

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

THIRD QUARTER.

- 1. July 3. Israel in Egypt. Exodus i. 1-14.
2. July 10. The Coming Deliverer. Ex. ii. 5-15.
3. July 17. The Call of Moses. Ex. iii. 1-14.
4. July 24. Moses and Aaron. Ex. iv. 27-31; v. 1-4.
5. July 31. Moses and the Magicians. Ex. vii. 8-17.
6. Aug. 7. The Passover. Exodus xii. 1-14.
7. Aug. 14. The Red Sea. Exodus xiv. 19-27.
8. Aug. 21. The Manna. Ex. xvi. 1-8.
9. Aug. 28. The Commandments. Ex. xx. 1-11.
10. Sep. 4. The Commandments. Ex. xx. 12-21.
11. Sep. 11. Idolatry Punished. Ex. xxxii. 26-35.
12. Sep. 18. Leviticus of the Quarters Lessons.
13. Sep. 25. Selected Lesson: The Body in Subjection. 1 Cor. ix. 22-27.

Lesson III.—JULY 17.

THE CALL OF MOSES.

Exodus iii. 1-14.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 10-12.

The last lesson left Moses in the land of Midian, sitting by a well, (s. c. 1531). He was then forty years of age, and he had fled from Egypt before the enmity of Pharaoh and of the Israelites.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And he said, Certainly I will be with thee."—Ex. iii. 12.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Call of Moses, Exodus iii. 1-14.
T. Moses Settled in Midian, Exodus ii. 16-25.
W. Moses Commissioned, Acts vii. 30-37.
T. Joshua Commissioned, Josh. i. 1-9.
F. Isaiah before the Lord, Isaiah vi. 1-12.
S. John before the Lord, Rev. i. 10-20.
S. The Deliverer of Israel Commissioned, Exodus iii. 1-14.

THE DELIVERER OF ISRAEL COMMISSIONED.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Moses at Horeb, Vs. 1. II. Moses before God, Vs. 2-6. III. Moses Commissioned, Vs. 7-14.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vs. 1.—Where is Mount Horeb? Why is it called "the mountain of God"? What employment led Moses to this place? Whose flock did he keep? How came he in this man's service? What great king was originally a shepherd? (1 Sam. xvi.) What greater King likens himself to a shepherd? (John x.) Who are the sheep of the Lord?

II. Vs. 2-6.—What "great sight" did Moses behold at Horeb? Who then appeared to Moses? What titles are in vs. 2, 4, 6, given to this visitor? Give all God's words to Moses from vs. 4-6. What did Moses do when God spoke? Why?

III. Vs. 7-14.—Unto whom did God propose to send Moses? For what purpose? Give the reply of Moses. What reason had he for such a reply? How did God meet this difficulty? When was the promised "token" fulfilled? (Ex. xix. 1, 2.)

Forty years have passed since the flight of Moses from Egypt into Midian. There he married a daughter of Jethro, the priest of Midian, and "was content to dwell" there. There he had two sons, and spent his years as a shepherd, caring for the sheep of his father-in-law. Meanwhile, the bondage of the children of Israel continued in Egypt; and God heard their cry and their groaning, and remembering his covenant with Abraham, determined to deliver them. Our lesson presents "the hour and the man" chosen for this purpose.

NOTES.—(vs. 1-6).—Verse 1.—At the end of forty years, Moses seems to have been no richer than when he went to Midian. He kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law. Apparently, having none of his own. He was but a servant, instead of having abundant flocks and herds, as Jacob did under similar circumstances. See Gen. xxx. 43. Moses was in training for his great work. Jethro. Meaning pre-eminence. Lived

east of Horeb; and a wilderness lay between his home and the green valleys which intersected the range of Horeb. To these valleys, on the west of this wilderness, Moses had taken the flocks. Mountain of God, Sinai. Thus designated because of the signal displays of God's presence there, about to be narrated. Horeb. Meaning, a dry place. This was the name of the range of hills or mountains, of which Sinai (meaning jagged) was a peak.

