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Used according to directions, gray hair begins to show color in a few days. Soon it has all the softness and richness of youth and the color of early life returns.
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The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Fourth Quarter, Lesson 8, Nov. 19, '99

PUBLIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURES. — Nehemiah 8: 1-12.

Read Nehemiah 8 and Luke 4: 16 22.

Commit Verses 1 3.

Golden Text.—The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book o the law.—Neh. 8: 3.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—The first day of the seventh month, *i. e*, the middle or last of September, A. D. 444, about two months after the arrival of Nehemiah in Jerusalem, and a week after the completion of the walls on the 25th of Elul, the sixth month (August September). The first day of the seventh month was September 22 in 1892, September 11 in 1893 and October 1 in 1894.

Place.—Jerusalem, In the open square of Ophel, southeast of the temple area, and near the water gate, through which water was brought for use in the temple.

Rulers.—Artaxerxes, king of Persia; Nehemiah, governor of Judea. Herodotus writing his histories in Greek, B C. 450 430

SUBJECT: A GREAT MEETING FOR BIBLE STUDY.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES.—Nehemiah's design was to renew and enlarge the reforms which Ezra had begun thirteen years before Chaps. 8-10 are an account of transactions running through twenty-four days or more, by which Nehemiah brought this and other reforms into active operations. Our lesson tells what happened in one day,—the first day of the seventh month (v. 2). (1) Nehemiah first secured the confidence of his compatriots by securing their cooperations in building the wall, became their comrade in work and perils and successes, made them feel that he was their friend, ready to sacrifice all for Jerusalem. (2) Then came the earnest study of God's Word. Through this study there came to these people a revelation of themselves that made them ashamed and sorrowful. There came also, a revelation of God that made them glad and exultant. (3) Through twenty-three days of public services Nehemiah fostered in them this strength that comes from studying Jehovah's law, and rejoicing in him. (4) On the twenty-fourth day, with fasting and prayer, a solemn covenant was entered into with God. (5) Then followed the particular reforms needed, such as breaking off heathen alliances and keeping the Sabbath.

THE GREAT MEETING.—Vs. 1 This chapter should begin with the last clause of the last verse of the previous chapter: "And when the seventh month was come," etc. The first day of this month was the feast of trumpets, which proclaimed a day of rejoicing. This was a week after the walls were finished. *All the people gathered themselves together.* From the city and surrounding country. *As one.* In one place, with one purpose. *Into the street.* Rather the public square, for the streets of an Oriental city are very narrow. *Before the water gate.* The open space south of the temple, lying between the temple wall and the city wall. *They spake unto Ezra the scribe* This is the first time Ezra's name occurs in the book of Nehemiah. It is probable that he had been absent during the past thirteen years, perhaps copying, studying, and putting into shape the Book of the Law, which they asked him to bring out to them There was great interest in him and his work, and they had gathered together on purpose to hear the words of the book.

THE TEXT BOOK.—Vs 1 3. *Book of the law of Moses*, which *the LORD*, Jehovah, *had commanded to Israel.* This was not a book inspired and revealed by God. *The law.* To Ezra is due the glory of promulgating the law, and making it pass into the life of the nation. *Both of men and women.* Both have equal need of studying God's Word *And all that could hear with understanding.* The children, all who were old enough. *He read therein ....from the morning until midday.* Or, "from daylight." He began as soon as it was light enough, and read on (he and his assistant, v. 7) till noon, that is, for six hours or more. *The ears of all the people were attentive.* Though there is no word in the Hebrew for "attentive," the meaning is quite correctly given.

THE TEACHING FORCE.—Vs. 4, 7. *Ezra....stood upon a pulpit of wood,* An elevated platform, broad enough to allow fourteen persons to stand upon it, and of considerate height. *And beside him stood.* Six on his right hand and seven on his left. *Mattithiah*, etc Nothing is known of most of these persons except their names. They were probably prominent priests. They probably aided Ezra in reading the law. *Also Jeshua*, etc. Thirteen of them are named. Leading men, or heads of clans. *Caused the people to understand.* In the three ways described in v. 8.

STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD.—V. 5. *Opened the book.* Unrolled the scroll, or roll. For books in those days, as still in Jewish synagogues, were wide strips of parchment rolled upon sticks, one at either end, so that one side was rolled up as the other was unrolled to read. *All the people stood up.* As an act of respect and reverence for God and his Word. *Ezra blessed the LORD.* Praised God in prayer. *All the people answered.* Responsive worship is no new thing. *Amen.* was equivalent to saying, We accept the prayer as our own, as a true expression of our feelings. *Lifting up their hands.* An appeal to God, that they accepted the law thus read, and would obey it. *Bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.* They sank down into the posture of humble, earnest prayer, first falling on their knees, and then bending forward. *So they read....distinctly.* It required clear enunciation to be heard by the many thousand assembled. *And gave the sense,* Explaining the unusual words, expounding the meaning and the application of the law, interpreting the allusions to history, and in every way possible causing *them to understand the reading.* So Christ in the synagogue at Nazareth caused the people to understand Isaiah.

