

distinction.—*d*—*The second of the King's state Chariots is assigned to him, and heralds are commanded to cry before him, "Bow the knee."* In V. 44: Pharaoh pledges to Joseph his own royal dignity as a guarantee that his power should be as unlimited as his own. Fourthly, his *social elevation*—he was united, by marriage to one of the most illustrious families of Egypt. The city of On, called Ayon, in Ezek. 30: 17 and Bethshemosh in Jer. 43: 13, but known in profane history by the name of Heliopolis, or "city of the Sun" was at this time the Egyptian Capital. The Priest or Prince, of the capital city, must have been a man of very high rank.

The exaltation of Joseph, who like Christ, our gospel Joseph was first humbled and then exalted, that he might save his brethren and his father's house—was a surprising contrast to his previous condition. For the persecution of his brethren he had the favour of the King. For the condition of a slave, the rank of a Prince. For a prison, a palace. For the toils of servitude Royal power. For fetters of iron, a chain of gold. It was also long delayed. Thirteen years of servitude elapsed from the time of his expulsion from his father's house and protection, before God interfered for his deliverance. Often during that time he may have been ready to faint under the idea that God had forgotten him; and yet he was not left without tokens of the divine care and favour. And still it came unexpectedly. Two long years had shown that the butler had forgotten him; and never perhaps had he less expectation of it than at that time. But the arrangements of God were completed, and the selfishness of the butler accomplished that which would never have been brought about by his gratitude.

Vv. 47-49.—Show us Joseph making provision for the coming famine. Twenty per cent of the produce of the year of plenty were collected and stored up, being probably a tax exacted from the people. In modern times the Egyptian taxes have been as much as 70 per cent; Joseph may have bought corn at low prices in addition to that yielded by the tax. The greatness of the crop during the years of plenty was perhaps never equalled in other times. The Egyptian wheat yields from seven to ten ears or heads on the stalk, and sometimes as many as eighteen stalks from one root. A handful of stalks from each seed, therefore, is such a return as has never been known before or since.

Explain to the children the leading facts in the history of Joseph; and practically improve the lesson by adverting to Jesus,

Joseph's great antitype, to whom alone they as sinners must go to receive the bread of life, even as the Egyptians and the house of his father went to Joseph.

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).