

distress, and the heart of Nehemiah was greatly burdened. He laid the whole matter before the Lord. God heard his prayer. Learn how the answer came—a beautiful illustration of the way God sends answers. Study the account of Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem and what he did there. What opposition did he meet? Read the whole section. Ch. 3:1 to 7:73.

The Lesson Applied.

(1) It is instructive to study Nehemiah's method of work, as it is explained in the third chapter. For one thing, his arriving at Jerusalem was as good as if he had brought ten thousand helpers. He put courage and enthusiasm into the people's hearts. They were disheartened and hopeless, but his presence awoke them from their sleep. The influence of a man like Nehemiah is very great. We should all train ourselves to be encouragers and inspirers of others. This is one way of doing good, of being useful. Nehemiah also taught the people that every one of them had a share in the work. Each built a part of the wall—building opposite his own house. This is a good suggestion for us all—we must do our part, and our part is "the next thing."

(2) It is important to keep the walls built up about our life. In ancient days a city without walls or with walls broken down was open to robbers and enemies. That was the condition of Jerusalem when Nehemiah arrived there, and his work was to get the walls and gates repaired. Too many lives are like Jerusalem then, with all the defenses broken down. The first thing to do is to get these defenses built up. Some people are not careful enough in keeping their lives protected. Christ Himself is the best refuge. If He defends us no harm can come to us. No other can really keep us.

(3) There are enemies swarming about us as there were about Jerusalem in Nehemiah's days. These enemies tried to hinder the rebuilding of the walls. Elsewhere we are told how they behaved. They laughed at the people, and made sport of their efforts to build. See ch. 2:19 and 4:3. Ridicule is hard to bear. The world sneers at Christians, too. But like Nehemiah, they should not be afraid of being laughed at. These enemies tried slander also—saying false things about them. See ch. 2:10; 6:6. These weapons, too, the world uses against Christians. Then when they saw the work going on in spite of their ridicule and slander they conspired together to fight against the workmen. In all these ways enemies will try to hinder us, but we should not be dismayed by them. We should be bold in our trust in God.

(4) In all danger we should both look to God for help and also do our own part. Nehemiah made his prayer to God—that was well. But he also set a watch to guard against sudden surprise. We should put our trust in God, but this does not free us from the duty of guarding against enemies and dangers. "Watch and pray," said Jesus. While we ask God to keep us in temptation, we must not needlessly run in the way of temptation. We must keep the doors shut to prevent the coming in of enemies, and must ever be on our guard.

(5) We must watch also against the danger of discouragement. Some of the workers here got disheartened. Ver. 10. Others were discouragers—saying disheartening things. Ver. 12. We should never get discouraged, and we should never be discouragers. Nehemiah is an example of a good leader. Nothing made him afraid. He cheered up the people, and bade them trust in the Lord. Then we see the value of such a man in the

way the builders kept on at their work under his influence. It is an interesting picture we have here—men working with one hand and with the other holding a weapon. They were ready all the time either for work or for defense.

LESSON 8.—NOV. 19, 1899.

Public Reading of the Scriptures.

(Lesson Text: Neh. 8:1-12. Commit to Memory Verses 1-3.)
(Read the chapter, also Luke 4:16-22.)

GOLDEN TEXT—"The ears of all the people were attentive unto the Book of the Law."—*Ltvi* 5:3.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: Neh. 8:1-12. Tuesday: Neh. 8:13 to 9:3. Wednesday: Deut. 11:1, 21. Thursday: Psalm 119:1-16. Friday: 2 Kings 22:3-13. Saturday: Jer. 36:9-24. Sunday: Psalm 119:7-14.

TIME.—445 B.C., the first of the seventh month, approximately October, the feast of trumpets.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

Between the Lessons.

The work of rebuilding the wall was completed in fifty-two days, on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month, corresponding nearly to September. A week later, on the first of the seventh month, occurred the event of to-day's lesson.

How to Prepare this Lesson.

Recall the last lesson—opposition and how overcome. After the walls were rebuilt what reforms did Nehemiah bring about? Read the chapters between last lesson and this and also to close of ch. 10. Nehemiah knew that the training of the people was more important than the building of the walls. Hence he led them to the study of the Word of God.

The Lesson Applied.

(1) It is a good thing when people want to hear God's Word. It shows that their hearts are turning toward the Lord. Here we are told that the people came together as one man to listen to the reading of the law. We remember Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, hearing His words. We think, too, of the effect of Christ's words in the world, how they have changed nations. Great Britain and the United States owe all their greatness to the Word of God by which they have been leavened.

(2) We learn here how to get help from the Bible. First, the ears of the people were attentive. This is very important. It is here that too many fail. The Word of God is read and explained to them but they pay no attention to it. There is lamentable ignorance of the Bible even among those who have been hearing it all their life, just because they have not paid heed to its teachings. Then the people also revered the Book. When Ezra began to read they all stood up. God was going to talk to them now and they would honor Him. There is too much lack of respect for God's Word in our days. Bibles are so common that people do not prize the Book as they should.

(3) We should thank God for giving us His Word and should receive it with joy. The people blessed the Lord and answered Amen to what they heard. It surely is a wonderful thing to have God's own very words in the Bible. Then the saying of Amen when we hear the words of God is very suggestive. Amen means "So let it be." The people meant that they accepted what they had heard and would take the words as the guide of their own life. We should say Amen to every Word of God we hear, letting it rule all our life.