

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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GOOD MANNERS

The year 1969 should be one of the most prosperous years in the history of the United States. There are more doors open to job, school, and social opportunities than ever before, but one should not forget the editorial of Good Manners which we publish every year.

It has always been said that good manners will carry a person further than money. That doesn't mean that a Negro has to be an "Uncle Tom" or "Aunt Hannah" or a person with a master's degree in education to acquire the habit of using good manners in the everyday walks of life.

Our older parents were accustomed to wearing tacky garments when they went out to seek a job, or a bargain of some commodity which was needed. By going out in this manner, they felt that the proprietor would have sympathy and grant them a better bargain or job because their appearance showed they were in need.

This is a new day. The younger generation is wiser and understands his needs without putting on ragged attire.

I often see nowadays, many of the older parents uptown seeking a bargain with their teen-age jackets and misfitted suits, bowing and being submissive to some proprietor of a business firm. The first reply comes from the salesman of the firm, "Come in Auntie (or Uncle), what can I do for you today?" The customer answers, "I am looking for certain commodities." Their appearance induces the salesman to present some cheap or store worn goods which cannot be sold as first-class materials. On many occasions, the buyer usually falls for the cheap goods and buys it at a price that he could get the same line of products at first class. The salesman tells the customer to pay ten dollars down on the price of the goods which is twenty-five dollars and pay a dollar a week for goods which are worth about ten dollars. The salesman tells auntie or uncle, "I have seen you around town, and I know you have good credit references, but give me at least three of them, and sign your name on this application blank." The buyer signs his name John Hancock or Mary Jones with the understanding that payment will be made each Monday following. If a payment is missed one or two weeks, she receives a letter addressed to Mary Jones. When she opens the letter, the first thing she reads is, "Mary, you have missed two weeks on your payment," or a collector may be sent to the residence requesting payment of back bills. If the buyer is able to catch up his payments and also pay a week in advance, the same salesman is back telling the customer of some new commodity on display. Before any business is transacted, he will have to tell two or three commercial jokes with reflections on some Negro, to create humor, and a big laugh. The salesman of the firm places all Negroes in the same category. The new generation is educated to the point that they are getting away from such manners. Many refuse to buy from a sales agent when they do not put a handle to their name on the contract. The customer mails a check when payment is due, and will not allow agents to come to their homes early in the morning before the household duties are done in order to receive guests.

May we urge our readers, please do not be high pressured by salesmen to buy commodities beyond your earnings and then be humiliated by bills and collectors at home and especially at work. Put yourselves in a position with business firms so you may be able to demand respect.

On many occasions when one goes shopping properly dressed and stops in a cheap credit store he is greeted by a salesman as Reverend, Professor, or Madame. Hold this standard up with good manners in your transactions or business, even though you may be an ordinary industrial worker.

The little things that count most in the use of good manners are, first: the use of your neighbors telephone. If you do not have one, long drawn out conversations are unmannerly; cut your conversation short, even if you do have a telephone. Beware of the type of conversation you have on the telephone. I was told that three children were burned in a house where a family was on a three party line, and one of the parties was using the line and refused

This Week's Sunday School Lesson

THE PROMISE OF RETURN Beginning Where You Are

Harvey Cox has reported: "When a well-meaning Christian from the West assured a young East German pastor with a pat on the shoulder that 'we are remembering you constantly in our prayers,' the pastor thanked him and said, 'But when you pray, pray that we will be given the capacity to see what God is doing here in our German Democratic Republic, and the willingness to let him do it in his way instead of ours.'"

In these words the pastor expressed the perennial need of the religious man, namely, to be assured that God has not forgotten or abandoned him. This same need was felt by the Jewish exiles and led an anonymous poet of the Exile, often called Second Isaiah, to write his sublime message of comfort and reassurance. (Isaiah 40 through 55)

Also, in the words of the young German pastor we find one of the rarities of modern, activist Christianity. We find an earnest expression of the idea that God chooses his own means to perform his wonders. Of course, this idea prevailed Old Testament writings. But prideful men were and are irritated by it. (See Jonah 3:10 through 4:1). Such men tend to continually want to choose God's methods for him.

