

Training
LIGHT BEARERS

How to Give Bible Readings

Prepared by the
HOME MISSIONARY DEPARTMENT
of the
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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INTRODUCTION

IN EVERY age God has His witnesses for the truth with a message especially applicable to the time.

"There was a present truth in the days of Luther,-a truth at that time of special importance; there is a present truth for the church today. He who does all things according to the counsel of His will, has been pleased to place men under various circumstances, and to enjoin upon them duties peculiar to the times in which they live, and the conditions under which they are placed."-*The Great Controversy*, pp. 143, 144.

"In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import,-the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention."-*Testimonies*, vol. 9, P: 19.

To become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church involves a heavy responsibility. Membership means far more than having one's name on the church records, attending church services regularly, and measuring up to the individual quota in tithes and offerings. The ideal is far higher.

"Every member should be a channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ."-*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 600.

The light of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a whole depends on the light flooding the life of

its individual members. Just as a carload of matches will never serve its purpose unless each match is lighted, so the church standing in the world as a "light bearer" will fail in her mission if each member does not reflect the light which he has received.

One of the best ways whereby this present-day gospel of the kingdom may be made known to a perishing world is by personal, individual effort. The following instruction is our guide:

"The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought home to every soul. To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ's method. His work was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience. Through that one soul the message was often extended to thousands. 'We are not to wait for souls to come to us; we must seek them out where they are.'" -*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 229.

Whatever his vocation in life, every Seventh-day Adventist stands in the world as a light bearer, an "epistle of Christ," "known and read of all men." 2 Cor. 3:3, 2. His life, his conduct, his very presence, is to witness for the truth which he professes and to the reality of a living faith in the power and effectiveness of that truth. He must be ever ready to "give an answer to every man that asketh . . . a reason of the hope" which holds him steady in the midst of life's turmoil. Every Seventh-day Adventist, like his Master, must have a "faithful regard for the one-soul audience"-the audience which confronts him in the daily affairs of life.

One of the most distinctive channels through which the truth for this time may be proclaimed by every member of the church is known as Bible readings. This work, we are told, "has been marked out for us by our heavenly Father. We are to take our Bibles.

and go forth to warn the *world*."-*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 150.

"A great work can be done by presenting to the people the Bible just as it reads. Carry the Word of God to every man's door, urge its plain statements upon every man's conscience." *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 388.

The aim of this volume is to deal with the origin and meaning of the term "Bible readings," to set forth the importance of this work and the distinct call to each member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to do his part, to point out how and where to begin, and to make plain the methods which have been tested by experience and have demonstrated their effectiveness in yielding successful results. Included also is a comprehensive study of the doctrines of the third angel's message, with side lights and helps furnished by those who have pioneered the way in this field of personal work.

That it may fulfill its purpose in enlisting and training the lay members to open the Word of God and let the truth shine out in its clearness and beauty, and thus bring to complete fulfillment that prophetic view of the closing work of the gospel in which "hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families, and opening before them the word of God," is the hope and prayer of THE SECRETARIES OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE HOME MISSIONARY DEPARTMENT.



Elder Stephen N. Haskell



Mrs. A. T. Robinson

To S. N. Haskell, One of the Pioneers, Goes the Distinction of Having First Inaugurated the Question-and-Answer Method of Giving Bible Studies. Mrs. A. T. Robinson, the Wife of Another of Our Early Ministers, Was the First Woman Bible Instructor in the Denomination

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EARLY HISTORY

THE term "Bible readings" is a denominational phrase, and to some its meaning may not at first be clear. To read the Bible is a Christian privilege and duty, but "how to give Bible readings" to others is something different. Although this phrase has been familiar to Seventh-day Adventists for many years, it has been suggested that a more harmonious term might be "How to conduct a Bible study"; for while this method of personal work involves reading the Bible, it specifically applies to the question-and-answer method of Bible study.

A notable example of this personal Bible-study method is found in the record of the early days of the Christian church. The account is found in Acts 18: 2, 3, 24-28. Here we are introduced to two friends of the apostle Paul-Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. These lay members of the Corinthian church were tent-makers by trade. They had been diligently instructed by Paul and were well versed in the doctrines of Christianity. So great were their zeal and enthusiasm that they were quick to seize any opportunity to explain the truth to others, and did not hesitate to approach the learned and eloquent Apollos, who was himself "mighty in the Scriptures." But while Apollos was honest and sincere, he lacked knowledge of present truth for that time.

As Aquila and Priscilla listened to his eloquence

they perceived his lack; and instead of going home and bewailing the fact that Apollos was in the dark and did not know the precious truth which had been brought to their knowledge, they followed the only wise course for any Christian who is in possession of advanced light: they extended to Apollos a personal invitation, an invitation which carried with it the urgency of acceptance-to come to their home, where they *"expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."* The Bible says, "They took him unto them," which might infer that they did not accept "No" for an answer. They apparently did not give Apollos their home address and tell him they would be glad to have him call, but they brought him right down to the business in hand.

How interesting it would have been to listen in on that Bible study, where two humble laymen, filled with the Spirit of God and rejoicing in truth, "expounded" or explained the Scriptures. They no doubt asked him to turn to the text and read during the expounding process.

As the result of this home Bible study or Bible reading, Apollos went on his way, having perceived and fully accepted the new light, and through his remarkable gift of teaching he "mightily convinced" his hearers of truth in its larger aspects.

It is well that we hold in sacred memory these noble laymen of the early church, Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, who have given such a forceful example of personal endeavor in making the Bible plain to others. As the name of the disciple Dorcas of Joppa is perpetuated in all Seventh-day Adventist churches today, because of her practical ministry for the temporal needs of those about her so the order of Aquila

and Priscilla should be perpetuated by lay Bible instructors who minister in spiritual things. Their example serves as encouragement to every member of the church to conduct Bible studies in his own home or in the homes of neighbors and friends.

Through the writings of the Spirit of prophecy we are told that "the plan of holding Bible readings was a heaven-born idea."-*Gospel Workers*, p. 192. It behooves the church, which has been "given a work of the most solemn import, the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages" to fully understand and apply this method of Bible teaching which bears the divine credentials.

The First Bible Reading

The circumstances which brought about the question-and-answer method of Bible study within our own ranks are very interesting. From the beginning of the advent movement in 1844 the message was proclaimed largely by preaching, which must be understood in the usual meaning of the term. The pioneer leaders in the cause of God were diligent students of the Bible, and from the pulpit, taking a text and preaching therefrom, instructed the congregations of Adventist believers. As an auxiliary to preaching, the extensive circulation of literature by the tract and missionary work, in which all the church members were included, proved increasingly effective in the advancement of the message of truth.

It was in the year 1882, or possibly 1883, that the plan of conducting Bible readings was inaugurated. The story of the event, as told by the pioneers of that day, is as follows: Elder S. N. Haskell, one of the leading pioneers, and the one who organized the Vigilant Missionary

Society and came to be known as the "father of the tract and missionary work," was preaching a sermon in the usual manner, on the campground in California, where there was a very large attendance of believers. California then, as at the present time, was noted for its sunshine and flowers, freedom from stormy weather, and an ideal climate for campers. But as we look back over the records of the camp meeting in 1882, as they appear in the *Review and Herald* published that year, we find that mention is made of "unprecedented storms," which swept over certain portions of the State, of floods and mud, of thunder and lightning-altogether a great surprise for the campers attending the Seventh-day Adventist meeting. However, out of these unusual circumstances God chose to establish a new era in His work, reminding us that His ways are past finding out and that His plans and purposes are revealed in His own time and manner.

In the midst of the sermon which Elder Haskell was preaching to a large audience that morning, a severe storm arose, and the clashing of the elements made so much noise that it seemed as if the service would have to be discontinued, because the people could not hear what the preacher said. It was then that the Holy Spirit impressed Elder Haskell to try another plan. Stepping down from the pulpit, he took his place in the center of the tent and gathered the people close in around him. Then, instead of continuing to preach to them, he gave out texts of Scripture, to be read by different persons in the congregation in response to questions which he asked. for example, he might have asked; "How were the Holy Scriptures given?" And

someone arose and read 2 Timothy 3: 16, 17, in a clear voice- "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

In another section of the audience another brother arose and read from 2 Peter 1:21: "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Then Elder Haskell's deep voice rang out "For what purpose were the Scriptures written?" and back came the reply in the words of Paul: "For doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

All the people listened intently for the next general question and watched to see who had the answer: "What is necessary on our part?" "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." John 5:39.

And then a sister arose, and, raising her falsetto voice to its highest pitch, gave added emphasis to what is necessary on our part by reading: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee. I will delight myself in Thy statutes: I will not forget Thy word." Ps. 119:11, 16.

The truths presented in this manner made a deep impression on the minds of the people. It was evident that here was a new and very effective way of "preaching" truth.

Mrs. E. G. White was at this camp meeting, but she was not present during this "stormy" service.

However, her son, Elder W. C. White, knew of the experience, and gave a glowing description of the meeting to his mother. The very next day Elder Haskell and other ministers were called to meet Mrs. White, and then the messenger of the Lord told them that the meeting about which she had heard was in harmony with the light she had received from the Lord. She stated that in vision she had seen hundreds and thousands of Seventh-day Adventists going from house to house with the Bible under their arms, teaching the truth in this way.

This endorsement of such a plan brought great encouragement to Elder Haskell, and he began at once to prepare question-and-answer Bible studies, which were called Bible readings, because the students did the reading, while the preacher or teacher asked the questions which the reading of Scripture texts answered. It may be of interest to know that the first two Bible-reading studies prepared by Elder Haskell dealt with themes of fundamental importance to the believers in those days, from which there has been practically no variation since that time. The first Bible study was entitled "The Coming of the Lord," and the second, "The Sabbath." The fact that these Bible studies averaged one hundred and fifty questions, with even a larger number of texts of Scripture, indicates how thorough was the instruction. However, it should be noted that the experience of succeeding years has demonstrated the impracticability of such lengthy studies, and it is accepted as a well established fact that a few carefully selected, pointed, and definite texts used at one time are much more effective than a multiplicity of texts covering the entire subject.

A recommendation passed at a camp meeting in California indicates the plans for the permanency of this work.

It reads as follows:

"Resolved, (2) That we recommend that as far as practicable, the various churches and little companies of Sabbath-keepers hold Bible readings similar to those conducted on the campground, for the purpose of better informing themselves in the Scriptures, and also of interesting their neighbors in the special truths of these last days."- Signs of the Times, Sept. 27, 1883.

From that time on, decided emphasis was placed on the importance of Bible readings being given by workers and laymen. Beginning October 30 and continuing to November 7, 1883, a ten days' Bible institute was held in Battle Creek, Michigan, for the purpose of fitting men and women for active duty in the field, especially in the work of holding Bible readings. Elder S. N. Haskell was in charge, and a general invitation to all Seventh-day Adventists was extended. The announcement read, "Not only young men and women are wanted, but men of mature years; even if their heads are sprinkled with gray hairs, they are none too old to visit families and tell what God has done for them, and read the Scriptures."-*Ibid.*, Oct. 18, 1883.

From a report of this first institute we quote as follows: "The institute for instruction in Bible reading commenced at Battle Creek, Michigan, October 30, and has continued with increasing interest. It is the largest gathering of our leading brethren from different parts of the country that we have ever had. Over three hundred have joined the class, and the Bible readings have created an unusual interest The attendance at these meetings has increased from a congregation of a few hundred persons ... to over one thousand, including many of the citizens of this city. The Bible readings will be continued through the

conference, and will be conducted by different ministers from various parts of the field, who will prepare lessons to present."-*Ibid.*, Nov. 22, 1883.

During this remarkable institute, which called the attention of the entire denomination to the work of giving Bible readings and placed the plan on a solid footing for all time, the following counsel was received from the messenger of the Lord:

"We are not doing all we might do to encourage workers in the great harvest field. We must encourage simplicity; we must not degenerate into formal service. We must lay responsibility upon humble, God-fearing men. I know God will accept their efforts if they will dedicate themselves to Him. If they will place themselves in the channel, the light from the throne of God will shine through them. Jesus will work through their disinterested efforts. The Bible readings will be a means of getting the truth before a large number. Men and women may do a good work here. Our sisters are not excusable in letting the talents God has given them rust from inaction." -*Ibid.*, Nov. 15, 1883.

The denominational colleges began at once to include courses of instruction in Bible readings, and in a number of large cities training centers were established, known as city missions, where students from colleges, during the summer vacation, and church members of all ages, were placed under experienced instructors, and, while being taught the doctrines of the third angel's message and how to make them known through Bible studies in the homes of the people, were required to spend certain hours each day in actual field work, distributing literature, learning how to meet the people and secure openings for Bible studies, and becoming accustomed to all that is involved in "the art of giving Bible studies," for indeed it is one phase of that "highest of all sciences", the "science of soul winning."

Elder Haskell Describes a Bible Reading Elder Haskell presented a pen picture of a Bible reading service in the early days, which is both interesting and enlightening. He wrote:

"The plan which as yet has seemed to be most successful [for conducting city missions] is that of holding Bible readings in families and obtaining subscriptions for the *Signs* These Bible readings embrace more than a single family. Sometimes they are held with the family during the first visit, then an appointment is left for another, when the family themselves invite in their neighbors. In this way the families become interested for their neighbors, and not infrequently there will be from five to fifteen in attendance at each Bible reading. They sit around a large table, each one with a Bible, and all turn to the various texts. Questions are asked and the Bible explained, or rather texts are quoted so that the Bible explains itself. On Sabbath and Sunday there are public social meetings or readings at the mission rooms. Bible readings are also held on board the ships. Some of our sisters are quite as successful in holding Bible readings as our brethren ...It is as important that our brethren be instructed how to do this successfully as it is to do missionary work of any kind. Some will naturally adapt themselves to it, while others need a special drill to prepare them to give the readings acceptably One thing is certain, God is with His truth, and He will help those who not only feel their need of Him but feel the importance of qualifying themselves to labor in the best manner."-*Ibid.*, Aug. 14, 1884.

Bible-Reading Gazette

In order to strengthen the plan of preparing and holding Bible readings, the General Conference began to publish a monthly magazine of twenty-four pages, called *Bible-Reading Gazette*. Referring to this publication, which made its appearance in January, 1884, Mrs. A. T. Robinson, the first woman Bible instructor in the denomination, writes as follows: "To those who would prepare and send to the publishers four Bible readings, the offer of a year's subscription to *Bible-Reading Gazette* was made. The plan was a

success, and in a very short time more than 12,000 copies of the *Gazette* were being used. By the end of the first year the demand had become so great that the twelve numbers were published in a bound volume under the title *Bible Readings*. This book ushered in the Bible-reading era."

We find that the year's volume of the *Gazette* contained 162 studies, 2,800 questions answered, diagrams, notes, and texts written out. This material was contributed by more than a score of writers. It may be of interest to note the order of subjects given in the *Gazette* and the number of questions allotted to each. A partial list follows:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Number of Questions</i>
The Sanctuary	149
The Law of God	111
Spiritual Gift	126
Tithing	98
Conversion	58
New Earth	48
Sabbath	61
The Scriptures	27
United States in Prophecy, No.1.....	104
United States in Prophecy, No.2	53
Twenty-three Hundred Days	72

In the year 1891 an enlarged and revised edition of the book *Bible Readings* was published under the title familiar to all Seventh-day Adventists of today--*Bible Readings for the Home Circle*. Millions of copies of this book have been sold to the public; in fact, this work has had a larger sale than any of our other denominational publications. It has served as a guide to thousands in searching for truth, and is a standard textbook for all who are willing "to act their part, doing

house-to-house work, and giving Bible readings in families. " — *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 141.

How the First Woman Bible Instructor Got Started

In the early days, the same as at the present time, it was one thing to believe in the Bible-reading work, to be interested in it, and to actually prepare for doing it, but quite another thing to step over the line of preparation into the depths of service.

Mrs. A. T. Robinson, who, with her husband, was associated with Elder Haskell in the beginning of the Bible-reading plan, was the first woman Bible instructor in the denomination. Her son, Elder D. T. Robinson, tells of how his mother was pressed into giving her first Bible reading, as follows:

"It was in the days when all Seventh-day Adventists were urged to prepare Bible readings on the doctrines of present truth and submit them for publication. My mother, being the wife of a Seventh-day Adventist minister, and a teacher of successful experience, readily responded to the call and sent in several studies. All studies submitted were reviewed in a public manner, as a means of constructive criticism and general information. In the presence of a large class Elder Israel was conducting the demonstration of the study under consideration, which was one prepared by my mother. The Authorship, however, was a secret between him and my mother. Just as it was time for the demonstration to be given, Elder Israel complained of feeling ill and asked to be excused, announcing at the same time that he would call on Mrs. Robinson to conduct the study. Stunned by such an unexpected turn of events, my mother very vehemently declared that she could not do it, saying that she had never given a Bible reading in her life, and must be excused. Elder Israel held his ground, however, and insisted that 'Sister Robinson conduct the Bible study.' On his leaving the room, there being no other alternative, my mother then and there gave her first public Bible study, and from that time on was one of the most active and successful Bible teachers in the denomination. Up to the time of her

death in 1933 she never ceased to conduct Bible readings and to train others to engage in the work."

Other Denominations Interested

Since Seventh-day Adventists early adopted the Bible-reading system as a means of disseminating important truth, it is interesting to note that in some instances the plan has been partially adopted or adapted by other religious bodies. But it is not difficult to discover why this method of evangelism is not more generally followed today. There has been a departure from the fundamental truth that the Bible in its entirety is the 'Word of God and should be studied and accepted literally. It is time for a revival of the "Back to the Bible" movement, to lift up the standard of the divine Word and let the people know that the Bible is the only safe guide. The situation is described as follows:

"There are many who are reading the Scriptures who cannot understand their true import. All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in."- *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109.

It is for such a time as this that Seventh-day Adventists are set in the world as light bearers; it is at such a time as this that "all heaven is looking with intense interest upon the church, to see what her individual members are doing to enlighten those who are in darkness."- *Christian Service*, p. 89.

"Open the Scriptures to someone that is in darkness, and you will not complain of weariness and lack of interest in the cause of truth. Your heart will be awakened to an anxiety for souls, and joy in the evidences of the faith will fill your heart, and you will know that 'he that watereth shall be watered also himself.' "- *Ibid.*, p. 144.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SERVICE

SPECIFIC instruction stands on record as to certain qualifications or "personality traits" which will be called into action as the gospel light bearer mingles with the mixed multitude on the highway of life. These qualifications may be either natural or acquired, and it is important to study the "catalog" and to search our hearts and lives to see wherein we lack, that we may obtain divine help for our need.

Consecration.- "Christ asks for an unreserved consecration, for undivided service. He demands the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength. Self is not to be *cherished*."-*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 48, 49. "He who loves Christ the most, will do the greatest amount of *good*."-*Desire at Ages*, p. 250.

Education.-"God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God, develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness, ... his discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of

Righteousness, that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God."-*The Desire of Ages*, p. 251.

Efficiency.- "Every worker should be understandingly *efficient*."-*Testimonies*; vol. 7, p. 70. "We should not let slip even one opportunity of qualifying ourselves intellectually to work for God."-*Christ's Object Lessons*; p. 334. "We must not enter into the Lord's work haphazard, and expect success Jesus calls for co-workers, not blunderers."-*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 67. "Mechanics, lawyers, merchants, men of all trades and professions, educate themselves that they may become masters of their business. Should the follower of Christ be' less intelligent, and while professedly engaged in His service, be ignorant of the ways and means to be employed? The enterprise of gaining everlasting life is above every earthly consideration. In order to lead souls to Jesus there must be a knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind. Much careful thought and fervent prayer are required to know how to approach men and women upon the great subject of truth."-*Ibid*.

Faith.- "The worker for God needs strong faith. Appearances may seem forbidding; but in the darkest hour there is light beyond. The strength of those who, in faith, love and serve God, will be renewed day by day."-*Gospel Workers*; p. 262. "God's workers need faith in God. He is not unmindful of their labors. He values their work. Divine agencies are appointed to co-operate with those who are laborers together with God. When we think that God will not do as He has said, and that He has no time to notice His workers, we dishonor our Maker."-*Christian Service*, pp_ 233, 234.

Faith is confidence in God. The doubter would do well to study

carefully the chapter in *Steps to Christ* entitled "What to Do With Doubt."

Faithfulness.- "The secret of life's success is in a careful, conscientious attention to the little things. God makes the simple leaf, the tiny flower, the blade of grass, with as much care as He creates a world. The symmetrical structure of a strong, beautiful character is built up by individual acts of duty. All should learn to be faithful in the least as well as in the greatest duty. Their work cannot bear the inspection of God unless it is found to include a faithful, diligent, economical care for the little *things*." - *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 572.

To be successful in the Lord's work, we need to have the quality of faithfulness in keeping appointments and being on time. A Christian leader, of long experience, states: "We ought to be faithful to the promises we make, cost what it may. It is a noble thing when we find one of whose promises we are as sure as the rising of the sun, whose simplest 'word is as good as his oath, who does just what he says he will do, at the moment he says he will do it. This is the kind of faithfulness God wants." 'Sometimes when a worker goes miles on a wild, stormy day to keep an appointment, the one with whom the appointment is made may say, "My daughter told me not to trouble to prepare for a Bible study today, as you would surely not come in such bad weather. But I said, 'Yes, she will come, for she never breaks her word.'" Such is the impression which should be made upon the minds of the people with whom we conduct Bible studies.

