



The FAN and the UMPIRE

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AMERICAN LEAGUE UMPIRE

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JEREMIAH CAST INTO PRISON

Sunday School Lesson for Aug. 20, 1911
Specially Arranged for This Paper

LESSON TEXT.—Jeremiah 27.
MEMORY VERSE, 15.
GOLDEN TEXT.—"Blessed are ye, ye men shall revile you, and persecute you falsely, for my sake."—Matt. 5:11.

TIME OF this lesson was B. C. 588-586, 15 years after our last lesson during the last siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, from the 9th to the 18th year of Zedekiah's reign.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, surrounded by the besieging armies of the Chaldeans, and suffering from famine and pestilence (Jer. 38:2).

Jeremiah had prophesied nearly 40 years (since 626) and was a prematurely old man.

Zedekiah was the last king of Judah, reigning 11 years.

Nebuchadnezzar, 18th and 19th year of his reign.

Jehoiakim reigned six years after he had burned the roll of Jeremiah's prophecies, which, like the faded phoenix rose anew and fresh from the ashes. He was slain in 597.

The first blow of the threatened doom of Judah had fallen during the fourth year of his reign, the first tolling of the bell of judgment which should have summoned the very dead in sin to awake. But they gave no heed.

Jehoiachin, his son, ascended the throne, a bad, weak boy, utterly unfit to cope with the situation. His reign lasted only three months. Upon Jehoiachin descended the full force of the divine vengeance incurred by previous generations. He was scarcely on the throne when the Chaldean forces, which had been ravaging Judea, were joined by Nebuchadnezzar himself, and closed around Jerusalem, and Jehoiachin surrendered at discretion. The arm of Babylon raised to strike his father fell on him, and fulfilled the prophecy against Jehoiakim. "He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David," Jehoiachin was kept a prisoner in Babylon for 37 years and was then released.

This was the second blow of divine judgment, the beginning of the second captivity, when 10,000 people were carried captive to Babylon. Among them were the king's wives and officers, and 7,000 that were strong and apt for war, and 1,000 craftsmen; and a large part of the 5,400 vessels of gold and silver from the Temple and palaces. The policy of Nebuchadnezzar was to remove out of the way all those who might be able to organize a revolt when he and his army had departed. Such men it would have been dangerous to leave behind. It would seem as if all this would have been sufficient to prevail on the people to repent and be saved.

Zedekiah, the brother of Jehoiachin, was placed upon the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, "a shadow king over a desperate band of men. During the first nine years of his reign the nation, instead of embracing the opportunity of repentance, plunged more deeply into folly. The dregs of the people, left behind in Jerusalem, laid this flattering unction to their souls: "We have been spared by Jehovah, therefore we are righteous in his sight."

During a brief respite while Nebuchadnezzar left Jerusalem free while he fought the Egyptians Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin. His home was at Anathoth in Benjamin, three or four miles north of the city. It was apparently to secure his share of the tithes and produce of the Levitical glebe of the village, due to him as one of its priests. Knowing that the Chaldeans would return, it was imperative that he should obtain the means of subsistence to take back into the city, so soon to be beleaguered afresh. Others think it was to secure himself in the possession of an inheritance. There was a natural rush to get out of the city after so long a confinement. Jeremiah went with the others.

When Jeremiah was in the gate of Benjamin, the north gate of the city, that by which any one would go to the country of Benjamin which adjoined Jerusalem, a guard said: "Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans; you are trying to desert to the enemy." Then said Jeremiah: "False! A lie! I fall not a way to the Chaldeans." He was arrested by the guard, and brought to the princes, the officials of the government, who were with Jeremiah. He had compared them to rotten figs. He was the strongest and most resolute opponent of their war policy. But for him they would have had it all their own way.

Jeremiah was placed in a dungeon under the prison building. Jerusalem was honey-combed with subterranean cisterns, vaulted or arched overhead, and cabins, vaults, the subterranean, arched spaces of a cistern, containing water.

