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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE LIFE OF JOSEPH AS FOUND
IN JOSEPH THE PROVIDER BY THOMAS MANN AND
THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE WITH IMPLICATIONS
ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

By

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INTRODUCTION

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE LIFE OF JOSEPH AS FOUND
IN JOSEPH THE PROVIDER BY THOMAS MANN AND
THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE WITH IMPLICATIONS
ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

This study will be a comparison of the primary facts and their implications in the life of the Old Testament patriarch, Joseph, as found in the novel, Joseph the Provider by Thomas Mann, and the Biblical narrative in Genesis 39:20 - 50:26. The study will endeavor to get behind the factual statements to the basic implications about God involved in the statements.

B. Importance of the Problem

The constant appearance on the best-selling book lists of Biblical novels is proof that people today are reading novels written about Bible characters. If the people are reading this material, then the Bible teacher today must know not only the Bible but also the fictitious books which have been written about the Bible in order to meet the problems which might arise due to some difference in the facts or in the implications about certain Christian doctrines.

The recent series of Joseph novels written between 1934 and 1944 by Thomas Mann is the most extensive work on any Old Testament character to be written in modern times. Any teacher who plans to teach the Old Testament to college students should be familiar with this work.

C. Delimitation of the Problem

In order to limit the scope of this thesis the main character, Joseph, was selected for study and comparison. But Thomas Mann's first work in the Joseph novels was printed in 1934; and it was not until 1944 that the final volume, Joseph the Provider, was printed. A study of all these novels reveals a difference in the handling of the material about the character of God in the earlier books; and a collective study of the life of Joseph and its implications about God made from all four volumes would not be a true picture.

Therefore, out of the series, the final volume, which represents Mann's latest position, was selected for a more detailed study and comparison with the Biblical facts of the story and the implications of those facts in respect of the doctrine of God.

D. Method of Procedure

The three steps to be included in this thesis are

a study of the novel, a study of the Biblical narrative and a comparison of the two.

The first chapter will be a study of the primary facts of Joseph's life as given by Thomas Mann in Joseph the Provider and of the implications which are drawn from those facts about the doctrine of God.

The second chapter will be a study of the primary facts of the Biblical narrative found in Genesis 39:20 - 50:26 and of the implications of those facts which regard the doctrine of God.

The final chapter will be a comparison of the primary facts of Joseph's life as found in the two sources and a comparison of the doctrine of God as drawn from these facts.

The summary and conclusion will briefly review the major comparisons or differences found in the study and suggest possible conclusions of the writer.

E. Sources of Study

The primary sources of study will be Thomas Mann's Joseph the Provider and the American Revised Version of the Bible. There have been several translations of Thomas Mann's Joseph Novels; but the most widely accepted translator is H. T. Lowe-Porter; therefore, this thesis will use these translations.

Secondary sources will be the remaining three of the Joseph novels, books and articles about Thomas Mann, and reference books for the Biblical narrative.

CHAPTER I

THE PRIMARY FACTS IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH AS FOUND
IN JOSEPH THE PROVIDER BY THOMAS MANN WITH
IMPLICATIONS ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

CHAPTER I

THE PRIMARY FACTS IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH AS FOUND IN JOSEPH THE PROVIDER BY THOMAS MANN WITH IMPLICATIONS ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

A. Introduction

This chapter will have a two-fold division. The first section will contain the primary facts in the life of Joseph as given in Joseph the Provider by Thomas Mann. The life of Joseph will be divided into three parts: Joseph in prison, Joseph and Pharaoh, and Joseph reunited with Israel. In each of these parts only those facts which will be comparable with the Biblical narrative found in Genesis will be considered.

Mann's novel not only contains the facts of Joseph's life in Egypt, but also implications about God. These implications are not so much in actual statements as they are in the conversations and actions of the characters. Slochower says, "His sheer genius for creating characters that are living, intimate, plausible persons as well as carriers of hidden symbols was never greater."¹ These hidden symbols, which largely refer to God, will be examined in the second division of this chapter. As these

1. Harry Slochower, "Thomas Mann's Story," p. 7.

references are examined, the doctrine of God as presented by Mann will be unfolded. This doctrine has been considered under the main characteristics or attributes of God.

B. The Primary Facts in the Life of Joseph as Found in
Joseph the Provider by Thomas Mann

1. Joseph in Prison

Thomas Mann begins his last volume of the life of Joseph with the prison episode. As Joseph stood waiting for the keeper of the prison, the memory that he was a child of the blessing gave him a real sense of confidence. Generally speaking, it was trust in God which gave Joseph this confidence; but there was also a process of generalization which assured him that the individual could greatly influence the general force of circumstances.¹

a. Joseph and the Keeper of the Prison

When Mai-Sachme, the prison keeper, appeared, he questioned Joseph. Because Joseph could estimate materials needed and could read and write, the keeper gave him a position of leadership, saying, "What superior parts he brings with him we will ruthlessly exploit, just as we do the physical strength of the lower sort."² While tradition says that the keeper "took nothing on himself," actually Joseph's

1. Thomas Mann, Joseph the Provider, pp. 34-35.

2. Ibid., p. 51.

arrival only freed him for other duties. As keeper he was a perfectly competent man.¹ Matters under Joseph's command improved, for Joseph, in dealing with the other slaves, had in mind his father, Jacob, and the hatred with which he would have regarded the Egyptian method of slavery. In regard to the kindness and favor shown to Joseph, Mann says:

"It was not that God showed to Joseph the favor of making the captain's mind favorable to him. The sympathy and confidence--in a word, the trust--which Joseph's appearance and behaviour inspired in the prison-keeper flowed rather from the unerring instinct of a good man for the divine favour--that is, for the divine itself--which rested upon this convict's head."²

Joseph for his part rather enjoyed the keeper's believing him to be the breathing image of the Deity and felt no need to correct this belief.³

b. Joseph, the Butler, and the Baker

While in prison Joseph was appointed to serve the officials of the king who were suddenly placed in the prison. Mann gives a very detailed and careful description of these two prisoners and intimates that from their appearance Joseph was able to tell that the baker was guilty of his accused crime. About the baker Mann writes:

"There were unmistakably underworldly features in the baker's face: the longish nose was set somewhat awry, the mouth showed a one-sided thickening and lengthening, making it sag unpleasantly, and the lowering brows had a sinister, ill-omened expression."⁴

1. Ibid., pp. 52-53.
2. Ibid., p. 58.
3. Ibid., p. 60.
4. Ibid., p. 69.

When talking the baker was nervous and would never look straight at Joseph.

One day when Joseph entered the room he found the prisoners very dejected, for they had each had a dream and there was no one to interpret it for them. Joseph immediately informed them that he knew quite a bit about dreams, for as a boy he had had dreams himself.¹ Joseph said, "Whoever dreams interprets also; and whoever would interpret must have dreamed."² Joseph interpreted the dream of the butler and ended by asking the butler to remember him after he was restored by the Pharaoh. But Joseph prophesied that the butler would not remember the incident nor the interpreter for some time.³ To console the baker about his coming death, Joseph spoke to him of Egyptian gods, saying that the butler had merely confused evil with good, and added that both men represented the dual nature of good and evil of the gods.⁴

2. Joseph and Pharaoh

a. Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dream

When the messenger of the Pharaoh came to get Joseph there was scorn in his voice as he expressed his doubts

1. Ibid., p. 86.

2. Ibid., p. 87.

3. Ibid., p. 93.

4. Loc. cit.

about Joseph's ability to interpret what the greatest scholars and magicians could not explain. But Joseph answered, "That is in God's hand, whether He is with me or not."¹ While on the way to see Pharaoh, however, Joseph was aware that a great deal depended upon his talk. Mann writes:

"But what depended on it was being helpful to the Lord in His plans, not clumsily to thwart them. That would be a great folly and a disgraceful denial of the world-order out of want of trust. Only a wavering faith that God meant to lift him up could be a cause for unskillfulness or poor grasp of the opportunity presented."²

Mann says that Joseph was presumptuous in his faith for he believed that "God meant well and lovingly and momentously by him."³ Joseph appeared before Pharaoh to give his interpretation of the dream and said, "God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."⁴

When the Pharaoh inquired about this God whom Joseph believed in, he asked if it were the sun god. But Joseph replied, "My fathers, the God-dreamers, made their covenant with another Lord."⁵ Joseph tells Pharaoh how Abraham sought "in spirit" for the Being who was greater than all evidence which the Being created. Joseph said, "Near or far is all the same to Him, for He has no space

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1. Ibid., p. 106.
 2. Ibid., p. 142.
 3. Loc. cit.
 4. Ibid., p. 161.
 5. Ibid., p. 162.

nor any time; and though the world is in Him, He is not in the world at all, but in heaven."¹ Mann also has Joseph, in talking to Pharaoh about wars, say, "You owe it to God that things shall go on earth at least half-way according to His will and not entirely according to the will of burners and plunderers."²

The Pharaoh of Egypt is represented by Mann as worshipping "my father Aton." Pharaoh believed that he knew the father's will because he was in the father and the father in him, and all should become one in them.³ His father was above, and in him were united what was and what should be, or the past and the future. His father would unite all people in joy and tenderness, and would forgive them for their cruelty.⁴ Pharaoh believed that his father was the sun, and from him there flowed out into all the world an unfaltering love, and as his son whom he entrusted with his teaching, it was Pharaoh's duty to tell all creatures of his unique greatness and goodness. Indeed, Pharaoh's god was "My Father who art in heaven" and Pharaoh was his son to whom he revealed himself. Pharaoh says:

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1. Ibid., p. 213.
 2. Ibid., p. 196.
 3. Ibid., p. 154.
 4. Ibid., p. 192.

"He has made all, and His love is in the world, and the world knows Him not. But Pharaoh is His witness and bears witness to His light and His love, that through Him all men may become blessed and may believe, even though now they still love the darkness more than the light. . . Immaterial is God, like His sunshine, spirit is He, and Pharaoh teaches you to worship Him in spirit and in truth. For the son knoweth the Father as the Father knoweth him, and will reward all those who love Him and keep His commandments. . . For my words are not mine, but the words of my Father who sent me, that all might become one, in light and love, even as I and the Father are one."¹

Thus Mann portrays Pharaoh as a man who could almost interpret his dreams himself.

As Joseph stood before Pharaoh to interpret the dreams, he was asked if he needed any apparatus for his task. But Joseph said that he needed nothing at all and would interpret as the spirit moved him.²

Mann has Joseph say that it was God who spoke to Pharaoh in his dreams and that the dream was double, because Pharaoh had a double crown, signifying his rule over two lands.³ But Joseph does not actually interpret the dreams. He only subtly suggests things to Pharaoh, who interprets his own dream. Joseph then suggests that Pharaoh search for a wise man to help gather the grain; whereupon Pharaoh replies:

"God has told you all this; and because of it no one can be so understanding as you, and there can be no

1. Ibid., p. 214.

2. Ibid., p. 173.

3. Ibid., p. 175.

sense in seeking far and near for another. You shall be over my house; and all my people shall be obedient to your word."¹

Joseph has a real sense that God is the cause of the coming famine and informs Pharaoh that the purposes of God cannot be avoided.

b. Joseph's Marriage and Sons

After Joseph was appointed by Pharaoh as ruler over all Egypt, Pharaoh, acting as God, immediately sought him a wife named Asenath, the daughter of the priest of On. As the son-in-law of a priest, Mann says of Joseph that ". . . under certain circumstances he was liable to burn incense officially before an image--that of the falcon Horakhte with the sun-disk on its head."²

When their first child was born Joseph named him Manasseh, which means "God made me forget all my connections and my father's house." Perhaps because his wife was so disappointed that the child was not a girl, and because he was trying to defend himself against her and her mother, the name was given as proof that Joseph had forgotten his father's house.³ But Mann adds that the name must not be taken too seriously. Joseph had far from forgotten; indeed he could see that God had sent him to Egypt expressly to

1. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 270.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 285.

fulfill His "comprehensive plan of deliverance."¹ It was God who had blessed him in Egypt and Joseph named his second son Ephraim, which means "God made me grow."

c. The Famine

After the seven years of harvest and seven years of no harvest were prophesied, Mann in various places throughout the book states that "the fat and the lean years did not come up out of the womb of time to balance each other so equivocally as in the dream."² He says that there were only five years of good harvest rather than the seven which had been foretold--that people very likely miscounted the years of plenty which followed each other so evenly and confused five years with seven years. He explains the "how" of the drought by meteorological means, but adds that the "why" cannot be explained except that "there are higher orders in the All" which controls all.³

3. Joseph Reunited with Israel

The remaining part of Joseph's life is referred to as the "God-story."⁴ All the events are spoken of as being part of the "story!"

a. The First Trip

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1. Ibid., p. 286.
 2. Ibid., p. 231.
 3. Ibid., pp. 281, 338, 404.
 4. Ibid., pp. 335, 412, 384, 608.

