Poems by Ernest B. Sprunt

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The Higher Rock (May–June 1972)

From Ministry in Focus, May–June 1972.

Psalm 61

When my heart is overwhelmed with temptation, grief, or care,

When the tempest rages round me, and I tremble in despair;

When I cannot find a refuge from the perils of the way;

"Lead me, Lord, Oh lead me to the Higher Rock," I pray.

When I'm driven from Thy presence by the adverse winds and gales;

When the clouds are dark and heavy and the enemy assails;

When my faith begins to falter, and I fain would turn and flee;

"Lead me to the Higher Rock," is still my plaintive plea.

For I find a place of refuge when I'm lifted up on high,

Where the foes are all below me, and I feel Thyself so nigh:

In the shadow of Thy presence, I will trust beneath Thy wings;

Until, when storms are ended, on the Higher Rock I sing.

Tools, Instruments and Equipment (Apr 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 4, Apr 1955.

The divine exhortation, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,” (2 Tim. 2:15) reveals to us the objective of Bible study. The student is ultimately to shew himself before men as divinely approved, and this approval is the outcome of his knowing how to properly divide the Word of Truth. As men in the great achievements of life use helps, machines, and implements, even so, the student will find the profit of certain instruments and equipment. Let us consider some of these.

The Holy Bible

For this great and important work the first essential is to obtain a well bound reference Bible with clear black type. Small print is hard to read and is very hard on the eyes, and the time and labour spent on marking is wasted unless you have a book with a cover that is durable. The money put into a more expensive binding will prove to be a good investment over the years.

The Oxford Wide Margin Bible is very convenient because it provides space for brief notes, alternate translations, or references, which the student may wish to add for personal use. The Loose Leaf Bible provides even greater space for notes, which may be inserted between any pages, as desired. Loose Leaf Bibles are

published by Winston International, Scripture Gift Mission, and Scofield.

Many Christians prefer the Scofield Reference Bible because of its helpful notes and comments. There are topical references and chain references for main themes and for key words, also in this Bible.

The Newberry Bible, once very popular, is now printed only in the small edition, and with poor type. However, there is a real field of study provided for those who will follow Mr. Newberry's signs, and profit by his helpful notes on the prepositions, verb tenses, etc. If the reader should be fortunate to locate one of the old, large-size volumes in some second-hand store, he would have added treasure.

The Two Version is still available at some Christian book stores. This edition gives a marginal note of the changes made in the revision of 1885 over the King James Version.

For reference and comparison, and perhaps clarity of thought, the student would be advised to consult some other translations of The Bible. A New Translation by J. N. Darby is helpful, as is Young's Literal Translation. The Englishman's Greek New Testament, published by Samuel Bagster, is interesting because it gives the Greek text and an interlinear literal translation, along with the Authorized of 1611.

The recently published and much publicized Standard Revised Version is to be used with caution. Several of the translators are admittedly Modernistic in their views, and publicly deny the fundamental truths of the Faith. It is difficult to conceive of a translation by such

men that would not be tainted by the errors which they personally hold.

There are several other translations of the New Testament available, such as, Weymouth, Moffat, and Phillips (Letters to Young Churches). These are more or less free translations, and are written in modern speech. While they are very suggestive, they are not to be relied upon for the actual meaning of the words.

The Bible Concordance

The Bible student will find a concordance to be of great help in his study of the Word of God. The Cruden's Concordance gives a list of all the important words in the English text, and is useful for quickly finding any desired verse. This book is also available in abridged editions for smaller size and lower cost.

The Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible by James Strong will be of much greater help in word study. In this volume citations are listed alphabetically under English words in the order of their occurrence in the Bible, and it is quite complete. Then, there are numbers after each citation, referring to the Hebrew and Greek Lexicon at the back of the book. Here one finds in alphabetical order all the words used in the original Scriptures, numbered for the use of the reader. This listing includes the words in their Hebrew and Greek characters and then in the English equivalents, the pronunciation, derivation, and definition of the word, and finally the various translations given the word in the English Bible.

The Analytical Concordance to The Holy Bible by Robert Young is similarly large and useful. Young's differs from

Strong's chiefly in the following points. Young lists the English words under the various original words which are translated by the English word considered, rather than in one long list, as with Strong or Cruden. The original word is given at the head of each list in original and English characters, with a brief definition but neither derivation nor pronunciation.

Wigram's Concordance is again in print in two volumes, viz. The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance and The Englishman's Greek Concordance of The New Testament. This is recommended for those who have some knowledge of the original languages of the Bible.

There is also on the market The English Greek Concordance by James Gall. This contains Greek words and proper names, but is not as extensive as Strong's or Young's, and is a smaller book. The cost also is accordingly lower, and for some this is a factor.

The Bible Dictionary

Your library should contain a good Bible dictionary, and there are several good ones available in book stores. Smith's Bible Dictionary is well advertised and is popular with many. Peloubet's Bible Dictionary is edited by the founder of the Peloubet's Sunday School Notes. The Bible Student's Companion by Nicholson serves as a combined dictionary and concordance, but is limited in its material.

Most highly recommended is A New and Concise Bible Dictionary, published by G. Morrish. To give our readers an idea of its contents and value we might well quote from the Prefatory Note to this volume.

“The principal object in bringing out this Bible Dictionary is to give in concise form information on subjects not usually found in such works, namely;--

“(1)--A short survey of each of the books of the Bible with a glance at the truth of God contained in them.

“(2)--The doctrines of Christianity as set forth in Scripture.

“(3)--The Dispensational Dealing of God as revealed in His Word; the distinction between the various dispensations being often misunderstood and ignored.

“(4)--Prophecy: many parts of Scripture being unintelligible unless the ways of God as portrayed in Prophecy are understood.

“(5)--The Feast and Offerings given in the Old Testament, with their antitypes found in the New Testament.

“(6) The names of Persons and Places have been included to make the work complete, together with the identification of sites as far as they have been discovered by modern travellers.”

To summarize this article of the urge the reader to equip himself first of all with a good edition of equipment of the Bible student, we The Bible, well bound and suitable for marking; then a Concordance and a Bible Dictionary. Further additions to your library will be discussed in succeeding articles.

Adoption

Children of God through sovereign adoption; in adoption become the Sons of God in seniority.

S of M.

Personal Salvation (June 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 6, June 1955.

When asked if she were saved, a young woman replied, “Well, I know that I am not going to be in Hell, anyway, because I see that the Lord Jesus paid my debt of sin when He died on the Cross.” She had just accepted Him as her own personal Saviour, but knew only a little of all that such a decision meant to her.

Yes, it is indeed true that such an one is delivered from Hell, according to John 3:16, for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Also, Romans 5:9 confirms this thought by stating that, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

If we think of sin as a debt, then the Son of God Himself settled that account forever by His suffering upon the Tree, as the young lady discovered. The word which Paul wrote to Philemon concerning Onesimus (verse 18), is virtually the language of the Man of Calvary on behalf of the guilty, penitent sinner, “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I will repay it.”

If we regard sin as a deep-dyed stain that has appeared indelible, 1 John 1:7 declares that the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s son, cleanseth us from all sin. There is not a spot or trace remaining to meet the eye of a holy God.

Moreover, sin is found to be a barrier which separates between the sinner and God, barring the way into the eternal glories of Heaven. The answer to this obstacle is

found in Hebrews 9:26, where we are told that He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all,” says Isaiah 53:6, while New Testament confirmation of this is found in 1 Peter 2:24, where we are directed to the One Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree. How wonderful, and withal, how comforting to know that God, in His foreknowledge, removed all our sins from us and placed them upon His own Son. Then, by His suffering and death, Jesus put those sins away so that they will be remembered no more forever.

Ever keep in mind, young believer, that the whole work of salvation depends upon that which Another has done for you and not upon your own experiences or feelings. Your acceptance with God, and the forgiveness and pardon which you enjoy, are based entirely upon the worth of the sacrifice. God has been so well pleased with this that He has raised His Son again from the dead, giving Him a place at His own right hand in the eternal glory.

Always remember, too, that your assurance comes through unwavering belief in the Word of God. Do not try to follow the pattern of some other person’s experience but ever keep your faith resting upon the solid foundation of the Scripture of Truth. Romans 15:13 says, “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Joy, peace and hope are all the fruits of believing faith.

In John 1:12 we learn that as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name. Then, from Galatians

4:7, we find that, being sons, we are also heirs of God through Christ. Now, an added thought comes from 1 Peter 1:4, assuring us that ours is an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in Heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith.

To know the riches of this inheritance, and the fulness of the blessing of salvation, you must read your Bible carefully and with the prayer that the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth. Thus you will uncover many priceless pearls and a wealth of exceeding great and precious promises.