Perseverance.- "In the name of the Lord, with the untiring perseverance and unflagging zeal that Christ brought into His labors,

we are to carry forward the work of the Lord." *-Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 25.

Never become "weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Gal. 6:9. In many cases all the labor bestowed may seem useless. It will appear many times that the "good seed" has fallen upon a rock, to be parched by the fierce heat of prejudice. But we are to work on faithfully. For thirty years a man sent *Signs of the Times* to his brother, and for many years the paper was not read but burned. At last the entire family was won, and the faithful labor was rewarded. It pays to persevere.

Humility.-"The talents of the humble cottager are needed in the house-to-house labor, and can accomplish more in this work than brilliant gifts." *-Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 37, 38. "In choosing men and women for His service, God does not ask whether they possess learning or eloquence or worldly wealth. He asks: 'Do they walk in such humility that I can teach them My way? Can I put My words into their lips? Will they represent Me?' " *-Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 144.

Dignity.-"Be sure to maintain the dignity of the work by a well-ordered life and godly conversation We have the greatest truth and hope that were ever given to our world, and the greatest faith; and we want to represent this in its exalted character to the world. We do not want to assume the attitude as though we were passing through the world begging pardon of the world because we venture to believe this precious, sacred truth; but we want to walk humbly with God, and conduct ourselves as though we were children of the most high God, and, although feeble instruments, as though we were handling most important and interesting subjects, higher and more exalted

than any temporal, worldly themes." -*Christian Service*, pp. 226, 227.

Adaptability.-A prime asset to success is adaptability-a keen sense of the proper decision to make at the right time, under unexpected circumstances. A Bible instructor was once asked to accompany an enthusiastic lay member to a home in which a woman was just ready to receive the truth. The appointment was made, and these women reached the home about six o'clock in the evening. Scarcely were they seated when the woman's husband came in, looking jaded and weary. The Bible instructor had a sense of the fitness of things, and immediately gathered up her books and excused her departure by saying she would call again. The lay member was much disappointed and felt that an opportunity to win a soul had been lost.

But in a few days the Bible instructor called again, at a more convenient time of day, when she was most cordially received by the woman, who expressed her appreciation of their courtesy in recognizing the situation at the time of the former visit, explaining that her husband would have been much displeased if she had been prevented from preparing the evening meal by someone's insisting on a Bible study. This is a simple illustration of adaptability. There is also need to understand how to adapt the Bible studies to each person, to be able to read character and temperament, and to present the studies in such a way as to suit each mind.

Politeness.-"All coarseness and roughness must be put away from us. Courtesy, refinement, Christian politeness, must be cherished. Guard against being abrupt and blunt. Do not regard such peculiarities

as virtues; for God does not so regard them. Endeavor not to offend any unnecessarily."-*Ibid.*, P: 226.

Tact.- "In the work of soul winning, great tact and wisdom are needed. The Savior never suppressed the truth, but He uttered it always in love. In His intercourse with others, He exercised the greatest tact, and He was always kind and thoughtful."-*Gospel Workers*, p. 117.

Gentleness.- "As the dew and the still showers fall upon the withering plants, so let words fall gently when seeking to win men from error."-*Ministry Of Healing*, p. 157.

Pleasing Personality.- This is a qualification that cannot be ignored when studying how best to lead souls to Christ and obedience to His Word, we sometimes hear it said that this or that person attracts people to himself, as if this were a great failing. But truly it is essential that the soul winner cultivate a personality that attracts people and inspires confidence. We are to be ambassadors for Christ. It would certainly be very bad policy for any country to choose as an ambassador a man whose personality would repel. People will not be taught much by a person "whom they dislike. Probably there is no man or woman but who, consciously or unconsciously, may give offense to someone. But we should pray for wisdom to so live and act as "giving no offense in anything, that the ministry be not blamed." 2 Cor. 6:3.

The story is told of a blacksmith who was converted in the days of Wesley. The man was a terrible character, the shame of the countryside, but his conversion was genuine, and he wanted to win others to Christ. Through the ungracious personality of one of Wesley's young preachers, this blacksmith returned to his old life,

claiming there was nothing in Christianity. Still the Holy Spirit kept pleading with him, and at last he decided to try to find Wesley and see for himself just what kind of man he was. He walked many miles to the town where John Wesley was preaching. The beautiful, sympathetic heart of the great preacher understood at once the temperament of his visitor, and he said, "Abide with me, and I can use you." This young man became one of the most powerful witnesses for God, a successful soul winner. He was rescued from discouragement and despair through the counteracting influence of the pleasing and sincere personality of the ambassador for Christ.

Simplicity.- "Thousands can be reached in the most simple and humble way. The most intellectual, those who are looked upon as the world's most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words of one who loves God, and who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things that interest him most deeply. Often the words well prepared and studied have but little influence. But the true, honest expression of a son or daughter of God, spoken in natural simplicity, has power to unbolt the door to hearts that have long been closed against Christ and His love."-*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 232.

Sympathy.- "We need more of Christlike sympathy; not merely sympathy for those who appear to us to be faultless, but sympathy for the poor, suffering, struggling souls, who are often overtaken in fault, sinning and repenting, tempted and discouraged."-*Gospel Workers*, p. 141.

Genuineness.- "There must be no pretense in the lives of those who have so sacred and solemn a message as we have been called to bear.

The world is watching Seventh-day Adventists, because it knows something of their profession of faith, and of their high standard, and when it sees those who do not live up to their profession, it points at them with scorn."-*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 23.

Courage.-"Hope and courage are essential to perfect service for God. These are the fruit of faith."-*Prophets and Kings*, p. 164. "Courage, energy, and perseverance they must possess."-*Gospel Workers*, p. 39.

To Sum Up the Entire Matter

It would not be feasible to attempt to . cover the entire field of essential qualifications for the Christian layman. The matter is summed up as follows:

"The laborer for souls needs consecration, integrity, intelligence, industry, energy, and tact. Possessing these qualifications, no man can be inferior; instead, he will have a commanding influence for good."-*Ibid.*, p. 111.

The following encouraging assurance and call to service should ever be kept in mind and receive wholehearted response:

"The Lord imparts a fitness for the 'work to every man and woman who will co-operate with divine power. All the requisite talent, courage, perseverance, faith, and tact will come as they put the armor on. A great work is to be done in our world, and human agencies will surely respond to the demand. The world must hear the warning. When the call comes, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' send back the answer clear and distinct, 'Here am I; send me.' "-*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 333.

The Gauge of Usefulness

Notwithstanding the fact that the worker for God may have many or all the essential qualifications so dearly set forth, yet there is a gauge, a measure, a standard, by which all qualifications of the gospel

worker must be tested. Consider carefully this statement:

"God can use every person just in proportion as He can put His Spirit into the soul temple."-*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 144.

How much of God's Holy Spirit are you willing to receive? How large a place in your heart will you give to Him?

"There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God."-*Christian Service*, p. 254.

Let none be deceived in regard to the provisions which have been made for the fullness of the Holy Spirit's power in life and work:

"The Spirit awaits our demand and reception." -*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 121.

"If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit."-*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50.

"The Holy Spirit will come to all who are begging for the bread of life to give to their neighbors."-*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 90.

"Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord's promise; they talk *about* Christ and *about* the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies.

"We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us...But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves ...Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive." -*The Desire of Ages*, P: 672.

That the influence of the Holy Spirit must permeate the life of the Bible instructor, if souls are to be won, is revealed in many ways. A

scene presented to the messenger of the Lord is recorded as follows:

"Two Bible workers were seated in a family. With the open Bible before them, they presented the Lord Jesus Christ as the sin-pardoning Savior. Earnest prayer was offered to God, and hearts were softened and subdued by the influence of the Spirit of God As the Word of God was explained, I saw that a soft, radiant light illumined the Scriptures."-*Testimonies*, vol. s. p. 35.

The work that God "will accept is the work that reflects His image. His followers are to bear, as their credentials to the world, the ineffaceable characteristics of His immortal principles."-*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 144.

Do you, dear reader, have your "credentials"? They are ready for your asking. Do not attempt to go forth as a carrier of God's Word without this indispensable equipment.



H. M. LANSERT

Christ Had a Faithful Regard for the One-Soul Audience

THE PLACE AND IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL WORK

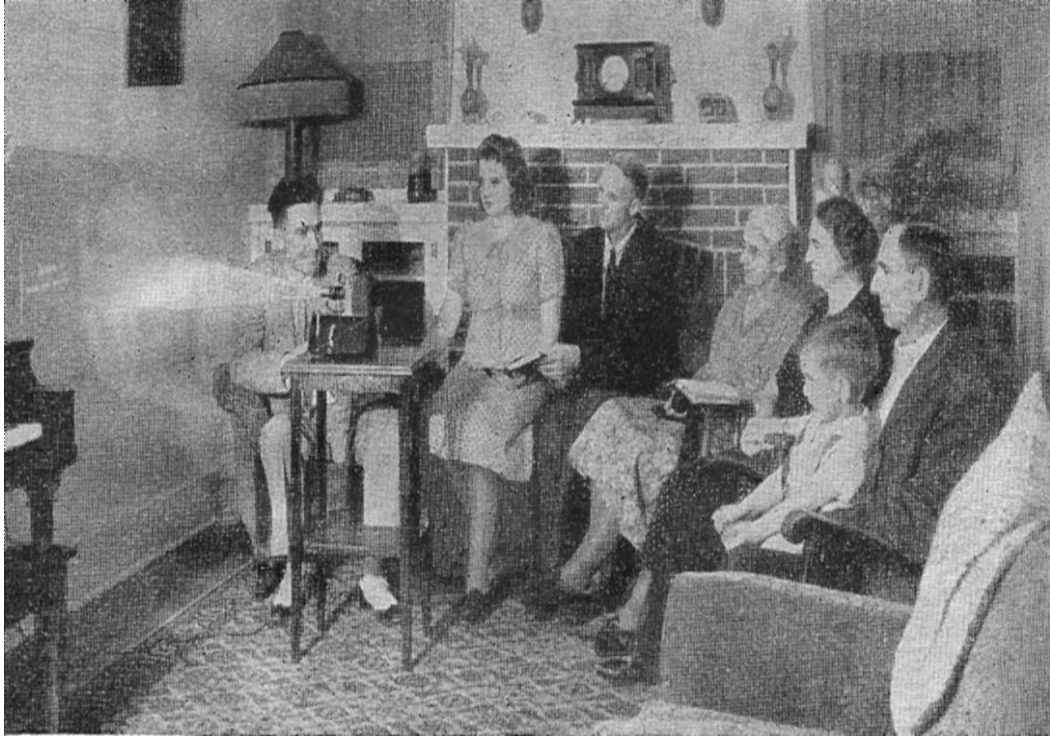
"GOD expects personal service from everyone to whom He has entrusted a knowledge of the truth for this time."-*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 30.

In view of this statement, it is well to seek an understanding of what is meant by the term "personal service." Is it possible to possess the qualifications which tend to success as a Bible instructor and yet fail to be a successful personal worker? What is the meaning of "personal service"? Is not all Christian endeavor personal work?

Personal work may be defined as the art of reaching the heart. The Bible instructor may possess a pleasing personality; his manner of teaching may be gripping, clear, and logical; he may find ready access to homes and be cordially welcomed; but has he mastered the art of dealing with the soul in a personal, heart-to-heart manner?

"The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought home to every soul. To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ's method. His work was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience. Through that one soul the message was often extended to thousands."-*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 229.

There is no substitute for the personal touch. This was Christ's preferred method. He spent much time in personal interviews with the people with whom He mingled day by day. Take, for example, that



Conducting a Bible Study in the home is one from of acceptable personal work

interview with the one lone Samaritan woman, who, in the pursuance of her daily tasks, came with her pitcher to the well for water in the heat of the day. The Master, weary and thirsty, was resting by the well that noontide hour. He had made no appointment for a sermon or an interview; He was not "on duty" in the sense of preaching or teaching; but every moment of His life was the spontaneous expression of personal appeal to the soul. How simple the approach to the prejudiced heart of this sinful Samaritan woman-the common request of a way-worn traveler for a drink. Her impertinent reply was met by such words as she had never heard before, revealing her great need as a sinner, and the gracious offer of the water of life which would forever quench spiritual thirst. The words of the Master touched the innermost recesses of a storm-tossed soul and led to discovery of personal need. Then followed a yielding obedience and immediate search for those nearest of kin, that they might share in the wonderful experience of salvation. That is "personal work." That is the "personal service" that God expects from everyone who has a knowledge of truth.

The apostle Paul was a personal worker. In the presence of King Agrippa, as recorded in the 26th chapter of Acts, he testifies as to his own conversion in a very convincing way and makes this the point of contact for personal appeal to the king. Paul knew something of the life of King Agrippa and the great need of his soul, and he watched for the opportunity to bring truth home to the heart-not as mere words to the ears. We find Paul, under the Holy Spirit's direction, appealing to the king at the psychological moment-"King Agrippa, believest thou

the prophets?" Without waiting for a reply, he said, "I know that thou believest." Conviction fastened itself upon Agrippa's soul, and he replied, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." That is an example of "personal work" in a public way. Usually this method of service applies to the "one-soul audience"; but the essential point is for the individual to be so entirely under the control of the Holy Spirit that the heart rather than the mind is convicted.

Personal work should begin in the home, in behalf of any member of the family who has not found Christ. Husband, wife, father, mother, son or daughter, neighbor, friend, employer, employee, all are candidates for personal work. We are told:

"There are many who need the ministration of loving Christian hearts. Many have gone down to ruin who might have been saved, if their neighbors, common men and women, .had put forth personal effort for them. Many are waiting to be personally addressed. In the very family, the neighborhood, the town where we live, there is work for us to do as missionaries for Christ. If we are Christians, this work will be our delight. No sooner is one converted than there is born within him a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart."-*The Desire of Ages*, p. 141.

We must find the needy just where they are in the church, at the family altar, in the field, the barn, the shop, or in the office. We must pray that God will help us to know when and where to begin. Jesus personally called His disciples while they were about their daily work. Four of the disciples left their fishing nets in response to His personal appeal. Matthew was called from a lucrative business profession. John the evangelist was a diligent observer of Christ's preferred method of

winning souls, and records the experience in which Jesus made direct personal contacts with individuals in eighteen to twenty cases.

Jesus never lost sight of the individual. We think of that unsurpassed personal appeal to Nicodemus, as found in John 3:16. The proud Pharisee never forgot the conversation with the Master that night, but he did not fully surrender until about three years later. Although Nicodemus procrastinated so long, Jesus never abandoned hope for him. Just so the personal worker for souls must never give up but must hold on by the cords of faith and love. To the vacillating Peter, Christ said, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke 22:32. It was this steadfast personal interest and love for Peter that held him and led him into genuine conversion. So the personal worker must ever manifest firm, unyielding faith, and prevail in prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Let your prospect know that you are praying for him. Help him to find God in prayer. If he does not know how to pray, explain that even two or three sentences expressing the deep desire of his heart will be heard and answered. Prayer is the key to unlock Heaven's storehouse for every time of need.

While engaged in Ingathering early one morning, a solicitor came to the rear door of a grocery store, through which customers were coming and going. Stepping inside the store, he approached the proprietor at a moment when he was not engaged, and explained his mission. The response was unexpected, for the grocer flew into a rage, declaring that he would have nothing to do with such work or with the churches in general. He referred to his wife, who, he said, had been a

wonderful Christian but was now dead, and he bitterly resented his loss. The solicitor appealed to the man to be ready to meet his wife when Jesus comes. As a quiet personal appeal was made for him to surrender to Christ, tears began to stream down the man's face, and his entire attitude changed. A silent prayer at the moment brought the assistance needed. God is ready to help in every emergency.

The enemy of truth and righteousness ever stands ready to hinder the worker for God, and one of his principal weapons is the excuse, "I am not qualified." Just so long as he can bind the child of God by the cords of procrastination or excuse, his purpose to thwart God's plans will be met. Let all be on guard, and through prayer and consecration break the fetters of hesitancy and doubt. God is counting on His children. Dare any disappoint Him? "God will not complete His work without human agencies."-*Christian Service*, p. 9. A sense of our unworthiness to be a co-laborer with God in the plan of salvation may almost overwhelm us, and our first reaction to the call to service may be like that of the prophet Isaiah, who exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Isa. 6:5. It is true that Isaiah was called to do a very great and difficult work, in comparison to which the call to laymen to engage in house-to-house personal Bible evangelism may seem small; but the call is from the same source, and the response must be made in the same way. It was when Isaiah's lips were touched with a living coal from off the altar that he had the courage to say, "Here am I; send me."

PREPARING A BIBLE STUDY

The first essential in teaching the Word of God is to *know the Book*, and to have personal acquaintance with, 'and love for, the Author of the Book. Without this foundation there can be no success. It is said that a young woman had placed in her hand a book portraying the steps in the Christian life, which she was urged to read carefully and prayerfully. She was not a Christian and had no intention of giving up her worldly pleasures, and the book seemed dry and uninteresting. After reading a few pages she threw it aside. But not long after, she became acquainted with a young man, whose brilliance, integrity, and high moral character won her heart. To her astonishment, she soon learned that her lover was the author of the book she had cast aside as dull and uninteresting. Immediately the book took on a new appearance. She was eager to read what her lover had written, and the book now became a personal message to her individually. She recognized in the life of her friend the reflection of the principles set forth on every page of the book, and the reading became fascinating. The change was brought about because she had come to know and love the author. Just so in our study of the Bible we must be in touch with the Author.

In the preparation of every Bible study, whatever the particular subject involved, there is to be one central theme, and that theme is "Christ

and Him crucified as the foundation of the gospel."-*Gospel Workers*, p. 158. "Uplift Jesus as the center of all hope."-*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 62. "Christ is the center of all true doctrine."-*Counsels to Teachers*, p.453.

The lay Bible instructor of the present day has access to a wide field of prepared Bible studies, covering every point of the message and connecting truths. These Bible readings have been developed through years of study and research by workers of experience, and have fully demonstrated their effectiveness in making truth plain; and it is recognized that, as a general rule, it is better for the inexperienced worker to follow these carefully arranged studies than to attempt to work out his own.

The most extensive standard collection of Bible studies is found in the book entitled *Bible Readings for the Home*. This work contains over two hundred Bible studies, answering nearly four thousand questions. Here the beginning Bible instructor will find a true guide and pattern for preparing an effective Bible reading.

Other sources of prepared Bible studies may be listed as follows:

Brief Bible Readings for Busy People is a series of twenty-eight Bible studies which will be found on pages 140-196 of this volume. For the convenience of the lay Bible teacher, these studies are printed in loose-leaf form and enclosed in a packet envelope. Each sheet contains a complete study and is of convenient size to be slipped into the Bible to serve as an inconspicuous guide to the teacher in turning from text to text. For brevity, conciseness, and adaptability to the

layman's need, nothing better IS available for beginners.

Studies in Bible Doctrines, for students in the Bible Service Training School, has been prepared by Miss Mary Walsh, an experienced conference Bible instructor who has devoted much of her time in training church members to become successful Bible teachers. These studies are more advanced and cover a wider range of subjects. They may also be obtained in sets, printed on loose-leaf sheets and enclosed in a suitable envelope container.

Home Bible Course presents 28 lessons on Bible topics, following the loose-leaf style, but arranged so that the question is followed by the printed text which gives the answer.

Twentieth Century Bible Course is a set of 30 lessons on Bible doctrines, printed in loose-leaf form, similar to the Home Bible Course but arranged in different order.

Mention should also be made of *Helps to Bible Study*, by J. L. Shuler; *Bible Handbook*, by S. N. Haskell; Family Bible Teacher; periodicals, as *Signs of the Times* and *Present Truth*, and the publications widely scattered by the Voice of Prophecy. All these may be obtained through the regular channels.

Notwithstanding the abundant helps available, the preparing of a Bible study means more than to copy off the questions and texts from some printed book or paper. However attractive the model, however well balanced the study, however perfect the arrangement. the beginner must make the study his own. He must go forth in his own armor to meet the Goliaths which challenge God's truth, and not attempt to wear the armor of giants in Bible teaching.

It is well to study the outline and examine the pillars on which the structure of the approved Bible study has been built. We may go round about the walls and mark well the bulwarks; we may trace the chain of thought guiding the one who formulated the study and get a mental picture of the complete setting; but we must have an experimental knowledge of how to build the temple of truth on that particular subject, at least until the initial stage of our work is passed. We may use the very same texts and follow the same line of thought, but we must do it in our own way.

From the laboratory of personal experimentation the beginner must bring forth his own product in Bible study, not that these products are to be used in place of the models studied, but to develop experience and background. Choose your subject; collect your texts; provide the central theme and the beginning and ending points; put all in the test tube and see what develops. On the first few attempts you may find the product coming forth from the test tube very lopsided, incomplete, and far afield. But try again, profiting by the apparent weak points and the constructive criticism of teacher and class members. Nothing will be of greater practical help than the work in the laboratory of experimentation before going forth to carry the truth to others. Avoid falling into parrot methods and becoming simply mechanical imitators. Be clothed in your own armor. Even though by comparison with the knowledge possessed by others your equipment may appear exceedingly meager, yet, if you go forth in the name of the Lord and use what you have in hand, as David used the pebble from the brook in his sling, victory is sure.

