

has been held by some that Egypt was invaded and occupied about this time by an Asiatic people whose sovereigns were known as the Shepherd kings. Josephus states that the government was transferred to another family. The historical evidence in this respect is not decisive, but the certainty is that the new king "knew not Joseph." According to Hebrew usage to *know* is to approve, to regard with affection, e.g., "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous," Psal. 1:6. "Thou hast known my soul in adversities," Psal. 31:7. The Targums of Jonathan and of Jerusalem render our passage "Who considered not Joseph, nor walked in his statutes," i.e., he disregarded and violated the compact of Joseph with Pharaoh in behalf of the Hebrew people. (b) This new king, whoever he was, oppressed the Hebrews through jealousy and fear. These base passions were excited by the manifest growth and prosperity of the people, and no limit can be set to the cruelties that may be perpetrated through jealousy, Prov. 6:34; Sol. Song, 8:6. These passages were verified in this case. Base fear mingled with jealousy. Pharaoh entertained the suspicion that, in the event of war, the Hebrews might join his enemies and thus escape from the land, and his covetous desire to reap the benefits of their inadequately recompensed labors would be defeated. Few things rouse the animosity of men as much as interference with their inordinate lust for gain.

3. *The forms of tyrannical treatment which the Hebrews endured.* (a) "Let us deal wisely with them," v. 10, i.e., cunningly. Let us adopt methods of oppression to prevent their appalling increase. The thought was to check the growth of population without seeming to be unjust or cruel, to so organize and govern the colony settled in Goshen as to accomplish this end. Hence (b) he appointed taskmasters over Israel, and reduced them to the condition of serfs, hoping in this way to wear out their strength and to crush their spirits, and thus banish the desire of freedom. In this bitter servitude they were compelled to build provision or magazine

cities for storing the produce of the land for purposes of trade and as supplies for the army in time of war. 2 Chron. 32:28. They built for Pharaoh, Pithom and Raamses, v. 11. These cities were situated in the land of Goshen, where "Joseph placed his father and brethren," Gen. 47:11. Pharaoh's first plan failed to accomplish his purpose. The people multiplied in spite of his tyranny. "And they were grieved," filled with chagrin and abhorrence, "because of the children of Israel," v. 12. Hence (c) they resorted to severer measures, made them "serve with rigor," v. 13, in a manner prohibited in Lev. 25:46. They toiled "in mortar, and in brick," v. 14. In this menial occupation of brick-making they were goaded on by overseers armed with whip or stick. "They made their lives bitter." This expresses the intensity of their hardships. The revelation made to Abraham was literally fulfilled, Gen. 15:13. God's word never fails.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

The scholars will probably not require prompting to recall the story of that night and day-dawn at Jabbok, Gen. 32:22-28. "Israel" was a princely family, when they came down to Egypt, rich in a good ancestry, vigorous households, many flocks and herds, and above all in the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Their fortunes in Egypt were varied, touched, indeed, the extremes of prosperity and of adversity. The contrast will form an excellent framework for the lesson.

I. GOOD TIMES, 1-7.

It is good to be able to name the twelve tribes in order (and the twelve apostles); memorizing is too much neglected. But it will show a sad lack of the sense of proportion to dwell too long on the first five verses. Full explanations are given in the "Exposition" and the class should clearly grasp the fact of the growth of seventy souls to almost two and a half millions, with all the increase of wealth, and comforts and power which accompanied that growth. Some of the old people in their lifetime have witnessed almost similar marvellous growth on this continent. "Good times" they were, indeed.