

Sunday School Lesson

Trouble With the World Today, Says Judge Allen, Is Sin; An Honest Confession Is Good for the Soul Nehemiah's Prayer is the Subject of Lesson

By JUDGE OLIVER H. ALLEN

Golden Text: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Jas. 5:16.

Subject: Nehemiah's Prayer.

Lesson Text: Nehemiah 1:1-10.

The book of Nehemiah is a continuation of the book of Ezra and was formerly called the Second Book of Ezra, and there are the last historical books of the Old Testament.

In Ezra we have the priest who is chiefly concerned in the restoration of the temple and the temple service and in Nehemiah is a layman concerned in a blessing to his people and the city of his fathers.

A Patriot of the Right Type

Nehemiah was a patriot of the right type. In captivity he was serving the king as cupbearer and upon learning of the deplorable condition of his people and of the dilapidated condition of Jerusalem he "sat down and wept and mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven."

The colloquy between him and the King related in the Second Chapter is very interesting and pathetic. "Why," he says, "should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres lieth in waste and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?"

There is only one patriotism that counts, and that is the patriotism of a godly man, a man interested in saving the souls of his people as well as in their temporal welfare.

The finest expression of patriotism ever uttered was by Christ when he said: "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and ye would not."

No true patriot can fail to be deeply troubled over conditions in our own land. There is the appearance of material progress but what of the spiritual condition. There is much false teaching and crime is so much on the increase that it is called a "crime wave."

Confession of Sins

Many have substituted amusement for religion. The time is ripe for a season of fasting and prayer, and for men like Nehemiah. One of the best things he did was to confess his sins. "Both I and my father's house have sinned," David humbly confessed his sin, (Ps. 32:5), and so did Paul (Eph. 2:3). Moses made a similar confession for his people and pleaded for them before God, as did Samuel at Mizpah. "An honest confession is good for the soul."

Nehemiah sets us an example of being definite in his confession. "We have sinned very corruptly against thee, and have not kept thy commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, nor thy precepts, nor thy laws which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets."

He acknowledges that the blame for the sad conditions rested on the people, and that the unfortunate state was due to sin.

Some millionaire, has provided a fund for a commission to study and ascertain the cause of the bad condition of society, and another has said why spend so much money to solve a problem which can be answered in one little word—sin.

Abraham Lincoln uttered a sad truth when, calling for a day of fasting and prayer during the Civil War, he said "We have forgotten God."

One of the most impressive sentences in the Bible is that in the warning of Amosiah to Aza: "The Lord is with you while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him he will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him He will forsake you." This applies to nations as well as to individuals. Israel was guilty of this great sin of forsaking God, and she was suffering for it, but God is ever ready to respond to the call of distress.

Fasting

In times of trouble in ancient times the distressed soul always accompanied prayer with fasting and often put on sackcloth.

Fasting is a natural expression of grief and intended to make one's petition effectual before God. It was a recognized mode of seeking Divine favor and protection and was associated with confession of sin and evidenced a penitent heart which always touches God.

To Elijah the Lord said "Seest thou how Ahab humbled himself before me because he humbled before Me, I will not bring the evil in his day." (1 Kings 17:24).

We never hear of fasting in this day except for purposes of health or partial fasting during Lent. There is nothing in the Bible that annuls it. On the contrary, Christ, when He healed the lunatic, which the disciples failed to heal, said in answer to their question as to why they could not perform the miracle, "How-be-it this kind speaketh not out but by prayer and fasting."

When the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch commissioned Paul and Barnabas to work they accompanied it with fasting and prayer. This seems to have been an enlargement of the practice from that in the Old Testament. It is said that "there is a close connection between fasting and insight both intellectual and spiritual—between simple living and high thinking." So much for fasting.

What is Prayer? Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed, the motion of a hidden fire that trembles at the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh, the falling of a tear, the upward glancing of an eye when none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try; Prayer is the sublimest strain that breath.

The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath.

RECRUITING NEW SHOPWORKERS IS MEETING SUCCESS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 19.—Efforts of the Southern railway to recruit skilled shop workers were declared by Fairfax Harrison, its president, today to be meeting with success.

"Approximately 200 skilled mechanics," said Mr. Harrison in a formal statement, "are en route to our principal shops points today and we expect to have more tomorrow. In addition over 600 Southern railway employees from other departments who have volunteered for service are now at work in our shops and new volunteers are being placed daily. We are still ready to receive our old men but they seem to give their first allegiance to union leaders who are themselves making no sacrifice."

British manufacturers have developed a rubber carpet, adapted to the same purposes as linoleum, which is reversible and soft to the tread.

TWO THINGS NOW IN WAY OF ENDING SOFT COAL STRIKE

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 19.—Two things today were disclosed by the conference between the leaders of the United Mine Workers of America and the operators to settle the coal strike in the anthracite fields, according to information obtained after the adjournment of the third meeting.

The first was that the only stumbling block that lies in the way of agreement was the arbitration proposal offered by the operators and the second was that the operators were anxious to arrive at an agreement and resume the production of coal at once.

How much time will elapse before the representatives of the two sides get together, however, proved speculative even among their own numbers.

Electrification of the steam railroads of Bombay, which will require five years to complete, will be begun in the near future.

SPAIN'S QUEEN ABOARD BRITISH FLEET IN 1692

LONDON, Aug. 1.—The woman who was Queen of Spain in 1692, spent 16 days on board a British fleet at Flush-

ing. Here is the frank letter Admiral Russell, in command, wrote to London about her. The communication has been given out by the Historical Manuscript Commission.

"I have had the Queen on board three Majesties yachts this sixteen days, and have as well as I could, disposed of a numerous beggarly train a board

the several men of war. There are about 200 persons, all very poor, few cloths, and no money—I have layed three weeks under water and in a hole of the yacht but a yard long and not two yards broad; it is so great a burden to me that I am weary of living, and shall be so, till I am blessed with a safe return from the Groine to England."

TARIFF BILL PASSES.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 19.—The Senate today passed the tariff bill which has been pending since April 30. The vote was 49 to 25 Senator Borah, of Idaho, was the only Republican to vote against the measure. Three democrats, Senators Broussard and Randall, of Louisiana, and Kendrick, Wyoming, voted for the bill. It now goes to conference.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

- National League. Pittsburgh 1, 8; Boston 4, 2. Cincinnati 9, Brooklyn 4. Chicago 2, New York 1. St. Louis 7, Philadelphia 8.
- American League. Philadelphia 3, 0; St. Louis 5, 6. Boston 1, 0; Detroit 5, 1. New York 12, Chicago 5. Washington 1, Cleveland 3.
- International League. Baltimore 11, 1; Syracuse 5, 8. Reading 6, 0; Rochester 7, 3. Second seven innings. Newark 4, 4; Toronto 6, 1. 2nd game seven innings. Jersey City 5, Buffalo 9.
- Piedmont League. Winston Salem Raleigh rain. Greensboro 11, High Point 9. Danville 7, Durham 6.
- Virginia State League. Wilson 1, Newport News 2. Portsmouth 6, 6; Rocky Mount 5, 4. Richmond 9, 4; Norfolk 9, 3.
- South-Atlantic League. Augusta 0, 3; Spartanburgh 3, 0. Charlotte 1, 1; Columbia 2, 0. Charleston 3, 4; Greenville 6, 1.



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