Joseph heard that his brothers had crossed the border into Egypt through one of the reports which came into his hands from the border fort. He was aware that God had caused these events, for he said, "God has put it that way . . . God has turned all to good, to everyone's good, and we must look at the results which He had in mind."¹ As he had stood before Pharaoh Joseph had known that he was "reading the purposes of God" and His workings in the history of mankind.² Now God had revealed His purpose in sending Joseph down into Egypt, for Joseph was to be the salvation of his people.

The brothers came for grain, were accused as spies, and were locked in a prison for three days. It was during this time that they talked of Joseph and the great sin which they had committed. They realized that God their Father was a God of vengeance, who had not forgotten the deed which they had done in their youth.³ When Joseph, after the three days of imprisonment, called them before him, he said:

"So long as you have not brought up the evidence and set it here before me, I mean your youngest brother you talk about, just so long you are rascals in my eyes, and fear not God. But I fear Him. Therefore I will tell you how it is ordained. . . One of you

1. Ibid., p. 348.
2. Ibid., p. 350.
3. Ibid., p. 381.

must remain as hostage and be held here until you get back and wash yourselves clean by setting all eleven of you before me."¹

Thus it was that the nine brothers returned to their father, leaving Simeon behind. When they found the money in each bag of grain they immediately asked, "Why had God done this?"² And they each felt that it too was because of the deed which they had done to the boy, Joseph.

b. The Second Trip

As the food from the first journey into Egypt dwindled, Jacob, their father, reluctantly agreed to allow Benjamin to make the trip. Mann portrays Jacob as a man wrestling with a great spiritual problem and passing from bargaining with God for the return of his son to a man strong in faith, trusting in a true and merciful God.³

Jacob said:

"I will build upon Him alone, who is the Rock and the Shepherd, that He grant me back this pledge that I have entrusted to Him in good faith. Hear, all of you: He is no monster who mocks at human hearts and treads them like a savage in the dust. He is a great God, purified and enlightened, a God of the bond and of good faith; if any man is to vouch for Him, I need you not, my lion (Judah), for I myself will vouch for His faith and He will not so injure Himself as to make His guarantee a mock."⁴

The brothers took special care of Benjamin on the trip, trying to make good in Benjamin what they had wronged

1. Ibid., p. 387.
2. Ibid., p. 394.
3. Ibid., p. 411.
4. Loc. cit.

in Joseph. They were fearful and uneasy as they were brought to the house of the ruler and confessed to the steward about the money which had been in the bags of grain. But the steward said, "God, the God of your fathers, amused himself by putting the treasure in your sacks."¹

The meeting between the two brothers, when Joseph said, "God be gracious to you, my son," and the famous dinner which followed were a high point in the lives of the brothers. With relief and rejoicing the brothers left Egypt to return home; but soon they were overtaken and the silver cup which Joseph had ordered placed in Benjamin's sack was found. It was Judah who appealed to the ruler in behalf of Benjamin. He offered himself in place of Benjamin and told the ruler of the crime which they had committed against their brother in selling him into slavery.

After this confession by Judah, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, saying:

"Yes, I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold down into Egypt; but never mind about that, for you did me no harm. That all had to be; God did it, not you. El Shaddei estranged me early from my father's house. He separated me according to His plan. He sent me on ahead of you to be your provider. . ."²

1. Ibid., p. 419.

2. Ibid., p. 456.

And Joseph sent his brothers back to tell Jacob that God had given him rank among the strangers of Egypt. Carts were provided and the brothers again made their way to Canaan.

c. Jacob's Journey into Egypt

As the brothers neared Canaan they were more and more uncertain of the method of revealing to Jacob that Joseph was indeed lord of Egypt. Mann reveals that the brothers met Asher's little daughter, who was sent to sing a song to Jacob relating the news that Joseph was still living.¹ Then after Jacob had been psychologically prepared for the amazing tale, the brothers appeared to verify it. When Jacob realized that Joseph was indeed alive, he said, "I will go down and see him before I die. . . Blessed be the name of the Lord!"²

Mann suggests that Jacob realized that all these events, even the famine, were the arrangements of a great plan. Some people might consider Jacob self-centered and arrogant to feel this way; but Mann calls it "piety." Piety is the putting of self and its salvation, remembering God's "all-embracing concern," at the very center of everything. That is, self must be important too; for, as Mann says, "The claim of the human ego to central importance was the precondition for the discovery of God."³

1. Ibid., p. 478.

2. Ibid., p. 490.

3. Ibid., p. 493.

(1) The Dream

When Jacob paused at Beersheba on his way to Egypt, he worshipped God and offered sacrifices to Him. That night God spoke to him in a dream and assured him that he need not fear to go into Egypt; for He, the God of his fathers, would be with him to bless him and bring a great multitude of his seed back.¹

(2) The Number Who Went

Jacob left Canaan with all his family to journey down into Egypt to be with Joseph. Mann says:

"They left seventy strong--that is, they reckoned themselves seventy; but it was not by actual count, merely a feeling of a count, a sort of mental conclusion, in which there prevailed that lunar degree of exactness of which we well know that it was not like our own, yet entirely right and justifiable in its time and place."²

The entire group moved down with Jacob to meet his son, Joseph, who had been lost, but was now found.

(3) Jacob Meets Joseph

As Israel drew near to Goshen, Judah was sent to tell Joseph that his father had arrived. The tender reunion between father and son is vividly given by Mann. Jacob and Joseph talk of the forgiveness of God in bringing them back together; yet Jacob speaks also of God's anger, saying:

". . . His anger is mighty and His wrath the wrath of a great and mighty God. He is so great and mighty that

1. Ibid., pp. 508-509.

2. Ibid., pp. 497-498.

He can have no other kind of anger, no lesser kind, and He punishes us weaklings that our cries pour out like water."¹

In regard to His anger Jacob also says that "He is as He is and cannot make Himself more moderate for the sake of our weak hearts."² But they not only talk of the anger of God, but also of His love, for Joseph says of God, the Father:

"But now we will praise His mercy and His forgiving spirit, even though it has taken Him such a long time! For His greatness is like only to His wisdom, I mean the fullness of His thought and the rich meaning of His acts. Always there is added manifold action to His decrees, that is the admirable thing. When He punishes, He indeed means punishment, and this serious purpose is both for His own sake and as means to the furtherance of great events. . . We blow hot or cold, but His passion is providence and His anger far-seeing goodness."³

Jacob then adds, "He is the God of life. . ."⁴

Jacob lived in Goshen all during the famine and even until his death.

d. Jacob's Blessing

Jacob lived in Goshen for seventeen years, and Mann writes that he lived in all "to the venerable but still possible limit of one hundred and six."⁵ On his death-bed he blessed both his own sons and Joseph's sons.

(1) Joseph's Sons

1. Ibid., p. 561.
2. Ibid., p. 563.
3. Ibid., p. 564.
4. Ibid., pp. 577-579.
5. Ibid., p. 580.

Jacob, excited by fever and Joseph's presence, began to tell again about the death of his beloved Rachel, and of the Almighty God who appeared to him in a dream at Luz.¹ After some time he noticed Joseph's sons; and Joseph said, "These are my sons, dear and reverend Father, the ones God gave me, as you know, here in this country."² Jacob embraced them and added that he had not thought to see Joseph again, but now God had allowed him to see Joseph's sons. Jacob then blessed them and called on the "three-fold God--the Father, the Good Shepherd, and the Angel" to multiply them.³

However, Jacob purposely blessed the younger before the older and played his little game of blessing the younger even as his father Isaac had done.

(2) The Final Blessing

Some time after the blessing of Joseph's sons, Jacob called his own sons together for a final blessing. But none of the sons took this blessing as worth much; for they considered it merely the dream fancies of a dying man. Mann says that Jacob's blessing contained much of the pagan mythology of that day. The brothers all knew the "not absolutely reliable character of death-bed prophecies,"

1. Ibid., p. 561.
2. Ibid., p. 563.
3. Ibid., p. 564.

and in most respects Jacob's final prophecies were "a dignified failure."¹ In the case of Judah, whom Mann accredits with receiving the birth-right, it did not seem to matter that he had sinned; and Judah thought:

"Then it was not so bad after all, and apparently it does not affect the blessing! Perhaps it is not taken so seriously--maybe the purity I so craved was not so indispensable to salvation; maybe it is all taken in together, even hell itself is taken in--who would have thought it."²

Jacob blessed Joseph with all blessings above and below the earth; but the first-born blessing was not given to Joseph. Mann writes that Jacob explained this to Joseph at their first meeting, when Jacob said,

". . . my heart loved you and will always love you, whether you live or are dead, more than your brothers. But God tore your garment and admonished me with mighty hand, against which is no rebelling."³

With only a few other words about the cave where he was to be buried, Jacob died, and the brothers began the preparations which would carry out their father's wish to be buried in Canaan.

e. The Brothers Reassured

After the burial of Jacob, the brothers sent Benjamin to Joseph in order to reassure themselves that they had been forgiven of their evil deed in selling Joseph. But Joseph said:

1. Ibid., pp. 577-579.
2. Ibid., p. 580.
3. Ibid., p. 518.

"Am I then as God? . . . When you talk to me about forgiveness it seems to me you have missed the meaning of the whole story we are in. . . Did you not hear from the father's own lips, when he gave me my blessing, that my life has always been only a play and a pattern? . . . God turned it all to good, for I came to feed many people. . ."1

With Joseph's reassuring words to the brothers, Mann ends the Joseph novels by stating, "And so endeth the beautiful story and God-invention of Joseph and his brothers."2

C. Implications of the Doctrine of God

Since this is a novel rather than a book of theology, the doctrine of God will not be found in statements as much as it will be found in the conversations and actions of the characters which reveal characteristics or attributes of God's nature.

However, Mann begins this novel with a section which he calls "Prelude in the Upper Circles." This section is basic to the understanding of Mann's idea of God, for the setting is among the "hierarchy" of Heaven and the angels are indignant and even scornfully sarcastic of the Almighty's dealings with men, especially with Joseph in regard to his being put into prison. Since this section is basic to Mann's interpretation of God, facts from the Prelude will be included with the study of the implications from Joseph's life.

1. Ibid., p. 607.
2. Ibid., p. 608.

1. The Reality of God

In the Prelude which has its setting in Heaven, Mann seems to take the personal Being of God as well as Shemael, or Satan, for granted.

But in the facts of Joseph's life, Mann subtly suggests that "God" is merely the higher intelligence of man and not a personal Being. As Joseph stood waiting for the keeper of the prison, Mann says he had "trust in God".¹ But Mann takes this trust in God and makes it into trust in self by stating that Joseph through a process of rationalization realized that the individual could change circumstances.² Mann also suggests that the keeper saw in Joseph the "divine itself," thus reducing the divine to the human.³ By human intelligence Joseph was able to tell that the baker was guilty while the butler was innocent, and interpreted the dreams of the two in the light of this knowledge.⁴

To the messenger of Pharaoh Joseph said that the interpretation of the dream depended upon whether God was with him or not.⁵ But Mann adds that Joseph asked questions about the Pharaoh and the dreams. Joseph learned of the dream; and on the way Mann says that Joseph's ". . . thoughts

1. ante, p. 3.

2. Doc. cit.

3. Cf. ante, p. 4.

4. Cf. ante, p. 5.

5. Cf. ante, p. 6.

played about mental images of hunger and food, of need and supply."¹ Thus Joseph, by knowing that the Nile did not always overflow, was able to predict successfully the years of famine; and the "God" was actually Joseph's own knowledge. Joseph's trust was in the "world-order" which Mann calls "God."²

While speaking to Pharaoh Joseph called his ancestors the "God-dreamers."³ This would indicate that God was not real and only something which man had dreamed. In speaking of Jacob's piety, or self-interest, Mann says that piety is essential for the "discovery of God."⁴ Man, then, is able to discover God through his own self.

As a final proof that Mann's idea of God is subjective, Mann calls the life of Joseph the "God-story."⁵ The impression received from this description is that the events were only a story and the persons fictitious. This belief is further carried by the phrase, "God-invention," used at the end of the book.⁶ This implies that the story is an attempt to invent a God -- a God who is neither real nor a person.

But Mann implies in various conversations that God is real. In reporting Jacob's dream, Mann says that "God

1. Mann, op. cit., p. 109.

2. Cf. ante, p. 6.

3. Cf. ante, p. 6.

4. Cf. ante, p. 14.

5. Cf. ante, pp. 10, 19.

6. Cf. ante, p. 19.

spoke,¹ thus taking for granted the actuality of God. Therefore Mann's view of the reality of God is quite difficult to determine definitely; since he assumes the reality of God in some places, and implies merely a subjective God in others.

