Genesis - Commentaries by Christopher Knapp

A Fruitful Bough: Five Addresses on Joseph as a Type of Christ, Joseph's Betrayal.: Gen 37:12-36

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Genesis 37:12-36.

A NEW chapter in Joseph's history is opened to us in the passage read to-night. We have already had before us what might be called the prologue to the great drama of the life of Joseph. The chief actors have been introduced. But, so far, we have only seen them, as it were, in tableaux. To-night we find ourselves in the midst of a scene of stirring activity, and each actor begins to play his part in the dark tragedy of Joseph's betrayal.

Joseph's brethren had gone to feed their father's flock in Shechem, and Israel sends him to them to inquire for their welfare, and the welfare of the flocks. Joseph yields willing and hearty obedience. "Here am I," he answers to his father's command. "So," we read, "he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem." How beautifully we see pictured here the coming of the Son of God into the world! It is, in type, the advent in their midst of Israel's Messiah. He was "sent" of his father; and in the New Testament we read that "the Father sent the Son." And Christ said to the Jews that God's work was to "believe on Him whom He hath sent." And He said again, "Him whom He hath sent ye believe not." The blind man is directed to wash in the pool of Siloam, which, the Spirit of God is careful to tell us, means "sent," reminding us in this way of Him who was "sent for the recovering of sight to the blind" (John 9; Luke 4).

And "he sent him out of the vale of Hebron." Hebron means fellowship, or communion. The vale suggests quiet peacefulness and rest. It was intended, I believe, to point them forward (and point us back) to the fellowship of the Son of God with the Father in heaven's eternal calm and peace previous to His entrance, at His incarnation, into this scene of sin and toil and sorrow. God has told us something of this in the mystical language of the 8th of Proverbs; the only language, it seems to me, in which mysteries of such a profound nature could be told to human ears. His pre-incarnation existence is declared to us directly in the opening verses of the Gospel of John. He was ever the "fellow" of Jehovah, and His equal. The unitarian denies this. And I do not spell the designation with a capital, for unitarianism to-day is fearfully prevalent, even in the theoretically orthodox bodies of Christendom. It has spread, and continues to spread, like a deadly gangrene, in Protestantism. All have not the honesty, like poor B. Fay Mills, to commit themselves, and declare openly for the awful blasphemy. It is antichristian, a damnable doctrine, and will shut out of heaven forever all who die in the belief of its hellish lie. The denial of Christ's eternal deity is taught in one of its most subtle forms in the series of books called "Millennial Dawn." No Christian should suffer one of these books to enter into his house. It is Satanic, I do not hesitate to declare. Every true Christian's heart must find its echo in the lines of Newton:

"And he came to Shechem," we read. Shechem was the place where Joseph's brethren had dealt so treacherously with the unsuspecting people of Hamor. In their "fierce anger" and "cruel wrath" they had committed wholesale murder. So black was their crime, and so base their treachery, that their father says, "Ye have troubled me, to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land." It just illustrates the condition of affairs among the Jews when Jesus came into their midst. Such was their hypocrisy and deceit, that they had made themselves to become a stench among their Gentile neighbors. They were "contrary to all men," as the apostle afterward wrote. And through them, because of their wickedness, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles, the same apostle says. (See 1 Thessalonians 2:15; Rom. 2:24). And it was into such a scene, and among such a people, that the antitype of Joseph came. Oh, what grace was this! what "matchless kindness" and disinterested love! And He came willingly, like Joseph. Joseph would have had good cause to draw back from such an errand. He knew his brethren's wickedness and hatred. He knew the envy of their hearts against him. He could with reason have asked his father to excuse him from this undertaking. But no; "Here am I" he says, ready always to obey, and glad to seek his brethren's welfare. And Jesus, ere "He came unto His own," knew perfectly the "hatred" they should give Him for His "love," He knew well their wickedness, "He knew all men," John writes, "and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." He knew He was coming into the midst of a "generation of vipers." He knew well that He was being sent to "an evil and an adulterous generation," to be among them as God's "lamb" in the midst of "wolves." And yet He came, willingly, obediently. "Lo, I come to do Thy will," He says, when being sent into the world by God, His Father. Old King George III. once visited a poor, sick Gipsy woman in Windsor Forest, and the world thought it a wonderful act of condescending kindness. But heaven's King came down in deepest tenderness to guilty Israel (and in them to the whole world, for they are but a sample of the entire human race), yet not many think it very wonderful, alas! The few who know Him do, however. They sing —

