

Sabbath School Notes

There is a lack of appreciation of the importance of the Sabbath-school work as supporting discipline of mind and a thorough education, in the things of God. There is a lack of thoroughness in Bible study.

2021

1. WHAT IS THE SABBTH SCHOOL?

i. ORIGINS

WE have stated several times that the Sunday-law movement and, in fact, the whole movement in general for religious legislation, is directly contrary to the gospel of Christ. The theory, the methods, and the purposes of the movement are the opposite of those that pertain to the gospel of Christ. And that this is so we propose to demonstrate by proofs that cannot be questioned. To begin with we quote from Mr. Crafts's book, "The Sabbath for Man," a passage from under the heading, "The Improvement of Sabbath Observance." It is written to show how Sunday observance can be improved; to show how that good for which the Sunday-law advocates are working may be promoted. It is as follows:—{December 11, 1890 ATJ, AMS 385.1}

The best way to keep young men in the Sabbath school sunday school **at the very age when they need it most, is to put a hedge of adult classes, filled with their parents, between them and the door.** {December 11, 1890 ATJ, AMS 385.2}

There is also in the State of Pennsylvania a small body **of German S.D. Baptist** found in the counties of Lancaster, York, Franklin, and Bedford, and in the central and western parts of the State. They originated in 1728 from the teaching of Conrad Beissel, a native of Germany. They practice trine immersion, and the washing of feet, and observe open communion. They encourage celibacy, but make it obligatory upon none. Even those who have chosen this manner of life are at liberty to marry if at any time they choose so to do. **They established and successfully maintained a Sabbath-school at Ephrata, their head-quarters, forty years before Robert Raikes had introduced the system of Sunday-schools.** This people have suffered much persecution because of their observance of the seventh day, the laws of Pennsylvania being particularly oppressive toward Sabbatarians. 2 The German S.D. Baptists do not belong to the S.D. Baptist General Conference. {1873 JNA, HSFD 499.2}

And now they will live a thousand years, which man in his natural state could never attain: yes, and after that forever and ever. "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." "But the rest of the dead,"-what dead? Divines tell us, Sinners who are, dead in trespasses and sins "lived not again." Then they once lived before or why say "again" Some Divines may answer, they had fallen from grace; **but a little sabbath**

school child, would answer William Miller, That those who were not raised in the first resurrection, would not be raised "until the thousand years were finished." This I have seen tried, and have often admired the saying of Paul, 1 Cor. 1:27, "And God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise." {1833 WiM, ESH 60.2}

Experience of William Foy

In the year 1835, under the preaching of Elder Silas Curtis, I was led to inquire, what I should do to be saved. {1845 WEF, CEWF 7.1}

Christians, directed me to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. I then began to pray earnestly to God to pardon my sins; but the more I prayed the more I beheld the sinfulness of my heart; and for many days I feared there was no mercy for me; but was led to see, that it would have been justice in God, to have cut me off, and sent me where hope or mercy could not have reached me. I then became willing to give up all; and in that moment Christ appeared the one altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousands, and spake the life-giving word to my soul. I then rejoiced in the God of my salvation; while all things around me appeared new, shining forth with the glory of God. Then could my heart unite in the song of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men." I then saw such a fullness in Christ, that I wanted to proclaim it to all the world. O the glory of God that filled my soul! Three months rolled away in which I enjoyed sweet communion with my God. I was then thrown into a trial by those who should have been ---sing fathers in Israel, and thus remained many days,

struggling in prayer; but the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation." **A father in Israel whom I visited at this time, gave me instruction that proved a blessing to my soul. I then joined the Sabbath School, and was there instructed for the first time, to read the word of God, and soon became able to read my little bible.** Immediately the duty of baptism was impressed upon me; and after three months disobedience, I went before the church and related the dealings of God to my soul, and the day following was led down into the liquid stream by Bro. S. Curtis, and was buried with my Saviour in baptism. Then did I experience the fulfilment of the promise; "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up as on wings of eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint;" and while coming up out of the water, it appeared to me the opening heavens around me shone; and I cried with a loud voice, saying: "Glory to God, and the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne!" {1845 WEF, CEWF 7.2}

ii. What it is

I HAVE been appointed to speak to-day on the Sabbath school work, especially as it is at the present time—its present work in the studies now before the school. The Sabbath-school work is, plainly enough, school work—school work for Sabbath. It is a school that is held on the Sabbath, in which instruction is given, as in a school, by teachers. {August 7, 1900 ATJ, ARSH 499.1}