Verses 2, 3.—Angel of the Lord. An angel is a messenger, and anything which God sends to do his work—whether a heavenly being, or a wind, or fire, or pestilence,—may be an angel of the Lord. But this phrase seems to have a special meaning here, as well as in many other Old Testament passages. See Gen. xvi. 7, 13; xxii. 11, 15; xxxi. 11, etc.; where it refers to the visible manifestation of God in the second person of the Trinity. In vs. 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, this "angel of the Lord" has the name of the Deity ascribed to him. In a flame of fire. See Deut. iv. 24; Heb. xii. 29. Bush. Literally, a bramble-bush; not some tall tree, but a humble bush, the thornacacia, such as is still found in that neighborhood. Was not consumed. This was the wonderful thing; not that a bush was on fire, but that it was not consumed. I will turn aside. He would know the meaning of this great sight. One design of the burning bush was, undoubtedly, to excite the attention of Moses; but that did not exhaust its meaning. It was intended to have some symbolic significance. Flame suggests suffering, and the process of refining; and the humble bush may represent the lowliness and feebleness of the Church of Christ. Israel in Egypt was not consumed, but grew greater under affliction.

Verses 4-6.—When the Lord. When Jehovah. The transition from the angel of Jehovah (vs. 3), to Jehovah (vs. 4), proves the identity of the two. God called to him. Two hundred years had passed since the last recorded conversation between God and man, (Gen. xli. 2). God knows the names of his saints. Draw not nigh. Compare Heb. x. 22. Put off thy shoes. The Oriental mark of respect, as the removal of the hat is with us. Even the priests of false religions entered their temples, and performed their services, bare-footed. So also the Jewish priests. Holy. Because of the special presence of God. The God of thy father. Not simply of Amram, for "father" is used in the generic sense. Moses was reminded of a holy ancestry. The God of Abraham, etc. The God of the Covenant, the God of the Promise, (Gen. xv. 13, 14; xvii. 8; xxii. 16-18; xxvi. 3, 4; xxviii. 13-15). Hid his face. In awe and fear; for it was supposed that no one could see God and live. See Gen. xxxii. 30; Deut. v. 26.

(Vs. 7-9).—The purpose of God toward Israel, as here disclosed to Moses, was one of sovereign, unconditional grace. Jehovah said, not I have seen their goodness, but, their affliction. Though Moses may sometimes have been tempted to think that God had forgotten his people, the Lord says emphatically, I have surely seen. He is not a careless spectator of his children's sufferings. At last, Israel, despairing of hope elsewhere, and shut up to God, had begun to cry to him, and God heard their cry. From personal inspection, he could say, I know their sorrows. The time had come for action. The period mentioned in Gen. xv. 13, had passed. Therefore, God said: I am come down, to deliver them. It was as if he had left his throne,—as Christ afterwards did,—in order to save his people. Deliverance must be out of evil into good; hence, this is "out of the hand of the Egyptians," and into a good land and large. The land of promise; larger than Goshen, and affording room for growth. Flowing with milk and honey. A proverbial description of the extraordinary fertility and loveliness of the land of Canaan. For fuller description, see Deut. viii. 7-9. Canaanites, etc. A land holding and feeding six nations, would certainly be "good and large" for one nation.

(Vs. 10-12).—I will send thee. Starting announcement, and an amazing honor? It was to be God's vicegerent to his own people; acting in his place, and clothed with miracle-working power. A type of Christ (Deut. xviii. 15), as deliverer, law giver, intercessor. Who

am I? He has oscillated from the presumption of chapter second, to unbelief. He remembers his failure, and seems to say: "If, with position and wealth, I failed, how can I hope for success in my present obscurity and poverty?" Certainly I will be with thee. This changes the whole face of affairs. There is an infinite difference between going un-sent, and going by God's command. A token unto thee. Not a present token; for God was demanding faith of Moses, and even the token called for the exercise of faith. See John xiii. 19; xiv. 29. (Vs. 13, 14).—The first objection his unworthiness, having been met, Moses has a second; it is, that the people may not receive him. The answer to this is God's Memorial Name: I am that I am. Or, "I shall be what I shall be." A new name, signifying undivided, unchangeable, eternal existence, one that always was, is, will be; a name reserved for this occasion, to be for ever associated with salvation.

The forty years of retirement for Moses were not wasted time. He waited on God while he waited for God. Every moment's delay was needed for the ripening of that grand character, and the preparation for the stupendous work. This may explain God's delays with his children now.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Review briefly, narrate the story of Ex. ii. 16-22. Moses had been a shepherd many, many years, but he had not forgotten his people.

