

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 IV.—JULY 24.

MOSES AND AARON.

Exodus iv. 27-31; v. 1-4.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 29-31.

How Moses hesitated to respond to God's call, and how God overcame his hesitancy and associated Aaron in the work, are narrated in Ex. iii. 15-22; iv. 1-26. Aaron, whom we here meet for the first time, was eighty-three years of age, Moses being eighty, (Ex. vii. 7).

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen."—Psalm cv. 26.

- M. Moses and Aaron, Ex. iv. 27-31; v. 1-4.
T. God's Message to Israel, Ex. iii. 15-22.
W. Moses Returns to Egypt, Ex. iv. 1-23.
I. Impiety of the Ungodly, Job xxi. 1-20.
F. Peril of the Ungodly, Psa. xxxvii. 1-20.
S. Confidence in Trial, 1 Pet. iv. 12-19.
S. The Deliverer and his Prophet, Ex. iv. 27-31; v. 1-4.

THE DELIVERER AND HIS PROPHET.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. With Each Other, Vss. 27, 28. II. With the Elders, Vss. 29-31. III. With the King, Vss. 1-4.

QUESTIONS.—Vss. 27, 28.—Who were "with each other"? What official position did each occupy? What kinship existed between them? Where did they meet? Where had Moses been? Where had Aaron been? What "words of the Lord" had been given Moses? What "signs"? Why is Moses called a "deliverer"? Why is Aaron called a "prophet"?

Vss. 29-31.—Who were "the elders"? Where were the children of Israel dwelling? Who spoke to the people? Why did he rather than Moses speak to them? (See Ex. vii. 1, 2.) What did he say?

Vss. 1-4.—Who were "with the king"? With what king? In whose name did they speak? What did they mean by this demand? What was Pharaoh's reply? What further appeal did they make?

Having disclosed to Moses his Memorial Name, which was in itself the assurance of success, God bade him go gather the elders of Israel, and acquaint them with the purpose of deliverance, and to go with them to Pharaoh, and demand the release of Israel. To this, Moses raised objections, and, in answer, was endowed with miracle working power. Still objecting, with a diffidence which bordered upon unbelief, God's anger "was kindled," and he took from Moses the supreme glory of leadership, associating his brother, Aaron, with him in the great work. Moses then returned to Jethro; and, receiving his permission, prepared to go to Egypt. On the way, he met Aaron; and, with this meeting, our lesson begins. A beautiful scene,—this meeting of the two aged men, after forty years of separation.

NOTES.—(Vss. 27, 28).—The Lord said. Or, had said. The story goes back a little, to tell how God had already moved upon the mind of Aaron to go "into the wilderness to meet Moses," and how he was on his way, even before Moses had started from Midian. Although the directions given in the text are general, there can be little doubt that the Lord had acquainted him with the particular

spot where he was to meet his brother. They met at Sinai, or, the mount of God—so called, because of the subsequent glorious manifestations of God there. It was at the place of the burning bush, where Moses had received his call. Aaron, supposed to be from the word meaning bright. Hence, Aaron would mean enlightener. He was now eighty-three, (Moses being eighty years of age), and was the eldest son of Amram and Jochebed. During the absence of Moses, he had married a woman of the tribe of Judah, and now had four sons. Kissed him. The Oriental mode of salutation, a mutual greeting. The custom prevails in some parts of Europe, as well as in Eastern lands. See 1 Thess. v. 26; 1 Pet. v. 14. A beautiful scene of brotherly love and union is here presented, as these two great leaders meet and confer together. Pointing to the bush, Moses told its story to Aaron, and also all the words of the Lord, as found in chaps. iii. 4-iv. 23. Who had sent him. More properly, which he (the Lord) had charged him to do. All the signs. See vs. 2-9.

(Vss. 29-31).—The scene changes from the "wilderness" to Egypt. The brothers have come to Goshen, to their own people. Gathered . . . all the elders. Persons advanced in years. In gathering all the "elders," there would be brought together the heads of the chief, or representative families, of the various tribes. To them Aaron, as well known among them, introduced Moses, and told them the story of the burning bush, and all the words which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses. To this communication were added the signs given to Moses. The people believed. Convinced by these miracles; and thus the fear of Moses (iv. 1) was proved groundless. Visited. In grace. See Gen. 1. 24. Looked upon. In compassion. See Psa. xxv. 18. Bowed their heads. According to the Jewish custom, with their heads towards their knees. Worshipped. Though so long in Egypt, they had preserved their faith in the God of their fathers.