2. The Infinitude of God

The God which Mann presents does not seem to be an all-powerful, absolute God, even though the words of Joseph and Jacob may seem to indicate otherwise.²

In the prelude Mann describes God as limited in wisdom, even from the beginning by the creation of man; for he writes:

"Even All-Wisdom might not be quite adequate to avoid all the blunders and waste motions in the practice of absolute qualities like these. Out of sheer restlessness and lack of exercise; out of the purest 'much wants more'; out of a capricious craving to see, after the angel and the brute, what a combination of the two would be like; out of all these motives, and impelled by them, One entangled Oneself in folly and created a being notoriously unstable and embarrassing. And then, precisely because it was such an undeniable miscreation, One set One's heart upon it in magnificent self-will and made such a point of the thing that all heaven was offended."³

Also in the prelude Mann suggests that God was tricked into creating man by Satan. Satan is revealed with power perhaps even excelling that of God, for Satan had "flattered the

1. Cf. ante, p. 15.

2. Cf. ante, p. 16.

3. Mann, op. cit., p. 5.

Throne and won it over to his counsels."¹ Thus Satan was actually greater than God.

Mann intimates this same attitude in the life of Joseph by making God on an equal with all the Egyptian gods. When consoling the baker at his coming death, Joseph spoke of Egyptian gods and reminded the baker that he had merely confused evil with good, as was so easily done. Both the baker and the butler merely represented the dual nature of good and evil of the god.² Another proof that Joseph's God is considered no different from Egyptian gods is seen in Mann's use of capital letters. The word "God" is used to refer not only to Elohim, but also to Pharaoh, to Pharaoh's "God," to the "God" whom the priests served, and in connection with the dead Pharaoh.³

The Pharaoh of Mann's novel has a very high religious conception.⁴ In fact, Pharaoh's ideas seem even more spiritual than Joseph's. Many of Pharaoh's expressions are lifted from the New Testament and even from the lips of Christ. Thus Mann reveals that Joseph's God was no greater than Pharaoh's God. This also shows Mann's rejection of the God of the New Testament as being different from any of the Egyptian gods, for Pharaoh had a religious-consciousness similar to Christ's.

1. Ibid., p. 6.

2. Cf. ante, p. 5.

3. Mann, op. cit., pp. 65, 66, 120, 122, 150.

4. Cf. ante, pp. 7-8.

3. The Power of God

Of all the attributes of God, Mann seems most contradictory in his reference to the power of God. His statements must not be taken separately but as a whole. In the prelude Mann states:

"Unlimited power, unlimited possibilities of taking into one's head, producing out of it, and bringing into being by a mere 'Let there be'--such gifts had, of course, their dangers."¹

The very suggestion that a God of unlimited power in all realms could be guilty of a danger or error, is contradictory. Mann also suggests that this all-powerful God was influenced by Satan to create man, and writes, "Thus God, on Shemael's advice, created for Himself a mirror which was anything but flattering. . . Man, then, was a result of God's curiosity about Himself."² According to Mann's interpretation the all-powerful God was not powerful enough to resist the craftiness of Satan.

This same contradiction about the power of God is brought out in the life of Joseph. Mann reveals that God had plans for man, but His plans could easily be thwarted by man's clumsiness.⁴ Joseph had to grasp his opportunities, rather than rely on God for power and knowledge. Joseph, in

1. Mann, op. cit. p. 5.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

3. Cf. ante, p. 6.

speaking to the Pharaoh about wars, says that God has a will for things on earth, but it is up to man to see that God's will is at least "half-way" carried out.¹ This would indicate that God did not have the power to carry out His own will.

But in talking about the famine, Mann says that there were higher orders in the All, which controlled all.² Pharaoh, in talking to Joseph, said that "God has told you all this."³ And when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers he said, "God did it . . . He separated me according to His plan."⁴ Thus Mann seems to be agreeing to the power of God in some places while subtly presenting a God lacking in power in others.

4. The Presence of God

There is evidence, especially in the Prelude, that Mann thought of God as a distant Being with very little contact with man. He speaks of God as experimentally trying to become a tribal God, but with His failure He once again returns to "His superior other-worldly and beyond-the-worldly rank above all other gods."⁵ With the relinquishing of God's "earthly existence as a folk-incarnation"

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1. Cf. ante, p. 7.
 2. Cf. ante, p. 10.
 3. Cf. ante, p. 8.
 4. Cf. ante, p. 13.
 5. Mann, op. cit., p. 15.

Mann asserts that God resumed His "all-power and spiritual all-competence."¹

However, Mann does refer to the presence of God in the novel. When speaking to Pharaoh's messenger, Joseph says that he can interpret Pharaoh's dream if God is with him.² Joseph was aware that God was the cause of the famine and God had caused him to prosper in Egypt.³ Joseph was also aware that God had turned the evil that his brothers had done to him into good.⁴ And Jacob, too, felt the real presence of God, for God spoke to him as he journeyed into Egypt and assured him that He would be with him.⁵

Therefore, Mann's view of the power of God is not consistent in the Prelude and in the facts of the novel.

5. The Dependability of God

Mann's entire presentation of God in the Prelude would indicate a God who was changeable and undependable; the influence of Satan, the blunders of creation, the arbitrary choosing of favourites, the desire to be an earthly tribal God, and the implication that the chosen seed knew of God's improper situation as a tribal god and actually affected His restoration to a "beyond-all, all-sufficing spiritual" state.⁶

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1. Mann, *loc. cit.*
 2. Cf. ante, p. 6.
 3. Cf. ante, p. 9.
 4. Cf. ante, p. 11.
 5. Cf. ante, p. 15.
 6. Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

Within the novel Mann states that ". . . God sometimes misspoke and did not always mean exactly what He said."¹ But when God spoke to Jacob in the dream, Jacob was assured that he need not fear to go down into Egypt, for God would be with him, would multiply his seed, and bring his seed back into Canaan. Joseph's God was the God of his fathers, the faithful God who would fulfill His covenant with Joseph's forefathers. Furthermore, Jacob knew that it was the God of his fathers who spoke to him on the way down to Egypt.

Therefore, Mann's idea of God's dependability and faithfulness also seems in the Preface to be contradictory with other facts presented in the novel.

6. The Justice of God

In the Prelude Mann discusses the punishments and rewards which God conveyed upon man, saying:

"In the circles and ranks the view was held--and cautiously passed about--that in the world below there was great lack of even-handed justice; that the moral world established by Shemrael's advice was not dealt with in a properly serious spirit. It did not need much, there were times when it needed nothing at all, to convince the hierarchy that Shemrael took the moral world much more seriously than He did.

It could not be disguised, even where it ought to have been, that the rewards, disproportionate as they were in some cases, were actually only a sort of rationalization of blessings which at bottom were nothing but

1. Ibid., p. 308.

an arbitrary playing of favourites, with almost no moral aspect at all."¹

Thus, in the Prelude, God is depicted by Mann as a God with no standard of justice at all, but merely a capricious choosing of favourites.

In the life of Joseph, this same idea is brought out when Jacob blessed Joseph's sons. Jacob, in the same spirit as his God, chose to bless the youngest above the oldest.²

However, the very life of Joseph testifies to the justice of God, for Joseph the innocent, was rewarded for his faithfulness, thus showing God's ultimate justice. His brothers, as portrayed by Mann, also had a sense of the justice of God and feared retribution for the evil they had committed in selling Joseph.³

Thus here again Mann's attitude toward God is not consistent as it is presented in the Prelude and in his description of the life of Joseph.

7. The Morality of God

In the Prelude God's lack of a moral standard was emphasized in connection with His lack of justice.⁴ Mann implied God's lack of morals when he mentioned that man was merely an unflattering mirror of God.⁵

1. Mann, op. cit., p. 9.
2. Cf. ante, p. 17.
3. Cf. ante, p. 11.
4. Cf. ante, p. 26.
5. Cf. ante, p. 23.

The moral character of God is seen in the moral requirements of those whom God favors. In the novel Mann represents Joseph as enjoying the idea that the keeper of the prison thought him divine.¹ Mann also pictures Joseph as offering sacrifices to images.² This would imply that Joseph either believed in the images, or thought God's standard such that it did not matter. The incident of the blessing of Judah seems to teach that God did not consider moral standards in bestowing the blessing; and it did not matter that Judah had sinned.³

Thus Mann's God in both the Prelude and the novel seems to be a God who does not consider moral standards of any significance.

8. The Mercy of God

Mann does not mention the forgiveness of God in the imaginary Prelude to Joseph's life.

In the novel, when the brothers were imprisoned in Egypt there was only talk of a God of vengeance, who was punishing them for their past sin against Joseph.⁴ Jacob and Joseph spoke of the mercy and forgiveness of God when they were reunited, but seemed to criticise His wisdom in

1. Cf. ante, p. 4.

2. Cf. ante, p. 9.

3. Cf. ante, p. 18.

4. Cf. ante, p. 11.

taking so long to bring them back together.¹ Mann gives the idea that God is so great and mighty that He cannot really feel for the "weaklings" on earth, and disregards their cries. And when the brothers came to Joseph after the death of Jacob to be reassured of Joseph's forgiveness Mann implies that forgiveness has nothing to do with the incident.²

However, Mann also shows the other side of the picture. When Jacob finally agreed to allow Benjamin to accompany the brothers down to Egypt, he proclaimed his faith in a true and merciful God, who would bring Benjamin back to him.³ Though Mann does not emphasize Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers, he states that Joseph told them to forget the incident.⁴

9. The Love of God

Love does not seem to enter into Mann's portrayal of God in the Prelude. The emotion which drew God toward man was ambition, and since God could not strive any higher, it was a degrading ambition "to mingle, a craving to be like the rest, a desire to stop being unusual."⁵ Rather than love,

1. Cf. ante, p. 16.

2. Cf. ante, p. 19.

3. Cf. ante, p. 12.

4. Cf. ante, p. 13.

5. Mann, op. cit., p. 13.

Mann states that it was God's desire "to exchange a lofty but somewhat anaemic spiritual all-sufficiency for the full-blooded fleshly existence of a corporeal folk-god; to be just like the other gods."¹

In the life of Joseph, Mann says that Joseph could not rely on God for love, for that would be presumptuous. Mann depicts Jacob with faith in a purified, enlightened and great God, who had some regard for man; but he does not call this regard love. Mann adds to this description, however, that God would be faithful in order to protect Himself from any criticism.³ Thus Mann's idea of God is entirely on a human level, with little room for Divine love.

D. Summary

Summarily, this chapter has been a study of the life of Joseph as given by Thomas Mann in Joseph the Provider and the doctrine of God as found in this book. The primary facts in Joseph's life were outlined under three topics: Joseph in prison, Joseph and Pharaoh, and Joseph reunited with Israel. Mann begins his last volume of the series with the prison episode. While in prison Joseph encountered the butler and the baker for the king, and when they dreamed Joseph was able to interpret their dreams, for the baker was plainly guilty. When Pharaoh sent for Joseph, Mann portrays Joseph as learning of the dream and thinking about its possible meaning while on the way to the palace. Even though Joseph says that the interpretation

1. Mann, op.cit., p. 14.

2. Cf. ante, p. 6.

3. Cf. ante, p. 13.

comes from God, Mann subtly suggests that Joseph's knowledge was the most important thing. Joseph did not actually interpret the dream himself, but only suggested things to Pharaoh who interpreted his own dream.

With the beginning of the famine, which Mann says was actually only five years long, Jacob sent his sons down to Egypt to buy food. After testing the brothers, and living out God's story, Joseph reveals himself and all Israel moves down to Egypt. After Jacob's death the brothers appeal to Joseph for reassurance of his forgiveness, but Joseph says that there is no need for forgiveness since they were all living in God's story. Mann ends the novel by saying, "And so endeth the beautiful story and God-invention of Joseph and His Brothers."

From the facts of the novel and from the Prelude which Mann calls "A Prelude in the Upper Circles" Mann reveals his doctrine of God. Since God is merely intelligent human reasoning, and actually invented by man, Mann's God must be subjective. Mann's God is also limited in power and wisdom, with very little contact with mankind, and now withdrawn from His experiment as a tribal God into space. This is a human God, unjust in His choosing of favourites, with no moral standard. In many instances He is unloving and unforgiving, and very often undependable in His relationship with men. This is Mann's doctrine of God as revealed through Joseph the Provider.

CHAPTER II

THE PRIMARY FACTS IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH
AS FOUND IN GENESIS WITH
IMPLICATIONS ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

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THE PRIMARY FACTS IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH AS FOUND IN GENESIS WITH IMPLICATIONS ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

A. Introduction

This chapter will be divided into two major sections. The first will be a study of the life of Joseph as found in Genesis 39:20-50:26. This study will correspond with the study in the first chapter as found in Joseph the Provider by Thomas Mann and will begin with the prison experience. The life of Joseph will be divided into the same major parts: Joseph in prison, Joseph and Pharaoh, and Joseph reunited with Israel. Those statements which refer to God will be particularly emphasized.