You will be enlightened also as to your responsibility as a Christian. In 1 Corinthians 6:20, you will read, “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” In 1 Peter 2:9, we have brought before us that we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (or, as the margin says, a purchased people); that we should show forth the praises (the virtues, or things worthy of praise) of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. His purpose in saving us is summarized in Ephesians 1:12, “That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

Seeing He has purchased us with His own blood, thus bringing us into the divine family of eternal grace, we enjoy an abundance of privileges. However, let us never be content to receive all the blessings while giving Him nothing in return. Let us each one, from this day forward, seek to live our lives for His glory and, as we learn His will for us, determine to be obedient children. Such service will not be drudgery, as though we were

slaves, but rather it will be delightful because of love for Him Who first loved us.

How To Start Well (July 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 7, July 1955.

Running the Christian race has been likened to a boy learning to ride a bicycle. If he gets a good shove at the start it is a great help toward his continuing without falling. For those who have recently trusted Christ, great importance is placed on the early formative years, because they affect the whole future life of the Believer.

One is impressed with this in considering the case of Saul of Tarsus, who rose to become the great Apostle Paul, a chosen vessel who became a mighty influence in the Church, whose written ministry, inspired by the Spirit of God, has been of such priceless import to the saints all through the ages.

The account of his conversion, given in Acts 9, follows the pattern of Romans 10:9, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord (Revised Version), and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

Stricken on the road to Damascus, Saul realized that the One Whose Name he had sought to blot out was even then living in Heaven, for God had raised Him from the dead. When he heard the voice of Jesus speaking to Him, all unbelief vanished in a moment.

Seeing Him as seated on the throne of Heaven, Saul readily owned Jesus as his Lord, as revealed in his words, “Who art thou, Lord?” Thus the once-blaspheming persecutor of the Church was saved and became himself a part of that Church.

Saul bowed to the Lordship of Christ not only in word but also by deed, for he asked, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Here is one of the first marks of a truly saved person. His heart desires to do that which will be pleasing to the Lord, whereas once he went in his own way, according to the dictates of his own heart.

For a good start in the Christian life it is important for the young convert to seek always to learn the will of the Lord for him. This will necessitate a careful and prayerful reading of the Bible, for within its pages is revealed the will of God for all who are His own. Even though Ecclesiastes 12:12 says that much study is a weariness of the flesh, patient persistence will pay good dividends. Heed the exhortation of 1 Peter 2:2, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.”

When Ananias was sent to the street which is called Straight (Acts 9:11) to enquire for Saul, he was given evidence of the reality of his conversion, for the Lord said, “Behold, he prayeth.” It is as natural for a newborn soul to want to pray as it is for a tiny infant to cry. Indeed, what a privilege to be able to talk to our Heavenly Father at any time, and at all times, knowing that He tenderly bows His ear to hear and to give answers according to His will.

The habit of prayer must be developed, and nothing of the world must be permitted to hinder that regular daily bowing of the knee when alone in the presence of the Lord. If this line of communication be broken, the strongest saint will become as weak as any other man and the Devil will have opportunity to make him fall.

Another evidence of divine life in the new convert is seen in Saul's desire for the companionship and fellowship of ethers of like precious faith. (See Acts 9:19). This agrees with the words of 1 John 3:14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." On the other hand, one who is saved discovers that there is a division between himself and those who are unconverted, and his newly-begotten love for Christ leads him to separate himself from all those who are the enemies of the Gospel of His grace.

When Saul was persecuted, he left Damascus and went up to Jerusalem. There, once more, he sought out the saints and desired to become one with them. However, they did not readily receive him until they were satisfied that there had been a change in his life, for they had known him previously as a persecutor of the Church. Any young believer seeking fellowship should be content to wait until all in the assembly are convinced that he has been delivered from his former sinful ways.

Finally, it is shown that Saul had a desire to spread the Gospel in order that others might be won to the Saviour. This is indeed a true mark of a child of God. You will recall reading of the Thessalonians, of whom it was written, "From you sounded out the Word of the Lord."

It is the moral obligation of all who have heard the Gospel to pass on the glad tidings that others too may come to know the blessing of sins forgiven. More than that, to witness for the Lord gives one a happy heart and there is a great joy in being used to bring someone to the Saviour.

To summarize, four things have been noticed as being marks of divine life in Saul of Tarsus. First, he owned

Jesus as his Lord and sought to learn His will for him. Secondly, he became a man of prayer and was found upon his knees in supplication. Thirdly, he sought to associate with the saints and to enjoy fellowship with the local church. Finally, he had a warm gospel spirit and desired to spread the Gospel to others that they also might be saved.

In reading the Acts and the Epistles, it will be observed that these points were uppermost in his life to the end of his days, so that his good start carried him on to a glorious finish. May such be the case with those who read these lines, may they have a deep desire to study the Bible so that these spiritual traits may be developed for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whom My Soul Loveth (Sep 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 9, Sep 1955.

E. B. Sprunt

A young bride sits alone with her heavy heart, unable to control the tears that overflow her reddened eyes and flood down her cheeks. Suddenly she rises and rushes out into the street. The dense darkness of that midnight hour matches the gloom that engulfs her soul as she wanders through the broad ways of the city. When the surprised watchmen find her she reveals the cause of her anguish by asking, “Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?”

The scene, of course, is from the Song of Solomon, chapter two, and is the only sad note in this otherwise sweet song of love. Her’s is a QUESTION OF DISMAY, for she is awakened to discover that her Beloved is gone. Something has brought about a separation between them while she was asleep and dreaming that all was well.

It is a picture so often reprinted in our Christian life, when the heart becomes cold and we no longer enjoy the sweetness of the presence of the Lord. The tragedy is that while we are in such listless lethargy we presume that He is still with us. Samson, after sleeping with his head on the lap of Delilah, assayed to go out as at other times, yet wist not that the Lord was departed from him. (Judges 16:20).

In the midst of her darkness a ray of hope is seen when the Bride becomes aware of His absence, for this begets within her a desire to seek Him, and seek Him at once.

In her heart she so loves Him that she can not be happy without Him.

Her anxious search is rewarded, moreover, for she says, “I found Him!” When the believer longs for the Lord, He will soon be found. We have assurance of this in Jeremiah 29:13, “Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye search for Me with all your heart.”

Finding Him, and afresh becoming occupied with His loveliness, the Bride gives way to an EXCLAMATION OF DELIGHT, “Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth!” She wants others also to be occupied with Him and to admire His beauty.

Following the end of World War Two, several troop trains were arriving in the City and crowds of friends and relatives were gathered to welcome the boys from the battlefronts. One young woman fairly danced with excitement, but not because of the presence of the mayor and other civic officials; neither was she interested in the brass band heading the parade, nor the high army officers with their medals and braid. She had eyes for only one young man in khaki and she scanned line after line of marching troops in search of him. Suddenly she shouted, “There he is! Do you see him?” Then she darted off to greet her lover.

“Who Is Thy Beloved?” (S. Of S. 3:6)

The enthusiasm of the Bride stirs those who are about her to ask, “Who is this? Who is the One you so love?” It is a QUESTION OF DESIGNATION, and easy for her to answer, for there is only One who is the object of her affection, there is only one “Beloved” in her life.

Some have suggested that the story behind the book is that the Bride is in love with a humble shepherd lad, from whom she has been taken by King Solomon, but her heart still yearns for the one who feeds his flock. For my part, I prefer to think that the King who is mentioned, in all his glory and majesty, is the same one who assumes the guise of the humble Shepherd to lead his sheep to pasture. Surely it fits the picture of our Beloved, who is the Lord of Glory and yet the Lowly One, the Good Shepherd of the sheep. It should melt our heart to think that He who fills the Throne of God above is the One who came down in humility to us, selecting us as the object of His heart's affection.

"What Is Thy Beloved?" (S. Of S. 5:9)

But for those in the world, who have never come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no beauty in Him that He should he desired. They therefore enquire, "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?" This is a QUESTION OF DESCRIPTION, and the Bride responds with one of the most majestic passages in the whole book.

"My Beloved," says she, "Is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." Then she uses simile after simile as she describes Him from His head to His legs and back to His countenance.

When she comes to His mouth, she is lost for language, for she can find nothing to compare with that. Instead, she cries, "His mouth… His mouth… Oh, His mouth is most sweet!" But why is His mouth sweeter than all? Remember, her first desire, at the beginning of chapter one, was, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth." In this present day kisses are given so

carelessly and thoughtlessly by some that the true meaning is lost. However, in Scripture a kiss is a holy and intimate expression of love. it suggests that there is no ill feeling, no estrangement, nothing unforgiven; there is no other love, no com-love, no competitor for the heart's devotion.

