



## LESSON II.—OCTOBER 12.

## Crossing the Jordan.

Josh. iii., 9-4:7. Commit vs. 15-17. Read Josh. iii., 1-5:12.

## Golden Text.

'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'—Isa. xliii., 2.

## Home Readings.

Monday, Oct. 6.—Josh. iii., 1-13.  
Tuesday, Oct. 7.—Josh. iii., 14-4:7  
Wednesday, Oct. 8.—Josh. iv., 8-18.  
Thursday, Oct. 9.—2 Kings ii., 1-14.  
Friday, Oct. 10.—Psa. lxxviii., 1-16.  
Saturday, Oct. 11.—Psa. cxiv.  
Sunday, Oct. 12.—Isa. xliii., 1-11.

## Lesson Text.

(9) And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God. (10) And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Gingshites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. (11) Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. (12) Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. (13) And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off, from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon a heap. (14) And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; (15) And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) (16) That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zareton; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. (17) And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

## Condensed from Pelonbet's Notes.

The children of Israel were encamped on a broad fertile plain on the eastern or Moabite side of the Jordan, about one hundred and fifty feet above the usual level of the Jordan, with the mountains of Moab behind them and the flooded river before them, with Jericho six or seven miles distant from the river on the other side. The plain where they were encamped was from five to seven miles wide. According to the last census (Num. xxvi., 51) there were 601,730 men from twenty years old and upward, implying a total population of over two million. That the numbers were large is certain from the fears they awakened in the inhabitants, who would not have been so troubled by a small band.

The great depression of this region,

more than a thousand feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and shut in by mountains, gave it a tropical climate and exuberant fertility. Gardens were numerous and palm trees flourished. During the winter season 'the climate is as lovely as could be desired. The air is soft and mild, and green fields are on every hand. . . . I suppose the Israelites came down from the mountains of Moab to enjoy the winter on the Shittim plain, covered, as it then was, with a rank growth of tropical vegetation. The abundance of fresh water at their command, the grass and flowers, the mild air, must have filled them with delight after their rough experience in the desert.

It would have been difficult anywhere to have found a land more perfectly adapted for the purpose of training a nation in the true religion than was Palestine. It was defended and sheltered by the Jordan on the east, and further to the east by a great desert, by mountains on the north, by the Mediterranean on the west, and by deserts on the south. Moreover, it was situated on a highway between the two great nations of the world, neither of which would want the other to possess it. Thus shut in there would be an opportunity to train and discipline the nation, till the great truths it stood for could be wrought indelibly into their nature.

(9) Hear the words of the Lord your God. Their taking possession of the land was according to the divine will. What right had the Israelites to drive out and dispossess the inhabitants? Their destruction is always presented in Scripture as a judgment of God sent on them because of their wickedness. 'The heathenism of Palestine and Syria was so foul and degrading that there is no State, even at this time, which would not put it down, if necessary, by the severest penalties. Its spread to Rome was bewailed fifteen hundred years later by the satirists of the day, as a calamity marking the utter decay of the times.'—Geikie. Nor did they sin thus through ignorance. They were not a savage race, but among the more cultivated ones of the time. They had commerce, coined money, iron chariots, probably books. If God had not destroyed them they would have destroyed themselves by their own corruption, but not till they had injured many others by their example and influence. This very destruction was more merciful than would have been the sufferings which would naturally flow from their character and conduct. What the Israelites did was not for themselves alone. 'If the Jews had failed, the world would have been lost. The true religion would have vanished, the mission of Christ would have been impossible. In these contests, on the fate of one of these nations of Palestine, the happiness of the human race depended.'—Stanley.

