

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX TO THIRTY-EIGHT

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

FURNISHES a catalogue of Esau's sons, with their various titles and localities. We shall not dwell on this, but pass on to one of the most fruitful and interesting sections in the entire Canon of inspiration, viz:-

CHAPTERS THIRTY-SEVEN

ON which we shall dwell more particularly. There is not in Scripture a more perfect and beautiful type of Christ than Joseph.

Whether we view Christ as the object of the Father's love,- the object of the envy of "**his own**",- in his humiliation, sufferings, death, exaltation, and glory,- in all, we have him strikingly typified by Joseph.

In Chapter 37, we have Joseph's dreams,- the statement of which draws out the enmity of his brethren. He was the object of his father's love, and the subject of very high destinies; and, inasmuch as the hearts of his brethren were not in communion with these things, they hated him.

They had no fellowship in the father's love, and they would not yield to the thought of Joseph's exaltation.

In all this they represent the Jews in Christ's day. "**He came to his own, and his own received him not.**" He had "**no form nor comeliness in their eyes.**" They would neither own him as the Son of God, nor King of Israel. Their eyes were not open to behold "**his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**" They would not have him; yea, they hated him.

Now, in Joseph's case, we see that he, in no wise, relaxed his testimony in consequence of his brethren's refusal of his first dream.

"**And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren,**" and they hated him yet the more "**. . . And he dreamed yet another dream, and he told it to his brethren.**"

This was simple testimony founded upon divine revelation; but it was testimony which brought Joseph down to the pit. Had he kept back his testimony, or taken off aught of its edge and power, he might have spared himself: hut, no: he told them the truth, and therefore they hated him.

Thus was it with Joseph's great Anti-type.

- He bore witness to the truth
- He witnessed a good confession.
- He kept back nothing
- He could only speak the truth because he was the truth, and
- His testimony to the truth was answered, on man's part, by the Cross, the vinegar, the soldier's spear.

The testimony of Christ, too, was connected with the deepest, fullest, richest grace.

- He not only came as **"the truth,"** but also as the perfect expression of all the love of the Father's heart; **"grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."**
- He was the full disclosure to man of what God was. Hence man was left entirely without excuse.
- He came and showed God to man, and man hated God with a perfect hatred.

The fullest exhibition of divine love was answered by the fullest exhibition of human hatred. This is seen in the Cross,- and we have it touchingly foreshadowed at the pit into which Joseph was cast by his brethren.

"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 shall see what will become of his dreams."

These words forcibly remind us of the parable in Matthew 22. **"But, last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him."**

God sent his Son into the world with this thought, **"They will reverence my son;"** but alas! man's heart had no reverence for the **"well-beloved"** of the Father. They cast him out.

Earth and Heaven were at issue in reference to Christ; and they are at issue still.

- Man crucified him; but God raised him from the dead.
- Man placed him on a Cross between two thieves; God set him at his own right hand in the heavens.
- Man gave him the very lowest place on earth; God gave him the very highest place in Heaven, in brightest majesty.

All this is shown out in Joseph's history. **“Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel;) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of Heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breast and of the womb; the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.”** (Genesis 49:22-26).

These verses beautifully exhibit to our view **“the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.”**

“The archers” have done their work; but God was stronger than they. The true Joseph has been shot at and grievously wounded in the house of his friends; but **“the arms of his hands have been made strong”** in the power of resurrection, and faith now knows him as the basis of all God's purposes of blessing and glory in reference to the Church, Israel, and the whole creation.

When we look at Joseph in the pit and in the prison, and look at him afterwards as ruler over all the land of Egypt, we see the difference between the thoughts of God and the thoughts of men; and so when we look at the Cross, and at **“the throne of the majesty in the heavens,”** we see the same thing.

Nothing ever brought out the real state of man's heart toward God but the coming of Christ.

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin.” (John 15:22). It is not that they would not have been sinners. No: but **“they had not had sin.”** So he says in another place, **“If ye were blind, ye should have no sin”** (.John 9:41).

God came near to man in the person of his Son, and man was able to say, **“this is the heir;”** but yet he said, **“come, let us kill him.”** Hence **“they have no cloak for their sin.”**

Those who say they see have no excuse. Confessed blindness is not at all the difficulty, but professed sight. This is a truly solemn principle for a professing age like the present. The permanence of sin is connected with the mere profession to see.

A man who is blind and knows it, can have his eyes opened; but what can be done for one who thinks he sees, when he really does not?

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

PRESENTS one of those remarkable circumstances in which divine grace is seen gloriously triumphing over man's sin.

“It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda” (Hebrews 7:14-). But how? **“Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar.”** (Matthew 1:3).

This is peculiarly striking. God, in his great grace, rising above the sin and folly of man, in order to bring about his own purposes of love and mercy.

Thus, a little farther on, in Matthew, we read **“David the king begat Solomon, of her that had been the wife of Urias.”**

It is worthy of God thus to act.

The Spirit of God is conducting us along the line through which, according to the flesh, Christ came; and in doing so he gives us as links in the genealogical chain, Tamar and Bathsheba!

How evident it is that there is nothing of man in this!

How plain it is that when we reach the close of the first chapter of Matthew, it is **“God manifest in the flesh”** we find, and that, too, from the pen of the Holy Ghost!

Man could never have devised such a genealogy. It is entirely divine: and no spiritual person can read it without seeing in it a blessed exhibition of divine grace in the first place, and of the divine inspiration of Matthew’s Gospel in the second place,- at least of his account of Christ’s genealogy according to the flesh.

I believe a comparison of II Samuel 11 and Genesis 38 with Matthew 1, will furnish the thoughtful Christian with matter for a very sweet and edifying meditation.

~ end of chapter 36-38 ~

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