We cannot enjoy the kisses of His mouth and the sweetness of His love and fellowship if there is unconfessed sin in our life, or something of the world taking His place in our affection. However, for the soul in close communion with the Lord, truly His mouth is most sweet.

"Where Is Thy Beloved?" (S. Of S. 6:1)

Her portrayal of the loveliness of the Bridegroom creates in others a longing to find Him as well, and so there is a QUESTION OF DESIRE: "Whither is thy Beloved gone… that we may seek Him with thee?" The Bride's reply is, "My Beloved is gone down into His garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." (6:2).

What a picture this is of the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of His worshipping people! The once waste howling wilderness, overrun with thorns and thistles, He has purchased with His own blood; He has hedged it about and cared for it, so that one could say, "Ye are God's tillage." (1 Corinthians 3:9, Margin), or as another translation puts it, "Ye are God's tilled field."

From this garden of spices and lilies there arises the blended fragrance that delights His heart. One gives forth a song of praise, another a prayer of worship, while every heart that says "Amen" at the giving of

thanks contributes to that sweet-smelling savour. Here, in the circle of His own redeemed people, is where the Beloved One delights to be found. “For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20).

May His presence be so manifest in our midst that others who are seeking Him, when they come amongst us, may exclaim, “I sought Him… I found Him.”

New Year's Resolutions (Jan 1956)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 2 No. 1, Jan 1956.

E. B. Sprunt

Traditionally, January First is associated with New Year’s resolutions. With so many people, however, the second week of the month, or even the second day, finds their good intentions broken and discarded, perhaps even forgotten, as they slip back into their former ways again. This may be the reason why some have not made any list of resolutions for 1956.

Having introduced the subject to our young readers, however, let us consider a few thoughts along this line. Do you not agree that, in your own case, a new resolution which would produce a more godly, sanctified Christian life might be both desirable and necessary? In our present way of living, the monotonous repetition of events, day after day, tends toward carelessness and laxity in spiritual things, so that we need periodically to check up on ourselves.

With some who are newly saved, the joy of the heart and the love for the Saviour have not been strong enough to conquer all the sinful practices of life, which are so grieving to the Lord. Others, with the passing of time, may have gone back to some of the old habits which had been forsaken at conversion. The best time to renounce these evils is right now! If the heart is sincere and determined, the Lord will provide the grace and strength that are needed to gain victory.

If you have been neglecting the daily reading of your Bible, this would be an ideal opportunity to remedy that

fault. Why not lay out for yourself a plan for reading consecutively, within the year, the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, to give you a broad view of the whole Word of God? This could be done by reading three or four chapters each day, requiring only five or ten minutes of your time. A young Christian from Toronto once read through his Bible in twenty-four days, mostly while riding the street cars to and from work, and during his noon hours. We would urge you, as well, to follow the helpful advice which appears month by month in the Bible Study section of this magazine. Become a careful student of the Word of God, so that you may grow and develop in the knowledge of the Truth.

Surely every one of us should resolve to spend more time in private prayer. In doing so, have upon the heart certain particular persons, certain definite problems, making repeated and earnest petitions to the Throne of Grace. Great will be the rejoicing when the Lord sends answers of peace. The habit of prayer is one that grows as the practice is continued, so that one becomes very much at home in the presence of the Lord and desires more and more to dwell in the secret place of the Most High.

Furthermore, each one of us may well ask, “During the coming year, what am I going to do for the Master?” As we remember that we have been saved so that we might be witnesses for Him we will be aroused to our responsibility and will seek His mind and guidances as to our service. “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” is the question not only of the newly converted Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:6), but of every one who has been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

Not every one has been fitted and called to assume an active public part, but we should seek to discover the gifts that have been given to us by the Risen Head of the Church. The young believer of today, like Timothy of old, is exhorted, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee.” Whatever our talents, we should put them to good use for the Master, and not bury them in the earth, as did the unprofitable servant of Matthew 25.

Even the least gifted could follow the plan of one child of God who determined to speak to someone every day about the Lord Jesus Christ. Personal witnessing will make us happy in our own souls and will also keep us separated from worldly companions and harmful associates.

Say, when did you last give out a Gospel tract ? Even if you shrink from speaking to people about your Saviour, you could hand someone a leaflet or booklet that would tell the message for you. One man, lacking the courage to give out his tracts on the busy street corner, put them into envelopes and so was able to get the silent witnesses into the hands of curious passers-by.

A Scottish youth, while crating machinery, slipped a Gospel tract under the lid, with the prayer that it might be used of the Lord. The box, after crossing the Atlantic, was delivered to a Nova Scotia coal mine where the equipment was unpacked. The tract fell unnoticed to the floor and was trampled underfoot. The precious seed was not dead! Some hours later, a passing workman picked up the soiled piece of paper. As he read it, his mind went back to his Christian father, who had been dead for over twenty years, and he recalled the Gospel lessons learned at his knee. As a result, the miner was

led to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and he became a happy and devoted child of God.

If we scatter the seed faithfully, the Lord will give the increase, so that there will be a fruitful harvest for His glory and our eternal blessing. “Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord” (1 Chronicles 29:5)?

Undoubtedly, the best resolution that we could make for 1956 would be to yield ourselves unreservedly unto the Lord, letting Him have first place in our heart’s affections. If we do so, He will control every phase of our Christian living; He will guide and direct us into the field of service that will be most for His glory. Moreover, our hearts will be made glad in the confidence that His purpose in saving us is being fulfilled with increasing measure; that is, that we should be to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:12).

In conclusion, let us prayerfully meditate upon the words of Romans 12:1-2. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

Eternal Life (Feb 1956)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 2 No. 2, Feb 1956.

Dear B…

I am now certain that I have Eternal Life. If you asked me when it happened I could not tell you the exact hour or day even. It was sometime before Easter. I know that I was certain by Easter morning. However, I have held off telling anyone until I told J… last week. Last night I told D… when he came up. I told him when we were cutting the grass behind the house.

It certainly has been a long hard search. It started three years ago when I sat down and realized that I was a complete atheist and completely disgusted and dissatisfied. I started to analyze what I had learned in schools and colleges and compare it with the Bible. My first big barrier was the Theory of Evolution, and my second big barrier was whether justification is by works or by faith.

A few months ago I met J… at the M… train station after work. She was tired so I suggested that we eat dinner in the diner. We did, and after we had finished, the waitress brought our check. When I picked it up there was a little red “Salvation Bible” underneath it. I put it in my pocket and read it when I got home. It was a wonderful help. I compared it with the “Schofield Bible” and the New Testament in Greek. Then I read “God’s Plan for the Ages in Dispensational Truth” by Clarence Larkin. For the first time in my life I had a terrific desire for Eternal Life. It loomed so large in my mind that honor, glory, power, and wealth seemed small. Needless

to say, I found it. I also found the promise, that by seeking the Kingdom of Heaven first all these things would be added unto me. When you come home I will tell you how quickly I was forced to put that promise to a test, and how God helped me.

I have no single verse that I can quote as being the means of my salvation. Each one I read helped make me more convinced. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, was divine; that He was the spotless Lamb of God. He died on the cross because my transgressions and iniquities nailed Him there. He was my Substitute. He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. I accept Him as my Saviour and accept His gift of Eternal Life. I am the happiest man in town today; I have joy.

I compared what you and D… had to say about Eternal Life with what I found in the Bible; I was impressed. I read "Fox's Book of Christian Martyrs." I was impressed by the fact that you and they both held to the view of "sudden death, sudden glory." Mostly I was impressed by the reward the martyrs from Stephen on expected. Many of those martyrs were wealthy men of high estate who were seemingly losing wealth and life for a promise from a person they had never seen. After I read the promises of Eternal Life, of the river that flows onward forever, of the tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations in a future day, of the Eternal City with gates of precious stones and streets of gold, of stars for the believers' crowns, and of God's protection here on earth, I ceased to wonder, and began to worry whether I had made a mistake myself. Having concluded that I was wrong, I sought the Scriptures for Eternal Life and found they testified of Jesus.

Philosophy teaches that God is not knowable or divine. From there it begins to build a perfect man, a man who is at peace with himself, a man who loves his neighbor, who commits no wrong, and who, theoretically, should live forever. Philosophy begins in denial of, and is finally forced to accept the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ fits all these conditions. He knew no sin from the beginning. How could I argue myself out of a circle of reasoning? I always wound up with Jesus, the Great Teacher, the Great Physician, the Great Healer, the Holy One of God.

