

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. Review of the Quarter's Lessons.
13. Sep. 25. Selected Lesson: The Body in Subjection: 1 Cor. ix. 22-27.

Lesson V.—JULY 31.

MOSES AND THE MAGICIANS. Exodus vii. 8-17.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 15-17.

The first effect of the appeal of Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh was an increase of Israel's burdens. This aroused them against Moses and Aaron, and sent Moses to the Lord for further direction.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham."—Psa. cv. 27.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Moses and the Magicians, Ex. vii. 8-17.
T. Oppression Increased, Ex. v. 5-23.
W. Deliverance Assured, Ex. vi. 1-13.
T. New Appeals to Pharaoh, Ex. vii. 1-7.
F. Lying Wonders, 2 Thess. ii. 1-17.
S. Lying Wonders, Ex. vii. 11-18.
S. The Deliverer Withstood, Ex. vii. 8-15.

THE DELIVERER WITHSTOOD BEFORE PHARAOH.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. In the Sign of the Serpent, Vss. 8-13. II. In the Sign of the Blood, Vss. 14-17.

QUESTIONS.—Vss. 8-13.—What demand did God anticipate that Pharaoh would make of Moses? What is a miracle? What reason had Pharaoh for making such a demand? How was Moses to meet this demand? How often before had that rod become a serpent? How did Pharaoh meet this miracle? What was the true spirit of these magicians? (See 2 Tim. iii. 8.)

Vss. 14-17.—What does the Lord here say of Pharaoh's heart? Where did he direct Moses to meet Pharaoh again? What river was meant? What was Moses to hold in his hand? By what sign did the Lord next prove his power? What reason for this is given in vs. 16? How did the Egyptians regard their river? What change is foretold in vs. 18? From vs. 19-21, 24, 25, tell how this sign resulted. How did the magicians withstand this sign? (vs. 22). By what power were the signs of Moses wrought? By what power were those of the magicians? What is the sure test of all miracles? (Mark ix. 39; John xi. 4. Whose signs did Moses and Aaron show? (See Golden Text.) How did these signs affect Pharaoh? (vs. 22, 23.) How did the signs shown by Jesus affect men? (John iii. 2; v. 36; vii. 31; ix. 16, 33).

Pharaoh chose to interpret the demands of the Israelites (in the last lesson) as an evidence that they were treated too leniently, and determined to crush out all thoughts of such privileges by adding to their burdens. He, therefore, bade his officers not to furnish them with the straw that was used in making brick, but to compel them to gather it for themselves, and yet to make the same amount of bricks as before. Not being able to do this, the Israelites were beaten; and a deputation to Pharaoh, making complaint of injustice, were sent away with harsh words. On their way back, they met

Moses and Aaron, and charged them with being the cause of their increased affliction. Greatly distressed, Moses took the matter to the Lord, and received from him fresh promises of the great deliverance. Now, again, he and Aaron stand before Pharaoh, to demand that he let the people go.

NOTES.—Verses 8, 9.—The "signs" of iv. 2-9, which were Moses' credentials, and which convinced the elders of Israel, (iv. 30, 31), were not wrought before Pharaoh at the interview of the last lesson. But God had previously (iv. 21) instructed Moses to "do all those wonders before Pharaoh," and here he teaches that Pharaoh will naturally demand such signs, as a proof of his being sent by God. Show a miracle for you. The demand was reasonable. Miracles believed, lie at the foundation of all religions which men have ever received as of divine origin. Thy rod. This rod, in Aaron's hand, was undoubtedly, the wondrous staff of Moses. Comp. vs. 15 and 17, with vs. 19 and 20. Rods were carried by all nobles and officials in the court of Pharaoh. They were symbols of authority and rank. Serpent. Not the same word as in iv. 3, but one implying any large reptile. The rod turned into a serpent would recall the serpent of Eden. It was also the emblem of divine wisdom and power, and revered as such.

