

Scripture Lessons.

International Lesson Department, 1875

FIRST QUARTER—LESSONS ABOUT JOSHUA.

Preliminary Remarks.

1. Another step forward in our Old Testament studies. In 1873 we spent six months in the book of GENESIS, with *Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*. In 1874 we devoted six months to lessons from the books of EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, and DEUTERONOMY, with *Moses and the Children of Israel*. In 1875—the third year of our new “International Series”—we shall study the books of JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH, and a part of the FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL, becoming acquainted with *Joshua and the Judges, especially with Gideon, Samson, and Samuel*. We shall meet *Ruth and Naomi*, and the first king of Israel, *Saul*, of whom we hope to learn more in 1876.

2. The lessons of 1873 covered a period—from Adam to Joseph—of about 2,379 years. The lessons of 1874—from the death of Joseph to the death of Moses—a period of 174 years. The lessons of 1875—from Moses' death to Saul's Coronation—a period of 356 years. Remember the dates: $2379 + 174 + 356 = 2909$ $4004 - 2909 = 1095$ B.C., the date at which our lessons for 1875 close.

3. The first five books of Moses are known as the “Pentateuch,” (five books.) The second class of Old Testament books is known as the “Historical.” The first of the historical books is JOSHUA, written principally by him whose name it bears. The Bible was not given all at once. It was at first a book of one book, and then a book of five books; and thus it gradually increased until now it is a book of sixty-six books. It is a library in itself. It is a full-orbed sun that rose slowly from behind the hills, increasing in size and brightness as the centuries passed. Every new addition gave new light. One grand idea—REDEMPTION—runs through the whole volume; but in GENESIS the Redeemer is only “the seed of the woman,” and in NUMBERS a “Star out of Jacob;” while in MALACHI—the last book of the Old Testament—he is the “Sun of Right-

eousness,” and in the APOCALYPSE—the last book of the New Testament—he is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” The Bible is a progressive revelation. Its successive unfoldings bring out in increasing clearness the character of God, the want and woe and worth of man, the office and person of the Messiah. The Israelite in Canaan knew more of the plan of redemption than did his father at Sinai, or his grandfather in Egypt, or his more remote ancestors in Mesopotamia.

4. The book of JOSHUA is more than a dry collection of historical facts. As in the bondage of Egypt we are taught of the bondage of man to sin, and as in the wilderness-life, its lessons and deliverances, we are taught the power of the “law,” (“the law came by Moses”) to convict man, and the grace of God in leading man, with occasional gleams of the work of grace under the Gospel, here in Joshua we see the Christian brought by Jesus (Jesus) into the land of grace where enemies are found who are to be fought and subdued and ejected. If the children of Israel had gone on as they did at Jericho, they would soon have taken the whole land and had perfect rest; but, alas! like Christians of to-day, who trust so implicitly and fight so valiantly at first, but who so soon waver and fail—the Israelites doubted, and had Achans among them, and became wedded to the sins of the old Canaanites, and fell into many snares and “hurtful lusts.”

5. The following very beautiful meditation, by a distinguished and spiritual minister, should be read in the spirit of prayer by every teacher of the Berean Lessons:

“Let us pray to the Divine Antitype of him whose name this book (Joshua) bears, that he would so enlighten our minds that we may read it aright, and profit thereby. May he who is the true Joshua, and who is also our great High Priest, and whose feet were dipped in the river Jordan at his baptism, and who has led us into the Canaan of his visible Church, give us grace, who have been baptized into him, to fight manfully under his banner against our spiritual Canaanites—Sin, the World, and the Devil—and to continue his faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end! May he who, after his baptism in the river Jordan, chose his twelve apostles, and set them up as the foundation stones of his Church, build us up, as lively stones, on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone! May he who has given the whole world to be the inheritance of his visible Church, and has planted us therein, enable us to occupy and adorn that portion of the inheritance which he has allotted to us, and to drive out there-