

JACOB AND DOUBTING SOULS—A PARALLEL

NO. 2470

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.”
Genesis 45:28

I THINK that the patriarch Jacob may well serve as the type and emblem of a doubting soul, one who has been told the good news of salvation, the Gospel of God's grace, but who cannot bring his mind to believe it.

Let us think for a few minutes of old Jacob. First of all, he was a man who was very ready to believe evil tidings. When his sons held up before him a coat dipped in the blood of a kid, and asked him if it was not the coat he had given to Joseph, the patriarch answered, “It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.” He had no doubt about it, yet it was not true, and we have many hearers who will believe anything that is terrible, even though it may not be true. If there is something in the sermon which seems to condemn them, even though it may not be meant to condemn them, they are sure to take home that part of the discourse. If they see any passage of Scripture that appears to frown upon them, they retain that in their memory, and they keep on stinging themselves with it, often making themselves unhappy with that which was never intended to apply to them.

I wish that readiness to believe the dark sayings could be turned to an equal readiness to receive the consolations of the Word of God. Surely, we ought not to be so prejudiced against ourselves as to accept every evil thing and to reject every good thing. No, let us fairly weigh the evidence for either form of teaching, and believe, or reject either, according as the evidence for it may be strong or weak.

Jacob would, all the while, have willingly believed that which was good, if he could have believed it. If you could have asked him if he had any objection to believe that Joseph was alive, the old man would have answered, “Oh, no! it would be the joy of my heart if I could but think it to be true.” There are some whom I am now addressing who are in a similar case. Ask them whether they have any objection to believe that Jesus Christ is their Savior, that He loved them, and gave Himself for them, and they would, each one reply, “Object to believe this? Why, I would give my eyes—I would give my life—if I could but think it to be true!”

Such an unbeliever as that is a very hopeful one, because it is evident that he is not a willful unbeliever, he does not desire to be so. His heart longs to grasp the truth which, for the moment, his mind dares not accept. Jacob in this respect is the type of very many who hear the gospel, but dare not receive it, and yet oh, how they wish they could! Their very soul hungers and thirsts after it, but they are afraid to take it lest they should be taking that which is not truly theirs.

So far, the parallel between Jacob and the doubting soul runs very properly. Next notice that, to the patriarch, the truth about his son Joseph seemed altogether incredible. Joseph was alive, and governor over all the land of Egypt, but the old man had so long believed the contrary that he could not readily get out of the rut. He had sorrowfully said, “Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces,” and this idea, though it was most painful to him, had, nevertheless, eaten its way into his belief, and he could not get it out of him.

So do I know some who have written bitter things against themselves. “I shall be lost, I know I shall, it is not possible that Christ will save me. He will certainly reject me.” And, although that is quite

untrue—as untrue as Jacob’s belief that Joseph was dead—yet they have hugged their despair so long that they cannot give it up. They are like the man who refused to be comforted or those afflicted ones of whom we read, “Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near to the gates of death.”

Oh, that the Holy Spirit would come upon these poor unwilling doubters, and help them to know that a falsehood, however long it is believed, is not the truth! Though we may be in despondency of spirit for years, yet, if there is no real cause for that despondency, it is a pity that we should continue in it. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would enable us to break those bands asunder, and joyfully to believe what is true—that there is a Savior, an all-sufficient Savior, that all power is committed into His hands, and that He will rejoice this very hour to save and bless our souls!

The news appeared incredible to Jacob because it seemed “too good to be true.” His eyes flashed for the moment with a joyful light. “Joseph alive? Joseph—my Joseph—ruler over all the land of Egypt?” And then the very brightness of the thought seemed to blind the eyes of his faith. “It cannot be true,” said he, “it is too good to be true.”

Suppose that one of you had lost a son many years ago, and that a person met you outside the Tabernacle and said to you, “That boy of yours, who was reported dead twenty years ago, is not dead, he is in Australia, alive and well,” you would be staggered, would you not? And I have no doubt you would say to yourself, “It must be somebody like him or somebody else of the same name, it cannot be my son, it is impossible, do I not know that he is dead.” You would hardly believe it, therefore, do not blame poor old Jacob for *his* doubts.