Joseph does not find his brethren when he comes to Shechem. They have departed. Now is his chance to return to Hebron if his heart is not wholly in his mission. Here he has given him a good excuse for turning back and giving up the undertaking. But no; he has no thought of turning back, or giving up the work given him of his father to do. We read, "A certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan, And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan." How like the blessed Son of God I He, too, "found in fashion as a man," was here,

Joseph wandering in the field, in utter loneliness, is but a shadow of Him who here on earth had "not where to lay His head." Though often in the midst of crowds, His life was one of loneliness and sorrow. He was like "a sparrow alone upon the housetop." Few could, or even cared to, share His thoughts. Sometimes, as in the case of Joseph, "a man found" Him, and to such He told His errand. To these, His disciples, He could unburden the intents of His burdened heart; but the world knew Him not! But, oh! how He persisted in His search for those "lost sheep of the house of Israel" to whom He was "sent." Nothing could turn Him back. He set His face like a flint. No seeming lack of success in His mission could cause Him to relinquish it. He presses on like Joseph, who, if he cannot find his brethren in the place of their former wickedness, Shechem, will follow them to Dothan. "Dothan" means "two wells," or, perhaps beer, "cisterns." This at once recalls what God says of Israel in Jeremiah 2:13. He says, "They have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." This was Israel's condition exactly when He with whom was "the fountain of life" was in their midst. And when, because of their

self-righteousness and pride, they would not be convinced by Him of their wickedness, He appealed to their unsatisfied hearts, and cried, on “the last day, that great day of the feast, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.” It is just Joseph going from Shechem — the scene of their wickedness — to Dothan (heart thirst). And sinner, this is Christ’s way still with souls. It seems impossible for some to think that they are great and grievous sinners. And so they have no crushing sense of guilt to drive them to the Saviour of lost sinners. But empty, unfilled hearts they have; and when they see how broken are earth’s cisterns, they will come to Him who is Himself the satisfying fountain for some to think that blessedness. It was so with me. I knew, of course, I was a sinner; but it was more as to “the fountain of life” than as to the “fountain opened for sin and uncleanness” that

Men have not only consciences, but hearts. And Christ appeals to both. And He appeals to you who are unsatisfied and thirsty. He can meet those strange, mysterious longings of your soul. He has met mine, and those of men of the very highest intellectual capacity; and He can meet yours, surely. Only let Him. Begin to let Him now.

Let us follow Joseph now to Dothan, and see how He is treated by his brethren. The narrative reads, “And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. 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 will see what will become of his dreams.” His reception was like Christ’s. He was no sooner born than men began to plot against His life. When Joseph was yet “afar off, even before he came near,” his brethren conspired against him, and determined to have his life. And so it was with Jesus. At His birth, Herod, and all Jerusalem with him, “was troubled,” we read. And Herod sought the young Child’s life. This was when He was “afar off,” for He was yet too young to reign in Herod’s place; and it was not till thirty years after that He was to enter upon His public ministry among the Jews. But He was “the heir,” and the counsel of the nation was, “Come, let us kill Him.” They ever thirsted for His life’s blood. Even the prophets who had shown before His coming were slain by them. “Even before He came near unto them,” they had marked Him out for death. “Crucify Him I crucify Him!” they cried, when at last they thought they had Him in their power. And what the Jew did nineteen hundred years ago, you and I, and every man, would do to-day if unrenewed by grace and placed in similar circumstances.

Murder, in the germ, lies buried in the natural heart of every man born in the world. And we read, “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” God permitted all this manifestation of enmity and murder in the Jewish heart that you and I might see just what is in our own. For our hearts are, by nature, all alike. Scripture says so. Harken!” As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man” (Prov. 27:19). Notice the perfection of the figure used. It is not “As in a mirror,” but “As in water.” It is well-nigh impossible, as most here may know, to obtain an absolutely plane surface on either glass or metal. And to see a perfect image of yourself, you must look upon a surface that is perfectly plane. An ordinary mirror only reflects a resemblance. There is always more or less distortion. But look into a pail or pool of water perfectly at rest, and you see an exact image of yourself in the reflection. Because water at rest presents an absolutely plane surface. I know then, from this verse in Proverbs, that when I see the Jewish heart displaying itself in the presence of Jesus here on earth, I see, not a resemblance of my Gentile heart, but an exact image. And yet, oh wonder of wonders! He loved, and loves, me still! And when He came to earth He knew just what treatment He should receive at the hand of man. Joseph did not, could not, know how his brethren would seek to destroy his life. Had he known, he would never have gone, perhaps. But Jesus knew; and, knowing, came!

