Himself the title of “I am,” the multitude had no idea of what He was saying. They went back and walked no more with Him when he said “I am the bread of life (John 6.35).” They took up stones to stone Him when He said “...Before Abraham was, I am (John 8.58).” There was a division among the Jews, and they accused Him of having a devil and being mad when He said “I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and go in and out, and find pasture (John 10.9).” And again “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine (John 10.14).” So it ever was. Until it was made known to those for whom it was intended, the great title of Jehovah (Exodus 3. 13, 14; 6.2; 7.5) was a troubling declaration. Little else could be expected then, when Joseph says, I am Joseph. His brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled. How did their trouble affect them? “They could not answer him.” Their mouths were silent as surely as though they had no tongues. They saw him; they heard him; yet they could not answer. We are reminded of the solemn words of the poet when he said: “Keep silent all created things, and wait your maker’s nod.” This was no time then for rattling off all their accomplishments or credentials. Of these things, they had none. Sin lay at the door. Whatever Joseph’s pleasure might be, they must wait for it in silent submission, be it good or evil. They had no time either, to rely on a hope of good things to come, for their past sins had become a present condemnation. They were troubled at his presence. How amazing that the presence of him who was to be their deliverer was the source of their trouble. Of all the places on earth they could be, there was none better than to be in his presence, yet they were troubled.

Their situation was far better, however, than their carnal fears could allow them to imagine. Joseph gently repeated his sweet salutation with a tender petition; “And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt (Gen. 45.4).” This second time Joseph uses the term “I am”, he bids his brothers to come near to him. This was to be as near an effectual call as a mortal could issue, for there was none that dare disobey him. Indeed, according to the tender way he conducted himself, there was little else the

brothers could do. “Come near to me” was the sensitive call that would finally sweep away the tremulous feelings from them and subdue their apprehensions. Besides all this, coming to him was no doubt far better than being banished to a dungeon or possibly hearing the death sentence passed on them. Such a bidding was well calculated to cause them to view their plight in a much calmer light.

Of all the words that ever fell from the lips of our Saviour, none were sweeter than when He bid us to come near to Him. As the antitype of Joseph, His voice carries with it authority and power. All authority, and all power. Besides that, it most surely calms the troubled breast. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt. 11.28).” Like Joseph’s brothers, we labor under a heavy load of guilt and sin until such time as the dear Redeemer bids us come to Him for rest. “Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing it was the Lord (John 2 1.12).” Shortly before Jesus bid them come, the disciples had been growing weary trying to catch fish to sustain themselves. Now He fills their boat with one hundred and fifty-three fish and bids them come and dine. Such grace and mercy can never be fully appreciated in this life. The Lord of the creation provides His disciples with all they need. Not a fish, however, do we learn, was fetched for any others. This was a bounty for His chosen ones. The Lord certainly had the power to feed the world’s hungry at the time, had He pleased. His pleasure was to feed His chosen ones, however.

Going back then to Joseph and his brothers, we see that none but family were gathered about him; and none but family were told to come. Joseph could have summoned the whole of Egypt had he pleased, but he did not please. “And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near.” They had much to learn, and a multitude of fears to overcome, but they came, for where the word of the king reaches, responses follow.

Having then led them along to this moment Joseph recites to them their crime from many days past. “I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.” Their sin was now out in the open. Startling as it was after these years to be confronted with their wanton deeds, it was not intended for condemnation as much as it was for reconciliation. Had Joseph intended retribution it would have come much sooner; besides his tenderness towards them would have been absent. So it is when the Lord draws His little lambs to Him. At the same moment He makes Himself known. He also makes known our transgressions against Him. It has been the experience of most that when this takes place the immediate reaction is the question, “How can I be cleared of my sins against one so great?” We may suggest too that we still contend with that question for many days after.

The Lord willing we will take up the comforting story of Joseph and his brothers again in the next issue of the paper.

The Remnant

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Number 9

We closed the last article on Joseph and his brothers with Gen.45.4. Joseph had kindly said unto his brethren, “Come near to me.” He had now made himself known to them in the most tender manner, and

then bid them to come near. Not one of them could, until that moment, possibly have dreamed that their own flesh and blood brother was the great ruler they then stood before. And, with the contemptible sin of selling him now more vivid than ever in their conscience, they could not possibly have anticipated this kind of warm, sensitive reception. It is no wonder then that they were confounded at those unfolding events.

Here again, as throughout this whole historic episode, we find a parallel figure of our standing before Jesus. Shame, mingled with fear, greatly influences our understanding, and much hinders, if not clouds altogether, our prospective joy. "How can these things possibly be?" we must ask. "Is it conceivable that our sins are all forgiven?" "Why does our Lord not display some anger at our transgressions?" "Am I deceived in this matter, and my worst fears will soon be realized?" These, and a thousand other erroneous conclusions fill our minds when, at God's appointed hour, we are brought before our Joseph. And, make no mistake about it, when we stand before Him, Who is our salvation, we will have been brought just as surely as these sinful brothers were brought. No guilty sinner has ever volunteered to come to Jesus. Until free grace brings him, and makes him willing in the day of His power, the sinner has no inclination to be in the presence of One so holy. "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life (John 5.40)." Such was the case with the Jews, and such is the case with all mankind, until drawn by cords of eternal electing love. We must point out here too, that as Joseph alone had the authority to summons his brothers to him, even so Jesus alone beckons the lost sheep to come to Him. Those who may have wanted to assist Joseph in this reunion, had they known of the relationship, would only have been meddling in private family affairs, just as it would be intrusive meddling for Arminians, freewillers, or other workmongers to seek to reconcile the sheep to the Great Shepherd. We are persuaded that as none but Joseph had knowledge of the relationship, so none today, despite their ever learning, are aware of the eternal tie that binds the great Shepherd and the sheep.

"And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." This text alone is sufficient to refute the devilish notion of the universal brotherhood of man. At this grand reunion was gathered all the sons of Jacob, and not another human on earth was a brother of Joseph. This was all there were, and he bids them alone to come to him. No matter how close the tie might have been between Joseph and those in the Egyptian palace, none but those born of Jacob could be addressed as they were; as brethren. The crime of Jacob's sons was enormous. It was of the foulest nature. Yet they, despite their wickedness against him, were still his kin, and his pleasure was to call them. It must be kept in mind that they were brethren before they sold him; they were brethren when they sold him; and they were still brethren these many years later. The family ties could not be broken. The gracious emotions flowing from Joseph were restricted to brethren only. Even so, however black are the sins of the elect, they alone are the brethren of Jesus, and they alone will be called effectually by free grace.

"Whom ye sold into Egypt." Twenty pieces of silver they had gotten from the band of Ishmeelites for his price. They struck the unholy bargain and walked away. Joseph thus was sold into Egypt. It was meager price for the life of an innocent lad, and surely it vividly reminds us of the thirty pieces of silver Judas took for the price of the innocent Son of God. The crime of Judas, like that of Joseph's brothers, lays bare the malignant hatred in the hearts of those who are unprincipled by the restraining grace of God. Hideous as both crimes were, they are no worse than any of the sons of Adam are capable of when left to act out the wicked intentions of human nature.

If such a crime were to be reported publicly today in our knee-jerk society, most all who heard of it would be incensed, and filled with outrage. "Throw the book at them" would be the general sentiment.

We seriously doubt there could be much in the way of sympathy or compassion for rouges like these. Further, if a story as this was cleverly embellished by one of today's sensation-peddling news commentators, the whole of the land would be up in arms; frothing for justice, punishment, and merciless retribution. Talk show hosts would likely whip the simple-minded public into a frenzy of revenge. Who, then, could tolerate such beasts as these?

How, then, was this episode to fall out for the brothers who had so grievously trespassed against their innocent kin? Would Joseph conduct himself toward them as we, or others, might? No; the magnanimous Joseph indulged in no self pity. Revenge and "getting even" were foreign to his demeanor. Justice and punishment were, rather than being executed, to be banished with love, compassion, and a yearning for reunion. Guilty as they were, the rouges were to be freely forgiven, and even mightily comforted in their distress! This, we believe, shows forth in type the magnificent manner of both the calling and cleansing of the chosen family of God; the brethren of Jesus. All we like sheep have gone astray; all the sheep will be safely returned. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; all the elect sinners will realize the glory of God in their standing with the Son of God. There is none that doeth good; no not one; the goodness of the Righteous Saviour will be ours by imputation. Deserving damnation, we receive deliverance.

Whom ye sold. As Joseph's brothers all were guilty of selling him, so are we regarding the selling of Jesus; just as much as if we had joined Judas in fetching the thirty pieces of silver. Hear the prophet Isaiah: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; with his stripes we are healed (Isa. 53.5)." Isaiah foretold the wounding and bruising of the Son of God, seeing all the brethren of Jesus fully involved. Notice the word "our" three times and the word "we" once. Zechariah saw much the same thing in the following: "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends (Zech. 13.6)." Were not we, as His friends, all alike guilty?

But for the earlier circumstances regarding Reuben we might have reason to beg off being personally guilty of the wounding of our Joseph. "And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again (Gen. 37.2 1,22)." See also verses 29,30. Clearly, Reuben was opposed to the plot as far as overt action was concerned; even plotting himself to deliver Joseph safely to father Jacob. Yet when the brothers came to Egypt the first time it is obvious from the way Joseph treated them all that Reuben was considered one of them in the transgression. "And he [Joseph] put them all together into ward three days (Gen. 42.17)." Read also Gen. 42.21-23. We conclude that even as Reuben was accounted guilty with his brethren, so we too stand condemned before our Lord as surely as if we also had contrived in the plot to sell him. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things (Rom. 2.1)." "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others (Eph. 2.2,3)."

"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life (Gen. 45.5)." This, we believe, is a blessed glimpse of pure, free grace. It much reminds us of the words of the Hymn:

“What wondrous love is this, Oh my soul.”

