

half-past two p.m. The following obituary minute was adopted in relation to the late Mr. Stuart. "The Presbytery records its deep sorrow at the death of their much esteemed brother, the Rev. John Stuart, B.A., of Trenton, who died on the 6th of May last, after a pastorate of about five years. The Church has lost in him a good man, an excellent scholar, an acceptable preacher, a faithful and beloved pastor. After a distinguished career as a student he was licensed, and was soon settled in his first and only charge, greatly to the satisfaction of his congregation, and with the prospect of great usefulness in the ministry of the glorious Gospel, to which he had consecrated his life from his early years. His sincere piety, his fine culture, his sound judgment and gentlemanly manner, made him a favourite wherever he was known, and, if he had been spared, would have gained for him growing respect and influence not only in his own congregation but in the Presbytery and throughout the Church generally. But the work assigned him by the Master was finished, and he has been called away to his reward. The Presbytery desires to express its heart-felt sympathy with his widow, and commends her to the kind care of Him who is the widow's stay. The Presbytery earnestly hopes that the death of our highly esteemed co-Presbyter will stir up us who remain to work more diligently than hitherto while it is day, because the night cometh when no man can work." The Clerk was instructed to require students to table their certificates, and to prescribe them written exercises. The committee to strike a rate on t. half of the Presbytery Fund reported that an assessment of twenty cents per family was found necessary. A portion of the evening of the second day was devoted to the hearing of addresses on special topics. Mr. Wishart spoke on church attendance, Mr. Robertson on the duties of ruling elders, and Mr. McCuaig on prayer meetings. Mr. Wishart was appointed to attend to the interests of the College Fund within the bounds. A committee was appointed, Mr. Young (Convener), to consider the question of holding missionary meetings.

THOS. S. CHAMBERS, Pres. Clerk.

REV. ROBERT HALL, MISSOURI.

The following subscriptions have been received by me for the Fund begun in meeting of Assembly for the Rev. R. Hall, Missouri: Revs. R. Campbell, Montreal, \$5; R. Campbell, \$2; J. S. Black, \$5; D. M. Gordon, \$4; A. F. Tully, \$1; D. Mitchell, 50 cents; Dr. Ure and Mrs. Ure, \$10; Principal Grant, \$5; Dr. Burns, \$5; S. Lyle, \$5; Mr. C. Davidson, \$5; Revs. M. G. Henry, \$2; J. S. Burnett, \$2; R. Murray, \$1; R. H. Warden, \$5; R. Torrance, \$5; Mr. C. Gordon, \$1; Revs. G. Munro, \$2; Dr. Cochrane, \$4; J. Laing, \$2; Dr. Smith, \$3; G. Bruce, \$2; Dr. Waters, \$4; F. M. Dewey, \$1; M. McAllister, \$2; Professor Bryce, \$4; Dr. Matthews, \$4; Dr. Wardrope, \$2; Mr. J. Stirling, \$5; Mr. G. McNicken, \$4; Revs. A. Drummond, \$2; Wm. Armstrong, \$2.50; W. T. Wilkins, \$4; A Friend, \$2; Revs. W. Mitchell, \$2.50; Dr. Kemp, \$2; Professor Forrest, \$4; Dr. Black, \$5; W. T. McMullen, \$3; Mr. M. McMurchy, \$5; Revs. J. McKinnon, \$2; D. Wardrope, \$4; Dr. James, \$5; J. Crombie, \$4; J. M. King, \$10; J. Middlemiss, \$2; Principal McVicar, \$5; Mr. M. McMillan, \$2; Hon. J. McMurrich, \$5; Mr. W. B. McMurrich, \$5; Revs. J. Hogg, \$—; Professor McLaren, \$5; Mrs. Bartlett, \$—; Mr. J. M. Clark, \$25; Mr. D. Morrice, \$100; Revs. Professor Hart, \$1; P. Wright, \$3; Mr. Wm. Alexander, \$2; Mr. J. Wilson, \$8; A Friend, \$2; Rev. W. Inglis, \$10; Professor Young, \$2; Rev. J. M. Clark, \$5; J. McCoy, \$1; Per Rev. J. K. Smith, \$30.33; B. F. P., \$5; A Friend, \$2; Revs. J. White, \$2; J. J. Cameron, \$5; Mr. J. Brown, \$1; Rev. W. Wilson, \$2; per Rev. A. A. Drummond, \$4; Rev. Alex. Kennedy, \$5; per Rev. J. McFarlane, \$20; Revs. J. Ratcliff, \$1; P. Masgrave, \$4; Mr. McGee, \$25; Dr. Atkins, \$4; Dr. Graham, \$5; Mrs. Dr. Burns, \$2; Mrs. J. D. Moore, \$5; Mr. Wm. Roger, \$2; Rev. J. B. Muir, \$2; per Rev. J. Pringle, \$31; Mr. Wm. Dunbar, \$5; Mr. John Stewart, \$4; Revs. A. Stewart, \$4; James Cameron, \$4.

