

years of incessant toil, endurance and testing, as well as of great blessing to others. When his end drew near in A.D. 579, the

last words that he wrote were,—“They that seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.”

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

By Rev. W. H. Smith, Ph.D., Fredericton, N.B.

Bring out, briefly, by well directed questions, the contents of the whole Lesson psalm (see Lesson Setting). The Lesson itself falls into two parts: (1) the life of the Hebrews in Egypt; (2) the judgments God wrought on behalf of His children. The main points to be enforced are:

1. *God always has regard to His own people in the exercise of His judgments.* The Israelites did not suffer from the plagues. Bring out the fact that, belonging, as God's people do, to the order of nature, they are not exempt from such ills, like sickness, accidents, etc., as fall on all flesh; but what to the ungodly becomes absolute ruin, becomes on the other, hand, to God's chosen the occasion for a fuller expression of His saving power.

2. *The things which should lead us to a sympathetic response to God's will may become the occasion of a hardening of heart.* Have the class discuss why things which bless some curse others.

3. *The sinful heart which repents in dire distress, often returns to evil when the tribulation is removed.* Bring out the folly of the human heart in supposing that delay in executing judgment is any encouragement toward greater sin.

4. *The lessons of the plagues.* These are many; but the following may be specially emphasized: (a) The supreme authority of God in His world. Consider Pharaoh's view that he was lord, owing allegiance to no one. These plagues demonstrated that God's will was absolute: His children protected; their enemies were conquered. The gods of Egypt were found worthless. (b) The plagues were all according to natural processes. The Nile ran blood red every year from vegetable matter; frogs plagued the land in September, flies and other insects, cattle disease, hail and fog were com-

mon sources of calamity. Bring out the real divine factor in these plagues, namely, that they came on and were removed by God's will, in response to the entreaties of His people. Impress the truth that God is for right against wrong in all His ways.

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

By Rev. A. Wylie Mahon, B.D., St. Andrews, N.B.

Point out that the Lesson psalm is a sacred historical ballad, the history of God's ancient people converted into poetry. The Lesson embraces the tragic period of the plagues. How many plagues were there? Ask the class to name them. In what order are they given in Exodus? How is that order departed from in this psalm? Discuss with the class the following points:

1. *The Nature of the Plagues.* Bring out the natural basis of each,—how at times, for example, the sun was darkened by vapor and clouds of sand, and everything assumed a weird aspect. While recognizing this natural basis of the plagues, do not fail to impress upon the class that we have here manifestations of the supernatural.

2. *The Purpose of the Plagues.* Note how this is expressed in Ex. 8:10; 9:14. God revealed Himself to Pharaoh in these divine ways. Pharaoh was slow of heart to learn the divine lessons. Bring out the different stages in Pharaoh's experience, first his profane indifference (Ex. 7:23), then his awakening to a sense of danger (Ex. 8:8), then his confession of sin (Ex. 9:27; 10:16, 17), then his forced surrender to the will of God after the death-angel had done his work. Remind the class that God does not afflict willingly or grieve the children of men (Lam. 3:33), and that when He is compelled to do so it is always that some good may be done.

3. *The Result of the Plagues.* Emphasize the fact, that in this great struggle between God and Pharaoh, God triumphed, and that this is always the case in the struggle between good and evil.