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EXODUS 10:1 The LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I may show these my signs in their midst,

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Moses is again sent to Pharaoh, and expostulates with him on his refusal to let the Hebrews go, Exo 10:1-3. The eighth plague, viz., of locusts, is threatened, Exo 10:4. The extent and oppressive nature of this plague, Exo 10:5, Exo 10:6. Pharaoh's servants counsel him to dismiss the Hebrews, Exo 10:7. He calls for Moses and Aaron, and inquires who they are of the Hebrews who wish to go, Exo 10:8. Moses having answered that the whole people, with their flocks and herds must go and hold a feast to the Lord, Exo 10:9, Pharaoh is enraged, and having granted permission only to the men, drives Moses and Aaron from his presence, Exo 10:10, Exo 10:11. Moses is commanded to stretch out his hand and bring the locusts, Exo 10:12. He does so, and an east wind is sent, which, blowing all that day and night, brings the locusts the next morning, Exo 10:13. The devastation occasioned by these insects, Exo 10:14, Exo 10:15. Pharaoh is humbled, acknowledges his sin, and begs Moses to intercede with Jehovah for him, Exo 10:16, Exo 10:17. Moses does so, and at his request a strong west wind is sent, which carries all the locusts to the Red Sea, Exo 10:18, Exo 10:19. Pharaoh's heart is again hardened, Exo 10:20. Moses is commanded to bring the ninth plague of extraordinary darkness over all the land of Egypt, Exo 10:21. The nature, duration, and effects of this, Exo 10:22, Exo 10:23. Pharaoh, again humbled, consents to let the people go, provided they leave their cattle behind, Exo 10:24. Moses insists on having all their cattle, because of the sacrifices which they must make to the Lord, Exo 10:25, Exo 10:26. Pharaoh, again hardened, refuses, Exo 10:27. Orders Moses from his presence, and threatens him with death should he ever return, Exo 10:28. Moses departs with the promise of returning no more, Exo 10:29.

#### Verse 1

Hardened his heart - God suffered his natural obstinacy to prevail, that he might have farther opportunities of showing forth his eternal power and Godhead.

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EXODUS 10:2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your son's son, what things I have done to Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that you may know that I am the LORD."

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#### Verse 2

That thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son - That the miracles wrought at this time might be a record for the instruction of the latest posterity, that Jehovah alone, the God of the Hebrews, was the sole Maker, Governor, and Supporter of the heavens and the earth. Thus we find God so did his marvelous works, that they might be had in everlasting remembrance. It was not to crush the poor worm, Pharaoh, that he wrought such mighty wonders, but to convince his enemies, to the end of the world, that no cunning or power can prevail against him; and to show his followers that whosoever trusted in him should never be confounded.

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EXODUS 10:3 Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and said to him, "This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me.'

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#### Verse 3

How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself - Had it been impossible for Pharaoh, in all the preceding plagues, to have humbled himself and repented can we suppose that God could have addressed him in such language as the preceding? We may rest assured that there was always a time in which he might have relented, and that it was because he hardened his heart at such times that God is said to harden him, i.e., to give him up to his own stubborn and obstinate heart; in consequence of which he refused to let the people go, so that God had a fresh opportunity to work another miracle, for the very gracious purposes mentioned in Exo 10:2. Had Pharaoh relented before, the same gracious ends would have been accomplished by other means.

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EXODUS 10:4 Or else, if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country,

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#### Verse 4

To-morrow will I bring the locusts - The word ארבה *arbeh*, a locust, is probably from the root רבה *rabah*, he multiplied, became great, mighty, etc.; because of the immense swarms of these animals by which different countries, especially the east, are infested. The locust, in entomology, belongs to a genus of insects known among naturalists by the term *Grylli*; and includes three species, crickets, grasshoppers, and those commonly called locusts; and as they multiply faster than any other animal in creation, they are properly entitled to the name ארבה *arbeh*, which might be translated the numerous or multiplied insect. See this circumstance referred to, Jdg 6:5; Jdg 7:12; Psa 105:34; Jer 46:23; Jer 51:14; Joe 1:6; Nah 3:15; Judith 2:19, 20; where the most numerous armies are compared to the *arbeh* or locust. The locust has a large open mouth; and in its two jaws it has four incisive teeth, which traverse each other like scissors, being calculated, from their mechanism, to grip or cut. Mr. Volney, in his *Travels in Syria*, gives a striking account of this most awful scourge of God: - "Syria partakes together with Egypt and Persia, and almost all the whole middle part of Asia, in the terrible scourge, I mean those clouds of locusts of which travelers have spoken; the quantity of which is incredible to any person who has not himself seen them, the earth being covered by them for several leagues round. The noise they make in browsing the plants and trees may be heard at a distance, like an army plundering in secret. Fire seems to follow their tracks. Wherever their legions march the verdure disappears from the country, like a curtain drawn aside; the trees and plants, despoiled of their leaves, make the hideous appearance of winter instantly succeed to the bright scenes of spring. When these clouds of locusts take their flight, in order to surmount some obstacle, or the more rapidly to cross some desert, one may literally say that the sun is darkened by them."