Read verses 3 to 6, try to impress the solemnity of the scene. Why did God come to call Moses? Because it was now time for him to go back to his people. Listen to God's words. Read vs. 7, first half of vs. 8, and vs. 9. God knew all about their hard work; he knew just how many bricks they had made; he knew how often the task-masters had beaten them. God said: "I know their sorrows; I have heard their cry."

It is better to have God for a helper than all the kings and soldiers and rich people in the world. —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

We have been obliged to omit the Enigma Department for a week or two, but shall resume in the course of a week or two.

The Hole in the Closet.

A STORY BY MRS. MOUSE.

My home is under the floor of the garret in the old wooden house. I live with Mr. Mouse and my five children in a snug corner behind a big beam. I have a good many brothers and sisters and cousins who live close by me.

We do not stay under the floor among the dusty beams and boards all the time. No, indeed. Every night when the house is still, we travel about and enjoy ourselves.

There are plenty of holes in the floor where we get through, and we find a great deal in the garret that is useful to us. We can get all the paper and rags we need to make our beds of, and we can get things to eat, too.

When the weather is bad, the boys and girls come into the garret to play. They bring bread and butter and doughnuts with them, and leave crumbs for us to pick up. We like boys and girls, because they are always eating and leaving crumbs.

Sometimes we find our way into other rooms besides the garret, for the house is quite old, and it is full of wide cracks. Last spring I got into the closet where Madam Wood keeps the victuals. I fared like a queen for a whole month, and kept Mr. Mouse and the children supplied with the very best dainties. O, what nice bits of cheese I found, and frosted cake, and mince pie.

Once as I was travelling around the house I happened to get near this closet and I smelt something sweet and spicy. So I searched all about, and at last I found a little hole away up by the highest shelf where I could get through. Mr. Mouse tried to follow me, but he was so large that he could not get through the hole. So he staid on the other side, and I carried good things to

him to eat. We went night after night in this way and feasted. Mr. Mouse would caution me every time not to eat too much. He was afraid I might grow so fat that I should not be able to get through the hole. So he ate all the richest pieces himself.

After a while Madam Wood took down a pie from one of the upper shelves and saw that it was badly gnawed. She knew that I had done it, and set a trap to catch me that very night.

But I did not mind the trap, at all. I knew it would be foolish to try to get a scrap of cheese out of that box. I could find something else, and I kept on going just the same.

I told Mr. Mouse about the trap, and he charged me never to go near it. He said it would be dreadful if anything should happen to me and he should be left with five young children on his hands. So I was careful to do as he ordered me.

Then Madam Wood concluded that I was too wise to be caught in her trap, and she looked and looked all around the closet to find the place where I got in.

At last she spied the little hole by the highest shelf, and she set to work to stop it up so that I could not get in again. She filled it full of broken glass, and then fastened a piece of tin over. She nailed it down very strong. I knew just what she did, because I was listening the whole time.

I am afraid it will be a good while before I shall have another such chance to feast on nice things. And I know that I am in a safer place in the old garret than I was in the closet, even if I cannot get so much to eat. And I shall keep looking around and smelling at the cracks, and perhaps I may have good luck once more.—Our Little Ones.

A Long Riddle.

A young Bible student was asked: "How many boys are there in your class?"

He replied: "If you multiply the number of Jacob's sons by the number of times which the Israelites compassed Jericho, and add to the product, the number of measures of barley which Boaz gave Ruth, divide this by the number of Haman's sons, subtract from this Joseph's age at the time he stood before Pharaoh, add the number of stones in David's bag when he killed Goliath, subtract the number of furlongs that Bethany was distant from Jerusalem, divide by the number of anchors cast out when Paul was shipwrecked, subtract the number of persons saved in the ark, and the remainder will be the answer."

Now, let our young readers search for these numbers and find the answer and they will not easily forget what they have learned in the process.

"He's a Brick."

Very few of the thousands who use the above slang term know its origin or its primitive significance—according to which it is a grand thing to say of a man, "He is a brick." The word used in its original intent implies all that is brave, patriotic and loyal. Plutarch in his Life of Agesilaus, King of Sparta, gives us the meaning of the quaint and familiar expression.