(Vss. 1-4).—Verse 1.—Afterward. Not only commissioned of God, but accepted of the people as their representatives. Moses and Aaron went in. Accompanied by some of the elders of Israel, to give the more weight to their mission, (iii. 18). The court had been a familiar place to Moses, forty years before. Pharaoh. The majority of recent writers say that this was Thotmes II. The Lord God of Israel. Rather Jehovah, God of Israel,—Jehovah being his specific title. Let my people go. As a message from Jehovah, it is fitting that its tone be peremptory. Hold a feast. A sacred festival, including worship and sacrifices. The demand was not unreasonable, but in accordance with the customs of heathen nations, who often celebrated festivals in honor of their gods. The Egyptians, themselves, sometimes made pilgrimages, such as Moses and Aaron proposed for Israel, to secluded spots, to perform their religious rites. Had Pharaoh yielded in this, no doubt Moses and Aaron would have boldly demanded the still greater concession of emancipation.

Verse 2.—Who is the Lord? Or, rather, Who is Jehovah? I know not the Lord. That is, Jehovah. The idea of Lord was familiar to him, as a term applied to objects of worship; but he was ignorant of the true God,—Jehovah. He haughtily refused to obey him, and boldly declared, Neither will I let Israel go. Perhaps he judged of the power of the God of the Hebrews, by the enslaved condition of those that trusted in him, and therefore ranked him low in the scale of deities. Pharaoh here threw down the gauntlet of battle, defying Jehovah, with all his power.

Verses 3, 4.—The God of the Hebrews. He had revealed himself to them by message and miracle: and demanded of them that His whole people should go into the wilderness, and offer sacrifices to him. To sacrifice to Jehovah, they must quit the land of idolatries. Three days' journey. This did not include a visit to Sinai, which was much farther off, but simply a distance which would take them out of Egypt. Lest he fall upon us with pestilence, etc. There would be nothing gained in keeping them, for then, Pharaoh would lose his slaves by the judgments of God. Wherefore do ye let [binders] the people from their works? Pharaoh treated their

demand contemptuously; considering it but an excuse to secure holidays for their people, which would involve a loss to the public works which they were building. Get you to your burdens. The reply of despotism to the cry for liberty of conscience. But this increased severity was needed, to work out God's purpose, to wean Israel from Egypt, and to prepare them to go out bodily from the land of bondage.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Review the two previous titles and Golden Texts; also the leading points of the narrative, in order that the story may be connected.

Moses began to think to himself, "It is forty years since I came away from Egypt; perhaps the people will not know me. I tried to help one man, and he was angry with me, (chap. ii. 13). If I tell the people that God talked to me out of a burning bush, perhaps they will say, 'We don't believe you.'" Read chap. iv. 1. Tell the story in vs. 2 to 9.

Moses was not yet ready to go; he thought that he could not talk to the people and to the king. Read vs. 11 and 12.

God promised that Aaron, Moses' elder brother, should speak for him. Read vs. 15, 16, 17.

Tell of Moses' departure, vs. 18-20. Some one came out to meet Moses. Who? How did Aaron know that Moses was coming? Read vs. 27.

God sent Moses with a message to the children of Israel. Has God ever sent any one with a message to you?—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

The Horse that went to Prayer-meeting.

BY ANNETTE L. NOBLE.

It was a curious kind of a horse; but then it was a curious prayer-meeting. You think, it may be, that good people go to prayer-meeting; so they do; but this was a prayer-meeting that went to bad people. It was in the work-house, where idle, disorderly and drunken folks are sent. There were a great many women there; some were sick; some were quite young; a few sent there for the first time were sorry and ashamed. There was once a lady that visited them. If you had seen her climbing up the long stairs with a basket on her arm and a bunch of flowers in her belt, you might not have thought she was carrying up the prayer-meeting with her. In a certain big room she used to sit down, talking as pleasantly as if these women had worn silk dresses instead of gowns made of bed-ticking. She might be talking about the weather or the view from the window, but she seemed to be thinking: "Poor woman! I am sorry for you. I wish you were better."

