

THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Interesting Bible History for Present Day Readers

Progressive Stephen Pays the Price.
(By Andrew C. Zenos, in The Continent.)

International Sunday school lesson for March 5: The Death of Stephen. Acts 7:1-8:3. Golden Text, Revelation 2:10; Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Stephen was the first to lay down his life in testimony of his faith in Christ. For this he is usually called "proto-martyr" (first martyr). The fact that his name stands first in the list of the seven helpers appointed to care for the poor and "serve tables" shows that he was best known among them for his aggressiveness. It was this characteristic that brought him to the front and led to the events which culminated in his death. God had endowed him with the gift of service such as few could render. He had been honored highly, and with the honor and peculiar gift came the responsibility of using his talents in the advancement of God's will. Stephen accepted the responsibility, used his gift, accounting his life a small price to pay for the advancement of God's kingdom. From the human point of view, his experience was tragic; from the point of view of the divine moral order of the universe, it was another illustration of the law which Jesus Christ has both preached and practiced, that "he that loseth his life shall find it."

Stephen a Victim of False Witnesses.

Verse 1—The charge upon which Stephen was brought to trial before the council was blasphemy, the same charge practically as that brought against Jesus himself. To prove the charge it was necessary to suborn "false" witnesses. These witnesses were false not because they manufactured their testimony purely and simply "out of whole cloth," as it were, but because they placed a false interpretation on the facts and palmed off their interpretation as the substance of the facts. It is not necessary to create a story out of nothing in order to violate the ninth commandment. It is enough to take a true situation and so represent it as to cause a false impression.

Stephen had made a plea for progress. He was a believer in the divine revelation given through Moses. But he had also noted that God had a fuller revelation of himself which he had reserved until the world was ready for it, and had given it in Jesus Christ. It was not blasphemy to show up the earlier revelation as inferior in comparison to the later one. But he who preaches progress is always open to the same misunderstanding with its counterpart, the charge of irreverence and blasphemy. For the exaltation of the newer ideal must needs appear the disparagement of the older, even though the newer may be presented as only relatively better than the old. Stephen was a martyr for progress.

Was it significant that a Hellenist should be the first to proclaim the broader and more elastic conception of the faith of Israel? The Hellenists were, by their touch with the world outside of their Judaism, better able to appreciate the broader bearings and universal applications of that faith. But it was evidently the Hellenists that brought Stephen before the Council, for it is in the synagogue of the Libertines (Freed-

men) and of the Cyrenians that offense was taken against his preaching.

Verses 2-43—In his defense before the council Stephen endeavored to show that the gospel of progress he was preaching was rooted in the history of God's dealings with men in the past. To the familiar facts of history, therefore, he makes his appeal. God had not revealed himself once for all in a single act and in an unalterable form. He had spoken his will in successive stages. First, he had made himself known to Abraham as a God of mercy who would send his blessing to the world through that patriarch. Next God had made himself known to Moses and through Moses to the children of Israel. But even as he was revealing himself to Moses he had assured him that he was not to be the last man to receive a prophetic revelation, but that others after him should be raised to continue the growing revelation.

Verses 44-50—Furthermore, Stephen went on to point out that in the matter of worship, too, there had been progress in the past. The fathers had had the tabernacle in the wilderness. In spite of the fact that this structure was built "according to the figure that he (Moses) had seen," i. e., the heavenly model, it presently gave way to the temple built by Solomon. And the building of this temple was approved by God. But if there had been two places of worship approved, each suitable to its own time and conditions, when God revealed himself as a spirit who "dwelleth not in houses made with hands," what could be the offense of predicting the passing away of the temple, and the coming in of a time when worship should be free and spiritual, offered anywhere because God was everywhere?

Accused Tries to Explain Words.

Since Stephen was charged of speaking against Moses, he reasserted most emphatically his belief in the genuineness of the revelation of God through Moses. Since he was accused of speaking against the temple, he pointed out that the temple was neither as venerable as Moses by its antiquity nor appropriate as the final house of God. This line of defense shows the discrimination exercised by a mind bent on giving things their proper place and perspective. To deny the permanency of the temple was no offense. Stephen virtually confessed that he had done so. To deny the authority of the revelation given through Moses would have been an offense. Stephen repudiates that interpretation of his words.

Verses 51-53—But the true preacher of Christ cares less to defend himself than he does to press upon the consciences of men the need of forsaking their evil thoughts and accepting Christ as their Saviour. This Stephen began to do as he pointed to the will of God by the rejection of the "Righteous One." He was not permitted to continue and finish his speech.

Verses 54-60—The directness and plainness of Stephen's arraignment of the Jews and their leaders stirred the men of the council to a pitch of fury amounting to madness. They refused to hear him to the end, and summarily condemned him to death, executing the sentence immediately.

Chapter 8, verse 1—Paul, like Stephen, was a Hellenist, but for the time he was impervious to the spiritual influence which had made a martyr of Stephen.

tion is distributed over a much longer time. That this is appreciated by a majority of farmers is indicated by the increase in the percentage of heavy wire that is being sold for fencing purposes.