"God will do the work if we will furnish Him the instruments."-*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 107. He is looking for "instruments" which have been sharpened and improved by every opportunity to gain and apply knowledge. To serve our church members to this end, the Bible Service Training Course is available to all.

Background of Knowledge

It is not expected that the Seventh-day Adventist professional or businessman or businesswoman, or the housewife and mother in the home, who responds to the call to go forth with the Word of God and open up its truths to others as opportunities occur in the daily routine of life, will be required to make the thorough preparation necessary for the conference employed Bible instructor who devotes her entire time to assisting the evangelist and keeps in hand a full list of appointments for Bible studies. Nevertheless, the lay Bible instructor should have a practical background of knowledge concerning-

1. The history of the denomination and the dates of outstanding events connected with the rise and progress of the advent movement.
2. The fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists.
3. The testing time awaiting every church member.
4. The distinguishing doctrines or beliefs held by the popular churches and the religious isms of the times.

Herein lies a field of almost unlimited research for the one who desires to make an exhaustive study, but for the convenience of the busy layman who, like Carey, must "cobble shoes to pay expenses" while teaching gospel truth, we include in this textbook a concise summary of history, data, and facts.

I-Denominational History

Through the courtesy of the leaders of the General Conference Missionary Volunteer Department we are permitted to glean from the book entitled *The Great Second Advent Movement* information and facts covering the high points of our denominational history. The material furnished appears in the Appendix, on pages 197 -222, and covers three sections:

- 1.The Basis of Our Denominational History.
- 2.The Spirit of Prophecy.
- 3.Our Mission Advance.

While in this connection brevity is essential, it is hoped that the material furnished will create a desire in the heart of the reader to study more thoroughly the wonderful providences and leadings of God which have been brought to us through the inspiring volumes dealing with the history of the great advent movement. To this end we would further suggest a study of *The Midnight Cry*) by F. D. Nichol, published in 1945 by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. (See also pages 223-239 of the Appendix herewith.)

II-Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists

No person can become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church without knowledge and acceptance of the fundamental beliefs which form the platform on which the church is established. It is well, however, to review these fundamental beliefs from time to time, in order to keep the vision clear and the pathway unobstructed. Especially important is the review by the layman who goes forth as a representative of the church, to make plain the steppingstones of truth which lead to the kingdom of God, for he will be confronted by

questions galore, and by misunderstandings and false ideas of Seventh-day Adventists and their work. We must know our ground and be able to state facts which cannot be disputed.

The statement of "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists" as set forth by the General Conference and printed in the denominational *Yearbook*, is presented on pages 239-243 of the Appendix. The "how" of making these "fundamental beliefs" plain to others will be dealt with in another part of this textbook.

In connection with the points for review as set forth, it would be of great advantage to the student to read any or all of the following books: *Seventh-day Adventists: Their Work and Teachings*, by Carlyle B. Haynes; *Why I Am a Seventh-day Adventist*, by Francis D. Nichol; *Belief and Work of Seventh-day Adventists*, by Alonzo L. Baker.

III-The Testing Time Awaiting Every Church Member

Lest any conclude that it will be possible to glide through the perils of the last days depending on the experience of others and not upon their own thorough background and solid foundation, it is well to refresh the memory by review of the warnings and admonitions which have been given. We read:

"The members of the church will *individually be tested and proved*. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone. The experience which would have helped them in this emergency they have neglected to obtain, and their souls are burdened with remorse for wasted opportunities and neglected privileges."-Testimonies vol, 5, p. 463.

As a member of the church, are you ready to be "tested and proved" as to your understanding of truth and the reasons why you are a Seventh-day Adventist? "Have you that intensity of zeal, that piety and devotion, which will enable you to stand when opposition shall be brought against you?"-*Ibid.*, p. 717.

"If God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when we shall be brought before councils, and *every position of truth* which we' hold will be severely criticized. The time that we are now allowing to go to waste should be devoted to the charge God has given us, of preparing for the approaching crisis."Mrs. E. G. White in *Review and Herald*, Dec. 11, 1888.

Everyone who professes to love and obey the truth which binds Seventh-day Adventists together, must be able to give the trumpet a certain sound. This is far from a weak, feeble, halfhearted exposition of truth. We must be able to give a clear-cut message, without compromise, and yet speak "the truth in love."

Elder F. M. Wilcox, for many years editor of our general church paper, *The Review and Herald*, sets the true standard toward which laymen as well as leaders must ever seek to attain. From one of his editorials we quote as follows:

"Every influence is being brought to bear by Satan to lead Seventh-day Adventists to compromise their position upon the message for this day and generation. As never before we need to emphasize the great fundamental truths which have brought us into being. These truths which make us Seventh-day Adventists, if cherished, will keep us Seventh-day Adventists. We may sympathize with other churches and organizations in their special objectives. We may unite with others in the promotion of the cause of temperance and other moral reforms, but let us never forget for one moment that God has called us to do a distinctive work. He has called us to give to the world His message for this day and generation. And the inspired declaration regarding Israel of old, 'The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations: is applicable to Israel today. Indeed,

this is the position to which God has called His church in every age. His call to the remnant church is to come out from the world and be separate. Only as we maintain this separation, only as we preserve our distinctive character, only as we give faithfully, fearlessly, and uncompromisingly the gospel message committed to us, can we expect the blessing of God to rest upon our labors."

IV -Distinguishing Beliefs of Popular Churches and Religious Isms

The "Background of Knowledge" should include a comprehensive survey of distinguishing beliefs of popular churches and religious isms. The layman who carries the Word of God from door to door and opens the casket of truth to the people will be met by many different doctrines held by people of all classes. Many of these people are honest in their conviction and are prepared to defend their religious teaching and belief. Tact and judgment are required to bring them to the place where they are willing to "prove all things" and "hold fast that which is good." In view of this, the lay Bible instructor should have an intelligent understanding of the common positions held by the different churches, in order that he may not be at a disadvantage or at a loss to understand the viewpoint of the individual.

It should ever be remembered that "to fail to prepare is to prepare to fail," and those who handle the Word of God should endeavor to be forewarned and forearmed, workmen who need not to be ashamed of their teaching on any subject, and able to rightly divide or apply the Word of truth for the correction of any error or false teaching.

It is not possible to attempt to cover every detail of the many phases of church doctrines, but a brief survey, as found on pages 244-251 of

the Appendix, will open the door to further and more intensive study as occasion may require. In public libraries will be found volumes entitled *Religious Bodies*, which may serve as a basis for more extensive study.

Nails in "a Sure Place" in Building a Bible Study

1. **Structure of Study.**- The three parts of a Bible study are:
 - a. Introduction.
 - b. Body.
 - c. Conclusion.

The *introduction* should be brief, serving to introduce the subject. Make the title clear and definite; search for a subtitle which will be explanatory. For example: The Millennium-A Thousand Years of Peace to Come.

The *body* contains the study proper. Here truth is presented link by link, each text leading to the next and interlocking the thought.

The *conclusion*, as stated by Alonzo J. Wearner, "contains the goal desired in any given study."

"One should purpose to leave a very well-defined and clear-cut impression of some definite idea upon the mind The conclusion should contain one or more of the following: (1) a summary of the study; (2) a definite statement of the conclusion reached; (3) an appeal to action and acceptance. It should be short, almost abrupt, not tapering off with a number of good landing places, but come to a stop easily."-*The Art of Personal Evangelism*, p. 38.

Another experienced worker suggests that the closing text furnish the climax to the study, so that the reader who has been following text by text will not want to stop at that point but be eager to go on and see what lies just around the next corner. The secret of success in

storytelling lies in stopping at the point of breathless interest and anticipation. The same principle should be observed in preparing a Bible reading.

The introduction is very important; the body of the study is the actual substance of divine truth; the conclusion will tend either to hold and intensify the interest, or to leave the reader in a state of bewilderment, confusion, and waning interest. Build the Bible study with strong fortifications on these three points.

2. Length.-Brevity is a prime essential. A limited number of texts, each definite and crystal clear on the point in question, is the secret of success in dealing with the mind in the realm of Bible instruction. In the early days of the Bible-reading plan from one hundred to one hundred and fifty texts were often employed in giving one Bible study. But experience soon revealed the error of this plan. From ten to twenty questions and answers are now considered sufficient to cover any subject. Where more time is required, the subject should be divided and presented under relevant titles, each complete in itself, so that the mind will not be confused by the presentation of many different angles and combinations of events at one time.

3. Limited Number of Texts.-Usually the beginner is so anxious to give the whole truth on a subject that he presents a long array of texts to prove his point. There is need of caution here. Usually one text will be sufficient to convey the answer needed, and although there may be a dozen equally as good, it is better to refer to only one clear text. There are times, however, when an added text or even two, will lend emphasis and may be used to advantage; but as a general rule one definite text is sufficient.

4. Relation of Texts to Subject.-Make sure that every text has direct bearing on the point to be stressed. Emphasize those points of the text you need, and do not branch out into bypaths of unrelated ideas, good as they may seem. Avoid using texts which bring in irrelevant subjects, as these often detract the mind and lead to questions which are confusing. Hold to the subject in hand. Maintain a clear continuity of thought. Sometimes even an experienced Bible instructor will fail to recognize this essential point. A person may present a wonderful array of texts, possess free-flowing language, and yet fail to maintain continuity of thought in the minds of his hearers, leaving them in a state of confusion because of the many loose threads of ideas which are left dangling in uncertainty instead of being corralled into a safe haven of concluding thought. It is very important to arrange all texts in such a way as to make them fit link by link, and thus lead to a definite and clear conclusion.

5. Formulation of Questions.-Knowing what you want the text to indicate, prepare your question in such a way that the reader will recognize the clear answer to your question as he reads the text. The art of effective questioning is worthy of consideration. Make the question so clear and simple that the reader will be curious to know the answer; then direct him to the text. The question-and-answer method of teaching has the advantage in that it enables the instructor to formulate questions in such a way as to cause the texts to give a very decided and clear answer. This is "opening" the Word of God, allowing the Bible to explain itself without human comment or interpretation. People who have never found a satisfactory manner of

studying the Bible and think it impossible or hard to be understood, are amazed to find that the Bible is its own interpreter and that it talks in such plain language that even a child can comprehend. This is why the Bible-reading method has the advantage over the pulpit discourse, as the preacher in the desk must make his statements and prove them by reading his selections from Scripture. When a person reads the answer himself, the truth comes home with new force.

6. Reserve Fund of Knowledge.-Be full of your subject, make thorough preparation, but do not attempt to tell all that you know on a subject at one time. It is said that a person ought to know ten times as much as he uses on any subject. Present your subject in a concise, definite, clear manner, but keep a large reserve fund of knowledge ready to draw upon whenever an emergency arises. Keen minds will penetrate the depths of the knowledge of the teacher of truth, sometimes unconsciously, but often with the intent to confuse and humiliate. While we should never seek to display intellectual attainment, or flourish an array of facts which might impress the uninformed, yet we should continuously study and be ready to give an intelligent answer.

Specific Suggestions on Preparing a Bible Study

The following practical suggestions for the help of lay workers in seeking how to prepare a Bible study are given by an experienced conference worker:

Decide Upon Your Subject.-First, decide definitely what you are to talk about. Haziness as to the theme will mean haziness all through the study. The selection of your subject may be determined by three

things: (a) the needs of the hearers, (b) respect to the proper sequence of thought, (c) the occasion. You should endeavor to know the spiritual needs of your hearers and the extent of their knowledge of the Bible. Then you should pray earnestly for the direction of God's Spirit as to how to supply the need. Sequence of thought should be considered in giving a series of studies, that there may be the proper arrangement of topics and correct order of development.

Gather Suitable Texts.-Having decided upon the subject, your next procedure is that of the gathering of texts. First, jot down any texts which may come to your mind as bearing on the subject. Thoughts may occur at all sorts of times and occasions, so it is well to jot them down when they occur; otherwise they may be lost. When you have exhausted your own resources you may add to your list by using the concordance, looking up words which are likely to be contained in Scripture and which are connected with the theme. It may be advisable to consult a book on Bible doctrines to see whether any important texts have been omitted. In securing your material, make no attempt to classify the texts, but write a brief thought beside each, suggestive of the leading thought or of the purpose for which the text could be used.

Build Your Framework.-Now that the material is collected, you are ready to build. The first part of the study to be constructed will be the framework, and the material before us will suggest the kind of framework to erect. This framework will consist of suitable heads to mark the divisions of the study. These divisions should give the main points to be developed in the study, and should be stated concisely and clearly. As to the number of heads in a study, there is no definite rule,

except the fewer the better. Three or four is a good number. Endeavor to classify the heads in such a way as to show a definite relationship to one another and to the theme. For instance, in a study on the second advent you could make an outline like this:

Theme: The Second Coming of Christ.

Divisions: (1) The Promise of Christ's Return,
(2) The Manner of Christ's Return,
(3) The Time of Christ's Return,
(4) The Purpose of Christ's Return.

After erecting the framework of your study, begin the work of building the needed texts into their proper places. It is not necessary to use all the texts which have been gathered. This would usually make the study too long. Therefore, use only those texts which are best suited to the theme. Always aim at the selection of simple texts which state specifically just what you wish to present. It would be better to leave out of the study any text which requires a lengthy explanation. A common mistake, especially among beginners, is to put too much into one study. Nothing is gained by overfeeding with even the best of food, and it is better to divide the subject into two, rather than to give more on one occasion than the mind is able to receive. Aim at teaching three or four points thoroughly in each study, and your work will count for far more than if you attempted to say all there is to be said about a subject.

One text, as a rule, is quite sufficient to prove a point. It only amounts to weakness to keep hammering away at a point once it has been proved. Nothing is gained by continuing to hit the nail on the head when once it has been driven home.

Seven Rules Suggested

1. Use the most convincing text first. A first impression is always the strongest, and the most likely to become permanent. Prove your point at the start, and the battle is more than half won. A strong statement in beginning a study carries conviction to the minds of your hearers as to your ability to prove what you assert. It makes you master of the situation.

2. Use no expression or text hard to comprehend. Truth shines, and its rays, shining into the heart darkened by sin, convert. But in spiritual things the natural heart is slow of comprehension; so in presenting truth use simple forms of speech, and select texts that, on their face, clearly state just what you claim. At least, avoid more obscure texts until your listeners have become wise in spiritual research and able to digest the strong meat of the Word.

3. Use as few questions as possible. Six or seven questions are usually sufficient. As a general rule it is advisable to restrict the study to a half-hour period.

4. In answering your own questions, use few words. The questions here meant are, of course, those found in the reading, which are to be answered by texts from the Bible. Be brief in all that you present to your hearers. The power is in the Word of God. Use just enough words to make the principles of truth shine out clearly; then let the convicting power of the Spirit do the rest.

5. To end the reading, use a text that clinches the points made in the study. Leave nothing for the people to guess at, and about which it is possible to come to wrong conclusions. Finish the subject before you leave it, so that the hearers may be able to trace it out for

themselves. Prove fully what you set out to prove at the beginning. Awaken interest in the next reading by announcing the subject.

6. Let every question be so stated that the chosen text will answer it. Ask no question that requires a reply in your own words. Always let the Bible answer the question; otherwise the people will begin to say, "That's what you say, not' what the Bible teaches." Your statement will not carry conviction; that power is in the Word.

7. Use, preferably, but one text to answer a question. Avoid all complications. The aim should be to help the listener to store up the statements of truth presented. A superfluity of evidence tends to mental confusion. Usually one text is sufficient to answer a question.

Helps in Preparing a Bible Study

The "tools" required by the lay workman for God are not numerous, but each is essential to success:

1. A reference Bible. This should have clear type, be substantially bound, and be of medium size. This is the chief tool of the Bible instructor and should be chosen for lifetime use. Markings and notations which are added from time to time make the book preferable to all others, as one becomes familiar with its pages and the location of special texts for ready reference.

2. A concordance. There are several to be commended: Cruden's or Walker's will serve to good purpose.

3. Books, loose-leaf doctrinal studies, and periodicals.

- a. *Bible Readings for the Home.*
- b. *Bible Handbook*, by S. N. Haskell.
- c. *Helps to Bible Study*, by J. L. Shuler.
- d. *Fundamentals of Bible Doctrine*, by A. J. Wearner.
- e. *Questions Answered*, by M. C. Wilcox.
- f. *Answers to Objections*, by F. D. Nichol.
- g. *Source Book for Bible Students.*
- h. *Studies in Bible Doctrines*, by Mary Walsh. /
- i. Home Bible Course.
- j. Twentieth Century Bible Course.
- k. Family Bible Teacher.
- l. "The Art of Giving Bible Readings," H. M. Series No. 17
- m. "Layman's Bible Training Course," H. M. Series No. 24.
- n. Complete set of Spirit of prophecy volumes.
- o. Current files of denominational periodicals; *Signs of the Times*, *OUT Times*, *Present Truth*, etc.

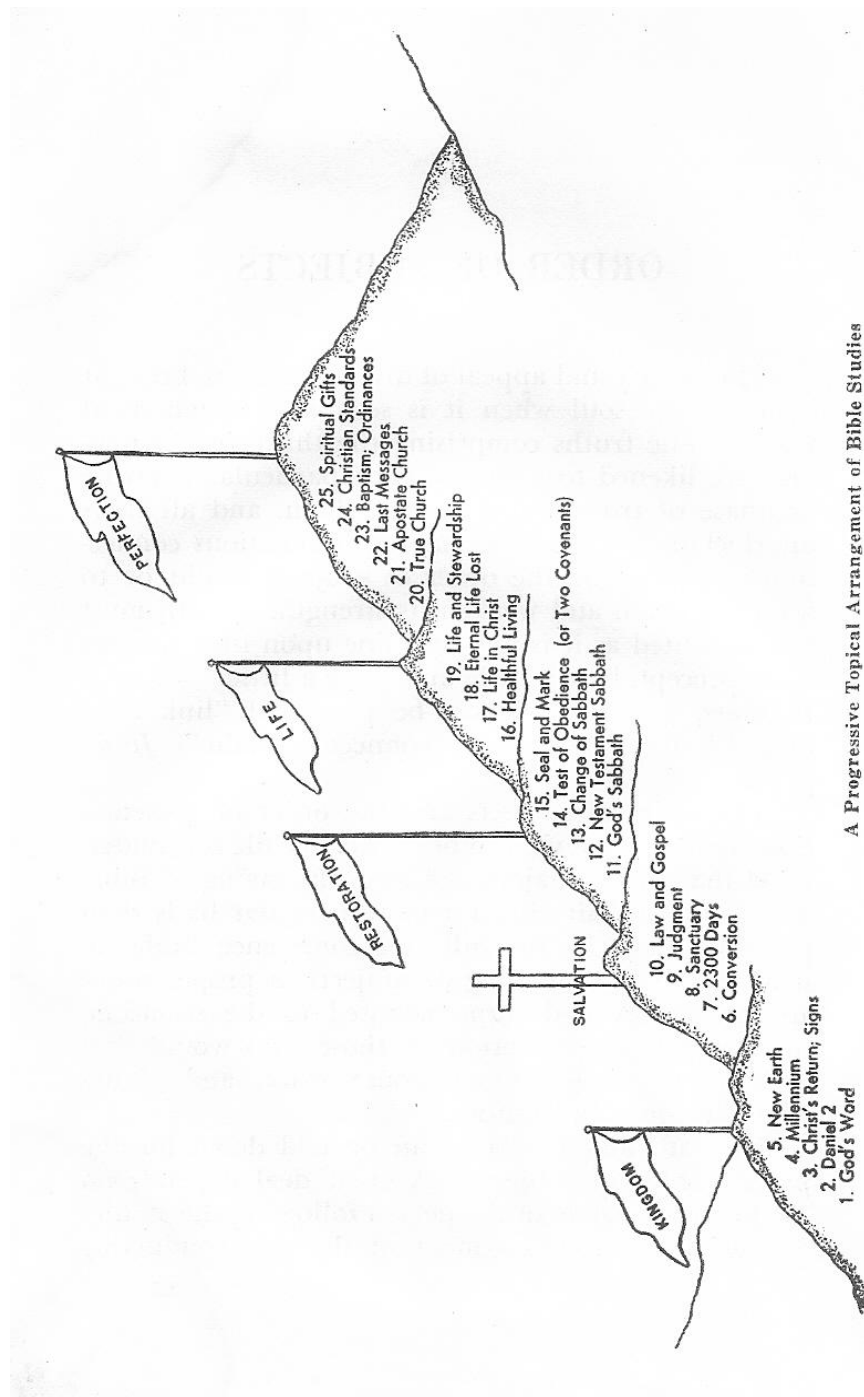
4. Clipping file. An accordion file from the dime store, or something more elaborate, will serve to good purpose as a receptacle for clippings which the lay Bible instructor will be constantly gleaning in his reading and study. These clippings should be filed under proper headings convenient for ready reference. Historical data, illustrations of points of truth, current events, comments by noted writers or preachers, etc., will be found of great value in the work of making truth plain. In fact, there is no limit to such a collection of miscellaneous material.

