THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

Joshua ii.
1 And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into a harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.
2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to-night of the children of Israel to search out the country.
3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.
4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were.
5 And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate when it was dark, that the men went out; whither the men went I wot not; pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.

THIS book gives an account of the final entrance of the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Joshua was the successor of Moses, and performed the same miracle in parting the waters of the Jordan that Moses did to enable his people to pass through the Red Sea. He was seven years fighting his way into the land of Canaan, where he spent the closing years of his life in peace.

There is mention of two women only in this book, though a casual reference is again made to the daughters of Zelophehad, as described in a former chapter.

In saving the spies from their pursuers, Rahab made them promise that when Jericho fell into the hands of Joshua, they would save her and her kinsmen. From the text, it seems that Rahab fully understood the spirit of her time, and with keen insight and religious fervor, marked characteristics of women, she readily entered into the plans of the great general of Israel.

Rahab was supposed to have been a great sinner, her life in many respects questionable; but seeing that victory was with the Israelites, she cast her lot with them. From the text and what we know of humanity in general, it is difficult to decide Rahab's real motive, whether to serve the Lord by helping Joshua to take the land of Canaan, or
to save her own life and that of her kinsmen. It is interesting to see that in all national emergencies, leading men are quite willing to avail themselves of the craft and cunning of women, qualities uniformly condemned when used for their own advantage.

There is no more significance, as one of our critics says, in commenting on the myths of the Bible than on Æsop’s fables. The difference, however, is this: that in the latter case we admit that they were written by a man; while in the former, they are claimed to have been inspired by God. Though at variance with all natural laws, it is claimed that our eternal salvation depends on believing in the plenary inspiration of the myths of the Scriptures; as the “higher criticisms,” written by learned scholars and scientists, are not familiar to women, our comments in plain English may rid them of some of their superstitions.

Though the injustice to woman is the blackest page in sacred history, the distinguished Biblical writers take no note of it whatever. Even Hon. Andrew D. White, though he devotes several pages of his work to the statue of Lot’s wife in salt, vouchsafes no criticism on the position of Lot’s wife in the flesh, nor of Lot’s outrageous treatment of his daughters. The wonder is that women themselves should either believe that such unholy proceedings were inspired by God, or make a fetish of the very book which is responsible for their civil and social degradation.

Joshua x.

11 And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

12 Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

13 And the Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the Sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.
14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel.

According to the sacred fabulist, Joshua surpassed Moses in
the wonders which he performed. In taking the city of Jericho, as recorded in Chapter viii., he did not use the ordinary enginery of war, but told his soldiers to blow a simultaneous blast upon their trumpets, while all the people with united shouts should produce such a violent concussion of the air as to bring down the walls of the city. He not only subsidized the atmosphere to overpower his enemies, but he commanded the sun and the moon to stand still to lengthen the day and to lighten the night until this victory was complete.

It seems that the Lord was so well pleased with Joshua’s refined military tactics that he suspended the laws of the vast solar system to vindicate the superior prowess of one small tribe on the small planet called the earth. The Lord also resorted to more material and forcible means, sending down tremendous hailstones from heaven, and thus with one fell blow destroyed more of his enemies than the children of Israel did with the sword.

There are no events recorded in secular history that strain the faith of the reader to such a degree as the feats of Joshua. Moses, with his manna and pillar of light in the wilderness and his dazzling pyrotechnics on Mount Sinai, fades into insignificance before these marvellous manifestations by Joshua, with the Canaanites, Jericho, and the sun and moon under his feet. Though teaching the people that all these fables are facts, still the Church condemns prestidigitators, soothsayers, fortune tellers, Spiritualists, witches, and the assumptions of Christian Scientists.

Joshua xv.
16 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher and taketh it, to him will I give Achsa his daughter to wife.
17 And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.
18 And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field; and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?
19 Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs.

In giving Achsah her inheritance it is evident that the Judges of
Israel had not forgotten the judgment of the Lord in the case of Zelophehad's daughters. He said to Moses, "When a father dies leaving no sons, the inheritance shall go to the daughters. Let this henceforth be an ordinance in Israel." Very good as far as it goes; but in case there were sons, justice demanded that daughters should have an equal share in the inheritance.

As the Lord has put it into the hearts of the women of this Republic to demand equal rights in everything and everywhere, and as He is said to be immutable and unchangeable, it is fair to infer that Moses did not fully comprehend the message, and in proclaiming it to the great assembly he gave his own interpretation, just as our judges do in this year of the Lord 1898.

Achsah's example is worthy the imitation of the women of this Republic. She did not humbly accept what was given her, but bravely asked for more. We should give to our rulers, our sires and sons no rest until all our rights—social, civil and political—are fully accorded. How are men to know what we want unless we tell them? They have no idea that our wants, material and spiritual, are the same as theirs; that we love justice, liberty and equality as well as they do; that we believe in the principles of self-government, in individual rights, individual conscience and judgment, the fundamental ideas of the Protestant religion and republican government.

E. C. S.