

The South African MISSIONARY

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

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The Sabbath-school Lessons: Their Value and How to study Them.

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(Paper read at the Cape Conference.)

IF I had been asked to write something on the Value and Study of the Sabbath-school Lessons to be read before a company of new members of the Sabbath-school, I would have undertaken the task with pleasure; but it is with considerable embarrassment that I attempt to write a paper on this subject for the benefit of members who have been studying these lessons for years. While I could not expect to present anything new, it was with the hope of expressing some thoughts that would serve to emphasize the importance of this branch of the Sabbath-school work that I have written these few lines.

It was my good fortune to have had Sabbath-keeping parents when I came into the world, and among my earliest recollections is that of attending our Sabbath-school every Sabbath Day. Long before I could read the Sabbath-school lessons were taught to me, beginning with the first of a series of books on the Old Testament which were in use in our schools at that time. The clear, strong outline of Old Testament history was firmly and indelibly impressed on my memory as the result of studying these early Sabbath-school lessons. I shall never cease to be thankful for this early training.

The Sabbath-school has been called the church at study. The primary purpose of the Sabbath-school was to encourage a systematic study of the Scriptures by old and young. If this object is not attained, the Sabbath-school is not fulfilling its purpose. According to my observation, our people do not at the present time manifest the interest and enthusiasm in the individual study of the Sabbath-school lessons that characterised

them as Bible students twenty-five or thirty years ago. I will not at this time attempt to give the reasons for this failing interest and neglect of study, but knowing the time in which we live, we should take heed, lest "the cares of this world, ... and the lust of other things entering in" should choke out the Word, "and we bring no fruit to perfection."

These Sabbath-school lessons are a means ordained of God by which officers, teachers, parents and children may become better acquainted with the Word of God. The words of the great apostle stand out in bold relief, as if written in living characters: "*Study* to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." There is life in the Word of God, and it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." But as far as *we* are concerned, if we do not study the Word, it is not profitable to us. It is only as we concentrate our minds upon the Word, and study it, and live upon it, that the life and power which is in it may quicken *us* and make us perfect, "thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

God has commanded us to study His Word: to read, search, meditate upon, and obey it. He has likewise commanded parents to teach it to their children, even to the little ones. He has made the study of His Word a means of grace, of enlightenment (Ps. 119: 130), of conversion (Ps. 19: 7), of enrichment (Ps. 119: 72), of comfort (Ps. 119: 50), of edification (Acts 20: 32), of strength (1 John 2: 14), of sanctification (John 17: 17), of stability (Ps. 37: 31). He has likened this Word of grace to all precious and excellent things—to light (Ps. 119: 105), to seed (Luke 8: 2), to rain and dew (Deut. 32: 2), to honey (Ps. 19: 10), to silver (Ps.

12: 6), to fine gold (Ps. 119: 127), to all riches (Ps. 119: 14). He has commanded His church to believe, love, and teach it.

That these benefits and blessings that result from a study of God's Word may be assured to us, a systematic plan of study has long been in operation among our people. That plan is found in the Sabbath-school lessons. Experience has taught us that unless we have a systematic plan and stick to it, many of us would allow the cares of this life to come in and crowd out the study, and cheat us out of these great blessings. By keeping the weekly Sabbath-school lessons ever before us, we kindle afresh every day the interest in the study of the Word. It is by doing a thing regularly that permanent impressions are made on the mind, and habits of life are formed. The regular study of the Sabbath-school lessons is a powerful factor, not only in attaining a knowledge of the Word, but in moulding the character. I have never heard of any member of the Sabbath-school, who has been accustomed to regular attendance and regular study of the lessons, falling to the back-ground of spiritual experience. The neglect of these privileges is usually among the first signs of coming defeat and discouragement.

How to Study.

We have noticed that some of our present-day Sabbath-school members wait until the class recitation before they study their lesson; then they try to find the texts and follow the lesson, but this takes up valuable time and causes delay to the recitation. Many others wait until Friday evening or Sabbath morning, and then hastily go through the lesson texts in order to get the main points of the lesson for the recitation. But what real, permanent blessing do they receive from such study? It is

not *study* at all. We are *not* simply to study for the recitation, or for the approval of men, but we are to study to show ourselves approved of God; and nothing less than a *daily* study of the Word will gain that approval.

Let the first thing be a careful reading of the lesson text. This should be done carefully and without any reference to lesson helps. We should make sure that we have sufficiently mastered the text that we could tell the story of the lesson, in all its details. This is not so easy as you might think. Do not take it for granted that you can do this until you have tried it. The next step should be to study the geography and chronology of the lesson, to become familiar with its conditions and surroundings, so we can understand the events recorded in their relation to the times in which they occurred. This will give intensity to all the events of which we learn, and will help to keep in mind the details of the lesson. To get this information we should have the best lesson helps obtainable.