Baron de Tott gives a similar account: "Clouds of locusts frequently alight on the plains of the Nougais, (the Tartars), and giving preference to their fields of millet, ravage them in an instant. Their approach darkens the horizon, and so enormous is their multitude, it hides the light of the sun. They alight on the fields, and there form a bed of six or seven inches thick. To the noise of their flight succeeds that of their devouring actively, which resembles the rattling of hail-stones; but its

consequences are infinitely more destructive. Fire itself eats not so fast; nor is there any appearance of vegetation to be found when they again take their flight, and go elsewhere to produce new disasters."

Dr. Shaw, who witnessed most formidable swarms of these in Barbary in the years 1724 and 1725, gives the following account of them: "They were much larger than our grasshoppers, and had brown-spotted wings, with legs and bodies of a bright yellow. Their first appearance was towards the latter end of March. In the middle of April their numerous swarms, like a succession of clouds, darkened the sun. In the month of May they retired to the adjacent plains to deposit their eggs: these were no sooner hatched in June than the young brood first produced, while in their caterpillar or worm-like state, formed themselves into a compact body of more than a furlong square, and, marching directly forward, climbed over trees, walls, and houses, devouring every plant in their way. Within a day or two another brood was hatched, and advancing in the same manner, gnawed off the young branches and bark of the trees left by the former, making a complete desolation. The inhabitants, to stop their progress, made a variety of pits and trenches all over their fields and gardens, which they filled with water, or else heaped up therein heath, stubble, etc., which they set on fire; but to no purpose: for the trenches were quickly filled up and the fires extinguished, by infinite swarms succeeding one another; while the front seemed regardless of danger, and the rear pressed on so close that retreat was altogether impossible. In a month's time they threw off their worm-like state; and in a new form, with wings and legs, and additional powers, returned to their former voracity." - Shaw's Travels, 187, 188, 4th edition.

The descriptions given by these travelers show that God's army, described by the Prophet Joel, Joe 2:1-11, was innumerable swarms of locusts, to which the accounts given by Dr. Shaw and others exactly agree.

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EXODUS 10:5 and they shall cover the surface of the earth, so that one won't be able to see the earth. They shall eat the residue of that which has escaped, which remains to you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which grows for you out of the field.

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Verse 5

They shall cover the face of the earth - They sometimes cover the whole ground to the depth of six or eight inches. See the preceding accounts.

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EXODUS 10:6 Your houses shall be filled, and the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; as neither your fathers nor your fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth to this day.'" He turned, and went out from Pharaoh.

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Verse 6

They shall fill thy houses - Dr. Shaw mentions this circumstance; "they entered," says he, "Into our very houses and bed-chambers, like so many thieves." - Ibid. p. 187.

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EXODUS 10:7 Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD, their God. Don't you yet know that Egypt is destroyed?"

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#### Verse 7

How long shall this man be a snare unto us? - As there is no noun in the text, the pronoun הַזֶּה zeh may either refer to the Israelites, to the plague by which they were then afflicted, or to Moses and Aaron, the instruments used by the Most High in their chastisement. The Vulgate translates, *Usquequo patiemur hoc scandalum?* "How long shall we suffer this scandal or reproach?"

Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God - Much of the energy of several passages is lost in translating יהוה Yehovah by the term Lord. The Egyptians had their gods, and they supposed that the Hebrews had a god like unto their own; that this Jehovah required their services, and would continue to afflict Egypt till his people were permitted to worship him in his own way.

Egypt is destroyed? - This last plague had nearly ruined the whole land.

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EXODUS 10:8 Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God; but who are those who will go?"

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#### Verse 8

Who are they that shall go? - Though the Egyptians, about fourscore years before, wished to destroy the Hebrews, yet they found them now so profitable to the state that they were unwilling to part with them.

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EXODUS 10:9 Moses said, "We will go with our young and with our old; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast to the LORD."