Come home soon,

D…

This letter, printed exactly as written except that names of places and persons are omitted, draws the attention of our young readers to four interesting facts: namely, the emptiness of atheism, the effectiveness of gospel literature, the enjoyment of Eternal Life, and the promptings of temptation.

The writer declares that while he was an atheist he was “completely disgusted and dissatisfied.” The theories of philosophy which set God aside and endeavour to build a perfect man, in actual practice produced only a dismal failure, a discouraged man. His experience parallels that of the infidel who wrote,

“I’ve tried in vain,

A thousand ways

My fears to quell,

My hopes to raise;

But what I need

The Bible says,

Is ever only

Jesus !”

The second point to impress us, is the effectiveness of a gospel tract. That waitress may not know until the Judgment Seat of Christ, the result of the little red-covered “Salvation Bible” dropped by her on to the table along with the meal check. The importance of spreading the gospel in printed form cannot be over emphasized.

That he cannot tell the exact day or hour when this experience took place, and that he cannot single out any one verse in the Bible as the means of his salvation, may seem strange to some; nevertheless, it is evident that as the truth of the death of the Lamb of God reached his heart, therein was begotten an enduring joy. He says in effect, “For my transgressions the Substitute died on the cross; my iniquities nailed Him there.” Consequently, on believing this he felt himself the happiest man in the town.

While the Word of God brought him peace and assurance he intimates that very soon he sensed the presence of a tempter, and was forced to definitely test the power of the promises of God. For all who may be undergoing similar times of difficulty or doubt, we would offer the assurance that the Word of the Lord can never fail; you stand upon a solid foundation, the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture.

Philosophic theories and fanciful hypothesis can give to the heart neither constant peace nor true satisfaction, but simple faith and trust in the teachings of the Bible and in the work finished by Christ upon the cross will impart conscious rest, permanent security, and spiritual delight.

Investing for Eternity (June 1956)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 2 No. 6, June 1956.

Sometimes when young people commence to earn a living, there is a strong temptation to buy everything that a covetous heart could wish. While prudence would lead one to use his earnings for some worthwhile purpose that would provide a measure of security for the future, there are some who foolishly spend their all without any consideration of the years ahead.

The Wisdom of Giving

The best investment obviously, is the one which gives the highest rate of interest with the least danger of loss. You, therefore, are strongly urged, as a young Christian, to lay up for yourself treasure in Heaven by setting aside a definite portion of your income for the Lord and for His work. “Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Matt. 6:20). This verse declares the absolute security of any investment made for the Lord.

You will be sure of liberal returns from such action, because God has promised that “He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (2 Cor. 9:6). The Lord Himself will grant an eternal recompense for all that is done for His Name’s sake.

You will also receive a measure of reward in this life, for you will discover true joy in giving to others. There is a satisfaction in knowing that you have helped to ease the burden of those in financial difficulties, Moreover,

through your gifts, you become a partner of those who are proclaiming the gospel and furthering the purposes of the Lord. Another result to your giving is the thanksgiving to God that arises from the heart of the recipient (2 Cor. 9:10-12). Furthermore, God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7); consequently, you will be given a special place in His affections. What remarkable spiritual and eternal dividends for an investment made on earth!

Our Duty to Give

As a young believer, you must early realize that the money you earn is not your own, because you are not your own, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20). Your strength, your talents, your time, and your money, all are His. It becomes you therefore to give of your possessions to the One Who gave His all for you.

Living in the twentieth century, you cannot minister of your substance directly to the Lord Jesus, as did Mary and certain other women which followed Him while He was here on earth (Luke 8:3). Notwithstanding, His Word reveals that He esteems any acts of kindness shown to His people as done unto Himself. He says, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me” (Matt. 25:40).

Because every true child of God is a member of the Body of Christ, when one member suffers, all members suffer with it” (1 Cor. 12:26). This kindred feeling of sympathy enables us to share the trials of others. Although you may be but young in the faith, you have a responsibility

to use your means to relieve any brother or sister in Christ who may be in distress. In this way, “We bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).

You have another weighty obligation as well, and that in regard to the spiritual welfare of the unsaved. Though you may not be fitted for nor called upon to preach the gospel at home or in the regions beyond, you should be a partner in that work by giving to the support of the evangelist or the missionary. This service is described in 2 Corinthians 9:10, as ministering seed to the sower. You ought, therefore, to join such efforts in the gospel for they result in fruit to the glory of God. If you are faithful in this service, the Lord may eventually honour you with a call to be a reaper in the harvest field.

The Scriptures also teach that those who minister to you in spiritual things should receive your gift of fellowship as an evidence of appreciation. The Apostle Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their lack of awareness in this matter (1 Cor. 9:11). Have you thought of ministering to the temporal needs of that servant of the Lord who pointed you to the Saviour? What about the saintly preacher who gave forth the truth of God in such a warm instructive way that your soul was fed and your heart strengthened to live more for the glory of the Lord and less for self and the world?

How Much To Give

Many, whose hearts are stirred to give to the Lord, find a problem in regard to the amount they ought to give. There is no set rule; nevertheless, God has stated a simple principle, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of

necessity” (2 Cor. 9:7). If the Pharisees, under the bonds of the law, reluctantly gave a tenth, should we, who are objects of God’s grace, give less than they? The Egyptians, who would have perished of hunger but for the wisdom of Joseph, gladly gave up a fifth of their increase (Gen. 47:24). Zacchaeus, in the joy of his newly-found salvation, covenanted with the Lord to give the half of his goods to the poor (Luke 19:8). The poor widow of Luke 21, by casting her two mites into the treasury of the temple, surrendered all her living. The Lord Jesus provides us with the supreme example of giving, for He gave Himself. “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

Divine principles would lead to the practice of giving a set percentage of our income, as the Lord has prospered us (1 Cor. 16:2). If we seek to honour the Lord with our substance, we may claim the promise given to the liberal-minded Philippians, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). Let us remember the Divine promise, “Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Sam. 2:30).

The money that we may spend now will be gone; the money that we may hoard will be left behind when we go home to Heaven, but all that we may give to the Lord will be ours, with compound interest, in the Treasury of Eternity.

As Obedient Children (Aug 1956)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 2 No. 8, Aug 1956.

E.B. Sprunt

Have you ever considered how important it is for you, as a young believer, to be in subjection to your parents? Many of your school chums may ridicule such an idea because they succeed in getting their own way without suffering any parental discipline. The ways of the world, however, should never be used as a pattern for the Christian's conduct. Our guidance comes from the Bible in which a prominent place is given to the subject of obedience, as we shall notice.

When Adam was first formed and placed in the Garden of Eden, he brought ruin upon all creation because of his disregard for the word of God. Romans 5:19 tells us that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so we see the far-reaching effect of this one sin.

In the law of the Ten Commandments, given to Israel at Mount Sinai, there was a special promise of reward to those who would honour their father and mother: "That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:11).

This same thought is repeated in the New Testament, for as Paul writes on the important subject of the believer's conduct, he says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise" (Ephesians 6:2).

Another point is added in Colossians 3:20, “Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.” When you submit yourself to the will of your earthly father you gladden the heart of your Heavenly Father, for He sees in you a likeness to His Son, Who did always those things which pleased Him (John 8:29), and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8).

There may be times when you rebel inwardly, perhaps because you feel your parent is wrong or harsh in the ruling or command given. Remember, young reader, that as yet you have neither the knowledge nor the experience to judge fully on the matter. In all likelihood, when you are older you will see the wisdom of his action, which now is so grievous to you, so do not question, but obey.

This may be hard for you to do, but obeying your parents is one of the things which, according to Colossians 3:23-24, may be done heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. By your willing subjection to your father and mother you are actually serving the Lord Christ. Prompted by this motive, you will find your heart more ready to conform to their wishes for you.

In the Scriptures, another form of obedience is enjoined upon young Christians. “Obey them that have the rule over you” (Hebrews 13:17). The margin of some Bibles explains these are guides among the saints, or the elders or overseers who watch for the souls of the lambs of the flock. In 1 Peter 5:5, we read, “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.”

You will thus see that God has plainly commanded in His Word that the young saints show respect and obedience to those who guide the flock and act as leaders in the assembly. You cannot be obedient children in the sight of God unless you humbly respect these men whom the Lord has gifted and raised up to serve Him in the teaching of the Scriptures and the maintaining of the testimonies to His Name.

Above all, we must obey God, for He is our Heavenly Father and we have become His spiritual children through our acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name” (John 1:12).

The sinner is characterised by disobedience, having turned every one to his own way (Isaiah 53:6). As the heart becomes hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, the unconverted person grows stubborn and rebellious against the Almighty, with the result that he is exposed to the righteous judgment and wrath of the offended God.