R. HAMILTON, Treasurer.

Motherwell, 14th July, 1881.

In a note accompanying the list, Mr. Hamilton says that when last he saw Mr. Hall he found him not suffering so much pain as on the previous occasion, but he adds: "The terrible disease evidently makes increasing progress, so that he is so overcome by it he is apt to fall asleep during the brief time any one may

converse with him. His faith is kept steadfastly on the merits of the loving Saviour, so that he has no fears in looking forward to the end. He feels grateful for the deep interest Christian brethren have manifested towards him and his."

MANY of our readers will regret to hear of the death of Dean Stanley, which took place on Monday last, after a comparatively short but severe illness.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXXI

July 21. } MOSES AND THE MAGICIANS. { Ex vii 8-17.
1881. }

GOLDEN TEXT—"They shewed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham."—Ps. cv. 27.

HOME READINGS.

M Ex vi. 1-13. God renews His Promise.
T Ex vii. 1-25. Moses and the Magicians.
W Ex viii. 1-15. Plague of Frogs.
Th Ex viii. 16-32. Plagues of Lice and Flies.
F Ex ix. 1-21. Murrain and Boils.
S Ex ix. 22-35. The Hail.
Sab. Ex x. 1-29. Locusts and Darkness.

HELPS TO STUDY.

Our last lesson closed with the harsh words of Pharaoh to Moses and Aaron in reply to the demand made upon him to release the Hebrews from bondage and permit them to worship the God of their fathers, "Get you unto your burdens"—reminding the noble brothers that they themselves belonged to the enslaved race, and hinting that, instead of effecting the deliverance of their kindred, they were risking the loss of their own liberty.

After this we read of increased oppression, of terrible pressure brought to bear upon the Hebrew officers in order that it might react on those beneath them; formerly they were forced to make brick, now they were ordered to "make brick without straw"—ever since a world-wide proverb, used to characterize the most unreasonable demands.

The chief men of the Hebrews, smarting under the rod, turned upon Moses and Aaron and accused them of being the cause of their increased suffering, "because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their throat to slay us."

What could Moses do? To whom could he go? He "returned unto the Lord and said, Lord, why hast Thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me?"

The answer to these questions finds partial expression in our present lesson, but the end is not yet; the darkness is still great, but there are indications that the dawn is near.

The following division of the lesson may be found convenient: (1) *The Unequal Contest*, (2) *The Divine Mission Proved*, (3) *The Evidence Rejected*, (4) *The Hard Heart made Harder Still*, (5) *The Warning—the Beginning of Plagues*.

THE UNEQUAL CONTEST.—Vers. 8-11. "Certainly," a fair-minded Egyptian might say, "it is an unequal contest, for the whole learning, and wisdom, and skill, and craft of the most enlightened nation on earth—the wise men, the soothsayers, and the magicians of Egypt—are pitted against two plain men from the wilderness." But the inequality was altogether the other way, for the contest was really between the simple but irresistible power of God and the poor little contrivances of man—between the majesty of Divine might and the meanness of human trickery.

And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. From verse 17 of this chapter, and from verse 17 of chapter iv. it is apparent that what is here spoken of as the rod of Aaron is the rod that Moses brought with him from the land of Midian; so this rod is not new to us; we have heard of it before. "What is that in thine hand?" was the reply to Moses' complaint of weakness, and forthwith the rod was turned into a serpent. Now we find this same shepherd's crook transferred to the hands of Aaron, the Divine power accompanying it, for the purpose of meeting the demand of Pharaoh when he should say, "Shew a miracle for you." And this rod is not yet done with. The Bible student will hear of it again and again. But the power was not in the rod; and before the ten plagues were over, even the Egyptian magicians were forced to say, "This is the finger of God" (Ex. viii. 19).

Now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. The word translated "enchantments," does not necessarily imply Satanic influence, although some commentators support that view. The ancient Egyptians were far advanced in such sciences as chemistry and mechanics; but this knowledge was confined to the priesthood and to those under their immediate control; and any wonders that could be accomplished by the aid of these sciences were attributed to supernatural powers, and used for the purpose of keeping up the credit of the gods of the country. Their imitation of Aaron's miracle may have been altogether artificial, or their serpents may have been real, natural serpents, benumbed and stiffened so as to present the appearance of rods. This matter is very doubtful, and it is best not to be positive. One thing is certain, that if the Egyptian soothsayers did really work miracles, then they did so by the power of Satan—as for the gods of Egypt, they were mere names, not beings.