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#### Verse 9

We will go with our young and with our old, etc. - As a feast was to be celebrated to the honor of Jehovah, all who were partakers of his bounty and providential kindness must go and perform their part in the solemnity. The men and the women must make the feast, the children must witness it, and the cattle must be taken along with them to furnish the sacrifices necessary on this occasion. This must have appeared reasonable to the Egyptians, because it was their own custom in their religious assemblies. Men, women, and children attended them, often to the amount of several hundred thousand. Herodotus informs us, in speaking of the six annual feasts celebrated by the Egyptians in honor of their deities, that they hold their chief one at the city of Bubastis in honor of Neith or Diana; that they go thither by water in boats-men, women, and children; that during their voyage some of the women play on castanets, and some of the men upon flutes, while the rest are employed in singing and clapping their hands; and that, when they arrive at Bubastis, they sacrifice a vast number of victims, and drink much wine; and that at one such festival, the inhabitants assured him, that there were not assembled fewer than 700,000 men and women, without reckoning the

children - Euterpe, chap. lix., lx. I find that the ancient Egyptians called Diana Neith; this comes as near as possible to the Gaile of the Isle of Man. The moon is called yn neith or neath; and also ke-sollus, from ke, smooth or even, and sollus, light, the Smooth Light; perhaps to distinguish her from the sun, grian, from gri-tien or cri-tien, i.e., Trembling Fire; yn neith-easya, as Macpherson has it, signifies wan complexion. I should rather incline to think it may come from aise. The Celtic nations thought that the heavenly luminaries were the residences of spirits which they distinguished by the name of aise, thus grian-ais signifies the spirit of the sun.

Moses and Aaron, requesting liberty for the Hebrews to go three days' journey into the wilderness, and with them all their wives, little ones, and cattle, in order to hold a feast unto Jehovah their God, must have at least appeared as reasonable to the Egyptians as their going to the city of Bubastis with their wives, little ones, and cattle, to hold a feast to Neith or Diana, who was there worshipped. The parallel in these two cases is too striking to pass unnoticed.

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EXODUS 10:10 He said to them, "The LORD be with you if I will let you go with your little ones! See, evil is clearly before your faces."

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#### Verse 10

Let the Lord be so with you - This is an obscure sentence. Some suppose that Pharaoh meant it as a curse, as if he had said, "May your God be as surely with you, as I shall let you go!" For as he purposed not to permit them to go, so he wished them as much of the Divine help as they should have of his permission.

Look - for evil is before you - ראו כי רעה נגד פניכם reu ki raah neged peneychem, See ye that evil is before your faces - if you attempt to go, ye shall meet with the punishment ye deserve. Probably Pharaoh intended to insinuate that they had some sinister designs, and that they wished to go in a body that they might the better accomplish their purpose; but if they had no such designs they would be contented for the males to go, and leave their wives and children behind: for he well knew if the men went and left their families they would infallibly return, but that if he permitted them to take their families with them, they would undoubtedly make their escape; therefore he says, Exo 10:11, Go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord.

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EXODUS 10:11 Not so! Go now you who are men, and serve the LORD; for that is what you desire!" They were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

EXODUS 10:12 The LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail has left."

EXODUS 10:13 Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day, and all the night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

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#### Verse 13

The Lord brought an east wind - As locusts abounded in those countries, and particularly in Ethiopia, and more especially at this time of the year, God had no need to create new swarms for this purpose; all that was requisite was to cause such a wind to blow as would bring those which already existed over the land of Egypt. The miracle in this business was the bringing the locusts at the appointed time, and causing the proper wind to blow for that purpose; and then taking them away after a similar manner.

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EXODUS 10:14 The locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the borders of Egypt. They were very grievous. Before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such.

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Verse 14

Before them there were no such locusts, etc. - They exceeded all that went before, or were since, in number, and in the devastations they produced. Probably both these things are intended in the passage. See Exo 10:15.

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EXODUS 10:15 For they covered the surface of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened, and they ate every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. There remained nothing green, either tree or herb of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

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Verse 15

There remained not any green thing - See Clarke's note on Exo 10:4.

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EXODUS 10:16 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and he said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you.

EXODUS 10:17 Now therefore please forgive my sin again, and pray to the LORD your God, that he may also take away from me this death."

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Verse 17

Forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once - What a strange case! And what a series of softening and hardening, of sinning and repenting! Had he not now another opportunity of returning to God? But the love of gain, and the gratification of his own self-will and obstinacy, finally prevailed.

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EXODUS 10:18 He went out from Pharaoh, and prayed to the LORD.

EXODUS 10:19 The LORD turned an exceeding strong west wind, which took up the locusts, and drove them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the borders of Egypt.

