

## DOCTRINES.

1. God is the disposer of all earthly events.
2. Earthly trials are no evidence of God's displeasure.
3. All things work together for good to them that love God.

## SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Report from Egypt*,—Gen 42; 29-38.

Driven by a severe and wide spread famine, the sons of Jacob had gone down to Egypt to buy food, where they stood face to face with their brother Joseph, the Governor of the land, of whose identity however they had not the slightest suspicion. Joseph recognized them, but for wise purposes did not make himself known until, by treatment apparently harsh, he had tested their character, and especially had turned their thoughts in upon themselves, to remind them of their guilty part and to give them a sorrow, which, however bitter for the time would produce the most salutary results. He spoke roughly to them, charged them with being spies, insisted that in proof of their veracity they should bring down Benjamin, retained Simon as a hostage, returned every man's money into his sack, and dismissed them with the emphatic injunction to bring down their youngest brother. On their way home one discovered the returned money, and this filled them with consternation: What is this that God hath done unto us?

V. 29-34.—The report they gave to their father was very correct. There was neither suppression of facts nor exaggerated statement. Judging from the past not much trust could be placed in the veracity of these men, when they had an object to gain; but although, in their present circumstances, equivocation had been able to accomplish a selfish end, the painful position in which they were placed, along with dark forebodings of the future, would have constrained them to speak the truth. This was one good which arose from the trouble. This report, read in connection with the preceding narrative compels the exclamations, How beautiful is the truth!

V. 34.—This general surprise would seem to indicate that the returned money had been found on the way only by one of the brethren. Joseph had returned their money partly through kindness (Ch. 43: 23), and partly to cause his brethren to think seriously of the past, (V. 28).

V. 36.—Probably Jacob had some suspicion, that, notwithstanding, the coat dipped in blood, Joseph had met with foul play at the hands of his brethren. However, this may have been, he now lays the

blame of Simeon's imprisonment, and of the prospective loss of his son Benjamin at the door of his sons, who had just returned from Egypt. And yet perhaps it was the pressure of the present sore trials which made him say what he did not mean.

V. 37.—Reuben had no right to make any such proposals. Yet, as this was not a time of calm thought, let him have credit in this utterance for an earnest purpose of using every effort to bring Benjamin safely back. Comp. chapter 37: 21-22-29.

V. 38.—Jacob was unyielding. His heart was wrapped up in Benjamin the youngest son of his beloved Rachel. Joseph was gone: Was not that enough? The fact that the Egyptian governor, a man of such apparent harshness, had insisted so strongly upon seeing Benjamin made Jacob's heart sink.

## LESSONS.

1. To remind of sin God sometimes send affliction. Yet he pities while he afflicts, just as Joseph wept when he spake roughly to his brethren and bound Simeon before their eyes. The heaviest end of the rod is in God's hand. How thankful we should be when our afflictions fill us with sorrow for sins of the past! Vv 21-22.

2. A time of trial sometimes furnishes occasion for the manifestation of fine traits of character. Look for example at the feelings which prompted the words of Reuben.

3. To God's people troubles are blessings in disguise. The hand of Providence was leading Jacob wisely and lovingly, yet he exclaimed, all these things are against me. He lived to see how mistaken he had been in his estimate of providential dispensation, nay, how unbelieving and sinful. Here is a note of warning: Never distrust God in the dark days of trouble. And a lesson of encouragement: All things work together for good. Fear not christian, for

The clouds you so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

## THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT.—*Joseph makes himself known*,—Gen. 45: 1-8.

For 22 years Joseph had been separated from his father and brethren. Here are his brothers before him; he can refrain no longer—love bursts all bounds. He had brought his brothers to a deep sense of their sin, and now, nothing remains but to show his love,—just as Jesus deals with us sinners, trying us, dealing with us until we come to see our sins, and then revealing his pardoning and saving grace.

V. 1.—All were sent out lest the past history of Joseph's brethren should be exposed before the eyes of strangers.

V. 2.—Perhaps also Joseph did not wish that strangers should witness the intensity of