

for the people to go so far at once into the interior of the country. To this view it may be replied, 1. Uniform tradition is in favor of the present Ebal and Gerizim; 2. God could easily put the fear of the Israelites upon the inhabitants of the land; 3. Ebal and Gerizim were in the very heart of the country, and they might be regarded as representing the whole country; 4. This was hallowed ground. It was the first spot where Abraham rested, and where he erected an altar, (Gen. 12: 6, 7. See also in connection with Jacob's history, Gen 33: 19.)

Matthew Henry remarks that the reason why the altar was erected on Ebal, the mount on which the curse was put, Deut 11: 26, was to signify "that there, where by the law we had reason to expect a curse, by Christ's sacrifice of himself for us, we have peace with God; He has redeemed us from curse of the law, by being made a curse for us. The curses pronounced on Ebal would immediately have been executed, had not atonement been made by sacrifice."

The law, probably only the ten commandments as being the sum of the whole, was written upon plastered stones. This inscription, with the altar of rough stones on which the sacrifice had been offered, was left on Mt. Ebal.

In the valley between the mountains the Levites stood with the ark of the covenant, while six of the tribes stood on Ebal and six on Gerizim. The tribes on Ebal responded with simultaneous "Amen's" to the curses, while those on Gerizim answered to the blessings.

Nablus, the ancient Shechem lies between Ebal and Gerizim. The valley has been supposed to be too broad for the purpose stated in this passage, but a gentleman long resident in the neighborhood has asserted that a voice can be heard without difficulty across the valley separating the two points in question. Gerizim is said to be 2600 feet high, and Ebal about 2700.

DOCTRINES.

1. Nations should remember that righteousness will exalt but sin will destroy. Read history for illustrations.

2. God is good in so faithfully and solemnly setting before all who have the Bible, the blessing and the curse.

3. Let us choose the blessing. And for this purpose may we first come to Christ for pardon, and then trust in God for Christ's sake to keep us from falling.

THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—Caleb's Inheritance, Joshua 14: 6—15. Golden text, John 12: 26. Read also the 14th chapter of Numbers.

Eleazer the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and one prince of each tribe were chosen to divide the land by inheritance. Of the tribe of Judah Caleb the son of Jephunneh was selected.

Vv. 6.—Before the work of division commenced, Caleb came to Joshua and reminded

him of what God had said concerning the future ownership of the district visited by the spies. (See Numb. 14: 24.) It is well for us to remember God's promises, and expect their fulfilment. Forty-five years had elapsed and yet Caleb had not forgotten the promise.

Vv. 8.—Caleb wholly followed the Lord his God. He was not half-hearted. He was not unbelieving. His faith was strong, and his expectation high, notwithstanding the difficulties in the way. And the Lord honoured him, honored him in recording his steadfastness, in sparing him and Joshua alone of all the people over 20 years of age to enter the promised land, and in giving him a goodly heritage in a green old age. Here then is an important lesson for the young. They should follow the Lord *wholly*. They may at one time be laughed at, and at another threatened, for their piety. But let them cling to the Lord in all simplicity of faith; and should they be spared to an old age, it will be pleasant to review the past, and for them the future can have no dread.

Vv. 12.—Caleb asked for a tract possessed by the Anakim, a powerful people who had fenced cities. Look at this man's faith. God promised him this district, and these Anakim are as nothing. Look, too, at his humble dependence upon God. "If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said." He was not disappointed in leaning on Jehovah's arm.

Let our faith like Caleb's be strong. Has God promised anything? Let us expect it. We should never say, "The Anakim are there," "There is a lion in the way," &c. But at the same time let us be humble. Should we ever in our own strength go against Anakim, we must fall.

Vv. 14.—Great emphasis is put upon Caleb's following the Lord *wholly*. Compare Numb. 14: 24. Because he followed the Lord *wholly* he obtained Hebron. We should attach great importance to a life of steadfast faith.

The city of Hebron itself was given to the priests and was made one of the cities of refuge, but "the fields of the city, and the villages thereof," were given to Caleb. Hebron is one of the most ancient cities existing, (Numbers 13: 12,) and its historical associations are most interesting. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob spent much of their time in its neighborhood, where they were all entombed. But so long as it lasts the name of Caleb the son of Jephunneh who wholly followed the Lord God of Israel shall not be forgotten.

FOURTH SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—The land divided, Joshua 13: 1—10; Golden text, Psalm 18: 6.

In previous lessons we had studied the conquest of the land of Palestine, now we come to the division of the land among the twelve tribes. Besides the prescribed lesson it will be necessary to read Chron. 14: 1-5, and a good part of chapters 15, 16, 17.

Vv. 1. *Shiloh*, for location see Judges 21: 19. It was situated in the centre or midst of