Searching The Scriptures

The Scripture for this lesson is Psalms 126; 137:1-6; Isaiah 40; 49; 51:1-16; Jeremiah 31.

to hang up so the family could call the fire department. Getting revenge over the telephone, they talk as long as they wish, not knowing what circumstances, the other parties are having, such as the need of a doctor, taxi, policeman, or the management of one's job.

One should go neatly dressed to and from work. Go before time to change clothes or uniform, if required. When working on construction jobs, be sure that the proprietor has a dressing room with showers. Most business firms like for their employees to be neat in appearance and conduct.

We are not writing this story as an authority on etiquette, but we are pointing out a few things for which we are criticized.

It has been said from time to time to train a child in the way it should go and when it becomes old, it will not depart from it.

The first step of good manners is in the home. All types of profanity that a child uses is picked up from family squabbles, mostly from the mother, because she is with the child all during the day, and she thinks the child is cute when it uses some profanity that he learns in the home. Not only the child, but but in most cases when you see congregations of teen agers on the street and old dirty men, all you can hear is all types and kinds of profanity, regardless of who passes.

Why so many people are unable to keep their jobs is that the boss gives certain employees more privileges than he does them. They are jealous and think other employees take advantage of their earnings and use it more properly for better living conditions. They say the boss accuses them of being impetuous and contrary on the job simply because they try to tell the boss how to run his business. They refuse to work in the rain, or snow and they just have to get the boss told every day. This is why we say good manners carry one further than money. Many proprietors would rather pay a contrary person a month's salary in advance and get rid of them than to have him keep confusion all the time. Good manners pay in every respect. It has been said time and time again that a good name is better than all richness and fine gold, and is derived from good manners. A person with good manners is first pure, peaceful, gentle, and is easily entreated, full of mercy and of good fruit without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Space and time will not allow us the privilege of explaining the uses of common sense and the use of good manners. What do you think?

Selected verses are printed below.

Isaiah 40:1-11

1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

3 A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

6 A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

7 The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people is grass.

8 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever.

9 Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

10 Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

Memory Selection:

The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. —Isaiah 51:11

Exploring The Questions

One of our major concerns in this lesson is, How are the various Scripture passages to be related to one another? Admittedly, answering this question is not an easy task. Yet we need to make a serious attempt to relate these passages in a meaningful way.

In a sense, all the questions that follow are subsidiary to the one above; but perhaps these more specific problems will help focus our attention upon the important features of this study.

1. What are the main points in the message that Second Isaiah presents to the exiles? In what sense and to what degree is this anonymous poet justified in writing words of comfort and hope, rather than words of judgment like the pre-exilic prophets, such as Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah of Jerusalem, and Jeremiah?

2. What is the religious value of Psalms 137? What special problems of interpretation does this particular psalm present? What does this imply about our manner of dealing with similar biblical passages?

3. What light does the Scripture throw upon the historical situation of the exiles in Babylonia? Why is this information of particular value for students of the Bible?

4. How does the faith exemplified in the Scripture passages relate to that which has gone before it and also to what will follow after it? How is it part of God's plan?

Finding Help

With Your Questions

We may note that in the list of Scripture for this lesson verses 7-9 have been omitted from Psalms 137. These verses are a source of embarrassment for many, especially in light of Jesus' teaching about love of enemies.

But one can find deep meaning in this psalm as a whole. In fact, since there are no good reasons for regarding verses 7-9 as anything but an integral part of the psalm, it is better to attempt to interpret the entire psalm, including the troublesome final verses.

Psalms 137

Psalms 137 is an example of the lament, for it arises out of an experience of distress or persecution. There is about it a note of bitterness and despair. This particular lament throws light upon the circumstances in Babylonia during the period of the Exile (586-538 B.C.) These circumstances were fertile soil for the bitterness many exiles felt because of the loss of their beloved homeland and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple.

In this psalm bitterness soon gives way to cursing. The psalm (Continued on Page 3)