THE FRUITS OF BIBLE STUDY.—Vs. 9-12 *The Tirshatha.* The Persian title for a local or provincial governor. *For all the people wept* Their grief arose from their perception of their own miserable imperfections in contrast to the lofty requirements of the law, and in view of its threats of punishment for disobedience. *Mourn not, nor weep.* You have wept long enough! Stop this, for there is something else quite as important. *Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet.* These were expressions of and aids to joy. *And send portions*, etc. Another way of expressing and of increasing true joy. *Neither be ye sorry.* Sorrow and repentance are never required for their own sake, but for the better things which grow out of them. *For the joy of the LORD is your strength.* "The joy of the Lord" is joy that our sins are forgiven. It is joy in fellowship with God, that he is our God, and Helper. It is the joy of hope, of possibilities, of heaven. It is the joy of victory over sins. It is the joy of doing good to others. It is the joy of loving and being loved by God.

Consecration to God. A formal covenant was entered into by the people, and signed by Nehemiah and the leaders, princes, and priests, of renewed devotion to the law and service of God. They promised to keep the law of Moses, to pay their tithes for the support of the temple services, and to keep the Sabbath holy. And they bound themselves under a curse to keep this covenant (Neh. 9: 38; 10: 1 39).

A Higher Morality. During the reading of the law (Neh. 8: 13 18), they found that they had neglected to keep the feasts as they ough to have done; and they immediately proceeded to keep the feast of tabernacles. Then they sustained the temple services, paid their tithes, brought in their first fruits and other offerings. Finally they reformed their worldly methods of keeping the Sabbath, and ceased from their alliances and intermarriages with the heathen.

PRACTICAL HINTS. &C

There is much value in assemblies for Bible study, (1) in reviving the interest in such study; (2) in arousing enthusiasm; (3) in bringing light from many sides; (4) in the instruction of men of the deepest experience and the widest knowledge.

There is need of interpreters and teachers who have made a thorough study of the Word of God. There is enough of the Bible that is plain to guide us in our ordinary life, but books and teachers reveal to us, as the result of years and centuries of study, what in no single lifetime could one discover for himself. They are not substitutes for study and thought, but aids, and material, and inspiration for study and thought.

The study of the Bible has wrought wondrous changes in men and in nations Every nation now existing is great, moral, and happy in proportion as the Bible is studied and obeyed.

It will not even be pretended that any book in the world, or all the books in the world put together, have wrought such vast and beneficent conversions,—such deliverances from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God,—as have been and are day by day being wrought by the voice of God speaking unto us from the Holy Scriptures.

Our Opportunities.

The value of personal work was under discussion at a convention of Sunday-school teachers in a pretty rose environed country church among the hills, when one of the women from a distance said to the friend by her side:

I've a great mind to say a word, only, you know, I came to read my paper, and don't wish to appear assertive.

But if the Lord has put a thought into your heart, is it not your duty to express it? The woman rose and was helped to say:

The white rose petals come flying in through the window like happy thoughts, and when in a discussion like this, we throw out the little incidents and experiences that come to our minds, they may carry a blessing, as the scattered rose petals bring fragrance to us all; and going on she related in a few words an experience of her own, where one encouraging little talk at the close of a suggestive lesson brought three sweet young sisters into the fold of the church.

As she was speaking a woman at some distance turned her eyes toward her, with a look that she interpreted as:

I am one who needs help, and as she was leaving the church, soon after, a regretful glance from the same violet eyes made her say: I wish I could have spoken with her; I think she is in some perplexity, and now the opportunity is gone forever.

That the conclusion was hastily drawn, she found just two weeks later, when making one of a driving party to a picturesque little woodland lake, she met this woman, who had come with a party from an opposite direction. The recognition was as mutual as the thought that the meeting was Providential, and strolling away together under the pines, the new made friend said:

I have been in Sunday-school since I was very young, and was converted when only a little girl, but my teacher never had any personal talk with her pupils, and it came about that as I was at all the church services, I was, after a while, looked upon as a member. I am now a Sunday-school teacher, but I cannot do personal work, and if I am a Christian it is a very unhappy one. When you spoke of the rose petals being happy thoughts, I felt that I could tell you my experience and that you would understand me.

My dear woman, said Mrs. Taylor, gently, your rose petals are all falling into the wind to be trampled under foot instead of carrying fragrance. The Lord needs His witnesses. We cannot lead others where we have not been ourselves.