The second section will be a study of the doctrine of God implied in the life of Joseph. This study will be centered around the character of God as revealed through His working with men, and particularly with Joseph. The character of God will be discussed under these main attributes: the real and personal God, the spiritual God, the life-giving God, the absolute God, the holy God, the loving God, and the faithful God.

B. The Primary Facts in the Life
of Joseph as Found in Genesis

1. Joseph in Prison

The outstanding fact about Joseph's prison experience is seen in the fact that "Jehovah was with him".¹ Jehovah is the name given to the God of the covenant, and His Name is given three times in the short verses describing the prison and the keeper.

a. Joseph and the Keeper of the Prison

The fact that Joseph won favor in the prison was the result of Jehovah's favor, for both ideas are in the same sentence with the conjunction "and" joining them. This favor resulted in the keeper's turning all the prisoners over to Joseph, and all the administrative work and activity of the prison were carried out through Joseph.²

Keil and Delitzsch say:

"In the prison itself Jehovah was with Joseph, procuring him favor in the eyes of the governor of the prison, so that he entrusted all the prisoners to his care, leaving everything that they had to do, to be done through him, and not troubling himself about anything that was in his hand, i.e. was committed to him, because Jehovah made all that he did to prosper."³

The reason the keeper did not do anything about the prison

1. Genesis 39:21.
2. Genesis 39:22-23.
3. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. I p.346.

was because he knew that Jehovah was with Joseph. Everything that Joseph did was successful not because of Joseph, but because Jehovah was with Joseph. Maclaren writes:

"Of course, work done 'because the Lord was with him,' in the consciousness of His presence, and in obedience to Him, went well."¹

One writer explains the concrete working out of Jehovah's presence thus:

"The record says that it was Jehovah's favor that got him all these advances, but it also expects us to see very plainly that Jehovah's favor did this by making him such a good, noble, likable and trustworthy man, that such trusted positions naturally came to him."²

b. Joseph, the Butler, and the Baker

Since Jehovah was with Joseph, the account of the imprisonment of the chief butler and the chief baker of the Pharaoh cannot be considered apart from this fact. Joseph was put into the royal prison, and when the Pharaoh's officers were confined, Joseph was appointed to serve them.

The butler and the baker each had a dream, and as Sayce writes:

"It was through dreams, so the Egyptians believed, that the will of Heaven was made known to man, and the dreams accordingly which visited the sleepers excited their anxiety and desire to know what they might portend. They could not leave the prison and consult the recognized interpreters of the visions of night, and Joseph's skill in explaining their meaning was as yet untested."³

When the two prisoners revealed to Joseph that they had had

1. Alexander Maclaren, The Book of Genesis, p.252.
2. David Murray, The Real Meaning of Genesis, p. 303.
3. A. H. Sayce, Joseph and the Land of Egypt, p. 37.

a dream Joseph said, "Do not interpretations belong to God? tell it me, I pray you."¹ Joseph is implying in this statement that he can interpret the dreams because he knows God and God will enable him to interpret the dreams. Murray says, "Joseph felt that he was in special fellowship with Jehovah, and so he felt assurance to offer to interpret the meaning of the dreams to them."² Keil and Delitzsch express this same idea by saying:

". . . Joseph reminded them first of all that *Interpretations are God's' come from God, are His gift; at the same time he bade them tell him their dreams, from a consciousness, no doubt, that he was endowed with this divine gift."³

After interpreting the dream Joseph asked the butler to remember him when the Pharaoh restored him to the position of chief butler. As Joseph prophesied, the dreams were fulfilled; the chief butler was restored, and the chief baker was killed.

2. Joseph and Pharaoh

a. Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dream

Jehovah was still with Joseph and at the end of two years Pharaoh dreamed. None of the wise men of the court could interpret the dream, and then the butler remembered Joseph and the prison experience. Hastily Pharaoh sent

¹. Genesis 40:8.

². Murray, op. cit., p. 304.

³. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., pp. 346-347.

for Joseph, and Joseph, in changed clothes and shaved head, appeared before Pharaoh. To the question asked about his ability to interpret Joseph answered, "It is not in me: God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."¹ Joseph was not claiming any special wisdom, but was giving all the credit for any interpretation to God. Taylor says that such humility and faith working together would certainly secure the co-operation of Jehovah.²

Pharaoh told Joseph the account of the dreams, and Joseph said, "The dream of Pharaoh is one: what God is about to do He hath declared unto Pharaoh."³ Joseph then told the interpretation of the dream, and added again that God had revealed the coming catastrophe to Pharaoh. Joseph explained that the dream occurred twice because "the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass."⁴ And Joseph did not stop with just interpreting the dream, but told Pharaoh what could be done to prevent the famine-- choose a wise man to supervise the grain and the storing of it for the seven years of plenty. Taylor writes:

"Then showing how thoroughly he believed in the truth of his own interpretation--which, indeed, must have at once commended itself to the acceptance of all who heard it-- he went on to advise that Pharaoh should immediately take measures to provide against the danger of which he had been thus supernaturally warned. . . . There was so much

1. Genesis 41:16.

2. William M. Taylor, Joseph the Prime-Minister, p. 83.

3. Genesis 41:25.

4. Genesis 41:32.

practical wisdom evinced in the suggestion, and so executive ability manifested in the manner in which it was proposed to carry it out, that Pharaoh came to the conclusion that no time was fitter for action than the present, and no man better qualified to superintend the whole business than Joseph himself."¹

But that which made the Pharaoh appoint Joseph was the "Spirit of God" who was with Joseph. All the Pharaoh's servants agreed about the appointment of Joseph, for no word of protest was raised when Pharaoh counselled with them. Sayce writes:

"Not only was the "spirit of God" in him, enabling him to look into the future; he was also clear-sighted and intelligent, supplementing the gifts of the seer with the keen vision of the practical man. The counsellors who surrounded the king agreed with their master: none was better fitted than Joseph for guiding the state through the troubles that should come."²

The Pharaoh acknowledged that God was the source of Joseph's information, and that God had made Joseph wise and prudent; therefore, the Pharaoh made Joseph the second in command in all Egypt.³ Joseph was not ashamed to speak out of God among the idolatrous court of Egypt. Meyer says, "When the heart is full of God, the tongue will be almost obliged to speak to Him; and all such references will be easy and natural as flowers in May."⁴ The fact that Joseph spoke of God on five different times during the short inter-

1. Taylor, op.cit., pp. 83-84.

2. Sayce, op. cit., p.56.

3. Genesis 41: 38-40.

4. F. B. Meyer, Joseph: Beloved--Hated--Exalted, p.71.

view shows Joseph's character and his relationship with God. Pharaoh knew that something was different about this young man, and since Joseph attributed the difference to God Pharaoh was willing to accept it and recognize it. Pharaoh then bestowed upon Joseph his own royal robes and the signet ring from his own finger; and thus Joseph became the viceroy of Egypt, the representative of Pharaoh.

b. Joseph's Marriage and Sons

One of the highest honors which Pharaoh bestowed upon Joseph was his marriage with Asenath, the daughter of the priest of On. Sayce says:

"... the priestly head of the state religion ranked next to the Pharaoh, and in marrying his daughter, therefore, Joseph was taken into the very heart of the royal circle. It placed him at once on a footing of equality with the highest nobles of Egypt."¹

During the years of plenty, there were two sons born to Joseph. The first son was named Manasseh; for Joseph said, "God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house."² According to Overton:

"He did not mean that he had actually ceased to think about those whom he had left in the land of Canaan. He only meant that God, in His providence, has poured so many blessings upon him, and committed so many important affairs to his management, that he had ceased to look forward now, as he once did, to returning and dwelling again in the land of his nativity."³

The second son Joseph named Ephraim, saying, "God has made

1. Sayce, op. cit., p. 62.

2. Genesis 41:51.

3. Charles Overton, The Life of Joseph, p. 119.

me fruitful in the land of my affliction."¹ Overton says:

"The land of Egypt, which he had entered as a slave, and where, for so long a period, he had been confined in captivity, he might well call the land of his affliction. But now, when he had not only been brought to great honor, but when two children had been given to him, he gratefully acknowledged the goodness of God in thus turning his captivity."²

c. The Famine

When Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, he said that the seven cows and the seven ears of corn represented seven years of good harvest, and seven years of poor harvest. In the paragraph following Joseph's elevation and marriage, the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine are spoken of four times as being fulfilled.³

3. Joseph Reunited with Israel

The famine was not only in Egypt, but also in Canaan, and Jacob soon sent his sons down into Egypt to buy bread.

a. The First Visit

The ten brothers, leaving Benjamin at home, began their long journey. Murray says, "As foreigners they seem to have had to come before the head man, Joseph, for permission to buy. Joseph recognizes them at once but they have not the slightest idea who he is."⁴ Joseph had no way of knowing if his brothers had changed from the evil doings

1. Genesis 41:52.

2. Overton, op. cit., pp. 119-120.

3. Genesis 41:46-54.

4. Murray, op.cit., p. 311

of their youth, and with a harsh voice he accused them of spying, and locked them in a prison for three days. Keil and Delitzsch say:

"...he wished to discover their feelings towards Benjamin, and see what affection they had for this son of Rachael, who had taken Joseph's place as his father's favorite. And with his harsh mode of addressing them Joseph had no intention whatever to administer to his brethren 'a just punishment for their wickedness towards him,' for his heart could not have stooped to such mean revenge; but he wanted to probe thoroughly the feelings of their hearts, 'whether they felt that they deserved the punishment of God for the sin they had committed,' and how they felt towards their aged father and their youngest brother."¹

On the third day Joseph called the brothers to him and said, "This do, and live; for I fear God:....."² Joseph gave as the reason for his changed decision the fact that he feared God--he, the ruler of all Egypt, would not slay these strangers upon mere suspicion because of God. The brothers then began to talk among themselves about the guilt which they had in selling their brother Joseph. Joseph, although he had been using an interpreter, understood them and "with inward emotion at the wonderful leadings of divine grace, and at the change in his brothers' feelings," turned aside to weep.³ Before their eyes Simeon was bound and the ten were sent home with the grain. On the trip home one of the brothers discovered his silver in the bag of grain,

1. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., pp. 355-356.
2. Genesis 42:18.
3. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p.357.

and they fearfully said, "What is this that God hath done unto us?"¹ The brothers looked upon the incident as punishment from God; and when they reached home they found all the money returned in the bags of grain, and they were afraid.²

b. The Second Trip

Jacob would not be persuaded to allow Benjamin to accompany the brothers even with the pledges of Reuben's sons and Judah's promise of responsibility. But at last, with the silver which had been mysteriously returned and gifts for the vizier, the brothers made ready to return to Egypt. Jacob, after refusing so long to allow Benjamin to go, finally put his trust in the Lord and said, "God Almighty (El Shaddai) give you mercy before the man, that he may release unto you your other brother and Benjamin. And if I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."³ This sentence shows the real Jacob resigned in submission to the will of God and saying, "If I am to lose my children, then let it be so!"⁴

When the brothers arrived in Egypt, with great uneasiness they were led to the great vizier's home. They confessed to the steward the incident of the returned silver, but he only said, "Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God

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1. Genesis 42:28.
 2. Genesis 42:35.
 3. Genesis 43:14.
 4. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 360.

of your fathers, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money."¹

Joseph arrived for the great dinner, and at the sight of Benjamin he said, "God be gracious unto thee, my son."² And Joseph's emotions gave way and he was forced for the second time to find a place where he might weep. The brothers were tested severely with regard to their love for Benjamin, for clearly the great vizier showed favor to him. As soon as the brothers had gotten out of the city, Joseph sent his steward to overtake them and search for Joseph's silver cup, which had been put in Benjamin's bag. With their clothes rent in sorrow all the brothers returned with Benjamin. The brothers felt that God was still punishing them for the sin which they had committed in selling Joseph, for Judah said to the great vizier, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants..."³ Judah then offered himself as a slave in Benjamin's place, and Joseph revealed himself to them as their lost brother. Maclaren says:

"More than natural sweetness and placability must have gone to the making of such a temper of forgiveness. He must have been living near the Fountain of all mercy to have had so full a cup of it to offer. Because he had caught a gleam of the divine pardon, he becomes a mirror of it."⁴

When Joseph revealed that he was their brother, he

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1. Genesis 43:23.
 2. Genesis 43:29.
 3. Genesis 44:16.
 4. Maclaren, op. cit., p. 265.

said three times that it was not the brothers who had sent him into Egypt, but God. Keil and Delitzsch say:

"Joseph announced prophetically here, that God had brought him into Egypt to preserve through him the family which He had chosen for His own nation, and to deliver them out of the danger of starvation which threatened them now, as a very great nation."¹

Joseph sent his brothers back to tell his father, Jacob,

"God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me . . ."²

Pharaoh sent word that Joseph was to send wagons and beasts to bring Jacob and his family down to Egypt.

c. Jacob's Journey into Egypt

The brothers left Egypt and went back to Canaan to get Jacob. The Biblical narrative says: ". . . And they told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt."³ Jacob finally believed them and said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die."⁴ Keil and Delitzsch say:

"When once the crushed spirit of the old man was revived by the certainty that his son Joseph was still alive, Jacob was changed into Israel, the 'conqueror' overcoming his grief at the previous misconduct of his sons."⁵

(1) The Dream

Jacob had stopped at Beersheba to offer sacrifice to God as he made his way to Egypt. God spoke to Israel saying:

1. Keil and Delitzsch, op.cit., p. 366.
2. Genesis 45:9.
3. Genesis 45:26.
4. Genesis 45:28.
5. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 368.