Joseph first encourages the brothers to avoid further grief, of which they had an abundance. Nor was there room anymore for being angry with themselves. Despite the prolonged smiting in their consciences, this was all to be put away; even as if it had never happened. Just so does the dear Saviour of sinners apprise them that their sins are cast behind His back; in the sea of forgetfulness, to be remembered no more. This is much more than the brothers then, or we today, can comprehend. Yet it must be so! Guilt is banished by grace.

“But may a poor bewildered soul,
Sinful and weak as mine,
Presume to raise a trembling eye
To blessing so divine?”

It was all so, though, and there was a grand basis for this direction Joseph had given his bewildered brothers; the eternal will and purpose of God, and that from all eternity. “For God did send me before you to preserve life.” This had been hidden from the guilt-stricken brothers, but their Joseph knew it. Was it merely a shrewd guess on his part? Bare speculation? No, he surely had learned this truth from his childhood at home, as God opened up the future to him in dreams. See Gen. 37.5-11. Joseph had recited all these things to the family then, but their eyes were blinded to it. They hated him yet the more. No doubt but as time went on the focus of these things became clearer to him, until the day his brothers stood before him the first time. Then he must have fully known the meaning of it all. God had ordered the whole affair before time as surely as He created the world. This whole business did not suddenly come up on the great Jehovah and cause a sudden change of direction No! This was a part of the “declaring the end from the beginning” as written in Isa. 48.

Many there are today that are revulsed at the mention of predestination. Others, simply fearful of accusing their Holy God of instigating sin, cannot bring themselves to join with those that find comfort and satisfaction in passages of scriptures such as this one before us. But there they are, and they are a sure testimony to the predestination of God. Knowing our own personal frailties and limited abilities, we nevertheless feast at this banquet of verities whatever others may feel. “For God did send me before you...” This was no chance journey Joseph had taken! God sent him! Oh yes, all his brothers contrived against him, and the wicked deed unfolded from their hands. Yet the testimony is emblazoned on the sacred pages of Scriptures: “For God did send me before you.” This is predestination, pure and simple; first, last, and always. It involves on the one hand, the sinful actions of wicked man, and on the other hand the all-wise, holy counsel of God to bring to pass His purpose. Dear saints of the Most High, rejoice. If the Lord has drawn back the veil, and shown you a little portion of His great handiwork, you are a blessed people indeed. These are the things He has hidden from the wise and the prudent, and revealed unto babes.

Subsequent evidence reveals that these brothers were among those that love God, and thus, all these things were working together for their good, or, as we may say, in their behalf. What amazing doctrine this is. They sinned maliciously, and obviously without giving a thought to the purposes of God, yet the very deeds that so troubled their souls later were the instruments of God for their benefit and were employed by the Lord to save them from the coming famine. Further, this was a golden link in the chain of certain events to fulfill the promise God made to Abram regarding his posterity (Gen. 17.6,7,19). Can all this be anything other than the destiny of mankind pre-ordered? Surely God did

purpose aforesaid to do such. It was no stop-gap action, nor did it need any last minute revisions to bring it to pass.

“For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest (Gen. 45.6).” Was Joseph speculating on the future? He could state well enough what had happened; the two years famine, but to predict the five years to come was another matter altogether. As Joseph is a prominent figure, or type of Christ, it is altogether probable, if not certain, that this insight on future events was to show forth his glory and elevated status before God, that his brothers would take their place before him at his feet. The unfolding events also established with certainty that Joseph spoke, as with the wisdom of God. This appears too, to be his reasoning why God had sent him before them; that preparation for the coming dearth might be made. Again, Jesus beautifully shines forth in Joseph as he went before his brethren. The Saviour has always gone before His people to make preparation for them. See Rom. 9.23; I Cor. 2.9; Matt. 25.34; Heb. 11.16; Rev. 12.6; John 14.2,3.

“And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance (Gen. 45.7).” There appears to be a double meaning in this scripture; one affecting their immediate circumstances, and another of a distant and prophetic nature. If the Lord will bless, we shall take up this subject again where Joseph explains the way God had charted their paths.

The Remnant

Volume 6, Number 6 – November-December 1992

Number 10

“And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance (Genesis 45.7).”

We concluded our last article on “Jesus seen in the life of Joseph” with the quotation of this text, and by commenting that there appeared to be a double meaning contained herein. Before attempting to continue opening up the meaning of the text let us again affirm certain truths found in this general subject.

All eleven of Joseph’s grieving brothers, (Genesis 45.5) had been gathered before him, and he had begun to recount to them how it was the Lord’s purpose that had brought all this to pass. This was no series of random events, as free-willers might imagine, that simply “happened”. God had, from all eternity, purposed the coming together of the family of Jacob at this time. This was uniquely family business, and none of the family involved were missing. This also beautifully portrays the gathering together to Christ, by the Spirit, all His brethren for cleansing and instruction. None of them can be missing at the appointed hour, as none of Joseph’s brothers could fail to be present when he revealed himself to them and freely forgave them their trespasses. Not a one could have “ducked out” or have been what the world calls a “no-show”. They could not fall away nor perish because their Joseph must tell them, “I am your brother.”

There were, however, others of Joseph's kin that were not present at this time, notably Jacob his father, and Dinah his sister. In type and shadow we believe their father Jacob represents the Father of the whole family of God, both in heaven and in earth. The case of Dinah is another matter and not so easily explained.

“And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land (Genesis 34. 1,ff).” Dinah, the seventh child, had six full brothers; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. These were all the children of Leah, the first wife of Jacob. Dan and Naphtali were the sons of Bilhah; Gad and Asher were the sons of Zilpah; and Joseph and Benjamin were the sons of Rachel. Other than the account of the defiling of Dinah, Genesis 34, and her being named as a daughter of Jacob, Genesis 46.15, nothing is known of her. She was, however, a member of the family even though she was not involved, in any way, direct or indirect, with the onerous crimes of her brothers against Joseph. That being so, she did not stand in any need of forgiveness from Joseph as did the eleven brothers. But, she did need to be delivered from the famine that sent the family of Jacob to Egypt seeking corn. It stands evident then, that all the family, Dinah included, needed Joseph in one way or another. Some, the eleven brothers, needed reconciliation, forgiveness, and deliverance; the other, Dinah, needed restoration and immediate deliverance from the doom that had fallen on the whole of the land. All the family would perish with the rest of the world without the sure mercies of Joseph. But one of them, that being Dinah, had not actively sinned against him as did the eleven. Thus we believe Dinah, in some measure, represents those of the elect family, possibly such as infants, that, despite not willfully sinning against the Lord, nevertheless have fallen under the general curse.

Joseph did indeed have other kin (Dinah) which must be brought. Dinah would in due course be brought to Joseph's presence as surely as the rest. On one occasion Jesus uttered the following: “And 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, and one shepherd (John 10.16).” We are very aware that some interpret this verse to mean the Gentiles, but we personally have never found anything in John 10 to satisfy us that this interpretation had any validity. Even so, whether we are right or wrong, we are very sure that Joseph delivered all his family, and gathered them safely to him; the deified sister as well as the wicked brothers. So will our blessed Saviour gather all His sheep to Himself. We have no desire to promote this view as being vital to the family of God, but rather, feel it would be wrong to avoid its mention, especially since Dinah was as much a part of the family of Jacob as were her brothers.

Returning now to the text at the heading, Joseph said “And God sent me.” Before any of the sons of Jacob had been born God had purposed to send one of them ahead of the others that he might deliver them from the seven years of famine God had also determined to bring upon the world. Joseph was that chosen one God would send. He did not volunteer, as the account clearly shows, yet neither did he seek to avoid this awesome position given him by God. This was his lot in life and he had been fully equipped before time to occupy his position. His conduct from his youth, both among his family and in Egypt, was not a product of his family life or environment; otherwise the other brothers would have also manifested the same characteristics of conduct. No; as surely as the potter shapes the clay, God had shaped Joseph to do His will; and he did it.

“God sent me before you.” No statement in all scripture more vividly portrays beforehand the coming into the world of our Lord Jesus than does this statement. In conjunction with this beautiful figure we learn that before the foundations of the world were laid, Jesus had been ordained as the Lamb slain (Revelation 13.8). Almost 750 years before the fact, the prophet Isaiah foretold of the Son to be given

(Isaiah 7.14). Shortly before His birth the angel informed Joseph, the husband of Mary, that the Saviour of sinners was at hand (Matthew 1.21). Jesus, as Joseph, the son of Jacob had typified, was sent by God for a great deliverance; one that far exceeded in scope and grandeur that of Joseph's. See the parable of the vineyard in Luke 20.9-18 for a description of the Lord's being sent, from His own lips.

“And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity.” The work was all for Joseph to perform; the benefits were all for the brothers to receive, but only by his grace. Did Joseph then offer these benefits to them? Did he imperiously attach a string of contingencies or conditional demands to his deeds? No; Joseph would freely assure their preservation, for it was God's will for him to secure them, and they contributed nothing to the fact. They had neither the power to assist, nor the inclination to resist. It was the day of his love and power, and their great need, and the one was as necessary to accomplish their preservation as the other was. No one but the most blinded skeptic would deny that God sent Joseph to preserve his brothers. It would require equally blind skepticism to deny that God also sent the brothers to Joseph. God sent Joseph before them, and God sent them following after him, though they knew it not at the time. Nothing did, and nothing could, prevent this family reunion, and the felt need of the brothers was just as necessary as the compassion of Joseph their tender and benevolent brother.

The religion of Arminians and assorted other free-willers would require that this text to be revised somewhat to read, “And God let me volunteer to go before everybody to make possible the preservation of everybody if they would just accept it”. But there the text stands, in the sacred pages of God's word, “And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity.” So long as the world remains this will be a comfort to every impoverished sinner that feels to be so much like the brothers of Joseph. We have sinned against our brother Jesus, and if now there is to be any hope for our deliverance it must come to us just like it did for them; by God sending our brother Jesus before us to preserve us a posterity. Observe well that Joseph did not say that he would preserve for them a posterity, but that he would preserve them a posterity. Clearly the sense of the statement is that they themselves were the posterity. Just so is the elect family today the posterity of God.