Verses 10, 13.—As foretold by the Lord, Pharaoh demanded a "sign," and it was given. Aaron cast down his rod . . . and it became a serpent. But this sign made little impression upon the king. Accustomed to the feats of snake charmers and jugglers, he believed Moses and Aaron to be simply skillful magicians, who desired to work on his fears by their arts. Hence, he called the wise men and the sorcerers, and the magicians. The first and third classes were summoned to Pharaoh, in the time of Joseph, (Gen. xli. 8). They were now called to determine whether the wonder done by Moses and Aaron was anything more than a trick. "The magicians formed a distinct body of counselors, called upon for advice and assistance by the king, in times of difficulty." The magicians refused to believe in the divine power of Moses and Aaron; and to impress Pharaoh that the "sign" was but a trick, they imitated it, and cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents. Some suppose that these magicians actually performed a miracle, through the help of evil spirits. Others think that their act was simply a feat of legerdemain, or optical illusion. It may have been, Pharaoh was satisfied with the demonstration, and would not believe in anything supernatural about Aaron's "sign"; not even when Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods—though this fact cast dishonour upon the magicians, destroyed their sacred serpents, and proved the power of God to be with Moses. Hardened Pharaoh's heart, More correctly, "Pharaoh's heart was hardened," as every heart is that disobeys God, and refuses to be convinced by proper evidences.

(Vs. 14-17)—Pharaoh had now rejected the message of God. He had defied Jehovah, had scoffed at his servants, and had hardened himself against any appeal. Now begins that terrible series of judicial strokes, increasing in intensity of effect, by which the refractory monarch is, at length, compelled to let the people go. Hardened. Insensible to right reason. Get thee unto Pharaoh. The king cannot escape God's messenger. The time and place of this third meeting are significant. Pharaoh went out in the morning to the Nile, not simply for a walk, or to bathe, but to present his daily worship to that river which was a favorite deity with the Egyptians. There, in the presence of this deity, standing by the river's brink, with the rod, as the symbol of power in his hand, Moses was to utter the name of Jehovah once more to the king, and to give to him Jehovah's one message, Let my people go, and to append the threatening of dishonour to this deity. To the Nile, Egypt owed its soil and fertility. The deliciousness of its waters was a national boast, and it was supposed that a divine efficacy was in them to heal diseases. Not only was it an object of religious reverence, but even its fish had a special sacredness. They shall be turned to blood. This deity could not protect itself against Jehovah. This they could not do.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

God told Moses that he had not forgotten his promise. God said: "Pharaoh shall let them go, and I will bring them to Canaan, as I have promised."

God sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh again. Tell in detail the story of the lesson in vs. 8-12.

Pharaoh would not obey, and he had to be punished. God punished Pharaoh ten times before he obeyed. I will tell you how God punished him the first time. Narrate vividly the account in vs. 14-25.

It seems best to include in this lesson an account of the first nine plagues, as we will need to give undivided attention next week to the tenth. There will not be time to give all the details, but each plague may be mentioned briefly. The following references may be helpful in preparing the accounts. 2. Frogs; chap. viii. 1-15. 3. Lice; vs. 16-18. 4. Flies; vs. 20-32. 5. The murrain; chapter ix. 1-7. 6. Boils; vs. 8-12. 7. Hail; vs. 22-35. 8. Locusts; chap. x. vs. 3-6, 12-20. 9. Darkness; vs. 21-23.

"What a wicked man Pharaoh was to refuse to obey God so many times!" Yes, he was very wicked, and every time he refused to obey he grew more wicked. When do you think it is best to obey God? The very first time he speaks; how much trouble this would save. —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Youths' Department.

Who Guides the Birds.