So far, then, a part of the subject that was presented here the last time that I spoke, is present instruction for to-day,—as to what is teaching; as to what is the work of a school, and of teachers in school. I may refer to that

for a few minutes, to recall the thought of what is true teaching. To teach is to show; to show how; to lead the way, in the doing of things. So teaching is not theorizing at all: it is substantial, concrete—the actual, practical "showing how" to do things. {August 7, 1900 ATJ, ARSH 499.2}

Patit Creek, W. T.—We held tent meetings here nearly four weeks. One was immersed; two commenced keeping the Sabbath; a band of nineteen brethren and sisters was formed, **and we organized a Sabbath-school of three classes. Our review of the Disciple minister on the law and Sabbath may result in a debate. We expect to effect a church organization here sometime this coming autumn.** Three adult Sabbath-keepers, living near, have not yet joined the band. {September 23, 1880 ATJ, ARSH 220.1}

iii. When Organized

General Organizations Formed

As the message advanced, the following general organizations were formed, the officers of which were elected at the regular sessions of the General Conference:- {1905 JNL, GSAM 355.1}

The General Conference Association—a legal body of twenty-one members, to hold the title to the property of the various institutions in America and other countries. {1905 JNL, GSAM 355.2}

The Foreign Mission Board—to superintend and extend mission work outside of organized conferences. {1905 JNL, GSAM 355.3}

The International Tract Society-whose province was the distribution of reading matter, and correspondence, seeking to open up new missions. {1905 JNL, GSAM 355.4}

The Religious Liberty Association-its special field being to aid those persecuted for conscience' sake, and to circulate literature on the principles of religious liberty. {1905 JNL, GSAM 355.5}

The International Sabbath-School Association-the object of which was the building up and advancement of the Sabbath-school work in all fields. {1905 JNL, GSAM 355.6}

The Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association-its work relating to the training of physicians and nurses, the conducting of sanitariums, homes for orphans, the aged, etc. {1905 JNL, GSAM 355.7}

2. ITS PURPOSE

A father in Israel whom I visited at this time, gave me instruction that proved a blessing to my soul. I then joined the Sabbath School, and was there instructed for the first time, to read the word of God, and soon became able to read my little bible. Immediately the duty of baptism was impressed upon me; and after three months disobedience, I went before the church and related the dealings of God to my soul, and the day following was led down into the liquid stream by Bro. S. Curtis, and was buried with my Saviour in baptism... {1845 WEF, CEWF 7.2}

It seems a commonplace to say that nobody should take part in Sabbath-school instruction who is not himself a constant student of the Bible; but the reminder is required. We assume too quickly and easily that we are familiar with God's Book; we fancy often that we know its contents with more accuracy than we really do; we forget how absolutely essential is the daily, patient, systematic, loving scrutiny of the Word of truth and life. **but are there not some of us who think ourselves quite ready to enlighten the children, when our own acquaintance with God's many-coloured revelation is shallow and superficial?** This state of things must end if the school is to grow in usefulness and power, and if, indeed, it is to vindicate its continued existence. {August 14, 1902 EJW, PTUK 528.12}

They shall all be taught of God.

3. PROPOSED REFORMS

IT has also been said, already, that these lessons "are too tedious—ask a question, and then answer the question by perhaps one or two words in a verse, and over and over so, before you get through a single verse. Why, to get the lessons the way that the lesson pamphlet requires, we should have to go over it fifty times a day!" Well, suppose you should. Is it a dreadful thing, a toilsome, burdensome thing, to drink in eternal life "fifty times a day"? "Oh, well, it does not seem like that to me." No, of course not! That is why it is so tedious. There is nothing tedious, there is nothing toilsome, there is nothing

monotonous at all, in drinking in eternal life by the word of God, even in the book of Galatians, "fifty times a day." And in the book of Galatians you have the eternal life which comes by the word of God in a way that an angel could not better. And in receiving this eternal life, there is nothing monotonous, there is nothing wearisome, in any sense whatever. It is simply joy, joy, joy—"joy unspeakable and full of glory." [Voice: "Good!"] {August 14, 1900 ATJ, ARSH 514.1}