Those who have received the greatest blessing from the study of the lessons are those who have followed the plan of beginning the study on Sabbath afternoon, or evening, and continuing the same in connection with the morning or evening worship throughout the week. It seems appropriate that we should study the Sabbath-school lessons in connection with our family worship, that we may ask God for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit as the lesson is studied. The first time the lesson texts could be read over. Then each one could be assigned some portion of the lesson to present at worship at other times during the week,—one to give a synopsis; one to locate the places mentioned, if any; one to look up historical points in connection with the lesson, etc. In this way the study could be varied each time and the interest kept up, and at the end of the week the lesson would be learned from every standpoint.

In this connection, please allow me to quote the following paragraph: "Parents, set apart a little time each day for the study of the Sabbath-school lesson with your children. Give up the social visit, if need be, rather than give up the hour devoted to the precious lessons of sacred history. Parents as well as children will receive benefit from this study. Let the more important passages of

Scripture connected with the lesson be committed to memory, not as a task, but as a privilege. Though at first the memory may be defective, it will gain strength by exercise, so that after a time you will delight thus to treasure up the precious words of truth. And the habit will prove a most valuable aid to religious growth." Page 10, *Test. on S.S. Work*.

If the study of the lesson has been neglected, the first thought that comes to our minds on Sabbath morning is almost invariably: "I think I will not go to Sabbath-school, today." Once the lesson is well learned, the inclination to be absent from the Sabbath-school will disappear, and instead there will be an irresistible desire on the part of each one to be in his or her place when the school is opened. I know this to be true from personal experience.

If both teachers and pupils have studied their lessons thoroughly, when the time for recitation comes there will be no need for lesson books from which to read the questions in a formal way, and open Bibles in the hands of members of the class from which to read the answers; but the Word will be stored in the mind, and all will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within them.

When in a class recitation I see a teacher depending solely on the lesson pamphlet or paper, and the pupils constantly referring to the lesson texts, I can only conclude that both teacher and pupils are lame, and they are using the pamphlet, or lesson text, as a crutch. Crutches are all right in their place, and serve a very good purpose for those who must have them; but it is far better not to require them.

Conclusion.

If you would be a Bible student, study the Sabbath-school lessons. If you would be a home missionary, bringing the message of salvation to your neighbours and friends, study the Sabbath-school lessons. If you would kindle a lively interest and zeal in the work of foreign missions, study the Sabbath-school lessons. If you would be led by the Holy Spirit into all truth, and be filled with all the fullness of God, study the Sabbath-school lessons. If you ever get the impression that you are called to serve the cause of God in any capacity, and at the same time you have not been taking the trouble or interest to study the Sabbath-school lessons, you

are mistaken in that impression. The Lord does not call those who are careless or indifferent to His service. Study the Sabbath-school lessons.

I make bold to say that it is my impression that the Sabbath-school has been the most powerful single agency in the work of this denomination to keep our people together and make the church what it is today; and the study of these lessons is the dynamo that has furnished the power.

Before closing this paper, dear members and teachers of the Sabbath-school, let me add one more word by way of appeal. Let us make up our minds that by the grace of God there shall be no more half-hearted study of the Sabbath-school lessons. Let us enter upon the study of these lessons as if we knew that in them we have eternal life. If we do this in the true spirit of devotion, we shall soon experience a quickening power and spiritual growth that we have waited for so long, and when our last lesson has been faithfully learned, we shall receive a diploma from the great Teacher that will give us an abundant entrance to the school above.

Orange Free State Conference Notice.

We presume our brethren of the Free State Conference are watching the columns of the MISSIONARY each week for the appointment of the Annual Conference for that field. At a meeting of the Executive Committee held in Bloemfontein in the month of October it was voted that this meeting be held on the farm of Brother Arthur Shone at Dewetsdorp and this announcement was made. However, this arrangement did not seem very clear to many of our brethren in the Free State Conference and after further deliberation it was thought best to hold this meeting at Kroonstad should the way open. Elder Tarr has been labouring in that field and some are beginning to keep the Sabbath and walk out in the light of present truth. It was thought that if the meeting could be held a little later, possibly the last of March, the weather would be a little cooler

and perhaps the meeting held at Kroonstad would be an inspiration to the work that Brother Tarr is doing, so we began to look for a location and the Lord has opened the way before us.