When one is born again, the stony heart is made soft through the working of the Holy Spirit, so that there is a willingness to submit to the commands of the Lord. Saul of Tarsus, on the Damascus Road, gave evidence of a complete inward change when he said, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). The divinely imparted life would lead one to do the will of the Lord from the heart (Ephesians 6:6).

A knowledge of the Word of God is essential for the carrying out of His will. You must therefore give yourself to the careful reading of your Bible, seeking from its

pages to learn all that God would have you to do. If you are willing to be guided, the Lord will be faithful in revealing His truth to you. “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17). As he unfolds each step to you, endeavour by His grace to walk in the way of His commandments. Each act of obedience leads you into a closer relationship to Himself and into the revelation of further truth as to His will for you.

God’s purpose in saving us was that we should be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). One way in which we may reveal the Christlike character is by our obedience. During His life He could say, “I came down from Heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me” (John 6:38). At the hour of His death, He declared, “I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do” (John 17:4). Later, from Hebrews 10, we learn that the words of Psalm 40:8 came from the Lord Jesus Himself, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God.”

Notice that this delighting to do the Father’s will goes beyond mere obedience. For example, I may say to my little boy, “Jimmy, pick up your toys and put them away before supper.” That is a task he does not enjoy, so it may be only after the threat of punishment that he reluctantly obeys. On another occasion I may say, “Jimmy, how would you like to fetch my keys from the desk?” Away he runs to fulfil my desire, returning with the keys and a glad smile on his face. In this case, he delights to do my will.

The Lord Jesus was ever ready and eager to carry out His Father’s desire; this is why the heavens were opened

and a voice was heard, “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

How delighted our Heavenly Father must be when His redeemed people show a similar willingness and eagerness to follow His commandments as obedient children. May each one, in sincerity of heart, say like Samuel, “Speak, for thy servant heareth” (1 Samuel 3:9). Then, having learned the will of God, may each one also honestly testify, like Paul, “Whereupon I was not disobedient” (Acts 26:19).

Your Body A Temple (Dec 1956)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 2 No. 12, Dec 1956.

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” —1 Cor. 6:19-20.

When king Solomon attained to the throne of all Israel, he began the construction of that very beautiful and ornate building, which he wished to be known as the house of God. Between that Old Testament temple and your redeemed body, dear young believer, I want you to notice some points of comparison, as these are suggested by our text from Corinthians.

The Price Paid

The temple was erected on that spot, known as the threshing floor of Araunah, Ornan the Jebusite. It was there that the plague was stayed and David paid the price to purchase the site. How significant are the words of David, “I will surely buy it of thee for a price” (2 Sam. 24:24). He refused to offer unto the Lord that which cost him nothing.

We only could become the temple of the Holy Spirit after the purchase price had been paid and that price was very great, even the death of our Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. Thus we learn that we are not our own, for we are bought with a price; we cannot do as we like, for we belong to another, even to the Lord Himself.

The Place Prepared

The construction of the edifice from the materials that had been prepared followed the purchase of the site. What a marvellous temple when it was completed, with its ornamentation and its architectural beauty!

Even so, God has prepared for us a body of remarkable design. With intellectual faculties, and with all the other capabilities of the body working in harmony, we can truly say that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. God, by the Spirit, in like manner, is seeking to mould and fashion the inner man, so that he may become like Christ. The adorning should not be outward, as the wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel (1 Pet. 3:3), but rather the hidden man of the heart, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, and those other graces that reflect the likeness to the Son of God, which are in the sight of God of great price.

The Priest Presiding

In the tabernacle in the wilderness, Aaron was the High Priest who entered through the veil. His sons, in turn, followed him; and his seed was given the honour of this privileged office throughout the service of the temple. On the great day of atonement the High Priest entered the inner sanctuary. Similarly, the Holy Spirit of God has come to dwell within our bodies as the priest of this temple for the Lord. He desires to enter the sanctuary of the heart and to dwell in the affections, thus taking complete possession and control of the believer in thought, word, and deed, so that nothing is held in reserve.

How grieving for the Spirit of God to find that some have another priest resident within! In third John we read of Diotrophes, who loved to have the pre-eminence. His priest within his heart was self. Let us never speak carelessly of some elder brother in the assembly as being a Diotrophes; rather, let us guard against falling under the sway of such an arrogant influence as self-centredness.

The Apostle Paul says, “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10). Demas did not necessarily go back into open ungodliness or into the evil of his former sinful life. He may have decided that “being in the ministry” did not pay sufficient dividends to offer security, so he returned to Thessalonica in search of more gainful employment. One thing is apparent, the world became the possessor of his heart, and the Holy Spirit was grieved. Young people today need constantly to be warned against the evils of this age hidden within the many worldly inducements offered them. “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas. 4:4).

In contrast, we have the precept of Romans 12:1-2, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

The Praise Presented

The purpose of the temple was to offer worship unto the Almighty. Likewise, the primary objective of our being saved is that “We should be to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:12). “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15).

The Lord Jesus Christ was ever to God the odour of a sweet smell. When the Spirit, ungrieved within us, has full access to the inner chamber of our hearts, He is able to produce those graces and virtues which are Christ-like. Thus our lives, too, are fragrant unto the Lord.

The Purity Preserved

The ancient sanctuary was carefully guarded by the priests and the Levites, so that nothing defiling might mar the holiness of the place where God Himself dwelt. Even so, the young believer is enjoined in Scripture to flee youthful lusts, and to keep himself pure.

Instruction is given relative to the purity of the Assembly, as a holy temple of the Lord in First Corinthians chapter five. The chapter which follows deals with the need for purity in the individual. Such is the context of the Scripture that forms the basis of this article, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?”

We are living in a period when moral standards are being lowered. The Bible teaches and illustrates, however, that Divine standards are high and holy. The Lord would not allow a degrading of His standards of holiness on the part of Nadab and Abihu, even although

they were the sons of Aaron, possessing the right to enter the sanctuary and offer incense (Lev. 10:1-2).

Similarly, the Lord drove out of the sanctuary good king Uzziah, emphatically stating, “It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast transgressed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God” (2 Chron. 26:18).

Because of their lowering of the Divine standards, Nadab and Abihu came to a tragic end when the fire of God consumed them, while Uzziah was smitten with leprosy and spent the rest of his days in lonely isolation as an outcast.

Seeing we are bought with a price to become the temple of the Holy Spirit, let us refrain from every evil temptation, and yield ourselves continually to the One Who indwells us. By this means we shall be able to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits which are His.

Let Us Keep the Feast (Oct 1957)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 3 No. 10, Oct 1957.

In the Book of Exodus, where the Lord is giving instruction regarding the feast of the Passover, He anticipates the question being asked, “What mean ye by this service?” In order that a correct answer be given to the inquiring one, the children of Israel were to be well-informed relative to the reason why this feast was observed and how it was kept.

Luke, chapter 22, takes us to the upper room where the Lord Jesus met with His disciples to keep the last Passover. He gave to His own a new feast, for He took bread and having given thanks He gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you.” Surely the Christian of today, like the Israelite, needs to know the importance and significance of the service of remembrance which he is thus enjoined to observe.

Let us, therefore, consider some of the things that are indicated by a direct revelation from the Lord to the Apostle Paul: “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall

be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Corinthians 11:24-29).

The passage shows us, first of all, that this feast was characterized by

Simplicity

The common concept of a banquet is a table laden with the finest of delectable foods and liquors so that the guests may eat and drink to the point of gluttony and intoxication. How strange, then, must seem a feast that consists of a morsel of bread and a mouthful of wine! The Corinthians, however, were solemnly admonished not to turn the remembrance feast into a banquet, lest they come together unto condemnation. Let us ever seek to maintain scriptural simplicity when we gather to remember our Lord Jesus Christ.

This feast carries with it a note of

Sadness

After the death of a beloved Christian it was revealed that, shortly before her homegoing, she had written a request that every sister in the assembly receive a piece of her china as a token of remembrance. How carefully the women would keep this memento, prizing it far above its actual monetary value because of their esteem for the one who had left it to them! With tears, every time the piece of china was observed, they would recall the loveliness of the departed one.

Similarly, our hearts are softened as we ponder that our dearest Friend, the Lord Jesus, gave to us a loving remembrance of Himself in the bread and wine. With what reverence and tenderness we should keep the feast seeing it was the last request of our Absent Lord!

