

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSONS.**August 18. Deuteronomy vi: 3-15.**

The very low standard of spirituality apparently attained by the Hebrews of the exodus is nowhere more clearly indicated than in this passage, which, at the same time, marks the highest point of their religious development. The Shema, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord," like the Moslem declaration of God's Unity, "Say. God is one God; the eternal God," represents the revolt from polytheistic idolatry, the product of ancient ignorance and superstition, and must undoubtedly be attributed to the influence of Egyptian and Chaldean philosophy, which in recognition of the God One, reflected the secret and sacred teaching of all ages. The merely public presentation of the Trinity in Osiris, Isis and Horus, lacked the profounder aspects of thought which the common people were just able to appreciate in the conception of one only Ruler, and the idea of the Trinity in any form does not appeal to the average Semite. The reasons urged by Moses for the worship of Jehovah are material to the last degree, and almost cynical in their knowledge of human nature. "That thy days may be prolonged . . . that it may be well with thee . . . that ye may increase mightily;" that they might have great and goodly cities that they didn't build, and vineyards that they didn't plant, and houses full of good things that didn't belong to them. A freebooter's expedition in the present day under the most pious auspices, would be differently judged; an appeal to the Israelites to worship God for the sake of increasing spirituality, for a growing consciousness of the Divine life, for a knowledge of truth and justice, would have met with no success.

August 25. Joshua iii: 5-17.

Whether Joshua, who had been one of the twelve spies, had become acquainted with the possibility of damming up the Jordan as Col. Watson relates in the statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund, quoted elsewhere, and used his knowledge and engineering skill to encourage and inspire his followers, is by no means settled in the negative by the Bible account. The people were kept a

thousand yards distant from the priests, and could not very well judge whether the water stopped instantaneously when the priests' soles touched it, and the water was not gathered in a heap, as is usually understood, immediately beside the passage, but verse 16, "a great way off, at Adam" quite possibly by a dam such as Col. Watson describes. Esoterically, the crossing of Jordan, as of the Red Sea, symbolises the entrance into other planes of consciousness; the ark, the receptacle of the sacred things, is of much significance.

September 1. Joshua vi: 8-20.

Jericho is said to be a name of the moon, and the city so called was sacred to the moon, the ruler of the astral plane. The symbolism of the septenary operations carried on around the city: the seven priests, their seven trumpets, the seven journeys round the walls, and the seven times seven on the seventh day, all refer to various cyclic periods and processes in and by which the grosser veils of the inner planes are torn down. The preservation of the harlot Rahab, who became the mother of Boaz and therefore ancestor, mystically, of the Christ should be noted.

September 8. Joshua xiv: 5-14.

Hebron was formerly Kirjath Arba, the City of Arba, the city of the strength of Baal. Baal was Lord of the Sun, or Spiritual Fire in the ancient systems, so that the inheritance of Caleb on the fulfilment of the twelve times seven years may well be studied. Caleb, the bold and impetuous, on his first survey of the land of the Anakim had been undeterred by any fears, and he now enters upon the fruition of his life-long aspiration.

September 15. Joshua xx: 1-9.

The custom of the vendetta was preserved among the Israelites probably because it was impossible to extinguish it among the fierce and passionate natures which the sojourn in the desert must have developed. Such modifications as were possible Moses adopted, and the cities of refuge served the purpose of curtailing to some extent the savage thirst for blood which even civilized communities consider to be necessary for the expiation of crime. The distinction