

LESSON XXVI.

GENESIS L.

THE DEATH OF JOSEPH.

WHEN Jacob died Joseph fell upon his breast, and wept upon him and kissed him. The love between them had been one passing the love between father and son. Both men were capable of an unusual intensity of affection, because their characters were deeper and greater than those of ordinary men.

Every honour which Joseph could render to his father was immediately done. We notice that the physicians embalmed him, and not the professional embalmers, probably because the latter embalmed only the Egyptians, and Jacob was an Israelite. Ten days were set apart for mourning for Jacob; that is to say, there was a royal mourning for him. Though he was only a wanderer in the land, yet, as the father of Joseph, he was held in royal esteem.

Joseph could not himself go in to see Pharaoh, as he was mourning, and therefore probably unshaven, and unclean to the Egyptians. But his request was granted, and more than his request, for the whole aristocracy of Egypt, an aristocracy reckoned the most exclusive that the world has ever known, went up with Joseph and his brethren to bury Jacob. It was strange indeed that this great ancestor of the Jewish race should have been officially mourned by the representatives of the ruling nation of the world; and it is a beautiful touch that the royal mourners stopped short at Abel-Mizraim, and that his sons only carried him into the land