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## Verse 19

A mighty strong west wind - ד' רוח ruach yam, literally the wind of the sea; the wind that blew from the Mediterranean Sea, which lay north-west of Egypt, which had the Red Sea on the east. Here again God works by natural means; he brought the locusts by the east wind, and took them away by the west or north-west wind, which carried them to the Red Sea where they were drowned.

The Red Sea - ים סוף yam suph, the weedy sea; so called, as some suppose, from the great quantity of alga or sea-weed which grows in it and about its shores. But Mr. Bruce, who has sailed the whole extent of it, declares that he never saw in it a weed of any kind; and supposes it has its name suph from the vast quantity of coral which grows in it, as trees and plants do on land. "One of these," he observes, "from a root nearly central, threw out ramifications in a nearly circular form measuring twenty-six feet diameter every way." - Travels, vol. ii., p. 138. In the Septuagint it is called θαλασσα ερυθρα, the Red Sea, from which version we have borrowed the name; and Mr. Bruce supposes that it had this name from Edom or Esau, whose territories extended to its coasts; for it is well known that the word דדא Edom in Hebrew signifies red or ruddy. The Red Sea, called also the Arabic Gulf, separates Arabia from Upper Ethiopia and part of Egypt. It is computed to be three hundred and fifty leagues in length from Suez to the Straits of Babelmandel, and is about forty leagues in breadth. It is not very tempestuous, and the winds usually blow from north to south, and from south to north, six months in the year; and, like the monsoons of India, invariably determine the seasons of sailing into or out of this sea. It is divided into two gulfs: that to the east called the Elanitic Gulf, from the city of Elana to the north end of it; and that to the west called the Heroopolitan Gulf, from the city of Heroopolis; the former of which belongs to Arabia, the latter to Egypt. The Heroopolitan Gulf is called by the Arabians Bahr el Kolzum, the sea of destruction, or of Clysmæ, an ancient town in that quarter; and the Elanitic Gulf Bahr el Akaba, the sea of Akaba, a town situated on its most inland point.

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EXODUS 10:20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he didn't let the children of Israel go.

EXODUS 10:21 The LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt."

## Verse 21

Darkness which may be felt - Probably this was occasioned by a superabundance of aqueous vapors floating in the atmosphere, which were so thick as to prevent the rays of the sun from penetrating through them; an extraordinarily thick mist supernaturally, i.e., miraculously, brought on. An awful emblem of the darkened state of the Egyptians and their king.

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EXODUS 10:22 Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.

EXODUS 10:23 They didn't see one another, neither did anyone rise from his place for three days; but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

## Verse 23

They saw not one another - So deep was the obscurity, and probably such was its nature, that no artificial light could be procured; as the thick clammy vapors would prevent lamps, etc., from burning, or if they even could be ignited, the light through the palpable obscurity, could diffuse itself to no distance from the burning body. The author of the book of The Wisdom of Solomon 17:2-19, gives a fearful description of this plague. He says, "The Egyptians were shut up in their houses, the prisoners of darkness: and were fettered with the bonds of a long night. They were scattered under a dark veil of forgetfulness, being horribly astonished and troubled with strange apparitions; for neither might the corner that held them keep them from fear; but noises as of waters falling down sounded about them; and sad visions appeared unto them with heavy countenances. No power of the fire could give them light - only there appeared unto them a fire kindled of itself very dreadful; for being much terrified, they thought the things which they saw to be worse than the sight they saw not. For though no terrible thing did scare them, yet being scared with beasts that passed by, and hissing of serpents, they died for fear: for whether he were husbandman, or shepherd, or a laborer in the field, he was overtaken; for they were all bound with one chain of darkness. Whether it were a whistling wind, or a terrible sound of stones cast down, or a running that could not be seen of tripping beasts, or a roaring voice of most savage wild beasts, or a rebounding echo from the hollow mountains, these things made them to swoon for fear." See Psa 78:49.

To this description nothing need be added except this circumstance, that the darkness, with its attendant horrors, lasted for three days.

All the children of Israel had light - By thus distinguishing the Israelites, God showed the Egyptians that the darkness was produced by his power; that he sent it in judgment against them for their cruelty to his people; that because they trusted in him they were exempted from these plagues; that in the displeasure of such a Being his enemies had every thing to fear, and in his approbation his followers had every thing to hope.

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EXODUS 10:24 Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, "Go, serve the LORD. Only let your flocks and your herds stay behind. Let your little ones also go with you."