That drew them to her. If she had been thinking, "Oh you wretches! you ought to be punished," they would have found it out, and you can depend upon it they would have had work away in some other part of the house. Well, one day she arrived, sat down and told a story to a girl that was ill; five or six others, who were sewing, brought their work; three scrubbing women chose that side of the room to clean. By the time the story had got itself into the New Testament and was being read aloud, there were twenty together, and it was all at once a meeting. Some sat on the floor, two or three were drinking tea from big bowls; but all were orderly. They had sung hymns the lady had taught them, and had repeated the Lord's Prayer. Then she talked, and they grew stiller, like wicked children who get sorry and ashamed when their mother tells them about God, even if before they had reproached one another.

In the middle of this meeting Jimmy came. He was a queer little chap, four years old. He belonged to a woman who was outside the door in the hall, trying to keep him out of the meeting; but in he pattered on his wee old shoes, that carried him all day long into every corner in search of play-things he never found. He was pale and sharp-nosed, with one black eye; the other had a film over it, and was sightless. He stood still before the lady when she sang; then he was off, up and down the room, crept under beds, smelt of bottles

of medicine, threw a spool of thread out of the window, every few minutes coming back to see what a prayer meeting was like. His mother shook her fist at him, coaxed and scolded and called him under her breath. Jimmy only shook his head at her when he happened to think of it. At last he espied a little lunch-basket by the lady's side, and, going up to it, peered in. She went on with the Bible verse that she was teaching the women, but she slid off the basket cover and slipped into Jimmy's little thin hand a big, big piece of spice-cake. Think of that, to a little boy fed on black bread and codfish for six weeks! Jim's bright eye sparkled and those bad women listening to the verse were as glad for Jimmy as he was himself. His mother out in the hall, who had said, "Nobody could come the pious over her," gave up trying to get him, and went back to her work. I assure you Jimmy approved of prayer-meetings after that, and never failed to come when he discovered one. He did no harm, but in your meetings the sexton would have put out the uneasy little midget pretty quick.

One day the lady went to see his mother at her work. She did not talk of her wickedness or ask her to come to the meeting, but spoke of Jimmy and how delicate he looked. The mother's big black eyes grew softer after a while, and she found herself telling how she came to be there. She had a "good, industrious man, too good for the likes of her." He provided well for her, and they would have been happy if she could have let "drink" alone; but she loved beer. One day she drank more than usual, made a great uproar, was arrested and sent here. Her poor husband was discouraged, and she would not blame him if he "went to the bad" himself. Jimmy was their only child; he loved him, but as there was no one to take care of him he was sent with his mother. The next time the lady came she went after Mary and asked her to come into the meeting.

"I won't then," said Mary. "I'm no hypocrite. My old mother was good, and my father too, but there is naught of that about me and I'm too old to put it on."

That same day Jimmy came to meeting as usual, and made very little trouble. The coarse food and the being shut up so closely made him listless. He laid himself across the lap of a woman who sat on the floor to listen, and he watched the lady out of his one eye with a dreary expression for so young a child. She was not ready to end the meeting, but she must have looked very pitifully upon Jim, for he rose and tottered over to her lunch-basket, as if the kindness in her face might have meant—spice cake! It did; but not that alone; oh no, indeed!

Such a shrill squeal of delight as that four-year old boy set up and kept going! The hymn had to stop short and was not taken up again. Out of that basket he drew, panting with excitement, a bright yellow horse with a scarlet rider; both of them in a green hoop which, when started rolled down the room, the horse swinging, the rider ringing a bell, and Jim's thin legs spinning along after it in a way to "brake up" any prayer-meeting, genteel or otherwise. They all knew then how much he must have longed for a play-thing by the fairly crazy delight he showed over this one. He danced and ran and capered, spinning around with it like an exceedingly frantic little bug. At last he thought of his mother and away he went to her.