This gathering will be held in the above-named city commencing on Friday evening, March 29th. The meeting will be held in a hall that Elder Tarr has rented for this purpose and the City Council have granted us a nice little park near by in which our family tents can be pitched. We are glad to say to our brethren of the Free State that the Cape Conference kindly loaned us enough family tents for our accommodation and we trust that by the time of the meeting all necessary arrangements will be made. The tents will be pitched upon the ground and be ready to receive all of our people who may desire to come. We trust that this meeting, the first session of the Free State Conference, may be largely attended by all our people. At this time the work should be fully arranged for the coming year, officers elected etc., so let us all remember the date and the place, and arrange our affairs so that we can be present. More will be written through the MISSIONARY a little later giving details, but we trust all of our brethren and sisters in the Free State will plan to come. Meetings will be held in both English and Dutch. We trust that this meeting may be greatly blessed of God and give a new impetus to the work in the Free State Conference.

(Signed) W. B. WHITE.

Mission Superintendents' Notice.

Last week there was sent out from the Cape Town Tract Society Office a small roll of "Harvest Ingathering Reviews" to each of our several Mission stations in South Africa. At the October meeting of the Union Conference Committee, it was recommended that we join with our Amer-

Weekly Report of Book and Paper Sales.

The Book Work.

NAME	PLACE	BOOK	HRS	ORDS	VALUE	HELPS	TOTALS	DEL'D
Cape Colony Conference, for week ending January 16, 1914								
Mrs. Frost	Alisa	P.P. C.K.	33	12	7 4 6 3 15	6 10 8 6		2 6
A. W. Tiektoe,	Kimberley,	B.R.	23	14	9 10 0	14 5 10 4 6		
Total,	Agents,	2	58	23	£13 14 6	4 10 0	£20 13 0	2 6
Natal-Transvaal Conference, for week ending January 23, 1914.								
T. G. Crouch,	Durban,	S.D. & S.P.	39	29	10 17 5		10 17 6 3 0 0	
A. W. Dixie,	Jo'burg,	G.C.	63	37	33 16 6 6 4 6	37 1 0	29 14 0	
Native Work,	Jo'burg,	Misc.	35		2 0 0		2 0 0 2 0 0	
Total,	Agents,	3	143	63	£43 14 0	6 4 6	£49 18 6	£34 14 0

12 weeks.

ican brethren in the Harvest Ingathering work and do what we can here in Africa to raise funds for foreign missions. The Union Conference Committee then ordered 1,000 copies of the *Harvest Ingathering Review* to be used by our Conferences and Missions. A small roll of ten copies has been sent out to each mission station, and we trust that our mission brethren will endeavour to handle these to the very, very best advantage. These papers are not to be sold, but are to be handled as follows:— Give them to those whom we think are kindly disposed toward our work. Tell them what we are doing in heathen lands to carry the gospel to those who know it not. Show them the paper, show them the pictures, and give them a copy. Then tell them that if they would feel it a privilege to assist us in our foreign work, we would be glad to receive it. Nearly everyone will assist us some, and it will do them good. The reading of the paper will do them good and it will place our work in the right light before the people. Other denominations complain of us because we do not go among the heathen and labour for souls in darkness. This paper will show them that that is just the work we are doing, and the placing of a few copies in the hands of prominent people about the stations should remove prejudice and do good. The paper is certainly a beautiful specimen of the printer's art and is full of good things, from start to

finish. When our stations handle these papers among neighbours, men whom you are trading with, let us hear from you as to what experiences you have been having, and these will be inserted in the MISSIONARY, and your successful experiences will encourage others. Next year, we should handle many more than a thousand copies. The Free State Conference has taken 300 copies and Natal Transvaal and the Cape Colony Conferences have undertaken to handle the remainder. 100 copies are being sent to the Mission Stations, 10 to each station. May God bless the circulation of this good paper and may a nice little fund come into the treasury for "missionary" work.

W. B. WHITE.

In Memoriam.

I regret to have to report the death of our old Brother Bender, aged 63. He accepted the Truth through the labours of Brother Schmidt about 14 or 15 years ago in Pietermaritzburg. He has distributed and sold many periodicals and tracts and was faithful in attending all meetings.

Many were at his graveside. The writer spoke on 1 Thess. 4: 16-18, and admonished the bystanders to prepare themselves to meet their God.

F. C. ERNST.

South African Missionary

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Address: - Miss E. Elffers.
"Rustica", Court Road, Wynberg, C.P.

S. S. Teachers' Training Course.

Outlines for Home Study.

Text-book: "The Teacher's Pedagogy,"
Part 2, Lesson 1.

What Is Teaching?

FIRST WEEK.

1. SOME DEFINITIONS OF TEACHING:—

- Learn the most helpful ones.
- From these, what must we conclude?

2. TEACHING IN THE SIMPLEST SENSE IS THE COMMUNICATION OF KNOWLEDGE:—

- What the knowledge may be.
- How may it be taught?
- What may be the object?
- Enthusiasm and exhortation cannot be substitutes for knowledge.