There are many who are, spiritually, just in that state. They say, “What! you say that Jesus died for me, that I have been redeemed with His most precious blood, that I can have my sins forgiven? It cannot be. What! that I can be taken up to dwell with Christ in heaven? Oh, that it were true! It cannot be true. I did sing, just now—

*“Even me, even me,
Let Thy mercy light on me;”*

“but oh, surely, it cannot come to me! I must be left out, when the showers of blessing are falling, I cannot hope that there will be even a drop for me.” Well, then, you and old Jacob are very much alike, I think you must be first cousins. Yet Jacob was wrong, and so are you, the news is not “too good to be true.”

Through not believing his sons, Jacob began to faint in spirit. When they told him that Joseph was yet alive, we read that “Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not.” There is nothing that so stops the action of the heart and brings on faintness of the spirit, as unbelief. As soon as the old man began to believe the good tidings that his sons brought, “the spirit of Jacob their father revived.” Faith makes our spirits revive, but unbelief seems to strike us dead. I do not wonder that some of you are sad, and dull, and unhappy, as long as you cherish your unbelief, you must be so. O Holy Spirit, deliver them from this unbelief! Revive them by enabling them to believe what is true, that there is a Savior, a Savior yet alive, a Savior who is Lord of all, able and willing to save them.

There, then, is the parallel between Jacob and a doubting soul.

But, at last, Jacob rose out of his despondency and doubt, according to our text, “Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive: I will go and see him before I die.” I think the time has come for some others to say, “It is enough.” After having been attendants on the means of grace, perhaps for thirty years or more, they ought to be able to say, “It is enough.”

There came in here, last Lord’s-day, from a distant part of the country, an aged man, a farmer. He came up on Saturday for no other reason but to find the Savior. He heard me say that I would see inquirers on Tuesday, so he was here then. He said, “I left my farm, though it is a large one,” and then he told me something about himself, and he added, “I want to find the Savior. I thought, sir, I would come and see if I could find Christ on the Sabbath day, and I waited on that I might go to the prayer meeting on Monday night, and then come and speak to you about my soul.”

I thought, “Yes, and it is worthwhile to leave your farm to find a Savior, it is worthwhile to come from a distant county of England, it would be worthwhile to come from the ends of the earth if one might but find the Savior.” Ere I left him, I think he could say, “It is enough, Jesus is still alive, I will trust Him even now,” and he went on his way rejoicing. Oh, that some others might be able to say with him, “It is enough”!

There are two points upon which I think Jacob could say, “It is enough.” First, *the evidence was enough to convince him*, “It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive.” Secondly, *the conviction was enough to move him*, “I will go and see him before I die.” The second point is quite as important as the first, indeed, it is that to which the first ought to practically lead us.

I. The first point is, that Jacob had ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO CONVINCHE HIM, “It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive.”

The question for us to consider concerns, not Joseph, but Jesus. He is yet alive. He died upon the cross, but He has risen from the dead, and gone into the glory, “wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

The evidence that good old Jacob had received was *personal testimony*. His sons said concerning Joseph, “We have been to Egypt and we have seen him.” There have been many witnesses to testify that Christ is yet alive. Not only did the eleven apostles see Him many times, but over five hundred brethren at once saw the Son of God after He had risen from the dead. There is no fact in history that is better attested than the fact that He was crucified, and that He rose again. The resurrection is as true after nearly nineteen hundred years as it was the day it happened, the distance of time does not alter the fact. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died on Calvary, and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, the third day rose from the dead, no more to die, and ascended into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God.

To this fact, His disciples bore unfaltering witness, they were honest, simple-minded men, without enough imagination to make up the story. They were so sure of this truth that they died rather than deny it, most of them died by the most painful forms of death, yet nothing could ever make one of them speak a word to the contrary. They declared that they had seen Him, that they had eaten with Him, some of them could say that they had touched Him, and one had put His finger into the print of the nails. Yes, brethren, Jesus Christ is yet alive, and I pray that each one here may say, “The testimony of these many witnesses is true, I believe it. It is enough; Jesus is yet alive.”

Moreover, the Holy Ghost bore witness to this fact, for after the ascension of the Savior, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and their companions, and they began to speak with other tongues. They went into all the countries of the world, and wherever they went, they were able to speak the language without having to learn it. At the same time, the Holy Ghost enabled them to work miracles by which the sick were healed, and these two things together were the witness of the Holy Ghost that Jesus Christ the Son of God still lived, and that in His name salvation was to be preached to the sons of men. To me, this is evidence enough—the witness of faithful men, and the works of the Holy Ghost.