Let me adapt an illustration: A widow has an only son. She loves him dearly; and wishing to inculcate in him a spirit of unselfishness and care for others, she says one day, “James, I wish you to carry this basket of eatables to the Smith family over the mountain. I hear they are in very hard circumstances, and perhaps are starving. It is a long journey, but if you start now, while it is yet early morning, you will have time to get back before dark. Please ask them to accept this food as an expression of my neighborly care and love.” James, always in hearty sympathy with his mother’s plans, gladly undertakes the journey over the rough, steep mountain, and just after noon arrives at the dilapidated but in which the squatters to whom he is sent are living. As he is seen approaching, the rough, rude elder sons come out, and begin to ill-treat the widow’s son. Though he meets them with a kindly, gentle smile, they first mock and then begin to beat him, until, all covered with blood, he lies insensible and still upon the ground. Supposing him to be dead, they cast him into the bushes, and begin to eat, with the rest of the family, the basket of victuals. After a time poor James recovers consciousness, and succeeds, by a terrible effort, in reaching his mother’s house about midnight. As he staggers, all bruised and bleeding, into his mother’s arms, he groans, “O mother, had I known they were such cruel people, I never should have gone” And this would be but human. But the love of Christ was more than human love; it was divine. He knew beforehand just how men would treat Him, yet He came. He knew the heartless mockery and the cruel crown of thorns that they would place upon His brow. He knew that they would nail Him to the shameful tree — yes, He knew it all; yet, blessed be His name, He came. My heart cannot withstand such love as this. It is a love “which passeth knowledge.” It will melt the stoutest heart that, by God’s grace, believes it. May you, poor Christ-rejector, get to know and believe that love to-night.

Many are like Reuben — they try to occupy a neutral place. He seeks, in a timid, half-hearted way to save the life of Joseph. If he knew Joseph to be unworthy of such treatment, why did he not step out boldly and say, “No; lay no hand on this defenseless lad. Why do you seek to kill the child? I shall stand by him; and if you kill him, you must do it over my dead body.” “Well said, Reuben!” we would all exclaim. But no; he is too cowardly. He tries in a weak kind of way to save the life of Joseph, but he is careful that it is at no risk to himself; and he suffers with his wicked brethren just as if he had, like Judah, taken the leading part. Is there a Reuben here to-night? Be warned. You cannot occupy a neutral place between this Christ-rejecting world and an open confession of His name. You may think in your heart that you have a kind of respect or regard for Jesus; but let me tell you, this will not avail you in the coming day. Hear what He says about this matter: “Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God” (Luke 12:8, 9). You must make your choice, and openly abide by it. Remember what He said to the daughters of Jerusalem, who, out of the tenderness of their womanly hearts, wept as they beheld Him being led to death and bearing His cross. “Weep for yourselves,” He says, “and for your children,” as He saw what would come upon them. They were not really believers, and had not confessed Him, like His true disciples. And He can only say to them, “Weep for yourselves.” You too may weep as you hear preachers pathetically describe the sufferings of Christ upon the cross of Calvary; or you may be moved to tears as you gaze upon some life-like picture of the thorn-crowned and bleeding Saviour. But I say, Weep not for Him, but for those miseries that are coming upon your soul if you do not from your heart believe on Him, and with your mouth confess Him in the face of this world’s scorn and hatred.

More than two hundred years ago the city of Limerick was besieged by King William, and at last surrendered, conditionally. An open space was prepared outside the city, and one gray October morning the soldiers of the surrendered garrison were marched towards this spot. The two flags of the rival French and English nations were planted at opposite points, and the Irish regiments were allowed to choose, each man

for himself, which flag he preferred to live under and fight for. The first to decide was the foot-guard regiment, fourteen hundred strong. All but seven chose the tri-color of France. Next came Lord Iveagh's regiment, a splendid body of men. Will they, too, decide against the flag of England? The inhabitants of the city and country-side stand almost breathless as they advance with measured tread, and in perfect order, toward the spot where the decisive choice of each man must be made. One by one they stopped before the flag of England, until they stood a solid body, and as one man declared for England's king. Not one denied allegiance to the British crown. As the last man of this loyal regiment halted beneath the ensign of Britain, the silence of the spectators was broken by a mighty shout. Cheer after cheer rent the morning air. And men and angels look to you to see if you will make the Christ of God your public choice to-day, my unsaved hearer. You must decide as did each soldier on that morning of long ago outside the gates of Limerick. No man that clay could take neutral ground. It must be the one flag or the other. And you must choose between the world and Christ. "Choose ye this day," is the word of command. It is impossible to continue long a Reuben. May God show you this, and "for the divisions of Reuben" may there be "great searchings of heart" to-night.