At last Zedekiah, the king, secretly took him out to inquire: "Is there any word from the Lord?" Jeremiah replied: "There is." The word was: "Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon."

Missionary illustrations are abundant in modern times. Witness the four fold growth of the church in Madagascar as the result of the cruel persecutions in 1849 and the two decades following, when Christians were flung over "the Rock of Hurling" a precipice of 150 feet, were burned to death, killed by boiling water or by stoning, killed by the growth of the poison. Witness the growth of the church in China after the fearful Boxer massacres of 1900.

And the heroism of the missionaries, so like that of the apostles of old, has elevated the whole missionary work throughout the world.



GET your glasses on." "You better consult an optician." "Don't we ever get a close decision?" "Who ever told you that you could umpire?" "Back to the ribbon counter for you, very shortly, Percy." "Say, honest, how much are you getting for throwing the game?" "Don't you know enough to retire when you have gone totally blind?" "You certainly must have something on your boss to hold your job."

"The only thing about you that looks like an umpire is your mask and protector." "You better start to run for the back fence as soon as the game is over, for we are going to get you."

These, and a few million more "complimentary" expressions of a like nature are hurled at the umpire during the course of a closest, contested game.

It is really strange and wonderful into what a frenzy the average baseball fan can work himself during the progress of an exciting game. It is almost incredible to think what he will do or say when he imagines the umpire has made a wrong decision that has apparently put his club out of the running.

Prominent attorneys, distinguished doctors, well-known actors, staid business men, in fact men of all classes, will invariably jump to their feet at what they consider a "punch decision," and shake their fists violently, utter all kinds of incoherent remarks, and insist that nothing will satisfy their thirst for revenge but the life blood of the poor, defenseless umpire. The next day, when some one meets one of the frenzied rooters, and in a joking way explains to him how he acted and tells him some of the things he said about the umpire, Mr. Loyal Rooter takes a vow then and there that he will never again open his mouth at a ball game, no matter how thrilling the situation. Perhaps the very next afternoon, if the proper occasion arises, he will unknowingly commit the very act of the previous day.

Civic pride is to be admired in all things. A baseball fan who doesn't want to see the home team triumph is surely a peculiar sort of man. Perhaps it might be well for him to have his sanity investigated. Desire to win at any cost however often makes intelligent persons absolutely unfair in their views and opinions.

The extent to which the fan will allow his civic pride to dominate his opinion was well illustrated to me one day last year. While on my way to the hotel after a particularly brilliant game, which the home team had lost by a score of 1 to 0, after a desperate struggle, I was much amused at the conversation of a number of dyed-in-the-wool fans who happened to be in the same car.

It was the unanimous opinion of every one that the home team needed good-sized boards instead of regulation bats, if they were ever to win a game. They cited a half dozen instances where a hit, or even a fly to the outfield, would have won the contest. All of them were sore over the loss of the game, principally because of the weak hitting of their favorites. They proclaimed the visitors stronger in every respect. That one run was the big event of the day. The fans seemed to forget that for 11 innings the hitting of the visitors was just as feeble as that of the home team. That the hit that sent the only run of the game across the plate was due to a lucky bound which sent it over the second baseman's head. To me it was one of the best games of the year.

The following day the home team won by a very one-sided score of 12 to 1. As fate would have it, I bumped into several fans of the previous day on the car down town. The contest was a decidedly poor one, I thought, the one and only redeeming feature being the hard hitting of the home club. The fans were satisfied, however, for it was unanimously agreed that the home boys had recovered their batting eyes, and that from now on they would make the best of them step the limit to win.

I shall never forget a little incident that happened to "Silk," O'Loughlin during a game at Washington, one day, which illustrates what some fans will do when the home team is getting trimmed.