Beside that, there are many of us who are witnesses that, in answer to prayer, we have received pardon through the living Christ. We have also received, through that living Christ, a new life into our soul, we have passed from death unto life, and those who knew us before our conversion must notice a very remarkable change in us. They may not all admire it, but they must all admit it, and bear witness that we are now other than we used to be.

The Lord Jesus, in whom we have trusted, has given us new motives, new desires, in fact, a new nature, and a new life, and we are witnesses to this truth that He is a living Savior, still mighty to save. I wish you could all say, with regard to these witnesses, “It is enough.” I do not know what more witnesses we can give you, and I may say of the apostles, and of all those who bear witness by the Holy Spirit, “If you receive not their witness, neither will ye believe though men should rise from the dead and bear testimony to the fact that Jesus lives to save the sons of men.”

But then, Jacob had, in addition to this personal testimony of witnesses, the testimony of *accurate reports*, for we find that Jacob's sons told their father, "all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them." Those words of Joseph were remarkable words, for he traced God's providence in all that had happened. He said to his brethren, "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God, and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." Jacob knew that those words were after the manner of Joseph, for Joseph always lived in the fear and love of God.

As for our Lord Jesus Christ, He has come to teach us of the Father. He reveals God to us, that which He speaks to us, He speaks not of Himself, but in the power and in the name of God, and we know that His word is true, because it is a word which glorifies God and not man.

Joseph also spoke somewhat about his own position and power. "Tell my father," he said, "thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt." So, the Lord Jesus Christ has told us that all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth, and therefore we are to go and teach all nations, and bring them as disciples to His feet. The words He speaks concerning Himself are not boastful or false, but they are the utterance of a humble, meek, and lowly Savior who never said a word more or less than the truth.

Joseph had also spoken to them very tenderly and kindly about their father. He would do everything for his father and his brethren, giving them the best of the land, and our Lord Jesus has spoken very tenderly to us. "Come unto me," says He, "all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The words of the Lord Jesus Christ, if you hear them or read them, are their own witness. There is a certain distinct unique majesty about the language of Jesus Christ which somehow penetrates to the hearts of men, and carries its own convincing witness into the mind. I pray you, then—you who have for years heard His words—say, "It is enough, we have heard quite sufficient from Him to compel us to believe that He lives, and that He is able to save."

How long must He continue to speak to you who are now getting old hearers of the Gospel, and yet have not believed it? How much longer must we persuade, entreat, exhort in the name of the Lord Jesus? How much longer must His Words be read and quoted in your hearing? May God the Holy Ghost speedily end your indecision, and bring you each one to say, "It is enough; Jesus is alive, there is a living Savior, I will take Him to be my Savior"!

There were also *abundant tokens* which greatly helped to convince old Jacob, "When he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him," he said, "It is enough." To what shall I liken these wagons? It seems to me that some of you, who are doubting whether Christ will save you, ought to think to yourselves, "Well, there is the Sabbath day, which is a special token of God's love." As I came here this evening, I thought to myself, "Why has God appointed a Sabbath day if He does not mean to give rest to men?" What a mockery it is to have one day in seven set apart for you to think of God if God does not mean to think of you! The very institution of the Sabbath seems to me to be a "wagon" in which to bring you to Christ.

And why does God send ministers to preach His Gospel? I said to myself, as I came here this evening, "I am going on the silliest errand that ever moved the foot of man, unless God means to save men by the message He has given me to deliver." What is the use of my talking, and talking, and talking, unless there is a living Christ, and unless that living Christ is really able to save? He has sent you a minister who, with all his faults, loves your souls, and who would do anything within the compass of a human mind to bring you to Christ if he only knew how to do it. Surely, God did not send us to speak in His name, and move us to an agony about your souls, if He did not mean to bless you. So, the Christian ministry itself is like a "wagon" in which to bring men to Christ.

I have often thought to myself, when I have been going home after preaching, "I have put the truth before my hearers so plainly that if they want to be saved, I have very clearly shown them the way to Christ." I used to attend the means of grace very, very often when I was under concern of soul, and to the best of my knowledge and belief I never heard the Gospel simply and plainly put to me while I was

listening for it. This is the pity, that so often our brethren preach very fine sermons, but they are no good to seeking souls, and they do not lead them to Christ. But as soon as I heard that poor Primitive Methodist preach Christ—and he preached Christ alone, because he did not know anything else, and I myself am very much in that condition—why, as soon as ever I heard that, I laid hold of it. When fish are hungry, they bite at the bait, and if you really want Christ, you will at once lay hold of Him. If you do not accept Him, at any rate He has been plainly set before you, and if you refuse Him, you shall deliberately and willfully reject and refuse Him. I pray that you may not do that.

