

then seven priests with cornets; then the ark, followed by the rearguard, also of chosen warriors. We are not to imagine every Israelite—young and old, male and female—as thus marching around the city; only “the army.”

10. Ye shall not shout. The absolute silence of this march overawed all who took part in it and all who watched it. Every reverent Israelite's mind was full of trust and prayer, while absolute terror must have trodden fast on the heels of the scorn and laughter with which the besieged Canaanites first observed it. **Until the day I bid you.** Notice the complete subordination, order, and discipline of the Israelites under Joshua. They had profited by their training in the wilderness, and in the art of war were in advance of the nations they fought.

11-14. The ark of the Lord compassed the city. Was carried around it, according to the divine orders. Doubtless the procession moved at a sufficient distance from the walls to be out of the reach of the enemy's arrows and out of the hearing of their scoffs. **They came into the camp.** At the close of the first day's circuit, which is thus mentioned as a specimen day of a unique week. **Joshua rose early.** The energy and promptness of Joshua are everywhere noticeable, and formed an important factor in his success. **Six days.** One circuit for each day of the six. Too much can hardly be made of the influence of all this strange procedure upon the Israelite warriors and upon their friends who at a distance watched them. If they had not with faith and patience taken up this wearisome and apparently useless march six days in succession, and had not on the seventh day marched seven times, the walls of Jericho would not have fallen. So the Lord now frequently passes his people through tedious discipline so as to develop noble efficiency.

15. On the seventh day. This was a Sabbath, according to the Jewish tradition. **Rose early.** As they had seven times as much marching to do, they rose with the dawn and promptly began their march. This must have been nearly continuous from daybreak to sunset, when the Hebrew Sabbath closed.

16. The seventh time. Since the Hebrews could march seven times around Jericho in one day, the city could not have been very large. **Shout.** Up to this moment the soldiers may not have known what part they were to perform. But they obeyed their commander as they had obeyed him before. They shouted not as they saw the walls fall, but before the walls fell, and with living faith that in some way God would give them the city. **The Lord hath given you the city.** The whole event was recognized as “God's doing.” The walls fell, save at one spot where a scarlet cord floated in the wind, showing the house of the woman who had protected the spies, and Jericho

was destroyed; not conquered nor looted, but absolutely annihilated, as an offering by fire. Its site was afterward occupied (Judg. 3. 13), and five centuries later its walls were rebuilt (1 Kings 16. 34). It became the home of the prophet Elisha, and was visited by Christ in the Gospel period, though, indeed, the two Jerichos were not on exactly the same site.

17. The city shall be accursed. Rather, “shall be devoted,” or “consecrated.” We miss the whole meaning of the event if we ignore its symbolism. A host of cowardly slaves had in forty years been turned into a brave and splendidly disciplined army; but this was the least important phase of their training. They had been turned in the same time from Egypt's idols to Jehovah. They belonged no longer to themselves, but to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The battles they fought were Jehovah's battles; the land they were to conquer was the “Lord's land.” The well-organized nation into which these tribes were to develop was to exist for no other purpose than as custodian and exemplar of divine law. Constant reminders of these truths were embodied in their law, which required the consecration of all the firstborn and the first fruits to God. And on this occasion, when they were about to capture their first city in Canaan proper, they must acknowledge Jehovah's sovereignty, acknowledge that the land had been given them by him, and not conquered by their own prowess. This could be most intelligibly done in that age by giving the whole city as a sacrifice to Jehovah, its silver and gold to be put into the treasury of the sanctuary, its buildings to be burned, and its inhabitants and all living things to be put to death. It was this view of the slaughter, doubtless, which Joshua and the Israelites had, and it was quite sufficient for them. But nineteen hundred years have already passed since the Messiah came, the incidents of whose coming were symbolized by the strange procedure of these Hebrew conquerors. These nineteen centuries have bequeathed us tender hearts and made unspeakably revolting such slaughter as we study to-day. But they have also secured to us pure ideals; and from our exalted point of view we can see reasons for the severity of God's judgment against the Canaanites, of which those who executed it could never have thought. “The Israelites,” as Arnold has said, “fought not for themselves only, but for us.” The licentiousness of the Canaanites—their unnatural wickedness—had in many cases corrupted their very houses, so that for the burning of certain cities there were good hygienic reasons, to say nothing of the infamous carvings and paintings which would have taught immorality to all who dwelt within their walls. There are not lacking evidences that these races were degraded beyond redemption—physically and mentally, as well as morally, degraded—and their extermination was a mercy to the world.