The word posterity, as used in the Bible, means remainder, or remnant. It occurs nine times in the Old Testament and is not found in the New Testament. Except for our reference here, and one in the book of Numbers, where it regards ceremonial cleansing, it refers to the cutting off of the posterity of various persons. Here, however, it is the preserving, or keeping of the posterity under consideration. Comparing then the story of Joseph with Jesus, does not the Good Shepherd preserve and keep the sheep, even restoring those lambs that become lost? We are reminded of the text, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen (Jude 24,25).” And another, “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (I Peter 1.5).”

Joseph alone had the power and authority to rescue his family from certain destruction in the coming famine. It is worth repeating again that all of the succeeding events over the years, since they sold their brother, were necessary links in the chain of God's purpose to save their lives by a great deliverance. How great then was their deliverance? Great enough to bring them back before Joseph time and again, though they were terrified and condemned each time they came. Their conduct in all this much reminds us of the response of Peter to the Saviour's inquiry in John 6.68: “Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” Joseph's brothers had no choice in the

matter. God sent Joseph before them, and sent them after him. And there they were, to hear the words of life fall sweetly from the lips of their offended, but forgiving, kinsman.

“So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt (Genesis 45.8).” This was the third time in his brief recitation that Joseph attributed to God the sending of himself to Egypt. Clearly Joseph attached much importance to this fact. This was the very basis of relieving the offenders of their sense of grief and being angry with themselves (Genesis 45.5). The brothers had thrown him in the pit; they had sold him for twenty pieces of silver; they had covered his coat with blood to deceive their father; but in all their actions it was the work of God being fulfilled as surely as if done by Himself. So said Joseph, and so it is recorded in God’s Word. Some may feel we make too much of this episode, but it should be noted that God the Spirit has seen good to relate this wondrous story to us in detail. It is the sole account given in chapters 37 through 50 with the exception of the account of Judah and Tamar in chapter 38.

Joseph said he was made a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his house, and ruler of all Egypt. God had signally elevated him to this exalted position that he might be in position to care for his family at the appointed time. However, it would be a serious mistake to contend that Joseph felt towards the house of Pharaoh and the citizens of Egypt as he did towards his still beloved family. Indeed, by his wisdom he parleyed the seven years of plenty into a great windfall for Pharaoh, Genesis 47.14-26, but in no respect did he display the same emotions toward Pharaoh or the Egyptians as he did towards his brethren. From the entire account of the famine it appears that Joseph was very austere towards the citizens of Egypt; he took their moneys, and then their lands with no other obvious compassion, and turned it over to the King’s treasury. On the other hand he lavished good things on his family. He secured their best interests and settled them in the favored land of Goshen. And mark it well, this was all because they were brethren. Trespassing brethren at that! He wept over them, spoke kindly to them, and supplied them with provisions to return to fetch their father from Caanan. He guided and counseled them in every step. This was all a vivid display of love to them he had for no one else in the world. His deliverance of the Egyptians was all incidental to the purpose of God for His chosen people.

The Remnant

Volume 7, Number 3 – May-June, 1993

Number 11

Joseph, the benevolent and forgiving brother, had revealed himself to his offending brothers in what must be described as an astonishing way. Joseph drew them all near to him (Genesis 45.4), encouraged them not to be angry with themselves or grieve (45.5), and then opened up for them the glorious plan of God, showing that He superintended the whole series of episodes leading them all up to this family reunion (Genesis 45.5-8). Joseph then proceeded to instruct them with such matter as was needful for the moment.

“Haste ye, and go up to my father and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not (Genesis 45.9).” Surely the king’s business required haste. They, no doubt, would have preferred to linger and bask in the glow of the moment, but they must now return home. Joseph had so willed it to be. This much reminds us of the account of the wild man of

Gadara out of whom the Lord cast legions of demons. “And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee (Mark 5.18,19).” “Go home!” Thus said Joseph also to those upon whom he had shown compassion. The forgiven brethren must now go home to their father and relate to him all that pertained to their exalted brother. What wondrous news they were to carry back. They must apprise their father of how the matter had fallen out, and how great their dear brother was in putting all their sins behind them, to be recounted no more forever. It should be noted that there was no requirement for them to fully understand all this business. Joseph was sending them home with the message of his exaltation, and his bidding was sufficient for the moment.

“Go up to my father.” it is interesting to see that he does not tell the brethren to go up to their father, but rather, “Go up to my father.” Vividly this again gives us a glimpse of Jesus in the life of Joseph. The first admonition Joseph delivers to his restored brethren regarded his, and their, father. In the early life of Jesus we find the following: “And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my father’s business (Luke 2.49)?” Jesus ever regarded His Father, as did Joseph before him.

“God hath made me Lord of all Egypt.” Joseph was in absolute supreme authority in Egypt; he was lord of all, and he says so. He also relates in unmistakable terms that God had done it. Pharaoh, his immediate mentor, was given no credit for his lofty elevation. Joseph, a model of decorum if there ever was one, sought no acclaim for the rigid discipline he exercised that led to many favors during his sore trials. No; the humble eye of this now regal son of Jacob saw only the hand of Divine providence in his astral circumstances. We see not a trace of pride or boasting in the statement. Rather, we observe a sublime sense of simple acknowledgment. Joseph was lord of all, and God had ordered and executed the business; thus, “God hath made me Lord.”

We feel obliged to stress the point that if God made Joseph Lord, then everything, positively everything, that was involved, great or small, incidental or direct, leading to the lordship of Joseph was under the same decrees that led to his ultimate elevation. If this is not the absolute predestination of all things what would it be? Joseph knew the whole business better than anyone, then or since, and he surely was persuaded God directed the whole affair with no exceptions. Conditionalists may demur, but the record is far too clear for serious protest. Joseph could not possibly have become Lord of all Egypt had not his brothers initially hated him, abused him, and sold him into slavery; unless you believe in pure chance. His elevation over the house of Potiphar, the attempted seduction by Potiphar’s wife, his dreams and interpretations in prison, the famine and his certain knowledge of what to do about it, the will of Pharaoh to promote him over his whole realm; was this all chance? If any small part of the whole had turned about some other way, could the end have been the same? We are persuaded none but madmen could believe seriously that the elevation of Joseph in Egypt could be traced to anything other than the absolute decrees (determined before the foundation of the world) of God.

After hastening his brethren to return to father Jacob, and proclaiming his lordship in Egypt was directly from God, Joseph then issued the following directive: “Come down to me, tarry not.” Egypt was not simply down geographically, where he bid them come. It was to be for a long number of years down positionally. The land of promise they were leaving was their most elevated status; particularly as regarded Jerusalem. Throughout the Scriptures, when any of the citizens of Israel journeyed, they were said to be going down. A case in point is that of the Good Samaritan. “And Jesus answering said, A

certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead (Luke 10.30).” The same was true if they were going to Samaria, Damascus, Galilee, or Carmel, all up geographically. When an Israelite removed himself from the seat of God’s government over them, they were said to be going down.

David was at the low point in his life when he hid in the cave of Adullam. He dare not at that time frequent any of his usual haunts, for fear of Saul’s death threats. “...and when his brethren and all his father’s house heard it, they went down thither to him (I Samuel 22.1).” To be with David, the anointed of God, his brethren and family must go down to him. Thus we see that the family of Joseph, like David’s following, must go down to him. Joseph and David alike are beautiful figures of our Lord, Who left the lofty heights of heaven to gather to Himself all His beloved family here in this low ground of sin and sorrow. Though Joseph was residing in a land of heathen darkness, he was supreme, and thus bids the family, “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 flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast (Genesis 45.10).” We see again so vividly in this pronouncement of Joseph that there is positively no offer system to be found in the Word of God. Joseph did not invite the brothers to sit down in conference to work out a convenient plan for their futures. No! he says “Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen.” And blessed were all those brothers, for surely did Joseph undertake to care for them in all things. Surely they were confounded enough without having to chart their lives during the impending famine. They would surely be doomed unless he took full care of them. Just so does Jesus our brother instruct and care for us in the affairs of our sojourn here in this Egypt world. If Jesus says, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,” or, “Go ye into all the world”, we may be sure He has our well-being in mind, though we may have but a faint glimpse of the circumstances. Our Saviour does all things well for us, though He often does not fully bless us to know the reasons why matters fall out as they do.

Goshen was the finest of all the land of Egypt and Joseph chose it for his family to dwell in during their sojourn there. It is remarkable to see the power he possessed. No doubt but many of the natural citizens of Egypt coveted that choice and fertile land for themselves, but Joseph reserved it for his own dear family, sinful though they had been. After his revelation of himself to them, and fully pardoning them, their evil conduct was all past; and nothing but the best would do for them.

Probably 200 years earlier God had come to Abraham while a deep sleep had come over him, and apprised him of this very time that Joseph would fetch his family to Egypt. “And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance (Genesis 15.13,14).” Whether Joseph knew of this prophesy or not, he certainly, under the direction of his God, furthered it by bringing the family, Abraham’s natural seed, down to Goshen. Could he, or they, have done otherwise? If they could, what would have become of the clear statement of God to Abraham? What then appeared at the time to be the richest of all blessings towards the brothers of Joseph, would shortly become bitter servitude, yet down to Egypt they must go. However, it must be kept in mind that God had also told Abraham that after the appointed time they would come out with great substance. Thus, in a manner of speaking, they would go from good, to bad, to good again, and all at the direct appointment of their Sovereign God.

Isaac too seemed to have some knowledge of the purpose of God to bring the family down to Egypt. “And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac

went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of (Genesis 26.1,2).” Gerar was a little town just to the South of Gaza on the coastal route to Egypt. Probably, Isaac interpreted the famine as the fulfillment of the prophesy to Abraham, and had begun his journey through the land of the Philistines when the Lord more fully instructed him. God directed him to sojourn in that land, not Egypt, where He would there bless him and his seed. “And Isaac dwelt in Gerar (Genesis 26.6).” It is marvelous to see how that each generation felt the promise would apply to them, yet God had appointed it to be brought to pass at the time when Joseph delivered his family to Goshen. None could run before they were sent, for God’s timetable must be kept.

