

his feelings. "It was the wicked brothers who should have filled the house with groans and outcries of repentance. But it is Joseph who weeps in the presence of his transgressors,"—"Jesus wept." The Egyptians and the House of Pharaoh heard the former by their own ears as they were turned out of Joseph's presence:—The latter would hear the report of the news immediately.

V. 3. Joseph then uses all possible plainness; as Jesus did in dealing with Saul of Tarsus. A sense of their great crime put them to shame. When we see our sins we are apt to be driven away from God; we would if we could, hide from him. It is when God reveals to us His heart of love that we are drawn to Him.

V. 4.—He overcomes their fears by tenderness of his love. How like Christ's dealing with sinners! He calls himself their *brother* when he recalls the memory of their crime; Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren.

V. 5.—He shows to them God's over-ruling hand in the whole matter. Compare Acts 2: 22-24.

V. 6.—*Earing*, old English for ploughing. The famine was to be terribly severe for five more years, no tilling and no reaping; no rising or overflowing of the Nile.

V. 7.—Here God's hand is again pointed out.

V. 8.—*Father to Pharaoh*—most confidential and important Counsellor and friend.

DOCTRINES.

1. See how freely and fully Joseph forgives. It is noble and like God to forgive injuries and pay them back with love.

2. See how Joseph notes God's hand in all events. Let us do likewise.

3. Jesus reveals himself with greater love than Joseph, with fuller, freer pardon, with a greater deliverance.

4. As Joseph invited his brethren to draw near to him, so Jesus invites all to Himself.

FOURTH SABBATH.

SUBJECT.—*Joseph sends for his father*,—Gen. 45: 16-28

This lesson is a continuation of the interesting narrative that we have been studying for the last seven Sabbaths. Mark the progression—now the story is pointing to a satisfactory ending. Joseph long lost as his father thought, makes himself known to his brethren, as we saw in our last. The lesson to-day tells us that he made himself known to his father.

V. 1.—Pharaoh's concurrence in Joseph's desire concerning his father. Pharaoh had heard of the visit of Joseph's brethren (V. 2). Knew about their father, Jacob, (V. 8.) probably had heard the whole story from Joseph himself. And now for Joseph's sake he is ready and anxious to show kindness to them all. (a) provides means of transit from Canaan to Egypt—waggons or—Egypt was rich in horses and waggons, but the Nomadic Hebrews had none, (b) provides provision for the way, (c) promises that if they will come to Egypt they shall eat of the good of the land. And since they are to be so highly

favoured in Egypt they need not be at all distressed about leaving some little goods or furniture in Canaan.

It would almost seem that the desire to get Jacob and all his sons down to Egypt, originated with Pharaoh. So urgent and liberal was he. It did not, however, though as King he issues the invitation.

II. Joseph carries out Pharaoh's command, give his brethren waggons, provision, change of raiment, but to Benjamin he gives more than to the rest. Benjamin was the youngest and the favorite. And by them he sends to his father, (a) 10 she asses laden with provisions for the journey, (b) 10 asses laden with the good things of Egypt. These good things were in addition to the corn and wheat spoken of; they were doubtless costly gifts—rich presents to his father, Egypt supplied such things in abundance.

III. The obedience of Joseph's brethren. They deliver the message—tell it simply "Joseph is yet alive and he is Governor over all the land of Egypt." Jacob who had given up all hope of ever seeing or even hearing from his loved and long lost son, is incredulous. He has not full confidence in his sons, especially when they speak of Joseph. Then they bring forward the evidences of the truth of what they say. They repeat the very words of Joseph and in all likelihood they confessed their own guilt in connection with their brother, how they had sold him, how he was taken down to Egypt, where they met him, and how he, on making himself known to them forgave them. Moreover they shewed him the waggons, the Egyptian waggons that Joseph had sent to convey him and his out of the land of Canaan. At length Jacob believes—is satisfied—his longing is appeased and his mind is made up. I will go &c. Such joyous tidings revive his spirit. He feels young again. A terrible load has been taken from his mind. He is Israel again, and as Israel he says "I will go &c."

LESSONS.

1. God can employ even wicked men for the promotion of his cause. Pharaoh invited Jacob and his sons to Egypt during the years of famine, and thus he did good to the people of God, the Church of that time.

2. A Godly life and a consistent walk wins the regard of worldly men. Joseph's life influenced Pharaoh to do what he did for Israel.

3. When we are raised to high positions we should not forget our friends who are not so favoured. Joseph though next in position to the King himself ministered to his poor brethren.

4. How beautiful it is to see sons mindful of their aged parents. Joseph's kindness to his father.

5. Nothing gladdens a father's heart so much as to hear that his children are doing well. Jacob is rejoiced at the good news from his son.

6. Household troubles are heavy—Joseph absent and Jacob sad. But household joys are great, the meeting of long separated father and son, rapturous.