

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

NATIONAL GLORY AND DECAY

International Sunday School Lesson
For April 27, 1947

Golden Text: "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding." —Proverbs 3:5.

Lesson Text: I Kings 3:5-9; 4:29-34; 5:13-15; 10:26; 11:4-9

In the Hebrew manuscript first and second Kings are treated as a single book. There is no reason for any division. The two books give us the history of Israel from the close of David's life to the Babylonian captivity. The name of the author is not known but these books were written earlier than Chronicles which treat of the same historic period.

David's reign ended in tumult and disorder. Adonijah, one of his sons, sought to assume the inheritance, whereupon Bathsheba had her son Solomon proclaimed as successor, with the help of the prophet, Nathan, the priest, Zadok, and the general, Benaiah. "I am going the way of all the earth," said David to his son, "be thou strong therefore, and show

thyself a man." Having reigned forty years David died and Solomon ascended to the throne.

We are told that, at the commencement of his rule, Solomon dreamed that he offered sacrifices to Jehovah at Gibeon, whereupon Jehovah offered to bestow a boon upon him. In his reply the young king first expressed gratitude and then his own humility, finally asking that the divine gift be wisdom so that he might be able to rule justly and wisely. Because of the unselfishness of the request Solomon was promised riches and, if he followed Jehovah, long life as well.

The splendor of the king may be seen from the following quotation from Dean A. P. Stanley. "His banquets were of the most superb kind. All his plate and drinking vessels were of gold. His household daily consumed thirty oxen, a hundred sheep, besides game of all kinds. There was a constant succession of guests. The train of his servants was such as had never been seen before.

"His stables were on the most splendid scale. Solomon's intercourse with Egypt at once introduced horses. Four thousand stalls were attached to the royal palace.

"He established gardens, and parks and trees of all kinds of fruit, and reservoirs of water to water the trees. A long covered aqueduct, built by him, and restored by Pilate, still conveys water to the thirsty capital. In the midst of this gorgeous array was the sovereign himself, fair, radiant as if with the oil and essence of gladness, his robes scented with the perfumes of India or Arabia."

The outstanding memorial of Solomon's reign was the construction of the temple in Jerusalem, according to the wish and plan of David. This temple was one of the wonders of the ancient world, in the construction of which Solomon was helped by the King of Tyre and Hiram, a worker in metal.

A little more than seven years was needed for the construction of this great edifice. Upon its completion a great national ceremony of dedication was held, during which Solomon uttered a prayer of intense spirituality and earnestness, including therein a request for blessing upon strangers as well as the children of Israel.

Solomon's wisdom, great though it was, was not that of a true statesman. He was skillful as a builder, as a teacher, as a diplomat in arranging a whole series of marriage alliances with foreign royal houses. But he was not wise enough to see that buildings might be so numerous and so costly as to burden unduly the resources of his people.

Solomon was not like his father, David, who was close enough to his people to sympathize with their needs and struggles. David knew poverty at first hand but Solomon, born in the King's palace, had his every want supplied without effort on his part. He looked upon his subjects only as means to an end—to gratify his every desire.

That was a great failure on Solomon's part, but his greatest was his failure to keep himself in touch with God. With his multitudinous marriages with heathen women, he allowed them to bring into his court their idols and idol-worship. Religion with Solomon became something to be subordinated to political aims. He would not listen to the voice of the prophets. With Solomon began the long struggle between the kings and statesmen who looked on religion as a means to the national ends, and the prophets who saw in it the supreme goal of a nation's life. And, thus, began the downfall of Israel as a nation.

it and then have a showdown with her," says the Virginia Senator, who adds that "if this means a retirement of Russia from the United Nations, it is far better to do that now, because as long as she continues her selfish and obstructive tactics, there is no hope of the United Nations being a real instrument for the preservation of world peace."

The Virginia Senator thinks that the United Nations should be reorganized, if necessary, to permit it to function and that "if Russia is an enemy, and persists in being an enemy to free people, it is better to have her outside the family than inside the family."

There will be many people to approve the position taken by Senator Byrd. Apparently, such a test must come sooner or later if the United Nations is to function effectively. The question arises, however, whether it is wise to make the test now.

Proposal To Assist Greece Is Within Purpose of U. N.

The proposal of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg that the Greek-Turkish aid program include a statutory invitation to the United Nations to modify or halt it by majority vote was a challenge to those fighting the proposal on the ground that the action of the United States by-passes the United Nations.

Obviously, the world organization is not in a position to function at the present time. The amendment, as a

serious economic repercussions, that might develop into an economic crisis. At this time, it is well to remember that the Government has removed price controls from practically everything except a few items. When this was done, there were abundant assurances from business leaders that private enterprise, functioning without controls, would provide an abundance of goods at reasonable prices. The public is still waiting.

Are "Abnormal Profits" Back Of Steadily Mounting Prices?

President Truman recently expressed "deep concern over the level of prices prevailing today." He said the same factor that can weaken our economy is the kind of selfishness "which is now expressed in the form of unnecessarily high prices for many commodities and for many manufactured articles."

A few days later, Mr. Jack L. Straus, president of the world's largest department store, appealed to manufacturers, retailers and the public to make an effort to reduce prices, declaring that prices could come down if, on the part of everybody, "there is a willingness to forego abnormal profits."

The concern of the President and some of our leading business men over the present high level of prices is founded upon their realization that mass production can be supported only by a huge buying market and that the buying market is restricted by high prices. Apparently, the fear is that high prices will develop into a buyers' strike, which may cause

Sure Is
"You'll be sorry if you kiss me. I've laryngitis and I am under observation."
"Don't be silly. Laryngitis isn't anything to worry about."
"No, but my husband's observation is."

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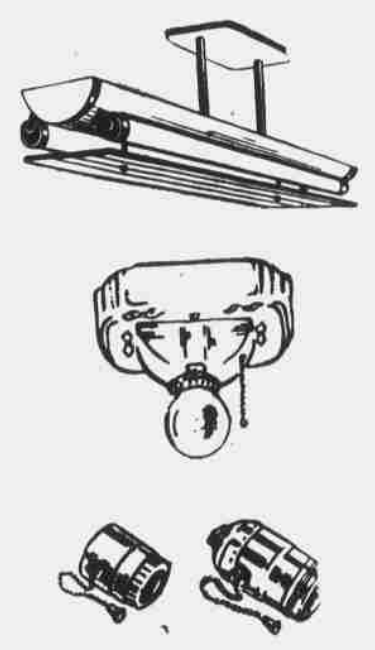
LOOKING AT WASHINGTON

By HUGO S. SIMS

(Continued From Page Three) that the problems of Greece and Turkey be referred to the United Nations although action by the Security Council could be nullified by the veto of a single nation.

"Let Russia, if she pleases, veto

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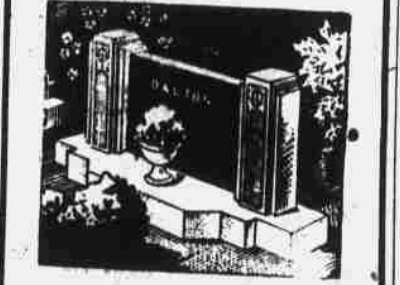
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