SECOND WEEK.

3. TEACHING AROUSES THE MENTAL FACULTIES OF THE STUDENT:—

- "Teaching is not telling."
- Of-repeated maxims.
- What does Gregory say of the teaching?

4. THE AIM OF TEACHING:—

- Development of character.
- Teaching not an end in itself.
- What are the most permanent elements in Christian character?
- What should the teacher seek to do?

THIRD WEEK.

4. PERSONAL EVANGELISM:—

- What is "evangelism"?
- What is the result of exhortation without information?
- How may a pupil be led to respond to the "beauty of truth"?
- What promise is given to teachers?
- Which are more effective,—appeals personal and private, or official and public?

FOURTH WEEK.

Text-book: "How to be a Successful Teacher," paragraphs 25, 26.

1. LOVE YOUR CLASS.

NOTE.—Read "Love the Constraining Power," page 100, "Testimonies on Sabbath-school Work."

2. REMEMBER THE ABSENTEES.

Notes.

—We are very glad that the reports from a number of our Mission Stations indicate that they are now getting rain. Brother Sturdevant writes that they have not had any great amount of rain, but there have been light showers that have kept their crops growing. He says that he has 200 acres of very fine mealies, that some of these are now getting ripe and the prospects are for an abundant harvest.

—A letter from Brother Walston of the Solusi Mission states that they have received a heavy rain that filled the rivers and pools, and everything looks green about Solusi. He states that three big ploughs and two harrows are at work with the planter behind, and they hope yet, although it is late, to have a fair crop.

—Brother and Sister Jewell left Rusape on the 27th. ult. for the Cape. Brother Jewell has been greatly afflicted of late with sciatic rheumatism and the Union Conference advised him to come to the Cape Sanitarium where he could have proper treatment. We trust that he may soon be better and be able to return to the work that he and his wife both love so well.

—We are sorry to inform the readers of the MISSIONARY that Brother R. P. Robinson, who came to Africa in Elder Armitage's party was taken with a severe attack of appendicitis shortly after reaching the Cape. We are sorry for this and it is a great disappointment to Brother and Sister Robinson. He has been operated upon and is progressing as well as may be expected.

—The Union Conference Committee have recommended that Brother Hubert Sparrow go to the assistance of Brother Sturdevant, as Brother and Sister Sturdevant are now alone upon their station. Probably other help will have to be sent them, as Brother Sturdevant has had to work so hard since returning to Africa that he feels his strength failing. This is also true of his wife.

—The Union Conference Committee have recommended that Brother J. R. Campbell, after spending a short time at Emmanuel Mission, should proceed to Johannesburg and superintend the selling of our native literature on the Mines. Thus he will

relieve Brother Clark, who will then give his time to the field work. Brother Clark has been confined to this line of work for quite a long time, but we trust may now soon be able to give his whole time to the development of the canvassing work in the field.

—Sister V. Sutherland has gone to the Maranatha Mission to teach the mission school the coming year. Sister Sutherland has had a good experience in the teaching work, and we wish for her much success in her work at this station.

—Brother Robison, who came to Africa with Brother Armitage's party, has been chosen preceptor in the Claremont school. He and his wife are occupying the rooms which Professor Crager occupied last year. Elder White and Professor Crager have rented the house formerly occupied by Elder Porter, and more recently by Elder Hyatt.

—The thirteenth Sabbath offering in our Sabbath-school for March goes to the upbuilding of our training school in Honan, Central China. A few months ago a letter was received from that school which stated that they had 70 sturdy young men and women who were securing a training for the work. This school gives prospect of being our central training school for the interior of China. We trust that a liberal offering may be given on the thirteenth Sabbath of March, which falls this year on the 28th. Many workers must be trained for the vast Chinese field and our thirteenth Sabbath offering could not go to a better enterprise than the upbuilding of the Honan School.

—The Union Conference Committee at its recent session decided, if there was no intervening Providence, to hold the next biennial session of the South African Union Conference in the city of Durban, Natal, at the time of the Easter holidays, 1915; and further that this meeting should be preceded by a Workers' Institute of a week or ten days much after the order of the Ministerial Institutes that are now being held in connection with Union Conference sessions in America. The Committee have also appealed to the General Conference to send to us either W. A. Spicer or W. T. Knox to assist us on this occasion.

—It is now definitely decided that Sister W. S. Hyatt and her daughter Helen will spend the coming year in America. Miss Hyatt will attend the General Educational Convention of the Educational Department of the General Conference, which will be held in the States in July and August.

—Brother J. R. Mtinkulu has moved from Lindley in the O.F.S. to Kroonstad, and he will take part in the work there. His address will in future be: c/o Pastor D. F. Tarr, Kroonstad, O.F.S.