On a certain occasion an ambassador from Epirus, on a diplomatic mission, was shown by the king over his capital. The ambassador knew of the monarch's fame—knew that, though nominally only king of Sparta, he was ruler of Greece—and he had looked to see massive walls rearing aloft their embattled towers for the defence of the city, but he found nothing of the kind. He marvelled much at this, and spoke of it to the king. "Sire," he said, "I have visited most of the principal towns, and I find no walls reared for defence. Why is this?"

"Indeed, Sir Ambassador," replied Agesilaus, "thou canst not have looked carefully. Come with me to-morrow morning, and I will show you the walls of Sparta."

Accordingly, on the following morning, the king led his guest out upon the plain where his army was drawn up in full array, and pointing proudly to the patriot host, he said, "There thou beholdest the walls of Sparta—ten thousand men, and every man a brick."

O Happy Day.

The day so sweetly celebrated in the well known hymn as "The Happy Day," is described by different names in the Scripture.

Sometimes it is spoken of as a day of espousals. The day in which Jesus, the Heavenly Bridegroom wins the heart of His bride. He reveals to her His love—displays His beauties—tells her of His suffering for her sake. He woos her by His sighs and tears, and lays siege to her heart on every side, while his lips drop honeyed words of loving kindness. It is a happy day when the soul is espoused to Christ. All heaven looks on, and rings a marriage-peal, and sweetest music fills the new born heart.

This day is also spoken of as the day of His power. There has been previously, if we may so express it, many a skirmish in which the Lord has withheld His great strength, but now He cometh forth to certain victory. The strong man armed may fight with all the fury of despair, but 'tis a hopeless conflict, "the stronger than he" has taken the field against him. Rampart after rampart is taken, stronghold after stronghold is carried. Before the mighty blows, doors of adamant give way, and bars of brass are shivered. Conquered at the Saviour's feet, the rebel cries, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" Mercy triumphs in the victory. The arm which struck the rebel low now raises him from the dust. The hand which gave the blow now brings the balm. He who kills now makes alive. The happy day is, in a word, "the day of salvation."

With many this day has a secret dawning. It does not come to all alike. There are some who know not the precise time when it commences. This is of little consequence so long as the day actually shines. Can the reader say when the light of this spiritual day first dawned. Were there any two consecutive moments in which it could be said "Now it is night," "Now it is day?" No! Imperceptibly the darkness melted into dawn; undetected by the eye the night began to ebb and light to flow. But you know the light now shines, you have walked in it, worked in it, and felt its warmth. Oh think not you are forbidden to sing of "The Happy Day," because you remember not its first golden ray.

Sometimes this day has an early and sometimes a long delayed dawn. God has no fixed age at which to convert, and the sun in the heavens at the same hour all the year round. Sometimes it is the child in whose heart the day breaks, and sometimes the aged white haired sinner. True, the former experience is the most glad some, for it is summer when the sun rises early, and winter when it rises late. But it can and does rise late. Long may anxious friends have cried, "Watchman, what of the night?" Long may the answer have been, "It is dark, murky dark," and yet just when despair is creeping over all, the joyful response is heard, "the morning cometh."

This day like all others, has a silent dawn. When light comes to open the gates of morn, and unbar the doors of day, she does so with so soft a step, that she shakes not the dew from the blade of grass, nor the rain drop from the feathery fern. Silently as the snow melts does the darkness depart. The work of grace within the heart can be perceived by its results, but not heard in its approach. The sigh, and the cry, and the prayer, are the music of the dawn, not its cause.

The dawning of this day, like that of all other days, is irresistible. Who can say to advancing morn, "thus far, but no further." If all the Parliaments of the world were to decree that the light of day should fail, the rosy morn would glide through the windows of "the house," and bid the senators view their folly. Were all the armies of the earth to gather themselves together to war with advancing dawn, it would but shine upon their weapons, and tell them they have no arms to combat her. So it is with grace in the heart. Neither earth nor hell, nor both combined can arrest the onward march of this blessed day. God is the light of the heart as well as of heaven, and who can quench His beams? Has this day dawned yet in your experience? If not, may the Lord now say, "Light be."

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