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"I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes."¹

Overton suggests that Jacob worshipped at Beersheba to know if the trip into Egypt was truly the Lord's will, and the mighty God spoke to him to reassure him.²

(2) The Number Who Went

The names of all the children of Israel who went into Egypt are given in the Biblical narrative and with Joseph's sons they total seventy.³ Keil and Delitzsch suggest that this was not the actual number who went, for the wives were not counted, and some of the grandsons were probably born in Egypt. Keil and Delitzsch also suggest that the seventy who are mentioned are the future number of the families which were in Egypt at the time of Moses.⁴

(3) Jacob Meets Joseph

Judah was sent to announce that Jacob had reached Egypt, and Joseph came out to meet his father. Very little is given of this tender meeting; but Joseph wept, and Jacob was content to die now that he had seen Joseph again.⁵

Joseph immediately made plans to present his father and five

1. Genesis 46:3-4.

2. Overton, op. cit., p. 240.

3. Genesis 46:8-27.

4. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., pp. 369-374.

5. Genesis 46:30.

of his brothers to Pharaoh, and arranged for the settlement of Israel in Goshen. When Jacob appeared before Pharaoh, Jacob blessed him.¹ Joseph provided for all his father's household throughout the famine.

d. Jacob's Blessing

Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and was one hundred and forty seven years of age at his death.² As the time grew near for Jacob's death, he sent for Joseph and asked him to bury his body not in Egypt, but in Canaan.³

(1) Joseph's Sons

When Joseph heard that his father, Jacob, was sick, he took his two sons and went to visit him. Jacob talked of God Almighty and how He had blessed him. When Jacob noticed Joseph's sons, Joseph said, "They are my sons, whom God hath given me here."⁴ Jacob mentions God five times as he blesses Joseph and Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim and Manasseh are considered as Jacob's sons, and receive Joseph's part of the blessing. Meyer says:

"With prophetic insight he crossed his hands, as the two lads waited before him for his blessing, so that his right found its way to the head of the younger, whilst his left alighted on that of the elder. By that act he reversed the verdict of their birth, and gave the younger precedence over the elder. . . .The old man knew quite well what he was doing, and that he was on the line of the

1. Genesis 47:10.
2. Genesis 47:28.
3. Genesis 47:29-31.
4. Genesis 48:9.

divine purpose."¹

(2) The Final Blessing

As Jacob grew weaker he called all his sons together for the final blessing. This blessing was a prophetic promise which had been revealed to Jacob by divine illumination.

Keil and Delitzsch say:

"The groundwork of his prophecy was supplied partly by the natural character of his twelve sons, and partly by the divine promise which had been given by the Lord to him and to his fathers Abraham and Isaac, and that not merely in these two points, the numerous increase of their seed and the possession of Canaan, but in its entire scope, by which Israel had been appointed to be the recipient and medium of salvation for all nations. On this foundation the Spirit of God revealed to the dying patriarch Israel the future history of his seed, so that he discerned in the characters of his sons the future development of the tribes proceeding from them, and with prophetic clearness assigned to each of them its position and importance in the nation into which they were to expand in the promised inheritance."²

Keil and Delitzsch also indicate that by the adoption of Joseph's two sons by Jacob, Joseph was placed in the position of firstborn in the inheritance.³

e. The Brothers Reassured

After Jacob's death the brothers took his body and with the long Egyptian procession made their way up to Canaan to bury it. After Jacob's death the brothers sent a messenger to Joseph, again asking his forgiveness for the deed which

1. Meyer, op. cit., p. 150.

2. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 387.

3. Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 382.

they had committed in selling him. Joseph wept and said:

"Fear not: for am I in the place of God? And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones."¹

To show the completeness of his forgiveness Joseph promised not only to forgive his brothers, but also to provide for them and their children. Taylor says:

". . .that which weighed with Joseph was his experience of the nearness and the goodness of his God. Jacob might die, but God remained, and that God had been with him and made him prosperous in everything he did. It would have been a poor return, therefore, for his goodness, if he had dealt sternly and implacable with his own brothers. His gratitude for the divine favor thus showed itself in his tenderness towards them . . ."²

Mann concludes the novel with Joseph's reassured forgiveness of the brothers, but the Biblical narrative does not end with the promised forgiveness. The concluding paragraph of Genesis tells of Joseph's death at the age of 110. His brothers were still with him in Egypt, for he called them to his bed and made them promise to take his body with the nation when it returned to Canaan. Joseph said to his brothers, "I die; but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which he sware. . ."⁴ God was with Joseph throughout his life in Egypt and even at his death Joseph was in close communion

1. Genesis 50:19-21.
2. Taylor, op. cit., p.207
3. Genesis 50:24.

with God who promised deliverance.

C. Implications about the Doctrine of God

It was evidently not the purpose of the writers of Biblical history to trace in detail the lives of the fathers of the Hebrew race. It is not biographies that they have written. God, not man, was their supreme subject, or rather God speaking in and through man of Himself. This is seen quite clearly throughout the Joseph narrative, for God's name is mentioned forty-two times in these few chapters. The doctrine of God is revealed not so much in "abstract attributes of His essential nature, as modes of His action with regard to His people" and particularly with regard to Joseph in this study.¹ This narrative reveals not only the kind of person through whom God works, but also the kind of God who made this kind of person possible.

1. The Real and Personal God

The most important thing revealed through this narrative is that God is real and a person. Personality involves free self-consciousness and the ability to make decisions. If God is self-conscious or has thoughts and reasons, and if he makes decisions or choices; then. He

1. W. H. Bennett, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, p.103.

is a real personal being. Saying that God is a person is saying that He in some way resembles man with regard to the higher senses. That God is a person is seen in His ability to plan Joseph's life; His plan for the future was the reason for sending Joseph into Egypt.¹ And His willing is seen in the choosing of Joseph to be the salvation of all Israel.²

God's personality is also seen in the use of His Name, Jehovah, which means "to be". This Name signifies that God is a being, or the I AM. Girdlestone says that God's attributes are all gathered up in His Name which stands for His Nature, and is manifested in His actions.³

2. The Spiritual God

God is a spirit. Joseph realized that God was spiritual, for he did not worship the same gods as the Egyptians did. Pharaoh acknowledged that God was with Joseph but there was no human form present therefore God is invisible and spirit.⁴ Jacob realized that God was spirit also, for he worshipped Him at Beersheba as he journeyed down into Egypt. Jacob did not worship an image, but offered sacrifices to the true, spiritual God.⁵

1. Cf. ante, p.43.

2. Cf. ante, p.47.

3. R. B. Girdlestone, Old Testament Theology, p.67

4. Cf. ante, p.37.

5. Cf. ante, p.43

Something of God's supernatural attributes or spirituality is also revealed in His Name Elohim, which is used in the Joseph narrative. As Bennett says: "The divine name which Jehovah hears as one of a class of spiritual or supernatural beings as ELOHIM."¹

3. The Life-Giving God

God is life, possesses life, and gives life. God is shown as life, for He was with Joseph in prison--a living God, who could influence Joseph's environment. God was the giver of life to Joseph's sons, and Joseph realized that God was the One who had given him increase in his sons.²

4. The Absolute God

The absolute sovereignty of God is revealed in this narrative through the selection of Jacob and Joseph above all other creation. God had chosen to be with Joseph in prison, and in the land of Egypt. The sovereignty of God is also revealed through His will. God's will in regard to Joseph's life was that Joseph be the deliverer of his own nation.³ In His absoluteness God has control of all His creations to accomplish His will.

1. Bennett, op. cit., p.198.

2. Cf. ante, p.45.

3. Cf. ante, p. 43.

a. The Infinite God

God in His absolute sovereignty has no limitations. God was not limited by the heathen Pharaoh, but sent His revelation in the form of a dream, and caused the wise men of Egypt to be as fools in regard to the interpretation.¹ God was not limited by the wickedness which put Joseph into prison, but used it as a means of accomplishing His will. Joseph was aware of God's infinity, for he knew that the famine was caused by God.² There was no doubt in his mind that God was not limited by any of His creation. Jacob also knew of God's infinity, for God was able to change the character of a man even in a far distant land, and caused the grand vizier to have mercy.³ God was not limited in His revelation to Jacob, for He spoke to him in a vision and reassured Jacob of His presence.⁴

b. The Eternal God

The eternity of God is revealed in the Joseph narrative by the very absence of any reference to the end of God. Joseph's God was the God of his father, and his forefathers; there was no end of God at the end of their lives. Jacob knew of God's eternity, for God spoke to

1. Cf. ante, pp. 35-36.

2. Cf. ante, p. 36.

3. Cf. ante, p. 41.

4. Cf. ante, p. 43-44.

him saying, "I am the God of thy father."¹ Jacob also implied the eternity of God when he blessed Joseph and described God as "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk . . ."² God told Jacob when He spoke to him in the vision that He would bring his seed out of Egypt.³ Joseph referred to the fact that God was not ceasing at his death, but would bring the people out of Egypt into Canaan.⁴ This seems to indicate that God is not limited in any way by time.

c. The Presence of God

"Jehovah was with Joseph".⁵ The opening sentence of the narrative is indicative of God's omnipresence. God was with Joseph in the prison, and on the throne. Taylor says:

"God was with him (Joseph) in the dungeon, and that kept him from over-estimating its hardships; God was with him in the chariot; and that kept him from over-estimating its honor."⁶

God spoke to Jacob in the vision and told him, ". . . fear not to go down into Egypt; . . . I will go down with thee into Egypt . . ."⁷ God was present with Jacob in Canaan, and also with Joseph in Egypt, therefore God could be in Canaan and Egypt and this seems to prove His omnipresence.

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1. Cf. ante, p.44.
 2. Genesis 48:15.
 3. Cf. ante, p.44.
 4. Cf. ante, p.47.
 5. Cf. ante, p.33.
 6. Taylor, op.cit., p.227.
 7. Cf. ante. p.44.

d. The Wisdom of God

The teaching of the wisdom of God is unquestionable in the Joseph narrative. When Joseph told the baker and the butler, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" he was bearing witness to the wisdom of God.¹ Joseph on each of his occasions of interpretations plainly stated that God had given the interpretation. God in His wisdom was able to give Pharaoh an answer that would give him peace or satisfy him.² Even Pharaoh acknowledged that Joseph's wisdom came from God, for in choosing Joseph as the grand vizier Pharaoh said, "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou."³ The wisdom of God sent Joseph down into Egypt to preserve life in the time of the famine, and Joseph told his brothers of this fact.⁴ And Joseph received all his wisdom in administration of the affairs of Egypt from God, for he in no place implies that his wisdom is his own.

e. The Power of God

One of the most outstanding attributes of God seen in the Joseph narrative is power. His power is seen in both the natural realm and the human realm. God had power to change Joseph's condition in prison, and give him favor in the sight of the keeper.⁵ God had the power to make all

1. Cf. ante, p. 35.

2. Cf. ante, p. 36.

3. Genesis 41:39.

4. Cf. ante, p. 47.

5. Cf. ante, p. 33.

that Joseph did to prosper and succeed.¹ God had the power to send dreams, and his power of interpretation was revealed to Joseph.² God had the power to give the Pharaoh peace about his dream; indeed God was the only one who could give this peace, for none of the wise men of Egypt had succeeded. Perhaps the greatest evidence of God's power over nature is the sending of the seven years of plenty, and the seven years of famine. Joseph knew that God was the cause of the coming famine, for he mentions four times that "God would bring it to pass."³ God also had the power to make Joseph forget his toils, and make him fruitful in the land of Egypt.⁴ God was the cause of the brothers' feeling of guilt, or at least they felt that the silver which they found in their bags was something which God had done.⁵

