

of suffering, discord, and ill will in many families. The envy and hate which Joseph's brethren cherished in their hearts toward him soon ripened into revenge. The coat of many colors which he wore, and which was the distinguishing badge of his father's partiality, and ill judged favouritism, coupled with his repeated dreams of future superiority to them, tended to turn away their affections from him, and implant, nurse, and bring to maturity that positive hatred which nestled in their bosoms. When Joseph told them about his sheaf rising up, and their sheaves standing round about and making obeisance to his sheaf, we are informed that "his brethren said to him 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." But their crime did not stop here; they not only envied him, and hated him, they formed plans for the destruction of his life. Having become murderers in their hearts, they conspired against him, to imbrue their hands in his blood. Their language was "come now therefore and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

They were not all equally guilty of their brother's blood, but it is quite evident that the majority of them were ready to do with their hands what was already done in their hearts. But God in his adorable providence interposed. A band of Ishmaelites appeared in sight on their way down to Egypt, and they sold him as a slave. This was what they did. The act was theirs. The motives that prompted them to the act were theirs. The ends which they had in view were to get quit of the dreamer, to express their hate, and to give the lie to all his dreams of future pre-eminence and power. We say the act was *their act*, the motives that prompted them to the act were *their own motives*, the ends which they had in view were *their own evil wicked ends*. And if ever Joseph was to be anything else than a degraded slave,—if he was ever in after life to rise to manhood and fill a higher position or station than that of a degraded and oppressed thing in a foreign land far from his home, his friends, and his loving Father, no thanks to his brethren. They meant evil, only evil unto him; and if any good whatever was brought out of the evil no thanks to them.

It was doubtless the design of God to send Joseph into Egypt for the accomplishment of wise and benevolent purposes. Of this we have the strongest and the best evidence. And in his