For the general farm on which all kinds of stock are kept, and on which the rotations practiced call for temporary pastures, the common type of fence now being adopted in the North Central States is one which has approximately ten line wires and a total height of about four feet. The bottom wires are spaced about three inches apart. Such a fence constructed from all No. 9 wire with a strand of barbed wire on the top, Osage orange, locust, red cedar, steel, or cement line posts set a rod apart, and ends and braces of the same materials as for the line posts at distances of forty rods, can be constructed, it is figured, for 93½ cents a rod. This allows a labor cost of 9 cents a rod. The cost of the wire itself is estimated at 40 cents, the line posts at 28 cents, and the ends and braces at 12½ cents a rod. Such a fence is exceptionally durable and should last approximately 22 years. Cheaper fences can, of course, be constructed with less expensive materials. Allowing for repairs, depreciation, and interest at 5% on the investment, the total annual cost of upkeep for a fence such as the one described should be 9 cents per rod. In addition, the interest on the value of the land which the fence occupies, and thus withdraws from tillage or pasture, should be included.

The growing scarcity of timber in the North Central states, which has already resulted in popularizing wire fencing, is also increasing the cost of posts for these fences, and may ultimately result in a more general adoption of some substitute for a wooden post. The only kinds of timber fence posts which in their natural condition last on an average for more than fifteen years are Osage orange, locust, red cedar, mulberry, catalpa, and bur oak. The supply of all these is limited, and most of them in the areas where they are not native are high priced.

In the past, before wire fences came into such general use, Osage orange hedge was much used for fencing purposes, and many of these hedges have been allowed to grow up into trees from which posts have been cut. On high-priced land, however, this is not a profitable practice, because the hedge row con-

sumes the fertility of much land that could be used to better advantage for crop production. The supply of locust timber is constantly decreasing, with a consequent rise in price, and most of the red-cedar posts used in the corn-belt area have to be shipped from the Southern states. Their cost is also steadily advancing.

Under these circumstances, farmers are turning attention to the possibilities of steel and concrete posts. The chief objection to steel posts, that they are bent by heavy stock rubbing against them, may be overcome both by the proper construction of the fence so that the strain is transmitted along the line to the end posts, and also by the use of heavier posts. Concrete posts are commonly believed to be especially durable, but to secure this quality great care must be exercised in the selection of materials and in the construction. Moreover, such posts should not be used for at least a month, or better still for three months, after they have been removed from the mold. On farms where sand and gravel are available, however, and where the work may be done at a season of the year when the labor might not otherwise be profitably employed, the construction of concrete fence posts is quite feasible. The concrete, however, must not be allowed to freeze.

Still another method of meeting the increasing cost of durable timber for fence posts is the use of preservatives on the cheaper kinds of wood. Creosote is the cheapest and most efficient of common preservatives, and short-lived timbers that are properly treated with it should withstand decay as long as the more durable woods. The treatment is simple and can easily be done on the farm. Detailed instructions on the subject may be obtained from the Department.

Whatever form of fence post is adopted, it must be remembered that it is very poor economy to construct a fence in which the posts will decay before the wire does. In such an event the fence has to be re-stretched on a new set of posts, the cost of repairs will be considerably increased, and full efficiency will not be obtained from the wire.

OAT SMUT PREVENTION.

The average annual losses from smut in oats are greater than those caused

by any other preventable cereal disease in the United States. Treating the seed with hot water or with formaldehyde solution before sowing is an easy, cheap, and effective way of preventing this disease. The latter method, which is the one most available for general use, is here briefly summarized. Both methods are described in detail in Farmers' Bulletin 507, which will be sent free on application to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Mix the formalin (a commercial preparation which is 37% formaldehyde by weight) with water at the rate of one pound (a little less than a pint) to forty gallons of water. The grain may be either loosely inclosed in a sack or put loose into a tub or vat with the solution. Agitate the sacks or stir the grain occasionally so that the entire surface of every grain will be thoroughly wet. Instead of being immersed the seed oats may be spread on a clean floor or canvas and sprinkled with the solution and shoveled over during the process so that they will be wet evenly as in the other method. Not over a gallon of solution will be needed for every bushel of dry grain. After sprinkling, shovel the seed into a pile, cover it with sacks wet with the solution, and allow it to stand for at least two hours before spreading it out to dry.

Precautions: The oats may be seeded as soon as dry enough to run through the drill. If the seed is still moist, however, the drill must be set to sow more to the acre than if it is dry. The quantity which should be sown may be determined by measuring a given bulk before and after treatment and figuring the proportion of increase. After treating do not expose the seed to freezing until it is thoroughly dry.

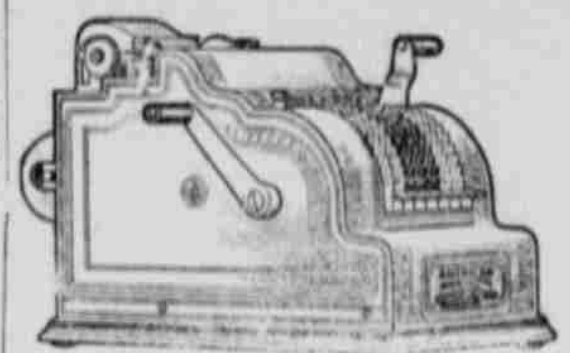
Do not allow the treated seed to come into contact with old sacks, bins or machinery in which there may be smut spores. If such must be used, scald them or wash them first with the formaldehyde solution.