The greatest proof of God's power is Joseph's whole life, and God's supreme authority in turning the evil which the brothers did into good and preserving the whole nation from famine.⁶ Jacob realized God's power; for he called God "Almighty" on two occasions.⁷ Jacob as well as Joseph

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1. Cf. ante, p.34.
 2. Cf. ante, pp.35,36.
 3. Cf. ante, p.36.
 4. Cf. ante, p.38.
 5. Cf. ante, p.41.
 6. Cf. ante, p.43.
 7. Cf. ante, p.41.

was aware that God's power would enable Him to bring the nation of Israel out of Egypt into the land of Canaan.¹

5. The Holiness of God

"Holiness" is a term by which man sums up the perfection of God; His nature, His attributes, and His works. God in His holiness was considered by both Joseph and Jacob as different from man. All that was good in Joseph was only a partial picture of the holiness of God. Pharaoh recognized this difference and spoke of the "spirit of God" being in Joseph.² Jacob knew of God's holiness and paused at Beersheba to worship Him.³ Perhaps the greatest proof of the holiness of God or His difference is seen in Joseph's answer to his brothers' plea for forgiveness. Joseph said, "Am I in the place of God?"⁴ Joseph knew that God was holy and so much greater than he was that there was no considering his own judgment.

a. The Righteousness of God

God's righteousness is goodness in action. The righteous God loves righteousness, and Joseph is an example of a righteous man. God loved Joseph and made all that he did to prosper, but Joseph's character and life must have been such that God could love him.⁵ Joseph was righteous

1. Cf. ante pp. 44, 47.

2. Cf. ante, p. 37.

3. Cf. ante, pp. 43-44.

4. Cf. ante, p. 47.

5. Cf. ante, p. 34.

because his God was righteous, and Joseph gave God the credit even before the high court of Egypt with all its idolatrous worship.¹ The righteous God demands obedience from His children, and His goodness rewards their obedience and trust.

b. The Justice of God

One of the greatest teachings of the Joseph narrative is the justice of God. The justice of God did not allow Joseph, the innocent, to be thrown into prison, and made to suffer all of his life at the hand of wickedness; but through the divine plan and justice, Joseph was elevated to the very heights in the land of Egypt. When the brothers came to Joseph after Jacob's death, pleading that Joseph forgive them, Joseph replied, "Am I in the place of God?"² God was the supreme authority for his brother's sin, and Joseph would rely upon His justice to settle the matter. The brothers were also aware of the justice of God; for when the silver was found in their bags after the first visit into Egypt, they asked, "What has God done?"³ They each felt that God in His justice was holding them responsible for the crime which they had committed in selling Joseph. After the second visit, when the cup had been found in Benjamin's bag, Judah pleaded to Joseph, saying,

1. Cf. ante, p.36.

2. Cf. ante, p.47.

3. Cf. ante, p.41.

"God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants . . ."1
 They were all aware that they were guilty before God, and that God in His justice was punishing them for their sin.

c. The Truth of God

God in His absolute holiness could be nothing but truth, and this attribute is revealed in the Joseph narrative. God gave to Joseph the interpretation of the dreams of the baker and the butler, and it was the truth.² That which God had revealed was what actually happened. The same element of integrity is seen in the Pharaoh's dream. The interpretation which God disclosed through Joseph was that which came to pass. There were seven years of plenty and seven years of famine even as God had said.³

6. The Love of God

God is capable of feeling, and is aroused by the condition of His creatures. Through love God is disposed to do good to His creatures. Clarke says, "God, then, is moved by the well-known desire to impart himself and all good to other beings, and to possess them as his own in spiritual fellowship."⁴

a. The Forgiveness of God

Jacob also knew the mercy of God; for when he sent

1. Cf. ante, p.42.

2. Cf. ante, p.35.

3. Cf. ante, p.39.

4. William Newton Clarke, The Christian Doctrine of God, p.85.

the brothers down into Egypt for grain he prayed that God in His mercy would send them mercy in the sight of the ruler of Egypt.¹ God in His mercy spoke to Jacob, reassuring him that He would be with him even in the land of Egypt.² But the greatest revelation of the mercy and forgiveness of God is seen in the mercy and forgiveness of Joseph, who realized that God had forgiven the repentant brothers.³

b. The Gracious God

God's lovingkindness for man is seen when Jehovah was with Joseph in prison and showed kindness unto him.⁴ When Joseph met Benjamin in Egypt he said, "God be gracious unto thee. . ."⁵ Joseph knew that God in His lovingkindness could be gracious. Jacob knew of God's lovingkindness, for God had allowed Jacob to see not only Joseph again, but also Joseph's sons.⁶ Jacob recognized that God had "fed" him all his life, and in His protecting love had allowed and planned that he be "fed" in Egypt.⁷

7. The Faithfulness of God

God was faithful and dependable in Joseph's life, and Joseph put his trust in this God of the promise.

1. Cf. ante, p. 41.

2. Cf. ante, p. 44.

3. Cf. ante, p. 42-43.

4. Cf. ante, p. 33-34.

5. Cf. ante, p. 42.

6. Cf. ante, p. 44-45.

7. Genesis 48:15.

Thomas says:

" . . . this (the revelation of the promise) was the distinctive faith of Joseph, the elemental force in developing his character, which shielded him in temptation, sustained him in the guidance of an empire, and also, greater even and nobler than this exalted work, let him to be gracious and forgiving to his brethren when their guilty consciences made them fearful of retribution for their crime."¹

God's faithfulness is seen in His keeping of His covenant, for God is spoken of as the "God of thy fathers". He is the same God whom Abraham and Isaac depended upon.² Both Jacob and Joseph bore witness that God would bring Israel out of Egypt into Canaan. They believed in His faithfulness.

C. Summary

This chapter has been a study of the life of Joseph as found in Genesis 39:20 - 50:26. It began with the prison experience of Joseph and relates the remaining experiences of his life including his death. Only those primary points which will be compared with the facts in Joseph the Provider were considered. Those statements which refer to God have been given special attention.

Jehovah was with Joseph in prison, and showed him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. The keeper saw that God was with Joseph, and turned over all the affairs of the prison to him. God caused everything

1. M. Bross Thomas, The Biblical Idea of God, p. 63.
2. Genesis 48:15-16.

that Joseph did to succeed. While Joseph was in the prison the baker and the butler of the king were put into the same prison, and Joseph was appointed to serve them. Joseph was able to interpret their dreams because interpretations belong to God and God was with Joseph.

After two years Joseph was called before Pharaoh, who had had a dream which none of the wise men could interpret. Because God was with him, Joseph was able to tell the Pharaoh the meaning of his dream. Only God could give Pharaoh the answer to his dream, because God had spoken to him and revealed future events. Because Pharaoh saw that the "spirit of God" was with Joseph, he and the counselors of Egypt made Joseph the ruler of the land and gave him charge of all the grainaries.

Joseph was married to Asenath, the daughter of the priest of On, and to them God gave two sons. God was showing Joseph that He was still with him; and Joseph did not miss his home in Canaan as much as he might have, because God had made him fruitful in Egypt. Joseph's sons were born before the seven years of plenty ended and the seven years of famine began.

When the brothers made their first trip into Egypt for grain, Joseph was harsh with them, accusing them of spying. But because he feared God Joseph allowed ten of them to return. On the second trip Benjamin was brought

in compliance with the rulers demand, and the silver cup was found in Benjamin's bag. Judah pleaded for Benjamin, saying that God had found out their guilt, and offered himself as a slave for Benjamin. Joseph then revealed himself and told the brothers that God had sent him into Egypt to prepare the way and to save them in the famine.

The brothers returned and told Jacob, who decided to go down into Egypt to see Joseph. God spoke to Jacob in a vision, assuring him that He would be with him and would bless him. Jacob's family consisted of seventy, but some have suggested that this number was the number of families in Egypt during the time of Moses. Jacob met Joseph and was content to die now that he had seen him, but Joseph arranged for them to live in Goshen, and even took some of them to see Pharaoh.

When Joseph heard that his father was sick he took his two sons to see Jacob in order that Jacob might bless them, and Jacob in prophetic wisdom blessed the younger before the older. All Jacob's sons were called together that he might bless them before he died. Through the individual character of his sons and divine illumination Jacob prophesied the future history of his children.

At Jacob's death the long funeral procession from Egypt made its way up to Canaan to bury him. Joseph's brothers wanting reassurance of his forgiveness asked Joseph again to forgive them. Joseph assured them that

he was not God and that God meant what they had done for good. Joseph also promised to take care of them as well as their children in Egypt.

At Joseph's death he reminded the people that God would surely come and take the people back to the land of Canaan, and Joseph asked them to take his body with them.

All of these facts in the life of Joseph reveal the character or attributes of God. God is real and personal for His Name Jehovah means I AM, and He is spirit as shown through His presence without a physical form. God is a life-giving God, for He gave life to Joseph's sons. Joseph's life also reveals an absolute God in all things. He is infinite, eternal, always present, powerful, and all-wise. God's holiness or difference is disclosed when Pharaoh saw in Joseph the "spirit of God", and His righteousness and justice made a difference in Joseph's life. God is true and faithful in His fellowship with mankind, and His gracious love allows for His mercy and forgiveness.

CHAPTER III

A COMPARISON OF THE PRIMARY FACTS IN THE LIFE OF
JOSEPH AS FOUND IN JOSEPH THE PROVIDER AND GENESIS
WITH IMPLICATIONS ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

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A COMPARISON OF THE PRIMARY FACTS IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH AS FOUND IN JOSEPH THE PROVIDER AND GENESIS WITH IMPLICATIONS ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

A. Introduction

Thomas Mann has written a very detailed account of the life of Joseph. This chapter will contain a comparison of the primary facts in the life of Joseph as given by Thomas Mann and the Biblical narrative found in Genesis 39:20 - 50:26. The formal presentation of the material will follow the established outline followed in the preceding chapters. The major sections of the first division are: Joseph in Prison, Joseph and Pharaoh, and Joseph reunited with Israel.

But at times facts can be used and such implications added to them that they involve the same words but have a different meaning. It will be necessary to compare not only the primary facts in the life of Joseph, but also the implications of those facts with regard to the doctrine of God. The second division of this chapter will be a comparison of the doctrine of God as found in Mann's novel and the doctrine of God as found in the Joseph narrative of Genesis. This comparison will involve the major attributes of God: the reality of God, the infinitude of God, the power of God, the presence of God, the dependa-

bility of God, the justice of God, the holiness of God, the love of God, and the mercy of God.

B. A Comparison of the Primary Facts
in the Life of Joseph

1. Joseph in Prison

The greatest difference between the Mann account of the prison experience and the Genesis narrative is the phrase "Jehovah was with Joseph", which is found only in the Genesis narrative.¹ Mann says that Joseph had trust in God, but he rationalizes that faith by saying that Joseph really had confidence in his own abilities.

a. Joseph and the Keeper of the Prison

In Mann's novel Joseph found favor with the keeper because he could read and write and was educated in administrative matters.² That which Joseph did with the slaves of the prison was successful because Joseph remembering his father, Jacob, treated the slaves with kindness, and they were willing to work for him.³ The keeper later realized that Joseph was the divine itself and showed favor to him. Joseph enjoyed the keeper believing him to be the image of the Deity.⁴

1. Cf. ante, p.33.

2. Cf. ante, p.3.

3. Cf. ante, p.4.

4. Loc. cit.

The Biblical narrative says that Jehovah was with Joseph and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison, and that which Joseph did was successful because Jehovah was with Joseph.¹

b. Joseph, the Butler, and the Baker

Joseph in Mann's novel could tell that the baker was the guilty one of the two prisoners, and when interpreting their dreams Joseph had only to guess that Pharaoh would discover that the baker was guilty and punish him.²

Joseph also told them that he could interpret the dreams because he had dreamed at times himself, and could therefore interpret the dreams of others. Joseph asked the butler to remember him, but prophesied that he would forget. Joseph consoled the baker in his despair by telling him that he had merely confused evil with good as was so easily done, and therefore he only represented the evil in the god, while the butler represented the good in the god.³

In the Genesis account Joseph told the two prisoners that interpretations belonged to God, and adds that they should tell him their dreams.⁴ Thus Joseph intimates that God is with him and will reveal to him the interpretation of their dreams. Nothing is given in the

1. Cf. ante, p. 33.
2. Cf. ante, p. 4.
3. Cf. ante, p. 5.
4. Cf. ante, p. 35.

Biblical narrative to indicate that Joseph would know which of the two prisoners was **guilty**, and Joseph's fellowship with God would make him very conscious of God's uniqueness. Joseph asked the butler to remember him, but he does not prophesy that the butler will forget, as Mann indicates. After the butler was restored by Pharaoh, he forgot to remember Joseph.