ORDER OF SUBJECTS

The beauty and appeal of divine truth are brought home to the soul when it is seen as a symmetrical whole. The truths comprising the third angel's message are likened to a chain, each particular doctrine or phase of truth a link in the chain, and all links interlocking. To fail in making harmonious connection in presenting the order of subjects would be to sever the chain and weaken its strength. Truth must "be presented as it is in Jesus, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little."-*Gospel Workers* p. 326. It must be presented "link after link, till it forms a clear, connected chain."-*Ibid.*, p.322.

The series of subjects and the order of presentation are matters of vital importance. While it is understood that in the majority of cases the giving of Bible studies by the laity is on a more irregular basis than the work done by the full-time conference Bible instructor, yet the blending of subjects in proper order and in abbreviated form, adapted to the situation, requires due consideration by those who would "act their part, doing house-to-house work, and giving Bible readings in families."

No hard and fast rule can be laid down for the proper order of subjects. A great deal depends on the mental attitude of the person following the studies as well as on the judgment of the one conducting



A Progressive Topical Arrangement of Bible Studies

the studies. In this matter the Holy Spirit should be allowed to guide in a very definite way. However, there are logical arrangements of subjects which have been prepared by experienced Bible teachers, and these may well serve as a guide for study and adaptation.

The diagram on page 56 illustrates a progressive topical arrangement of Bible studies. The basis of this progressive arrangement is found in Hebrews 6: 1: "Leaving the principles of the doctrine . . . , let us go on unto perfection." Beginning with a study on "God's Word," the subjects advance step by step to the twenty-fifth study on "Spiritual Gifts," carrying the reader over the heights from the Kingdom to Salvation; then to Restoration, Life, and Perfection.

Another series, outlined and used with great success by a public evangelist in training lay members, is as follows:

1. What Is Coming? (Daniel 2)
2. The Revelation of God to Men (Inspiration of the Bible)
3. How to Understand the Bible
4. History's Coming Climax (Second Advent)
5. Will Christ Come in Our Day?
6. How Men Are Saved
7. The Millennium
8. What and Where Is Heaven?
9. What and Where Is Hell?
10. The Three Steps to Heaven
11. Is There Any Sure Rule of Right? (Perpetuity of the Law)
12. The Two Laws
13. The Sign of God in Our Modern World (Sabbath)
14. The Search for the Missing Text (Sabbath)
15. Christ's Test for Today (Sabbath)
16. Where Are the Dead?
17. How Much Do We Owe God? (Tithe)

18. The Master Key of Last-Day Prophecy (Seventy Weeks)
19. What Is Jesus Doing Now? (Cleansing of the Sanctuary)
20. How Near Are We to Judgment Day? (Investigative Judgment)
21. Seal of God and Mark of the Beast
22. Is God Particular? (Obedience to Law and Sabbath)
23. Christ's Unfailing Reminder (Sabbath)
24. How to Have a Healthy Body
25. The Fold of the Good Shepherd (True Church)
26. The Spirit of Prophecy
27. Christian Standards
28. The Gateway to a New Life (Baptism)

Where it is not deemed wise to continue the studies over such a long period of time as would be required in the above outline, a "streamlined" course of eighteen studies is recommended, composed of studies as listed, arranged in the following order: 1,3,8, 10,5,7, 12, 13, 15, 17,9,22,24, 16,25,26,27,28.

A conference Bible instructor of wide experience in public work, who has been very successful in conducting Bible training classes in churches for the lay members, uses a somewhat different arrangement of subjects as set forth herewith:

1. The Second Coming of Christ
2. The Millennium
3. Signs of Christ's Coming
4. The State of the Dead
5. The Sanctuary
6. 2300-Day Prophecy
7. Investigative Judgment
8. The Two Laws
9. Christ in the Sabbath
10. First-Day Texts in New Testament
11. Daniel 7 and Change of Sabbath
12. Paganism, Papacy, and United States
13. Mark of the Beast
14. Seven Last Plagues
15. Coming of Elijah

16. Baptism
17. Christian Ordinances
18. Tithing
19. Standards of Church Fellowship
20. Spirit of Prophecy
21. Two Covenants
22. Last Call to Supper

A list of "special subjects" to be brought in during the studies as seems best, is given as follows: (1) What a Person Must Do to Be Saved, (2) Is God Particular? (3) Faith, (4) Prayer, (5) Light, (6) Everlasting Covenant, (7) Covenant of Peace, (8) Foxes in the Desert.

The Bible instructor suggesting the order of subjects as indicated above gives the reasons for the arrangement, as follows:

"The presentation of our doctrines must be in logical and orderly sequence. The simple and easy to understand must be given before the more complex. As far as possible a subject for a Bible study should not touch extraneous points which have not already been covered. Certain fundamental doctrines must be thoroughly understood before others can be discussed intelligently. To illustrate: What subject should precede the giving of the millennium? The answer would naturally be, the second coming of Christ. The events which are to take place before Satan is bound would naturally be given first; otherwise the mind of the reader would be confused and could not comprehend what it was all about. Again, in giving the mark of the beast, one would have to be conversant with what the beast is and also its image in order to comprehend fully the subject of the enforcement of the mark.

"A schoolteacher would never think of giving her pupils a lesson in algebra without first acquainting them with the simple rules of

mathematics, and thus it is in giving the great doctrinal points. Suppose the subject of the seven last plagues should be introduced before the study of the sanctuary, twenty-three hundred days, and the investigative judgment. How could the plagues be dealt with inasmuch as they are poured out after the close of probation or the end of the judgment? Furthermore, the first vial falls upon "men which have the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image." Rev. 16:2. (See also, Rev. 14:9, 10.) How could this subject be treated in the way that God designs without first studying Revelation 13, which defines both the beast and his image? And in addition to this, the mark should be rightly understood. The object of giving the subject of the unmingled wrath of God is for the purpose of warning the people of the divine retribution which is to be the portion of those who refuse God's mark which is the keeping of the true seventh day Sabbath, and the dire consequence which follows the observance of the mark of the beast--Sunday enforced by law. Thus, one can see what is involved by not following the proper sequence of subjects. If the subjects are not handled in their logical order, the beauty and symmetry of the message of truth will be marred, and its effect upon the human heart will be less potent."

The complete series especially recommended for the beginning lay worker is as follows:

1. The Word of God
2. The Prophecy of Daniel 2
3. The Second Coming of Christ
4. Signs of Christ's Coming
5. The Millennium
6. The Destiny of the Wicked

7. The Home of the Saved
8. The Prophecy of Daniel 7
9. Christ Our High Priest
10. The Investigative Judgment
11. The Law and the Gospel
12. The Sabbath
13. The Sabbath of the New Testament
14. Origin of Sunday Observance
15. Origin of Evil Angels
16. Good Angels: Their Work
17. Nature of Man and State of the Dead
18. Spiritualism
19. Controversy Between Christ and Satan
20. Seal of God and Mark of the Beast
21. The Christian's Duty
22. Jesus Saves the Lost
23. Faith
24. Ordinances of the Church
25. Precious Promises
26. The Body Temple
27. Acceptable Prayer
28. Work of the Holy Spirit

Sometimes it is well to leave with the reader the list of texts which have been used in the lesson, which will serve as an aid in review. To meet this need, these twenty-eight studies, with an additional slip furnishing a Miniature Prophetic Chart and an Index to the subjects, may be obtained in loose-leaf sets, known as Brief Bible Readings for Busy People.

Where circumstances do not permit of continuous study covering twenty-eight subjects consecutively, the instructor should be prepared to conduct an abbreviated series, requiring twelve studies, or possibly only eight, and if possible arrange to give two studies a week, which will shorten the time very decidedly and, in these rushing days, may be accepted where a prolonged series would be objectionable. These are days of "rapid" movements, and often subjects can be combined

to good advantage. Sometimes more will be accomplished by a short, intensive series of studies than by a long-drawn-out course covering twenty or more weeks. It is not to be expected that these shorter courses of Bible study can be as thorough in teaching the message of truth as courses in which more time is allowed, but they may lay a foundation for permanent interest which will lead to attendance at evangelistic meetings or personal study through literature by enrollment in the Bible Correspondence Course. The Bible instructor must be prepared to adapt his plans to meet the situation.

The Abbreviated Series No. I, selected from the twenty-eight studies of Brief Bible Readings, is as follows:

1. The Prophecy of Daniel 2
2. Signs of Christ's Coming
3. Christ Our High Priest
4. The Investigative Judgment
5. The Nature of Man and the State of the Dead
6. The Law and the Gospel
7. The Sabbath
8. Origin of Sunday Observance
9. The Seal of God and Mark of the Beast
10. Jesus Saves the Lost
11. Precious Promises
12. The Home of the Saved

Abbreviated Series No.2:

1. Second Coming of Christ
2. The Millennium
3. Nature of Man and State of the Dead
4. The Law and the Gospel
5. The Investigative Judgment
6. The Sabbath
7. Seal of God and Mark of the Beast
8. Work of the Holy Spirit

FINDING OPENINGS AND SECURING APPOINTMENTS

Far too often the point of failure in soul-winning Bible instruction by the laity lies at the juncture between consecrated preparation and actually doing the work. The worker asks himself, "Where shall I begin? How can I secure openings for giving Bible studies?"

In the Christian warfare we deal with a crafty foe. He does not care how sincere the purpose, how earnest the study and preparation, if only he can block the way into the field of actual conquest. By such a simple means he can defeat the divine plan for the finishing of God's work in all the world through the united effort of ministry and laity in opening the Word of God to the multitudes of earth's inhabitants who are searching for light. Let all be on guard against Satan's attempts to intimidate and discourage, and stand firm and steady, ready to obey as the Holy Spirit may lead.

The gospel commission (Acts 1:8) should be read carefully by everyone who enters the service of God. Here we find that the place of beginning is Jerusalem. In other words, begin in the city, the town, the neighborhood where we are dwelling. Yes, begin in our own homes. In the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10) there is a principle revealed which should be our guide in soul winning. The woman in the parable took the following steps to find her precious treasure:

First, she lighted a candle, which represents the Word of God (Ps. 119:105), and as the light of God's Word illuminated the house there was revealed the rubbish and filth of sin. After the filth of transgression had been removed, then began the diligent search for the lost piece of silver. The parable distinctly declares that the lost coin was recovered. Her search was not in vain. A feeling of joy fills the heart of the searcher, and immediately she shares the good news with her friends and neighbors.

Just so, we are to take God's Word and search diligently for lost souls, first removing all the debris of sin which the light of the Word reveals in our own heart, and then our search will be rewarded and the jewel found, whether it be in our own family circle or the next-door neighbor or someone far down the street.

The starting point is definitely outlined; "Take up the work anywhere and everywhere. Do that which is the nearest you, right at your own doors, however humble and uncommended it may seem Go to your neighbors one by one, and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. Sympathize with them, pray for them, watch for opportunities to do them good, and as you can, gather a few together and open the Word of God to their darkened minds Do not neglect speaking to your neighbors, and doing them all the kindness in your power, that you may 'by all means save some.' " -*Gospel Workers* (1892 ed.), pp. 336, 337.

The avenues of contact for personal Bible instructing are numerous, more numerous today than ever before. We are told:

"There are many who are reading the Scriptures who cannot understand their true import. All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in."-*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109.

And at the same time God sends forth His messengers by "hundreds and thousands" to visit families and open before them the Word of God. The matter of primary importance is for the worker to be in a frame of mind that will allow the Spirit of God to direct him to the people who are seeking light.

A very definite example of how the Holy Spirit guides in the matter of finding openings for Bible studies is found in the record of Philip in the early days of the Christian church, as recorded in Acts 8: 26-35.

"In the experience of Philip and the Ethiopian is presented the work to which the Lord calls His people. The Ethiopian represents a large class who need missionaries like Philip, missionaries who will hear the voice of God, and go where He sends them. There are those in the world who are reading the Scriptures, but who cannot understand their import. The men and women who have a knowledge of God are needed to explain the Word to these souls."-*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 58, 59.

Today, as truly as in the time of Philip, the Spirit of the Lord will send those whose lives are under divine direction, to the honest inquirers after truth, and appointments made under the direction of the Spirit of God will be fruitful in results.

Various Channels of Contact

1. Literature.-Placing literature in the hands of the people will lead to inquiry and appointments for Bible studies on the subjects introduced in the literature. This is one of the oldest and most successful methods

of securing a list of appointments for regular Bible studies. Take a block, or a larger section of territory, and call at every door, lending literature adapted to awakening interest, such as tracts, periodicals, small books, and follow along each week with an exchange of literature, arranged so as to present the message of truth in consecutive order. In this way acquaintances are formed and conversations developed which lead to wonderful results. The various literature methods, such as Free Lending Library, Home Bible Study League, Bible Correspondence Course, weekly distribution of *Signs of the Times*, *Present Truth*, *Our Times*, or *Life and Health*, will be fully explained by the instructor of the Bible Training class, or through Home Missionary Series Leaflets. It is important that literature work be carried on in connection with the classwork, as the laboratory or field part of the instruction.

A conference home missionary secretary of successful experience in conducting Bible Training classes offers the following suggestions:

"Experience has taught that in the vast majority of cases the homes that open their doors to the Bible instructor are the homes in which a careful, systematic literature program has been followed. This leads to another tremendously important point. Thousands of our church members have been distributing literature for many years without any apparent fruit of their labors. One important reason for this is that the readers are not being brought to a decision. Under ordinary circumstances decisions are made either in a public evangelistic meeting or in a personal way through personal Bible study. Far too many people, whose interest has been aroused through literature, have been left 'on the verge of the kingdom: when they might have been gathered in if the literature had been followed by an invitation to follow a systematic course of Bible study. Very few people understand the program of systematic Bible study sufficiently well to ask for it. Consequently, the plan must be suggested to them. A brief canvass to secure

openings for Bible studies in connection with the literature work has brought good results, and may be stated thus:

"Good morning, Mrs. Smith! [Smile pleasantly.] For several weeks you have been receiving copies of *Signs of the Times* (or whatever literature is used), and no doubt you have enjoyed reading them. Perhaps some of the articles have been perplexing, and you would like to be more fully informed regarding what the Bible teaches concerning the stirring events which are taking place in the world today. Quite often the friends who have been reading the literature are glad to know of our house- to-house Bible-study plan, which provides for a thirty- or forty-live-minute personal Bible study once a week right in your own home. There is no charge, and I am sure you would find the study worth while. When my attention was first called to these important events, a helpful friend and teacher interested me in a deeper study of the Scriptures. I found this most profitable. Soon the desire to help others understand these truths led me to study God's Word with them, just as I am now suggesting to you, Mrs. Smith. I would be very happy to come whatever day or time suits you best. Would Tuesday afternoon be convenient? or, which day do you prefer? Very well, I shall plan to be here next Tuesday afternoon at half past two [or whatever day and hour is decided]. If you wish to invite a friend to study with us, that will be very agreeable and pleasant. I am sure we shall have an interesting and profitable time. Thank you very much. Good-by until I see you next Tuesday!"

2. Radio Follow-up.- The radio programs sent out over the air are reaching thousands of people in all parts of the world. The message of the third angel is indeed given wings these days, and the radio has become one of the greatest soul-saving agencies of modern times. Interested listeners are in every city, town, village, and rural territory. It is true that the way is open whereby these interested people may communicate with the Voice of Prophecy and other stations, and receive literature and Bible correspondence lessons; yet nothing can take the place of the personal visit and instruction where proper

contacts are made. If we follow up the names and addresses in every community where radio reaches, encouraging faithful listening of the radio audience, and offering to meet with them for personal Bible study, many doors into homes will be open and the work of the radio evangelist strengthened and made more effective.

3. Bible Correspondence School.- The same principle applies for personal follow-up of interested persons within the conference radius. In many cases the printed Bible lessons are appreciated and helpful; yet often questions arise which the student would be glad to talk over with a personal representative of Bible truth. Lay Bible instructors will find a great field of opportunity here, not always an appointment for a regular series of Bible studies, but friendly contact and helpful counsel and advice which will tend to develop interest and lead to decision.

4. Evangelistic Efforts.-While it is expected that the conference Bible instructors will assist the evangelist in all public efforts, the lay members of the church can render great service by distributing literature and announcements and calling on interested persons as directed by the evangelist. The lay Bible instructor should always be very careful never to run ahead of the evangelist in attempting to explain any subject, but to co-operate fully under the guidance of the conference workers. In this combination the laity are able to render great help while at the same time learning much, both in theory and in practice, which will bring them greater efficiency as lay Bible instructors.

5. Ingathering Contacts.-Each year thousands of homes. are visited by Ingathering solicitors in behalf of missions. This is the most

sweeping, intensive missionary effort of the church and includes contact with rich and poor, high and low, and people of many nationalities. Primarily this campaign is to gather in funds for the cause of foreign missions, but it also means watching for souls and following up interests. One of these follow-up methods is conducting Bible studies with those who manifest a desire to know more about Bible truth and whose names and addresses are recorded by the solicitors. Hundreds of such names are brought in annually, and it has been repeatedly proved that Ingathering affords very large opportunity for securing appointments.

6. Conversational Contacts.-These are days when opportunities are legion to speak a few words to stranger or friend while riding on the train, bus, streetcar, or while waiting for traffic connections, which may lead to further conversation on religious topics and often to appointments for Bible studies. The agent who calls at the front door, or the deliveryman, may be among those who are "reading the Scriptures" but "cannot understand their true import" and are longing for light. If the Holy Spirit should whisper, "Go thou and speak to this man, asking, Do you understand what you read in the Scriptures, or do you perceive what is the meaning of the daily events of these sad days?" do not hesitate to obey. You will often receive the answer, "How can I understand except someone teach me?" and right there is the opportunity to make the appointment.

7. Neighborly Friendliness.-Friendliness is cheap; it is effective. Just be a friend in neighborhood and community. Just such simple friendliness as sharing the products of the vegetable or flower garden with those who have none, will open doors. Sympathetic interest

and help in time of sickness or bereavement will unlock many doors. Besides expressing your sympathy or offering what service you may to near-by neighbors or friends, watch the obituary notices in the daily papers, and with appropriate tact and good judgment mail copies of A Friend in Need series leaflets, such as, "A Message of Hope for Those Who Mourn" or "Words of Comfort to a Mother."

These leaflets offer sympathetic helpfulness, which may lead to Bible studies. You may be chatting with your neighbor over the back fence, and in a very informal way turn the conversation in the right direction. Each member of the Bible Training class is required to give a certain number of Bible readings to someone who is not a Seventh-day Adventist, as a qualification for receiving the certificate. A very good plan is to go to a neighbor or friend and state that you are taking a special class which requires studying the Bible with someone in the neighborhood and ask the privilege of "practicing" on her. Usually the request is granted, and the experiment proves mutually interesting and helpful.

8. Colporteur Lists.-Millions of books are being placed in the homes of the people by colporteurs. Usually the colporteur must pass on to new territory after delivering the books, but there is very great need of calling on these people after due time has elapsed, with a view to establishing and developing the interest which may have been created. Openings for Bible studies will be found in this way. Every church should receive lists of customers for books in the vicinity, and urge the members of the Bible Training class to follow up and extend the interest.

9. Invite to Your Home.-Not all appointments for Bible studies center in the homes of strangers. We are instructed: "Invite your neighbors to your home, and read with them from the precious Bible and from books that explain its truths. Invite them to unite with you in song and prayer."-*Ministry of Healing*, P: 152. A Seventh-day Adventist family whose home was on a well-paved rural highway placed a neat board sign in front of the house on the edge of the highway where all passers-by could read, announcing Bible studies held in the home on certain days and hours, and extending a welcome to everybody. This novel sign attracted attention and led to group studies. The signs all along the road were for the accommodation of tourists, or something to sell; but here was a wayside Bethel invitation to "Come in and Study the Word of God With Us."

10. Cooking Classes.-Housewives and prospective housewives are always interested in the culinary art, and with the "unusual" foods and the many recipes with which Seventh-day Adventists are familiar, a community cooking class may often be continued as a Bible study class. Blend with the principles of health for the body spiritual food for the soul, and tactfully lead from the study of a balanced diet afforded in the vegetarian regimen into the mine of truth where gems of eternal value are to be found.

II. Social Contacts.-"Wherever you can gain access to the people by the fireside, improve your opportunity. Take your Bible, and open before them its great truths. Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than

by the most able discourse. The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses, is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls and churches."- *Gospel Workers*, p. 193.

"Ready Always to Give an Answer"

Bible studies may not always be by prearrangement. It may not always be possible to plan for an uninterrupted period of quiet, systematic Bible study. It may be necessary to give a reason for your belief in the truths of the third angel's message on a moment's notice, in the midst of the busy throng in shop or factory, or in legislative halls. Under such circumstances neither the complete nor the abbreviated series of studies can be of help. One must depend upon the Holy Spirit to bring to mind that which has already been stored away. The lay Bible instructor should therefore study continuously, and be able to give a convincing Bible answer, with meekness and fear. He will thus be well fortified to render "minuteman" service in Bible teaching, to take advantage of all channels for making definite appointments for Bible studies and also to witness for truth at any and all times.