Notice that this feast was instituted in the same night in which He was betrayed. He so soon was to be rejected by His people, the Jews; sold by His companion, Judas, for thirty pieces of silver; forsaken by His own disciples as they turned to their own families. At such a time He left for us this cable to keep us from drifting away from Himself. Can we therefore refuse His dying request, or turn our backs on Him, or seek after worldly pursuits, or engage in any other activities which would prevent us from keeping the feast in remembrance of Himself?

The Lord's supper is not observed solely because of sentiment; rather, we learn through the Scriptures its deep

Significance

According to His own words concerning the bread, He declared, "This is My body which is given for you." Likewise, of the cup He said, "This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22: 19).

The bread would tell us of His incarnation through which, in obedience and humility, He took upon Himself the body which was prepared for Him and tabernacled among men. It would enable us to recall His suffering and death at Calvary, where He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. It would

speak of His giving Himself as a sacrifice for sin, acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

The cup signifies the blood which was shed for us, that precious, precious blood of the Lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:9). This is the very blood which cleanses us from all sin and brings us nigh to God. By means of the blood of Christ we are all, as believers, made unto our God holy priests to offer up spiritual sacrifices, the fruit of our lips, giving praise to God.

Who would dare to esteem lightly the bread and the wine, seeing these have such a significant meaning to the child of God?

The intelligent reader of the Word, having learned the meaning of the emblems, finds in the feast a

Sweetness

We sit down beneath the shadow of Calvary's tree with great delight and enjoy the fruits of His suffering and death. Sitting there we realize that He bore the wrath in our stead, for He said that His body was given for us and His blood was shed for us.

Sweet, too, is the thought that we remember and worship the One Who is now living in Glory, rather than one who has died and gone to corruption. With the eye of faith we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, of which He is abundantly worthy because of the triumphs of His death.

We also enjoy the sweetness of His promised return, when He will transport us from earth into His own presence in eternal glory. The showing forth of the Lord's death is "till He come." How blessed to

remember Him in His death, His resurrection, and in the hope of His coming again!

The closing verses of 1 Corinthians 2 assert that with the observance of the Lord's supper there is associated a

Solemnity

Those who participate must first examine themselves lest they eat and drink judgment to themselves through partaking of the emblems unworthily. Let us notice that the Scriptures declare some to be ineligible to keep the feast, for to do so would bring upon themselves the judging hand of God.

The unconverted man must not eat, because he has not accepted the truth of Christ's death as a sacrifice for his sins nor has he owned His Lordship. The Lord's table and the Lord's supper are reserved for those who have first acknowledged Christ as Saviour and Lord. The Corinthians are given the admonition, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).

The unclean man should not eat. The Scriptures teach that one who is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, must be put away from the assembly. "With such an one no not to eat" (1 Cor. 5:11). "Therefore put away from yourselves that wicked person" (v 13). If one were guilty of such sins as are listed in the passage, self-examination would lead to confession, thus sparing the offender from eating and drinking judgment to himself.

The unmindful man is not worthy to eat. God so highly esteems the Person of His Son and His sacrifice at Calvary that He will not look lightly upon any who enter into His presence carelessly to worship, whether this be through lack of knowledge of the Scriptures or through want of consideration for the significance of the bread and wine. We are not to keep the feast with “the leaven of malice and wickedness” (1 Cor. 5:8) but, rather, we are to “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22).

Therefore, let us keep the feast with sincerity and truth, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.”

Stir Up the Fire (Jan 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 1, Jan 1958.

E. B. Sprunt

Paul was in Rome when he sent his second epistle to Timothy at Ephesus. As one reads this intimate letter, the miles between Paul and Timothy seem to disappear, and he can imagine, in spite of their separation, the old man and his son in the faith sitting together before a fireplace. One can almost visualize a kindly arm over Timothy's shoulder as they discuss their problems together.

The coals seem to be turning black on the hearth and the flame to be only a flicker. The older man appears to arise, and taking the poker scatters the ashes and stirs up the fire.

As a father he says, "Now, my son, that is what I want you to do in a spiritual sense. Stir up the gift of God which is in you" (2 Tim. 1:6). Robertson says that in the Greek the words "to stir up" mean "to rekindle" the flame.

Paul discerned that such counsel was needful for the young Christian of his day. The Church was passing through troublous times. Paul was a prisoner. All they in Asia were turned away from him (2 Tim. 1:15). Since Ephesus was one of the Asian churches, Timothy would find himself in the midst of a hostile element because of his affection for Paul. Timothy, with his infirmities (1 Tim. 5:23), would also naturally be inclined to discouragement.

In all these trials Timothy had no one near to whom he could turn for the advice that strengthens. Through the only reference to him we learn that his father was a Greek; therefore, we assume that Timothy could not turn to him for needed spiritual help.

Paul, consequently, wrote this timely second letter to give his faithful young partner the necessary succour and fortitude. His loving heart overflowed and his strong arm was stretched out to embrace him as his dearly beloved son (2 Tim. 1:2).

Doubtless, some of our young readers feel the need of someone's help for the problems currently arising in their lives. If so, Paul's counsel is most suitable also for you, so pull up a chair before the hearth, and listen to the conversation.

Paul mentions some circumstances which might dampen the fire within the soul of the young warrior of the cross; he warns Timothy about being ashamed, afraid, and afflicted.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner" (2 Tim. 1:8). There is a danger of being cowardly in confessing Christ before the world; of hiding the fact that we belong to the Lord Jesus. It is not enough to be considered "religious"; we should testify for Him Who died for us, and Who now owns and controls us.

There is danger of being ashamed of the testimony of the Lord and of the assembly gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some groups may endorse unscriptural practices, and enjoy large memberships, varied activities, and social prominence. We should never lose our esteem for the company of believers who

gather unto Himself alone, and who desire to carry out the full teaching of the Word of God.

Unlike Onesiphorus we may tend to be ashamed of those who are our brethren and sisters in Christ. He was not ashamed of Paul's chain, but sought throughout Rome until he located him (2 Tim. 1:16-18). Paul tells Timothy, see that you, in like manner, are not ashamed of me.

What will keep us from being ashamed? Love. The young bride whose affections have been wholly won is not ashamed of her beloved; she is glad to disown all other names and be known by his alone. Her heart is so full of her lover that she cannot refrain from speaking of him to others. Similarly, love for Christ will counteract the natural timidity of the flesh and will enable us to witness for Him, to be content to identify ourselves with the place where He has put His name, and to enjoy fellowship with those who are redeemed by His precious blood. Paul could say, "I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1:12).

The flame would also be dampened, Paul suggests, if Timothy were afraid. Fear can deter us from being on fire for God. Timothy might have feared for the aged Apostle, for the Church, and for his own safety. Today, many dark clouds on the horizon tend to make us fear, but we must not become occupied with these things unduly.

What will counteract our fear? Faith! By placing our confidence in God, and by claiming His promises, we can enjoy the full assurance of faith. When faith takes us by one hand and love by the other, fear cannot walk with us. "I will trust and not be afraid" (Isa. 12:2).

Timothy is reminded of the faith of his grandmother Lois and of his mother Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). It was unfeigned faith; it was genuine. Timothy has the example of Paul's own faith in the Lord, and is also reminded of his own earlier faith. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear" (2 Tim. 1:6-7). Stir up the fire! Do not let the flame die out!

Paul also knows that if Timothy is afflicted, the young man's spiritual gift might be left dormant, and his testimony might cease to burn brightly for the Lord. Many have run their Christian race well until faced with adversity. There is provision for counteracting this tendency. Hope! What will enable us to stir up the fire within us, even during affliction? The real and blessed hope of the Lord's return! It is as a bellows to fan the flame of spiritual enthusiasm.

Paul himself, faced with a violent death, could say, "I am now ready to be offered." He was confident of seeing the Lord, the righteous Judge, in that day (2 Tim. 4:6-8). The hope of the Lord's return gives assurance of the resurrection from the dead (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

For those who will be passing through affliction at the Lord's return, there will be immediate relief from distress. What a deliverance, to be caught up out of the storm of affliction into the calm of His glorified presence!

Paul also reminds Timothy of the reward for suffering (2 Tim. 1:12, 18, 4:1, 7-8). He speaks several times of ''that day," using this hope to stir up faltering Timothy to renewed exercise and activity for the Lord.

As we journey the stormy road of life, what an incentive it is to us when we get a glimpse of the glories of our

heavenly home, and the prospect of being with our Eternal Lover!

Paul's advice to Timothy, and to you and me, is summarized in this: Do not be ashamed, do not be afraid; lest your flame be quenched, and the Lord dishonoured. If you are afflicted, do not be overcome; let your love for the Lord, your faith in His word, and your hope of His soon return, all stir up the gift of God that is in you.