Now what that yellow horse said or did in the next week I cannot say; but when there was another prayer meeting well under way, the door opened, and the yellow horse careered down the long room straight toward it, and Jim followed dragging his mother, like a little boat tugging a bigger craft. He stopped at the meeting, took the horse on his knees and put himself in his mother's lap, as much as to say, "Here we are, and going to behave ourselves too." The lady read and talked as she always did, and Mary's eyes got so full of tears that she wanted to hide behind Jim's head, but he bobbed it about so that she could not. When the meeting was all over and the rest had gone to their work, she said, hesitatingly, "If I s'posed it'd be any use to try, I'd let drink alone. I'm wickeder than most of these others here; 'cause lots of 'm haven't

got any home, or else they've got a man worse than they be. I can't go straight all alone, but if, as you say, God does help folks that take hold hard to help themselves—why, I might try. Will He help me, do you s'pose? John (that's my husband) he'd be so glad. I am smart when I'm sober, and I keep his home clean. I haven't got any other bad ways and never was accused of any; but I just gave up ever trying to do better when I got sent here. I meant to keep a way from you, but Jimmy wouldn't let me. That yellow horse was the biggest thing that ever happened to him, and it had got to come to prayer meetin'—and I had got to come to."

The lady told her that God's love and help were ready the minute that she was ready to take them. If she did her best she could be kept from strong drink. She told Mary it was indeed a great thing to have a sober, hard working husband; and she asked her if she wanted little Jim to grow up and be ashamed of her. Mary listened to every word. For three weeks after that she came to the prayer-meeting just as steadily as Jim and the horse. The fourth week she was not there, but there was a letter awaiting the lady. This was its contents, only in the real one every line began with a capital, like poetry; but that did not matter; there was more in it than in some poems. It said:

"Jim and I went out last Monday. I got to thinking before I went out, and I wrote to John that if he wouldn't give up, and if he'd overlook this time, I'd do better. I didn't know if he would or not; but when I got into the city there he was, so glad to see Jim—laughing because he would run and rattle that yellow horse over the pavement. Why, he never said a word about where I'd been. The rooms were all clean and he'd got supper all ready for us. Jim ate up half there was before ever I got ready. It come over me how nigh I'd been to giving up everything and going to the dogs. I told John all you said, and he promised to stand by me. He said we'd move out of that ward, away from old neighbours; that we'd better sign the pledge and on Sundays go to Gospel meetings. Please God, that is the last racket I'll ever go on! Jimmy is awful happy. He didn't like workhouse codfish; now John fetches him every night a big bun with currants in it. When I see him playing with the tin horse I think how it was just that thing that pulled me into your meeting. I could have seen you passing around Bibles and tracts for ever, and thought it was just your trade, you know; but when you fetched the poor little chap that painted creeter, away out from the city, I couldn't have sassed you, if I had been ugly enough to try it. It is easy enough to hear folks tell me how wicked I be, I guess I know it better than they, though, and it 'tain't none of their business in particular either. John he says you was after me just the same, only you baited your hook with spice-cake for the baby; but what if you did? it was a nice way. I never shall forget you, and please don't forget to pray for me. From your respectful well-wisher, MARY WILLIAMSON."

The lady read it and was happy. She said to herself: "The means of grace are many. I thought that horse would draw something good after it."—Christian Union.

HINT FROM AN UNDERTAKER.—I once picked up a hint as to the sad uses to which the study of human nature is occasionally put. A man happened to be in the shop who was employed in "black work"—or who, in other words, worked for an undertaker—and in saying something about his occupation I remember that he made what sounded to be a cruel statement. "Yes, sir," he said, "it's a rule in our trade that if you want to get your money easy you must send the bill in when the tears are in the eyes." There is no reason whatever, so far as I know to suppose that undertakers are less tender hearted than other men, and I took the utterance to mean merely that, under the influence of strong emotions, either of sorrow or of joy, people are less disposed to raise questions and disputes that they might be in quieter moments. It is only now and then that I find a bridegroom grumble in the vestry at the amount of the marriage fee, whereas if he were applied to for it a week later he might happen to be very captious.—Leisure Hour.