Of Course Paw Knew.

Little Lemuel—Say, paw, what is an upstart?
Paw—An upstart, son, is a self-made man who isn't your friend.

Now Lemuel Knows.

Little Lemuel—What's an auction, paw?
Paw—An auction, son, is a for-bid-ding place.



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Wayne County Democratic Central Committee Endorses Lontz Candidacy

The Wayne County Democratic County Central Committee has adopted the following resolutions:

The candidacy of John M. Lontz for Congress is making splendid progress throughout the Sixth District. This is not surprising when the qualities of the man and the existing political conditions are considered.

The first condition that confronts the Democracy is the significant fact that there will be only two candidates for Congress in the district in the campaign of this year. The pertinent question is, where will the 9,200 votes go that were cast for the Progressive candidate in 1914?

The present representative, Mr. Gray, was elected in 1914 by a plurality over Mr. Lynch, Republican, by 3,400. If a Democratic Representative be elected next November he must not only carry Mr. Gray's vote in 1914 but about 4,000 additional votes. It is no disparagement of Mr. Gray to admit, in view of his greatly reduced plurality of 1914 from that of 1912, that there is grave doubt of his ability to secure this needed additional vote either from the Progressives or from any other source.

Can John M. Lontz secure enough votes outside of the ranks of Democracy to be elected? We believe he can get these votes and be elected for the following reasons:

FIRST. He is a new man, free from factional or political entanglements and personal enmities.

SECOND. He is an alert and successful business man with unusual executive ability, and also well versed in the principles of common law on which all statutory law is founded.

THIRD. He understands the political issues of the day and is especially well informed on the vital questions of the tariff and the currency. As a large exporter of lawn mowers he is well qualified to expose the fallacies of the Standpat "scare crow" that a high tariff is necessary to protect American labor from the pauper labor of Europe.

FOURTH. His personal popularity will bring to him, if nominated, the aid of 2,000 votes outside his party in Wayne county alone.

FIFTH. He will carry Wayne county as he did in 1890 for auditor, when the Republicans had a normal majority of about 3,000, and his name on the Democratic ticket will add strength to the State and National tickets and every county ticket in the district.

SIXTH. He will meet the modern need and growing demand for more efficiency in the public service, which has not kept abreast with the progress and the methods of private business.

SEVENTH. He is not a radical nor extremist, but an honest, clear-headed man of self poise and sound judgment.

EIGHTH. As an employer he has proved the friend of labor, recognizing its rights as well as its dignity and importance.

NINTH. As a citizen he has been progressive and public spirited, always ready to aid enterprises for the welfare of the community both by his purse and his personal efforts.

TENTH. He is broad-minded and unselfish and can be depended on to give an earnest and loyal support to the principles of self government.

WAYNE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE By Executive Board—

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Department of Agriculture

Weekly News Letter from Washington, D. C., in the interest of Better Farming

FARM-FENCING PROBLEM.

Factors to Consider Are Durability, Economy in Construction, and System Suited to Farm Needs.

Wire fences, particularly in the North Central States, are very generally replacing those of stone, wood, and hedge. The latter become unserviceable. Where high-priced land, a scarcity of timber, and high wages for farm labor exist, the farmer can no longer afford to construct any but wire fence. The extent to which this fencing is now being used is shown in a recent report, published as Bulletin 321 of the Department, which contains the results of investigations into the cost of fencing farms in the North Central States. In of the twelve states from which data were obtained wire constituted more than 70% of the fencing, and in western Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and northern Minnesota the percentage of wire was more than 90.

The general and increasing use of wire farm fencing in this section has caused the farmer to consider very seriously what system will be most suitable to his needs. A farm fence, says the bulletin already mentioned, should combine the two qualities of service and economy. To give satisfactory service it

must be constructed so as to turn all kinds of stock without injury to them. To be economical it must be built as cheaply as is consistent with durability. The fence that is erected at a low initial cost is not necessarily economical, for it may be short-lived.

In selecting a woven-wire fence, it is preferable to economize by eliminating unnecessary wires rather than by using a lighter-weight wire. A fence the spacing in which is too wide to turn swine satisfactorily will prove quite adequate when only cattle, sheep, or horses are to be considered. The farmer, therefore, who keeps no swine can save money by doing away with wires that are not needed. The factor which determines the price of woven wire fencing is its weight, so that in fences of the same height a wide-spaced fence with comparatively few wires costs less than a narrow-spaced one with more wires. On the other hand, it is becoming generally recognized that the use of heavy wire in fencing is economical. The initial cost of the heavy wire is greater, but its durability is more than sufficient to offset this disadvantage. The labor and other costs in the construction of a fence are practically the same whether a heavy or a light grade of wire is used, but with heavy wire the fence lasts so much longer that this cost of construc-