Now let us come back to the narrative. Reuben's expedient to deliver him out of his brethren's hand fails. True, they do not kill him. They strip him of his coat of many colors, and cast him into a pit of the wilderness. And in Reuben's absence (evidently) they sell him to the Ishmaelites. Like the Jews with Jesus, they deliver him up to the Gentiles. Twenty pieces of silver is the price they get for him. This was just two-thirds the price of an average adult slave (see Ex. 21:32). Judas asked the chief priests what they would give for Jesus. Thirty pieces of silver is their offer. The price of a slave is their estimate of His worth who was ever God's delight, the object of the adoration of all angels, the fear of demons, and the "all" and "altogether lovely" of the hosts of the redeemed. "Every man has his price" is a vulgar saying of the world, and it is frequently untrue. But every soul whom Satan cheats of Jesus has its price. Some accept gold, others position or power. With some it is paltry pleasure, or lust, or some darling secret sin rolled like a sweet morsel under their tongue. What is he giving you, poor sinner? you are accepting something, be assured. And whatever it may be, you are being fooled a thousand times more really than the stupid savage who sells an exhaustless gold mine for a few brass buttons. Well might the sold and slighted Saviour say in seeming irony, as He beholds it all, "A goodly price that I was prized at of them" (Zech. 11:13).

I know this may not give you much concern just now. It did not trouble Joseph's brethren very much that they had basely betrayed and sold him. But the time came, after many years, that they were forced to feel it. And you will some day realize the sin of all your sins — the rejection of the Son of God. It is the crown-crime of human guilt, and shuts heaven in your face. There is no place but hell for men who choose the world and sin, and leave the patient, pleading Saviour standing unanswered at their door.

Will you not have Him to-night, unsaved man, woman, child? He stands ready to-night to receive and save you. He will gladly forgive the years of neglect and rejection you have shown Him, just as Joseph, when exalted in Egypt, forgave his brethren freely when, in their need and sorrow, they were brought before him. You need a Saviour. You need one now. You need a Saviour from sin, and you need a Saviour from hell. Jesus waits to be all this to you right here and now. Love led Him to Calvary to die for your sins, and it is love, long-suffering love, love for the lost, that causes Him to delay His coming, and to call, and call you, though you do not yet respond. Oh, say to Him,

God help you to say it! Amen and Amen.

A Fruitful Bough: Five Addresses on Joseph as a Type of Christ, Introductory Address.: Gen 37:1-11

Genesis 37:1-11

THE Scriptures testify of Christ. This is the declaration of the Lord Himself: "They are they which testify of Me," He says, referring to the Scriptures. And He does not here refer to the Gospels, as some might suppose, for they had not yet been written. He is speaking of the Old Testament Scriptures. So throughout the whole of the Old Testament canon we may expect to find allusions, direct and indirect, to Christ. This is what makes it all so interesting. God has chosen a double method of bringing Christ before us in these ancient writings. He speaks of Him by direct reference, as in the 53rd of Isaiah, Deuteronomy 18:15, and in many other places. Then He shows us Christ in type and figure. In doing this, He uses inanimate things, such as the ark, the tabernacle, the manna, etc. He uses animals also, as the firstling of Abel's flock, the Passover lamb, the scapegoat, sacrificial bullocks, and doves. But His most string and effective method of manifesting beforehand the character of the coming One was in the use of persons.

It is not my purpose now to point out to you all these persons. They are many. Some are named, and others are unnamed. A few are in a very manifest and full way typical of Christ; others are only so in a somewhat shadowy and mystical way. Seven stand out prominently from the general background of the less apparent. These are Adam, Melchizedek, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, David, and Solomon. There we have the perfect number, seven, giving us a perfect sweep of the sky of prophecy ("for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," Revelation 19:10) from the dawn of human history to the end of time. Adam ("figure of Him that was to come"— "the last Adam," Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:45) heads the list; and Solomon, beautiful figure of Christ in His millennial reign, completes it. And in the five that come between we are given a good general outline of all the leading truths of Christ's person, character, offices, and work.