STEPPING INTO THE OPENINGS

After one has secured an opening for Bible studies, the next step, which should be taken without delay, is to fill the appointment and conduct the Bible study. Usually the lay Bible instructor goes forth with fear and trembling to meet this new responsibility, and the memory of the occasion remains vivid through life. The experience of one young woman in filling her first appointment may serve as an example to many in taking the initial step in the heaven-born plan of giving- Bible readings. The experience is related as follows:

"No one could be more fearful or timid than J, when answering the call to go from house to house, opening the Bible to the people: Never shall I forget the sensations experienced in meeting my first appointment and, for the first time, facing a stranger over the open Bible and giving expression to the truths which I had been taught and had espoused.

"A large number of students from a near-by college were spending the summer vacation at the City Mission: where experienced instructors conducted classes in Bible doctrines, the distribution of literature, securing appointments for Bible studies, and the proper procedure, under varied circumstances, in giving Bible readings and leading the reader through the valley of decision:

"The broad vision of the place of this Bible work in connection with the third angels message was strikingly portrayed in all the instruction, and each student was enthusiastic over the possibilities and happy in the privilege of receiving such training. Although many years have passed since that time, never has the vision faded nor interest waned.

"The instruction combined theory and practice from the very start. Class members repeatedly passed through the ordeal of giving a Bible study before the entire class, subject to kindly, helpful criticism and words of commendation as appropriate, all of which was testing but beneficial. Certain hours of each day were devoted to work on the streets, distributing literature and making appointments for Bible studies.

"When about halfway through the course, students were sent out to fill appointments for Bible studies in homes. My assignment was in a suburb at some distance from the mission, reached by car and bus. The trip required some time, and to me, the longer the time before arriving at my destination, the better, so great seemed the undertaking. But at last the junction was announced, and the street and number of the house located. After walking up and down the block a few times and silently praying for divine help, I rang the doorbell, and a lady whose kindly face and unpretentious bearing inspired courage answered. Yes: she said, 'I am Mrs. Brown, and I have an appointment to meet a Bible teacher this afternoon. Are you the teacher?' Hardly-daring to assume such a dignified title, I replied that I had come to fill the appointment and was very happy to make her acquaintance.

"Soon we were seated at the library table, with Bibles and notebooks in hand. First, we bowed together in prayer-just a few sentences, uttered in broken words from a sincere heart, but the Holy Spirit bestowed the benediction of peace upon us, and from that moment there seemed to spring up an understanding between reader and teacher which melted the ice of formality, and we became more than friends-sisters in the great family of God, for the lady was a sincere and honest-hearted seeker after truth.

"Our subject for study was the usual initial topic-'The Word of God.' The outline was followed without interruption and break, and the texts of Scripture read one by one. Never did those very texts seem to mean so much as then; never did they shine with such brilliance. How my heart thrilled as I opened the Scriptures to this one-person audience, and how eagerly she grasped the connection and seemed to accept the Bible as the Word of God to her.

"All too quickly came the time of departure, but we separated as Christian friends, eagerly anticipating another period of study the coming week.

"That was the beginning of prolonged experience in Bible work, extending into various cities in different parts of the country. While there have been many occasions for fear and trembling, when I have met complicated and difficult situations, yet the memory of that early experience has sustained me, and in going forward I have always found the same sweet presence of the Holy Spirit to conquer difficulties and to impart courage and wisdom. I can truly say that it is a joyous work to open the Scriptures to others: and I rejoice to know that today so many lay members like myself are engaged in this work, after lacking advantage of the excellent opportunity afforded in the Bible Training class, which can now be conducted in every church.

"The call is to everyone who has a knowledge of the message of truth for this time. There must always be the first Bible study, and if you have not ventured forth in actual demonstration of the instruction received, do not wait another day. Once you have broken the ice of fear and procrastination, you will revel in the depths of joy in service as never known before."

Your Questions Answered

Naturally many questions arise in the mind of the lay Bible teacher as to how to meet certain conditions which often arise in conducting a Bible study with a group or individual in the home. It may therefore be helpful to consider inquiries which arise most frequently, gleaned from the experience of successful Bible instructors the answers to serve as a guide.

I. How much time should be allowed for giving a Bible study?

Exclusive of brief preliminaries on entering the home and a pleasant and friendly departure, the time for actual Bible study should not exceed thirty to forty-five minutes, the half hour being preferable. Be definite, concise, and businesslike. Never allow the study to drag over the time specified. People are busy; time is precious. Promptness in

arriving and promptness in leaving will be appreciated.

2. How often should Bible studies be held?

Usually appointments are made for one study a week. This has proved to be the wisest plan. There may be exceptions, however, when two studies a week or even three may be desired, in order to cover the series of studies in the shortest possible time.

3. How many texts of Scripture should be used in one Bible study?

An average of fifteen to twenty texts, well chosen and right to the point, is usually sufficient. Some subjects can be covered in ten texts, whereas other subjects may require twenty or more. Bear in mind that people in general are not familiar with the Bible and how to find texts, and if too many texts are used, the mind may become confused and the study grow tiresome. Brevity with clarity should be the aim.

4. Is it advisable to give the study to more than one person, in case others wish to attend? If so, is there a limit to the number to be admitted?

The "one-soul audience" is to be preferred in Bible study, especially when the Bible instructor is inexperienced. Personal, heart-to-heart study often produces the best results. However, the family group should be considered as a unit, and every opportunity should be improved to reach the whole family. Then, again, the reader may wish to invite one or two special friends to join in the study, and the privilege should always be granted. There are times when a group of ten to fifteen or twenty form a class for the studies. This group plan is more difficult to handle; yet it affords a larger opportunity. Each member of the group should be asked to bring a Bible and turn to

each text and read in consecutive order. The Bible instructor must accommodate the wishes of the reader, but as far as possible hold to the individual study, whereby the truths revealed are of more direct and personal application, and the reader is free to ask questions and give expression to conviction.

5. What should be the Bible instructor's attitude on entering a home?

. Upon your entering the home where the study is to be given, there is sure to be some conversation before the beginning of the study. It is wise to improve these few minutes for establishing a friendly spirit, manifesting special interest in any who are sick or any member of the family who is incapacitated, making friends with the children, and in every way manifesting a sympathetic human interest. There should not be any stiffness or artificiality. The conversation should be of a dignified character, not light or flippant. Ever bear in mind the object of the visit, remembering that it is not a social occasion but an errand for the King. And above all, do not allow the conversation to wander so far away from the business in hand that you will find it difficult or impossible to enter upon the study promptly. Reach the appointment on time, and let it be known that while coming as a friend, the mission upon which you come is a very important one and demands first attention.

6. How soon after closing the Bible study should the instructor take his or her departure?

The same cautions that are heeded on entering the home should be observed by the Bible instructor in taking his departure. When the study is finished, and the review of the entire lesson has been summed

up in a few words, there is but one appropriate thing for him to do, and that is to leave as quickly as possible without seeming rude. All conversation after the conclusion of the study has a tendency to detract from the force of what has been said. The worker should allow nothing to come in to mar the influence of the lesson. With a few pleasant words of farewell, and expressions of pleasure in planning for the next appointment, he should leave the house in a business-like manner. Sometimes the hostess desires to show her appreciation by serving refreshments after the study is finished. Every effort should be made to avoid this, by explaining that the Bible studies are not ordinary social occasions, and that it is not desired to have the study followed in this way, at the same time making it clear that the kindly spirit which prompts the offer is truly appreciated.

7. Should a Bible study in the home be conducted in a manner similar to a religious service?

The lay Bible instructor should avoid the formalities of a religious service. He comes as a neighbor, a friend, and not as a preacher. There should be no attempt to lecture, but to teach. "One of the most effective ways in which light can be communicated is by private, personal effort. In the home circle, at your neighbor's fireside, at the bedside of the sick, in a quiet way you may read the Scriptures and speak a word for Jesus and the truth."-*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 428, 429.

8. What is the proper way to begin a Bible study?

A brief but earnest and sincere prayer should open the Bible study, always, without fail. With the Word of God in hand the instructor should call attention to the fact that the Book to be studied is not like

any other book in all the world, and that it cannot be rightly understood without the help of the Holy Spirit; therefore it is essential to seek for divine wisdom and guidance. If the study is held with professed Christian people, it might be appropriate to ask one or more persons to offer prayer. This is a matter which must be tactfully handled, however, as some persons might be embarrassed by being asked to pray on such occasions. Usually the safest plan to follow, at least for the first few studies, is for the teacher to offer prayer.

9. What should be the attitude in prayer on such occasions?

It is always preferable to kneel in prayer, but where to do so would cause embarrassment to the reader, it would be better to remain seated and bow the head reverently, or to stand with bowed head. Catholics and various other groups have been educated to kneel in prayer, and for the Bible instructor to do otherwise would tend to lessen his influence. Usually, where people are accustomed to kneeling, the suggestion by the one leading out, "Shall we kneel together?" brings a quick response. We must bear in mind that educating people in the Bible and religious practice is progressive. It takes time for some people to become accustomed to prayer in the home, and care should be exercised to avoid making anyone feel embarrassed or ill at ease. The scene which the messenger of the Lord describes gives us the right pattern to follow:

"Two Bible workers were seated in a family. With the open Bible before them, they presented the Lord Jesus Christ as the sin-pardoning Savior. Earnest prayer was offered to God, and hearts were softened

and subdued by the influence of the Spirit of God. Their prayers were uttered with freshness and power. As the Word of God was explained, I saw that a soft, radiant light illumined the Scriptures."-*Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 35.

The spirit of prayer may mean more than the attitude in prayer.

10. When and how should a Bible study end?

Plan the study so that it will end at the point of deepest interest. Stop just where the next step will be eagerly anticipated. The teacher in the day school is aware of the psychology of the mind and recognizes that success in teaching his pupils lies largely in presenting the subject so that it will appear fascinating and arouse anticipation and curiosity to go on with the lesson. The writer of the serial story follows the same principle, and concludes a chapter at the most exciting point with the words "Continued in our next issue." The same principle should be adapted in teaching the truths of the Word of God. Plan the study so that it will end where broad visions of further study on connecting subjects and vital questions will naturally develop. Each textual point should prove a steppingstone toward the summit of truth; and while the study should be complete in itself, and end with a definite climax, there should also be established at this point an eager desire to go on to further heights of truth which loom on the mental horizon.

When the climax is reached, conclude the study in a definite manner. A brief review of the high points of the lesson, with a forecast of what is to follow, will prove effective. Later in the series, the studies should end with pointed appeals to walk in the light. It is well to conclude by

offering a brief prayer. At this time it might be preferable for all in the room to stand while the prayer is offered. Then depart as quickly as possible, to forestall irrelevant conversation which might have a tendency to counteract the impressions made on the mind by the Holy Spirit.

11. Is singing and instrumental music appropriate in beginning a Bible study?

Much depends on the environment of the home and the mood of the person desiring the study. If there is a musical instrument in the room, it might be well to suggest that all join in singing a familiar hymn for the beginning of the study. The song chosen should be one that will give emphasis to the subject to be considered. This is merely a suggestion, and is not meant to imply that a Bible study should always begin with singing. If the one giving the reading lacks musical ability to the extent of not being able to lead in singing the song chosen, and there is no one else to do it or to play the instrument, it would be wisdom indeed to omit the song. Generally speaking, the home Bible study should avoid the formalities of a religious service.

12. What is considered proper and improper handling of the Bible?

The Bible is the most sacred of books and should be handled in a reverent manner. We should give the Bible ascendancy over every other authority. Workers should form the habit of keeping the Bible on top of all other books, and uncovered. Do not allow the notebook to be placed on top of the Bible, but let it be seen that we have reverence for the Word of God and that we realize we are dealing with

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instruction which is a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. Some Bible teachers, particularly those who teach from the desk, when desiring to make some point very emphatic, have a habit of bringing the fist down on the Bible as if it were an auctioneer's block. Let us bear in mind that it is our mission to expound, and not to pound.

"We should reverence God's Word. For the printed volume we should show respect, never putting it to common uses, or handling it carelessly. And never should Scripture be quoted in a jest, or paraphrased to point a witty saying."-*Education*, p. 244.

13. Is it necessary that the individual member of the class have his own Bible and turn to each text?

This plan should be encouraged by all means. Occasionally you will find a home where there is no Bible. In such a case carry an extra Bible (or more if several are in the class) and see that each member of the class is supplied. By explaining how necessary it is to have a Bible, and offering to secure one for each or urging that purchases be made, you will soon overcome this difficulty.

14. What should be done when a person does not know how to find the texts called for, and has no idea of the arrangement of the books of the Bible?

This is a very common situation, which the lay Bible instructor should be prepared for. Do not hurry, but allow plenty of time for the reader to make his search, at the same time making some remark, such as, "Revelation is the last book in the Bible, you know," or, "Jeremiah is one of the Old Testament prophets and the book bearing his name is [give location or page]." Sometimes you may find the text for the reader. Never begin reading the text before the student has found the

place. Tactfully avoid causing embarrassment, and make everything as natural and comfortable as possible. In time the reader will be able to find texts much more readily, and when this is observed, it is well to speak a word of commendation and encouragement.

15. Would it be well to ask the person with whom you are studying to read the texts audibly?

That depends on the circumstances. Usually a person is glad to be called on to read a text, and the study is more interesting and helpful if this plan is followed. If a person is not accustomed to reading out loud, and fears encountering words which he does not know how to pronounce, then do not embarrass him by asking that he read the text. Use good judgment and seek to avoid embarrassment to any.

16. Should the Bible instructor stand or be seated while conducting the study?

As to one's posture in giving a Bible study, it is always best to be seated, unless, of course, there are a number of people present. Then the study will be conducted more in the nature of a cottage meeting, and the speaker should stand so as to be heard distinctly by all. There is a friendliness of contact when speaker and hearers are seated around the table, each with a Bible, such as is not possible in a larger assembly, where the speaker has to stand.

17. What attitude should the instructor take when interruptions occur during the study?

Studies given in the home are subject to many interruptions. In this respect there is an advantage in teaching a congregation from the pulpit, for the audience is supposed to sit quietly and not interrupt. But

laymen are to work largely in the homes, and they must understand how to relate themselves to the common interruptions, such as the ringing of the doorbell, which requires the attention of the reader, or the crying of the baby, or attention required by the children. Possibly a visitor will drop in just at the inopportune moment, the telephone may ring, or some other such everyday distraction. The Bible instructor must appear patient and undisturbed, and wisely gather up the threads of thought which have been broken and carry the mind of the reader back to the very point at which the interruption occurred. It will be helpful to maintain an attitude of prayer while the reader is absent, attending to other things. This is one of the difficult problems, for which "grace sufficient" will be supplied.

18. What should be the attitude toward the children in the home?

When children are present at a Bible study, an effort should be made to give them some part in the study, if nothing more than to furnish them with a Bible to hold in their hands, allowing them to turn the pages in imitation of what they observe older people doing. If the children can read, assign a short text to them. Effort should be made to interest the little ones to the extent that they will at least remain quiet and not annoy the mother as she endeavors to concentrate her mind on the study. Many a Bible study is practically ruined because of interruption and unnecessary annoyance by the children in the home, who are not accustomed to seeing mother sit down with a book in the middle of the day, and consider it an unusual opportunity to attract attention. There may be times when a mother must take her children

with her when she goes to the home of a neighbor to conduct a Bible study. In such a case the children should be carefully instructed as to the importance of the occasion and told how they can help by being quiet and obedient. Well-behaved children afford an impressive commentary on the influence of truth in the home life.

19. How and when should the Bible instructor seek to ascertain the attitude of the reader toward the truths taught?

A person of a quick, demonstrative character may give free expression to his opinion, either for or against the points of truth brought out; but others will be reticent, giving profound attention to all that is said, reading the texts of Scripture as indicated, but remaining silent as to belief and acceptance of the teaching, or disagreement with it. The Bible instructor should seek to draw assent from the reader in connection with each study. Do not hesitate to ask such questions as, "What do you think of the study we have had?" "Is it clear?" "Do you understand that the Bible teaches this?" In this way it is possible to call forth a definite expression, showing that the reader does or does not understand and accept what has been taught, and it will give opportunity for further explanation if necessary. Make sure that the reader is grasping the truth taught, not merely being entertained. For some people it is necessary to repeat the point of truth in different ways over and over, and the successful worker will watch to see that the mind of the reader is not confused but comprehends the full meaning. Assent to points of truth step by step will pave the way for final decision to obey. It is important to watch for opportunities to make the personal appeal, but there is need of care not to overstress

this. The worker for souls should pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that he may know just when and how to appeal to men and women to decide for God.

20. How can the lay Bible instructor most readily become prepared to meet the common objections to doctrinal truths which Seventh-day Adventists hold?

This is a very important matter, for it is always true that the enemy of truth hurls his darts of unbelief, ridicule, and falsehood upon the messenger of divine truth. While we need not fear, for the "truth shall be thy shield and buckler," yet it is important for us to be fortified so as to meet these objections in an understanding and intelligent manner. For the help of the lay Bible instructor, we recommend *Questions Answered* by M. C. Wilcox (Pacific Press) and *Answers to Objections* by F. D. Nichol (Review and Herald), as well as the section, "Distinguishing Doctrines of Popular Churches and Religious Isms," in the Appendix, which includes a brief survey of the cardinal positions held by many of the popular churches and isms of our day. To be well informed regarding the background and basis of the common objections affords decided advantage in many respects. While difficult situations may arise in spite of all we can do, the Holy Spirit will provide the answer and give confidence and assurance in time of need. In most cases the objectors are perfectly honest in their belief; and tact, patience, gentleness, and enlightenment from the Word of God must accompany firmness and loyalty.

The importance of being well informed is well stated by Evangelist Alonzo J Wearer:

"Thorough preparation is the secret of self-confidence, a ready ease in the expression of ideas, fearlessness, and accomplishment. It provides an ample foundation, which, though unseen is consciously or unconsciously felt by the hearers. To teach to the very edge of one's knowledge is to court the embarrassment of an exposure of ignorance, and the danger of lost confidence. A safe guide must preserve the confidence of his followers as they tread the narrow way of truth."-*The Art of Personal Evangelism*, p. 39.

In the admonition of the Spirit of prophecy we find this statement: "If you take upon you the sacred responsibility of teaching others, you take upon you the duty of going to the bottom of every subject you seek to teach."-*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, p. 59.



HOFMANN. ARTIST

Christ Taught the People the Way to Eternal Life

CONDUCTING THE BIBLE STUDY

Having covered the ground of preliminary preparation for personal Bible evangelism to which the lay members of the church are very definitely called to do their part, we now turn to the methods which have proved to be successful in conducting the Bible study.

Methods of Teaching

The Savior's Example.-In our effort to teach the truth in such a way that the people will be able to grasp it, we should study the example of our Savior.

"He made truth beautiful by presenting it in the most direct and simple way. His language was pure, refined, and clear as a running stream. His voice was as music to those who had listened to the monotonous tones of the rabbis. But while His teaching was simple, He spoke as one having authority Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted."-*The Desire of Ages*, p. 253.

Our Savior taught the people through means of parables, using the everyday events and experiences of life as the channel through which to direct the mind to the contemplation of spiritual truth. He "met the people on their own ground, as one who was acquainted with their perplexities." A practical demonstration of this method is found in the record of Jesus conversing with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well. The woman came to the well for water, and Jesus engaged her attention by speaking of that in which she was interested-water. Through the simple request for a drink of water from the well, He

taught her the divine lesson of the living water. To have approached her with a long series of texts, or a sermon in the usual understanding of the term, would have closed the door of opportunity to bring light to her sinful soul; but by the conversational method, based on a subject of mutual interest, the way was open for teaching eternal truth. Another example is found in the case of the young ruler who came to Jesus and inquired what good thing he could do to make sure of eternal life. Here Jesus met the inquirer on his own ground, beginning with the subject of most vital concern to the young man, the consecration of his wealth as well as himself in order to inherit eternal life.

The Example of the Apostles.- The apostles were taught by the Great Teacher, and their training was based on both precept and example. We would, therefore, expect them to demonstrate the best methods of teaching divine truths through human instrumentality. The following outline of the attitude of the apostles as they took up the work appointed them, and the basis of teaching, is helpful in preparation for service in this our day:

1. Taught as witnesses. Acts 2:32.
2. Spoke things seen and heard. Acts 4:20.
3. Testified and exhorted. Acts 2:40.
4. Preached in the name of Jesus Christ. Acts 4: 10-13.
5. The theme-"Christ Jesus the Lord." 2 Cor. 4:5.

Just so today Christ must be the central theme in every study. Theoretical teaching is essential, "that people may see the chain of truth, link after link, uniting in a perfect whole- but no discourse

[Bible study] should ever be preached without presenting Christ and Him crucified as the foundation of the gospel."-*Gospel Workers*, p. 158.

In the case of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, we find that the conversation began at the point where the eunuch was most interested, and Philip explained the scripture which he was seeking to understand.

We also have the example of Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, in his speech and appeal to the men of Athens, made on Mars' Hill. He refers to an altar he saw on the street-something with which his hearers were very familiar. From that altar and its strange inscription, which were known facts, he led the people to the consideration of facts which were unknown by them-the certainty of the true God, the judgment, and the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The importance of the Bible instructor's aiming to meet the people where they are, not where they ought to be, cannot be overestimated or over-emphasized.

