

thanksgiving instead. The suggestion was acted upon, and was found so helpful that it was never abandoned afterwards. God wants our seasons of grateful rejoicing as well as our times of contrition for sin.

Very great gladness, v. 17. We are not surprised to find these Jews happy, because they went the right way about it. And what is that? To achieve happiness one must do three things:

The Road to Happiness

First, do what God bids you. Secondly, go where God sends you. And thirdly, take what God gives you. To trust God thus for everything, is to lay aside care and worry, and so find peace. It is to live like the lily of the field which opens its fragrant petals every morning to the sunlight, with no thought of either toiling or spinning,

assured that it has but to look upward to the sun to live and grow.

Day by day, v. 18. M. de Rentz used to read three chapters of the Bible every day with his head uncovered and on his bended knees. Lady Frances Hobart

Bible Students read the Psalms twelve times a year, the New Testament thrice, and the Old Testament once. Dr. Gouge read fifteen chapters every day, five in the morning, five after dinner and five in the evening, before going to bed. Joshua Barnes carried with him a small pocket Bible which he read one hundred and twenty times. History and experience show how the daily reading of God's Word produces a strong and noble type of character and lives that are pure and true.

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Teachers of the Older Scholars

Keep clearly before the class the historical connection. Study the remainder of the book to get a view of Nehemiah's work as a whole. When the walls were built, which secured comparative safety, Nehemiah next called the attention of the people to religious duties. They had grown careless and he was anxious to see a new life and spirit fill the new temple and city. The Lesson describes his method. Ezra co-operated heartily with him.

Observe the special preparation, the assembly, the high pulpit, the worship, Ezra's prayer, response by the people, reverence and devotion.

1. The reading of the law, v. 8. Note the plan. What part did the priests take? Remember that copies of the law were very scarce, and had been neglected. This accounts for the ignorance of the people and their eagerness to understand the reading.

2. The effect of knowing the law, vs. 9-18. Study this in detail. (a) It led to a conviction of, and sorrow for, sin, (compare the effect upon Josiah, 2 Kings 22:11). Study the function of God's Word in awaking the soul to a knowledge of sin and responsibility. (b) It further led to joy, vs. 9-12. What was the basis of this change? Note the social element

and unselfish devotion. Compare the experience of the early church after Pentecost, Acts 2:44-46. (c) The Feast of Tabernacles was kept, vs. 13-18 (compare Lev. 23:39-43; Deut. 16:13, 15; Ex. 23:16). Grasp the original idea in this feast, and why it was especially prominent at this time. What is the truth contained therein for the Christian? (d) The solemn covenant made, ch. 8:18 to 9:10. This was based on the new experience. Especially observe the ethical consequences of this covenant, as the purification of the temple, restoration of tithing; crime was checked, heathen wives put away, and Sabbath breaking stopped.

This was a great revival, and the covenant made the law the permanent rule of Israel. It was the beginning of Judaism. This Lesson is an illustration of the blessing which comes by knowing and doing the will of God. It emphasizes the duty of making it the rule of life. Three principles are unfolded in this study: (1) Successful Bible study must be in a devotional spirit. (2) It must permeate the whole life of the people to be fully enjoyed. (3) It is capable of transforming the whole life of the people. See England in the time of Elizabeth.

It is important to seek results from this teaching. Emphasize the value of personal systematic Bible study. This should be a