And if we take the book of Genesis alone, we have in it also just seven men who picture Christ. This is only what we might expect, since the book has been called the "seed-plot" of the whole Bible, which means that all the leading truths of Scripture are found in Genesis in the germ. The seven are Adam, Abel, Melchezedek, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Benjamin. Of course, three of this number do not stand out so strikingly as types as do the others, but they are nevertheless types unmistakably, if not so manifestly. For even the tricky Jacob, when "he served for a wife, and for a wife kept sheep," in this toil of his for his beloved Rachel, typifies our Lord in His life of toil for the "bride of His heart's deep longing," His loved and ransomed Church.

But of all these typical characters, Joseph is, without doubt, the chief. He eclipses even David, who, though "a man after God's own heart," failed grievously, and in his sin could not in any sense be taken as a type of our holy, spotless Lord. But in Joseph's life there is no recorded failure. He rises on the horizon of his time like a beautiful star, that shines on and sets without a single cloud to dim its brightness. He is the Sirius of the shining host of Old Testament typical men.

Joseph's very name is suggestive of Christ. It means "adding." At his birth his mother "called his name Joseph, and said, The Lord shall add to me another son" (Genesis, ch. 30:24). Let us see how this name "adding" suits our Lord.

He has been adding in a threefold way: 1St. He adds to the creature's knowledge of God. Until the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, God's heart of love was never fully known, even by the angels who stand in His presence and behold His face. They by their very creation knew His power. They saw His glory too, and beheld His awful majesty. Other of His divine attributes were known to them. When He "spared not the angels that sinned," they fully understood His holiness. But His love and grace were never fully known by either men or angels until Jesus came, telling out the Father's heart. He it was who first said, "God so loved the world." God's love was manifested toward us through His Son and Fellow, Jesus Christ. His death upon the cross manifested to the full, to all the universe, what depths of love and kindness towards guilty man were in the heart of God. So in this way Christ adds; He increases our knowledge of God by showing forth His love as none but He could do.

2d. He adds to heaven's inhabitants. He says, in John 12:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bring eth forth much fruit." He refers here to His death. "Much fruit" is the result. And it is all to be gathered at last into the heavenly garner. In addition to the "innumerable company of angels" already there, there shall be, through the death and resurrection of Christ, "a great company, that no man can number," composed of men redeemed from the earth. Angels that sinned were cast out; and in their place, in proportion ten to one, perhaps, God will place men who, though they have sinned, have believed in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

That's the question. I shall be there, by His grace, thank God. My presence shall help to swell the ranks of the redeemed on high; my glad voice shall mingle with that of the many myriads whose song shall swell in volume until it becomes like the sound of the many waters of a mighty sea. Hallelujah! But again I ask, Will you, dear friend, be there? Listen:

3d. Christ adds to the Church. I mean by "the Church" all true believers of the present dispensation, of course. "The Church, which is His body," Scripture says. And we read in Acts 2:47, "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." No one can "join" this Church. No pastor, however successful, can "add to the membership." It is Christ who does the adding. All mere voluntary "joining," or human "adding," is like waxwork apples fastened to a living tree, or an artificial limb attached to a live body. He it is who "builds" His Church (Matt. 16:18). It is His body, and every true believer is a member. Now here is my little finger; it is a member of my body. But how did it get to be a member? or, when did it ever "join?" Not by any voluntary act of its own, certainly; nor by the manipulation of some clever surgeon. God, my Maker, joined it to my human body; it was an act of creation. And just so Christ, by an act of new creation, makes the sinner who believes on Him a member of His body, which is the Church. So He now, as of old, adds to the Church daily. May He add some few from among this company to-night. May He make you a "member" now, poor sinner, by saving your precious soul.

We have seen how the name of Joseph — "adding" — suits our Lord. Let us now see how Joseph, in his character and doings, pictures Him.

He is first of all presented to us like David — in the character of a shepherd. "Joseph," we read in verse 2, "being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren." I notice this because no figure of Christ can be more beautiful than that of a shepherd. It seems to come nearest our hearts. The earliest conceptions of Christ among children are as a gentle shepherd. One lovely infant prayer is,

No figure could be more full, suggesting, as it does, His tender love, His watchful care, His doted tenderness, His faithfulness, His meekness, His patience, and His gentle sympathy. Scripture presents Him as the "good," "great," and "chief Shepherd." He is also called "the Shepperd and Bishop of our souls." It is only what we might expect, then, in this fullest and most perfect type of Christ, to have a shepherd shown us first of all.