Then, if to me it is a task, if it is a weariness, if it becomes so monotonous as to grow dull; and I can not stand it to go over that thing fifty times a day, to get the Sabbath-school lesson, so that other persons who do not know it may have it,—then it is not eternal life at all to me: I have not yet found the fountain; I am not drinking at the fountain. I am away off on the dry mountains: I am away in the desert, where that lost sheep is. {August 14, 1900 ATJ, ARSH 514.2}

I call your attention to these things, not for the things themselves, but for illustration. **These statements that the lessons are "very dry" and "so tedious," when the lessons are simply the very words of Scripture itself—this illustrates exactly the evil which the book of Galatians is given to correct.** It illustrates exactly the condition of things that is considered and refuted, and annihilated by the book of things as that—a condition of things in which a people professing to be Christians were not Christians—a condition of things in which a people professing to be in the way of God knew not the way of God. It was a condition in which all was only formalism: their profession was a form; what they did was a form; all their service to God was a form; it was formalism and ceremonialism altogether. That is how it is that there came

"some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." {August 14, 1900 ATJ, ARSH 514.4}

OUR time is so nearly gone that I can call attention only to another phase of this subject. But I hope that this to which I have called your attention will encourage every soul here to get the principle so that we can have it, every one, every day, as we come into the school, or into the church. **Let us not continue for a moment in a way that any of the Sabbath-school lessons, in the book of Galatians, or in any other part of the Bible, will be in any sense dry or tedious. If it has been so with any, let it not be so longer.** {August 28, 1900 ATJ, ARSH 547.1}

"Staying Away from Sabbath-School" The Signs of the Times 9, 7.

E. J. Waggoner

It is often the case that we hear persons give as a reason for not coming to Sabbath-school, "I didn't have my lesson." But this answer should not be dignified with the title of reason, for it is really a very poor excuse. It shows that the individual offering it does not realize the object of the school. We do not go to Sabbath-school to "show-off" our proficiency, as some people go to church to exhibit their fine clothes. We go to Sabbath-school in order to learn. We are all of us ignorant, to a greater or less degree, of the truths contained in the Bible; we go to the Sabbath-school that we may become enlightened. To stay away from the school because we are ignorant, is as foolish as it would be to stay away from dinner because we are hungry. If we do not know the lesson, that is a great

reason why we should attend the school. If it were possible for us to be perfectly familiar with the lesson, so that we could learn nothing more, there would be no special reason for us to attend, except for the sake of our example; we would not lose so much personally by staying away, but our absence might influence others to stay away also. But when we do not understand the lesson, and stay away, we have not only our example on the wrong side, but we suffer great loss ourselves. {February 15, 1883 EJW, SITI 77.9}

It may be asked, "If the Sabbath-school is simply the place to learn, what is the use of studying the lesson at all?" Just this: The more we know of anything, the more we are able to learn, and the better able are we to appreciate what others have learned. If we have learned the lesson as well as we can by ourselves, we shall be in the best condition to learn from others; we will have an interest in what they say. If we know nothing of the lesson, we may learn but very little in regard to it during the Sabbath-school hour; but that little is vastly more than we should learn **if we did not hear the recitation at all.** {February 15, 1883 EJW, SITI 77.10}

Let every Sabbath-school scholar, then, whether young or old, resolve that he will attend every Sabbath, both for the good which he may do, and for that which he may receive. E. J. W. {February 15, 1883 EJW, SITI 77.11}

4. NEED FOR INTEREST

There is but one thing now lacking, and that, unfortunately, is not peculiar to the school. The same lack exists in Oakland, and we believe it exists in all our

schools, and among our people generally. **There is a lack of appreciation of the importance of the Sabbath-school work as supporting discipline of mind and a thorough education, in the things of God. There is a lack of thoroughness in Bible study.** The Sabbath-school has been regarded as different from the day-school, and that it was not expected that the lesson should be learned perfectly. There has been such an apparent fear of formalism, and a desire to be able to generalize and state things in our own language, that we have neglected that accurate knowledge of the Bible which alone can enable us to generalize. The particular is before the general. Before we venture to state a Bible event or truth in our own words, we must be familiar with the words of the sacred text; then, if necessary we can paraphrase. But the instances where it is necessary or proper to change the expression in the least, in order to convey its exact meaning, are more rare than is commonly supposed. {May 10, 1883 EJW, SITI 211.6}