II. THE DIVINE MISSION PROVED.—Ver. 12. Whatever may have been the nature of the rods thrown down by the Egyptian magicians—possibly they were very expensive articles, the product of much skill, care, and labour—they

never got them back again. Had they failed in making it appear that their rods were changed into serpents, it would have been bad enough, but how foolish they must have looked when they stood there and saw the very implements of their craft taken from them by the power against which they had dared to contend. Nothing could more decisively prove the Divine mission of Moses and Aaron, and nothing could be more significant of coming defeat to Pharaoh, than the fact that, when the magicians' rods were cast down and apparently changed into serpents, Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

III. THE EVIDENCE REJECTED.—Ver. 13. Pharaoh had called for a miracle; the miracle was performed; but he yielded not. We are left to infer that he had not been at all open to conviction on the point in question, and that he had called for evidence merely in the expectation that it would not be forthcoming. From this the "S. S. Times" draws two practical lessons: (1) "No mere display of miraculous power is sufficient to change the heart or produce real faith (Matt. xi. 20; Luke xvi. 31)." (2) "Men may be intellectually convinced of the truth, and yet not obey it (John xiii. 17; Rom. i. 32)."

IV. THE HARD HEART MADE HARDER STILL.—Ver. 14. It is not to be supposed that God exercised a direct influence on the heart of Pharaoh to make him worse than he had been. All He had to do was to leave him alone, or in the language of Scripture, to withhold His "restraining grace" from him. "The Lord," says the "S. S. Times," "gave up Pharaoh to his own headstrong will, suffered his pride and obstinacy to run on unchecked, and allowed his impiety to work out its own punishment by involving him in ever-deepening sin and ruin. Thus the preaching of the prophets and of our Lord Himself is said to have hardened men's hearts (Isaiah vi. 10; John xii. 37-40); not that this was its aim or its legitimate tendency, but to the unbelieving and the disobedient it afforded a new occasion for the evil of their nature to develop itself in yet more aggravated forms."

V. THE WARNING—THE BEGINNING OF PLAGUES.—Vers. 15-17. As this is the only lesson which contains any reference to the ten plagues sent upon Pharaoh and his people to compel them to let the Israelites go, it may be well to give a list of them: (1) The turning of the waters of the Nile into blood, (2) Frogs, (3) Lice or gnats, (4) Flies, (5) Cattle-plague, (6) Boils, (7) Hail, (8) Locusts, (9) Darkness, (10) The smiting of the first-born. In our present lesson we find Moses authorized to announce the first of these plagues to Pharaoh.

Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water—perhaps to worship it, as the Nile was reckoned a divinity, or at least a representative of one. Leaving idolatry aside, to pollute the waters of the Nile in any way would be a terrible calamity to the Egyptians, for they depended altogether upon it for their water supply. But considering that they worshipped the river as a God, the effect upon their feelings of seeing its waters turned into blood would be overpowering.

In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord. It would be difficult to conclude this lesson in any better way than by taking the following paragraph from the paper already quoted:

"God will see to it that every man believes in Him sooner or later. There will be an end of doubt in one way, if not in another. God wants men to walk by faith; but if they refuse to do this they shall have visible evidence that He is the Lord. 'God tried every gentle way to win me,' said one, 'but I wouldn't heed His loving calls. Then He pressed me more heavily, but I resisted Him still. It wasn't until He had taken my last child from my arms, and I stood all alone in the world, that I even looked toward God. Oh that I had been wise, and had yielded to Him before all this!' It is a perilous thing to press God for evidence of His power. It is a perilous thing to refuse attention to God's gentlest calls. Hasn't God given sufficient proof that He is God? Dare you defy His power, by delaying obedience to the commands He has already made plain to you? Would you have the waters you now look to for your refreshing turned to blood before your eyes? God can do this, if nothing short of it will bring you to a recognition of His authority."

Of Ireland's two dukes, Leinster, a Whig, rarely passes a day out of it, while Abercorn, a Tory, except when he was viceroy, has rarely spent, on an average of years, two months a year in it, although for many years he has had no other country home except when he has hired one in England. The value of their respective properties is about the same. Neither is wealthy for his position, and both have had families of thirteen children.

TO SUBSCRIBERS IN ARREARS.

The fact that so many of our readers allow their subscriptions to get far in arrears renders the publication of THE PRESBYTERIAN a very onerous task. The amount so owing now aggregates THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS. A change must take place. It is impossible for us to longer allow so unsatisfactory a state of affairs to continue, and friends are urged TO MAKE IMMEDIATE REMITTANCE. Accounts are enclosed in this issue, and we expect a prompt response.

We have all along looked upon our subscribers as HONEST AND TRUSTWORTHY; it is now for them to shew that our estimate was not a great mistake.

Names in arrears for more than two years on 1st of August next will be struck from our list; and the accounts will be placed in other hands for collection,