Next we have a contrast. "Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." We learn as much from contrasts as we do from parallels, and sometimes more (as, for example, in the great epistle to the Hebrews). A snowball never appears so white as when laid beside a lump of coal. Now Jesus says to the unbelieving Jews, in John 5:45, "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust." These Jews are pictured by the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, who were not wives of Jacob really, but only concubines. They were sons of the bond-women, not of the free. It is remarkable that there is no mention of the sons of Leah, the free woman, here. And the apostle Paul, at the close of Galatians 4, speaking of those who were "Israelites indeed," says, "So, then, brethren, we are not the children of the bondwoman, but of the free." They were Jews "outwardly only," children of the bondwoman, whom Christ said He would not accuse to the Father. And we see in Joseph's brethren their early representatives. Joseph might accuse his brethren, but "God," we read, "sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world." And again, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." What wonderful grace! Christ did not come to accuse, nor condemn. He said to the poor trespasser in the temple, "Neither do I condemn thee." Moses accused her, and his law condemned her, but Jesus came to save; all glory to His name!

We have Jacob's love for Joseph next. We read in verse 3, "Now Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age." This suggests to us the love of God the Father to His Son Jesus Christ. Twice God opened heaven over His head, and said, "This is My beloved Son." Twice our Lord Himself said, when here on earth, "The Father loveth the Son" (John 3:35; 5:20); and He is called by the Spirit, "the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13, margin). Precious as this is, we cannot dwell upon it, as there are other points to nice and take up our time.

Israel, we read, made his son "a coat of many colors." This has, evidently, some typical significance. The question is, what does it signify? Scripture itself, I think, supplies the answer. I shall ask you to turn to two passages, Judg. 5:30, and 2 Sam. 13:18. In Judg. 5 you will see it is "the mother of Sisera" who speaks in the 30th verse. She was awaiting the return of her son from his war with the Israelites. She had not yet been apprised of the fact that he had been slain by the hand of a woman, Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. So, we read, "She looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? "Her" wise ladies "volunteer to explain the cause of the delay; which, however, she heeds not, but repeats to herself," Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colors, a prey of divers colors of needlework, of divers colors of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?" Here we have a hint as to the use in Old Testament times of these garments of divers colors. They were worn as marks of distinction, "meet for the necks of them that take the spoil," Sisera's mother says. He should wear this" prey of divers colors "as a distinctive honor becoming such a mighty conqueror as he, she thought. The verse in 2 Samuel reads," And she had a garment of divers colors upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins appareled." Here we have the many-colored garments again referred to as a mark of honorable distinction, as the attire of unmarried princesses. Such a garment would

mark one as a person of noble birth, or of very high standing. And this is what Jacob, doubtless, had in view when he gave to Joseph the coat of many colors. He would have a mark of honor placed upon him to distinguish him from his other sons. Such a mark would attract attention. Everybody would understand the meaning of his many-colored coat.

Now, see how this applies to Christ. From the beginning, at His very birth, God gave evidence to all, that this was not a mere Galilean carpenter's son that had been brought into the world. Angels, in glad acclaim, announce to wondering shepherds of the plains of Bethlehem the advent of "that holy thing" that should be called the Son of God. Wise men, truly wise (like all who seek the Saviour), come from the east to find and worship Him that was born "King of the Jews." God gave a special star to be their guide; and when they find Him, though He lay in a "manger rude," they offer Him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold is emblematic of the display of the glory of God; and so their gifts of gold bore witness to the deity of the infant "wrapped in swaddling clothes." The frankincense foretold the holy, blameless life that He should lead on earth; every act of which should ascend as a sweet perfume of burning incense up to God, His Father. In the meal offering, as described in Lev. 2 (type of the spotless life of "the man. Christ Jesus"), all the frankincense was placed upon it; and as it burned upon the altar, it ascended up, "a sweet savor unto the Lord." And myrrh was prophetic of "the sufferings of the Christ." How precious, and how wonderful! The virgin's infant is distinguished unmistakably from any other child that ever had been born, from Seth to John the Baptist. For even this "more than a prophet," while yet unborn, leaped in his mother's womb for very joy at the sound of the salutation of "she that believed," who was soon to bring forth Him who should be called "the Son of the Highest."

