

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 14

THE SIN OF ACHAN.

LESSON TEXT—Joshua 7:1-15. Read Joshua chapters 7-11.
GOLDEN TEXT—"Be sure your sin will find you out."—Num. 32:23.

Before proceeding against Jericho, God, through his servant Joshua, had given strict injunctions as regards the taking of anything from the city for self-enrichment, ch. 6:17, 18. It was necessary at the outset of this campaign to safeguard Israel against any such motives. The fruits of their victories must in no way seem to be the rewards of, nor to be dependent upon, the efforts of their own hands. Spiritual victories are, as we learned last week, won by means and upon principles utterly foolish and inadequate in the view of human wisdom. Nor is the Christian dependent upon the principles of human thrift for his sustenance or enrichment. That does not mean the divorcement of the Christian from those principles.

The story of Achan is an illustration. While his sin was individualistic yet it was national in its results (v. 1). After the fall of Jericho, Joshua sent a detachment of 2,000 or 3,000 men to take possession of the small town of Ai (literally, "ruins"). The task was seemingly an unimportant and an easy one, but the result was that the expedition was turned into a miserable rout (vv. 1-6).

Achan's Sin Revealed.
The stages of the sin of Achan are wonderfully revealed in the confession (v. 21) which was finally wrung from—"I saw . . . I coveted . . . I took . . . they are hid."

I. Joshua's error, vv. 6-9. It was right and proper for Joshua to bring his difficulty to God, but it was not right for him to lay upon him the blame for his defeat. Moses before him had made that same mistake (Ex. 22: 23), and it would seem that Joshua should have profited thereby. In this, however, he is supremely human. We of today with far greater light are constantly making this same mistake of accusing God, instead of finding out and judging our sin. There is, however, an underlying note of the master passion of Joshua's heart, that note which had so governed the heart of his predecessor, Moses. It is expressed in the last note of his complaint, "What wilt thou do for thy great name?" v. 9. This complaint and petition sounds very much like those of the preceding generation uttered in the wilderness. For us to wish ourselves to be "content to dwell beyond Jordan," when the testing times of our Christian life come, when the calls come for an advance, is to doubt his wisdom. No wonder Joshua was amazed when he saw Israel turn its back upon its enemies (v. 8). We must beware lest we, too, be dismayed when we see the church of today give way before the world and the devil.

II. The cause of defeat, vv. 10-12. Joshua's petition is answered by the voice of Jehovah in terms of rebuke, strong, yet tender. In verse two we are told that Joshua sent men to view Ai. Why? Because in the language of verse one "the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing." Joshua wanted the people to know that the sin of Achan and its results was the sin of the whole nation. God brings the essential oneness of the nation before us in verse eleven; for an illustration, see I. Cor. 5:1-7 and 12:12-14, 16.

God's instructions.
III. The victory of defeat, vv. 13-15. It is a testimony as to the spiritual condition of this nation that the fraud was so soon located. The early Christian church had a parallel incident in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-11. In each case the evil was quickly judged and reveals the closeness of God to his people. In the process of years Israel passed from that condition; has the church of today so passed? God had given explicit instructions as to the spoil (ch. 6:18 R. V.). God commands Joshua not to cry unto him, but to "sanctify the people." The church of Christ, as well as the individual, needs to judge its sin and to set itself apart unto God. It was a stern judgment and the query arises what sort of bonfire would the church have today were all sinfully acquired property to suffer similar destruction. It is noticeable, however, that there is no suggestion of any confession on the part of Achan until the narrowing circle of judgment had closed upon him. He confessed only when there was no possible escape. This seems like a stern, hard process, but yet God was dealing in mercy with the whole people.

IV. The Golden Text. The words of this text were uttered by Moses to the two and a half tribes who settled on the east of Jordan, that in case they refused to come to the help of their brethren in the conflict necessary to the possession of Canaan, their sin would discover them. This lesson warrants the application of this principle. A sin against God results in injury to your neighbor. It is a sin not to help your neighbor and conversely to indulge in any act which results in the defeat, moral or otherwise, of those with whom we associate, is also a sin.

WAR REMINISCENCES

INSIDE CONFEDERATE LINES

Two Curious Yankee Soldiers at Apomattox Saw Rebs Cutting Down Tree and Got a Twig.

The morning of April 9, 1865, at Apomattox, our battalion (First Division, Fifth Corps) of sharpshooters was on the front line, a half mile or so from the McLean house.