O sinner, play not the fool with your own soul! If you must play, go home to your children, pick up their toys, throw their balls and twist their skipping-ropes, but trifle not with your souls, and with God, and heaven, and hell! If I have lied to you about these matters, condemn me, for I deserve it, but if I have spoken the truth to you, hear me, or if you hear not me, hear the still small voice of your own conscience, or rather, hear the voice of God which has been speaking through me. Believe in Jesus now that you are under the influence of a ministry which may be to you what Joseph's wagons were to old Jacob.

Think also, why is it that you are instructed in the truths revealed in the Word of God? Why is it that there are so many expostulations and warnings in it? Why is it that this precious Book is put into all your homes? Why is it so full of invitations and promises, but that all this is intended to be a "wagon" to bring you to your Joseph, even to Jesus? When you see God, as it were, moving heaven and earth to help you to salvation, bending providence in the direction of aiding you to hear and to believe the Gospel, surely you ought to say, "It is enough; Jesus is yet alive; God means mercy for me; Christ Jesus can save me, and He will save me."

*"Jesus sits on Zion's hill,
And receives poor sinners still."*

The evidence brought before Jacob was sufficient to convince him, he said, "It is enough." Oh, that you also may say the same concerning the evidence brought before you!

II. But now comes the tug of war, THE CONVICTION WAS ENOUGH TO MOVE HIM. "Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

Oh! how many people there are in the world who say, "Yes, there is a Savior," and yet they are not saved! Some of you have often sung—

*"There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."*

Is it so? Do you believe that? Then, why have not you lost all your guilty stains? "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." You never doubted the truth of that text, and yet you have not believed on the only-begotten Son of God, and you have not received everlasting life. I can understand those who reject the Scriptures altogether, and who deny that there is any Savior for sinners, I see where they are, and feel that there is some kind of consistency in their conduct, deeply as I grieve over it, but I cannot understand what you mean when you admit the truth of what we preach, yet do not practically obey it. If the Gospel be true, why do you not believe it? If you believe it, why do you not act upon it? It is not sufficient to merely say that you trust Christ for salvation, and then to fancy there is nothing further to be done.

I have often tried to expose that delusion by representing a pilot as being brought on board a vessel, and the captain and sailors saying that they all had confidence in him, that he would take the ship safely into the haven. They said they trusted him, but having declared their faith in him, they all went below, and lay down to sleep. Now, of course, the pilot wanted to have the sails attended to, and the ship put in good trim, and he needed the helmsman to manage the rudder, so he called out, "What are you all doing

down there? Why have you all run away from me?” And one of them answered, “Because we trust in you, you are the pilot, and you said you would bring us safely into port. We trust in you, so the captain has gone to his cabin, and all the sailors have gone to the fo’c’sle. You see, it is a wet night, a strong northwester is blowing, it is very cold, and we would rather be comfortable and snug in our berths than up there on deck. You said that you would bring us to the haven, and we trust in you to do it.” The pilot would of course reply, “You do not really trust in me, for if you did, you would do as I bid you. You are mocking me, you are insulting me, you have brought me on board your ship to make a fool of me, if you really trusted me, every man would take his proper place, and do his duty, and then, as I gave the word of command, it would be obeyed, and so you would be brought safely into port.”

It is just so with Christ and ourselves, we trust Him entirely to save us, but we have no right to say that we are saved if we do not practically obey Him. It is beyond all excuse that men should know that they need a Savior, and that there is a Savior, and yet that they should not trust that Savior. It is as if Jacob had said, “Joseph is yet alive, but I shall not trouble my head about him.” Oh, no, no, no! The patriarch does not talk like that, but he says, “Joseph is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die.” And, straightway, the poor old man and his household started to go down into Egypt, for the very next verse reads, “And Israel took his journey with all that he had.”