2. Joseph and Pharaoh

The greatest difference between Mann's account of Joseph's appearance before Pharaoh and the Genesis account is found in Pharaoh's idea of **God**.¹ Pharaoh worshipped "my father Aton", whom he later called "My Father who art in Heaven." Pharaoh's Father was loving and forgiving and universal, and Pharaoh was his son, who would teach everyone to love Him in spirit and truth. Indeed Pharaoh and his Father were one, and Pharaoh taught others about his Father that all might become one in light and love.

There is no indication in the Biblical narrative that Pharaoh had this high concept of God. Pharaoh recognized that Joseph had the spirit of God, but nothing is given of his own beliefs.²

a. Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dream

As Joseph stood before Pharaoh to interpret his

1. Cf. ante, pp. 7-8.

2. Cf. ante, p. 37.

dreams, Mann has Joseph say that he would interpret as the spirit moved him, and needed no apparatus.¹ Joseph said that God had spoken to Pharaoh in the dreams, and that God would give Pharaoh an answer of peace.² Joseph said that Pharaoh dreamed twice because he ruled over two lands. But Mann says that Joseph did not actually interpret the dream; he only suggested ideas to Pharaoh who really interpreted his own dream. After making these suggestions, Joseph slyly insinuated that Pharaoh should appoint him as the overseer for the collection of all the grain in the land. Then Pharaoh said that since God had told Joseph the meaning of the dream there could be no one as understanding as he.³

The Biblical narrative records that Joseph when the Pharaoh questioned him about his ability said, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."⁴ The dream had been repeated a second time because the coming famine was established by God, and God had revealed the approaching catastrophe to Pharaoh. Joseph suggested that Pharaoh find a wise man who would oversee the whole land. The idea pleased Pharaoh, and after consulting his servants Pharaoh said that there could be no wiser man,

1. Cf. ante, p. 8.
2. Cf. ante, p. 6.
3. Cf. ante, p. 8.
4. Cf. ante, p. 36.

or man in whom the spirit of God is; therefore he appointed Joseph as ruler of Egypt.¹

b. Joseph's Marriage and Sons

Mann says that because Joseph married Asenath, the daughter of the priest of On, he probably offered sacrifices to Egyptian gods.² The reason Joseph named his first son "Manasseh" was really to appease Asenath, who was so disappointed that the child was not a girl that she blamed Joseph and his background.³ But Mann adds that Manasseh's name could not be considered too seriously, for Joseph had not really forgotten his home in Canaan. Joseph named his second son "Ephraim" because God had made him fruitful in Egypt.⁴

Of course the Biblical narrative says nothing about Joseph offering to idols, and Joseph's close fellowship with God seems to deny the possibility of any such event. Joseph named his first son "Manasseh", meaning "God made me forget", because he had indeed forgotten the hardships of his father's house; and since he now had a home of his own, he no longer longed to return to his homeland.⁵ The accounts of Ephraim's name are the same as in Mann's novel.

1. Cf. ante. p. 37.

2. Cf. ante. p. 9.

3. Loc. Cit.

4. Cf. ante. p. 10.

5. Cf. ante. p. 38.

c. The Famine

For some reason, which he does not explain, Mann states that although the prophecy said that there would be seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, there were actually only five.¹ Mann says that the people probably miscounted the years.

The Genesis account says in four places that the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine occurred as Joseph had said it would.²

3. Joseph Reunited with Israel

In Mann's novel at this point Joseph begins to refer to his life as the "God-story".³ All the remaining events in the life of Joseph are spoken of as part of the "God-story" but there is indication of this idea in the Biblical narrative.

a. The First Trip

When Joseph heard that his brothers had crossed the border, Mann indicates that Joseph realized why God had sent him to Egypt--to be the salvation of his people during the famine.⁴ God had turned all to good. The brothers were sent to Joseph, the ruler, were accused as spies, and locked in prison for three days. During the time in prison they talked of Joseph and of their guilt

1. Cf. ante, p. 10.
 2. Cf. ante, p. 39.
 3. Cf. ante, p. 10.
 4. Cf. ante, p. 11.

in selling him. When they appeared before the ruler they again talked of Joseph. Mann writes that Joseph said, "You do not fear God, but I fear Him", and Joseph kept one brother as a hostage.¹ As the nine made their way home, leaving Simeon as hostage, they found all the money which had been put in each sack. Again Mann records that they realized that God was punishing them for their crime.²

When the brothers entered Egypt, according to the Genesis account, they seem to have had to purchase grain from the head overseer, Joseph, who immediately recognized them, and accused them of spying.³ The Genesis account is the same as Mann's account except the Bible doesn't specifically mention that the brothers talked of Joseph in prison. The wording of Joseph's reference to God is slightly different, and Mann says that all the brothers found their money while the Bible seems to indicate that only one found his sack with money and the others didn't find theirs until they reached home.

b. The Second Trip

Mann portrays Jacob as a man wrestling with a great spiritual problem and passing from bargaining with God for the return of his son to a man strong in faith, trusting in a true and merciful God.⁴ Benjamin went with

1. Loc. Cit.

2. Cf. ante, p.12.

3. Cf. ante, pp.39-40.

4. Cf. ante, p.12.

the brothers, and when they got to Egypt they told the steward about the money that they found in their sacks. But the steward said that God had amused Himself by putting the money in their sacks.¹ When he met Benjamin, Joseph said, "God be gracious to you, my son;" and after the dinner at Joseph's house, the brothers turned toward Canaan.² Soon they were stopped, and Joseph's silver cup was found in Benjamin's sack. All the brothers returned and Judah **pleaded** for Benjamin, offered himself in his place and told the ruler of crime they had committed when they sold their brother. Then Joseph revealed his identity and said, God did it, not you. It was according to God's plan.³ Joseph, then, equipped his brothers and sent them to tell Jacob that God had given him rank in Egypt.

Just as in Mann's novel, the Biblical narrative shows Jacob, after refusing so long, putting his trust in God Almighty in resigned submission.⁴ The steward told the brothers that God had given them treasure by putting the money in their sacks. Joseph met Benjamin and said, "God be gracious to you, my son!"⁵ The events regarding Joseph's silver cup are the same except in the Biblical narrative Judah does not actually confess to ~~the~~ selling

1. Cf. ante, p.13.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Loc. cit.

4. Cf. ante. p.41.

5. Cf. ante. p.42.

of their brother, but says, "God has found out the iniquity of thy servants."¹ The fact that God really sent Joseph to Egypt is repeated three times in the Biblical narrative. Joseph sent his father, Jacob, word that God had made him Lord of all Egypt, and asked him to come down to Egypt.²

c. Jacob's Journey into Egypt

Mann records that as the brothers neared Canaan they met Asher's little daughter, whom they sent to sing Jacob a song that Joseph was alive.³ Then the brothers appeared to confirm her story. Jacob, when he realized that Joseph was indeed alive, said, "I will go down and see him before I die . . . Blessed be the name of the Lord."⁴ In Mann's analysis of Jacob's piety, he writes that piety is really only self-interest.

The brothers left Egypt, reached Canaan, and they told Jacob that Joseph was alive according to the Genesis account.⁵ There is no mention of Asher's little daughter. Mann gives the same words that the Bible does of Jacob's reply, except Mann adds the praise to the Lord.

(1) The Dream

When Jacob offered sacrifices at Beersheba the Lord appeared to him in a vision of night, and assured him that

1. Loc. Cit.

2. Cf. ante, P.43.

3. Cf. ante, p.14.

4. Loc. Cit.

5. Cf. ante, p.43.

He would be with him in Egypt, would bless him, and bring the people back.¹

The Genesis narrative is the same.²

(2) The Number Who Went

Mann says that there were not actually seventy people who went with Jacob into Egypt, for that was only a feeling of a count, a sort of mental conclusion.³

The Biblical narrative states that there were seventy of Jacob's seed who went into Egypt, and names them.⁴ Critics disagree over this number, some stating that it was exact, others saying that this is the number of families still remaining in Egypt during the time of Moses.

(3) Jacob and Joseph Meet

Mann gives in detail the tender reunion of Jacob and Joseph. At the meeting Joseph wept, and then they discussed the character of God; His mighty anger and great wrath, His mercy and forgiveness, His greatness and His wisdom, His providence, and His far-seeing goodness.⁵

Very little is given about this joyous meeting in the Genesis account. Joseph wept, and Jacob said that he was content to die since he had now seen Joseph again.⁶ Joseph

then made

1. Cf. ante, p.14.
2. Cf. ante, pp.43-44.
3. Cf. ante, p.15.
4. Cf. ante, p.44.
5. Cf. ante, p.16.
6. Cf. ante, p.44.

then made plans for their future living, and they discussed visiting Pharaoh.

d. Jacob's Blessing

Jacob is recorded in Mann's novel as having lived in Goshen to the old but still possible age of one hundred and six.¹

In Genesis Jacob is stated to have lived seventeen years in Goshen, and died at the age of one hundred and forty-seven years.²

(1) Joseph's Sons

When Joseph brought his two sons to visit, Jacob was ill and excited by fever and Joseph's presence. Jacob's thoughts wandered in his reminiscing, and only the sight of Joseph's sons aroused him.³ In answer to an inquiry Joseph brought forward his sons and said, "These are my sons, . . . the ones God gave me. . ." ⁴ Jacob, playing his little game with the blessing, blessed the younger before the older, and said that he had not thought to see Joseph again, and now God had allowed him to see Joseph's sons too.

There is actually no difference in the facts as presented by Mann's novel and the Genesis account. The

1. Cf. ante, p.16.
 2. Cf. ante, p.45.
 3. Cf. ante, p.17.
 4. Loc. cit.

only difference is in the attitude of Jacob and the manner in which he blessed Joseph's sons.¹ There is no evidence in the Biblical narrative which seems to indicate that Jacob did not know what he was doing; indeed, the prophetic insight seems clear, especially in the blessing of Ephraim before Manasseh.

(2) The Final Blessing

None of the sons in Mann's novel seemed to take the final blessing by Jacob seriously.² As far as they were concerned, it was merely the dream fancies of a dying man. Indeed Mann says that Jacob's mind wandered and associated his sons with the characters in the pagan mythology of the day. According to Mann the final blessing was only a "dignified failure". Judah received the birthright of the oldest son because the three older sons had forfeited their right to it by sins. But evidently Judah's sin did not matter and purity was not so essential to the birthright or to salvation.³

There is every indication in the Biblical narrative that Jacob knew exactly what he was doing when he gave his sons the final blessing; indeed, the blessing seems to be the prophetic utterance of divine illumination.⁴ The

1. Cf. ante, p.45.
2. Cf. ante, p.17.
3. Cf. ante, p.18.
4. Cf. ante, p.46.

prophecies were based on the individual character of the twelve sons, and seem to reveal the future development of the entire people into an independent nation. There is a difference of opinion concerning the first-born birthright. Some authorities say that Joseph received the birthright, since his sons each received an individual blessing.¹ There is no evidence in the Genesis account that Judah's idea of the blessing was not concerned with his character. Indeed Judah's character seems to have changed from the sins in his early life to his sacrifice for Benjamin.

e. (The Brothers Reassured

After Jacob's burial the brothers sent Benjamin to Joseph to beg again for their forgiveness.² According to Mann's account Joseph assured them that he was not as God, but Mann adds that forgiveness really had nothing to do with the experience, for they were merely living in a story, and Joseph's life was only a play, or pattern. Mann ends the novels by saying, "And so endeth the beautiful story and God-invention of Joseph and His Brothers.³"

According to the Biblical narrative Joseph assured the brothers of forgiveness and said, "Am I in the place of God?"⁴ And this forgiveness is heightened by Joseph's saying that he would **feed** them and their children in Egypt. But the

1. Loc. Cit.
 2. Cf. ante, P.18.
 3. Cf. ante, p.19.
 4. Cf. ante, p.47.

Biblical narrative assures Joseph forgiveness, for it completes Joseph's life by giving an account of Joseph's death, and mentions that Joseph spoke to his "Brethren" saying, "I die, but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."¹ There is no indication that this narrative is merely a "beautiful story", invented to make God seem real.

C. A Comparison of the Implications

About the Doctrine of God

1. The Reality of God

The Prelude and some of the factual statements of the Joseph novel seem to assume the existence of God, but in the implications the statements seem to indicate that "God" is merely identified with Joseph's intelligence. Instead of trusting in God, Joseph appears to trust in himself, and he was able to guess the baker's guilt by using his intelligence to observe his guilt-complex, and therefore interpreted his dream.² Even the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream was a mere process of Joseph's own intelligence.³ Such expressions as "God-dreamers," "Discovery of God," and

1. Genesis 50:22-26.

2. Cf. ante, p.4.

3. Cf. ante, pp.20-21.

"God-story" suggest that God was not a real person.¹

Mann's concluding phrase, "The God-invention", also indicates that God was an invention which this "story" helped to create. The contradiction between the statement of certain of the facts and the implications which generally accompany such statement by way of explanation are confusing and disturbing in regard to the conception of Mann concerning the reality of God.