Keep your heart warm and the fire burning to the praise and glory of our beloved Lord.

* * *

Nothing is so destructive of confidence in God as a questioning mind.

* * *

It was said of General Gordon, that he gave one look around, then one look upward and he knew what to do.

* * *

Elim (the place of rest) was more PLEASANT, but Marah, (the place of bitterness) was more PROFITABLE to Israel. A MIRACLE revealing the power and love of God occurred at Marah, but not at Elim.

* * *

Let us search the Scriptures daily as the Bereans did (Acts 17, 11). A knowledge of the Word will preserve us from blindly accepting any teaching, even from an Apostle. The study of the Scriptures is a great privilege, as well as a sacred duty. A great many people, young and old, are woefully ignorant of the Word of God.

Five “C’s” for Superintendents (Mar 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 3, Mar 1958.

The superintendent, far from being a mere figure-head, is capable of making the Sunday School either a success or a failure. He, in most cases, is the major difference between a school which is alive and prosperous and one which is mediocre and listless.

Some practical suggestions therefore are offered which may prove helpful to those who at present hold this office or who may be called to fill such a position at some time in the future.

The Superintendent And Christ

The relationship of the superintendent to the Lord Jesus is of as vital importance as is essential the abiding of the branch in the vine for fruitfulness.

First of all, he must be a child of God through faith in Christ. No man can do the work of the Lord who first has not responded to the Saviour’s invitation, “Come unto Me.” If one has not been born again through receiving the Lord Jesus by faith, neither natural ability nor religious fervour are sufficient for the performance of his duties.

It is equally imperative that he be a servant under the control of Christ, the Master. Successful work for the Lord requires that he respond to the injunction of the Lord, “Take My yoke upon you.” He must know what it is to bow in submission to the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Having done this, he will yield his

time and his talent unreservedly to labour without faltering or fainting even in the face of difficulties and discouragements.

Above all, the successful superintendent must be a scholar at the feet of Christ. He must ever be ready to respond to the Divine Teacher's instruction, "Learn of Me." He must become well acquainted with the Word of God. This will require careful and accurate memorizing of Bible verses and passages for ready reference. More than this, he must learn to rightly divide the Word of Truth, to grasp the meaning of the passages, and by the Spirit's guidance to understand the true teaching of the Scripture portion under consideration. Timothy was enjoined to give attendance to reading, to meditate upon these things, and to study.

The Superintendent And The Church

The early disciples were sent forth, not only to preach the gospel, but, also, to teach the young believers to observe the commandments of the Lord and to walk in accordance with His truth. Those who engage in Sunday School work or in Child Evangelism should keep this in mind.

The superintendent of any Sunday School, therefore, should be in perfect accord with the doctrines of the church which is supporting the effort. One could not conceive of a man being happy in building up a work if he were not satisfied in his own mind that Scriptural principles were being practised there. For best results he must be in hearty fellowship with all those who are associated with the assembly so that they may strive together with him as one man for the faith of the gospel.

Every superintendent must be prepared to submit to the judgment and the will of the overseers of the assembly as enjoined by the Scriptures (Heb. 13:17. 1 Pet. 5:5). Even if personally he considers his brethren to be mistaken on some occasions, he should not act independently, but patiently wait for the Lord to solve the problem in His own time and way. On the other hand, the overseers should have such confidence in the superintendent as to let him supervise the Sunday School without interference.

The Superintendent And His Co-Workers

The relationship between the superintendent and the teachers is of great importance as the harmonious co-operation and progressive activity be maintained throughout the entire school. He must have their respect and be able to act as a leader and an organizer among them. To be these he ought not to act in an arrogant or arbitrary manner over them. A superintendent with a domineering attitude soon develops antipathy in the hearts of others toward himself. Much rather must he, through wise and amicable leadership and warm enthusiasm, inspire and encourage each teacher to give sacrificially his best at all times. He will also unite all the teachers in a whole-hearted effort for the growth of the school and the salvation of the young.

Furthermore, the superintendent should endeavour to instruct and train by his counsel and example younger teachers in order that they may be better fitted for their duties. He should watch also for the opportunities in which advice out of his own experience might help younger teachers to solve their problems.

A good superintendent will be on the look-out constantly for new teachers, manifesting the ability to discern latent qualities in a prospective candidate who may develop real gift in teaching children.

The Superintendent And The Children

No man should consider himself called of the Lord to children's work unless he has a genuine love for the young. He must enjoy being in the company of children, and must be able, culturally speaking, to bring himself down to their level. He should learn the names of the scholars as quickly as possible, and become acquainted with the details of their home and school lives as well as with other matters of the child's personal interest. Let him be careful not to show any favouritism, but to pay equal attention to all on the school roll, for by such means he will draw the children close to himself, and will hold their confidence, esteem, and affection.

The God-called superintendent will have a deep passion for the souls of boys and girls, and a prayerful desire to see them won for the Saviour in early life. Great wisdom is needed in speaking with children who show a desire for salvation, so that they may be led to trust the Saviour without undue and hurtful pressure.

The Superintendent And His Character

The man who is qualified for leadership in any children's work must be of impeccable repute in the neighbourhood. He must be of high moral integrity and free from any shady rumours, even those not founded on facts. Only in this way will the parents have sufficient confidence to entrust their children to his influence, care, and teaching.

Nevertheless, the Sunday School superintendent must be governed by a higher standard than public opinion; as a servant of the Lord and of the church, he must conform to the qualifications of a deacon as given in the Word of God:

“Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

The brother who in humility and sincerity aspires to these ideals in the fear of God will, doubtless, become a successful superintendent highly compensated for his labour of love with a prosperous Sunday School; he, moreover, will receive his Master’s approval at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

* * *

It is dangerous to follow any business that you cannot pray about, and ask God’s blessing upon. Take part in the building of God’s spiritual Temple.

* * *

It is well for us all when we are grounded upon what has been termed the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture. Resting on this foundation, opinions may come and opinions may go. but they will never be able to disturb

the divine certainty of the soul that is able to say, “It is written.”

Learning the Name (Aug 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 8, Aug 1958.

E. B. Sprunt

In the days when the writer was teaching a class of tiny tots, one of the most frequent problems was how to learn the name, address, and age of some of the new scholars. Sometimes a child took a shy streak, and would not utter a word in response to questions asked. Another child would not speak distinctly, so one could not be sure of the correct spelling of the surname. Occasionally, a child only knew his first name, and, likely as not, this would prove to be a nick-name or a family pet-name.

The difficulty was solved simply and effectively by use of a printed card which was sent home with the child. A brief message expressed appreciation for having the child come to the Sunday School. The parent was then requested to fill out the form and return it when the child came to class the following week, or if more convenient, mail the card to the teacher's home address. Space on the card was designated for the child's name, address, age, and telephone number.

It is advisable also to invite the parents to the Bible Class or gospel meeting. Enclose the card in an envelope when sending it home, because little folk have a penchant for finger marking or soiling things which are unprotected.

Be sure the card bears your name as class teacher; then the parent will know you when you make your first visit to the home.

Lead Me to the Rock (Sept 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 9, Sept 1958.

Who is that aged man who flees across the wilderness toward the ascent of Mount Olivet? He wears no royal robes, no kingly crown; he walks barefooted. His head is bowed, as under a heavy burden of care. That man is grief-stricken David in exile from Jerusalem. Absalom has stolen the hearts of the people and seized the throne.

As the weary king pauses to rest by the wayside, he brings forth his stringed instrument and begins to play and sing. Drawing near, we catch the words …"When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, he is creating the Sixty-First Psalm.

The complete text of his song has been preserved in order that, from its words of comfort, afflicted and discouraged saints through the succeeding centuries may find strength and succour. Let us consider a few thoughts in this Psalm which may bring blessing to our hearts in times of distress.

The Circumstance

"My heart is overwhelmed." The word draws a mental picture of a river swollen by torrential rains bursting its banks and flooding the valley. Such is the description of David's circumstance, and so often of ours as well.

He is overwhelmed by sorrow, for his own son whom he had so loved and so highly favoured has turned against him in revolt. He is overcome by trial, for he has been

driven from the glory of his throne and the comfort of his palace and has been separated from his loved ones and friends. When we are similarly afflicted, well might we cry with David, “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

David is also overwhelmed by his distance from God, for he speaks of himself as being at the ends of the earth. As to actual miles, he is only an overnight journey from Jerusalem, but in his exile, he feels himself to be as far from God’s sanctuary as possible to be. Sad to say, we too have times in our Christian experience when in our coldness of heart we feel ourselves to be far removed from the consciousness of God’s presence. On such occasions we should pray, “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

The Confession

This petition contains a threefold confession. He acknowledges his weakness, as he declares his need of being set upon the rock, the place of strength. We take the first step toward our gaining that place of safety when we make an honest appraisal of our own helplessness and insufficiency.