One reason why Jacob wanted to go to Egypt was because *he wished to see his son*. Some of us know the delight of seeing again a dear son who has been absent from us for years, and of seeing him return again well. It is not so much a matter for us to talk about, it is rather a thing for our own hearts to rejoice over and to remember, and we often breathe the prayer, “God grant that we may see our beloved son again!” Yet, after all, to see a son is but the gratification of a natural affection, there is a great deal more reason why we should, by faith, see our Savior, for he who truly sees the Son of God shall live forever. O dear Hearts—

“There is life for a look at the Crucified One!”

A faith-look to God in human flesh, a believing sight of Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, will bring you life forevermore. I think that every sinner who knows that there is a living Christ ought to say, “I will go and see Him, whatever else I do not go to see.” There are some sights in the world of which we say, “I should like to go and see that.” Well, you may forego all the things of beauty that ever charmed the eyes of men, but, I charge you, do not forego this sight of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the heaven of angels, He is the delight of God Himself, there is no true life for you other than that which will come through your looking to Him who says, “Look to me, and be ye saved, all you ends of the earth.”

Since you believe that there is a Savior, I pray that you may be moved at once to say, “I will go and see him.” May you be preserved from putting it off even till the daylight breaks again! This very hour, through your tears, look straight away to the cross, and may the Lord Jesus Christ reveal Himself to you, that in His light you may see light!

Further, this old man, who said, “I will go and see my son,” yet felt that *it was but for a little while*. He says, “I will go and see him before I die.” He had seventeen more years to live, but he did not know that, he felt so old a man at one hundred and thirty that he thought he should only just manage to see his son, and perhaps die on his neck. He said, “But I will go and see him, even though it be only with my dying eyes. I will die with the sight of Joseph before me, and that will be enough to make me happy.”

And, dear souls, if you did but get to Jesus, you might be happy if you could only say, “Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” But it need not be death to you any more than it was to Jacob. Indeed, when you have seen Him, you shall live, and never die, but your eyes shall be opened to see yet more and more of Him, and the light of Christ shall so shine into your soul that you shall behold Him after a still more glorious fashion till He shall be the joy of your heart, and the heaven of your soul forever. Therefore, since there is such a living Savior, go to Him, I

pray you, and you shall not merely see Him for a little while, and then die, but you shall see Him and live forever. Therefore, hasten by faith to see Him this very moment.

Old Jacob also felt that *age should not hinder, but rather speed him*. He believed that he was soon going to die, but he said, “I will go and see him before I die.” I think that Jacob’s age really made him go more quickly. “Ah!” said he to himself, “I shall be dead soon, therefore, let me hasten down to Joseph, that I may see him before I die.”

So, dear friends, do not let anyone say, “I am too old to be saved.” Who is too old to trust Christ? Who is too old to seek and find the Savior? I have often heard stories told about people not being converted until after they are five and forty, or thereabouts, but that is all untrue, and I do not believe a word of it.

I have seen just as many people in proportion converted at one age as at another. There are more young people in the world than there are aged persons, and therefore there are more people converted, by God’s grace, while they are young. There are fewer old people than young ones, but I do thank God that, even in this building, I could point out a great many who I know who were baptized after their hair had grown grey. Some of them put their trust in Jesus when they were threescore years and ten, and others even later than that.

There was a dear old brother who came in here when he was past eighty years of age, and he found the Savior. He was such a Little-faith or Feeble-mind that he hardly dared to speak to any of us as he came in and out among us, but at last he said to himself, “I must join the church.” I fancy that he was eighty-eight when he was baptized, and he was so happy with us for about six months, and then he gently slipped away and went home. I am sure I never saw a more childlike person, or a more genuine conversion than that of this dear old man.

However old you are, friend, come along. If Methuselah were here, I would preach to him the same Gospel that I would teach to one of these dear girls, for, however old a sinner is, there is nothing in the Gospel about limiting it to persons of a certain age. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,” does not mean, go and begin picking out the creatures, and saying, “I only preach the Gospel to people who are under a specified age.” Go home, and go to bed, sir, if that is how you talk, Christ never sent you on such an errand as that. He sent us to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to you who are almost worn out, if there be but life in you, I cry, “Come along, trust in Jesus, and He will save even you.”

*“While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return;”*

and, returning, he shall find Christ.

Be quick about it, however, you who are getting on in life, you who are far advanced in years, and may God bless you!

