

Watch. Prayer came first, followed by vigilance. "We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night."

NO LOAFING ON THE JOB

We have no reason to believe that God will relieve us from the doing of that which is within our power. A Christian cannot loaf on the job and expect God to save him from the consequences of inaction or carelessness. Nehemiah prayed; he laid his case before God and then proceeded to act to the limit of his own power. Man's extremity is said to be God's opportunity.

The adversaries laid plans, relying upon their own strength; they boasted that they would take the Children of Israel by surprise, but they did not know Nehemiah. He was not the kind of man to be surprised. He did not overlook precautions and then send in an "I regret to report," as generals sometimes do. He armed his people "after their families with their swords, their spears and their bows" and placed them in the open places behind the walls, and then he aroused the nobles and rulers and the rest of the people by his exhortation:

"Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses."

"I AM DOING A GREAT WORK"

Later Sanballat and Geshem, the former's Arabian ally, tried to draw Nehemiah away from the city on the pretext of a conference with them. Nehemiah's reply gives us a notable passage which is often quoted and which might well be used even more frequently than it is. Nehemiah sent messengers unto the conspirators, saying: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."

A great deal of time is lost because men entrusted with important work spend their time in fruitless controversy with adversaries. Time is precious to those who are entrusted with a high commission and they have no leisure for fruitless dispute. They have a work to do and cannot excuse themselves if they allow an enemy to use time required for work. "Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" is the best reply that the earnest can make to the frivolous or the cunning.

ANCIENT PROFITEERS

When the conspiracy failed the people returned to the wall—half . . . wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, the bows, and the habergeons." The walls were restored and that, too, in the short space of 52 days—a remarkable achievement.

And now for a sidelight on this great Bible character.

They had profiteers in those days as we have them today, but the people were fortunate in having a powerful representative to speak for them and the profiteers themselves seemed to have been less calloused than ours. Although the time required for the rebuilding of the wall was not long, this profiteering interrupted the work of production. The price of food went up and the rates of interest rose. Even five centuries before Christ prices seemed to be exempt from the law of gravitation, the tendency to rise being much stronger than the tendency to fall.

"There was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews." Some complained that they had to mortgage their lands and vineyards to pay for corn, and that they had had to borrow money for the king's tribute and their taxes. Some had been compelled to sell their sons and daughters into bondage, and it was not in their power to redeem either their children or their lands.

CURBING THE PROFITEERS

Nehemiah was very angry and rebuked the nobles and the rulers, saying, "Ye exact usury, every one of his brother." He called "a great assembly," he appealed to the consciences of the usurers, saying: "It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?" He touched their hearts; those who had been guilty of extortion answered, "We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest."

At this point Nehemiah exhibits another important characteristic—he was cautious. He was very happy when the profiteers relented and promised to treat the people justly and with consideration, but he was not so carried away by exultation as to overlook the possibility of a relapse. He evidently feared that some, at least might again yield to greed and avarice when the excitement abated—they might be "bending to the tempest" of his oratory. So he "called the

priests, and took an oath of them (the extortioners), that they should do according to this promise." Then he pronounced the customary curse upon them if they failed to keep the pledge they had given.

"THE FEAR OF THE LORD"

As is usually the case, there was more in the man back of the speech than there was in the speech itself. Nehemiah had a right to castigate the oppressor because he himself was guiltless.

He held a commission as governor of Jerusalem for 12 years, during which time he refused to accept a salary; he would not eat the bread of the governor, although former governors had done so and their salaries had been charged up to the people. He did not do as they had done because "of the fear of God."

He also refused to take advantage of the opportunities that came to buy land when the people were compelled to mortgage and sell it. His hands were clean; his record was clear. He could condemn and none could charge him with inconsistency.

Who will calculate the far-reaching effect of a life like this? A great executive, a great orator, a great soldier, a leader trusted and worthy to be trusted, an honest, upright man. And why?

Because he feared God. He had that sense of responsibility to God that means more to society than all the laws that man can make. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

TWO MR. HUGHESSES

Against Secretary Hughes's defense of Senator Newberry of Michigan may be set the statement made Dec. 22, 1921, on the floor of the Senate by Senator Kenyon of Iowa, since then appointed to the bench of the United States Circuit Court by President Harding, Secretary Hughes's superior. Discussing the evidence presented in the Newberry case, Senator Kenyon said:

"I assert that under the record the following conclusions can reasonably, safely and legitimately be drawn:

"That the committee expended approximately \$263,000.

"That the committee violated the Federal statute and the statutes of Michigan, and that such action entered into the election through the primary.

"That the committee was not a voluntary committee. It was picked by Mr. Newberry.

"That Mr. Newberry was responsible for the acts of the committee, and that the agency of Cody and King (Newberry campaign managers) is established beyond question, and he would be responsible in a civil action for debts contracted by them in the campaign.

"That Mr. Newberry knew about the campaign, financially and otherwise, and knew of most of the expenditures of the campaign.