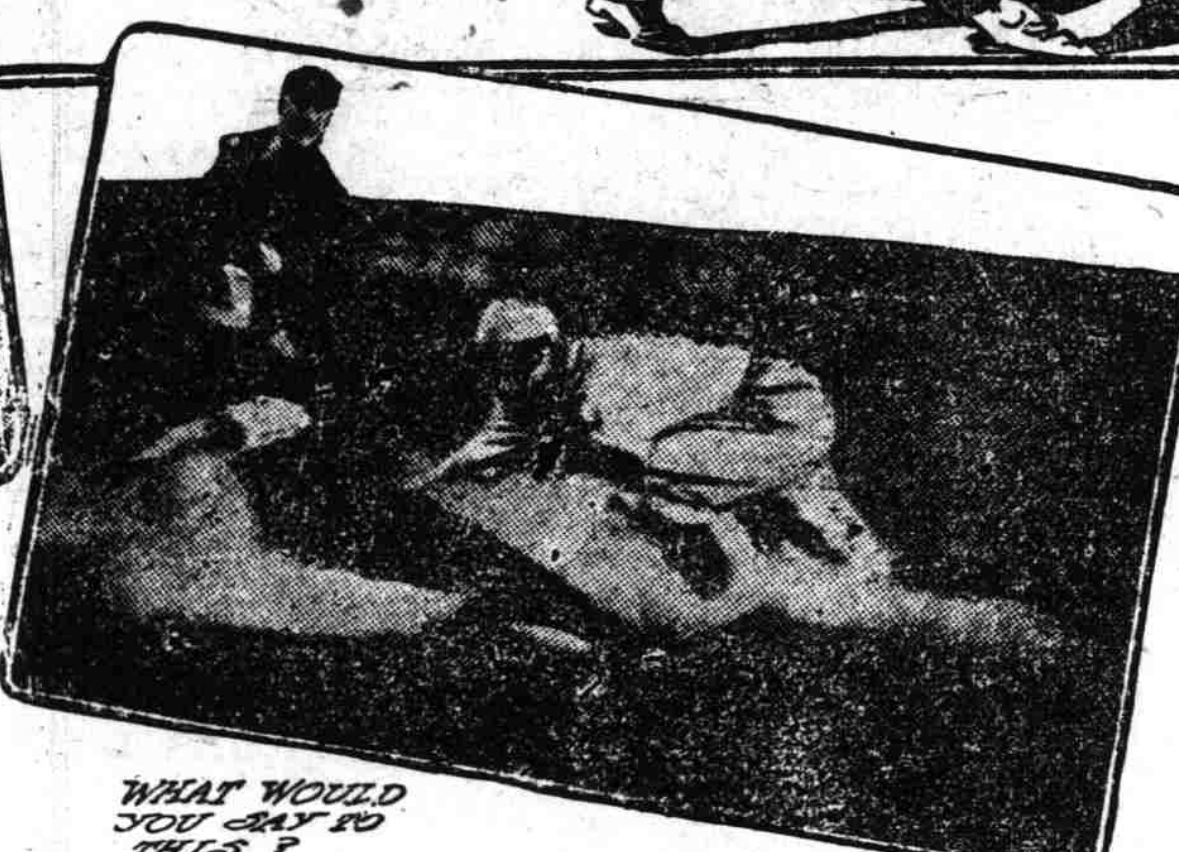
I happened to be working back of the plate that afternoon, while "Silk" was performing on the bases. All the close plays seemed to come up on the bases. "Silk" had at least a dozen plays that could have been given one way or the other, because of the extreme closeness. Practically all of the plays went against the home team, and while "Silk" had little or no trouble from the players, a fan, who was sitting in the third-base section of the grandstand chose to disagree with the arbitrator on practically all of his rulings. He kept up a volley of remarks throughout the game, and before its close had enlisted quite a few volunteers.

Because of the actions of this one lone fan, "Silk" was subjected to a rather strenuous afternoon, although his work was well nigh perfect. "Silk" discovered that his enemy was sitting in the front row of the grandstand, also that he wore glasses. He made up his mind long before the close of the game that he would express himself to the gentleman in question.

The home team managed to win out by a brilliant ninth inning rally. In his jubilation over the winning of the game, the fan had forgotten entirely that a person bearing



DIFFICULT PLAY FOR THE UMPIRE TO DECIDE



WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THIS?