The Bible Its Own Interpreter.- "The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture."-*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 462. The Word of God is a living word. It is powerful, it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, it is the channel through which the Spirit of truth speaks; therefore, in dealing with this living Word of God, "let thy words be few." It is a most sacred work to handle the Word of the living God, and become the instrument through which it reaches the mind with its convincing message. Never should the Bible instructor say, "This text means" so and so. From the reading of one text turn to another which will clearly give the meaning, thus letting one text of Scripture explain another without

personal interpretation or individual opinion. Herein lies the beauty and effectiveness of the Bible reading plan; for it permits the Bible itself to do the teaching in the hands of humble men and women.

Unpretentious Manner.-It is possible to present the truths of the Bible in such a way that readers will not grasp the meaning, and consequently will get nothing from the study of the Bible but be left with a feeling of discouragement at their failure to comprehend what seems to be so easy for the teacher to understand. Many times this discouragement finds expression in words like these: "Yes, that is just what I have always thought. If one has a good education, he can study and explain the Bible, but I have not had much schooling, and it is no use for me to try." On the other hand, when the Bible is explained in simple language, one text of Scripture being allowed to explain another, the people are encouraged to study the Book for themselves. Many times a person has said, "I did not suppose the Bible could be understood without a college education, but now I see that it is very simple and easy to understand." It is pleasant to have people pass compliments on the instructor's knowledge of the Bible, but it is not so important to make an impression of this kind as it is to gain the mental assent of the reader to the truth taught. It would certainly be unethical to "hint" for an expressed compliment as to the teacher's ability. The aim should be to make the teaching so simple and forceful that it will penetrate the heart rather than be considered eloquent and pleasing. Jesus might have taught lessons of such deep meaning that the people would not have been able to comprehend them.

But His method of teaching was so simple that "the common people heard Him gladly." He is our Example.

Teacher Rather Than Lecturer.-In conducting Bible studies it will be impossible to teach without using to some degree the "telling" or lecture method, and it is perfectly proper to follow this style to a certain extent; but one should avoid getting into the common rut of "telling" all the time. The successful teacher stimulates thought in the minds of his pupils. The pointed question, "What think ye?" was often asked by Jesus in His teaching. Endeavor to ask questions which will cause people to think before they answer questions which require something more than a simple "Yes" or "No" response, for which no energy of the mind is needed.

Clear and Positive.-If any people can be positive in their teaching, it is wholehearted, consecrated Seventh-day Adventists. There need be no "maybe's," no "if's," no "and's" about it. God has entrusted us with a message to be given to the world today. As we make our plans for giving various studies, the Spirit of God will help us to make them plain, simple, and clear, so there can be no doubt about the points made. We need not be bombastic in our manner of teaching, but we should speak with the power of conviction. Make sure that each point of truth is made very clear to the reader before presenting another point, but be careful to avoid dogmatism or giving offense. When we find that a person is well informed on a point of truth, it is not wise to spend further study on that particular point to the detriment of other topics. It is best, in such a case, to emphasize the truth that is mutually understood, and then pass on to another

topic. One writer expresses the truth of this principle in the following sentence: "To dwell on that which is already seen or is believed in the degree desired, is to annoy and disgust."

Question-and-Answer Method.- The origin of this method of teaching Bible truth is explained in the chapter entitled "Early History." All through the years this method has demonstrated its effectiveness in Bible readings given. The formation of the right question to bring out the thought in the text is a very important matter, to which careful study should be given. A question which arouses curiosity as to how it can be answered, and the reference to a crystal-clear text which conveys the answer in unmistakable language, awaken and hold the interest in Bible study. Such interrogations as How, When, Where, Which, What, Who, Why, are in great demand, but care should be taken to vary the arrangement of questions so' as not to make them monotonous. Take, for example, a Bible study on the second coming of Christ, arranged as follows:

1. *How* will Christ come? Acts 1:11; Matt. 25:31.
2. *When* will Christ come? Matt. 24:36, 33 .
3. *Where* will Christ come? Matt. 24:26, 27; Rev. 1:7; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17
4. *Which* Jesus will come? Acts 1:11.
5. *What* will be the sign of His coming? Matt. 24: 14, 29, 30.
6. *Who* will see Him come? Rev. 1 :7.
7. *Why* will Christ come? John 14:2, 3.

Introducing the Subject

One of the fundamental points at which tact and good judgment should prevail is in the introduction and arrangement of subjects for

Bible studies with the people. On general principles it may be stated that such subjects as the inspiration of the Bible, the second coming of Christ, or the prophecy of Daniel 2 are to be preferred as introductory subjects, rather than deep and complicated subjects, such as the mark of the beast, the change of the Sabbath, and the state of the dead. It is advisable to establish confidence in the system of Bible study to be followed, by presenting subjects which are simple, clear, and convincing. However, there may be exceptions to this rule. Possibly the reader will be found to be particularly interested in certain subjects which would not naturally have first attention, but his mind is filled with inquiries which need to be cleared up before his attention can be centered on other themes. In such a case the special subject should not be postponed indefinitely. Sometimes it can be handled tactfully as the initial study, care being taken to avoid entering into side lines. But it is preferable to conduct one or two practical studies, getting the full co-operation and assent of the reader, and then deal with the particular subject requested.

Concerning the introduction of the subject for a Bible study, the following suggestions made by an experienced Bible instructor are of interest:

"Some statements make a more lasting impression than others, and it is very important that at the commencement of a Bible study the introductory sentences and texts be of a nature to create and hold the interest of the reader. This does not mean that we should try to start out with a burst of oratory. Most of us could not do this, and to try to do so would only make us appear ridiculous. For example:

"Suppose I come to your home to give a study on Daniel 2. and after we are seated, I make the statement, 'This afternoon we shall study Daniel 2, and

announce the first text. Would such an introduction cause *you* to be aglow with interest? Not if you are like most people. But suppose I begin by saying, 'God has a plan, and His plan never miscarries. Today we are to study the revealing of God's great plan for the world, and how it is being fulfilled right now in our day. The prophet Daniel has told us the story.' Such an introduction to the Bible study awakens a desire to know how it can be proved that God's plan never fails, when man's plans continually fail, and the thought of a real story with a meaning for our time being found in the Bible arouses curiosity. Having secured the reader's interest, lead on from step to step to the conclusion, bringing home the lesson that today we are living in the last end of the prophetic outline of world history, and that the next event will surely follow-the setting up of the everlasting kingdom of the Prince of Peace, which shall endure forever. Then it might be well to announce that the next study will be on 'What It Means to Be a Subject of the Everlasting Kingdom,' which should explain the new birth and what it means to be a Christian. Follow with studies on the second coming of Christ, signs of His coming, etc."

Manner of Announcing Texts

As a rule, the people with whom the lay members of the church conduct Bible studies are not very familiar with the Bible, as they have not been accustomed to studying the Book for themselves. It is, therefore, unfair to presume upon their knowledge and familiarity with the arrangement of the books of the Bible. Care should be taken to make the study simple and easy in every sense of the word.

In announcing the text, the best plan is first to give the name of the book in the Bible, then the chapter in the book, and after that the verse or verses in the chapter. This enables the reader to look for one thing at a time. Of course, the finding of the book is often the most difficult, and plenty of time should be allowed, and in a tactful manner help

should be given in finding the place by a suggestive statement that such and such a book is in the Old Testament, or the New Testament, and comes near the beginning, center, or end of the section. After the book is located, the chapter and verse are readily found, although sometimes the Roman numerals are confusing, and help will be needed here.

While this form of announcing the text is usually most readily grasped by the ordinary reader of the Bible, the worker should seek to vary the method, as wider experience may indicate. In this, as in other things, the Bible instructor should seek to avoid getting into a rut.

Distinct Articulation

It is of the utmost importance that the one giving the Bible study pay particular attention to the matter of reading and speaking distinctly. A stranger's voice is not always readily understood, and it should be remembered that the number of people with impaired hearing is greatly on the increase. Many times a person will refrain from asking for a repetition of the text or statement, out of courtesy to the teacher, and therefore will fail to get the full import of the study. With the study group seated around the table in a small home, it ought not to be difficult to speak so that every person will hear. In the Bible we read that a certain messenger of truth to the people "read in the book in the law of God *distinctly*, and *gave the sense*, and *caused them to understand the reading*." Neh. 8:8. Distinct and clear articulation is a matter of vital importance.

The importance of the proper use of the voice is emphasized many times in the instruction which has been given through the Spirit of



A Chart of the Twenty-three Hundred Days Is Indispensable in Presenting the Sanctuary Truths

prophecy. We are told:

'The tones of the voice have much to do in affecting the hearts of those that hear.'"-*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 615.

"Let every word you speak, even the tones of your voice, express your interest in, and sympathy for, the souls that are in peril."-*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 150.

"The one who gives Bible readings in the congregation or in the family should be able to read with a soft, musical cadence which will charm the hearers."-*Gospel - Workers*, p. 87.

Teaching Helps

Since the days of the pioneers in conducting Bible studies great advancement has been made in visual education. It has been said truly that what the eye sees makes an impression five times as great as what the ear hears. The Savior exemplified this truth by teaching the people in parables and illustrating truth by the commonplace things which were most familiar. It is essential that we, as His followers, find ways and means for illustrating truth. For the special help of the lay Bible instructor, a number of simple and economical devices have been prepared to illustrate truth, such as charts, filmstrips, and diagrams.

A set of thirteen prophetic charts, size 25 by 36 inches, printed on cloth, has been especially prepared for the help of lay workers, and may be purchased through the Book and Bible House.

A Miniature Prophetic Chart is furnished with the set of Brief Bible Readings for Busy People. While this is too small to be of much use in large gatherings, it should be slipped into the worker's Bible for handy reference. There is an advantage, however, in having each symbol on a chart by itself, which may be displayed when the particular subject is presented. To unfold a chart containing all the

beasts and other prophetic symbols may be startling to the reader. It is best to present one illustration at a time.

The stereopticon machine, or projector, may serve to good advantage in a cottage meeting or in individual Bible study, although it is preferable for a group. Sets of film slides covering all points of the message have been prepared by the Mayse Studio of San Diego, California. The slides are beautifully colored, and the symbols, diagrams, and pictures are interwoven with texts of Scripture. Thus the worker may give the reading even while the lights are out, either reading the text from the screen, to answer the question asked, or having different persons take turns in reading.

While the filmstrips help to secure and hold the interest, and have their place in the Bible reading plan, yet they have the disadvantage of the teacher's talking in the dark, and sometimes cause the reader to depend on the pictures instead of finding the texts in the Bible for himself. Nothing must be allowed to detract from the true purpose of the Bible study. It is not our business to entertain, but to "open the Word of God to the people:" using only such "helps" as serve to impress the lessons upon the mind of the hearer. (For further suggestions for "Helps" see Appendix.)

Time Required for a Bible Study

The question is often asked, "How long a time is required for a Bible study?" While no exact rule can be laid down, it is safe to say that the time should be just long enough to make the subject very clear and plain, and no longer. Usually thirty-five or forty minutes is ample time. However, much depends upon the subject in hand and upon the

teacher and his method of explanation. The readiness of the reader to follow the texts and follow the thought must also be taken into consideration. The reading study must never be forced or hurried; neither should it be long drawn out until it becomes tiresome. Wisdom and tact will be required on the part of the instructor.

It should ever be borne in mind that no more texts should be used than are necessary to give absolute clearness to the subject under consideration. By thought and diligent study it is often possible to shorten the study and secure more effective results. By holding strictly to the subject, it may be possible to eliminate many superfluous texts. For the average study of the average subject by the average person, it would seem that from ten to sixteen texts are sufficient. By this do not infer that the instructor need not have more than that number of texts at his command. It is always well for him to be thoroughly acquainted with many more texts than he will use, as one can never tell just what line of thought may develop, and he should be prepared for any emergency. Again, it is well to keep in mind that -the teacher should have ten times as much material in hand as he expects to use. The aim should be to concentrate rather than to scatter.

Supplying the Reader With a Review of the Lesson

It is a good plan to present to the reader a list of the texts which have been used in the study, or a printed sheet covering the same ground. When following the Brief Bible Readings series, the slips containing the Bible studies furnish-a convenient guide to the reader in reviewing the lesson. Often the numbers of *Present Truth* serve to good purpose.

The Bible Truth Series of tracts, published by the Pacific Press Association, cover sixty-two Bible doctrines and can be used to excellent advantage. Or perhaps the teacher will have mimeographed copies of the study outline made in advance, giving the texts and a brief statement as to the thought brought out. People appreciate such provision, and it is a plan well worth while. Often during the study the reader may try to write down each text as it is announced, but this detracts from concentrated thought and prolongs the study.

Danger of Becoming Sidetracked

There is danger of becoming side tracked to a disastrous degree in giving a Bible study. Either the reader may raise some irrelevant question, or the instructor himself may unconsciously precipitate a crisis. It is well to be on guard. For instance, in a Bible study on the subject of the millennium, Revelation 20:4 is nearly always used. This is a good text, but it must be used with care. The presentation of this topic usually comes early in the course, and should the instructor attempt to explain the entire verse, he would find himself on an entirely different subject, having become sidetracked from his original goal. The same might be true with reference to the use of many other texts; and just to the extent that there is digression from the subject in hand will the reader's interest in the main topic be weakened.

Another danger which it is well to recognize and guard against is that of making a statement, possibly with a direct bearing on the subject, for which we do not have a plain "Thus saith the Lord" to give as

authority. For example, we know from the Spirit of prophecy that Gabriel was the angel who took the place of Lucifer. Suppose that in giving a study on the "Origin of Evil," the instructor makes that statement, and some inquisitive mind asks for the proof, It would be difficult in that connection to explain the origin and authority for the statement. It really is not essential to tell the reader who took Lucifer's place. It is well to avoid all non essentials and hold to a clear presentation of the one subject.

There are times when the reader may ask questions which lead into another subject and prove bewildering to the instructor. In such a situation three courses may be pursued:

1. Answer the question in a sentence or two, and then proceed quickly to turn the attention to some point of interest in the study under consideration.

2. If it does not seem wise to answer the question at once, promise to do so at the close of the study, thus holding attention to the connected thought until the study is completed.

3. In a kindly manner explain to the reader that the next study (if that is the case; if not, refer to the proper time) will make clear all the points in question, and request that, for the sake of brevity and to avoid confusion, the questions be answered at the proper time. Such a request is always granted, and the instructor can then proceed uninterruptedly.

Irrelevant questions are often brought in because of some failure to hold the undivided attention of the reader. By cultivating and exercising tact in giving the study in such a way as to rivet attention on the topic in hand, it will be possible to avoid many such questions.

Attitude Toward Opponents

It is well to be on guard lest the element of opposition suddenly arise from some unexpected source and cause consternation on the part of the Bible instructor. Bible studies may have been conducted on two or three occasions with the family circle in a neighborhood home with results which are most promising and encouraging. Suddenly a stranger may make his appearance at the time of the next study. This stranger may be the family pastor, or a near friend who feels it his duty to safeguard the interests of the home against the influence of what he considers to be false teaching. The humble Bible instructor, engaged in house-to-house work, may be termed a wolf in sheep's clothing and some self-appointed person may undertake to remove the supposed camouflage and let the "wolf" appear. The tactics of such opponents are often covered by the attitude of pity for the deluded person who is endeavoring to teach the Bible truth, and to show their wisdom they are ready to bring in questions designed to oppose and confuse, and be disconcerting in general.

At such a time the sincere worker for God will submit his case entirely to the control of the Holy Spirit and rest upon the promise, "Whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." Mark 13:11. Never attempt to argue with an opponent, but maintain the attitude of a humble learner, who speaks from personal experience of the joy and blessing which God's Word has brought to his own soul, responding to all accusations or false statements with a plain "Thus saith the Lord." Such experiences are crucial tests, but they result in victory for the side of truth.

Wise counsel for such a time is this:

"Often, as you seek to present the truth, opposition will be aroused; but if you seek to meet opposition with argument, you will only multiply it, and that you cannot afford to do. Hold to the affirmative. Angels of God are watching you, and they understand how to impress those whose opposition you refuse to meet with argument. Dwell not on the negative points of questions that arise, but gather to your minds affirmative truths, and fasten them there by much study and earnest prayer and heart consecration. Keep your lamps trimmed and burning, and let bright rays shine forth, that men, beholding your good works, may be led to glorify your Father which is in heaven." *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 147, 148.

Two Forms of Questions to Be Met

Not all the interrogations in a Bible study originate with the one conducting the study, for many times the reader presents an array of questions, which may be of two kinds: First, honest questions for information, whether or not on the subject in hand makes no difference. Second, questions asked in a spirit of ridicule or scorn. The latter need cause the instructor no special concern, for they are few compared with inquiries arising from an honest heart. But they do have to be met, and much care should be exercised in giving just the right replies. Jesus was confronted with such questions by persons who sought to entangle Him, but His answers were such that "no man ... durst ... ask Him any more questions." When Nicodemus asked Jesus a question in all sincerity, the Savior answered it in like manner. John 3.) In Matthew 19: 16-25 we have the record of a young man who came to Jesus and asked a question in all candor. His inquiry received the Master's loving and tender sympathy, and the answer was such that he could not misunderstand.

While the King's business requires haste, it also requires all the wisdom, tact, and skill which can be employed. Our Savior admonished His disciples to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Coming from His divine lips, this instruction should never cease to be pondered and to be allowed to influence all Christian service. The work of the gospel worker requires a nicety of perception and discrimination second to none. But to the fainthearted and the fearful there is the assurance, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally." James 1:5.

THE VALLEY OF DECISION

THE science of soul winning embraces three stages of investigation. The Bible instructor should be well informed concerning these mental stages in the experience of the reader, and prepared to safeguard the interests of truth and lead on through the treacherous shoals which border the valley of decision.

The three stages may be defined as follows:

1. Interest.- The interest of the reader must be awakened and deepened, and having once been aroused, must never be permitted to diminish. From week to week the interest should be intensified, as the wonderful treasure house of God's Word is unlocked and the student finds that it is really a living message, applicable at this very day and affording guidance and comfort in every experience.

2. Conviction.- Interest must lead to conviction. This can be brought about only by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The human instrument may make truth clear and plain, and present it in such a manner as to hold attention and deepen the interest, but bringing conviction to the soul is beyond the scope of the instructor. However, we have the positive assurance, "If you are presenting the word in Christ's way, your audience [reader] will be deeply impressed with the truths you teach. The conviction will come to them that this is the word of the living God."-*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 143, Conviction is a hidden process.

We cannot always recognize when conviction seizes the soul, but with persevering effort and unswerving faith, we must teach the truth in love, trusting in God for results. Of Jesus it is said that He "watched the first glimmer of faith grow into a conviction." So the Bible instructor today should be on the watch for the evidences of conviction in the heart of his reader, and be prepared to lead on to the next step.

3. Decision.- The Bible speaks of "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." Joel 3:14. Into this valley the Bible instructor should seek to lead his reader gently, firmly, and safely, loyally and prayerfully standing by his side in the severe conflict which must be encountered at this stage of the journey, never giving up until the battle is won and the reader emerges on the other side and is safe within the fold of the church.

Getting Decisions

Getting people to decide for the truth is of primary importance. Failure on the part of workers to bring the interested one to a deciding point is a chief reason why comparatively few join our ranks. The Bible says there is a "season" and a "time" for every purpose under heaven. (Eccl. 3: 1, 2.) Just as truly as there is a time to be born into the physical world, so there is a time for the spiritual birth. There is usually a psychological moment when a person should be brought to decision. Many a soul has been lost to this message because when that decisive hour came, no effort was made to help the wavering one make up his mind.

Someone asks, "When are we to expect decisions? Should we wait until every doctrinal subject has been covered?" Most emphatically

no. Decisions are to be made whenever a subject giving new light is presented. For example, when a study on the state of the dead has been given, it is proper to ask the reader, "Do you accept what the Bible teaches concerning the dead?" If he answers "No," then find out what his objections are, and endeavor to meet these objections by a "Thus saith the Lord." After the questions are answered, if the reader still cannot see the matter clearly, it may be advisable to let the subject rest for the time being. Urge that he pray over the matter. Study other points of truth in which the reader is interested. The study regarding the dead may be brought in again, and usually it becomes clear and plain. The same plan applies in calling for decision on any subject—Sabbath, baptism, etc.

After the presentation of each subject it is proper to ask whether the evidence presented has been clear. If the reply is affirmative, then press home the question, "What are you going to do about it?" If you have been studying the Sabbath truth, encourage the reader to obey. Read Isaiah 58:13, 14; 56:1,2, which tell the blessings God has promised to those who take their feet from His "holy day," and state that you will be remembering him in prayer as the sun sets the next Friday evening.

The Crucial Moment

The time when the appeal is made for surrender is a crucial moment. The messenger of the Lord has portrayed the situation in the following manner: .

"Many are convinced that we have the truth, and yet they are held as with iron bands; they dare not risk the consequences of taking their position on the side of truth. Many are in the valley of decision, where special, close, and pointed

appeals are necessary to move them to lay down the weapons of their warfare, and take their position on the Lord's side. Just at this critical period, Satan throws the strongest bands around these souls."-*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 646.

