

HATED WITHOUT A CAUSE

– *APRIL 27.* – *GENESIS 37.* –

"Love Envieth Not." – 1 Corinthians 13:4.

THE STORY of Joseph and his brethren, beautiful in its simplicity as a narrative, is deeply interesting and instructive, from various viewpoints. One lesson would be the unwisdom of a parent in showing too great a preference for one child above another, and thus cultivating amongst the children a spirit of envy. Another lesson would be along the line of the unwisdom of telling even our dreams to unsympathetic ears: as when Joseph told his dreams to his brethren. In the one dream, he saw eleven shocks of wheat bow down to one shock, which was his. In the other dream, he saw the sun, the moon and the eleven stars all doing homage to him.

Joseph was not to be blamed for having these dreams. Unlike the majority of dreams, they apparently came not from indigestion, but were from the Lord. Joseph was not even to blame for artlessly telling the dream to his brethren; and evidently this was the very thing which the Lord intended should be done. The Lord foreknew the jealousy of Joseph's brethren, and how envy would be cultivated in their minds; and He gave the opportunity for it; for He had already mapped out Joseph's subsequent experiences, which the envy of his brethren merely helped to accomplish.

We may, however, learn the lesson that in general it is the part of wisdom to keep to one's self truths not necessary for another to know which might merely arouse opposition. Jesus encouraged this very thought, saying, "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they turn again and injure you." Very deep truths connected with the Divine Plan and with Christian hopes had better not be told to others than those for whom they are intended by the Lord – namely, the meek.

JOSEPH A TYPE OF MESSIAH

The most important feature of today's Bible Study is that which in addition to all that we have suggested, recognizes Joseph as a type, or prophetic picture of Christ, the Messiah. Joseph was kind to his brethren and was on an errand of mercy to them when their envy plotted his death, and later on sold him into slavery in Egypt. His brethren hated him without a cause – merely because he was good, because his father loved him, and because God in the dreams foreshadowed his coming exaltation.

Joseph's brethren should have said, "Let us rejoice that we have so noble a brother. Let us rejoice if it be God's will that he should be very highly exalted. God's Promise made to our grandfathers, Abraham and Isaac, and to our father Jacob, may thus be reaching a fulfilment. Let God's blessings come in whatever way He sees best. We will rejoice with our brother, as we see that he is pleasing to God and to our father Jacob. We will seek more and more to copy his character." But they were envious to the point of cruelty, first resolving to murder him, and later, merely as an alternative, to sell him as a slave.

"THEY HATED HIM WITHOUT A CAUSE"

But God's providence continued with Joseph and blessed him as a slave, and through much tribulation finally brought him to the throne of Egypt – next in influence and power to Pharaoh himself. Then it was that the famine of the land drove Joseph's brethren to Egypt to buy wheat. Thus was fulfilled his dream – that his **[R5215 : page 108]** brethren bow down, as illustrated in the eleven sheaves which bowed down before his.

Later on when his father and the entire family came into Egypt to live in Goshen, they all did obeisance to Joseph, as the representative of the Egyptian Government, thus fulfilling the second dream. But all of these experiences were at the time dark.

They all looked as though the Lord had less love for Joseph than for any others of his family, until the time came for his exaltation to the throne. Then everything changed.

"WHICH THINGS ARE AN ALLEGORY"

The allegorical meaning of all this, as applied to Joseph, is that he was also hated without a cause. We read in Psalm 69:4, "They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head." Jesus quoted this statement and applied it to Himself, saying, "They hated Me without a cause." (John 15:25.) The brethren of Jesus were the Jews, who crucified Him. But there was no cause of death found in Him.

We perceive that it was for envy that they delivered Him up and called for His crucifixion, because His works were good and theirs were evil; because he taught the way of the Lord more perfectly than they; because He declared to them that the time would come when they and all others would recognize Him as the Messiah – coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory – and would bow the knee to Him.

As with Joseph, disaster, treachery and shame prepared the way for glory and honor on the throne of Egypt, so with Jesus. His trying experiences proved Him loyal to God and led onward to His exaltation to the right hand of Divine Majesty. St. Paul refers to this, saying of Jesus, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2.) Again he says, "Though He was rich, for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9), even as the experiences of Joseph – all of his humiliation – prepared the way for him to be succored and honored by Pharaoh. Again we read of Jesus, that "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect [through suffering], He became the Author of eternal salvation to all those that obey Him." – Hebrews 5:9.

"IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM"

The Scriptures assure us that in God's great Plan, not only Jesus is to be exalted to the Throne as the world's Messiah, but with Him is to be a company of brethren, sharers of the same glory, honor and immortality. And these brethren, in God's great Purpose, are required to pass through similar experiences to those of their Elder Brother Jesus. Their experiences, therefore, are illustrated also in Joseph's experiences. They are not on an equality with their Elder Brother. He is designated their Head, their Chief, the Captain of their salvation. So we read again, that God, "in bringing many sons to glory, made the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." – Hebrews 2:10.

And all of the company of sons received under this great Captain must similarly be perfected through sufferings.

Does not this account for the trying experiences of the Church during the past nineteen centuries? The Apostle John declares, "As He was, so are we, in this world"; and again, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." As Joseph's brethren were blind to the fact that their brother would be their savior from famine, as well as the savior of the Egyptians, so the world fails to realize that only through The Messiah will any have eternal life.

In the very same connection in which Jesus mentions that He was hated without a cause, He plainly forewarns all of His elect followers that they must similarly expect to be hated unjustly. We read, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent

Me. ...But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their Law, They hated Me without a cause." – John 15:18-25.

We give in full the same text from which our Lord quoted, "They that hate Me without a cause are more than the hairs of Mine head...Let not them that wait on Thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for My sake; let not those that seek Thee be confounded for My sake, O God of Israel. Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach: shame hath covered My face. I am become a stranger unto My brethren, and an alien unto My mother's children. For the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me. Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." – Psalm 69:4-9,20,21.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE FACTS

We have considered the facts – that Jesus and all of His followers, according to Divine intention, have suffered shame and contempt. We perceive that, in the case of Jesus and of the early Church, the persecution came from their brethren according to the flesh – from the Jews. And since then, all the way down the Gospel Age, the persecutions of the Church, the brethren of Jesus, the Household of Faith, have come from their brethren, too. These brethren are not Jews, but Christians. As the Jewish religionists in Jesus' day persecuted their more righteous brethren, so since then nominal Christians have been the chief persecutors of the Lord's faithful followers.

This persecution has come upon faithful souls of nearly every denomination. And, sad to say, this persecution has come from unfaithful souls of nearly every denomination. Presbyterians, Covenanters, Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Methodists and

Baptists have all endured persecutions from blinded brethren; and blinded ones amongst themselves have also shared in the persecuting work. In nearly every case the profession has been made that the persecuting was done for the glory of God. Thus the Lord through the Prophet expresses the matter, saying, "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for My name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified! But He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." – Isaiah 66:5.

Already the world in general, including the Jews, realize that a great mistake was made in persecuting Jesus unto death. Already to some extent similar transgressions against the faithful followers of Jesus have been recognized. And yet the same blindness, from the same envious disposition, leads on to persecution even in our day.

The majority admit that they do not know very distinctly much about God or much about the Bible. They [R5215 : page 109] pray for light, and sing, "Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom." And yet, if any light appear, if any voice of love or tenderness be heard, directing toward the dawning of the New Day, and pointing out with clearness the riches of God's grace and the lengths and breadths of His mercy, immediately their songs for light cease, and their stones of ridicule and slander are hurled. And why? Lest peradventure there should be any change; lest any one should get further light; lest the Divine promise should be fulfilled, and a new Dawn should be ushered in.

But what is the philosophy of these facts of history? Why has God permitted, yea, ordained that Christ should suffer, and that all who would walk in His steps must share in His experiences of ignominy and shame and reproach – suffering with Him? In Jesus' case, the Father used the trying experiences to test the love and loyalty of His Son, and to demonstrate His obedience to angels and to men. Intending to confer upon Him very great glory and honor,

the Father would have all to see, as He saw it, the worthiness of the Logos, subsequently Jesus.

In a symbolical picture the Heavenly hosts are represented as acknowledging the propriety of the high exaltation of Jesus, because of His faithfulness unto death, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And if such a demonstration of the worthiness of Jesus, the Logos, was necessary or proper, much more necessary would it seem that an elect Church, being gathered from amongst a fallen race, should be proven loyal to God to the very last – even unto death. There is a difference, however. **[R5216 : page 109]**

In the case of the Master, it was a demonstration that He was perfect before He left the Heavenly glory, and perfect also when He became the Man Christ Jesus – "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." "In Him was no sin." In the case of His followers, the imperfection of the flesh still remains; but they are judged, not according to the weaknesses of their flesh – of heredity – but according to the love and zeal of their hearts. And this loving zeal is witnessed to by their endeavor to walk faithfully in the footsteps of their Leader and Savior, overcoming to the best of their ability the weaknesses of their flesh, and "showing forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light."

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