A mounted orderly came down the line and informed us that a flag of truce had come in and the war was over, and for us to rest in place until further orders, or words to that effect. In our front, in a little valley, was a small body of the enemy and several army supply wagons. Having nothing else to do, and desiring to see a rebel camp, I, with Comrade Gardiner, on detached service from the 22d Mass., crossed to the enemy's line and entered their camp after Gen. Lee had gone to the McLean house, writes Osgood P. Martin of Foxcroft, Maine, in the National Tribune.

We were the first Union men inside the lines at that point. We talked with the men and officers, but they did not seem to be in very good humor. I remembered an officer said to me: "You have not whipped, only overpowered us, and inside of 20 years we will be at you again."

We noticed some of the Johnnies cutting an apple tree to pieces, which stood near the fence of a small orchard. We stood by until several had cut and split out quite large pieces of the tree. I heard one of them say, as he shouldered his portion: "Gen. Lee may surrender if he wants to, but he isn't going to surrender me." Then he started off across the country and disappeared.

When the tree was nearly all cut up and distributed I asked an axman why they were doing that. He informed me that Lee and his generals had sat under this tree and held a consultation before the surrender.

I asked for the ax and cut out several pieces for myself and comrade—partly roots, so nearly had the tree already disappeared.

By this time it was wise that we were getting back inside our own lines, for two reasons—first, the enemy, who had gathered around in great numbers, looked and acted as if we had no business there; second, we had gone inside their lines out of curiosity and without permission, and had been absent some time. We did not see another Union man while we were inside the lines.

An Oratorical Boomerang.
The inexperienced candidate had had a bad time. He had been electioneering in the camp of an Indiana regiment, and had been severely heckled and his temper was at breaking point.

"Gentlemen," he said presently, in exasperation: "Herodotus tells us—" "Which side is he on," came a voice from the crowd.
Herodotus tells us," he went on firmly, "of a whole army that was put to flight by the braying of an ass."
But his triumph was short lived, for again came a voice from the crowd, this time in a resigned tone: "Young man," it said, "go ahead. This army's been tested."

Promoted.
An officer of the navy, in speaking of the extent to which the lingo of the navy is used as slang in the families of navy officers, particularly by the young women, offered the following as an illustration:

The youngest girl of a prominent naval officer was entertaining a friend who had called to congratulate the oldest daughter, who had lately become engaged to a captain in the same service. The friend suggested incidentally that the youngest daughter would doubtless miss her big sister, whereupon the girl addressed replied: "Yes, I shall; but just think of it, I am advanced a number."

Robbery by Mistake.
Two ladies, while General McClellan was at dinner at the Massachusetts house, Springfield, Mass., on his passage through that city, ventured to rob a military cap, which they supposed to be the general's, of both its buttons, tearing them out in a very unfeminine manner, to be preserved as mementoes of that military chieftain. The mortification of their feelings and the redness of their faces can only be faintly imagined when one of the aids carelessly as usual put on the mutilated cap, and the general put on his own, which was intact. Those buttons were not preserved, but the story has been.

Good Athletic Exercise.
There are many methods of "keeping fit" besides the Swedish exercises in the early morning between bath and breakfast. One may kick a ball. The simple exercise has come into fashion on the southeastern coast of England. Each boarding house buys a ball of India rubber, or any bouncing variety. The boarders come out upon the promenade, throw down the ball, and men and maidens pursue and kick it from breakfast back to the next meal. It is splendid exercise for the girls and boys.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN WESTERN CANADA

THE LATEST METHODS ADOPTED BY THE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES.

Scientific farming can be pursued with more profit and advantage in Western Canada, probably than in any other portion of the continent. What may be achieved by it may be ascertained when it is known that has been accomplished by the thousands who have been following the occupation for some time and made a success of it with not even a theoretical knowledge. They "have tickled the land with a hoe" and become rich. But the question is how long could that continue. The soil and the climate and every other condition favor great results by a pursuit of such methods as a technical and practical knowledge will bring. There is in the writer's opinion no possibility of failure. Fully aware of this and also of the great potentialities that exist in Western Canada for the following of the profession of farming, as it could be developed and carried on in Western Canada, the various governments have established the machinery, that there may be developed a class of farmers, who in the possession of the rich soil of that country, with its abundant humus and its phosphates and other properties with which it is so largely endowed, will make of the country, the greatest farming portion of the known world.

The Dominion government showed its paternalism years ago when it established experimental farms in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The benefits of these in the matter of practical education have been widespread, but the greatest benefit is to be observed in the immediate vicinity of these farms, where the occupants have brought their holdings into a high state of cultivation, and year after year sees an added value.

The Province of Manitoba is supplementing this work by its excellent agricultural college, manned by professors of the highest standing in their various branches. That this work is appreciated is shown by the large attendance, not only of the farmer's sons, but by the farmer himself and also by the sons of business men and professors who intend following farming as a profession, and that is what it is fast becoming.