Familiar as the migration of birds is to us, there is, perhaps, no question in zoology more obscure. The long flights they take, and the unerring certainty with which they wing their way between the most distant places, arriving and departing at the same period year after year, are points in the history of birds of passage as mysterious as they are interesting. We know that most migrants fly after sundown, though many of them select a moonlight night to cross the Mediterranean. But that their meteorological instinct is not unerring is proved by the fact that thousands are every year drowned in their flight over the Atlantic and other oceans. Northern Africa and Western Asia are selected as winter quarters by most of them, and they may be often noticed on their way thither to hang over towns at night, puzzled, in spite of their experience, by the shifting lights of the streets and houses. The swallow or the nightingale may sometimes be delayed by unexpected circumstances. Yet it is rarely that they arrive many days sooner or later, one year with another. Professor Newton considered that were seafowl satellites revolving round the earth, their arrival could hardly be more surely calculated by an astronomer. Foul weather or fair, heat or cold, the puffs repair to some of their stations punctually on a given day, as if their movements were regulated by clock-work. The swiftness of flight which characterizes most birds enables them to cover a vast space in a brief time. The common black swift can fly 276 miles an hour, a speed which if it could be maintained for less than half-a-day, would carry the bird from its winter to its summer quarters. The large purple swift of America is capable of even greater feats on the wing. The chimney-swallow is slower—90 miles per hour being about the limits of its power; but the passenger-pigeon of the United States can accomplish a journey of 1,000 miles between sunrise and sunset. It is also true, as the ingenious Herr Palmen has attempted to show, that migrants during their long flights may be directed by an experience partly inherited and partly acquired by the individual bird. They often follow the coast line of continents, and invariably take on their passage over the Mediterranean, one of three routes. But this theory will not explain how they pilot themselves across broad oceans, and is invalidated by the fact, familiar to every ornithologist, that the old and young birds do not journey in company together. Invariably, the young brood travel together; then come, after an interval, the parents; and finally the rear is brought up by the weakly, it is firm, molting, and broken-winged. This is the rule in autumn. The return journey is accomplished in

the reverse order. The distance travelled seems, moreover, to have no relation to the size of the traveller. The Swedish blue-throat performs its maternal functions among the Laps, and enjoys its winter holiday among the negroes of the Soudan, while the tiny-ruby throated humming bird proceeds annually from Mexico to Newfoundland and back again, though one would imagine that so delicate a little fairy would be more at home among the cacti and agaves of the Tierra Caliente than among the firs and fogs of the North.—London Standard.

Dead Egypt.

BY HORATIUS BONAR.

Isaiah xix. 25.

Are thy pyramids still smiling To the everlasting sun, Mighty Mizraim of the sand-waste, As they smiled in ages gone?

Is the sphinx still grandly gazing With those melancholy eyes, Drinking in delicious moonlight From those silver-showering skies?

Does thy gay Mukattam cliff-range Yet protect the level shore? Is that highway to the desert Still as lonely as of yore?

Is the bronze on thy brown ripples Still as brilliant as when she, Stately queen of spells and splendor, Glided o'er her river sea?

Does that river-sea so royal, With its soft, slow-swelling tide, Still do battle single handed With the waste on either side?

Are thy Pharaohs resting yonder, Filling each his fragrant shroud, With their own calm stars above them, As of old, without a cloud?

Do they still claim awful homage, Oldest peagee of the dead, In their chiselled shrines unconscious Of the ages that have sped?

Does the breath of ancient odors Sweeten still their cheerless room? Do the robes of princely Pathos Still adorn them in the tomb?

Is thy Memphis still the Memphis Of young Mizraim when he came From his cradle plain of Shinar, Here to build a boundless name?

Mystic-realm of magic story, Never changing clime and stream, Shadowy fatherland of science, Home of fable and of dream.

From thy temples marched the ages Of our earth's unwritten prime; These majestic Nubian portals Are the mouldering gates of time.

Buried dark beneath the ruins Of dead kingdoms thou hast lain; But thy day of honour dawneth, Thou shall rise to youth again.

In his hour of infant exile, Once the Son of God in thee Found a refuge from the tyrant, Underneath thy sheltering tree.

And for this thou art remembered; For this great debt shall be repaid. In earth's age of promised glory Israel's God shall lift thy head.

The voice of seers hath spoken Words of glorious light and rest; It has blessed thee lonely Egypt; And thou shalt—thou shalt be blest.

What to Teach Our Daughters.

Teach them self reliance. Teach them to make bread. Teach them to make shirts. Teach them to foot up store bills. Teach them to wear thick warm shoes. Teach them how to wash and iron clothes. Teach them how to make their own dresses.