CLOSE DECISION AT FIRST



AN ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE PLAY TO SEE



WILL AN UMPIRE NEVER ERR?

the title of umpire ever existed. The Irish in "Silk's" blood was up, however, and he managed to work his way through the crowd to where the frenzied rooter was celebrating over the victory. The fan was a well-dressed chap, and appeared to possess more than the average intelligence.

"You have a lot of license to be roasting an umpire, when you have to wear a pair of thick glasses to be able to even see. I can't see how you ever managed to break into the grandstand. Your place is on the outside, looking through a knot hole." The fan said many a word in reply, and "Silk" having gotten all the venom out of his system, was content to drop the matter. It was evident from the look of embarrassment that came over the rooter's face that he was thoroughly disgusted with himself. He just began to realize what he had been doing throughout the afternoon.

Shortly after we had reached our dressing room there was a knock at the door. We bade our visitor enter. He introduced himself as Dr. "So and So," a very prominent eye specialist. We both began to wonder if he had come to examine our optics.

"I just overheard your conversation with that excited fan, Mr. O'Loughlin," said the specialist. "I really can't blame you for saying what you did to him, but I would advise you to ignore him in the future. I've been treating that chap for a year for eye trouble. His sight is decidedly defective. He really can't see 90 feet with any kind of accuracy. He wouldn't have known whether it was you or Jack Sheridan umpiring the bases if some one hadn't told him."

"Silk" almost keeled over when he heard the news. It simply goes to show what baseball will do to a man, especially if the home team happens to be losing. This chap with the defective eyesight was getting an excellent umpire into trouble because most of the decisions were going against the home team, and he was so partisan in spirit that he could see only one side of the argument.

When you come to think it over, and weigh carefully the cold facts, it is really remarkable the work that devolves upon an umpire during a ball game. In the course of a regular nine inning contest he is called upon to render between 375 and 400 decisions. Rather remarkable figures. Considering his arduous duties, it is not to be wondered at if he errs. Indeed it is remarkable that the judges of play do not slip up more frequently. Here is a little data that is mighty interesting. Possibly a perusal of it may cause the umpire to receive more favorable consideration.

In a nine inning game on an average of 35 men on each team will face the pitcher, making 70 men in all who step to the plate in an attempt to outguess the twirler. Thus the umpire is called upon to pass judgment on three score and ten batters.

It has been estimated that the umpire makes four decisions on each man. In these modern days of baseball "groove" pitchers are mighty scarce. The pitcher is constantly trying to make the batter hit at bad balls on the outside and inside, while the batter is trying to make the twirler get them over. Consequently the game resolves itself into a continual battle of wits between the pitcher and batter.

Should the batter strike out on three balls, it would require three decisions. If the batter works the pitcher for a pass to first on four balls, it requires that many decisions. Often the count before the batter is finally retired or reaches first is one strike and three balls, two balls and two strikes, two strikes and three balls, three balls and three strikes, four balls and two strikes or any of the many other combinations that may arise. Thus it would

seem that four decisions on each batter in connection with balls and strikes would be a fair estimate.

With 70 men coming to the plate in a nine-inning game, and each batter averaging four decisions, the umpire is called upon to render in the neighborhood of 280 ball and strike decisions.

That there are 20 decisions to render on balls in the immediate neighborhood of the foul line during the ordinary game, is a conservative estimate. The decisions are often a matter of inches, and many times change the entire complexion of the game.

Of course, in a full nine inning game, 54 men must be retired before it is completed. If the home team happens to have made more runs in eight innings than the visitors in nine, they will refuse the last half of the ninth, making it necessary to retire only 51 men in order to complete the game. A decision is necessary on every one made, although frequently it is evident to every one that the man is retired as on a fly ball or when a man takes a healthy swing for the third strike. Such decisions are more a mere matter of form than anything else. On the other hand, there are perhaps 20 plays that come up in a game where the umpire rules the player is safe on a very close decision.

