

face of opposition, and sit down and weep. The "remnant" in Jerusalem were in "great affliction and reproach," the city's walls were leveled, and the gates burned. Nehemiah wept. Those tears came from a fountain of disinterested love deep in the tender heart of this noble patriot. Paul wept. "Jesus wept." We should weep over the affliction of sin.

Question 4. *Should not fasting accompany prayer at the present time?*

Fasting is beneficial on general principles. That which chastens and subdues the body ministers to the health and vigor of the soul. There are special emergencies where fasting, according to the Scriptures, is absolutely necessary to victorious conquest over the powers of darkness. Failing to fast, the disciples broke down in the attempt to cast the foul spirit from the child; Jesus deposed the unclean spirit, and informed them that "this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

Nehemiah's Prayer.

- I. THE MAN.
 1. **Noble.** "In...the palace." v. 1.
"The king's cupbearer." v. 11.
"Not many noble." 1 Cor. 1, 26.
 2. **Patriotic.** "I asked them." v. 2.
"If I forget thee." Psalm 137, 5.
 3. **Praying.** "Prayed before God." v. 4.
"Men pray everywhere." 1 Tim. 2, 8.
- II. THE PRAYER.
 1. **Earnest.** "Wept." v. 4.
"Fervent prayer...righteous man." James 5, 16.
 2. **Humble.** "Fasted." v. 4.
"Humble yourselves." James 4, 10.
 3. **Persevering.** "Day and night." v. 6.
"Continuing instant in prayer." Rom. 12, 12.
 4. **Confessing.** "We have sinned." v. 6, 7.
"I will confess." Psalm 32, 5.
 5. **Pleading promise.** "Remember." v. 8, 9.
"Remember the word." Psalm 119, 49.

Thoughts for Young People.

The Example of Nehemiah.

1. **Notice Nehemiah's fidelity to his father's God** while in a strange land, in the temptations of the palace and the cares of public life. Let the young man away from home follow his example.
2. **Notice Nehemiah's devotedness to the interests of the Church.** His first inquiry was concerning it; his prayers were in its behalf; for it he was ready to make every sacrifice.
3. **Notice Nehemiah's industrious, practical spirit.** Read the story of his inspecting the condition of the city, his endeavor to arouse the people to ac-

tion, and his labor in rebuilding the wall. What are you doing to build up Christ's Church?

4. **Notice Nehemiah's self-denying liberality.** He gave up much of position and wealth for the sake of God's people.

5. **Notice Nehemiah's persevering spirit,** not yielding to obstacles, but overcoming them.

6. **Notice Nehemiah's intense zeal for a pure Church.** He led the people back to an obedience of God's law, to a solemn covenant with God, to keeping the Sabbath.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

And this is Nehemiah, the Jew. How fine and flowing are his robes! He stands in the palace corridors. Look about you and see how gorgeous is this palace of Artaxerxes. If Nehemiah may have any station here, he is to be envied. What grand corridors, what magnificent apartments! Go into the throne room with its imposing guards, its brilliant throng of courtiers, its gorgeous throne. Enter the banquet hall with its glittering vessels, its luxurious couches, its walls resplendent with richest oriental decorations. And all this magnificence is only a setting to encase that jeweled presence, the King Artaxerxes, the strong, the magnificent the absolute one. See him on his throne when down before him fall his courtiers as if mere grass blades pressed to the earth by a strong wind. The king frowns in anger or nods a smiling assent. People die or live: **is this absolute one** may frown or smile. Has Nehemiah anything to do near that king's source of power? It is an important sphere he fills if his work be inside the palace.

But look again!

There stands Nehemiah.

And who are these coming up?

A group of Jews.

He asks about a city dearer to the Hebrew than all the cities of the great Artaxerxes. As they answer, Nehemiah can see it, seated on lowly Judean hills, its towers humbled, its walls broken down, its gates burnt, while every enemy passing by points at it his sneering fingers. O Nehemiah, that is Jerusalem!

Those fellow Jews are gone, and Nehemiah is alone. How sad and clouded his face! He cannot stay amid the magnificence of the palace. He goes away, all alone, and sits down in sorrow. All the while a voice is ringing in his soul: "Nehemiah, you are the one to speak to the king about Jerusalem!"

Speak to Artaxerxes?

Yes, you are the king's cupbearer. That is what you do in the splendid palace. Now, meet your opportunity manfully.

Imagine it, Nehemiah speaking to the king! Think of it, great Artaxerxes in all his splendor,