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Editorial Comment

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“To him that hath shall be given.”

Reading is an active and purposeful process of identifying, interpreting, and evaluating ideas. One can read without the use of words, sentences or paragraphs. The well trained and experienced scout can read the signs of the trail. The woodsman, well acquainted with the lore of field and forest, can identify, interpret, and evaluate the signs of the approaching storm. The telegrapher reads the message sent to him by means of dots and dashes, whereas the uninformed and inexperienced hears only the clicking of the instrument. The effective counselor, teacher, and psychologist can read the reactions of those whom he is observing. The tone of voice and even smiles have a meaning. The physician identifies, interprets, and evaluates the reactions and symptoms of his patient. He integrates information from all available sources and reads his patient as he would read a book. Surely, reading is more than a mechanical recital of ideas and the spelling out of words. Reading from all media of written communication makes use of symbols which must be identified, interpreted, and evaluated. The act of effective reading requires experiential background or mental content. In fact, meaning is directly proportionate to the kind and amount of mental content available at the instant the act of reading takes place. This concept is aptly expressed by Goethe for he says,

“Every reader, if he has a strong mind, reads himself into the book and amalgamates his thoughts with those of the author.”

It is obvious that he who has an extensive background resulting from previous experiences not only will have more to contribute but also more to receive.

Homer L. J. Carter
Editor