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ticular time-the beginning of the Holiday sea-

A STATESMAN ON HIS KNEES

The International Sunday School Lesson For November 11
Is "Nehemiah's Prayer." Neh, Ch. 1

By WILLIAM T. ELLIS

These are the times of widened with the wing of the state of t

licitude for Jerusalem was apparent to the king upon his throne. There by his prayer was answered.

Some of us have never wanted any thing in the world so greatly as Nehemiah wanted the restoration of Jerusalem. Such are to be pitied. They have merely wanted good times, and automobiles and summer trips and the gratification of whims; and so they have never really lived. When we want any great boon earnestly, then we think of it always in prayer fashion. Millions of mothers are thinking Godward thoughts of their sons today, and sweethearts dream prayers of lovers, because of the dangers of battle and camp. No great soul can refrain from praying in time of lofty desire. All our best aspirations are inextricably bound up with thoughts of God. As we see sad-faced Nehemiah standing before the Persian monarch, we are admonished to let all our trouble be big ones, at least of Jerusalem size. Souls are made great by the size of their concerns. Love of country, solicitude for the welfare of others than self, sorrow and work in behalf of the poor, a burning zeal or justice—these, and their like, are the anxieties that exalt while yet they weigh down.

The Man Who Prayed in a Hurry Two great passions flowed together to make up the solicitude that

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The Man Who Prayed in a Hurry
Two great passions flowed together to make up the solicitude that wrote itself on the face of Nehemiah. One was filial piety. Jerusalem was the city of his fathers and of their graves. Our western world does not fully apprehend the length to which respect for parents goes in the East. Perhaps the interchange of ideals which this fluid time is effecting may help us in this respect. The other great desire of Nehemiah was patriotic. His love for his native land, like that of our own people at the present time, was an overmastering passion. So possessed was he by these ideals that the king read them on his face, and inquired the reason for the unwonted sadness. That was a critical moment for Nehemiah. It is dangerous to attract the especial attenion of despots. Men who serve kings are expected to smile. So Nehemiah, we are told, prayed. This was not the long, fine, formal prayer about which we studied last week. It was an ejaculatory prayer, such as perhaps a teacher of grammar could not parse. It shot straight out of the heart to heaven. As Moody used to say, it went to heaven so fast that the devil had no time to interfere with it. Peter prayed the same sort of prayer to Jesus when he was sinking in Gallee; there was no time for ornate petitions then. Zaccheus prayed the same fashion. As if such petitions are particularly popular with God, because of their clear sincerity, they are quickly answered. Elessings continue as they originate, by prayer. Perhaps that is what the apostle meant by the injunction to be instant in prayer.

A Chance to Do the Hard Thing
There were courtiers not a few about the Persian court who would

prayer. Pernaps that is what the apostle meant by the injunction to be instant in prayer.

A Chance to Do the Hard Thing There were courtiers not a few about the Persian court who would have saved Nehemiah the opportunity which came when the king asked him what he desired. They wanted jobs for themselves, and for their wives' relatives. But Nehemiah sought only a hard thing for himself, and a great boon for his people. He reminds us of the college-bred lads who are eager to go into the aviation service. He wanted to go to Jerusalem, and investigate the plight of the city, and of the remnant who remained therein.

That was no small journey, as the British prisoners from Kut el Amarra, which is not far from the ancient Persian palace, can testify; as can I also. It meant giving up comfort, and ease, and the meeting of obstacles and enemies. Old Xenephon led the Ten Thousand over part of the same route. Also it meant a large military escort, and materials for rebuilding. Verily, Nehemiah, you asked largely when you did ask. That is the way to go to a king. "Whoever goes to God for porridge should carry a large bowl," said old John Bunyan.

Letters for the juorney were asked. It was on this very route covered by

carry a large bowl," said old John Bunyan.

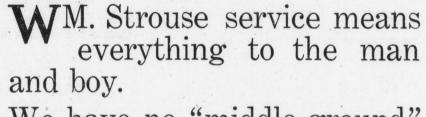
Letters for the juorney were asked. It was on this very route covered by Nehemiah that I arrived one evening in the town of Severek, to spend the night. I called on the governor with a letter from the Sublime Porte, and straightway they wanted to throw out of the best room in the inn a guest already established, because of the letter I bore. In the East the recipient of such a letter will sometimes touch it to his head, i ntoken of loyalty and esteem. In the case of Nehemiah, the letters did the work, as he set out to Jerusalem. He was aided on the way, and succeeded in his mission. His prayer had been answered—by way of his own interest and endeavor. How God delights to answer our prayers on our own feet!



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