

V. 36.—Probably Jacob had some suspicion, that, notwithstanding, the coat dipped in blood, Joseph had met with foul play at the hands of his brethren. However, this may have been, he now lays the blame of Simeon's imprisonment, and of the prospective loss of his son Benjamin at the door of his sons, who had just returned from Egypt. And yet perhaps it was the pressure of the present sore trials which made him say what he did not mean.

V. 37.—Reuben had no right to make any such proposals. Yet, as this was not a time of calm thought, let him have credit in this utterance for an earnest purpose of using every effort to bring Benjamin safely back. Comp. chapter 37: 21-22-29.

V. 38.—Jacob was unyielding. His heart was wrapped up in Benjamin the youngest son of his beloved Rachel. Joseph was gone: Was not that enough? The fact that the Egyptian governor, a man of such apparent harshness, had insisted so strongly upon seeing Benjamin made Jacob's heart sink.

LESSONS.

1. To remind of sin God sometimes send affliction. Yet he pities while he afflicts, just as Joseph wept when he spake roughly to his brethren and bound Simeon before their eyes. The heaviest end of the rod is in God's hand. How thankful we should be when our afflictions fill us with sorrow for sins of the past! Vv 21-22.

2. A time of trial sometimes furnishes occasion for the manifestation of fine traits of character. Look for example at the feelings which prompted the words of Reuben.

3. To God's people troubles are blessings in disguise. The hand of Providence was leading Jacob wisely and lovingly, yet he exclaimed, all these things are against me. He lived to see how mistaken he had been in his estimate of providential dispensation, nay, how unbelieving and sinful. Here is a note of warning: Never distrust God in the dark days of trouble. And a lesson of encouragement: All things work together for good. Fear not christian, for

The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT—*Joseph makes himself known*,—Gen. 45: 1-8.

For 22 years Joseph had been separated from his father and brethren. Here are his brothers before him; he can refrain no longer—love bursts all bounds. He had brought his brothers to a deep sense of their sin, and now, nothing remains but to show his love,—just as Jesus deals with us sinners, trying us,

dealing with us until we come to see our sin, and then revealing his pardoning and saving grace.

V. 1.—All were sent out lest the past history of Joseph's brethren should be exposed before the eyes of strangers.

V. 2.—Perhaps also Joseph did not wish that strangers should witness the intensity of his feelings. "It was the wicked brothers who should have filled the house with groans and outcries of repentance. But it is Joseph who weeps in the presence of his transgressors,"—"Jesus wept." The Egyptians and the House of Pharaoh heard the former by their own ears as they were turned out of Joseph's presence:—The latter would hear the report of the news immediately.

V. 3. Joseph then uses all possible plainness; as Jesus did in dealing with Saul of Tarsus. A sense of their great crime put them to shame. When we see our sins we are apt to be driven away from God; we would if we could, hide from him. It is when God reveals to us His heart of love that we are drawn to him.

V. 4.—He overcomes their fears by tenderness of his love. How like Christ's dealing with sinners! He calls himself their brother when he recalls the memory of their crime; Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren.

V. 5.—He shows to them God's over-ruling hand in the whole matter. Compare Acts 2: 23-24.

V. 6.—*Earing*, old English for ploughing. The famine was to be terribly severe for five more years, no tilling and no reaping; no rising or overflowing of the Nile.

V. 7.—Here God's hand is again pointed out.

V. 8.—*Father to Pharaoh*—most confidential and important Counsellor and friend.

DOCTRINES.

1. See how freely and fully Joseph forgives. It is noble and like God to forgive injuries and pay them back with love.

2. See how Joseph notes God's hand in all events. Let us do likewise.

3. Jesus reveals himself with greater love than Joseph, with fuller, freer pardon, with a greater deliverance.

4. As Joseph invited his brethren to draw near to him, so Jesus invites all to Himself.

FOURTH SABBATH.

SUBJECT.—*Joseph sends for his father*,—Gen. 45: 16-28

This lesson is a continuation of the interesting narrative that we have been studying for the last seven Sabbaths. Mark the progression—now the story is pointing to a satisfactory ending. Joseph long lost as his father thought, makes himself known to his brethren, as we saw in our last. The lesson to-day tells us that he made himself known to his father.

V. 1.—Pharaoh's concurrence in Joseph's desire concerning his father. Pharaoh had heard of the visit of Joseph's brethren (V. 2.) Knew about their father, Jacob, (V. 8.) pro-