“And thou shalt be near unto me.” Only moments before the brothers would rather have been anywhere else on earth than near Joseph. Their sins had loomed up before them with relentless condemnation. Joseph was perceived as their worst enemy. But now, with tenderness and words of both forgiveness and explanation of the works of God in the matter, the offenders had been set free from their worst fears. And now, they would be near the regal monarch, Joseph, their compassionate friend, benefactor and brother.

We fail to see how any could plead for free will in the salvation of sinners when we have such a clear illustration and figure here in Joseph of Jesus bringing His family near to Him, not only to forgive, but further to undertake for them. To be near to Jesus is determined by Him just as surely as to be near Joseph was his, not the brothers, decision. In this context we do not understand the expression “Near unto me” to only respect physical proximity. They were at that very time being sent from the immediate presence of their brother. Rather, the full scope of the expression regards their total care by Joseph from then on. As sovereign, Joseph’s rule and presence was as extensive as his domain. Thus, even when on their journey back to Jacob, the will and sway of Joseph was with them. Their lives were under his total and absolute regulation. This again is a beautiful figure of our dear Saviour. When He calls a sinner by His grace, no matter where his lot may be cast, they are near to Him, or we may say He is near to them. “...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28.20).” Could a poor redeemed and forgiven sinner want for more?

Not only would the brothers be near to Joseph, but so too their children, their children’s children, their flocks, their herds, and all that thou hast. This was about as near total control as you could find, yet not one word of complaint falls from the brothers’ lips. How could they complain? These pitiful fellows had come to Egypt for corn lest they die of starvation. In the development of circumstances they found themselves with guilt-ridden consciences, and Joseph, the very one they had sinned against, was the only person on earth that could deliver them. If one was inclined to believe in luck they would no doubt feel that these brothers surely had a terrible run of bad luck. This series of events was, however, produced neither from bad luck, chance, or fate; it was the precise development of God’s good plan to deliver His people. So, at Joseph’s command, they would either perish or find deliverance. In a magnificent type of Christ’s dealing with His family, he freely forgave them, comforted them, provided for them, and then assured them of his complete care for them. Surely, there was no room for dissension. Joseph spoke with consummate authority, and henceforth they would be near him.

“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 (Genesis 45.11).” That is about as positive a statement as one could find in, or out of, the Bible. Not just any place would he, Joseph, nourish his brothers, but there in the land of Goshen. Joseph determined the bounds of their habitation just as surely as God does ours (Acts

17.26). Jeremiah also said in this vein that, "...it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jeremiah 10.23)." If it was in man to direct his own steps, the brothers of Joseph might just as well have walked off to Ethiopia or elsewhere and sojourned there, rather than in Goshen. But what a happy people we are when the God of all grace reveals to us that we are not only bought with a price, but kept by the power of God. Even so, did Joseph keep and nourish his beloved family, and that right where he proposed.

"And there will I nourish thee." No contingencies here. Nor is this a vague proposition tendered to the eleven. This is a firm declaration, sealed up in the perfect will of Joseph. It would, no doubt, be a pleasure for the brothers to have all their needs fully met by their brother, but it would be a sad oversight if we failed to see that it was first his pleasure to sustain them. And why was it his pleasure? Again, we affirm, it was because they were his family, and he loved them, despite their crimes against him. This again gives us a blessed glimpse of Jesus in His care for the elect family. It surely was not our will that turned Him to care for us; no more than it was the will of the brothers to elicit Joseph to care for them. Joseph was pleased to care for his family in Goshen; Jesus cares for His chosen ones in His kingdom which is not of this world. As Goshen was prepared for the sons and daughters of Jacob then, just so is the Kingdom now prepared for those who shall inherit it. Joseph was lord over Goshen; Jesus is Lord over the kingdom. Much more might be said here, but we will leave it for the reader to thresh out the rest.

"And there will I nourish thee." Though thousands of others may have come to Egypt to buy corn, just as the brothers did, none of them were bidden to reside in the favored land of Goshen. They too had needs and families to feed, yet the bowels of compassion were not moved in Joseph for them; only for his kin. There should be little doubt that when the word got around that Joseph was showing special favor to his little band of relatives, many were moved with anger, possibly even hatred. "Why not us?" they would ask. We suspect his response would be something similar to that of the goodman of the house (Jesus) when he paid off the laborers. "And when they ! had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, which have borne the burden and the heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen (Matthew 20.11-16)."

If the Lord wills, we hope to take up this sublime subject again in another article.

The Remnant

Volume 7, Number 6 – November-December 1993

Number 12

In our last article, Number 11, we related how Joseph had fully revealed himself to his brethren and then began to chart out their future for them. There they stood, hearing and seeing their once hated brother. Now, however, the Joseph they had before scorned was lord and governor over all the realm of Egypt, and their lives and safety completely depended on him. His will, and the execution of it, would alter and shape their lives from that time on.

It must have been pure amazement gripping them as they contemplated all that was unfolding before them, for matters had seemingly worsened for them with each of their previous audiences before Joseph. But now, baffling at it might have appeared, Joseph, whom they had wantonly sold into slavery, was tender and kind to them beyond any reasonable expectations; expectations, we may add, they surely did not have. They had, with probable cause, looked for evil treatment from this governor, and rather than realizing their awful apprehensions, Joseph began to lavish them with love and pity. All but those who are strangers to grace and mercy will readily see in this the similar manner our Lord has dealt with His estranged family. Dread and terror take their flight, and joy mingled with sweet relief comes in their place whenever Jesus brings His little ones into audience with Him.

“Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him (Genesis 45.15).” What could be more tender and revealing of his nature than Joseph kissing these offenders? All but Benjamin had been directly involved in the cruel betrayal of Joseph, yet, they all, being family, shared in Joseph’s compassion. The text says “he kissed all his brethren.” What mattered was not who was most or least guilty, but that they were his kin; his brethren. We would emphatically state again that probably thousands had come to Egypt for corn, and to escape the famine. Not one of them had violated human decency as did Joseph’s brothers, but they received no kiss from Joseph. He dealt with them all as strangers. But not so with the eleven. Neither their black sins nor their ignorance of unfolding events could eradicate their union with their brother. The tie of paternal bonds transcended all else as Joseph gave vent to his smoldering emotions. His love flowed visibly as he reckoned with the eleven. Well could we say with the poet, “What wondrous love is this!”

Beside Joseph kissing the brothers, the scriptures say he wept upon them. This was the fourth time Joseph was moved to weeping because of his brothers. The first time, Genesis 42.24, he turned himself about from them, and wept. He intentionally concealed his feelings from them then, for the time had not yet come to make himself known to them. The second time, Genesis 43.30, Joseph was much more moved by them, for he had to hasten to his chambers to weep unnoticed, for his bowels yearned within him. Then too, all this was hidden from them, for other matters had to follow before they could be made aware this was their long lost brother. The third time, Genesis 45.2, Joseph wept aloud, then revealed himself to his brethren. The blessed moment had come, and he said, “I am Joseph.” He had wept behind their backs twice, and wept in their presence once, but now, he wept upon them. The fountain of affections must at this time flow upon his beloved family. Their union had once again been established. Mark well that all of this was, from first to last, at the initiation of Joseph. He was totally in control of every event of this family reunion. This is much like Jesus governs all His family. Our Lord, from first to last, cares for the details, large and small, that dictate union with Him; and we may well say His children are satisfied that it is so.

Not one brother had come to Joseph seeking pity, forgiveness, mercy, grace, nor any other favor. It had never entered their minds to presume in that fashion. Their best motives could rise only to that of seeking for the purchase of corn, that they might save their wretched hides from the famine. Had not Joseph first acted in love toward them, they could never have been any better off than all the other seekers coming to Egypt. Yet he did act favorably to them. Need we wonder why? He was the saviour of the family; appointed so by God. Just so do we see our dear Lord saving all His family, every one of them, for so has God appointed Him for such. Not one of the family of Jesus has sought Him first either. And, despite all the fabricated doctrines religious hucksters may attempt to peddle off on the unsuspecting, our Lord and Saviour, as did Joseph, wept upon and kissed only His brethren.

“And after that his brethren talked with him.” Previous to this moment all the conversation between Joseph and his brethren had been strained on their part and guarded on Joseph’s part. Now, however, the burden of guilt was washed away with the kisses of Joseph and a blissful concourse evolved. The whole united family were conversing freely. How vastly different this was from the time of Joseph’s youth when his brethren could not speak peaceably unto him (Genesis 37.4). Then they hated Joseph for his dreams and as well for his father’s exceeding affection toward him, but now all that, including their wicked transgression against him, was gone; they could talk freely with him just as though nothing of the past had ever occurred to mar their relationship!

We fully believe that all those who have a hope in Christ have at some point in their lives experienced much what the brothers of Joseph did as he dispelled their forebodings. All our sinning, straying, and bitter feelings have been washed away, to bring in their place communion with our dear brother Jesus. We see Him now, after He reveals Himself unto us, as never before. He is our present deliverer, benefactor, and friend, and brother, and as such we may freely speak (though often feebly) with him in prayer. No famines, bonds or temptations or guilt may prevent our coming boldly to His throne of grace, though it is often with much trepidation. And, as the brother’s privilege to talk with Joseph was based on what he had done for them, and not what they had to plead or offer, just so is it with the family of the heavenly King. We come because He bids us, and because He makes us willing in the day of His power. And, just as Joseph’s brethren only were involved in this transcending conversation, the elect only may now freely call upon the name of Jesus.