My thought is this, she replied; I am a bush with thorns and green leaves. There is always a hope that I may bloom and carry fragrance, but thus far I have been a disappointment.

You must be so no longer. You see for yourself that you must be pruned of your pride, timidity, and all of the little useless branches that have been growing up, making a barrier between you and your Saviour.

Yes, I see it now, and this very evening at the midweek meeting which I always attend, but where my voice has never been heard, I will make my confession and endeavor to put myself where the Lord can use me.

If I Were a Teacher.

When the Earl Cairns was a little boy he heard three words which made a memorable impression on him; God claims you. Then came the question, What am I going to do with the claim? He answered, I will own it and give myself to God.

He went home and told his mother: God claims me. At school and college his motto was, God claims me. As member of Parliament, and ultimately as Lord Chancellor it was still God claims me.

When he was appointed Lord Chancellor he was teacher of a large Bible class, and his minister thinking now he would have no time to devote to that purpose, said to him, I suppose you will now require to give up your class?

No, was the reply, I will not; God claims me.

If I were a Sunday school or other teacher I would like for this motto to adorn the walls of my class-room. If it did the lessons surely would be so well prepared that the little ones could more easily be induced to lay aside their books and answer promptly. They might cease reading answers from their books as I have often seen some do

If I were a teacher how would I strive to prepare the lessons! Then asking and securing of God's help would make the knotty points of the lesson to dissolve as mists before the morning sun.

If I were a teacher I would try to be punctual. This is one of the of most important qualifications in any teacher. It is a great wrong to fail to be on hand at the appointed time.

If I were a teacher it must be that I would wield a great influence over the children, an influence for good or bad, so that my work would tell for time and eternity.

Let those of us who aspire to be teachers realize that we are claimed of God and strive as in his sight to be worthy of that high responsibility.—Baptist Argus.

What is Your Aim in Life?

There is no question of more importance for the young to ask themselves than: For what purpose was I created?

Life is a great battle-field, and no one should go into it single-handed and alone without having a definite idea of what he is to do. It is a sad fact that very many young people enter upon life with no definite object in view. They hope to receive great good without thinking how it is to come to them or what its character will be. In after life their hopes are disappointed, and life to them is a weary pilgrimage.

Life was not given for amusement or momentary pastime; and he who has no loftier aim in view than the enjoyment of the passing hour need not complain if he ends his days in bitter disappointment. How low and grovelling is that life which is wholly given up to present gratification! The aim of life must be higher, nobler, more important.

The true aim in life is not to secure fame. Those who strive most fiercely for honor but seldom meet with success.

Neither is the aim of life to secure wealth. Many have set out with this object in view. A few succeed, while many fail. Wealth, in itself, can confer no happiness upon its possessor.

Let your aim in life be to do good. Live so that your life may be a blessing to others. In this way you will answer the purpose of your life. No matter how humble your sphere in life may be, aim at doing good. Labor for the welfare of others, for the good of mankind in general.—Our Boys and Girls.

Me Pray Too

Little Grace's papa believed that every member of the family should take part in the family altar; but baby Grace, about three years old, sitting in mamma's lap, was thought to be too young to understand anything about praying.

One morning at worship after papa had reverently read a chapter from the Bible, he asked mamma to pray, then George, who was the eldest and the only boy, then Mary, then Amanda, and closed the service by offering a prayer himself.

As they arose from their knees, they were astonished to hear Grace burst into a passionate fit of crying. Something must be hurting her, mamma took her up in her arms and said: Why, Grace, what is the matter?

Between her sobs the little one said in her baby prattle, Me pray too. So they all dropped again, and gave her an opportunity to offer up her little prayer, and we believe the Father and all of the angels stopped to listen.—[The Open door.

Lend a Hand.

A young girl on a railroad train gave a bunch of roses to a cripple. The child held them to her lips and pressed them to her heart and fell asleep. The train reached its destination. The father came in from the smoking car. At the sight of his little one lying peacefully with her head against the stranger and the roses in her hand, he said, in a voice full of feeling, I'm not a praying man, but the Lord's blessing rest on you for your kindness to my motherless bairn. The child roused as she was taken in her father's arms, and said; I've been—in—heaven, pa; I've got—some—roses. There was a mist in other eyes than the father's, and more than one voice heard a divine voice saying: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these.....ye have done it unto me.—In His Steps.

Some boy and girls are more anxious to have a good reputation than to have a good character. In other words they care more about what the people think than what God thinks. Be true under all circumstances.

FOR THE OVERWORKED — What are the causes of despondency and melancholy? A disordered liver is one cause and a prime one. A disordered liver means a disordered stomach, and a disordered stomach means disturbance of the nervous system. This brings the whole body into subjection and the victim feels sick all over. Parmelee's Vegetable Pills are a recognized remedy in this state and relief will follow their use.

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