Teach them every day, dry, hard, practical common sense. Teach them to say No, and mean it; or Yes, and stick to it.

Teach them to wear calico dresses and do it like queens. Teach them that a good, rosy romp is worth fifty consumptives.

Teach them that the more one lives within his income the more he will save. Teach them to have nothing to do with intemperate and dissolute young men.

Teach them the accomplishments, music, painting, drawing, if you have time and money to do it with.—Advance.

As it was with Peter, so it is with us; as long as there is in the valley below a lunatic child who needs our help, we must not stay on the Mount of Transfiguration.—George Dana Boardman.

Forty years ago the Fiji Islanders feasted on human flesh. Now forty thousand children attend Sunday school, and thousands of the people are earnest, consistent Christians.

My Influence.

"Gather up my influence and bury it with me," were the dying words of a young man to the weeping friends at his bedside, as stated to the speaker awhile since by one to whom he was dear. What a wish was this! What deep anguish of heart there must have been as the young man reflected upon his past life! A life which had not been what it should have been. With what deep regrets must his very soul have been filled as he thought of those young men whom he had influenced for evil!—influences which he felt must if possible be eradicated, and which led him, faintly but pleadingly to make such a dying request, "Gather up my influence and bury it with me."

My young friends, the influence of your lives, for good or evil, cannot be gathered up by your friends after your eyes are closed in death, no matter how earnestly you may plead in your last moments on earth. Your influence has gone out from you; you alone are responsible; you had the power to govern, to shape; your influence no human being can withdraw. Such a request cannot be fulfilled. It is impossible. Your relatives and friends cannot "gather up your influence and bury it with you." Young men, live noble, true, heroic lives. Possess this "moral courage" in full proportions and at all times—everywhere.—Baldwin.

Kleptomani.

This is a long word, and a hard one, but it is exceedingly handy to use in some cases. When a wealthy woman goes into a drygoods store and steals a piece of silk, that is called,—not theft, that is a vulgar word for the poor, but kleptomani! When a minister in a fit of absent-mindedness comes into your study and puts the book he has been reading into his capacious coat-pocket, that is kleptomani! When an elegantly dressed lady sits awhile in your parlor, and in your absence amuses herself by transferring the photograph of Longfellow from your album to her reticule, that is kleptomani! When a good fellow at the Social Union takes your silk umbrella, and leaves in its place a faded cotton one, that is kleptomani! When the church supplies its lecture-room with new singing books, and sixteen members of the church take home copies to examine, and never return them, nor contribute a single shilling to help to pay for them, that is kleptomani! When a good brother borrows your sermon from intense admiration of your ability, and preaches it to his own people before he returns it, that is kleptomani! How much grander word "kleptomani" is than theft! Why, some men think it a sort of honour to be a kleptomani! But no poor person can be a kleptomani. A poor person that steals is nothing but a thief.

Tear-Bottles

In Persia they bottle up their tears as of old. This is done in the following manner: As the mourners are sitting around and weeping, the master of ceremonies presents each one with a piece of cotton-wool, with which he wipes off his tears. This cotton is afterwards squeezed into a bottle, and the tears are preserved as a powerful and efficacious remedy for relieving a dying man after every other means has failed. It is also employed as a charm against evil influences. This custom is probably alluded to in Psalm lvi. 8, "Put thou my tears into a bottle." The practice was once universal, as is found by the tear-bottles which are found in almost every ancient tomb, for the ancients buried them with their dead as a proof of their affection.

The following story is from a ministerial correspondent of the London Freeman: A section of the Lancashire Baptist Association arranged for their annual gathering in a village, where there was a popular minister, though the sphere of his labour was comparatively limited. The place had only two public houses, one the Angel, the other the Sporting Dogs. The gathering was large, and the accommodation for dinner small. The club-room in each inn was engaged. The arrangement was thus announced: "We are sorry we cannot accommodate all in one room, so that all may dine together, but we have made the best arrangement we could, in conformity with which the ministers will go to the Angel, and the people to the Dogs."