

2. Like the Israelites, we are to get *on new ground*—not make some slight change. March right over into the Lord's country.

4. When the ark goes before we are safe in following.

5. All difficulties are removed before obedience. It was *easy* crossing Jordan that day; much easier than going back again.

THE LORD LEADS OVER JORDAN.

July 15, } **THE PLAINS OF JERICHO.** } Joshua 5: 10-15; 6: 1-5.
1883.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days."—Heb. 11: 30.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Faith in God conquers the strongholds of His enemies.

CONNECTION.—After the people were all passed over Jordan, Joshua commanded the priests to come up with the ark. It was the 10th day of the first month—four days before the Passover. They encamped at Gilgal, and erected a memorial with twelve stones from the river. All the kings of the country feared when they heard of Jordan drying up. Circumcision having been strangely neglected, the people were now directed to observe it.

NOTES.—**Gilgal**—*rolling*: the first camping ground of the Israelites after crossing the Jordan. It continued to be the camp of the children of Israel during the war and after. (Josh. 10: 6, 9, 43; 14: 6.) Later it was where Samuel judged the people (1 Sam. 7: 16) and offered sacrifices (1 Sam. 10: 8), and where Saul was crowned. (1 Sam. 11: 15.) It was from five to ten miles north of Jericho. Jericho: a rich, strong and walled city on the Jordan, six miles north of the Dead Sea. Gold and silver, brass and iron were found there, besides cattle. It carried on commerce with Babylon, and purchased textures in that great city. (Jo. 7: 21.) It was once called "the city of palms." (Deut. 34: 3.) At Jericho Jesus brought salvation to Zaccheus, the publican, and gave sight to blind Bartimeus. (Mark 10: 46.) Joshua burned and pronounced a curse upon the city. Jesus entered it, not to destroy, but to heal. Canaan: now Palestine; so called when Abraham first entered the land (Gen. 12: 5), and because the descendants of Canaan inhabited it.

I. A NEW BEGINNING.—Ver. 10.—Encamped at Gilgal: this was about six miles west of Jordan, and less than two miles of Jericho. In the East, the presence of water determines the location of camps and cities. Gilgal is often afterward mentioned. The Tabernacle remained here till it was removed to Shiloh. Kept the Passover: we do not read of the Passover having been observed since the people were at Sinai, thirty-nine years before. It was indeed making a new beginning in their religious life! Let us too remember our vows, and plead God's promises. Plains of Jericho: the valley was of considerable width, and of extreme productiveness; with a tropical climate.

Vers. 11, 12.—Eat of the old corn: generally rendered simply "corn;" that is grain. Parched corn: grain roasted in the ear. It was harvest; and new-ripened grain was in abundance. The manna ceased; they had eaten it for forty years; but God never gives a blessing that is not needed. It was not necessary to give them a fruitful land, and a miraculous supply of food *both*.

II. THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST.—Ver. 13.—Was by Jericho: Jericho was the key to Palestine from the S. E., commanding the two principal passes—one to Jerusalem, and the other to Bethel and Ai. There

stood a man: Jehovah in human form. With a sword drawn: see Numbers 32, where he thus appeared to Balaam. Is it not wonderful that the same Son of God, who died for our sins on Calvary, also led the hosts of Israel, and often manifested his presence in Old Testament history? Art thou for us: it makes a great difference whether the Lord comes to punish us, or to help us! Joshua's conscience would tell him that, unworthy as he was, he was *trying to obey God*; and therefore this visit must be in mercy, not in wrath.

Ver. 14.—As Captain of the host of the Lord, am I now come: the "host of the Lord" Christ is often spoken of as having hosts of angels with Him. (Matt. 25: 31, etc.) In their war against the idolatrous Canaanites, they should have heavenly power and might on their side. So David often speaks of God "casting out the heathen" to make room for Israel. This visit must have inspired Joshua with confidence that God was with them in their endeavours; for there was *no retreat* open to them now! and also with reverence—for he would now place the Divine Captain where Jonathan placed David, "Thou shalt be king over Israel and I shall be next unto thee." (1 Sam. 23: 17.) Fell on his face to the earth: as soon as he knew who his glorious visitor was, he fell down and worshipped Him. Notice, in several places, how saints and angels refuse worship. (Rev. 22: 8, 9, etc.)

Ver. 15.—Loose thy shoe from off thy foot: see the same direction to Moses at the burning bush. (Ex. 3: 5.) For the place whereon thou standest is holy: as with us the head is uncovered in worship, so in the East the shoes must be taken from the feet. This direction shows that the person speaking was higher than a mere angel.

III. HOW TO SUCCEED.—Chap. 6. ver. 1.—Straitly shut up: the Israelites were so near Jericho, that it was "invested" or "blockaded." The inhabitants acted entirely on the defensive. We do not know how strong the place was: but no doubt it had good solid stone walls.

Ver. 2.—The Lord said unto Joshua: notice, that the Captain of the Lord's host is now called Jehovah, "The Lord." Jehovah was a name never given to any but God. I have given: it was God who gave them the victory; and gave them the whole land.

Ver. 3.—Compass the city: Go round it. Six days: They were thus to do, for six days in succession.

Ver. 4.—Bear before the ark seven trumpets: Though the men were armed, the procession was a peaceful one. Not a word was said. (Ver. 10.) The seventh day: the Jews say this was a Sabbath day. Quite likely. Compass the city seven times: in ancient walled cities, the houses were generally built close together; and the circuit of the city would not be very great. Still, seven times round it, in this religious procession, must have taken all day. And if it was a Sabbath day, the fighting, and the destruction of the city, would be *after* the Sabbath, which ended at sunset.

Ver. 5.—All the people shall shout: and at that shout the walls should fall down! They believed what the Lord said; and when the time came, "shouted with a great shout." (Ver. 20.) This was *faith*: see the Golden Text.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. They made a good beginning for the new life they were entering, by attending to religious duties. *Then* they were prepared to go forward!

2. When God gave them corn out of the harvest-fields of Jericho (which was as much God's gift as the manna), they did not need the latter. God who gives the healing hunger, both bodily and spiritual—gives also the supply!

3. The Captain of the Lord's host is always "for" us, if we are "for" Him!