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE CONFERENCE

"Your committee, appointed for the purpose of taking into consideration the great principles upon which we can unite and act in advancing the cause of truth, for the edification of the body of Christ, the salvation of souls, and the preparation of man for the near Advent of the Saviour, submit the following report: {1853 SB, MWM 301.2}

..."PLAN OF OPERATIONS. {1853 SB, MWM 305.3}

"In the midst of our disappointed hopes of seeing the King of Glory, and being made like him, and still finding ourselves in a world of sin, snares, and death, the question forces itself upon us, {1853 SB, MWM 305.4}

"What now is our work? {1853 SB, MWM 305.5}

"To us it seems clear that our first work is to make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. We are in duty bound to give the household meat in due season, and to build ourselves up in our most holy faith. While doing this, we are to continue, in obedience to the great commission, to preach the Gospel to every creature: so long as the love of Christ dwells in us, it will constrain us. We shall not be released, while in our present state, from our obligations to be 'workers, together with God,' in saving those for whom the Redeemer died. It is evident that the duty, which of right devolves on every minister of the Gospel, of proclaiming the hour of God's judgment, is, if performed at all, to be done by those who are convinced of its truth. Shall we continue to do it, or shall it be left undone? And if we continue to work in this peculiar department of the Lord's vineyard, what system of operations shall we adopt for carrying forward our work? On this point we feel that we have need of great wisdom and prudence. {1853 SB, MWM 305.6}

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"Nor can we think ourselves justified in neglecting Sabbath-schools and Bible-class instruction. We would suggest to each congregation the necessity of opening a Sabbath-school for the benefit of at least their own children, and as many more as can be induced to attend. If the beginning is small, perseverance will accomplish the object. . . . {1853 SB, MWM 306.3}

5. SABBATH SCHOOL DIVISIONS

The number of classes formed in the Sabbath school was twenty-eight, five of them in **the primary divisions**, with a total membership of 228, of which twenty-seven were children. The lesson in **the senior division** was: "Unsanctified Service and the Result." In the primary, "The Life of Christ." Elder E.H. Gates reviewed the senior division, and Elder W. W. Hyatt the primary. The first named is from the Colorado conference and the latter from Nebraska. {May 7, 1889 ATJ, TDC 4.2}

At 8:45 came the principle event of the day, the Sabbath School, in which, **in four divisions, the senior, intermediate, primary and kindergarten**, 41 classes were formed with a membership of 253. The classes were distributed in the large tabernacle according to the program already published in the CAPITAL, and the kindergarten children formed a pleasing sight up on the rostrum surrounding their tables seated in the diminutive chairs of this department. Mrs. C. P. Haskell, of Denver, reviewed the little ones on the lesson "Life of Enoch," and Elder W.H. Wakeham the senior division on "Unbelief and Punishment." {May 14, 1889 ATJ, TDC 7.2}

6. HOW CONDUCTED

i. Organization

ii. Reports

THE THIRD SABBATH IN CAMP—AN INTERESTIN KINDERGARTEN

The End of the Storm and a Sunshiny Sabbath—The Swollen Marais de Cygene—Campers Occupy all Vacant Rooms—Another Supply of Tents Telegraphed for—Several Hundred People Expected this Week—The Main Meeting to Begin To-day—The Sermons and Lectures Resume and a Fair Attendance from Ottawa—**Report of the Sabbath School**—Another Storm at Night but Fair Weather Sunday Special Correspondence of the CAPITAL.... {May 21, 1889 ATJ, TDC 5.1}

iii. Donations

"Dear Brethren and Sisters of the Sabbath-Schools—" Pacific Union Recorder 2, 14 , pp. 8, 9.