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#### Verse 24

Only let your flocks and your herds be stayed - Pharaoh cannot get all he wishes; and as he sees it impossible to contend with Jehovah, he now consents to give up the Israelites, their wives and their children, provided he may keep their flocks and their herds. The cruelty of this demand is not more evident than its avarice. Had six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, gone three days' journey into the wilderness without their cattle, they must have inevitably perished, being without milk for their little ones, and animal food for their own sustenance, in a place where little as a substitute could possibly be found. It is evident from this that Pharaoh intended the total destruction of the whole Israelitish host.

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EXODUS 10:25 Moses said, "You must also give into our hand sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.



EXODUS 10:26 Our livestock also shall go with us. Not a hoof shall be left behind, for of it we must take to serve the LORD our God; and we don't know with what we must serve the LORD, until we come there."

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Verse 26

We know not with what we must serve the Lord, etc. - The law was not yet given; the ordinances concerning the different kinds of sacrifices and offerings not known. What kind and what number of animals God should require to be sacrificed, even Moses himself could not as yet tell. He therefore very properly insists on taking the whole of their herds with them, and not leaving even one hoof behind.

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EXODUS 10:27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he wouldn't let them go.

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Verse 27

The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart - He had yet another miracle to work for the complete conviction of the Egyptians and triumph of his people; and till that was wrought he permitted the natural obstinacy of Pharaoh's haughty heart to have its full sway, after each resistance of the gracious influence which was intended to soften and bring him to repentance.

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EXODUS 10:28 Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Be careful to see my face no more; for in the day you see my face you shall die!"

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Verse 28

See my face no more - Hitherto Pharaoh had left the way open for negotiation; but now, in wrath against Jehovah, he dismisses his ambassador, and threatens him with death if he should attempt any more to come into his presence.

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EXODUS 10:29 Moses said, "You have spoken well. I will see your face again no more."

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Verse 29

I will see thy face again no more - It is very likely that this was the last interview that Moses had with Pharaoh, for what is related, Exo 11:4-8, might have been spoken on this very occasion, as it is very possible that God gave Moses to understand his purpose to slay the first-born, while before Pharaoh at this time; so, in all probability, the interview mentioned here was the last which Moses had with the Egyptian king. It is true that in Exo 12:31 it is stated that Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron by night, and ordered them to leave Egypt, and to take all their substance with them, which seems to imply that there was another interview, but the words may imply no more than that Moses and Aaron received such a message from Pharaoh. If, however, this mode of interpreting these

passages should not seem satisfactory to any, he may understand the words of Moses thus: I will see thy face - seek thy favor, no more in behalf of my people, which was literally true; for if Moses did appear any more before Pharaoh, it was not as a supplicant, but merely as the ambassador of God, to denounce his judgments by giving him the final determination of Jehovah relative to the destruction of the first-born.

1. To the observations at the conclusion of the preceding chapter, we may add that at first view it seems exceedingly strange that, after all the proofs Pharaoh had of the power of God, he should have acted in the manner related in this and the preceding chapters, alternately sinning and repenting; but it is really a common case, and multitudes who condemn the conduct of this miserable Egyptian king, act in a similar manner. They relent when smarting under God's judgments, but harden their hearts when these judgments are removed. Of this kind I have witnessed numerous cases. To such God says by his prophet, Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. Reader, are not the vows of God upon thee? Often when afflicted in thyself or family hast thou not said like Pharaoh, (Exo 10:17), Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only This Once, and take away from me this death Only? And yet when thou hadst respite, didst thou not harden thy heart, and with returning health and strength didst thou not return unto iniquity? And art thou not still in the broad road of transgression? Be not deceived; God is not mocked; he warns thee, but he will not be mocked by thee. What thou sowest, that thou must reap. Think then what a most dreadful harvest thou mayest expect from the seeds of vice which thou hast already sown!

2. Even in the face of God's judgments the spirit of avarice will make its requisitions. Only let your flocks and your herds be stayed, says Pharaoh. The love of gain was the ruling principle of this man's soul, and he chooses desperately to contend with the justice of his Maker, rather than give up his bosom sin! Reader, is this not thy own case? And art thou not ready, with Pharaoh, to say to the messenger of God, who rebukes thee for thy worldly mindedness, etc., Get thee gone from me. Take heed to thyself, and see my face no more. Esau and Pharaoh have both got a very bad name, and many persons who are repeating their crimes are the foremost to cover them with obloquy! When shall we learn to look at home? to take warning by the miscarriages of others, and thus shun the pit into which we have seen so many fall? If God were to give the history of every man who hardens himself from his fear, how many Pharaoh-like cases should we have on record! But a day is coming in which the secrets of every heart shall be revealed, and the history of every man's life laid open to an assembled world.