At His baptism, too, He was marked off from all others. Jerusalem and all Judea, stirred by the preaching of the fiery Baptist, were being baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. How natural it would be for the bystanders to think that this man, too, had sins to be confessed. To prevent any such mistake, God, at just that critical moment, parts the heavens, and says, as the dove-like Spirit descends and abides upon Him, "This is My beloved Son, in whom is all My delight." All might know from this that He was no mere man who was that day baptized of John in Jordan. He was markedly distinguished from all around.

He has been born, baptized; and now, His life-work finished, He is dying. Shall He die undistinguished from the malefactors at His side? Shall He be allowed to die as any mortal man might die? No I the heavens grow black; and though it is high noon, a midnight darkness settles over all the land. Rocks are rent as a mighty earthquake's throes convulse the land; graves are opened and the dead arise, not to ascend silently to heaven, but to appear in Jerusalem as witnesses to the fact that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth was not only Israel's smitten Shepherd, but Jehovah's Fellow too. There could be no mistake as to the meaning of such signs. God took care that even in death there must be marks that men might see. And men did see. The centurion saw when he exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

On three important occasions, then, we see our Lord "declared to be the Son of God," and not a mere man. They are, we might say, the three great epochs in His life: His birth, when He became "God manifest in the flesh"; His baptism, when He entered upon His public ministry; and in death, when He finished the work given Him to do, and "died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

Who, or what, is Jesus Christ to you, my hearer? What say you to these things? Do you in your heart and life honor Him whom God has taken so much care to honor? Not if you do not love Him. And you do not love Him, if you have not yet received Him as your Saviour. Nobody does. There is positive enmity to Christ in every human heart until renewed by grace. Joseph's brethren, we read in vs. 4 of our chapter, "hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him." So it was with Jesus here on earth. He was hated without a cause, and had to endure "the contradiction of sinners against Himself." And this is every sinner's attitude toward Christ until he comes to Him by faith and learns His love. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," Scripture says. You may not wish to believe this of yourself, but it is true nevertheless. You may not know this enmity to Christ is in your heart, but it is there just the same. I may not know nor believe that there is deadly arsenic in the clear-looking glass of water, but it might be there just the same, and only the introduction of another chemical element would be needed to discover it and turn the water black as ink. So in every human heart there is this awful and deadly enmity to the Son of God, and it only requires the proper circumstances, testings, or temptations, to draw it out so as to manifest itself. Better believe it to-night, friends, just because God says it, and seek reconciliation at the Cross, than wait until the great Judge says, "Those Mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me." This brings us to another subject, Joseph's sovereignty, as predicted in his dreams.

He dreams two dreams. The first is an earthly scene. He and his brethren were binding sheaves in the field, when, lo, his sheaf arose, and stood upright; while the sheaves of his brethren stood round about, and made obeisance to Joseph's sheaf. In the second dream the scene is heavenly. Joseph there sees the sun and the moon and the eleven stars making obeisance to him. In the dream of the sheaves in the field, only Joseph's brethren are concerned; in the dream of the sun, moon and stars, his father and mother also figure. There is a possible reason for this. For why are there two dreams? And why is the first scene earthly, and the second heavenly? Both foretell Joseph's supremacy. But they forecast more, I believe. They have a sort of double significance. Primarily and literally, they are predictive of Joseph's exaltation over his brethren and all his father's house. This they themselves appeared to understand. When Joseph tells to his brethren his first dream, they say, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" And when he tells to his father his second dream, Job says, "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

But I am persuaded that they have a much more deep and full significance. Turn, please, to Eph. 1:10. There we read," That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one (head up) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." Here things in heaven and things on earth are mentioned. And Christ is to be the supreme head of all. The heavens (or heavenlies) are at this present time in revolt against the Lord. By "heavens," of course I do not mean God's dwelling-place, or that blest abode of holy angels and the spirits of the righteous dead, but a sphere beyond and above this earth, in which are "invisible" principalities and powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, or "wicked spirits in the heavenlies." (See Eph. 6:12.) These, in the coming day of Christ's power, are all to be in complete and manifest subjection to Him. We see not yet all things put under Him. But God has foretold it; and here it is foreshadowed in Joseph's second dream. And it has not to do with the forces of evil in the heavenly places only; it has a good side also, if this expresses it. Paul speaks of being preserved unto Christ's "heavenly kingdom." Saints and angels will compose this heavenly kingdom of our Lord's. All this will be headed up in Him. This we have foreshadowed in the obeisance of the heavenly bodies to Joseph, type of the "Star" that should arise out of Jacob. This, I think, is confirmed by the fact that Joseph's mother is mentioned as making obeisance with the rest, when she had been dead years before. This gives the dream an air of mystery, and seems designed of God to teach us that there is in it something beyond the personal Joseph and the present life. Symbolically it is a post-resurrection scene.