The work of spreading the third angel's message outside of our conference is so important that it ought not to be allowed to languish. The conference organization is doing well in having so many of its regularly-paid laborers work in foreign fields. But this is not enough. This is only helping in one way; while this work needs to be helped in every way that is possible. Besides, California is the only conference that has done as it has done. True, the movement is spreading; but no other conference has yet set free all workers who will go to foreign fields, to be paid as such the same as if they

worked in the home field. Therefore, even if this plan were enough when universally employed, it is plain that as yet it can not, in any fair degree, be counted a proper working of the foreign fields. Therefore all other means must likewise be employed. {February 12, 1903 ATJ, PUR 8.1}

The Sabbath-school donations have for a number of years been one of the greatest helps in supporting foreign missions. This must be so still. It will never do to slacken this stream of means, nor divert it from the channel through which has been carried such splendid help to foreign fields. {February 12, 1903 ATJ, PUR 8.2}

Yet we find that some of our Sabbath-schools are using all the regular Sabbath-school donations for the expenses of the school, or for the support of the church-school or other home work, thus diverting these donations wholly from the foreign work. This is not only crippling the foreign work, but it is shutting off the giving of much that would otherwise be given. For since, in such cases, the funds are all used for the home work, there are many who have ceased to make regular Sabbath donations. This way of using the Sabbath-school donations is therefore crippling in both directions; it cripples the foreign work, and it cripples the home work. Evidently this can not be the best way to do. Of course, each school has power to use its donations as it may choose. But why choose the way which is not best, but is only crippling in both directions? Why not continue to use the regular Sabbath-school donations in the best way, and then take also the better way to support the church-schools, as well as all other home work? {February 12, 1903 ATJ, PUR 8.3}

And there is a better way,—the way to which the Lord is now calling us all,—the way of the second tithe. Everywhere that this is adopted the results are so entirely satisfactory that all are only pleased with it, and thankful for it. This way supplies abundance for all home needs. {February 12, 1903 ATJ, PUR 9.1}

Please, then, brethren and sisters, do not cripple the foreign work to help yourselves at home. Keep up the foreign help, and take the better way of helping your home work. In any event, please do not cut off any supply to foreign missions; do not turn the Sabbath-school donations from this much-needed work. {February 12, 1903 ATJ, PUR 9.2}

Alonzo T. Jones. {February 12, 1903 ATJ, PUR 9.3}

Jan. 29, 1903. {February 12, 1903 ATJ, PUR 9.4}

iv. Time for Study

Sabbath morning at 8:30, Brother Prescott gave one of the best Bible studies that ever I heard, from 2 Cor. 3:1-6; 4:1-7, on the ministry of the Spirit of life. Words can not describe it, but a careful reading of the Scriptures used will give an indication of the line of study. The Spirit of God was present in power, giving light and life, and deeply impressing conviction of truth, privilege, and duty. {May 14, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 317.1}

At eleven o'clock Sister White spoke with her usual power and solemn impressiveness, on the love, the presence, and the ready helpfulness of Christ to all. {May 14, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 317.2}

At two o'clock the Sabbath-school lesson was studied.
The house was so full that, instead of reciting by classes, all joined in a study of the lesson of the Sanctuary, led by

Brother Prescott. Beautiful lessons were found on the meaning of the earthly sanctuary, as a parable for the time then present, signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing; and, upon the manifestation of that way into the holiest of all, since the first tabernacle is not now standing; hearts were made to burn as it was seen that Christ alone is the Way into the holiest of all; that Christ is the great object and the meaning of the parable, as in all things of God He is the Way. {May 14, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 317.3}

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At three o'clock the writer followed with a discourse on the priesthood and ministry of Christ as the pattern of the priesthood and ministry of Christians. For of us it is written: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood," and "all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:18. Christ was made priest "after the power of an endless life." Heb. 7:16. And it is only "the power of an endless life" that can ever make anybody a priest and minister of God. It is only an endless life of which we are the ministers. God has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 2 Cor. 5:18. That word is the word of life, eternal life. It being thus only an endless life of which we are ministers, it is impossible for any one to minister that which he has not. Then, except we be possessed of endless life; our ministry, as of God, is nothing. This simply expresses the great truth that every man must himself be that which he calls others to be, or his call is in vain. No man can minister that which he has not. And in this, as in all other things of Christ, full provision is made, because, though "the wages of sin is

death," "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Endless life is a free gift to every soul, every one can have it by believing in Jesus. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. {May 14, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 317.4}