Yesterday I had many kind letters congratulating me on completing my fifty-second year, but there was one that did a little surprise and amuse me. One brother writes that he has read my sermons for many years, and that, *at my advanced age*, he cannot pray that I may have many returns of the day, but he does trust that God may spare me at least two or three years longer for the good of the church. Well, as I read the letter, I could not help smiling, as you do, for I do not feel that I am quite as advanced in age as that, but still, I thought that, perhaps, this brother’s letter might be prophetic. We may be older than we think we are, and two or three years may be all the time we are to have here. At any rate, I will try to work for Christ as earnestly as if I had only two or three years to live, and then it may be that He will add to us yet more, and if not, what does it matter? We shall go home to Him who sent us, and be gathered to our Father in peace.

Once more, old Jacob was not kept back from going to see his son because it *was a long journey into Egypt*. Journeys appear longer to old men than they do to young folk, and it was a very great undertaking to go so far with those seventy and more people around him. There would be a deal of

packing up to be done, and there were no Pantechnion vans in those days to carry everything for the whole company. It was the transplanting of a grand old tree, and it was a difficult task to move so venerable an oak, with such wide-spreading roots and branches. Yet Jacob said, “I will go and see Joseph before I die.”

Now, dear friend, if it does seem a long way to Jesus, yet undertake the journey, and if you can persuade your wife and all your children to go, so much the better. Christ will receive them all in Goshen, and they shall dwell with Him forever. I wish that there might be a blessed migration of many who have been rooted to the soil of the old Canaan, the sinful place, who will now go, not down to Egypt, but up to Jesus in the land of plenty and of purity, to dwell with Him forever.

That which ruins so many is that hesitancy, that delaying, that halting between two opinions, which I find in the original is hopping upon two twigs, and never resting upon either, let not that be the case with you. Procrastination is the devil’s net in which myriads are entangled to their utter destruction, may the Lord deliver any of you who have been caught in it!

Decide for Christ now, I beseech you, may the Holy Spirit constrain you to decide at once, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—241, 508, 607

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

GENESIS 45:9-28, JOHN 5:24-44

Genesis 45. Verse 9. *Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down to me, tarry not:*

Joseph, having made himself known to his brethren, bids them return to their father, and bring him down to Egypt to see his long-lost son.

10-11. *And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children’s children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: and there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.*

It is just like Joseph to speak thus kindly, and to put the invitation so attractively to his father, “Thou shalt be near unto me.” That would be the greatest joy of all to old Jacob, and this is the greatest joy to a sinner when he comes to Christ, our great Joseph, “Thou shalt be near to me.” It is not merely that He gives us the land of Goshen to dwell in, but He promises that we shall be near unto Him, and that is best of all.

12-22. *And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him. And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh’s house, saying, Joseph’s brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land. Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours. And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.*

Benjamin was his full brother, so he loved him best, and gave him most.

23-24. *And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said to them, See that ye fall not out by the way.*

This was a sure sign that Joseph knew his brethren, and they might well recognize him even by that precept, for their consciences must have told them that it had been their common habit to fall out either with or without occasion, so he bids them not to do so.

25-28. *And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: and Israel said,—*

See how quickly the patriarch changes from Jacob into Israel; when his spirit is revived, he becomes Israel.

28. *It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*

Now we are going to read in the Gospel according to John, the fifth chapter, beginning at the twenty-fourth verse.

John 5. Verse 24. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life,—*

If we truly believe the word of Christ, and trust in Him who sent His Son into the world, we have at this moment everlasting life.

24. *And shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life.*

What a grand verse this is! It is worthy to be written in letters of gold at every street corner, would that we all knew the fullness of its meaning by heartfelt experience!

25-30. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgement also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*

Christ as Mediator did the will of the Father, and yet also did His own will, for His will was always the same as His Father's!

31. *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.*

He did bear witness to Himself by His miracles, but that was not the witness upon which He relied, nor was it the only witness to the truth of His mission.

32-40. *There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

They were great Bible-readers, great students of the letter, but they would not come to Christ, and hence the Scriptures themselves became a sepulcher in which they were entombed.

41-44. *I receive not honor from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that comes from God only?*

Some men find it difficult to believe in Christ because they are always seeking honor for themselves, desire for the praise of men often blinds the mind and prejudices the spirit. How boldly our great Master speaks! There is no flattery on His lips. He is the faithful and true Witness, the very Word of God. Oh, that all men would give heed to His message!

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