But we have the assurance that the heavenly host surrounds the soul in perplexity, and that the Holy Spirit pleads in his behalf. Cling to the promise, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Isa. 59:19. Make the appeal earnest and personal. Ask, "Why delay to walk in the light of truth as God's Word has revealed?" There may be a hesitancy, a holding back. Ascertain what it is that stands in the way of full surrender, and repeat again and again that God never forgets His promise and never forsakes those who trust Him, while to ignore truth and turn from the light is to choose darkness and lose eternal life. Not all people respond in the same way. Some will yield readily and quickly, while others will struggle indefinitely. There is a psychological moment at which to make the appeal to the soul, and in this the Holy Spirit must be the guide. Unless the personal worker is controlled by the Holy Spirit, and ready to speak when the opportunity offers, the soul may be lost. The crisis of decision is a crucial moment for all.

Meeting Sabbath-keeping Objections

Possibly the first and most testing conflict to be encountered as reader and teacher enter the "valley of decision" is that of coming face to face with the call to obedience in keeping the Sabbath. Economic difficulties will often loom up as mountains, and false reasoning form the scaffold for procrastination. It is then that the Bible instructor should be conversant with Scriptural promises that counteract flimsy

excuses and definitely bring the decision to obey.

The following are a few of the stock excuses and the Scripture texts with which to meet them:

1. How can I make a living and keep the Sabbath?

Scripture reply: "Take no thought ... what ye shall eat." Matt. 6:25, 26.

"Not ... begging bread." Ps. 37:25. "Not want any good thing." Ps. 34:10.

Shall find a "living." Isa. 57:10, 13. (See margin.)

"He is thy life." Deut. 30:19, 20.

"More than my necessary food." Job 23: 10-12-

"For a piece of bread ... man will transgress." Provo 28:21.

2. My position may be at stake.

Scripture reply: "Fear ye not .. '. men." Isa. 51:7.

"Establish thou the work of our hands:' Ps. 90:16, 17.

"I ... put my life in mine hand." Job 13:14,15.

3. I am buying a car and must first pay for it.

Scripture reply: Chariot (auto) may become .a modern idol. Isa, 2:7, 8.

"The idols He shall utterly abolish." Isa. 2:18.

4. I am building a house and must meet my payments.

Scripture reply: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

Ps. 127:1.

"Foolish man, which built his house upon the sand." Matt. 7:24-27.

5. I must first lay by a little means.

Scripture reply: "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God." Matt. 6:33, 34.

"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich:' Prov 10:22.

Riches without God's blessings bring sorrow, Prov, 28:20,

"The expectation of the wicked ... tendeth to poverty." Prov 11:23, 24.
 God's law "is better ... than thousands of gold and silver." Ps. 119:72, 127.

6. I don't think God expects me to deprive myself to keep the Sabbath.

Scripture reply: "My thoughts are not your thoughts." Isa, 55:8,9.

"Blessed is the man • . . that keepeth the Sabbath." Isa. 56:1, 2.

"They consider not that . . . do evil," Eccl. 5:1.

"To obey is better than sacrifice." 1 Sam. 15:22,26.

7. I am afraid to go ahead.

Scripture reply: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee." Isa. 41:10.

"Neither have ... our steps declined from Thy way." PS. 44:17,18.

"I ... turned I made haste ... to keep Thy commandments." Ps. 119:59,60.

Workers of iniquity turn away from the Lord. Ps. 125:4,5.

"Remove thy foot from evil." Provo 4: 26,27.

Take feet off God's Sabbath. Isa. 58: 13,

8. How shall I decide about the Sabbath?

Scripture reply: "How long halt ye between two opinions?" 1 Kings 18:21.

"Ask for the old paths, and walk therein." Jer. 6: 16.

"Do His commandments." ' Rev. 22: 14.

-LOUISE C. KLEUSER, in *The Ministry*, February, 1945.

Appeal for Prayerful Interest by Others

All during the series of Bible studies the lay Bible instructor should seek the help of the local pastor or evangelist in dealing with his readers, but at no time is such help more needed or appreciated than

at the point of decision. While the gospel worker should be careful to maintain the same close personal contact as during the weeks of study, and not allow the reader to feel he has been abandoned to the solicitation and oversight of the pastor, yet the closest co-operation should be maintained between the pastor, the Bible instructor, and the reader.

Church members should be asked to pray unitedly for those who are on the battleground of victory or defeat. Give heed to the following instruction:

"Solicit prayer for the' souls for whom you labor: present them before the church as subjects for their supplication, It will be just what the members of the church need, to have" their minds called from their petty difficulties, to feel a great burden, a personal interest, for a soul that is ready to perish As you do this, God will give you the Holy Spirit to convict and convert the soul."-*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 80, 81.

Never should the worker allow faith to weaken, and yield to the temptation to give up hope. Procrastination, delay, and excuses must be encountered.

"Those in the service of God must show animation and determination in the work of winning souls. Remember that there are those who will perish unless we as God's instrumentalities work with a determination that will not fail nor become discouraged He has given us a great work to do. Let us do it with accuracy and determination. Let us show in our lives what the truth has done for us."-*Ibid.*, p. 418.

Of Christ it is said, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged," and surely His representatives should not fail to hold on to the soul who is struggling toward obedience. God is long-suffering and patient, not willing that any should perish; He will never forsake those who put their trust in Him and yield obedience. The Bible instructor should know for himself what it means to step out by faith, and to have

experienced the fulfillment of God's promises.

"When we give ourselves wholly to God, and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure." -*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 363.

Through the plan of holding Bible readings in families, "men are entreated to read, examine, and judge for themselves, and they must abide the responsibility of receiving or rejecting the divine enlightenment."-*Gospel Workers*, p: 192. Then comes the precious promise which should ever cheer the heart of the lay Bible instructor: "God will not permit this precious work for Him to go unrewarded. He will crown with success every humble effort made in His name."-*Ibid.*

Some may delay to make the decision at once, but will take their stand during the final crisis. Referring to some who have heard the message and have been convicted by it, the messenger of the Lord speaks as follows concerning what will occur during the time of the latter rain:

"The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all beides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against

the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side." -*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

If we have been faithful in presenting truth, and will never cease to pray and to work and to trust, God will "not permit this precious work for Him to go unrewarded. "



EWING GALLOWAY. N.Y.

Interested Persons Should Be Encouraged to Attend Church Services

Entering the Fold of the Church.

A very important means of helping persons to take a firm stand for truth is by bringing them to the church services, where they become accustomed to the spiritual atmosphere of the church. This plan may be followed soon after the testing points of truth begin to be presented. The pastor should extend a personal welcome, and the members of the church should be friendly and cordial. At times it may be well for the pastor to give the members of the church some gentle

admonitions as to the proper attitude toward these people who are interested, convicted, and on the point of decision. There must be no "holier-than-thou" attitude, no curiosity as to personal affairs, no criticism or gossip. The newcomer will watch to see whether the principles of truth are demonstrated in the lives of the believers. This they have a right to expect. Arrange to have the reader attend Sabbath school, and see that he is placed in a class in which the teacher will adapt the lesson to the experience of the hearers. To be made to feel "at home" in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and happy in the Christian fellowship of its members, is a long step toward entering the door of the church through baptism. The baptismal class will be conducted by the pastor of the church, who will make sure that the new convert understands the doctrines of the Bible as held by the church, that he is in full harmony therewith, and maintains personal fellowship with Christ Jesus by private prayer and Bible study. Thus a soul is won from darkness to light, to walk in the pathway of the people of God which has been established high above the world and ends in the city of God.

"To be a co-worker with Christ and the heavenly angels in the great plan of salvation! What work can bear any comparison with this! From every soul saved, there comes to God a revenue of glory, to be reflected upon the one saved, and also upon the one instrumental in his salvation."-*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 232.

"When the redeemed shall stand before God, precious souls will respond to their names who are there because of the faithful, patient efforts put forth in their behalf, the entreaties and earnest persuasions to flee to the Stronghold. Thus those who in this world have been laborers together with God will receive their reward."-*Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 196, 197.

ESTABLISHING NEW CONVERTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

A Few Typical Cases in the Aftermath of Decision and Entering the Fold of the Church

CASE A.-Mrs. Smith has implicit confidence in the Bible, and readily accepted the teaching concerning the coming of Jesus and the Sabbath truth; in fact, she manifested a hunger for truth and did not hesitate to walk in the light as fast as it was revealed to her. She is an elderly woman, not well educated, but very sincere; she has no special opposition at home. Her husband and her married children agree to let her have her own way. They are noncommittal but not hostile.

Suggestions in Behalf of This Family: Encourage a few of the men in the church to get acquainted with Mr. Smith and establish mutual friendship, manifesting a special interest in his trade or the things which appeal to him. Perhaps a series of Bible studies conducted by laymen like him would appeal to him. He might wish to invite his special friends to join, and thus he would become host to his friends. The married children should be invited to join. Of course Mrs. Smith will be delighted and will co-operate as may seem best. Although Mrs. Smith has united with the church and has taken her stand alone, she should be encouraged by Christian fellowship. See that she comes to Sabbath school and to prayer meeting. Find some place of service for her. She may be especially helpful in Dorcas activities. It is important that she find her place in service, in order to grow in the spiritual life.

CASE B.-The Browns are busy farmers, well thought of in the community. Mrs. Brown has often chatted with the Bible instructor and has long been leaning toward the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Recently a series of studies convinced her that her decision must be made, and she succeeded in bringing her husband with her. Both husband and wife took their stand, the pastor being a great help in their decision.

Suggestions for Further Interest: Encourage the Browns to work for their children. If possible, arrange for another series of studies, in the parents' home or in the home of one of the children. Be friendly with the members of the family. Invite the young people to outings and young people's affairs. Provide reading matter for them. Arrange for a young woman to be present when a Bible study is held, and make it her work to keep the attention of the small children in the home, by telling them stories during the time of the Bible study. See to it that the Browns attend Sabbath school and church services regularly. Farmers often feel that they are too busy, but this excuse should not stand. Place them in a class where lively discussion takes place. Invite them to representative Seventh-day Adventist homes, where they can learn more about Sabbath-keeping and healthful cookery.

CASE C.-Mr. Jones is a single young man, who was first interested in the message through a woman friend. His family is not too pleased with his new religion. He works for his father, who considers it a nuisance to try to arrange for his Sabbath-keeping. His mother is more friendly toward her son's religion. Young Jones is inclined to be a bit aggressive in dealing with his parents.

Suggestions for Winning Father Jones: Enlist the good will of Mrs. Jones by friendly contacts. Encourage her to begin home Bible studies. Help her to see that her son's woman friend is a sincere

Christian and that her influence tends in the right direction. Mrs. Jones can be a great help in influencing her husband. Since Mr. Jones enjoys good music, the singing of gospel hymns before the Bible study may please him. He is a businessman and expects efficiency and speed; therefore the Bible study should be brief and pointed. The church background lies in the Presbyterian doctrines; therefore the teachings of this denomination should be understood and every effort made to avoid controversy or antagonism. Make a special point to speak well of the church in which Mr. Jones holds a leading position.

CASE D.-Mr. Darr is most enthusiastic about the truth, but his wife does not share his enthusiasm. She is a very busy housewife and resents her husband's leaving her alone with her burdens while he attends a Bible study under pleasant environment. It did not help matters any when Mr. Darr's manager became annoyed by his request to be allowed to quit work on the Sabbath. The wife is quite upset about it all, and not too cordial to any Seventh-day Adventist.

Suggestions for Winning Mrs. Darr: See to it that tactful women in the church make friends with this family. Invite the wife and children to the church outing, or to visit in the homes. Be sure that the children enjoy the Sabbath school, to which the father has insisted on bringing them. Help with the home cares; offer to care for the children while Mrs. Darr goes shopping. Encourage the husband to be patient and kind. Often kindness and attention will mean more to a wife than Bible studies. Soon Mrs. Darr will want to be with the family among the church friends, and prayer, tact, love, and perseverance will often result in a united happy family.

CASE E.-Mrs. Murphy was a strong-minded Catholic. It required time for her to see that her church was in error, but she has now been baptized, and takes great delight in reading the Bible. She is bubbling over with enthusiasm, and few Catholics within her reach escape warning and entreaties. Mr. Murphy never was a Catholic. It makes no difference to him one way or another. But the children are greatly upset over the mother's stand. The priest has visited Mrs. Murphy with a view to causing her to recant, but without success. She is thrilled with her new-found faith and never misses a meeting.

Suggestions for Dealing With the Murphys: Take Mrs. Murphy with you to a neighborhood Bible study. This will help to establish her more firmly in the truth. In the case in mind the study is held in the home of Mr. F, a friend of Mr. Murphy's, and Mr. Murphy attends. As both he and Mr. F have Catholic wives (until the recent change in Mrs. Murphy) but are not churchgoers, although of Protestant background, they have much in common interest. Both enjoy good singing, and provision should be made for good music. This may be the key to establishing interest in Bible study. Both men may see what it means to be a consistent Protestant. Such is often the result. Do not expect results immediately. Be helpfully friendly. Get acquainted with the married children, and where there are little folks *Bedtime Stories* may serve as an entering wedge. Friendliness breaks down prejudice.

TIMELY CAUTIONS

"He that winneth souls is wise."

Be on Guard to Avoid Argument or Debate

Some people are natural-born debaters and arguers. They have the gift of twisting facts into hideous caricatures and thoroughly enjoy the mental gymnastics which their assumed superior knowledge creates. These individuals spring up everywhere, particularly where the Word of God is being studied. Be on guard. 'Never try to carry your point by argument, which generally leads to a heated debate and brings in a spirit which is foreign to divine truth. "The Savior knew that no argument, however logical, would melt hard hearts or break through the crust of worldliness and selfishness."-*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 31. Remember that the most convincing argument in favor of truth is a consistent Christian life.

Never Speak Disparagingly of Other Churches

The inexperienced worker will need to be on guard here, for often the reader may be critical of some religious practice or belief, and it is an easy matter to take sides with him with a view to gaining his sympathy and thereby anticipating his agreement with the points of truth to be presented. Remember the Savior's words to His disciples, when they reported or complained of what one who, while not an acknowledged follower of Christ, was doing in the name of the Master, "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me." Mark 9:39. We are to perform the work we are sent to do, without criticizing or condemning others. The light of truth will obliterate error.

Do Not Lend an Ear to Neighborhood Gossip

The reader may be having trouble with her neighbors and seek relief by confiding her difficulty to the Bible instructor, hoping thereby to secure a sympathetic listener to her side of the matter. It is very easy to appear sympathetic and to take.

sides, but this is entirely out of the realm of the gospel worker's sphere. Neighborhood gossip or trouble should never be encouraged but always met with a tactful reply which will silence the narrator. It requires tact to maintain solid ground here.

Don't Ask Personal Questions

Avoid questions which pry into personal affairs, as, for example, "What is your husband's business?" or, "Do you own your home?" etc. In an attempt to appear friendly and sociable, or to be a "good mixer" there is oftentimes danger of stepping over the bounds of ethics. Cultured people resent such conduct. One must maintain proper exclusiveness and reserve, and at the same time be cordial and pleasant. "The lack of true dignity and Christian refinement in the ranks of Sabbath keepers is against us as a people, and makes the truth which we profess unsavory."-*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 358. "There is the greatest necessity that men and women who have a knowledge of the will of God, should learn to become successful workers in His cause. They should be persons of polish, of understanding, not having the deceptive outside gloss and simpering affectation of the worldling, but that refinement and true courteousness which savors of heaven, and which every Christian will have if he is a partaker of the divine nature." -*Ibid*.

Don't Expect or Accept Gifts

Many kindly and well-meaning persons like to express their gratitude for the help received by the presentation of some gift or gifts, whether it be a simple token of friendship or of monetary value. The instructor's attitude all the way along may be a safeguard here, making it clear that no compensation or gift is acceptable, as you consider it a privilege to open up the casket of the gems of truth, and that gratitude and appreciation belong to God. Sometimes a donation of money for carrying on the work of God may be accepted with propriety. If some small personal memento is offered unexpectedly, it might be better to accept gracefully than to offend by refusal. Tact and good judgment must prevail.

Adapt Yourself to Circumstances

Situations may arise when it would not be expedient for the instructor to conduct the Bible study as planned, even though a definite appointment has been made.

For example, a meal may have to be prepared, unexpected company may arrive, sickness may suddenly afflict some member of the family, and many other things are likely to occur. To insist on keeping the appointment under such conditions would cause embarrassment and perhaps close the door to further studies. Be ready always to adapt your program to suit the circumstances.

Don't Hesitate to Acknowledge "I Do Not Know"

It is said that "a fool can ask questions that the wisest man cannot answer." Questions will arise which you are not prepared to answer. Do not make a pretense of knowing the answer but think best to withhold it; state frankly that you do not know the answer, but that you will look it up. If the question is irrelevant and of no merit, do not bring it up again; but if otherwise, promise the answer at a later date and see that you make good the promise.

Avoid Questions of a Delicate Nature

Such questions as deal with personal opinions but cannot be answered by direct scripture, should be avoided as far as possible. For example, "Do you believe that infants of non-Christian parents will be in heaven?" On many such subjects the teacher may hold to a well-founded opinion; but "opinion" is not the standard, and it is best to take no position which is not clearly stated in God's Word.

Be Patient With the Talkative

Sometimes there are people who want to do all the talking. What course should the humble layman pursue? It may be a test of patience to sit still and listen to the chatter, but usually it won't be long until the person has told all he knows, or has to stop to catch his breath. That is the psychological moment to take the floor and control the situation; and having once gotten the floor, do not give it up.

Prayer in the Home

What to Pray For-Avoid long prayers. Do not pray for everybody in general rulers, governors, the sins of the world, etc. While it is perfectly proper to pray for these needs, the home Bible study does not afford the proper occasion. If there are children in the home, mention them in prayer. If there is a sick or afflicted

member in the family, make special mention of the case. If there are sons and daughters in the service of their country, pray for them, that they may be kept in safety and return to the home nest in due time. If bereavement has recently entered the home, pray for the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Be keen to observe conditions in the home and tactfully make them a subject of prayer. It brings comfort to people to know that you are interested in what concerns them.

Attitude in Prayer.-Bear in mind that some people are not accustomed to kneeling in prayer; in fact, there are people to whom prayer is a new experience entirely. Avoid embarrassing any by asking them to kneel while prayer is offered. Where people are accustomed to kneeling, there is no difficulty, and to kneel is the preferable attitude. But in some cases it is best to suggest "let us bow our heads in prayer," or "shall we stand while prayer is offered." Catholic people always kneel in prayer, and consider it irreverent to do otherwise. However, Catholics are not accustomed to hearing anyone but the priest pray to God, and the gateway to the throne of God on the part of each soul may need to be pointed out to them.

Who Should Pray.-Usually it is the teacher who leads in prayer. If the study is being held with Christian people, who are accustomed to public prayer, ask others to pray. But it is well for the instructor to make the closing prayer, focusing the mind on the need of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

What to Avoid in Prayer.-Don't pray that the Lord will lead the reader "to accept the truth." This is a common expression in our church, but it would not be understood by others. Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead in the study of God's Word, and guide into deeper, richer mines of truth.

Don't Be Careless as to Personal Appearance

It is possible to give offense and to bring reproach on the cause of God by negligence in personal appearance. Immaculate cleanliness of person and clothing is essential. The apparel must be neat, modest, appropriate, careful attention being given to the smallest detail of personal appearance. Sometimes the lay Bible instructor will drop in next door just as a neighbor, without formal attire; sometimes a Bible study may be conducted over the garden fence at an opportune moment when neighborly conversation turns to some Bible topic. At other times

there will be a definite hour appointed for the study in a home at the other side of the city, which requires that the Bible instructor dress for the journey in an appropriate manner for the occasion. Never wear soiled or ragged gloves, or hose which have served their day. The shoes should be polished and in good repair, and all garments should be free from spots and stains. Teeth, fingernails, hair, skin, are indexes to character observed keenly by critical eyes. It is not expensive or elaborate apparel which meets the standard of being well dressed. Follow a conservative style, never the extreme, being neither behind the times nor in advance of the times, but always fresh, clean, becomingly attired.

Don't Ask the Reader to Read the Text Out Loud

Unless you know the person is used to reading out loud and is accustomed to finding the texts of Scripture readily, do not embarrass him by asking him to read the texts. Some people are afraid of the unusual words and difficult names in the Scriptures, and have no idea of the location of the books in the Bible. Do not embarrass them by exposing their ignorance. Pave the way for an enjoyable study and forestall any embarrassing moment.

Denominational Terms to Avoid

Do not refer to "the Testimonies," "the third angel's message," "Spirit of prophecy," in connection with the studies. These expressions are familiar to us as a denomination, but they have no meaning to others, and until the proper time comes to explain their meaning, it is well to avoid using such terms.

Dealing With Different Types of Minds

Some persons are calm, self-possessed, teachable, stable, and easy to approach. Such people are a source of joy and inspiration to the Bible instructor. Others are repulsive, indifferent, self-assertive, positive in their own beliefs, and unapproachable. Upon such, wisdom, tact, and patience must be bestowed with generous hand. Utmost caution should be observed to avoid engendering a spirit of controversy. Never attempt to meet argument with argument. The instructor must possess poise and balance. Diffidence, nervousness, and irritation must be kept under cover.