At the close of the Sabbath, there was taken up the business of the Conference. At 7:30 Elder Daniells was to preach; but the business meeting was so spiritual, and therefore so interesting, that it has the unanimous choice that the business meeting should continue. And throughout, the proceedings were not distinguishable in spirit from the meetings that had been held even on the Sabbath; because the same principles were simply continued in the business meetings that had been dwelt upon in the Sabbath meetings. The people themselves did the business; they themselves named the committees. {May 14, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 317.5}

The congregation of Seventh-day Adventists, that has hitherto been worshipping in the Athenaeum, Camden Road, N., will hereafter, until further notice, meet in Duncombe Hall, Duncombe Road, Hornsey Rise, N. Services will be held every Sabbath at 11 A.M.; **Sabbath-school at 9:45 A.M.** Besides these, there will be preaching every Sunday evening at 7, and Bible study at 3 P.M. A general invitation is extended. {September 7, 1893 EJW, PTUK 368.1}

v. How to Study

-Thoroughly review the entire lesson in the following manner: {July 1896 WWP, GBJ 2.16}

1. Ask the questions as found in the Lesson Quarterly. {July 1896 WWP, GBJ 2.17}

2. Call upon different ones to give a synopsis of the lesson or the lesson story in their own language. {July 1896 WWP, GBJ 2.18}
3. Have the references given by different ones, and have those texts repeated that have been committed to memory. {July 1896 WWP, GBJ 2.19}
4. Give each one the privilege of questioning others upon the lesson. {July 1896 WWP, GBJ 2.20}

SABBATH

-Review practical truths of the lesson, repeat all the texts committed to memory, and relate personal experiences in which the truths of the lesson have been found helpful. {July 1896 WWP, GBJ 2.21}

(This program is simply suggestive and can of course be varied to suit circumstances, but we do urge upon all the necessity of thorough, regular, systematic study of the Scriptures as given in our Sabbath school lessons.) {July 1896 WWP, GBJ 2.22}

After each chapter has been studied, encourage each member of the class to express in few words the leading thoughts of the chapter, and by frequent reviews fix these topics in mind. If parents would do this for themselves, and then help their children to do it, making it-instead of the gossip of the day-a common subject of conversation in the homes, much good might be accomplished.

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vi. Reciting

If on this occasion I can say something to enable you to see the fullness of the truth expressed in the **Sabbath-school lesson that you have studied and recited**, I shall be satisfied. I do not know whether in this hour I shall get beyond the first verse of your Sabbath-school lesson. It will make no difference if I do not, because to know the truth, with its consequences, that is expressed in that verse, is to know everything. Indeed, all the verses that follow but express the consequences of the truth of that verse.
{October 9, 1900 ATJ, ARSH 643.1}

At two o'clock the Sabbath-school lesson was studied. **The house was so full that, instead of reciting by classes, all joined in a study of the lesson of the Sanctuary**, led by Brother Prescott. Beautiful lessons were found on the meaning of the earthly sanctuary, as a parable for the time then present, signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing; and, upon the manifestation of that way into the holiest of all, since the first tabernacle is not now standing; hearts were made to burn as it was seen that Christ alone is the Way into the holiest of all; that Christ is the great object and the meaning of the parable, as in all things of God He is the Way. {May 14, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 317.3}

If we know nothing of the lesson, we may learn but very little in regard to it during the Sabbath-school hour; but that little is vastly more than we should learn if we did not hear the recitation at all. {February 15, 1883 EJW, SITI 77.10}

TEACHERS

"Shunning Responsibility" The Signs of the Times 9, 26.

E. J. Waggoner

What would be thought of the pastor of a church who would occasionally be absent from service on Sabbath morning without sending any excuse, or even letting the congregation know that he intended to be absent? Or, if a minister should make an appointment to preach on a certain evening, and then should stay away without informing anyone of his intended absence, how would he be regarded? The reply is at once that a man who would do such a thing, and repeat the offense, could not expect to retain the confidence of the people. They would justly feel that he had no appreciation for the responsibility resting upon him. His course would show that he was not a true minister-a servant of the church-but a server of self. {July 12, 1883 EJW, SITI 305.13}

But how much worse would that be than for a Sabbath school teacher to absent himself from his class, without any real excuse, or without notifying anybody of his intended absence? The cases are exactly parallel. When the teacher consents to take charge of the class, he virtually pledges himself to be present every Sabbath and do his duty by it. He has no more right to be absent from the Sabbath-school than the pastor has to be away from church. The teacher who does so shows his unfitness for the work in which he is engaged, and should he not reform, ought not to be retained in his position. {July 12, 1883 EJW, SITI 305.14}