“Whosoever will may come” may be a popular theme with unhumiliated Arminians, but it could never suit the experience of Joseph’s brothers. Not a single Egyptian or foreigner who was there to buy corn ever dreamed of seeking the affections of Joseph, the regal governor. Nor could the brothers of Joseph. Their past sins, their ignorance of what was transpiring, and more than all else, the eternal purpose of God inhibited them. These fellows were, to a man, also confirmed “Whosoever won’ters.” Until the love of Joseph first melted away their unwillingness and relegated them to humble suppliants at his feet they were but aliens like the Egyptians. They had sooner skulked away unobserved than to seek the favor of this one who held life and death in his hand. They would have too, but for the grace of God.

This is exactly the case with the elect family of Jesus. We believe our quickened brethren know of what we speak. What rebels we were before Jesus showered us with His affections and heart-melting warmth. Only then could we, as did Joseph’s brethren, dare talk or commune with our Saviour. Previous to our Saviour bidding us to come to Him we might have known about Him, but we could not personally know and speak with Him. No sin-stricken son of Adam, from the first to the last one, has ever engaged in concourse with the Redeemer until His royal call has drawn them to Him.

The news of this blessed gathering was soon known throughout Pharaoh’s house, and both Pharaoh and his servants were said to be well pleased (Genesis 45.16). And why not? Was not God working in the hearts of all concerned to bring to pass His will and purpose? In perfect sequence each heart and mind was guided to fulfill the will of God. If God had not governed all this business then Pharaoh might just as well have suggested to Joseph, “We best bid your brothers hello and good-bye. With hard times at hand there may not be enough resources to go around as it is.” He very well could have done just that if the notions of the free will system were so. But, blessed be the name of our God, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will (Proverbs 21.1).” So too might others have plotted harm or confusion for Joseph’s brothers had not the Lord God Omnipotent reigned over all.

“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; And take your father and your households and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat of the fat of the land (Genesis 45.17, 18).” What makes this benevolent pronouncement of Pharaoh so marvelous is that Joseph had previously told the brethren to do precisely that (Genesis 45.9,10)! There should be no doubt that Pharaoh was then reciting only what God had before ordained to come to pass, though Pharaoh knew it not. But, if the Arminian system of chance, choose, and connive were possible, then what was to prevent these sons of Jacob from deciding to go home and stay rather than following the directives of both Joseph and Pharaoh? Human nature and personal experience tell us that the brothers would no doubt have begun reconsidering this dramatic series of events as they left for home. Temerity and presumption, and a healthy dose of self preservation thrown in for good measure, would have soon set their sails for a safer haven. Better judgment might have dictated a path of caution rather than obedience to Joseph and Pharaoh. Then, we suppose, the whole plan of God to bring His people down to Egypt would have fallen apart at the seams. May the holy name of God be praised that we have been spared from imbibing such heaven-daring nonsense. The brothers would go home and do just what they were instructed to do, for God was superintending the whole affair, no matter if the events and things that made up this journey were major or minor in the eyes of man. Everything was evolving to bring to pass the purposes He had ordained for them from eternity past.

Pharaoh had further instructed the brothers to take enough Egyptian wagons back to Canaan. “for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come (Genesis 45.19).” They had traveled to Egypt with only their empty sacks and a few asses (Genesis 44.3), but this journey was to be with all the splendor and convenience of Pharaoh’s best resources. No one was to be left behind when they returned, for their provisions were involved as well. Thus the journey of which God had foretold to Abraham would be made in the royal chariots of Egypt’s king. Little could they realize that for those of the family now living that the journey back to Egypt was to be a one way trip, but go they must, for so was it the will of God, and had been confirmed by the mouth of both Joseph and Pharaoh. So, what was to be for the present a journey of splendor and sweet anticipation would, in years to come, prove to be the vehicle for Israel’s servitude under hard and cruel taskmasters.

Many of God’s little children have, speaking in a figure, ridden in Pharaoh’s chariots, and the journey always ended in bondage of one sort or another. But we, like Joseph’s brothers, have the sweet assurance that our journey will be made in conjunction with the truths affirmed in Romans 8.28. Life for the family of God, with all its ups and downs, bitter times and blessed moments, are most positively covered in the scope of “all things work together for good...” even if not seen at the time.

If the brothers knew of the purposes of God for Israel in Egypt the Scriptures are certainly silent on it, but it probably was known by their grandfather Isaac, and their father Jacob as well, for a prophecy of this magnitude was not likely to be kept secret by Abraham. “And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years (Genesis 15.13).” Surely, however, the brothers were too caught up with the anticipation of the moment, doubts and fears notwithstanding, to even consider this was but the coming to pass of that great promise of God to Abraham years earlier.

“Also regard not your stuff: for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours (Genesis 45.20).”

Volumes might be written about the word, “stuff”, and there are many definitions for the word. As used here it seems to indicate the pitiful little parcel of personal goods the brothers were able to scrape up to

haul along with them from home in their journey to Egypt. Value, somewhat like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, and while their assortment of “stuff” probably had some value to them, in the eyes of one like Pharaoh it had a value about the equivalent of dung. Pharaoh was treating them in a manner somewhat like the father of the prodigal treated his son who had returned to his home after a season of substance wasting in a far country. Nothing but the best robe, shoes for his feet, and a ring for his hand would do for this son, and Pharaoh wanted nothing but what he considered best for the brothers of Joseph. Stuff from other quarters was to be discarded for Pharaoh was supplying them with the “good of the land.” In time it proved to be just the opposite.

We believe there is a lesson in Pharaoh’s communication to the sons of Jacob. His admonition was that the brothers should, by comparison with the good of the land of Egypt, disdain those things they had accumulated prior to coming to his domain. Their “stuff” might well have appeared pitiful in comparison to what Pharaoh had to offer. However, in our mind, it would have been error to “regard not” what God had provided them. Meager as their “stuff” may have been, free grace had been its avenue of provision. No one claiming Jehovah as their Lord is well served in showing contempt for that which is their lot and provision in life.

There are many religious “Pharaohs” even today that would speak evil of what our Lord has given us in our journey, especially as it would regard the church which Jesus built. The ordinances, doctrine, practice and loving fellowship would all be considered so much “stuff” in their eyes. “Give it up!” “Leave it behind; the good of the land can far better suit you now” is the substance of their appeal to the sons of Jacob that are now making their pilgrimage through this Egypt world. We see here a unique similarity with the instructions of our Lord in Luke chapter 12, regarding what he called “things.” “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth (Luke 12.15).” It is plain enough that the abundance of things was that which the Lord was warning the disciples to avoid. He later encouraged them with the fact that “your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things (Luke 12.30).” Thus Jesus says, “Take heed” regarding the evil of accumulating, or even coveting to accumulate, the extravagant things of this world, such as Pharaoh might provide. Pharaoh said, “Heed (regard) not” in reference to what the Lord had already provided those brothers, for the direct inference was that the things of Egypt were vastly superior to their “stuff.” As Peter admonished the Pharisees, “We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5.29).”

If it were possible today’s religious Pharaohs would strip us of all our “stuff” just as Pharaoh in Egypt did the sons of Jacob. The reasoning is common among the unhumbled Arminians; “Our things are better than your stuff.” But is it really better? Not according to the following text: “Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith (Proverbs 15.15).” The great treasures of Pharaoh and his current counterparts are guaranteed to amply produce trouble if we cash in our little “stuff” for their goods. The same message is clearly stated again by the wise man: “Better is a little with righteousness than great revenue without right (Proverbs 16.8).” Read also Proverbs 28.6, and Ecclesiastes 4.6 in this respect.

In summary, we would point out again that the brothers of Joseph seemed to be getting a substantial improvement in their standard of living. In time, after swapping their “stuff” in for the goods of Egypt, that high and lavish standard would be taken away, and the rigors of the brick kiln would take their place. It would then be several centuries before they would be delivered out of this bondage to see the salvation of God. But for the moment, deliverance had come to the brothers of Joseph, and their

prospects certainly appeared brighter than when they had first journeyed down to Egypt to buy corn for the starving family in Canaan.

If the Lord wills, we shall take up this subject again later.

The Remnant

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Number 13

“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 (Genesis 45.21).”

The eleven brothers of Joseph had just been involved in the greatest and most far-reaching event of their lives. Having come to Egypt to buy corn so that their family would not perish in the famine, they had, through a series of most unusual events, been reunited with their brother Joseph whom they had shamelessly sold into slavery while he was yet a youth. In this latest audience with Joseph they had been made fully aware that this governor of Egypt was their brother. They were forgiven their trespass, lavished with love, and given instructions for their future by their wise and compassionate brother. Without attempting to trace those incidents once again, we do point out how in all this Jesus beautifully shines forth from the many types and figures. Jesus too was offended by His brethren, yet He delivered His offenders, as did Joseph centuries earlier. Also Jesus guided the lives of His brethren after He had revealed Himself to them. Although the history of Joseph is highly interesting reading, if we see not Jesus in the whole of the narrative, we have missed the spiritual import of the story.

“And the children of Israel did so.” This refers to two commandments, the first to take the Egyptian wagons for their journey home and back again, and second, to “regard not your stuff.” In article Number 12 we pointed out the serious pitfalls in placing confidence in the goods of Egypt over the “stuff” the Lord had blessed them with up until that time. However, with such force behind the injunction, coming from both Joseph and Pharaoh, it is at least easy to see why the brothers acted as they did. This did not, however, spare the twelve tribes and their families much future grief, as will be seen in following articles, the Lord willing. But, before concluding that the brothers “ought to” have acted different than they did, it would be well to reflect on the matter. They were but following a course that, at that time, appeared to come from complete good-will of Pharaoh, and both leadership and benevolence from their brother Joseph. Consider also the eternal purpose of God. He would make of them a great nation while in Egypt. That was the unseen force behind all that transpired. All was falling into place. Each event would harmonize with the will of God for the tribes of Israel.