V. 11. Behold, the ark . . . of the Lord of all the earth, who, therefore, has the right and the power to give them the land. 'Passest over before you,' to lead you, to make the way for you, to prove that it is safe for you to follow, to show that the power and the victory are from God. V. 12. Now therefore take you twelve men, to bring memorial stones from the river bed, as described later on. Out of every tribe a man, so that each tribe should be represented, and each feel a common interest in the event. No one tribe should have an advantage over the others. V. 13. And it shall come to pass. This verse is the promise of what is described in v. 16, as fulfilled. V. 14. First came the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of God's presence with them. It is no longer the pillar of cloud and fire, but the ark that now guides them. V. 15. This season of high water was wisely chosen; for (1) the miracle was the more stupendous and impressive to the Israelites. (2) It inspired their enemies with greater terror. They would see in it the marvellous power of God. (3) Those enemies, had the crossing been attempted when the water was low, would have appeared upon the opposite shores to annoy the Israelites. Why, then, did they not dispute it upon the present occasion? The answer is simple. They trusted to the swollen river, which they

knew no army could cross. (4) The crossing in harvest was also providentially ordered with reference to the food of the people; they entered the land when it yielded abundance (see Josh. v., 11, 12). V. 10. The Canaanites were, strictly speaking, the lowlanders, who inhabited the lower tracts of Palestine. V. 16. The waters . . . rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam. The true meaning is expressed by the R. V., 'Rose up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan.' That is, in some way, by direct miraculous power, or by some means, the waters were dammed up there long enough for the people to pass over the Jordan. City Adam, that is beside Zarethan. Probably at the ancient bridge at the Damieh ford, fifteen or twenty miles above the encampment of the Israelites. At this place the river is narrow and flows between two ridges of mountains on either side, which here almost meet, which seems the most suitable point for damming up the river. If in any way the river was dammed up at this narrow gorge, the waters would accumulate above the dam, and form a great lake extending far up the river, while the waters below would all flow away into the Dead Sea, leaving the bed of the river comparatively dry. And this would continue till the mass of water above had become so great as to break through the obstacle. 'In A. D. 1267, whilst the bridge at Jisr Damieh (or Adam) was being repaired, a land-slip, some miles above, dammed up the Jordan for several hours, and the bed of the river below was left dry, the water being drained off to the Dead Sea. What occurred six hundred and fifty years ago, by what we call natural causes, may well have occurred three thousand years before, timed by divine interposition.'—Canon Tristram.

V. 17. And the priests that bare the ark. When they touched the water the stream subsided, and they bore the ark into the middle of the river bed, and there stood firm on dry ground, with good footing and without flinching from fear of the waters rushing upon them from above. This required no little faith. The priests were about three-fifths of a mile up stream above the people, and were thus seen by all; and their faith encouraged the people to venture into the bed of the river. And all the Israelites passed over on dry ground. Probably at different points, over a wide space. They were now fairly standing upon the Promised Land, on the eve of conquest, and after that, of rest. 'The ark stood above. The army passed below. The women and children, according to the Jewish traditions, were placed in the centre, from the fear lest they should be swept away by the violence of the current. The host, at different points probably, rushed across. The priests remained motionless, their feet sunk in the deep mud of the river.'—Stanley, Jewish Church. Thus the whole people crossed in safety, in a very few hours, and stood for the first time in their new home. They encamped at Gilgal. Then the river returned to its usual course. There was no retreat now. It was victory or death.

## C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Oct. 12.—Topic—Fruitful or fruitless. John xv., 1-8, 16; Mark xi., 12-14.

## Junior C. E. Topic.

## THE WIDOW'S OIL.

Monday, Oct. 6.—Fear God. 2 Kings iv., 1.  
Tuesday, Oct. 7.—Use what you have. 2 Kings iv., 2.  
Wednesday, Oct. 8.—Expect great blessings. 2 Kings iv., 3.  
Thursday, Oct. 9.—Believe God's promises. 2 Kings iv., 5.  
Friday, Oct. 10.—God's gifts are overflowing. 2 Kings iv., 6.  
Saturday, Oct. 11.—God rewards the faithful. 2 Kings iv., 7.  
Sunday, Oct. 12.—Topic—Old Testament miracles. V. Lessons from the widow's oil. 2 Kings iv., 1-7.