Some teacher of this sort may say: "Well, I am willing to give up my class; let them fill my place with some one who

can do better." What an admission! Willing to give up all responsibility, because it interferes with your convenience. Willing to do nothing, when you ought to, and by the practice of a little self-denial could, do a great deal. How much better it would be to say, "I am willing to do all I can; if I fail, it shall not be on account of lack of effort." You who are so humble that you don't want to occupy any position of responsibility; who are willing to let others do all the work, do imagine that you will take things so calmly when you see another coming forward to take your crown? Think of this. It is well to consider consequences. E. J. W. {July 12, 1883 EJW, SITI 305.15}

NOTES TO TEACHERS

But we must all be sure that we learn the lesson, or else we can not teach it. He can not teach who has not first learned. You and I can not teach; we can not show the way to God; we can not show the people how to find the way, nor how to walk in the way when they have found it; until we ourselves have learned the lesson of how to find the way to God, and how to walk in the way after having found it. We can not teach these until we have learned them; and we can not learn them except from him who is "the Way," and who is the original Teacher of the way. {August 7, 1900 ATJ, ARSH 499.8}

And, having learned these things, then it is the sole work of the school for the Sabbath to teach these things. There is nothing else to be taught. And anything that has not that lesson in it, anything that has not in it the elements of showing how—of showing the people the way out of

darkness into light, and then the way of light after they have got into light—anything that is not that, has no place in the school for the Sabbath, has no place in the Sabbath-school. {August 7, 1900 ATJ, ARSH 499.9}

FEEDBACK

EDITORS OF THE REVIEW AND HERALD: The members of our Sabbath-school have been studying, or trying to study, the book of Galatians all through the quarter, and do not know what we have been studying about. Some of us think we have studied both laws together; others think we have studied the moral law; while others say it is the ceremonial law all through the book of Galatians, and nothing else. Now I wish you would tell us what law we have studied this quarter. Please answer through the REVIEW. {February 5, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 89.1}

We publish this letter and answer it in the REVIEW, because it is a sample of a number that we have received; and we fear that it tells the experience of a great many persons, and, indeed, a good many whole Sabbath-schools throughout the United States. {February 5, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 89.2}

The letter asks us to tell what law these folks have studied the past quarter, in the Sabbath-school lessons. We can not tell. For when they themselves can not tell what law they have been studying, who are the very ones who have been doing the studying, how can we be expected to tell, when we were not there at all to know what they were studying? Perhaps even if we ourselves had been among them, it would have been as difficult for us to tell what law

they were studying, as it is for them to tell. {February 5, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 89.3}

One thing we do know; that is, that no law at all has been the subject of study in the Sabbath-school lessons themselves; but the gospel only. We know that in the Sabbath-school lessons as written and as published in the Sabbath-school lesson books, papers, etc., the sole subject for study, from the first verse of Galatians unto the last one that has been before the schools, and even to the end of the book, has been and is the gospel, and the gospel only. {February 5, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 89.4}

It could not be otherwise, and be a study of the book of Galatians; for the gospel is the only subject of the book. This is made plain at the very outset of the book itself. The very first words of actual address in the book are: "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." And that is the gospel, and the gospel alone. {February 5, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 89.5}

The very next words of the book are: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." {February 5, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 89.6}

That shows emphatically that the only subject that was in the mind of the writer of the book of Galatians, is the

gospel. There is, indeed, a question as to whether it is the true or the false gospel, the genuine gospel or the perverted gospel; yet, for all that, the only subject is the gospel. {February 5, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 89.7}

The following verses in the first chapter (11-14) show that the subject is still the gospel; that the gospel is received by the "revelation of Jesus Christ," and that it delivered Paul from the false gospel, the traditions of the Jews' religion. {February 5, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 89.8}

The next verses (15, 16) still emphasize the fact that it is only the gospel that is treated, showing how the revelation of that gospel is Christ in you the hope of glory: "It pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen." And that is the gospel. {February 5, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 89.9}