There is another class which may be described as weak-kneed, retiring, and often inattentive; lacking courage, stamina, and solidity. In dealing with such people the instructor must manifest courage, determination, patience, and positiveness. All rash, impulsive words must be left unspoken. A reproving tone or look, impatience or severity, displayed at a critical moment, may give offense and close the way for further work. Study the life of Christ and follow His example. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 352, 353.)

Dealing With Catholics

Catholics as a rule love their church and are loyal to its teachings and its priesthood. We should be understandingly considerate of their attitude. We should conquer prejudice and be sincerely friendly.

Never speak disrespectfully of the Roman Catholic Church or of pope, bishop, or priest. They have great reverence for the names God, Christ, Virgin Mary, and the saints. Always use these terms with respect. In early Bible studies it is well to make frequent mention of the Virgin Mary, referring to the statement in the Bible, "blessed among women." Always refer to the apostles as Saint Peter, Saint John, etc. Refer to "the Holy Scriptures" instead of "the Bible."

Mention and commend the charity work carried on by Catholics, also their teaching on prayer, faith, and the return of Christ. When quoting from, or referring to, authorities on current events, try to include statements which have appeared in some local Catholic organ.

The Douay version of the Bible, in common use among English-speaking Catholics, is for the most part a fairly satisfactory version. If the Protestant is familiar with this version and willing to use it in the Bible studies, if preferred, confidence will be established. A Catholic New Testament has recently been published, in which the word "repentance" is used in place of the word "penance" in the older version. The majority of Roman Catholics are firm believers in the Ten Commandments, and are surprised to find that any change has been made by their church. A profound impression is made on the Catholic mind by connecting with the second commandment Isaiah 40:18; 44:8-10, 12-17; Psalms 115:2-9.

The Bible instructor should not depend on superficial knowledge of Catholic belief. It is important to be well informed, so as to meet Catholics on their own

ground. The book *The Wine of Roman Babylon* is to be recommended in this connection.

Don't Run Ahead of the Evangelist

More and more laymen are being called to assist in preparing the way for evangelistic meetings. This is as it should be. The purpose of the Bible Training class is to make the lay members in the church efficient helpers to the evangelist. When assisting in an evangelistic effort by distributing announcements or literature, or visiting in the homes of the people as the evangelist may direct, the lay worker should be careful not to run ahead of the evangelist and try to explain any point of truth which has not been covered in the series of sermons. Some people will be curious and ask questions on points of truth yet to be presented in a public way. The lay worker should guard against attempting to explain or to answer questions. Tell the inquirer that the evangelist's topic will care for that soon, and urge that he come and hear the sermon on the subject.

STEPPINGSTONES OF FAITH
(Experiences of New Converts in Meeting the Test)

Sabbathkeeping

An Insurance Man Faces a Severe Test

Mr. B held an important position in one of the large insurance companies in an Eastern city. This company had an agreement that no one in their employ would be granted Saturday off. The inflexible rule was that everyone should be at his desk on Saturday forenoon. Mr. B was well acquainted with these regulations.

Bible studies were held in the home of this man, primarily for his wife and son, who were deeply interested. He merely listened in, more out of courtesy, mixed with a bit of curiosity, than any desire to be enlightened from the Bible by a Seventh-day Adventist instructor. He was not the affable type, and the instructor found it rather difficult to get him to commit himself on any point of truth. His innermost thoughts and feelings were clothed by an unapproachable and seemingly resolute exterior.

The truism "Still waters run deep" was quite obvious when it came to dealing with the character of Mr. B. The only time he seemed interested in the Bible studies was when the mark of the beast was presented. The startling revelation of this important topic aroused him. The lethargical spell no longer held sway. His long silence was broken by a number of questions bearing on the events leading up to the enforcement of the counterfeit sabbath.

From that hour his interest kept increasing. His wife had been baptized, and his son was preparing to take the same step the next time a baptismal service was held. It became evident that the father wanted to be baptized with his son; but there was the question of the Sabbath. the breadwinner faced with the possibility of losing his position. Finally he settled the matter in his own heart; then with his

God; afterward he would settle it with his employers.

This occurred during the vacation period, when he was substituting for his superior, and thus he was able to arrange to be off each Sabbath without any difficulty. His case was called to the attention of the church. Special prayers were offered, that the Lord would overrule in his case, and if it would glorify God to have him remain with the insurance company, a heavenly controlling power would take possession of those in authority so that they would be willing to retain him.

When the hour came for him to face his superiors on this important matter, he unhesitatingly and unflinchingly told of his new-found faith and his conviction that he should keep the true Sabbath. His superiors listened with rapt attention to his story, and then exclaimed, "We admire your courage, but you know the policy of this company. 'What shall we do about it?'"

Mr. B replied, "I realize that I cannot hold my present position, but you men will not go back on me at this time, for I am doing this for my God. Surely some place can be found for me within the confines of this great establishment."

Within his own heart he felt that God had heard the prayers which were offered in his behalf, and that a way would be provided. However, position or no position, he was going to be true to God. Yes, "some place can be found within the confines of this great establishment," and found it was. They actually created another department and made him head of it. And so Mr. B remained to bear his testimony to the keeping of God's true Sabbath. Thus a precedent was set; the inexorable law of the insurance company was broken. "What hath God wrought!"

A Railroad Man's Dilemma

Mr. C was not interested in religion. He had never professed anything, had never known what it was to pray or study the Bible. What he was deeply concerned about was his health. He was nervous and high-strung, and had poor digestion. His only hope of relief from his maladies was proper diet.

Health lectures were given in connection with the public evangelistic meetings which were held in the city where Mr. C resided. He was given an invitation to attend the class, which he did, and he enjoyed what he heard. However, he remained for the health subject only. He was not interested in religion and would

have nothing to do with it. As he became better acquainted with the one who was presenting the health messages, he was finally persuaded to stay one night to hear the evangelist. Studies were also arranged, with the result that he gave his heart to God and became converted. In due time the Sabbath was presented, and he was convicted of his duty in the matter.

Mr. C was working for the railroad in a special department, over which he had supervision, with a large number of men under him. It was evident that he had accomplished great things for the company. Inasmuch as he had built up that department, he felt that his services were valuable to the company and that he could easily arrange his program so that he would not have to appear at his office on the Sabbath. This he had done for several consecutive Sabbaths, but he must now make known the facts to his immediate superior. He wrote a letter, stating his desire to have the Sabbath off, and also how he could arrange his program so as not to work a hardship on the railroad or himself. Yes, it was a well-worded letter. His reasoning was plausible and his program quite feasible. It was with confidence and felicity that he waited for a reply. He was certain that he would not encounter any difficulty in getting his Sabbaths off.

The one who was studying with him felt a little concerned. This man had gone through life without sacrificing anything for his God. Should he now go through without a test that most men have to meet, would he be as strong in the faith as he otherwise would be if he had to meet with opposition from his employers? One Friday evening he came to the meeting with infelicity written all over his countenance. He had had a letter, a letter that shattered all his fond hopes. He could not retain his position and be off on Saturday, was the cruel word from headquarters. He exclaimed, "What shall I do? If I should lose my position how could I meet the payments on my home that I have recently purchased?" Then, too, he had an invalid wife. What would become of her? He had reached the age when it was rather difficult to find work. In the face of all these circumstances, would God expect him to keep the Sabbath? Such were the questions that Mr. C put to his instructor.

He was startled to hear coming from the lips of one whom he had felt would be sympathetic the words, "Thank the Lord, you were turned down in your request!"

The instructor went on to say that he must be tested on his allegiance to the Lord of the Sabbath. It was quite obvious that he had not settled it within his own heart that, come what might, he would remain true. Loss of position, home, loved ones, or even life itself should not cause the least deflection from the pathway of rectitude. After prayer it was suggested that he appeal his case to the highest official of the railroad company, passing by all the subordinates. But before appearing before this gentleman he was to determine that, come what might, he was going to keep God's Sabbath. Then he could cast himself upon the mercies of God, and know that whatever was for his good would be worked out. The Lord's promises were read to him, and he was assured of God's loving care, which would be over his wife, his home, and himself. His trembling hand must be placed in the hand of the dear Savior, and with his face set as a flint he was to go forward, fearing nothing. He took a firm hold upon the Lord, fully resolved that he would be true, regardless of the consequences.

A few days later he appeared before the highest ranking officer of his company. He now realized that God alone could help him find favor. With a prayer in his heart and courage born from above, he stated his case, making it clear that while he wanted to remain in his present position, he, would under no condition violate his conscience by working on Saturday. God can work when a man or a woman takes a stand like this. The railroad official was very sympathetic and without hesitating told Mr. C to arrange his work so that he could have his Sabbaths off, and in addition his salary was raised.

God honored his faith and his complete surrender. This experience made the Lord very real to this brother. A direct answer to prayer is a personal introduction to the God of the universe.

The Test of Losing a Lucrative Position

A young Catholic man, whom we shall call Mr. A, became interested in the message and began receiving instruction on the various points of faith. His wife had already accepted the truth and was a member of the church. One night after the Sabbath question was presented, he made this remark, "In order to be saved, I must obey the fourth commandment." The instructor, knowing that the Spirit of God was working, encouraged him to decide definitely that night to step out by

faith. This was during the years of depression, & Mr. A had a very lucrative position. It was a mighty challenge to his faith to resign from his present employment believing that he could get work elsewhere with the Sabbath off, when thousands in the same city were walking the streets trying to find employment.

Mr. A needed the encouragement of the instructor to place his trembling hand in the hand of God and cast himself upon the mercies of a loving Father, whose watchful, tender eye would lead, guide, and direct this newborn child of His. Regardless of what obstacles he would encounter, he took his stand with a firm belief that the God whom he was obeying would supply his every need. (Matt, 6:25-34; Mark 10:28-30.)

This step took as much faith and courage as was manifested by the three Hebrews when they chose the furnace rather than violate the second commandment. (Dan. 3:1-18.) The same God who wrought their deliverance would work for Mr. A. The simplicity with which this young man accepted the promises of the Holy Word was in itself inspiring. He felt that the Lord would testify to his acceptance of the holy Sabbath by giving him a position despite the prevailing conditions of unemployment, and would honor his faith before his Catholic family.

He subscribed to all points of truth and united with the church. He was happy now in his new-found belief. What about his work? Weeks went by, and thus far he had been unable to secure a position. Through the Spirit of prophecy we are told that we must have a faith that will endure weariness, delay, and hunger. Many times the Lord permits delay in the experience of new converts for the purpose of testing their faith. And so it was with Mr. A.

One morning quite early Mr. A and his wife appeared at the home of the instructor. He felt his need of a new infusion of strength from God, that his faith would not weaken during the long days of waiting. He needed to be reassured of God's promises. After a season of prayer an appointment was made by the worker to meet in Mr. A's home that night and again lay hold of the throne of God for help and deliverance. That night, as the worker was questioning this brother, asking whether he was aware of anything in his life that would hinder his prayers from being answered, the various points of truth were mentioned, such as smoking, health principles in their varied forms, tithing, etc. No, there was not anything that he knew of. The promises of God were again read, and prayer was

offered for a very definite answer.

After the worker left, this man and his wife spent considerable time going over the various questions that were asked. Could they, by mistake, have slipped on anyone point? The Spirit of God called to their minds that they had withheld a portion of tithe. It was not done intentionally but through oversight. They promised God that when morning came, this would be taken care of.

Prayer meeting was the following night. As soon as the worker entered the church, Mr. and Mrs. A were there waiting to discharge their full duty to God. As he passed the envelope, with the total amount of tithe, into the hand of the instructor, he exclaimed, "Now, God will work! This is why my prayers have not been answered."

The worker told them to remain after the meeting for special prayer. The worker's own faith was now put to the test. It was now not a question of the young man's faith. He knew that God was going to answer prayer that very week. Did the worker have sufficient faith to believe that God would do the impossible in securing a position for this brother that very week when no positions were to be found? Realizing the gravity of the situation, the worker went off alone to seek God for special help and faith to meet the demands of the hour, for nothing must be permitted to shake the confidence this young man had in the promises of God.

Later, when the three bowed in prayer, all were assured God answered their prayer, and a position was secured that very week.

How an Army Officer Met the Test, as Told by Himself

"I was an officer in the --- army during what is now being called the First World War. It was while I was an army officer that a copy of *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* was given to me as a Christmas gift. The plan of questions and answers used in that wonderful book appealed to me, and I soon began to read it. Almost immediately my attention was attracted to the section in which the truth of God's Word regarding the seventh-day Sabbath was clearly presented. At that time I had never heard of Seventh-day Adventists. I had been brought up a Baptist, and I was reluctant to recognize the seventh-day Sabbath as having- claims upon any but the Jews .

Diligent study of the book and a careful checking up of the actual texts in the Bible itself resulted, however, in a growing conviction that God was calling me to observe the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath.

"After very careful consideration of all the issues involved, and much earnest prayer for courage and wisdom, I resolved to approach my commanding officer with the request that I be allowed to keep the Sabbath 'according to the commandment.' The issue was clear to me, and I had told the Lord in my prayers that I was willing, in His strength, to face *whatever* the consequences of my stand might be. I believe that this is fundamentally important, whether one is facing this Sabbath issue in the army or in business under normal conditions. The suppliant should be sure that he is willing for God's will to be done. There must be implicit faith in the leading of God, even though His leadings should be through difficult experiences, persecution, or even 'the valley of the shadow of death. Our prayer should be for the faith that is expressed in the song, 'Where He may lead me, I will go, for I have learned to trust Him so.'

"I presented my request simply but with all the earnestness of which I was capable. I made no *demand* but pleaded that understanding consideration might be given my very unusual request. The commanding officer's response was very characteristic. His language would not bear quoting here! He told me that I was a fool to make such a request, and foolish to think that anything to do with religion could claim consideration in the army at such a time. He swore, he abused, he demanded that I withdraw my request. Patiently, and very respectfully, I assured him that I had counted the cost and was prepared to face the consequences, whatever they might be. I explained to him that it was a matter of life or death to me, and that I believed that my eternal destiny was at stake. I had prayed earnestly that the Spirit of God would influence him to be sympathetic, and during the interview I repeatedly prayed that God would soften his heart, if that was for the best. After a great deal of swearing and unpleasantness my prayer seemed to take effect, for he suddenly calmed and said, 'Well, I think you are very foolish, but since you have apparently fully made up your mind, I suppose I must submit your case to headquarters.' I thanked him warmly and said, I hope that you will not only submit my case, but that you will find it in your heart to recommend

its favorable consideration.' He responded, 'I would hate to lose you, and it may be useful to have an officer around to whom principle and religion are of such great consequence. So I shall recommend a favorable response to your unheard-of request, although I confess that I fear your case is rather hopeless.'

"The interview took place on Friday, and I suggested to the commanding officer that several weeks would elapse before my case could be decided upon. He replied, 'Don't worry about that. You may commence your queer Sabbath-keeping tonight, and we shall hope that the higher authorities will not disappoint you.' I thanked him and praised God for victory in the first stage of the conflict. I met with considerable taunting and ridicule from my fellow officers, but during the waiting period the commanding officer allowed me the privilege of observing the Sabbath. After about three months of suspense, during which I prayed 'without ceasing: the commanding officer showed me a telegram which he had just received. It was from the commander in chief of the army, and it read as follows:

" 'AFFORD MR. -- EVERY FACILITY FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF HIS RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS.'

"The Lord had heard the prayers of His child, and how my heart thrilled as I read the telegram. As I handed the telegram back to my superior, I told him how grateful I was to him for his understanding and co-operation. He remarked that it was due to nothing he had done, and then he went on to say, 'This is something that has never before been heard of in the -- army. I feared the worst, but you evidently have a wonderful God, and *He* worked for you.'

"We *do* have a wonderful God, a God who is wonder working. His miracles are not confined to the distant past. He will perform miracles today in behalf of all whose hearts are perfect toward Him. And in these days of peril, of anxiety and distress to those who faithfully seek to order their lives in harmony with the commandments of God, He whispers to the heart of each one, 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.' What a marvelous promise this is! And when Sabbath-keepers are called to military service, or have to meet the test in any other circumstances, if they resolve that they will, at all cost, serve God rather than man, He will uphold them

them with the right hand of His righteousness. And that 'right hand' never fails!"

Tithe Paying

A Widow's Problem

"I am a widow, sixty-five years old, dependent upon myself for support. By working hard at odd jobs I had laid by a small sum of money to help me through the winter. With this money was my tithe of \$6.35. Should I turn the money in to the treasury, or should I hold it in reserve, replacing it at a more favorable time? I had no more work in sight, and could barely stretch what I had to meet the winter's necessities. Day after day my problem confronted me, until in desperation I knelt in prayer and said, 'Lord, it is yours; you may have it. But please provide a home for me this winter, with food and heat.' I supposed the answer would come in the form of openings for work. But that afternoon a car drove in from a town forty miles away, and a friend and her husband rapped at the door. After we had exchanged greetings, she said, 'I have been worrying about you for a week, and we have come to offer you a home with us this winter, or as much of the winter as you care to stay. My husband and I are both working, but the house is warm, and you will be comfortable and more than welcome.' Who can say that God did not send these friends in answer to my prayer, or who can say that I would have been provided for during the long, cold winter if I had failed in meeting the test to be honest with God? My lesson is learned. I have proved God and found His promise true. It pays to give to God His own and trust His care."

Faithfulness Rewarded

A member of our church in Nassau, Bahama Islands, related his experience, as follows:

"When I accepted the message I lost my position because I would not work on the Sabbath. I searched for work over a period of many days, but without success. Finally the day came when the family was entirely without food and there was no money with which to purchase the necessities of life. Tucked away in one of the bureau drawers was twenty-five dollars which had been laid away as tithe when a salary was being received. The temptation now became severe. Should I use the Lord's money to buy food for my family in this time of need, or should we all go

hungry? The forces of evil championed the urge of hunger, while conscience was on the side of obeying God. After talking the situation over with my wife and children, we decided we would go to bed hungry rather than touch God's tithe. We presented our case to our heavenly Father, knowing that He understood our need and would provide in His own way. The next morning I received word to report for work, and have had steady employment since. God has prospered me financially, and I am now able to stand in the front ranks of liberal givers to the needs of the cause of God. Not only does the Lord hold in store a future great reward for His faithful children, but even in this life He gives them a hundredfold for their faithful service."

A Reformation in the Home

"It was my privilege to visit the home of a well-to-do Seventh-day Adventist farmer," writes a minister. "With great satisfaction he took me over his premises, showing me his fine herds, fields of golden grain, and commodious house and barn. Everything about the place bespoke careful planning, thrift, and 'the blessing of the Lord' that 'maketh rich, and He added no sorrow with it: Prov 10:22. Knowing that this brother, just a short time before, had been a poor man, harassed by a load of debt, I was interested to learn what windfall of money had come his way and brought about such a change. We seated ourselves on the grass for a confidential chat, and he told me the story of his experience somewhat as follows:

"I had been a nominal Seventh-day Adventist for years. Obedience to the truth, however, was more or less bondage to me., But I knew that the seventh day was the Sabbath, and so I kept it. I also believed in the tithing system, and to ease my conscience I paid a little now and then; but never very much, for, being worried about my debts and the needs of my family, I felt that I could not spare one tenth of all that came into my hands to turn over to the Lord's treasury. I argued that charity begins at home, and that the man who provideth not for his own house is worse than an infidel. Yet with all my pinching and saving we were always in distress, and everything seemed to go against us.

"One day while I was out in the field a conviction seized me that we were robbing God; that the little sums of money I had given to the church were not tithe

at all. I had no system of keeping accounts, and there was no way of knowing whether I gave a fifth, a third, a ninth, or a tenth of my income; whereas the tithe is a specified one tenth, just as truly as the Sabbath is the definite seventh day. As I thought the matter over I felt like a thief. My wife and I talked matters over, and we covenanted with each other that we would keep books for God and faithfully render unto the Lord the portion which belonged to Him. She took charge of the household affairs, and I of the general business. We concluded that what we ate of our garden was an income just as verily as money received from any source with which to buy vegetables at the store. So my wife placed a neat tablet near the kitchen door, with a pencil attached, If a half dozen eggs were used in cooking, the kitchen was charged for them at market value. In fact, the value of every thing that went onto the table was estimated and the amount of tithe due the Lord for each meal was recorded. It was a revelation to us how much we had previously robbed God in just the little things. It was not long until the church treasurer became surprised at the amount of tithe we turned in:

"Such was the gist of the man's conversation. Did such a reformation in the home result in blessing? Indeed, it became apparent in a hundred different ways. Could you have seen the chaos and abject poverty in that family before, and compared it with the order and restful harmony that existed now, you would be convinced that the very act of systematizing affairs of the household with a view to paying an honest tithe, carries in itself a blessing.

"The brother said that as far as he could see his tithe paying had not changed the laws of nature. There had been no more rain upon this crops than before; neither had the market for farm products materially increased; nor had he worked any harder, for he always had been very industrious. But as soon as he decided to give an honest tithe of all he had, the windows of heaven began to open, and the blessing of Malachi came upon that home. His prosperity was a testimony to the community that God's plan in temporal finances is best."