

The Sabbath School.

Sabbath School Lessons for May.

FIRST SABBATH.

SUBJECT: *Joseph in Potiphar's house.* Genesis xxix.

The date of Joseph's arrival is about 1890 years before the birth of Christ.—Egypt was then the richest and most advanced country in the whole world. Slavery has continued there from that day to this.

As a son and brother Joseph had been faithful, honest, obedient, loving. He had been severely tried. Let us look at him now in a new situation. The Lord was with him in Potiphar's house; and this was so manifest that he was made master over all that Potiphar had. Joseph was about ten years a slave in this house.—These years were spent in managing his master's affairs and thus he was educated for his future work as ruler of Egypt. God trained him for honor and greatness in the school of adversity. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." No doubt Joseph studied all the learning of the Egyptians during these years.

Most nobly he resisted the temptation of the wicked and licentious wife of his master! Had he yielded God would have forsaken him and his life would have ended in slavery, shame, ruin. As it is he is cast into prison, and is in danger of losing his life. But as the Lord was with him in his slavery so is He with him in prison.

LESSONS.

1. Point out the great value of early piety. Joseph was a good lad at home, and his goodness—the goodness of the Lord followed him all his days.

2. Here we have a most remarkable illustration of the value of honesty and diligence. Joseph got into the good graces of Potiphar, and of the jailer. Both trusted him and he did not betray their confidence. Even a slave and a prisoner can render himself respected by honesty, faithfulness and piety.

3. God leads men to high positions through deep humiliation. Joseph is cast into a loathsome prison, and it is evident from Psalm cv. 18, that at first he was very harshly treated; yet this is a step to his exaltation to be Pharaoh's prime minister. Learn from this that our afflictions are for our good.

4. Observe the great value of pious persons—they are a blessing to all with whom they have to do, Joseph was first a blessing to Potiphar, and then in the prison, and by and by to the whole land.

5. Mark how one sin leads to another. Potiphar's wife first tries to seduce Joseph; then she belies him, and tries to induce his master to put him to death. But God knows how to deliver those who trust in him.

DOCTRINE TO BE PROVED:

The duty of resisting temptation: 1 Thess. V. 22, James iv. 7. No better instance can be quoted than that of Joseph himself. But you may refer also to Moses who "refused the honors of Egypt"—to Daniel and the three children, and to our blessed Lord Himself.

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT: *Joseph in prison.* Genesis xi. 1-23.

Joseph was cruelly treated when first put in prison, but he soon won the friendship of the keeper, and was again thoroughly trusted. V. 2.—It is supposed that these officers were charged with an attempt to poison the king. Joseph, under divine inspiration is enabled to interpret dreams of the butler and baker. The interpretations are speedily proved to be true.

LESSONS.

1. "On how many little incidents of which the parties at the time think nothing, do some of the greatest events depend!—If the butler and baker had been sent to another prison Joseph might have died where he was, and no provision have been made for the seven years of famine;—and Jacob and his family with millions of others might have died for want; and so all the promises of their becoming a great nation, and of the Messiah springing from among them, and all nations being blessed in him, would have been frustrated. But he that appoints the end appoints all the means that lead to it."—*Scott*.

2. Joseph was anxious to be remembered by the butler when it should be "well" with him. There are two tendencies in the world against which we should always be on our guard:—too much eagerness to be noticed, helped, patronized by the rich; and too great carelessness of the regards of the poor. The rich forget the poor, as the butler "forgot Joseph." In our prosperity we should not forget the friends of our adversity.

3. "Though we ought not in general to expect information from dreams, and need not regret the want of an interpreter; yet to be favored with a wise and faithful interpreter of God's providences and oracles, especially in seasons of affliction, is an unspeakable mercy."—*Scott*.

4. Joseph faithfully tells the bad news to the baker as well as the good news to the butler. From this we may learn to deliver