

to confess Christ every day of our lives, in our words, and in our walk and conversation, —Matt. x. 32; Rom. x. 9; 1 Tim. vi. 13.

May 25th, 1862.

JACOB BLESSING HIS GRANDSONS.
GEN. XLVIII. 1-22.

1. *Joseph, upon receiving intelligence of his father's sickness, goes to see him.*

Though a man of business, he would not fail in paying this duty to his dying parent. He took with him his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh; it is good that the young should see the servants of God when laid on the bed of sickness or of death, as they may then have ocular demonstration of the reality and power of true religion. Joseph had been Jacob's favourite son; he had also shown him more kindness than any of his other sons. When Jacob therefore heard that he was coming to see him, he prepared to meet him—"Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed." We are enjoined to stir up the gift that is within us.

2. *Jacob's adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh.*

He recapitulates the promises which God had made him. We should seek to comfort both ourselves and others by calling the promises to remembrance. "And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, shall be mine," not only my grandsons but my sons, "as Reuben and Simeon they shall be mine;" v. 5. As his sons, he constituted them also heads of tribes; but as for any sons which Joseph might afterwards have, they were not included in this charter of adoption; they were to be assumed into the tribes of their brethren. We do not learn that Joseph ever had any more sons; however, Jacob wisely provides for such a contingency.

3. *Joseph presents his sons for his father's blessing.*

"The eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see;" ver. 10. Though old age is an honour, it is attended with many infirmities; but the bodily vision may be dim, and our faith be strong. Jacob testified great affection towards his grandsons, "he kissed them and embraced them;" ver. 10. For years he had been under the impression that Joseph was dead. But he not only had enjoyed the happiness of seeing "the lost one" alive and prosperous, but also of seeing his offspring; ver. 11. Thus, even in temporal matters, God blesses his people "exceeding abundantly, above all that they can ask or think." In the blessings which they enjoyed, both Jacob and Joseph discerned the hand of God;" v. 9-11. There was not the custom, so prevalent at the present time, of attributing every event, prosperous or adverse, to second causes; they traced every blessing up to the hand of a gracious

God. Joseph so placed his sons before his father, that in pronouncing the blessing Jacob's right hand should be on the head of the eldest and his left hand on that of the youngest. But, by crossing his hands, Jacob reversed this arrangement, not from fancy or partiality, but wittingly, under the influence of the prophetic spirit, as he explained to Joseph; v. 19.

4. *The blessing pronounced by Jacob upon his grandsons.*

"God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk." He holds up to these young men, who were now about twenty-one years of age, their forefathers, Abraham and Isaac, as models to imitate. If they would covet the same blessing as these good men, they would have to walk in the same steps as they also walked. "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil," ver. 16, who delivered me from every danger, who preserved me in the midst of temptation, and who will shortly set me free from all sin and sorrow, bless the lads. There can be no doubt that the Angel here mentioned was the Lord Jesus, the Angel of the Covenant, the Redeemer. The superiority of the tribe of Ephraim to that of Manasseh appeared from the fact that the former was more numerous than the latter when the tribes were mustered in the wilderness; Joshua also was of the tribe of Ephraim. Manasseh, too, was divided, lying partly on one side of the Jordan, and partly on the other.

5. *The peculiar marks of distinction which Jacob conferred upon Joseph.*

First.—To him he committed the promise that God would bring them again into the land of their fathers. When, therefore, the Egyptians showed them kindness, they were not to set their affections too much upon Egypt, and if they were oppressed, they were not to be cast down. "Behold I die; but God shall be with you;" ver. 21. Our friends may be separated from us by death or other causes, but God will never leave us.

Secondly.—He conferred upon Joseph a double portion. The land here bequeathed is described as that which he had taken from the Amorite with his sword and bow. It appears that Jacob first purchased it from that people; Jos. xxiv. 32. He must have afterwards been dispossessed of it by the Amorites, and have again recovered it from them by force of arms. This portion of land is alluded to, Jno. iv. 5.

Learn.—1. That we should visit the sick and afflicted.—Ecd. vii. 2; Matt. xxv. 36.

2nd. That the blessing of God is to be desired above all other things.—Prov. x. 22.

3rd. That we should set our affections on the things of the heavenly Canaan, the land of promise, not on the things of this world, where we are only sojourners.—Col. iii. 2; 1 John ii. 15.