“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 (Genesis 45.21).” This was the only time in the extended account of Joseph and his brethren that the eleven brothers were described as the “children of Israel.” We believe it was for good reason. Was this not the sound of a certain note from the trump of God? Pharaoh had now taken an interest in the brothers. Through Joseph Pharaoh was adapting them for life in Egypt. But – we are reminded by the inspired record that they were, after all, still God’s chosen children; the sons of Israel. It did not matter one bit that for about four centuries they and their families would live in Egypt, first as highly favored guests, and later as slaves. They were yet a separate people under God, and where they sojourned could never change that. At the appointed hour they would, like

God's pilgrim elect today that sojourn in Babylon, hear the call, "come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues (Revelation 18.4)." Those children of Israel (Jacob) were a particular family, chosen and called of God, and the many centuries in Egypt could never make them the children of Pharaoh, nor permanent citizens of that accursed land.

When Moses was come to years he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Why? Because he was not her son! He could not dare to be called what in fact he was not. He too was a child of Israel, though many generations removed from Jacob and nurtured in the court of Pharaoh. Even so today the children of the heavenly King can know but one family identification; that of being the children of promise. Not Egypt and its Pharaoh then, nor the world and its potentates now, can make those of the royal line to be other than what they are by birth. With good reason then the brothers of Joseph were called the "children of Israel."

The family of God often in this day hear the "Lo here, Lo there" and but for the grace of God would soon enough fall into bondage as terrible as that which the brothers of Joseph experienced. But, it must be remembered that there was a plan worthy of God Himself in these brothers abandoning their "stuff" and taking the wagons back home to gather up the family. Our God yet today orders our steps, often in strange-seeming paths, but nevertheless the end is always deliverance at last. It reminds us of the sweet words of the following hymn:

"How strange is the course that a Christian must steer,
How perplex'd is the path he must tread!
The hope of his happiness rises from fear,
And his life he receives from the dead."

Joseph's brethren were given the Egyptian's splendid wagons and ample provisions for the long and tiresome way. It is good to remember that from Pharaoh's court to their home and back again to Egypt was an extended and tedious journey, so every comfort and necessity for this great journey was kindly provided for them. They did not have to lift so much as their little finger to receive any of them, nor even ask. It could well be said that they were not their own, and that their will was only to do and have what Joseph and Pharaoh determined for them. While thousands of Egyptians and other hungry suppliants were spending their all to obtain corn in order to survive the famine, the brothers of Joseph were being freely given the best of Egypt's land. Again we would suggest this was the results of their family ties, and nothing else. Pharaoh was kind to them because they were the family of Joseph. No other reason could possibly be assigned to his treatment of them. Joseph and these brethren had a living bond that not even their awful sins, past or present, could dissolve. For this reason they were favored when all others fended for themselves. This clearly shows us in a figure how the love of Jesus, our brother, undertakes to preserve all His elect family in our famine existence here in this world. We see many who are attempting to buy corn (the bread of life) from our Joseph, and when the transaction is done they are no closer to Him than before. No special favors. No tender care such as He bestows on His brethren. The citizens of this world receive many benefits from God, yet none of them are drawn to His bosom in love but His chosen family. How blessed then are the saints of the Most High if given to see in this the limits of His atoning work. There are no tears for the world of sinners that are not His elect family. No kind words of encouragement; no wagons for their journey; no provisions for the way. Only corn for which they must pay dearly. And when what they have bought is gone they are just where they were before; natural citizens of a fallen race of Adam.

When Jacob sent his sons down to Egypt this last time to buy corn it was with great reluctance, and but for the severity of the famine he would, according to nature, have refused to send them again. After a dissertation of some length with Judah, he said the following: "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 (Genesis 43.13,14)." Several matters related to the removing of Jacob's family to Egypt are evident in this text. First was the sin of the brothers that delivered Joseph to Egypt in the first place. Had they not acted in such a callous manner toward their young brother, Joseph would not be in Egypt to rescue them from their dire circumstances. Second was the famine so clearly foretold and sent by God Himself! No famine--no need to apply at Pharaoh's court for relief. Third was the wisdom and conduct of Joseph in securing Simeon with him when the other brothers returned to their father Israel. Increased panic and apprehension would well have led them to abandon all further journeys to that far land but for their imprisoned brother. Finally, we see the nature of man resigned to his lot and circumstances. "If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." How clearly it reveals the hand of God in reducing those miserable beings to accept whatever might come. May He ever be praised that we, like Jacob, at the last come to accept His kind, but fearful-appearing, providences.

We see then that Jacob had, by all these circumstances, been suitably prepared for the return of his sons in the Egyptian's carriages. However, while he anxiously awaits their return at home, the brothers are also being made ready for this great transition in their lives. Joseph, under the direction of Pharaoh, gave them the wagons and "provisions for the way." Surely, they, just as we would have, considered this was all too marvelous to be chance or luck. Their brother, long thought dead, was yet alive and well. He was in fact, governor of Egypt, and moreover, fully compassionate to them in their circumstances. "This is the way, walk ye in it" was stamped on every unfolding event. Certainly no other way could for a moment be entertained by these tried pilgrims. No; this was the way, and Joseph had given them provisions for it. Not even the dullest believer could avoid seeing in this episode a figure of our Governor detailing our way. Our dear Lord and present Joseph not only fulfils this grand type, He overshadows it with care and direction for us far more than could ever be imagined by those distant brothers. Well could we then join with David in saying "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

"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 (Genesis 45.22)." It has long been a source of interest for Bible students why there was such a disparity in the gifts conferred on his brothers by Joseph. We could well pass the matter by with the words of our Lord, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good (Matthew 20.15)?" There appears, however, to be more here than that. When Joseph was sold to the Midianite merchantmen the ten brothers received 20 pieces of silver for his price. His raiment, a coat of many colours, was dipped in a kid goat's blood, and deceptively carried to father Jacob as sure evidence his beloved son was dead. It can with some certainty be concluded that the 10 brothers did not reveal to Jacob the meager pieces of silver they had gotten for the life of Joseph, but they did display with much feigned sorrow his blood-spattered raiment. Now, however, the brothers all have changes of raiment from the Egyptian looms for father Israel to view, certifying that Joseph indeed is not dead, but yet alive! To add to this, Benjamin has 300 pieces of silver, 15 times as much as the price of Joseph's life, which was no doubt a source of much conversation, both on the trip home, and when in the presence of their father. It is not difficult to imagine that the other brothers winced considerably whenever the lavish gift to Benjamin was mentioned in conversation. Moreover, the five changes of raiment surely suggests the grace involved in

Joseph's benevolence. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Romans 5.20)." Whatever the meaning of the five changes of raiment and the 300 pieces of silver Joseph gave to Benjamin, it was certainly a vivid contrast to the coat of many colours and the 20 pieces of silver. Joseph had wickedly been reduced to poverty, sold for a pittance of coins, stripped of his raiment, and hauled off to the land of Godlessness. These things all vividly portray in figure the shame, degradation, sufferings, and then final exaltation of Christ. The Bible might be searched till time is no more without finding a more resplendent type of Christ.

Father Jacob was without question a clever man, as detailed in his sojourn in Padan-aram with his uncle Laban (Genesis, chapters 28-31). Upon the return of his sons with all this splendor from Egypt, changes of raiment and 300 pieces of silver, and the amazing news that Joseph was yet alive, his keen mind must have reviewed that sad incident long past when the brothers came dragging in Joseph's blood-covered raiment. He surely could recall their lying account of the supposed death of his darling son Joseph. Yet there is nothing in the record to suggest that Jacob persued the matter with his sons, or that they freely confessed their crime to him. In fact we have reason to believe, based on the account of their falsifying their father's intentions after his death, (Genesis 50.15-18) that the brothers kept this crime concealed; at least from all but God. But we are running ahead of our text.

"So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way (Genesis 45.24)." It is worthwhile to mention here that Joseph sent his brethren away. It does not read, "So he sent them away," for that would greatly diminish the force of the whole emphasis in this story. We cannot emphasize too strongly that Joseph and the 11 suppliants from Canaan were brothers; children by the same father. They were kin; family; and were so even when in the loins of their father. It is this peculiar tie, and nothing else, which separated them from all others that were seeking refuge from the famine conditions. Now, though, for their good, along with the rest of the family, they are loaded with provisions for the journey before them and sent away. Many of the tried saints of the most High God can fondly reflect on the many times their Joseph, as did Joseph of old, sent them away on a journey in life. Not, mind you, in capriciousness or lack of affection, but rather in love. While Joseph was able to care for his brethren to the limits of his power and ability, which, we may add, was considerable, he could not personally be with them while they traveled. Here the anti-type shines much brighter than the type. Our Lord and Master, exceedingly greater in power and wisdom than His type Joseph, has promised never to leave us nor forsake us, being with us always, even to the ends of the earth.

It may well be imagined that the feelings of affection for his brethren were stronger in Joseph than they were in them as they traveled off out of sight. The brethren were no doubt somewhat dazzled by all the swift-moving events. Off they journeyed then, with a "see that ye fall not out by the way." Egyptian wagons, changes of raiment, provisions for the way, and the ardent approval of both the governor and king of Egypt were theirs. Probably, very probably, lesser understood was the greatest of all blessings they then enjoyed; the forgiveness and affection of the brother they had sinned against. A review of our own nature, coupled with the record of the whole course of events that had fallen out to them, compels us to feel that these brothers were yet highly anxious about this whole business. Neither can it be imagined that today, we who are children of hope, can properly put into perspective our greatest of all blessings, the forgiveness of sins coupled with the restoration of our souls to Jesus, our governor and King. Joseph's final departing words to them would, however, dispel some of their trepidation. "See that ye fall not out by the way" is much more than a simple parting gesture. It strongly implied that

Joseph would yet care for their welfare, though not present with them as they made their way back to father Jacob.

If the Lord may be pleased to bless, we will take up this subject again in a future issue of The Remnant. We hope to conclude the series on Joseph with two, or possibly three, more articles.

The Remnant

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Number 14

Jacob Revived

“And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father (Genesis 45.25).”

