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Improving One's Good Points.

The art of posing lies in one's ability to acquire it without appearing affected. To make those with whom we come in contact weary with unnecessary affection is of course a blight to be deplored. If the individual, however, realizes the importance of eliciting nature's endowments, she will appear perfectly natural in all ways trying to look her very best. Learn to know your own good points and make the trouble to cultivate them. You will find that it will pay—Exchange.

See Only Good in People.

It is a mistake to grow tired of people or their efforts to please. The vast majority of us are trying to do our best. True, some of our number make a brilliant showing, while others do not cause a ripple of comment. But if we are going to get any real satisfaction out of life we cannot stop to weigh people's capabilities or attainments, but should, on the other hand, be grateful for whatever consideration they show us, and only seek in them all that is splendid and good.—Exchange.

Live for Something.

Live for something. Do good, and leave behind you a monument of virtue that the storms of time can never destroy. Write your name in kindness, love and mercy on the hearts of thousands you come in contact with year by year, and you will never be forgotten. Your name and your good deeds will shine as the stars of heaven. Chalmers.

Just Wanted One Look.

Dorothy went to spend a few days with her little cousin, but got home back before night. Her aunt's house, though really only in the best block, seemed a good way off to Dorothy. She had a good time playing with her little cousin for awhile, then she said to her aunt: "Aunt Mary, if you'd please take me home and let me look at mamma for a minute I'll come right back with you."

Think Before You Speak.

When we are tempted to do a mean act, to speak the unkind word, to be grasping and selfish, let us set our imaginations to work and picture next year, next decade, what will our act look then? What shall we think then and wish we had done?—Exchange.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SHILLING, Acting Director of the Sunday School Course of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)
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LESSON FOR DECEMBER 9

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH TEACH THE LAW.

LESSON TEXT—Nehemiah 8:1, 4, 6, 8-12. Read entire chapter.
GOLDEN TEXT—Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.—Ps. 119:105.

The first day of the seventh month (8:2) was about October 44 B. C. Seven days feast (vv. 15-18) was the feast of the Tabernacles beginning the 15th of the seventh month (October) and continuing for seven or eight days (Lev. 23). Nehemiah was the governor; Ezra the scribe, chief priest; and Artaxerxes, king of Persia, ruler over Palestine. It would be interesting to look up the sudden introduction of Ezra's name into this discourse; also the special reasons for teaching the Bible. There is in this chapter a record of a full week and of the daily events of that week.

I. The Preparation. Go back to verse 70 of the preceding chapter, and you will find that the temple had just been receiving some large gifts. The task of finishing the wall was also completed, all of which gives point to verse one, where it says that the people gathered themselves together as one man. This was an ancient oriental meeting, one we do well to study. The people requested Ezra to "bring the books." It needed no catch-penny operations to draw the crowd together. The writer of Nehemiah calls the book "the law which the Lord hath commanded unto Moses" (See v. 1). It is, of course, would include the Law, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, an indication as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, which is in line with the statement that Jesus Christ made that it was God who had written it as he had commanded Moses. It was not a mob; there was organization and equipment. (See v. 3 and 4). The Bible was also read so that the people could understand it (v. 2); certainly something that is in demand in our present day. Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he stood on an elevation above them (v. 5) and read "distinctly."

II. The Reading of the Word. They read the book, not from some commentary or quarterly, though these were in their place. The reading began with reverence. Reverence for, but not a worship of the book. The Bible is not a fetish or a charm against sickness or accident. The verse caused the people to understand the law" (v. 7) probably means that it was translated into the vernacular, the language of the common people. While God's word is a plain book and easy to read, nevertheless men of spiritual understanding are needed to "rightly divide" it unto the people (v. 7). However, the great interpreter of the Bible given by the Father is the Holy Spirit himself (John 16:12-13; 1 John 2:20-27). This method of beginning the study of the word and its continuance as presented in these verses is a good suggestion for modern Sunday school workers.

III. The Hearing of the Word. (vv. 8-17). As Ezra and Nehemiah and their associates and Levites taught the people, there was a fivefold result. First: There was conviction and mourning. The word of God always convicts of sin, but the people were told not to mourn over the past, nor were they to weep, for all the people wept (v. 9). When men hear the words of the law there will be conviction of sin. (See Eph. 6:7; Heb. 4:12). Weeping may not, however, be conviction (2 Cor. 7:40). Weeping weakens, but that was not designed, rather the exultation of joy. Moreover, they were to seek the refreshment of food and drink. Indeed, the joy of the Lord was to be their strength (v. 10). "And there was very great gladness" (v. 17). In verse 11 we are told that the Levites exhorted the people to hold their peace, that the day was holy and that they should be grieved. To this the people responded (v. 12), and made great mirth, because they had understood the declaration of the word of the Lord. Note that joy and gladness came after obedience, also that Nehemiah (who had been so stern to the teaching) it is a great thing for any people when their civil rulers are genuine, intelligent, and spiritual leaders. The people were instructed to show their gratitude as well as their piety by remembering those for whom nothing had been prepared" (v. 10). The fourth result was peace (v. 11)—the peace of right relation with God (Rom. 5:12 Phil. 4:7).

Fifth Result: Service. Mourning can very easily be continued too long, and, therefore, it was necessary to employ the emotion of mirth and the exercise of words that the people might enter into the peace. The fifth result, therefore, was service (v. 12). Notice that their thanksgiving portions and their service were based upon an intelligent knowledge of God's word. If there is anything that present-day social service needs, it is the illumination which comes from a knowledge of God's word. Last of all, worship (vv. 13-18). Worship is a compound of "worth" and "ship."

Bored Children. Strange as it may seem, children do get bored by uninteresting things, and as empty auditions exercises in which they have to sit still for an hour, and do get weary by an excessive amount of time given over to directed play.—William H. Maxwell.

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