The scene of the other dream is laid in the harvest-field. It is Christ's kingdom on earth. The field out of which the tares are gathered, in the parable of the 13th of Matthew, is called "His kingdom." All the earth shall own His sway. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and upon earth," He says. He does not now publicly take "upon Himself His great power, and reign." But He shall, when the harvest of this earth is reaped. Now is the day of "His kingdom and patience." He bears long with evil-doers. He has borne long with you, unsaved hearer. He waits in long-suffering grace to see if you will submit to His authority of your own volition. If you refuse in the time of His patience, you will, by sheer force, be compelled to own His righteous rule in the period of His power. Down, then, in your heart now, and cry, like Thomas of old, "My Lord and my God!" In John 3:36 we read, in our common version, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Literally, it is, "He that is not subject to the Son." Submit to Him, then. Do not say, like poor, hardened Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord, that I should serve (or obey) Him?" You know who He is, even "Lord of all" You know, too, that you must submit to Him in the end. But if you wait till then to render submission to His authority, it will only be to make your obeisance before the throne of His judgment, and then depart to the eternal miseries of hell, where damned souls and powerless demons gnash their teeth in baffled rage and hate. Oh, it is a fearful thing to contemplate! And what will it be to be there! Submit to Christ now, and you will never know it by awful and endless experience. Oh, do it I do it Now!

But the obeisance of the eleven sheaves had a direct reference to Joseph's brethren, who hated him, and who, in their groundless hatred of their brother, vividly picture the mass of the Jewish nation in the days of our Lord, and, indeed, up to this very day. And when Joseph told his dream, we read, "They hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words." They could not bear to hear of his supremacy and future glory. It aroused all the cruel anger of their wicked hearts. The same thing happened with our Lord when standing before Caiaphas. He says, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." He tells them of His future exaltation and His coming glory. And with what result? "Then," we read, "the high priest rent his clothes (a thing forbidden by the law, Lev. 21:10; so much for his consistency), saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? bold, now ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, Thou Christ, who is he that smote Thee?" (Matt. 26:64-68.) It is Joseph and his brethren reproduced — the original of the picture, the type fulfilled to the very letter almost.

And see what happens further: when Joseph tells his second dream, we read, "His brethren envied him." It was the same in the case of the great Antitype. It is written of Pilate, "He knew that for envy they had delivered Him" (Matt. 27:18). And "Who can stand before envy?" the proverb says. The rulers and the Pharisees were jealous of His prestige. "Bold, the world is gone after Him," they said, in alarm. They felt that because of Him, their own popularity and influence were on the wane. This is why they took the lead in clamoring for His blood. How different the spirit manifested by John the Baptist, who said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." It was his joy to be retired to the shades of obscurity, that Christ his Lord might, as God intends He shall, "in all things have the preeminence." That" Christ might be magnified," whether it were by his life or his death, was Paul's consuming desire. God give all us Christians more of the spirit of these mighty men. We should spell Christian, CHRIST, -I-Am-Nothing—Christ all, and I nothing at all. The center of sin is I.

Before I close this introductory address, I want to ask you, sinner, if you will submit to Christ to-night. God has exalted Him above all might and dominion. The true Joseph is seated now upon the highest pinnacle of celestial glory. Here, in the sphere of the terrestrial, "we see not yet all things put under Him." But we shall. He is coming again, not as once He came, the lowly Nazarene, to meekly suffer, but in His glory. But if you wait till that time, you will find, alas, that it is then too late. The time to own a king's authority in a land that has risen up in rebellion against him is not when he comes with his armies to put the rebellion down, for then it will be "not to your honor." It is during the rebellion, in the very midst of it, that loyalty is demanded. Now is your opportunity. I have heard it said that when "The Messiah" was being sung before Queen Victoria, and the part was reached where it says, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth," when all but herself were supposed to rise from their seats, she too arose and stood upon her feet. It was contrary to all custom for crowned heads to rise during any part of the oratorio; but, happy woman, she had yielded her heart's submission to Him who is King of kings, and would confess it in this way. She had anticipated the second Psalm, where, when God sets His Son upon His holy hill of Zion, all earthly potentates are called to yield instant and absolute submission. "Kiss the Son," the last verse says, "lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way.... Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." Do it, unsaved one; do it here, and Now!

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