

First Quarter : The Patriarchs and Early Leaders of Israel

LESSON FOREWORD—The leadership of Joshua was marked by many stirring events, such as the crossing of the Jordan, the taking of Jericho and Ai. In six years, six tribes, with thirty-one petty chiefs, were conquered. Then followed the division of the land among the tribes of Israel and more definite organization, as our lesson shows.

Lesson XI.

THE CITIES OF REFUGE

March 16, 1919

THE LESSON PASSAGE—Joshua, ch. 20.

1 The Lord also spake unto Josh'u'a, saying,

2 Speak to the children of Is'rael, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Mo'ses :

3 That the slayer that killeth *any* person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither : and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

4 And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

5 And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand ; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

6 And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand be-

fore the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days : then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city ; and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

7 And they appointed Ke'desh in Ga'ilee in mount Naph'tali, and She'chem in mount E'phraim, and Kir'jathar'ba, which is He'bron, in the mountain of Ju'dah.

8 And on the other side Jor'dan by Jer'icho eastward, they assigned Be'zer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reu'ben, and Ra'moth in Gil'ead out of the tribe of Gad, and Go'an in Ba'shan out of the tribe of Manas'seh.

9 These were the cities appointed for all the children of Is'rael, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth *any* person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

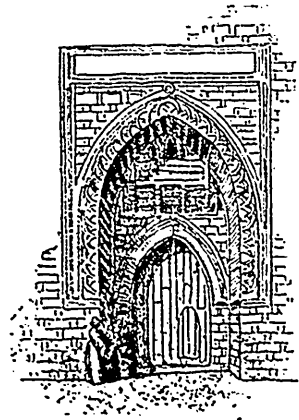
GOLDEN TEXT—Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.—Matthew 5 : 7.

SENIOR AND HOME DEPARTMENT TOPIC—Our Responsibility Towards Offenders.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. THE MANSLAYER'S PERIL.—1-3. *Speak to the children of Is'rael.* Joshua was leader, but not autocrat. Matters affecting the nation were

dealt with by people as representatives in assembly. *Cities of refuge.* The appointing of such cities had been enjoined upon Moses. It was now possible to carry out the plan. *Slayer that killeth . . . unawares.* One who took human life but without malice or intent.



A CITY GATE

Just laws take into account, difference of motive in the same offence. Even where the motive is not right, there are circumstances of heredity, en-

vironment, home, training, that make the offence less. Laws to-day should be more than punitive. They should be preventive and reformative. Deut. 19 : 5 illustrates unwitting killing in the case of two neighbors hewing wood in the forest. The axe head of one slips and mortally injures the other. *Avenger of blood.* The nearest relative of the slain was the authorized avenger of blood. The law of retaliation was not to extend beyond the one offending to his family. Thus blood feuds such as we find among other peoples was avoided.

II. THE MANSLAYER'S PROTECTION.—4-6a. *Stand . . . entering of the gate.* The gate of the city was an important meeting place. Justice was administered there. *Declare his cause.* Explain that the killing was accidental. *Elders.* Word means "old men." We remember the elders appointed at the advice of Jethro to relieve Moses. This seems to be a corresponding office in the city community. *Take him in ;* being satisfied with his defence. *Give him a place.* He becomes a resident there. Outside the city he is exposed to the avenger of blood. *Until he stand before the congregation ;* rather, "from the time he stands." *Until the death of the high priest.* The retaliation, therefore, of the