

4. If the "men of war," lacking faith, had *refused* to shout, the walls of Jericho would not have fallen. So the weakest and youngest soldier there, with the weakest and most trembling voice, could help to take the city! (Ver. 3, 5.)

FAITH'S FIGHT WINS VICTORY.

July 22,
1883.

ISRAEL DEFEATED AT AI.

{ Josh. 7:
10-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Be sure your sin will find you out"—Numb. 32: 23.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Sin brings Trouble.

CONNECTION.—Joshua repeated to the people what the Lord commanded him. The city was compassed for six days, and seven times on the seventh day; and, the walls falling down, when the people shouted, the city was taken and destroyed: Rahab and her father's household only being saved. The people had been strictly charged to take none of the spoil for themselves; but Achan did so. An expedition was sent against Ai (apparently without consulting God), and was defeated. Joshua and the elders, with dust upon their heads, fell to the earth before the Lord.

NOTES.—Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The tribe which bore his name was the largest that went out of Egypt. (Num. 1: 27.) From it Christ came. Babylonish garment; literally "a goodly mantle of Shinar." Just as many ladies to-day get dresses from Paris, so people in Jericho used to get fine garments from Babylon on the Euphrates. The Babylonians were famous for the beauty and richness of their embroidered goods. (Ezek. 27: 24.) This garment was a large cloak. Shekel: in the early days of Hebrew history all money went by weight or so many shekels. Thus Abraham weighed out 400 shekels to the sons of Heth for the cave of Machpelah. (Gen. 23: 16.) A silver shekel was equal to seventy-five cents. Stoning with stones: the Jews usually punished criminals in this way. We hang them; the Romans crucified them. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned to death. (Acts 7: 58.)

I. THE CAUSE OF FAILURE.—Ver. 10.—Wherefore liest thou? God did not answer till eventide; and when he did answer, it was in reproof. Joshua had been lamenting the defeat, instead of trying to discover the cause. A lesson to us.

Ver. 11.—Israel hath sinned: see the solemn charge by Joshua, (Ch. 6: 18.) The covenant was broken, and Israel had been defeated. Stolen and dissembled: one sin leads to another: here, disobedience, theft, deceit.

Ver. 12.—Therefore: the cause is now made known. They were accursed: a Curse was upon them for their sin, and the curse could not be removed till the sin was put away: and God threatens to desert them if they do not put away the sin from among them.

Ver. 13.—Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow: it was now eventide, and the proclamation was to be made at once. By ceremonial washings, and by putting themselves into a devout frame of mind, they were to prepare for the inquest of the morrow. Why had not Achan, long before this, confessed his sin? Perhaps God's delay in answering, and this further delay till the morrow, was in order that he might repent. But he did not. Canst not stand before thine enemies: Israel could not prevail, while there was sin in the camp. No more can we, if sin is hidden in the heart.

Ver. 14.—Tribes, families, households, man by man: these were, in succession, to be indicted, by lot or ballot; but we know not the manner. The Greeks and Romans often used pebbles, shells, or black and white beans.

Solomon says "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." (Prov. 16: 33.) The lot was a solemn appeal to God's decision.

Ver. 15.—Burnt with fire: first stoned and then the body burned. (Ver. 25.) Everything he had was to be burned with him. Sin must be entirely purged away, folly wickedness.

II. THE CAUSE REMOVED.—Ver. 16.—Early in the morning: not only because in the East affairs are transacted early, before the day becomes oppressively hot, but also as showing his alacrity to have this sin removed. Brought Israel by their tribes: in whatever way the ballot was drawn, Judah was taken as the tribe where the sin was.

Ver. 17.—Of the families of Judah, that of Zarah was taken: and of the family of Zarah, the household of Labdi was taken. The circle is narrowing upon Achan! Still no confession.

Ver. 18.—Man by man. Each man—probably a large number—was ballotted or drawn: and Achan was taken. Son of Zerah, or Zarah: Zabdi was three or four generations from Zerah, yet called his "son," meaning descendant. Achan (Ver. 24) is also called "son" of Zerah.

Ver. 19.—My Son: Joshua was acting judicially; had no personal anger. Make confession unto Him: glorify God, by telling thy guilt, and thus justifying the lot; and make confession of thy sin! It was also a mode of putting him on his oath.

Ver. 20, 21.—I have sinned: he confesses, when too late to avoid punishment. And how often yet, is it hopeless remorse, instead of timely penitence! Babylonish garment: a long robe, or stole "from Shinar," in the far East, probably of great value, two hundred shekels of silver. In ingots or pieces, not probably in coins: and worth at least \$100. Gold of fifty shekels: a wedge of gold of less weight, worth \$400 or \$500 (?), equal in purchasing power to ten times as much gold and silver now. The temptation to a covetous man was great: but the victory of overcoming it would be equally great! Hid in the Earth: he shows his guilt by hiding his booty. It was stolen from the Lord; for all the gold, silver, brass and iron were consecrated to his treasury. (Ch. 6: 19.)

Ver. 22, 23.—Behold, it was in his tent: the proof was conclusive: the stolen property was brought by the messengers whom Joshua sent.

Ver. 24.—Joshua and all Israel: the nation was involved in the sin; and the nation joined in punishing the criminal. All that he had: his ill-gotten gain all came to an end. Theft and covetousness never long "succeed!" Valley of Achor: valley of Trouble. Achan means "troubler." Hosea prophesies that God will give "the valley of Achor for a door of hope;" the very valley of "trouble" shall be a path for the joyful return homeward from Babylon.

Ver. 25.—All Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire: whether his sons and daughters perished with him is obscure. Some suppose they did, as being parties to the hiding and retaining, if not to the stealing of the treasure. Others, that they were brought as spectators, and as a warning to them: and that the words "burned them" mean Achan and his flocks and property. *Killo* suggests that "they were included in the doom by one of those sudden impulses of indiscriminate popular vengeance," which Joshua could not control.

Ver. 26.—A great heap of stones: called in Scotland "cairns." It was a memorial, for the ages to come, of the bitter end of sin. The Lord turned: the sin being now cleansed away from the nation, God took them again into his favour. Those who rashly speak about God's "severity," fail to comprehend, as they should, the exceeding "sinfulness" of sin!