

ains at the source of the river (Jer. 12: 5; 49: 19; 50: 44; 1 Chr. 12: 15). Rain did not fall in Palestine at this season. The Jordan would have been nearly a mile wide and proportionately deep. The spies might have crossed it by swimming (2: 1). "We were fortunate enough to see it in the state in which it is described in Joshua, 'overflowing all its banks'—that is, the whole line of its banks. The turbid stream rushed along like a mill race, and though it had fallen from its greatest height, the proper banks of the channel were invisible, and indicated only by lines of oleanders and other shrubs and trees." (Bartlett.) **All the time of harvest**—That is of barley harvest. The wheat harvest was seven weeks later (Exod. 34: 22), by which time the inundation is over. Blunt here points out an "undesigned coincidence" which confirms the genuineness of the narrative. In Egypt, but a day or two before the Passover, the plague of hail destroyed the *flax* and the *barley* "for the barley was in the ear and the flax was balled. But the wheat and the rye were not smitten, for they were not grown up." So we would expect that the barley harvest would also be the time for pulling flax, and accordingly we find that Rahab hid the spies in the stalks of flax (Josh. 2: 6) which she had spread out on the roof doubtless to steep and season. "Nothing could be a more satisfactory proof that the narrative we have before us comes from persons who were accurately and minutely informed concerning the circumstances of which they tell us," (Lias) and that the book of Joshua is not a work of some post-exilic scribe.

**16. Stood, and rose up in one heap** (R. V.)—Literally "stood—they rose up, one heap." The spirited narrative breaks into a poetic form (Ex. 15: 8, 9; Judg. 5: 26). **A great way off, at Adam** (R. V.)—This place is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture, and neither it nor Zarethan can now be

identified with certainty. Some place it 18, some 30 miles further up the river. Here the waters were arrested, so that a considerable length of the river was available for the passage, and thus the vast multitude could cross in a few hours. **The sea of the Arabah** (R. V.)—The Dead Sea. The term "The Arabah" is applied in the Bible to the whole gorge of the Jordan, the depression around the Dead Sea and its prolongation to the gulf of Akabah. In modern times the name *El Ghor* is given to the Jordan valley and the basin of the Dead Sea. The southern portion is still called *El Arabah*. (Grove). **The Salt Sea**—Its waters are so saline that no fish can live in them. Owing to this fact, and also that their specific gravity renders them not easily stirred by the winds, it is called "The Dead Sea. **Were wholly cut off** (R. V.)—Lit. "were completed, were cut off." Flowed away and left the channel dry down to the Dead Sea (Ps. 114: 3). **Right against Jericho**—And therefore not at the usual ford. (Keil).

**17. Stood firm on dry ground**—They remained standing in the bottom of the dry river-bed until the whole host had passed over. Their doing so was an assurance that all were safe from the returning waters (4: 10). **All the nation** (R. V.)—"Israel is usually called the 'people' as if this were a more honorable name; 'nations' usually means 'gentiles.'" Perhaps the appellation is given to Israel here, as they are now seen to take their place among the nations of the world, as much a nation as any of them, in accordance with the promise to Abraham, Gen. 17: 4, 6. (Douglas). **Clean over**—The same word is translated "failed" in verse 16, and "wholly" in the R. V. The stream of human beings had completely crossed. Before they took up the twelve stones as commanded they erected a heap of twelve right where the feet of the priests stood "and they are there unto this day" (Josh. 4: 9).

**LESSONS.** 1. We should "sanctify ourselves" when we are about to draw near to God. 2. God will honor his faithful servants. 3. He will open the way for us if he wishes us to go forward. 4. He will stand by us to defend us in every danger. 5. Christ will carry us through the Jordan of death into the heavenly Canaan.

## THE BLACKBOARD.

Take the passing of the Jordan as illustrating the manner in which we should meet and overcome apparently insurmountable obstacles in the path of duty.

BY

Consecration.

Faith.

Obedience.

Gratitude (memorial shows).

Consecration (anew and in more solemn form—the passover at Giigal).

"I will be with thee."