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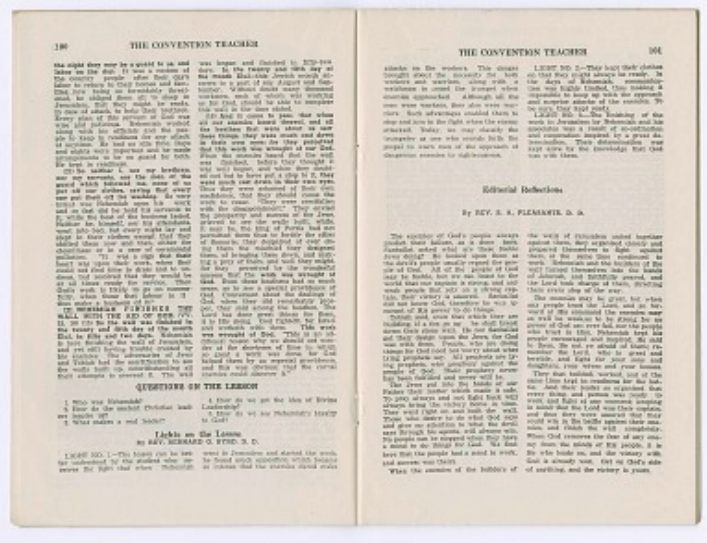
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the night they may be a guard to us, and labor on the day. It was a custom of the country people after their day's labor to return to their homes and families: now being so formidably threatened, he obliged them all to sleep in Jerusalem, that they might be ready, in case of attack, to help their brethren. Every plan of this servant of God was wise and judicious. Nehemiah worked along with his officials and the people to keep in readiness for any attack at anytime. He had no idle time. Days and nights were important and he made arrangements to be on guard for both. He kept in readiness.

(23) So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing. So intent was Nehemiah upon his work and so fast did he hold his servants to it, while the heat of the business lasted. Neither he, nor his attendants, went into bed, but every night lay and slept in their clothes except that they shifted them now and then, either for cleanliness or in a case of ceremonial pollution. "It was a sign that their heart was upon their work, when they could not find time to dress and undress, but resolved that they would be at all times ready for service. Then God's work is likely to go on successfully, when those that labour in it thus make business of it."

III. NEHEMIAH FINISHES THE WALL WITH THE AID OF GOD. (VV. 15, 16) (15) So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. Nehemiah is here finishing the wall of Jerusalem, and yet still having trouble created by his enemies. The adversaries of Jews and Tobiah had the mortification to see the walls built up, notwithstanding all their attempts to prevent it. The wall was begun and finished in fifty-two days. In the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul--this Jewish month answers to a part of our August and September. Without doubt many thousand workmen, each of whom was working as for God, should be able to complete this wall in the time stated.

(16) And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God. When the enemies heard that the wall was finished, before they thought it was well begun, and when they doubted not but to have put a stop to it, they were much cast down in their own eyes. Thus they were ashamed of their own confidence, that they should cause the work to cease. "They were crestfallen with the disappointment." They envied the prosperity and success of the Jews, grieved to see the walls built, while, it may be, the king of Persia had not permitted them thus to fortify the cities of Samaria; they despaired of ever doing them the mischief they designed them, of bringing them down, and making a prey of them, and well they might, for they perceived by the wonderful success that the work was wrought of God. Even these heathens had so much sense, as to see a special providence of God. Conversant about the dealings of God, when they did remarkably prosper, they said among the heathen, The Lord has done great things for them, it is His doing. God fighteth for Israel and worketh with them. This work was wrought of God. "This is an additional reason why we should not wonder at the shortness of time in which so great a work was done, for God helped them by an especial providence, and this was obvious, that the carnal enemies could discover it."



QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

1. Who was Nehemiah?
2. How do the ancient Christian leaders inspire us?
3. What makes a real leader?
4. How do we get the idea of Divine Leadership?
5. How do we see Nehemiah's loyalty to God?

Lights on the Lesson

By REV. BERNARD O. BYRD, D. D.

LIGHT NO. 1.--The lesson can be better understood by the student who receives the light that when Nehemiah went to Jerusalem and started the work, he found much opposition which became so intense that the enemies dared make

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attacks on the workers. This danger brought about the necessity for both workers and warriors, along with a watchman to sound the trumpet when enemies approached. Although all the men were workers, they also were warriors. Such advantages enabled them to stop and join in the fight when the enemy attacked. Today, we must classify the trumpeter as one who sounds forth the gospel to warn men of the approach of dangerous enemies to righteousness.

LIGHT NO. 2.--They kept their clothes on that they might always be ready. In the days of Nehemiah, communication was highly limited, thus making it impossible to keep up with the approach and surprise attacks of the enemies. To be sure, they kept ready.

LIGHT NO. 3.--The finishing of this work in Jerusalem by Nehemiah and his associates was a result of co-ordination and cooperation inspired by a great determination. Their determination was kept alive by the knowledge that God was with them.

Editorial Reflections

By REV. S. A. PLEASANTS, D. D.

The enemies of God's people always predict their failure, as is done here. Sanballat asked what are these feeble Jews doing? He looked upon them as the devil's people usually regard the people of God. All of the people of God may be feeble, but we can boast to the world that our captain is strong, and any weak people that rely on a strong captain, their victory is assured. Sanballat did not know God, therefore he was ignorant of His power to do things.

Tobiah said, even that which they are building, if a fox go up he shall break down their stone wall. He nor Sanballat got their design upon the Jews, for God was with them. People, who are doing things for God need not worry about what lying prophets say. All prophets are lying prophets, who prophesy against the people of God. Their prophecy never has been fulfilled and never will be.

The Jews put into the hands of our Father their matter which made it safe. To pray always and not fight back will always bring the victory home in time. They went right on and built the wall. Those who desire to do what God says and give no attention to what the devil says through his agents, will always win. No people can be stopped when they have a mind to do things for God. We find here that the people had a mind to work, and success was theirs.

When the enemies of the builders of the walls of Jerusalem united together against them, they organized closely and prepared themselves to fight against them, at the same time continued to work. Nehemiah and the builders of the wall turned themselves into the hands of Jehovah, and faithfully prayed, and the Lord took charge of them, directing them every step of the way.

The enemies may be great, but when any people trust the Lord, and go forward at His command the enemies may as well be weak, as to be strong for no power of God can ever fail, nor the people who trust in Him. Nehemiah kept his people encouraged and inspired. He said to them, Be not ye afraid of them; remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your sons and daughters, your wives and your houses.

They that builded, worked, and at the same time kept in readiness for the battle. And their leader was so organized that every thing. and person was ready to work and fight at any moment; keeping in mind that the Lord was their captain, and thus they were assured that they could win in the battle against their enemies, and finish the wall completely. When God removed the fear of any enemy from the minds of His people, it is He who leads on, and the victory with God is already won. Get on God's side of anything, and the victory is yours.

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