Jacob, the father of the twelve sons, was in low spirits when he sent his sons the last time into Egypt. Simeon had been held hostage by Joseph, the governor of Egypt, and Joseph had demanded the brothers bring Benjamin with them on their return to him. Jacob’s lament to them was: “...Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me (Genesis 42.36).” The evidence is sufficient to fairly conclude that poor Jacob had a dim view, if any at all, of the certain promises God had earlier made to him. Without seeking to revile the character of Jacob, it is clear his, “all these things are against me” reveals he was resting more on his feelings than on God’s word. May we add, so too do we until revived by God directly.

Father Jacob had moreover complained that following the path the Governor of Egypt had laid out for his family would, “...bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave (Genesis 42.38).” So emphatic was this statement that Judah, in his appeal, repeated his father’s words twice to Joseph just before Joseph revealed himself unto his brothers (Genesis 44.29,31). It cannot be overly emphasized that Jacob was in a dark frame of mind, both during the absence of his sons, and upon their return. The record is clear concerning his distressed state of mind.

To properly consider the typical relationship between Jacob and his long lost son Joseph, we must remember the basis for our thesis; Jesus is seen in the life of Joseph. All too often typology is run to imaginative extremes, bounded only by the limits of one’s mind to “type away.” Joseph, blessedly, can be compared to, and be a figure of, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, as fully as any person in the Bible; but there are limits. For example, before us now is the impending reunion of Jacob and Joseph, who are father and son. Does then this natural relationship give us license to determine that Jacob is a figure of our heavenly Father, simply because Joseph was his natural son? Positively not; unless it is obviously warranted by the Scriptural circumstances, which in this case, it plainly is not. In the particulars before us, Joseph is seen as the saviour of the entire family, regardless of their station in life. Joseph would deliver his beloved family unto him; no more and no less; from the first of them to the last. The position each of them held in the family was of no consideration.

For a New Testament example of the fulfilling of the type, we recommend the reader ponder the relation Jesus held as a son to Mary, His earthly mother. Briefly considered, and contrary to the grave error the Church of Rome holds on Mary's station, it is sufficient to know that in the plan of redemption, Mary occupied the same position as the rest of the elect, her maternal tie with Jesus notwithstanding. This is exactly where Jacob stood in this relation with Joseph.

COMING HOME

“And they went up out of Egypt.” We have previously mentioned that whenever the saints of God journeyed from Jerusalem they were said to be “going down” and whenever they were approaching that beloved city they were said to be “going up.” Even so here, before the establishment of the City of David, as the brothers set out for home from Egypt they are said to be going up out of Egypt. Of course, in due order, we will see Jacob, in his journey to Joseph, being told by God, “Fear not to go down into Egypt.” Surely one the grander marks of Divine inspiration of the Bible is its consistency, even in what might at casual glance appear to be matters of insignificance.

In the eternal purpose of God it was time for the brothers to go home; otherwise they would not have moved an inch in that direction. Let the Conditionalists rave on against the purposes of God; the chain of these events was forged in eternity, and nothing, or no one, in time can hinder the accomplishment of the will of God. As pleasant as a stay of greater duration with Joseph might have been, Joseph sent them on, for the fullest joy of reunion would come when all the family was gathered to Joseph. We believe a comparison of some gravity can be made here as this incident relates to the final gathering together of all the family of Jesus, our Joseph. Much as the saints rejoice in the company of our Lord in this world, it cannot be compared with the blessedness of the final gathering when all the redeemed family will finally be in the presence of the Redeemer. What a joyous conclave that will be cannot be known until the hope of it becomes a reality.

“And came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father.” Of the actual journey from Egypt to Canaan, nothing is said. Accomplishment and certainty fill in that period of silence. We believe there is a far greater message here, however. It should be evident that the trip was fraught with hazards and constant danger. These brothers were hauling out a sizable portion of wealth and substance from Egypt in a period when a starving world was producing an abundance of thieves and robbers to make the most secure caravan at risk. They carried out silver of considerable worth; at least twenty asses laden with good things, corn and bread and meat.” They had changes of raiment and wagons of Egypt. And, depending on where they had started from, the brothers had a journey to cover of at least two, to three-hundred miles, over terrain that would test the most rugged sojourner. But the Spirit of God links the journey and its end together as though they were one.

Though separated by time and distance, the family was a unit, despite the misgivings Jacob had about its present structure. Time and distance could not mar the physical union of Jacob's family. Appearance would suggest they were divided; reality tells us otherwise. Since Joseph had made himself the family's keeper, the only detail of any significance in the journey home is their unity. Thus, when he sends the brothers away to return home to father Jacob, they are as good as there; at least as far as we are enlightened by the record. We will see the same situation when Jacob takes his journey back to Egypt with the rest of the family. This, we believe, is a faint figure of that great union comprising all the elect in Christ. If, as the Scriptures affirm, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ, and since

Christ and His body are one, then it falls out in proper order that none of the body can be separated from each other, except in appearance. When time shall be no more, and all our journeys are past, they will be but the fulfillment of purposes born in eternity, enacted in the framework of time, and certain in accomplishment, as though they had been no more than the blink of an eye.

Amazing as had been the events in Egypt with Joseph, and as full of anticipation the journey home must have been, that was all past; the brothers were finally back in Canaan once again with their father Jacob. The whole stupendous episode was simply a memory belonging to history. The eleven brothers then were faced with a challenge far more complex than any they had faced in the presence of their younger brother Joseph. While before Joseph, it was the brothers that stood in need of being convinced that things were not as had long been supposed. Reconciliation with Joseph was accomplished, but not because of any effort on their part. Joseph, with love and mercy, fully persuaded his brothers that all was well for them at last. Now, however, these sons of Jacob must approach their father with a completely different story than the one they pawned off on him when they had appeared with the blood-spattered coat of Joseph many years earlier. He who was assumed dead was yet alive, and he would henceforth superintend the affairs of his family. This amazing story must then be laid out before a gloomy and distraught father. In this connection we recommend the reader carefully reflect on the New Testament account of the disciples reaction to Jesus rising from the tomb, and their reaction to each testimony regarding all that had transpired.

JACOB'S UNBELIEF

“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 (Genesis 46.26).”

We have heard the sorry doctrine coming out of the Conditionalist’s camp for many years now, with affirming certainty characteristic of work mongers, that the greatest of all sins the saints could possibly commit is the sin of unbelief. We have no idea what rigged scales they use to weigh various sins; nor do we care. Unbelief is indeed sin, but nowhere in our Bible have we ever found it to be of greater magnitude than other sins common to all. We do feel very sure, though, that only evidence submitted from God can convert a skeptic or unbeliever to a state of belief; and that by grace (Acts 18.27). Telling a wretched sinner he is a child of God cannot, and will not, cause him to believe it unless, and until, God gives him some sweet token of evidence to believe so. It is just as certain too as is the rising of the sun in the East that God will not give that token of evidence to one unless it is so.

It must be observed as well, there is no guarantee that if we relate the truth of a matter to another one of the family of God that they will be able to appropriate that truth for themselves, simply because we tell it to them. Other evidences, true or false, may compel them to conclude otherwise. This is just the case with dear old father Jacob. When his sons came home with a message that had freshly been made dear to their hearts he was unmoved and believed them not. As soon as they arrived home the brothers began telling their father, “Joseph is yet alive,” and positive evidence of the most overwhelming nature had compelled them it was so. But – as yet, this persuasion they possessed could not, and did not, convince their father to believe them. He had lived too long with convictions nurtured by false evidence to suddenly deny what he concluded many years ago had taken place. Joseph was dead! The witness of

his eleven sons contrariwise would not move this old unbeliever. (We would point out that Jacob was not an unbeliever in the manner Arminians call lost sinners unbelievers.)

The Conditionalist would, at this point, forcibly condemn father Jacob for his unbelief. Had not these newly made missionaries from Egypt told him the truth? Yes they had, but the truth did not move him. Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

"Joseph is yet alive." This was a certain truth, until recently not believed by the brothers of Joseph any more than father Jacob believed it to be so. Why then did they believe this fabulous news and their father did not? Had they not pointedly informed him of this most positive fact? Yes; they had told him, but they possessed something Jacob did not. That was evidence; visible and sure evidence of the most unmistakable nature. Joseph had opened up the very secret regions of their hearts and shown them with infallible certainty he was their brother; the same brother they had betrayed and sold into slavery. He showered them with love and compassion; communed with them regarding the eternal purposes of God in every detail of the events that led him to Egypt. God had sent him to be their saviour and the evidences compelled them to believe his words. Jacob, however, did not yet have these evidences; thus he believed them not.

"He is governor over all the land of Egypt." From the previous visits and circumstances related by these sons to Jacob, he no doubt believed that there was indeed a mighty governor in Egypt which had dealt in a strange fashion with these sons of his, but that he was Joseph, his long lost son? Hardly! If there is any one thing clear to us here, it is this; good news, and the joy we may feel in it, cannot be imparted to others, even those we may dearly love, unless it is accompanied by sufficient evidence that it is even as we have said. Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

Most of us have heard the expression, "Seeing is believing" more than a few times. We would suggest, however, that it is not a scriptural expression. One may see, and yet not believe. Recall the many miracles our Lord performed in the presence of the multitudes. Some believed what they saw; others did not believe. It is our conviction that rather than "seeing is believing" the truth of the matter is "believing is seeing." An example: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living (Psalm 27.13)." David exclaimed that he must believe in order to see, not the reverse; otherwise, like Jacob, he would have fainted. Thus, even with evidences, we must first be given a heart to believe. Without belief, God given belief, we shall surely faint.

The fact is, father Jacob was not yet, with only the word of his sons to rely on, capable of believing, no matter how convinced the brothers were their report was true. God must first bless Jacob to believe, and then enable him to see what he would believe. With this we conclude, hoping to take up the subject again of Jacob's reviving.

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Jacob Revived and Sufficed

“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 (Genesis 45.25-28).”

