

3. Power belongeth to the Lord. Men are but instruments in the Lord's hand; the Lord himself is the agent.

4. That which is devoted to the Lord is sacred. It is not to be used by us at all.

The teacher may also refer to what is said of Jericho in the Gospels. (See Luke 19: 5-9; Mark 10: 46-52; Matt. 20: 28, &c.)

LESSONS FOR FEBRUARY.

FIRST SABBATH.

SUBJECT: *Achan's sin*, Josh. 7., 19-26, *Golden Text*, Luke 12, 15. *Par. Passages*, 1st Tim., 6, 10, Eph. 5, 3, Col. 3, 5.

Let us consider, 1st, *The sin itself*. From chapter 6, we learn that the Lord, by Joshua, had forbidden the Israelites to take for themselves any of the spoils of Jericho. Everything that lived was to be killed, and the city was to be burned with all that it contained, except the silver and gold and other metals, which were to be dedicated to the service of God. It was intimated to the people that the violation of this command would bring a curse on them and on their future undertakings. Achan, however, finding an opportunity to secrete several valuable articles when no human eye was upon him, could not resist the temptation. He thus committed a gross act, first of disobedience, second, of sacrilege, because the stolen articles were to have been dedicated to God's service—and thirdly of treason against his nation because it suffered on account of his crime.

2ndly. The consequence of his sin, (a) *Israel was troubled*,—the expedition against Ai, as we learn from the first part of the chapter, disgracefully failed, and several innocent men punished. If expiation had not been made, other and more terrible reverses would have followed. Sin's most fearful characteristic is, that its attendant evils can never be confined to the sinner himself. Adam's sin ruined unnumbered millions. The drunkenness of a father plunges his children into degradation and misery. Who can calculate the amount of sin and suffering that may result, during the lapse of ages, from one transgression? This is true, indeed, not only of sin but of holiness. The first is an awful, the second a delightful thought, but both should induce children to forsake sin and to seek after holiness. (b.) *The offender was discovered*. The tribe of Judah, the division of the Zarithes, and the family of Zabdi were successively taken by lot; and we can imagine how Achan's heart died within him as the finger of God thus pointed nearer and nearer to himself: and how great would be his remorse when at length he stood revealed as the culprit, before the thousands of Israel. How terrible is the thought that a day will certainly come when the sins and follies which we now carefully conceal, will, unless they are repented of and pardoned, be proclaimed before an assembled universe.

3rdly. *The Confession*. It was late, in-

deed, but full, free, and without any attempt at extenuation. Joshua's address to Achan suggests two important thoughts. He calls him "My son" showing that while as a judge he must punish, he still pitied the criminal, and felt for him as a father, thereby setting a noble example to all who are called on to administer justice. In calling on him to give glory to God, he also points out to him that by confessing his sin before the people he would glorify God's omniscience in revealing, and his justice in punishing his sin; and from this we learn that the humble confession of our sins is highly pleasing to God as well as necessary to our spiritual welfare. Achan describes the articles which he had stolen—a Babylonish garment—or, as Josephus writes, a royal garment woven entirely of gold—such a robe as princes wore, and perhaps belonging to the King of Jericho. Two hundred shekels in weight of silver would be about \$112 of our currency. The words "I saw," "I coveted," "I took," point out the rise, progress, and consummation, not only of Achan's but of all sin; and should warn us to banish every thought of forbidden pleasure. Let us use the prayer of the Psalmist: "Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity."

4th. *The punishment*. Achan and all his family were stoned to death and afterwards burnt, with all their possessions. The crime was heinous, it was brought home to the offender, not only by his confession, but by the discovery of the articles in his tent, and required a terrible punishment—especially as it was necessary to teach the Israelites, just commencing their great work of conquest, a lesson of implicit obedience. As children (see Deut. 24, 16) were not to be punished for the offences of their parents, we must believe that Achan's family were implicated in his sin.

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*Ebal and Gerizim*. Joshua 8: 30-35. *Golden Text*, Deut. 30: 19. Read Deut. 11: 29, 30; and Deut. 27: 2-26.

Israel had now crossed Jordan and had taken Jericho and Ai. The land was now before them. The two cities just mentioned were the first fruits of the conquest: the full harvest would assuredly be gathered in. Hence Israel must now remember the injunction of Moses twice given, must go to Ebal and Gerizim, and must in one of the grandest national acts, if not the grandest ever performed, declare their hearty assent to the truth that God's blessing might be expected on a people's obedience, but His curse upon their disobedience. In this solemn federal transaction, too, they must renew their covenant engagements, be encouraged to go forward to conquest, and be reminded by what tenure they hold the land.

It was fitting that in the very outset this solemn transaction should take place. Some think that the scene was not so far from Jordan as the localities now known as Ebal and Gerizim, alleging in support of this view that it would be dangerous