

stroyed the cattle, was directed against the whole system of brute worship. In the sixth, the bloody rites of Typhon, the evil principle, to avert whose anger human sacrifices were sometimes offered, and their ashes cast into the air, were made a curse to the idolators by bringing boils and blains. The eighth plague was directed against the worship of Serapis, whose province it was to protect the country from locusts. The seventh and ninth—the fearful thunder and hail, scarcely ever known in Egypt, and the darkness that might be felt, were aimed at the worship of Osiris and Isis, the sun and the moon, after the Nile the supreme gods of Egypt, and supposed to control the elements. The destruction of the first-born showed that Jehovah was the God that executes judgment in the earth.

V. 14.—The hardening of Pharaoh's heart, here attributed to God, is said, chap. viii. 15, to be his own work. The meaning is that God did not interfere to restrain him, but left him to the natural influence of his own pride and unbelief, which led him to trust to the incantations of his magicians and to reject the solemn warnings of Moses. In verses 15 to 18, we have God's message to Pharaoh. Moses is commanded to address him no longer as a humble petitioner, but with all the dignity of the Ambassador of Jehovah. He was to meet him as he went out to pay his morning devotions to that river which was the pride, the glory and the god of Egypt. Pharaoh had contemptuously asked, chap. v. 2, "*who is the Lord?*"

Vv. 19–21.—Show us the infliction of this terrible judgment. Moses directed Aaron, who had been appointed to be his minister, to stretch out his rod over the river and all the streams, ponds and pools of Egypt, and their waters were immediately turned into blood, in the sight of Pharaoh and his courtiers. The mighty stream, which, as in their pride they boasted, made them independent of the rains of heaven, annually overflowing the whole country, and depositing on it the fertilizing mud, brought down from the hilaam, cry plain of Upper Abyssinia—and in those early ages, as now, furnishing the most delicious water for drinking that is known—flows in thickened blood, casting up its perished multitudes of fish, and tainting the air with its noisome stench. From Num. xi. 5, we learn that fish formed an important item in the food of the Egyptians. They had stained the waters of the Nile with the blood of Hebrew innocents, and now God gave them blood to drink, for they were worthy. Instruments of sin are made instruments of punishment. God

can convert our choicest blessings into our greatest plagues. In v. 22, we find that Pharaoh's magicians accomplished, probably only in appearance, some feeble imitation of this great miracle, and furnished him with an excuse for despising the words of Moses and persevering in his course of resistance to Jehovah.

### THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—Jehovah's Passover—*Ex. xii 21–30, 51. Golden Text: 1 Cor. v. 7.*

To get a full account of the Passover, of its origin, and its nature, and its design, it is necessary to read this chapter from the beginning. Indeed the verses marked cannot be otherwise understood.

V. 21 is explained by vv 3–7. Every householder of the Israelites was to take a "lamb without blemish, a male of the first year, out of his flock and slay it on or towards the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month. And if the household was small then two households might unite in this act.

V. 22.—The blood of the slain lamb was then sprinkled on the lintels and door-posts of the houses (see v. 7), by the Elders of Israel, or by the heads of households, for as yet the priesthood, as a separate order, had not been appointed. The next verse explains why no one was to go out of his house until the morning.

V. 24.—For the Lord was to pass through to smite the Egyptians. See also v. 12. The 29th and 30th verses tell us that God did execute this threatening. At midnight the destroying angel passed through all the land, and passed over or by all the houses, the lintels and door-posts of which were sprinkled with blood, but into all others. Hence the word *passover*.

Vv. 24, 25.—These verses tell us that the Israelites were to continue the observance of this ordinance even after they came into the land of promise; and, vv. 26, 27, they were to instruct their children in the meaning of it, so that they might intelligently observe it.

Though it is not contained in the verses marked off for the lesson, yet it will be well for the teacher to speak about the *feast* of the passover. It was a *feast* as well as a *sacrifice*, or, more correctly speaking, it was a feast upon a sacrifice. See vv. 8, 9, 10. The body of the lamb was roasted entire none of its bones being allowed to be broken, nor its flesh to be boiled; and if any portion should remain uneaten, to prevent it from seeing corruption, or being put to a common use, it was to be consumed with fire. It was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and eaten in haste, and all were to partake of it.