The narrative of Paul's experience, in the remaining part of the first chapter and the greater part of the second chapter, is all given as a means of demonstrating how he stood firmly, and even alone, and alone against even Peter himself, for "the truth of the gospel," and in order that "the truth of the gospel might continue with you." {February 5, 1901 ATJ, ARSH 89.10}

REVIEW

It was a blessed day altogether; and we know of no one thing that helped to bring about the good results more than the Sabbath-school lesson for the day. This was upon the love of God. All had studied the lesson with interest; the teachers entered heartily upon their work with the classes; the general review was full of life, and deeply impressive. Thus the deep and tender impressions made by the Spirit of God, as the wonders of his great love were

portrayed anew by his holy word, in the good Sabbath-school lesson, became the very best preparation for the effective preaching of the word, and the special effort in behalf of the people on the Sabbath day. {June 29, 1888 ATJ, SITI 392.1}

November 27, 1884

"Helps in Studying the Lesson" The Signs of the Times 10, 45.

E. J. Waggoner

The question has been asked, "At what time in the study of the Sabbath-school lessons should helps be brought in, and how should they be used?" To this question it is difficult to get an answer in a few words. In order to have a thorough knowledge of the subject, it would be necessary to have a clear understanding of what is meant by "helps;" but that must be waived for the present. We will suppose it to include the concordance, dictionaries, atlas, commentaries, histories, etc. Some will derive help from that which would be of no service to others. Taking it for granted that the things at hand are such as may be a help indeed, we would mark out, in brief, the following as a good plan for starting the lesson:- {November 27, 1884 EJW, SITI 710.1}

Having learned from the lesson paper what the lesson is about, and what portion of Scripture it covers, take the Bible at once, there is where you will find the lesson to be studied. Read carefully, several times, all the texts that are quoted, so as to get them well in mind. The next step will be to commit to memory the portion that is to be memorized. This, of course, will not be accomplished at

one effort; to commit the text thoroughly will be a work covering the whole week. If the student wishes, and is able, he may commit the whole of the lesson to memory; this is done by some, with profit. But it is not best to attempt too much at once. It is not the desire to tax the memory to such an extent that earnest thought cannot be put upon the matter thus committed. {November 27, 1884 EJW, SITI 710.2}

While thus learning the texts referred to, the student should bear in mind the object for which they are quoted. Very often many things may be learned from a single verse; the question will indicate for what particular thing the verses is quoted. Then after learning the answers to each individual question, the lesson should be considered as a whole, to see the relation of the questions to one another, and what general point is made by the whole lesson. When this has been done, the student is ready to consult outside helps. {November 27, 1884 EJW, SITI 710.3}

In the matter of consulting commentaries, great care and judgment must be exercised, as on doctrinal points they are often misleading. It is not safe for any one to consult commentaries indiscriminately, unless he is previously pretty well grounded in the truth. Commentaries are more for the learned than the unlearned. If one has a good general idea of the subject which he is studying, and is anchored to certain fixed principles, so that he can sift the chaff from the wheat, he will learn much from commentaries. It often happens that a positively erroneous exposition will awaken a train of thought in the mind of the careful student, that will be very profitable. Those, however, who are most familiar with commentaries, know that quite often the text upon which the student most needs light, is the one upon which the least is said. The

reasons for this is obvious. It is perhaps needless to suggest that if there is any work bearing on the lesson, of whose orthodoxy you are fully assured, that is the one to be consulted first. It will aid your judgment in your further search. {November 27, 1884 EJW, SITI 710.4}

One "help" should never be neglected. It is that of the Holy Spirit. It is the author of the Bible (2 Pet. 1:20, 21; Eph. 6:17), and can best give light upon it. One of its offices is to guide into all truth (John 16:13), and it may be had by any one for the asking. Luke 11:13; Mark 11:24. The promise, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men literally, and upbraideth not, and its shall be given him," is given to all. This help should be sought before beginning the lesson, and during all the time of studying it. One thing more: The Saviour has said, "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine." He who earnestly and prayerfully studies the word, with a sincere desire to profit by it, cannot fail to be enlightened. Jesus also said: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14:23. Now we read that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." When John 1:5. If then he dwells in us, what an all-powerful, ever-present help we have. Without this help, all others are worthless. E. J. W. {November 27, 1884 EJW, SITI 710.5}