A resume would show 280 decisions on balls and strikes, 20 decisions on fair and foul hits, 54 rulings on outs and somewhere near 20 plays in which the runner gets the benefit of the doubt, and is called safe, making 374 rulings an umpire is called upon to make during a nine inning contest.

It is easy to sit in the grandstand or bleachers, surrounded by a lot of friends who see things just as you do, and umpire the game, when you are not busy munching peanuts. It is entirely different on the ball field, however, where you are a stranger in a strange land, with a hostile crowd ever ready to criticize and 18 active ball players and as many substitutes, together with two foxy managers, trying their level best to outwit you.

I happened to have an off day in Cleveland last year, and I decided to journey out to the ball park and call on my brother umpires, "Bull" Perrine and Bill Dinneen had been assigned to the game. After making them a friendly visit I told them I intended taking a seat in the grandstand to look them over. They laughingly assented and informed me that they would give their best performance of the season.

Bill Dinneen, the former star pitcher, worked the bases, and it seemed as if every decision was close. Philadelphia was the opposing team that afternoon, and despite the closeness of many of the plays there was scarcely a kick from any of the players. Cleveland was losing, however, and the fans

made considerable fuss over several rulings on the bases by Dinneen. From where I was sitting in the rear part of the big grandstand it really did look as if he had slipped up on four plays. Observing that not a kick was made, I was convinced that something had happened in each instance which the fans in the stand—myself among them—had not noticed. I made note of the plays, with the intention of asking Dinneen about them, just to satisfy my own curiosity, and after the game I went to his dressing room.

"Why did you call Collins safe at first, Bill, on that throw from Turner?" I asked.

"Why, there wasn't anything to that play," said he. "The throw you will remember was a trifle wild. It pulled Stovall some distance off the bag, and when he lunged back his foot was about three inches shy of touching first."

"Why did you call Baker safe at second?" was my second inquiry. "From the stand it looked as if the ball beat him to the bag by a yard."

"The ball beat him all right," said Bill, "but the force of the collision in touching Baker caused that young shortstop Knaupp

to drop the ball. Had he held the throw, Baker would have been an easy out."

"Why did you, call Birmingham out at second when Coombs threw to catch him napping? Looked as if Joe got back to the bag before the ball reached Barry's hands."

"He got back, but not to the bag," replied Bill. "Barry had him blocked off, and 'Birmy' slid against Barry's shoe, not the bag. He hasn't touched the base yet."

"Just one more, Bill. Why was Jackson out at third? It looked as if he easily beat Catcher Lapp's throw in an attempt to keep him from stealing."

"No question about his beating the throw," answered Bill. "He was safe a mile, if he hadn't overslid the bag three or four inches and allowed himself to be touched out before he was able to regain it."

On the four plays in which Dinneen was absolutely correct he was forced to submit to all kinds of censure, because the fans did not know what had really happened.

There are any number of points that the fans should take into consideration when they see the umpire declare a man out who seems to them to be safe beyond a reasonable doubt. Four of them I have already referred to; failure to touch the bag, due to being drawn off by a high, low or wild throw; dropping of the ball after having touched the base runner, due to the force of the collision; sliding of the base runner into the foot of the infielder, instead of the bag and the oversliding of the bag after having reached it in safety.

The fallaway slide is another point that causes all kinds of trouble for the umpires. This slide is used by most of the leading base runners, and consists of going straight for the bag until within a short distance of it, then falling away, so to speak, by throwing the body either towards the infield or outfield as best suits the occasion, and hooking one foot under the bag. This slide makes it very hard for an infielder to put the ball on the runner, as it gives him only the sole of the shoe, or as the players express it, only the spikes to touch.

The baseball fans, however, may be considered pretty fair creatures, and each year they are getting more fair-minded. I have noticed a vast improvement in each of the five years I have umpired in the major leagues. I attribute the improvement to the fact that the umpires are being backed up in their decisions, and the attitude of the sporting writers.