God's reality is disclosed in the Bible account by the action of a free self-conscious personality who was able to plan and make decisions. God's reason for sending Joseph into Egypt, to save Israel during the famine, was fully attested by Joseph.² God chose Joseph to carry out His plan, and even the evil of Joseph's brothers was made to serve God.

2. The Infinitude of God

Mann seems to indicate in his Prelude and throughout the novel that God is limited in many ways. In the Prelude Satan was actually greater than God, for Satan influenced the Throne and "won it over to His counsels".³ Joseph's God seemed to be no greater than Pharaoh's god, or the gods of Egypt, for Joseph spoke of Egyptian gods

1. Cf. ante, pp. 6, 15, 10.

2. Cf. ante, pp. 43-47.

3. Cf. ante, p. 21-22.

to comfort the baker,¹ and Mann made no distinction in his use of the capital letter for "God".² But Mann also seemed to reveal an infinite God, for God had spoken to Pharaoh and revealed His purposes in a dream.³ God was not limited by Pharaoh, or by Joseph's brothers when they sold him, but used them to accomplish His purposes. Joseph said that God sent the famine, as well as the warning about it.

The Biblical narrative reveals the infinite God not only by the facts of the dreams, and the expected famine, but also by the actual sending of the famine. God is the life-giver as indicated by Joseph's words with regard to the birth of his sons.⁴ God was not limited by the wickedness of Joseph's brothers, or the prison experience in carrying out his purposes. The brothers had meant evil, but God used their evil for good.

3. The Power of God

Of all the attributes of God Mann seems most contradictory in his reference to the power of God. The facts of Joseph's life as Mann gives them seem to indicate an all-powerful God, but the suggestion that God could be guilty of an error contradicts this.⁵ Mann also suggests

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1. Cf. ante. p.5.
 2. Cf. ante. p.23.
 3. Cf. ante. p.8.
 4. Cf. ante. p.17.
 5. Cf. ante. p.24.

that Satan greatly influenced God in the creation of man, and that man is merely an unflattering mirror of God.¹ God's will does not seem to be absolute. But Mann records that God was the cause of the famine, and that God's plan had been the real cause of Joseph's journey to Egypt. Even Pharaoh acknowledged that God had revealed the coming famine to Joseph.²

In the Biblical account the power of God is the most outstanding attribute, for the chapters interpreted everything as having been accomplished by God. God was able to make a difference in Joseph's prison, and to make all that Joseph did to prosper.³ God sent the dreams, and God fulfilled them in sending the years of plenty and the years of famine. Indeed Joseph's whole life is proof of the power of God to carry out His plans for mankind.

4. The Presence of God

In the Prelude of the novel Mann indicated that God was a failure in His attempt to contact man and that God had to give up His superior rank above all other gods to become a mere tribal God.⁴ But God acknowledged his defeat, and has now returned to his former existence as all-powerful and spiritual rank above all gods, and has

1. Loc. Cit.

2. Cf. ante, P.8.

3. Cf. ante, p.34.

4. Cf. ante, p.24

relinquished his earthly contacts. In the facts of the novel, however, Joseph says that God had spoken in the dreams, and in Jacob's vision God spoke to Jacob.¹ Mann's view of the presence of God is therefore confusing and seems contradictory.

Without doubt God in the Genesis record is an all-powerful God who is present in spirit with Man on earth. In the prison experience God was with Joseph, and God was with him as he interpreted Pharaoh's dream; for Joseph said that only God could give Pharaoh the answer of peace.² God was not only with Joseph in prison, but also with Jacob in Canaan, for God spoke to Jacob in a vision and assured him that He would be with him in Egypt, and would bring seed back to Canaan.³

5. The Dependability of God

Mann's presentation of God in the Prelude seems to reveal a God who is changeable and undependable, for Satan was able to influence Him, and God chose favourites among mankind with no regard for their deeds.⁴ In the Prelude Mann implies that Israel knew that God's position as a tribal God was not right, and Israel was influential in making God realize that He must return to His own spiritual

1. Cf. ante, pp.8,15.

2. Cf. ante, pp.36.

3. Cf. ante, p.44.

4. cf. ante, p.24,22.

state.¹ God therefore was not consistent in His relationship with men, and was not even dependable in His forgiveness. Mann also says that God did not mean what He said at times.² But the facts in Joseph's life present a God who was dependable and could be depended upon whether in prison or in Pharaoh's court. God also reaffirmed his promise to Jacob that He would bless him in the land of Egypt, and bring him out.³ Joseph too knew that God would be faithful to bring Israel out of Egypt.

God's dependability and faithfulness in the Genesis narrative does not change because of His forgiveness. God in His essence accepts man's contrition. God is faithful in the keeping of His covenant with man. Joseph's faith was in the God of his fathers, and Jacob spoke of God's faithfulness as he blessed Joseph's sons and also assured them that they would grow into a multitude on earth.⁴ Both Jacob and Joseph were assured that God would keep his promise to bring Israel out of Egypt.

6. The Justice of God

In the Prelude of Mann's novel God's justice is merely the arbitrary playing of favourites, with no consideration for moral standards.⁵ In fact God was not even

1. Cf. ante, p.25.
 2. Cf. ante, p.26.
 3. Cf. ante, p.15.
 4. Cf. ante, p.45.
 5. Cf. ante, p.26.

serious in His regard for moral standards, and Satan was more serious than he was. Jacob is depicted as merely imitating God in choosing Joseph's younger son above the elder, but this kind of God does not seem to be consistent throughout the novel. The brothers were very conscious that God was a God of justice and was punishing them in Egypt for the crime they had committed in selling Joseph.¹ Mann portrays Joseph as being partly guilty with regard to his prison sentence, but the whole narrative shows that God does not fail the innocent. However, Mann seems contradictory regarding God's justice.

One of the greatest teachings of the Joseph narrative is the justice of God, for God did not allow the innocent Joseph to suffer at the hand of wickedness, but through the divine plan Joseph was elevated to ruler of all Egypt.² Joseph knew that God was the supreme judge of sin, for when his brothers came asking forgiveness Joseph told them by his question that only God would judge them for their crime.³ Mann's novel also shows the feeling of guilt of the brothers in Egypt.

7. The Holiness of God

Very little is given in Mann's novel about the holiness of God, but Mann does imply that God is different from the idols of Egypt, and God's holiness is seen in

1. Cf. ante, pp. 12-13.
2. Cf. ante, pp. 37.
3. Cf. ante, p. 47.

His difference.¹ When Mann implies that Joseph's "God" was really his own intelligence then "God" cannot be holy. This is also seen in Mann's use of capitals for the name "God", referring to Pharaoh, Pharaoh's God, and the priests of Pharaoh.²

In the Genesis account even Pharaoh acknowledged that Joseph was different because he had the "spirit of God" with him.³ When Joseph said that he was not in the place of God, he also implied that God was different from him, and there could really be no comparison.⁴

8. The Love of God

In Mann's novel there is very little about the love of God. In the Prelude Mann says that God drew near to man only from an ambition to mingle and be just like the other gods.⁵ Mann does not mention love in the novel at all, except to say that Joseph could not rely on God for love for that would be presumptuous.⁶ However, Mann does seem to allow for the forgiveness of God, for Joseph is the supreme example of forgiveness.

God is moved in love for spiritual fellowship with man, and this is seen in the life of Joseph by Jehovah's

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1. Cf. ante, p. 9.
 2. Cf. ante, p. 23.
 3. Cf. ante, p. 37.
 4. Cf. ante, p. 47.
 5. Cf. ante, p. 29.
 6. Cf. ante, p. 6.

fellowship with both Joseph and Jacob. Jehovah was with Joseph, and spoke to Jacob. The forgiveness of Joseph, and the graciousness of God all testify to His love.

9. The Mercy and Forgiveness of God

The forgiveness of God is not mentioned in the Prelude of Mann's novel at all, but in the novel itself Joseph forgives his brothers by saying that forgiveness really did not matter since they were really acting in the God play.¹ Joseph spoke of God who "is as He is" and who is so great and mighty that He really cannot feel for the "weaklings" on earth.²

Jacob knew that God was a God of mercy, for he prayed that God in His mercy would grant the brothers mercy before the ruler of Egypt as they went down for grain.³ But the greatest example of God's mercy is seen in Joseph's mercy toward his brothers. Maclaren says that Joseph had caught a gleam of the divine pardon in his forgiveness.

D. Summary

In this chapter the primary facts in the life of Joseph as given in Joseph the Provider by Thomas Mann have been compared with the primary facts as given in the

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1. Cf. ante, p. 19.
 2. Cf. ante, p. 16.
 3. Cf. ante, p. 41.

Genesis narrative. The first division has followed the established outline given in the formal presentation of the material, considering the primary facts in the life of Joseph. The sections of the first division are Joseph in Prison, Joseph and Pharaoh, and Joseph Reunited with Israel. Using the two sources, Joseph's relationship with the keeper of the prison, and with the butler and the baker have been compared in the first section, and Joseph's relation to the Pharaoh and the nobility of Egypt has been compared in the second section. In the last section Joseph's reunion with his brothers as they came to buy grain and the moving of Jacob into Egypt have been compared according to the facts as taken from the two sources.

In the second division the implications about the doctrine of God as found in the two sources have been compared. The attributes of God which have been considered in this comparison are: the reality of God, the infinitude of God, the power of God, the presence of God, the dependability of God, the justice of God, the holiness of God, the love of God, and the mercy of God.

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

The constant appearance on the best-selling book lists of Biblical novels makes it necessary that the Christian today know not only the Bible, but also the Biblical novels which have been written about the Bible. In many cases novels seriously distort the true Biblical picture either of the character or of the implications about God.

Thomas Mann has written one of the most extended series of novels of the life of Joseph that has ever been written about a Bible character. Something should be known of Mann's treatment of the facts with regard to the life of Joseph and the comparison of these facts with the Biblical narrative. But often the facts are not complete without a study of the implications involved in the differences in these facts.

Chapter one contains a study of Joseph the Provider which was published in 1944 and represents Mann's latest position with regard to Joseph and God. The formal presentation of all the material followed the general outline of Joseph's life. The novel began with Joseph's prison experience.

While in prison Joseph encountered Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker and interpreted their dreams, merely by human reasoning. When the Pharaoh dreamed Joseph was brought before him to interpret the dream. After Joseph prophesied the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine Pharaoh appointed Joseph as ruler of Egypt.

While acting as superintendent of the grainary Joseph met his brothers. He tested them severely and then revealed himself to them. Jacob and all Israel then moved down into Goshen. Mann ends the novel by stating, "And so endeth the beautiful story and God-invention of Joseph and His Brothers."

The implications about the doctrine of God were discussed under the following attributes of God's character: the reality of God, the infinitude of God, the power of God, the presence of God, the dependability of God, the justice of God, the morality of God, the love of God, and the mercy of God.

Chapter two contains a study of the Biblical narrative as found in Genesis 39:20 - 50:26. The material was presented in the same outline of Joseph's life as given in chapter one, with special emphasis given to the statements involving God. The implications about the doctrine of God were discussed as follows: the real and personal God; the spiritual God; the life-giving God; the absolute God - infinite, eternal, present, wise, powerful; the holiness of God - righteous, just, true; the love of God - forgiving, gracious; and the faithfulness of God.

Chapter three contains a comparison of the primary facts as found in the Joseph novel by Thomas Mann and the primary facts as found in Genesis. The same general outline of Joseph's life was used for the first division of the chapter. The second division was a comparison of the implications about the doctrine of God as found in the Joseph novel presented in the first chapter, and the Genesis narrative presented in the second

chapter. The attributes which were discussed in the comparison are: the reality of God, the infinitude of God, the power of God, the presence of God, the dependability of God, the justice of God, the holiness of God, the love of God, and the mercy of God.

From this study and comparison of the facts in Joseph the Provider and the Genesis narrative, the implications about the doctrine of God show that there are many contradictions between Mann's "God" and the Biblical God. Mann implies that God is merely intelligent human reasoning, or a character of man's invention. This would indicate a subjective God to whom Mann attributes limited power and wisdom. Mann's God appears to be human and has little contact with men. God seems unjust in His choosing of favourites and vascillating in His moral standards. At times Mann implies that God is unloving, unforgiving, and undependable.

In studying the Biblical narrative God is found to be a real and personal God, who in the Spirit is always present with man. God is absolute in His infinity, eternity, wisdom, and power. That God is holy is revealed through His righteousness, justice, and truth. God's faithfulness, graciousness, and forgiveness show that He is a God who cares for man.

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