

slavery existed in Egypt at this time. What Egyptian bondage meant the descendants of these men learned to know well. The crime of stealing and selling a man was punished in the Mosaic law by death. (Ex. 21 : 16). **28. Midianites**—probably a section of the larger caravan which as a whole was named from the tribe to which the majority belonged. **Twenty pieces**—probably shekels. So also in ch. 20 : 16. This seems to have been the price of a boy from 5 to 20 years old. (Lev. 27 : 5). A man from 20 to 60 was worth 50 shekels. (Lev. 27 : 3; Ex. 21 : 32). Compare Matt. 27 : 9. The price paid for Joseph was about \$15. This sale, is referred to in ch. 45 : 5; Ps. 105 : 17; Acts 7 : 9. When Joseph tells his fellow prisoners that he was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, he merely gives the substantial truth without betraying his brothers. **29. Rent his clothes**—"He seems designedly to have taken a circuitous route, with a view of secretly rescuing the poor lad from a lingering death by starvation. (Jameson). "Reuben was not cruel, simply because he was guilty of a different class of sin. It is well for us, before we take credit to ourselves for being free from this or that sin, to enquire whether it be banished by grace or only by another sin." (F. W. Robertson). Refer to ch. 49 : 4 "unstable as water," or as others take it "impetuous as the water-floods." This rending of the clothes was a very ancient mode of expressing grief. Job 1 : 20; Matt. 26 : 65. A rent is made in the skirt, long or short according to the intensity of the grief. The time came when the other brothers rent their clothes (ch. 44 : 13). **30. The child is not**—He thought the others had carried out their first intention. Compare ch. 42 : 13, 36; Jer. 31 : 15. They may not have told him the truth, but if they did, his weak nature yielded to circumstances, and he joined them in the deception practised on their father.

II. JACOB SORROWING. 31. "This was a cruel device. But possibly it was not intended to put a keener edge on Jacob's grief, nor to mock him, but was done in the thoughtlessness of coarseminded men." (Dods). Some explanation of Jacob's non-return was necessary, and this seemed the safest one for themselves. **32.** They sent the coat by a messenger. It seems to be implied that they did not have the courage to face their father. Had they done so, the shrewd Jacob might have detected something suspicious in their looks or manner. **33.** His agony of mind would divert his attention from any suspicious circumstances and the idea once in possession of his mind would prevent his making further inquiry. Refer to verse 20, and Jacob's words 23 years afterwards ch. 44 : 23. Also note that Jacob deceived his father. (ch. 27). **34. Sackcloth**—The cloth of which sacks were, and are still, made in the East was commonly woven of camel's hair. (Rev. 6 : 12). The garments for mourners were made of it, and were, in extreme cases worn next the skin. The robe probably resembled a sack in shape with holes for the head and arms, and fitted close to the person. Sometimes it was spread upon the ground and sprinkled with ashes (Jer. 58 : 5). Other instances of wearing sackcloth, 1 Kings 21 : 27; 2 Kings 6 : 30; Job 16 : 15; Joel 1 : 8; Jonah 3 : 5. It was worn also by prophets and ascetics generally, Isa. 20 : 2. Compare 2 Kings 1 : 8 with Matt. 5 : 4. **35. His sons and daughters**—Only one daughter, Dinah, is mentioned, and it is unlikely that even the callous hearts of the sons would have allowed them to go so far. They were coarse and cruel, but not smooth tongued hypocrites. They were probably still at Dothan. From the expression "tose up" we would naturally infer that the comforters were those who remained with Jacob, and whom also the news plunged into deepest grief. The terms would include his daughters-in-law and grand-children. So David 2 Sam. 12 : 17. **For I will go**—This was the refrain with which he declined all their consolation. "Great grief is still expressed in the East by saying, "I have grief like that which Jacob felt for the loss of Joseph." (Dods). "There is doubtless something more here than grief merely for the loss; there is also self-reproach for having exposed the child to so much danger." (Lange). **The grave**—R. V. margin, "Sheol," the name of the abode of the dead, answering to the Greek *Hades*. Acts 2 : 27. This is the first passage in which the word occurs. (See the Excursus by Prof. Taylor Lewis in Lange's Commentary here). It means neither the grave, i. e. the receptacle of dead bodies, nor the abode of lost spirits, but the place of the disembodied souls of men, without specifying their condition. Jacob really says "I will go to my son mourning Sheol-ward"—on the way to the unknown land. (Lewis). Each of the three patriarchs had to give up his son and receive him again as from the dead. (Dods). **36. Midianites**—R. V. marg. "Medanites," descendants of Medan, son of Abraham and Keturah and brother of Midian. In ch. 39 : 1, Joseph is bought from Ishmaelites, the common designation being used, as before. As Heliopolis, or On, was the seat of government, Joseph was probably offered there publicly for sale. **Potiphar**—"devoted to the sun," or to "Pharaoh" for the words are the same. **Officer**—The word originally meant a eunuch, but came to signify any courtier, or officer in attendance on the king. **Captain of the guard**—R. V. marg. "chief of the executioners." The Septuagint renders the word "principal cook." The royal bodyguard were the executioners of the king's sentences and these were generally death penalties. "It is manifest from this dark chapter, that the power of sin has not been extinguished in the family of Jacob. The name of God does not appear, and his hand is at