The Province of Saskatchewan, alive to the necessity of a higher and a better system of farming, has in connection with its university an agricultural college and what it is doing today in the matter of education will be felt for all time to come, and it will not be long before it will be an easy matter to pick out the farms manned by graduates of this college, or the farms owned by those who have gained from the experience taught by their neighbor.

The same may be said of Alberta. The university at Edmonton has a complete agricultural college. Full advantage of this is taken by hundreds of students anxious to better their agricultural knowledge, and fit them to take hold successfully of the lands that they expect to occupy. This province has also added demonstration farms in various parts, which are very successful, inasmuch as farmers visit them from all parts, and take advantage of educating themselves for short periods during each winter.

Dean Curtis of Ames Agricultural College, Iowa, says: "We of the United States think that we know how to get behind agriculture and push, but the Canadians dare to do even more than we do in some respects. They have wonderful faith in the future: they hesitate at no undertaking that offers prospects of results. More significant still is the wide co-operation for agricultural promotion, including the government, private individuals and corporations and the railroads."

"Canadians are putting great faith in education for the development of their resources—not the old education, but vocational and technical. Provinces that have less than half the population of Iowa and much less wealth are appropriating more liberally for colleges and schools. Manitoba, for instance, has in the last two years provided about as much money for the building of an agricultural plant as Iowa has appropriated in half a century. It has given in two years \$2,500,000 for buildings and grounds for its agricultural institutions.

"Saskatchewan is building a plant for its university and agricultural college on a broader and more substantial plan than has been applied to any similar institution in this country. Yet neither province has more than half a million population.

"For public schools equally generous provision is made. They are being built up to give vocational and technical training as well as cultural. They fit the needs of the country excellently and should turn out fine types of boys and girls. They do this with a remarkable faith in the value of right education.

"Dean Curtis was much interested in the many other ways the Canadian government aids agriculture, aside from appropriations for educational purposes. They are aiding in solving marketing problems; they are encouraging better breeding of livestock by buying sires and reselling them at cost, and they are doing many other things of like character.

"I found that the government is advancing from 50 to 85 per cent. of the money necessary to build co-operative creameries and elevators," said Dean Curtis, "and it is doing it at a low rate of interest and on long time payments. Where cattle need breed-

ing up, the government buys bulls of dairy, Shorthorn, or special dairy breeds and sends them in at cost price and on long time payments."
The yield of grain in Western Canada in 1913 was excellent but not abnormal, wheat going from 30 to 45 bushels per acre, and other small grain with equally good averages.—Advertisement.

What Could He Do.
"I hate to be contradicted," she said.
"Then I won't contradict you," he returned.

"You don't love me," she asserted.
"I don't," he admitted.
"You are a hateful thing!" she cried.

"I am," he replied.
"I believe you are trying to tease me," she said.
"I am," he conceded.
"And you do not love me!"
"I don't."

For a moment she was silent.
"Well," she said at last, "I do hate a man who's weak enough to be led by a woman. He ought to have a mind of his own—and strength."
—He sighed. What else could he do?

He Was Real Nasty.
A darky employed as an office-boy came to work one morning with a face that looked as though it had been run through a meat-grinder.

"Henry," demanded his surprised employer, "what in the world happened to you?"
"Well, sah, boss," explained Henry. "I got into a lile argument las' night wit' another nigger, and one thing led to another twell I up and hat at him. Well, sah, it seemed lak dat irritated him. He took and blacked both of mah eyes and bit both of mah years mighty nigh off, and split mah lip and knocked two of mah teeth loose; and den he th'owed me down and stamped me in de stomach. Honest, boss, I never did get so sick of a nigger in mah life!"

The Knocker.
After God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad and the vampire, he had some awful substance left, with which he made a knocker. A knocker is a two-legged animal with a cork-screw soul, a water-sogged brain and a combination backbone made of jelly and glue. Where other people have their hearts he carries a tumor of rotten principles. When the knocker comes down the street honest men turn their backs, the angels in heaven take precipitate refuge behind their harps and the devil bar-locks the gates of hell.—Missouri Brunswicker.

Something the Public Misses.
"They were picked up in the open sea," says the Times, "just after their vessel, the schooner Marjorie Brown, which had sprung a leak, was about to sink." That's the trouble with an unillustrated paper. The public is deprived of seeing a picture of a vessel just after it is about to sink.—New York Mail.

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Men always say more evil of women than there really is; and there is always more than is known.—Mezeral

This Little World.
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"And now?"
"Now he can't even find ground for a divorce!"—Judge.

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