

(b) Also this man so lovingly receives this highest and ennobling object of affection that he *loves to think* of what he loves; and in this law doth he *meditate* day and night. What defence here from the various unprosperity of sinfulness. "Hang this upon the wall of your room," said a wise picture-dealer to an Oxford undergraduate, as he handed to him the engraving of a Madonna of Raphael, "and then all the pictures of jockeys and ballet-girls will disappear."

Third, results.

Glance at what results of lofty prosperity come to a man thus refusing and thus accepting.

(a) Result of *noble growth*. He shall be like a tree.

(b) Result of *propitious placing*. He is like a tree *planted*; he is not like a chance tree growing wild. There is a high and holy meaning in his life.

(c) Result of *sustenance*. He is like a tree planted *by the rivers of water*. Water is the frequent figure in the Scripture of the Holy Spirit. This man is not left alone; he is fed and sustained by the very help of God.

(d) Result of *fruitfulness*. That bringeth forth his fruit in his season. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, temperance; against such there is no law."

(e) Result of *beauty of character*. His leaf also shall not wither.

(f) Result of *real prosperity*. And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Consider the contrast in the Psalm. The ungodly are *not* so.

JUNE 25-30.—GOD BETTER TO US THAN OUR FEARS.—Gen. xlviii. 11.

It is a gracious scene which opens here.

"The marble as pure and white,
Though only a block at best;
But the artist with inward sight
Looked further than all the rest,
And saw in the hard rough stone
The loveliest statue that sun shone on.

"So he set to work with care,
And chiselled a form of grace—

A figure divinely fair,

With a tender, beautiful face;
But the blows were hard and fast
That brought from the marble that work at last.

"So, I think that human lives
Must bear God's chisel keen,
If the spirit yearns and strives
For the better life unseen;
For men are only blocks at best
Till the chiselling brings out all the rest."

And the poem quite precisely tells the story of Jacob's life.

Faithless, scheming, self-confident, tricky, mean, pushing for the main chance, even along forbidden ways, he was.

Trustful, self-surrendering, benignant, joyfully recognizing his dependence upon God, he became; one of the most shining saints in the Scripture roll of them.

But between the Jacob—that is, to press the meaning of his name, the supplanter, the tripper-up, the self-seeking one, he was; and the Israel—that is, the Prince of God—he became, how many cutting blows from the chisel and the mallet of the Divine Sculptor!

And the worst of all, I think, was that strange black trouble about Joseph. The coat of many colors drenched in blood; the bewailing mourning for the son of his best love for many days; all the long, sad years of separation, while the father thought him dead.

But now, an aged patriarch, cushioned in the comfort of the land of Goshen; with all his prosperous family around him; and Joseph standing there before him—not alive only, but the ruler of Egypt, and bringing his two sons that his father's aged eyes might be filled with the vision of them, and that they might receive the patriarchal blessing.

How much better had God been to Jacob than his fears! It is all in our Scripture.

Generalize from this scene and notice some directions in which God is better to us than our fears.

(A) God is better to us than our fears in the direction of the *forgiveness of our sins*.