"That a part of the money spent in the campaign was actually the money of Mr. Newberry."

Senator Kenyon, like Secretary Hughes and Mr. Newberry, is a Republican. Partisanship did not enter into the Newberry case with him. But Senator Kenyon may have been at the disadvantage of never having been Truman Newberry's counsel in any court, of never having received a retainer from Mr. Newberry, and also of looking at some of the larger moral aspects of the case, not dwelling merely on legalistic technicalities.

Against the defense of Senator Newberry presented by Secretary Hughes may also be set the speech delivered at the Merchants' Exchange banquet at New Rochelle, March 20, 1910, by Gov. Hughes of New York, in which he said:

"Political corruption is not partisan. It is the common enemy. The essential operations of government inevitably furnish opportunities for scoundrelism, and against this curse all parties and the people as a whole must continually wage an unrelenting war."

Between the two Mr. Hugheses, the Governor who in 1910 urged unrelenting war on corruption in politics and the Secretary of State who comes forward as the champion of Newberryism, there is an amazing contrast.—New York World.

FREEDOM OF UTTERANCE

The New York World believes that William Allen White's editorial in the Emporia Gazette, addressed "To an Anxious Friend," is deserving a place among historic public documents. "It is a model of kindly but devastating criticism," says the World.

"You tell me," writes Mr. White, "that law is above freedom of utterance. And I reply that you can have no wise laws unless there is free expression of the wisdom of the people—and, alas! their folly with it. But if there is freedom, folly will die of its own poison and the wis-

dom will survive. . . . You say that freedom of utterance is not for time of stress, and I reply with the sad truth that only in time of stress is freedom of utterance in danger. No one questions it in calm days, because it is not needed. And the reverse is true also; only when free utterance is suppressed is it needed, and when it is needed it is most vital to justice. . . . Suppression leads to violence. Violence, indeed, is the child of suppression. Whoever pleads for justice helps to keep the peace."

Mr. White has expressed some true American principles. He presents the case for free speech against a law forbidding it with irrefutable logic. If the above quotation is "devastating criticism," this age needs more of such. In order to obtain deliverance from oppression there must be no suppression of utterance. Destructive criticism is most constructive if we know how to meet it.

The tendency is common to look with dismay upon language that rips into the established order of things. Men sometimes forget that in creating a better world we must tear down many ugly and outworn systems that others have wished upon them. And even that which they gave their own hands in building might sometimes better be destroyed to make way for more just and practicable machinery.

It is disturbing to complacency to have someone thrust divergent opinions within our hearing. But much as most of us enjoy a certain contentment, we hate suppression of speech more. And we brand those persons who refuse to believe there is any other wisdom than that which coincides with theirs as being oppressive as the law which would attempt to deny free speech.—Omaha World-Herald.

There is a possibility that Democratic success in Nebraska in November will damage the hotel business. The Republicans have drug inspectors, oil inspectors, cream inspectors, food inspectors, potato inspectors, bank examiners, insurance examiners, school inspectors, crop inspectors, county treasury examiners, railway commission telephone company accountants, and a variety of other employes running back and forth over the state, on good salaries and good-sized expense accounts, many of them following closely on one another's heels and many of whom are doing work that others might do on the same trips who will be absent from the hotels evenings after the next Democratic administration takes hold.

Big business is beginning to lick its chops again, and there is much talk in trade circles that the cost of living, which has been slowly rising since April, is to keep on ascending the scale. Big business does not learn by experience, even though it has been recent in character. The descent in prices was due to the buyers' strike. It cost many merchants and wholesalers very large sums of money through the decrease in the selling values of their stocks on hand. The next buyers' strike will come just as suddenly and it will continue until a lower level than before. The people have learned how potent a weapon this is, and they are rapidly reaching the point of concluding to use it.

Voters should understand that the one and only purpose of the advocates of light wines and beer is to reopen the saloon. When the government permits the sale of liquor it carries with it permission to use the usual and ordinary methods of disposing of it. In order to sell liquor there must be some place in which to dispose of it and some place where men desiring to get it may go and purchase it. Any place where light wines and beer may be sold, if this movement should win, would be a saloon, no matter under what name it masqueraded, and that would bring back with it all of the evils of that institution.

NO HIGHER BRANCHES

Should I believe my Darwin friends and swallow all their dope, I'd love to travel jungle trails and in the darkness grope. Instead of loving my forbears—a memory sweet to share—I'd dream of my dear grandpapa, all dressed up nice in hair. Associate with 'boons, "Ah boy," eat peanuts up a tree! But in God's image we 'are made, and monkey ne'er was he. Some evolution, ha, ha, ha! when Gabriel sounds the gong, to gather up our treasures rare and join the monkey throng. I'd rather be a human plain and know my A. B. C's, than in the "higher branches" climb, accompanied by fleas.—Estella W. Poston, in Ohio State Journal, August 7th, 1922.