

that he can arrest or turn aside the purpose of God, saying, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us!" Break his bands asunder! How he hath sith in the heavens shall laugh!—*Dr. Guthrie.*

3. A HARDENED HEART, vers. 14, 22. (1) *Heart secrets known to God.* The Lord explains to Moses the inmost thoughts of PHARAOH'S HEART. Psa. xxxix. 2. HARDENED. Like steel; no impression can be made upon it by reason, sense, goodness, wooing, or warning. The sinner's heart of stone. Ezek. xi. 19. Pharaoh the representative of millions. He hardened his own heart; God permitted it. Every sinner's consciousness reveals the history and hardening of Pharaoh. (2) *A stubborn refusal repeated.* No wisdom in sin. TO LET THE PEOPLE GO would be highest wisdom. But sin blinds the vision. (3) *A refuge of lies.* MAGICIANS—the interpreters of difficult subjects. DID SO. Procured water by digging, (verse 24,) and WITH ENCHANTMENTS attempted to turn it into blood. They were consummate tricksters; and perhaps, too, they had Satanic help, permitted by God, that he might make the wrath of man to praise him. Psa. lxxvi. 10. The stronger the opposition the more resplendent the glory of God's miracles. Let Pharaoh use every art, human and hellish, the y are alike futile against the Omnipotent. Isa. xxviii. 17. The haughty king's question, "Who is the Almighty?" shall be answered. (4) *Defiance to the Almighty.* HARDENED. Thus the wicked advance from hardness to still greater hardness, treasuring up "wrath against the day of wrath," (Rom. ii. 5,) "because of the blindness (margin, hardness) of their hearts." Eph. iv. 18. NEITHER . . . HEARKEN. Wilfully deaf to the voice of the All-Powerful, the All-loving God. Isa. vii. 24, 26.

There is enough tinder in the heart of the best men in the world to light a fire that shall burn to the lowest hell, unless God should quench the sparks as they fall.—*Spurgeon.*

Stones are charged with the worst species of hardness: "As stubborn as a stone." And yet the hardest stones submit to be smoothed and rounded under the soft friction of water. Ask the myriads of stones on the sea-shore what has become of all their angles, once so sharp, and of the roughness and uncouthness of their whole appearance. Their simple reply is, "Water wrought with us, nothing but water: and none of us resisted." If they yield to be fashioned by the water, and you do not to be fashioned by God, what wonder if the very stones cry out against you!—*Pulford.*

The human heart is hard, indeed; it sometimes appears soft, but is only like a soft and melting peach, with a harder and rougher stone.—*Illustrations of Truth.*

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

The order of God's dealings with Pharaoh is very instructive, and may be made the text of an impressive application. First was sent a simple command: "Let my people go." This being disregarded, a sign was given—Aaron's rod becoming a serpent. This failing, a judgment was sent—the turning of the water into blood. So God is calling our scholars now—how graciously and gently!—by the voices of parents and teachers, and by the messages of his written word. But because this call is not heeded God calls also by signs—sudden change, sudden danger, sudden death of a neighbor. These also, thought they may startle, may be disregarded; and then God tries judgments.

Notice two things about this first plague:

1. How alarming it was. It was a judgment, (a) upon a river which was one of the principal Egyptian deities—an object of honor and worship; (b) upon the source of Egypt's wealth and the means of her people's sustenance, for such the Nile was, and is to this day; (c) upon the necessary comfort of daily life—for what could they do without water?—and of Nile water the people were very fond. And this is the kind of judgment which God sends as a call to repentance. He touches (a) what we are proud of—health, strength, gifts, position; (b) what we trust in—money, energy, friends; (c) what we delight in—pleasure, fame, wealth, ease. See how he dealt with Job, with Jonah, with Hezekiah.

2. How mercifully it was limited. The first plague was, in a sense, the type and foreshadowing of those that followed, touching, as it did, the whole course of Egyptian life. The succeeding plagues, one by one, brought upon the Egyptians what it had prefigured: first, annoyance, (the frogs,) then pain, (the lice,) then loss, (the murrain,) then disease, (the boils); then hail destroyed the wealth of the land, and the locusts turned it into a wilderness. Then came the shadow of death in the awful three days' darkness; and, finally, the stroke of death itself fell upon "the chief of all their strength." But this first one was but a temporary judgment; it showed death and destruction, but, being mercifully withdrawn, did not actually inflict them. So our first judgments are often light ones; but they are but foreshadowings of what will follow if we disregard them.

These successive judgments were intended to