When we last wrote of the account of Jacob’s sons telling their father that Joseph was yet alive, it was stressed that Jacob believed them not. Jacob was unable to receive their testimony, though it was completely true. He had long nurtured the mistaken notion that his darling son Joseph was dead, even as his older sons had deceived him with false evidence. When the sons returned home from their last journey to buy corn in Egypt they recounted to Jacob what had to seem like a wild, fanciful story. Joseph was not really dead, they told their father; and in fact he was much alive, and even governor over the whole realm of Pharaoh’s kingdom. This startling account was far more than poor old Jacob could accept or believe. Far too long he had nursed his bitter sorrow over Joseph to turn from it; especially with nothing more than the word of these rowdy sons who had given him so much grief.

Are we then right to condemn Jacob for disavowing his sons’ impassioned story? If blessed to search our own past travels we must conclude that we now, like Jacob then, need something far more compelling than the bare testimony or wild yarns from our beloved kin to enable us to believe that Jesus, our Joseph, is yet alive and reigns over all. We are just as powerless to believe as Jacob was; even more so since the truth that Jesus lives can only be received inwardly in the renewed man. To our satisfaction, there is nothing but those sweet evidences, provided by our Lord Himself, that can remove our doubts and skepticism and then blessedly render us as humble believers. Even then, when unmistakable evidences are conveyed to us we are often made to cry out as did one in the following: “Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief (Mark 9.23,24).” Surely, the Lord’s help alone can turn our hearts to acknowledge His testimonies.

JACOB REVIVED

“And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them:” The telling Jacob all the words of Joseph was, however, not enough. No matter how captivating, and even fascinating, was the experience of Jacob’s sons, all that these newly enthused converts had revealed to father Jacob budged him not an inch. But, there was something else; something Jacob would be moved by. “And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.” He had no doubt patiently heard their words of testimony his sons had effused upon him, and, he now saw some evidence that, combined with their words, was compelling beyond controversy. He saw the wagons!

The witness of the sons which he had heard, and the sight of the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him sufficed the old doubter. He could be obstinate no longer. The sons had spoken in a unified witness; Joseph had spoken by sending the wagons. In the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter was established. Jacob was convinced.

Jacob had seen wagons before. His was a varied and checkered life that exposed him to many lands and peoples. Many years earlier, he had fled the home of his youth and traveled a great distance to his uncle Laban's for an extended stay of over 20 years. God had prospered him there before he returned home with a large complement of wives, children, flocks, tents and other accumulations. No doubt but he employed wagons to carry some of his bounty back home with him. He crossed Jordan at the first with but a staff, (Genesis 32.10) and on returning had two bands. Wagons were thus no new thing to Jacob. Nor would it be likely that any nomadic sojourners of that day were unfamiliar with such a staple moving device as wagons.

What Jacob saw on the return of his sons from Egypt, however, was not ordinary wagons. No, indeed, these wagons were not the everyday run-of-the-mill variety of wagons that travelers might pick up somewhere along their journey. We might expect an "Honest John's Used Wagon Emporium" to provide old rickety, rotted-out wagons to those in need. They would probably have a few spokes missing in the wheels, replete with rusty axles and broken tongues. Not so with Joseph and Pharaoh, though. Nothing but the choicest chariots from Pharaoh's fleet would do for this mission of love and compassion. It was wagons of the most magnificent sort that Jacob now saw. We have no doubt that Jacob had never seen wagons of such splendid nature before. He heard the witness of the returning sons, and saw these wagons of great resplendence. His fears were completely overcome. His doubts vanished as if they were vapor. "The spirit of Jacob their father revived." When his eyes were fixed on these vehicles it was as refreshing as a cup of cold water to a thirsty man; his spirit revived. It was as if newness of life had entered his aged frame, for he had for years grieved about the mistaken notion that his beloved Joseph was dead. Revival, real, God-given revival, had stirred the spirit of Jacob upon seeing the wagons sent to reunite the family. Jacob was revived.

Workmongers make much of what they call revivals. They relate grand accounts of what their revivals have done for the spirits of poor sinners. They boast of conversions, reclaimings, healings, and assorted other lavish benefits for those involved. We leave them to their devices by saying that had the greatest revival touters the world has ever seen encountered old father Jacob, they would not have gotten even as far with him as did his sons. That is, unless they could produce some wagons from Joseph, accompanied with a witness as true as that the brothers of Joseph had gotten from his lips. Joseph's words, and Joseph's wagons were the implements of Jacob's reviving. Had the whole host of wise sages since the dawn of time lent their assistance, and had legions of angels engaged Jacob with their beautiful presence, he would be unmoved still. God's eternal appointment included the witness from Joseph and his regal carriages. Nothing more, nothing less, would have revived the spirit of Jacob.

SUFFICIENCY

"And Israel said, It is enough." Three simple yet sublime words exhausted the whole mine of Jacob's current emotions. Nothing more needed be said. "It is enough." "Say no more; produce no more evidence" seems to sum up the exclamation of the old patriarch. He had seen enough; he had heard enough; his spirit was then revived; he lived again. There was nothing more in life that Jacob desired

than to see his son, long thought dead, and now he had hope that it would be so. This, we are persuaded, is a lovely figure from the Scriptures to compliment how God sweetly reveals to His little children (at the appointed time) the life of their spiritual Joseph Who is come again from the dead. Old father Jacob said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive." Thus in similar language, when hope is revived in us, so say we. It is a gracious and full experience when the elect are made to feel the sufficiency of God and respond, "It is enough." At such times nothing else, however compelling, could satisfy a child of God more. And, we may add, nothing less would be sufficient. It is a matter of pure fact that when God revives His groaning lambs all is exactly as needs be. That, we believe, is the sufficiency of the saints of God.

This sufficiency was not unique to old father Jacob. Many children of God before, and many of them after, like Jacob, found sufficiency – when God was pleased to reveal His gracious hand. Abraham, for instance, had been instructed of God to sacrifice his son Isaac upon one of the mountains, probably Moriah. He had stretched forth his hand with the knife, about to slay his son, when God called to him from heaven, showing him a ram caught in a thicket. Without so stating, the action of Abraham portrayed his feelings that, "It is enough." His son, like Jacob's later, had been spared the death that seemed so certain (Genesis 22.1-14). The testimony of God and the ram in the thicket was evidence enough to suffice Abraham and so his son yet lived.

In similar fashion Ruth the Moabitess experienced the sufficiency of God's grace. After gleaning in the fields of Boaz, and discovering the handfuls of purpose, her mother-in-law, Naomi, related the good news to her that there was life for her yet. Boaz was her near kinsman redeemer and he would take her to himself. Thus she told Ruth, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day (Ruth 3.18)." Here again was sufficient evidence to cause Ruth to "sit still." It was enough. She was sufficed with the testimony of Naomi and the evidences seen in the handfuls of purpose. She was wedded to Boaz, and from this union came a son. In her widowhood she could never have believed such could be possible.

Then there is the account of Hannah who wept sore and was in bitterness of soul because she was barren. While she prayed before the Lord, Eli the priest assumed her to be a drunken daughter of Belial. However, in relating her testimony of the matter to Eli she was given assurance the matter would be blessedly resolved, as can be seen in the following: "Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him (I Samuel 1.17)." God gave her a son and she called his name Samuel because she had asked him of the Lord (I Samuel 1.20). Here too is a case where, like Jacob's, there was sufficiency given at the appointed time, and so Hannah received her desired son from the dead womb. It was enough. Her greatest desire in nature was met and she was sufficed.

David had a much different experience and yet the results were the same. He had sinned grievously with Bathsheba and she bare him a son. In God's displeasure the son died, and yet David was sufficed. "But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be

gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him (II Samuel 12.19-24).” While the child was yet alive David had hope, as can be seen in his “Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?” When the son died David was sufficed with a great assurance that he would see the child again, though it was now dead. It was enough for David. He had seen the evidences of God in the whole affair that all was ordered and sure. Furthermore, David was given a second son, Solomon, which further reinforced his feelings that it was enough.

In each of these cases there is one common thread that unites them all. The experience of each one involved a son. Jacob wrongly believed his son to be dead but had him restored again. And, it was enough. He was sufficed. Abraham was instructed to carry out a death sentence on his son Isaac, but when sufficed with the evidences from God to the contrary, his son was restored to him as well. Ruth believed her hopes of a son were vanished with the death of her husband and subsequent journey to the home of Naomi. Despite her fears of barrenness she too was sufficed and blessed with a son to continue the royal line to Jesus. It was enough. In like manner Hannah was blessed with a fruitful womb and was made to rejoice in the sufficiency of God’s eternal purposes in her life. Her beautiful prayer in I Samuel 2 after the birth of Samuel could well have been summed up with, “It is enough.” David too was sufficed, both in the death of his son and in the birth of another son, Solomon. Surely each of these, like Jacob, could say and feel, “It is enough.”

It must not be overlooked that there was a long train of events, each in their successive order, that brought Jacob to be revived and to exclaim that it is enough. All the sons, with the exception of Benjamin, had a hand in the vile sin that took Joseph to Egypt in the first place. Jacob could not possibly have been revived and sufficed had all this never happened. It was eternally necessary for all to come to pass that Jacob and Joseph be united once again. And, we may add, the end of the matter was much better than the beginning (Ecclesiastes 7.8). All that transpired in the life of Joseph was but the plan and purpose of God to gather Israel, all of them, to Egypt, and to there make of them a great nation. For the gathering of all the family to Joseph, Jacob must first be convinced that Joseph yet lived; and the testimony of the sons and the wagons from Egypt did the job fully. Except for the actual departure, this ended the first chapter of the journeys of the descendants of Abraham. From henceforth they would be a family-nation; first in Egypt, next in the wilderness, and then in the land of promise, there to occupy until the coming of the greater Joseph, our Lord Jesus Christ. We trust the reader has seen in all this the parallel message of how all that transpires in the lives of the saints of God also bring us finally to our Joseph.

God willing, we shall take up the journey of Jacob to Joseph in the next article.

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