He also acknowledges his blindness or ignorance. David is aware of the higher place but, like a poor lost sheep, he does not know the pathway to the top of the rock; hence his request, “Lead me.”

He finally acknowledges his own littleness, for of the rock he uses the expression, “higher than I”. God withholds the blessing from us at times because we esteem ourselves to be too big or too important. On the

other hand, when we, like Saul (1 Samuel 15:17), are little in our own eyes, there is lifting up.

The Cry

What a blessing awaits us when like David we cry, “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I!” We are brought to a place of greater safety. When the Psalmist says, “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies,” (Psa. 23:5), he cannot be referring to a four-legged piece of furniture laden with food, because sheep do not eat from tables, and he already has mentioned the green pastures. The figure refers to the same place of safety to which David is brought in our passage; that is, the high flat table-rock above his enemies, where the sheep have a sure footing and where their foes cannot climb. In the next Psalm, David tells us that the Lord is that rock. “He only is my Rock and my Salvation: He is my defence; I shall not be moved” (Psa. 62:6). In His safety, we find rest.

We are brought to a place of greater understanding. In the gloomy valley the view is limited to the immediate surroundings, but from the higher rock one is able to see afar off. Spiritually, we are enabled to discern the will of God or, failing this, we see that His unrevealed purpose is working for our good. In His purpose, we find peace.

We are brought to a place of greater fellowship with Himself. To be led by Him means that He goes before and we are close behind. Better still, He takes us by the hand. What greater blessing could we desire than the sweet communion of walking with Him? As we are brought to the higher plane, we become more separated

from the world and all that would overcome us or distress us. In His presence, we find joy.

The Conclusion

In verse seven, David's life is preserved. By being led to the higher rock, he is delivered from the overwhelming floods of sorrow, trial, and coldness of heart. When we rest in the Lord, we are delivered out of all our fears.

In verse six, David's days are prolonged. We would not crave merely a lengthening of life; rather, we would desire that the added time may be used for the glory of God. Many Christians, when on the verge of being overwhelmed by grief or affliction, have cried unto the Lord for deliverance. As a result they have been saved from a fall and their lives have been preserved for greater usefulness.

In verse eight, David's song is produced, and he concludes by praising God. When we are brought out of the trial or distress into the blessing of the higher place, let us likewise express our gratitude and appreciation to God by offering up our sacrifice of praise and our song of thanksgiving to Him.

In reviewing the lesson which David's experience teaches us, we see that the very difficulties which to us are so distressing are working for our good as they unfold God's purpose for us and as they bring us closer to the Lord. Thus we learn to say, "God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day." (Genesis 50:20).

Four A’s for the Teacher (Oct 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 10, Oct 1958.

So you have a Sunday School class! Good! But what kind of a teacher are you? Have you checked up on yourself lately to see if you are all that you ought to be, or all that you could be with a whole-hearted effort?

The student in day-school may presume that he is doing well in his studies until he faces the examinations. Later his report card shows C or D where he expected to receive A. Only then does he realize the need for greater effort to reach his desired goal.

Self-examination on the part of the Sunday School teacher may similarly reveal shortcomings and deficiencies which are preventing greater success in the work of the Lord. Such findings will banish complacency and stir the heart to strive more earnestly in the development of the necessary qualifications.

This article brings four tests for the Sunday School teacher. Examine yourself by them and see if you rate an A in each.

The first requirement is

Affection For Children

This principle is taught in the Scripture. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have… fill in any attribute or natural qualification you wish!)… and have not love, it profiteth me nothing” (Read 1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Love is a requisite for service. You must love the little ones in your class with the heart of the Lord Himself. You must consider them as your own treasured gift from the Heavenly Father, entrusted to your care that they may be taught the Truth of God and be won in faith to the Saviour. Paul could say, “The love of Christ constraineth us” (2 Cor. 5:14). This is the motivating power behind the true Sunday School teacher.

Love is also the reward for sacrifice. No mother withholds the care and attention which her baby needs, nor does she complain of her extra burden of work when the little one is sick or suffering. Her love creates the will to spend and be spent for the one who is so dear to her heart. The only reward she seeks is given to her when he recovers health and then grows and develops as a normal boy should. Similarly, the burdens of the Sunday School class become light when the teacher has a deep affection for the children in her care. Her service becomes a labour of love.

Affection is not only demanded in our service; it is deserved by the child. This is especially true of the poor youngster, or the one who comes from a home where the parents show no interest in spiritual things. Many children could cry, “No man cared for my soul” (Psa. 142:4). No one has any interest in their spiritual welfare or their eternal state; that is, unless you, as the teacher, love and care for them.

This affection can be acquired and developed by the exercised teacher. Love is the first fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) and is produced within the heart that is truly devoted to the Lord and yielded to His will. The compassion of the Saviour is surely engendered in the

teacher who looks upon the pitiable sight of children who have no one to pray for them or to lead them to the source of salvation and life.

The second test to show how you rate as a teacher is your

Aptitude For Teaching

This topic covers the preparation and the presentation of the lesson. The first step is the choosing of a subject for your lesson. Let it be something that will capture the interest of your scholars; something that will be aimed at the level of their understanding and mental capabilities. Pray for the Spirit to guide you in this, even as a servant who seeks orders from his Master.

Having set upon a topic, gather all the material you can about the subject. Compare other passages of Scripture for further enlightenment, and learn what is taught in the Bible about the characters in the story, the places where they lived, etc. Use reliable reference books or Bible dictionaries for other background material. Have your subject well prepared and clearly outlined in your mind before you go to your class.

In telling the lesson, speak so as to control the interest of every member of the class. The tone of your voice is a great help; avoid monotones, or shouting. At a tense part of your story, lower your voice and watch the children draw closer to catch your words. Even a whisper will arouse the curiosity of an otherwise unattentive child!

The use of vivid word pictures, as well as visual aids, will enable the class to see the action of the story with the mind’s eye. Always use simple language, keeping in

mind the admonition of Paul, “Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.” (1 Cor. 14:9).

In telling the story, utilize the element of suspense; this will always hold the attention. Above all, let your lesson lead up to one point of application and then be sure that the point is definitely impressed upon your listeners. Remember that you are a teacher to instruct the children, and not an entertainer or a mere “baby-sitter” to keep the children quiet.

Strive to cultivate the aptitude of teaching and never allow yourself to become complacent in your present attainment. Do not become discouraged even if you feel you are not as gifted as you would like to be; the Lord only desires your best. Remember, though, that your best six months hence should be much beyond what it is now.

Consider now, briefly, what grades you merit for your

Attitude In Service

Sunday School work, like all activity for the Lord, demands full-time service; there is no room for half-heartedness. God expects our best and He deserves it. “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently” (Jer. 48:10 Margin). In contrast, consider how highly Hezekiah is commended. “In every work that he began ….he did it with all his heart, and prospered” (2 Chron. 31:21)

Some teachers think little of leaving the class on Sunday for the slightest excuse. Others come to teach with little or no preparation of the lesson, then wonder why the

children show so little interest. Remember that teaching is not a hobby to occupy the spare time. Let every other plan or arrangement take second place to that which you do for the Master and, like Hezekiah, you will prosper.

The fourth test of the Sunday School Teacher is

Anticipation Of Results

Do you pray earnestly and sincerely for blessing upon the Word which, week by week, is sown as seed in the young hearts? The Scriptures are full of exceeding great and precious promises, but we must claim them when we bow the knee in the presence of God. So often the words of James would condemn us: “Ye have not, because ye ask not” (Jas. 4:2).

Teach your lesson as though you are expecting the children to respond to the gospel invitation and conclude your lesson with an appeal for acceptance of the Saviour. This must be done with wisdom, taking into consideration the age of the scholars and their knowledge of the Truth. Undue pressure must not be used lest the work of the Spirit be hindered by the operation of the flesh in its impatience.

In concluding this article, one final thought is added. Do not be discouraged or tempted to give up your work for the Lord, even if you do not consider yourself to be all that is desired of a Sunday School teacher or children’s worker. Rather, study to make improvements constantly and above all, seek wisdom and grace from above to become “a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21).

The God of Peace (Mar 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 3, Mar 1960.

Vol 6:3 (March 1960)

The God of Peace

Ernest B. Sprunt

The descriptive names and titles of God form an interesting and profitable study. For example, He is called the Father of mercies (2 Cor. 1:3), holding back the punishment that we should have received. He is the God of all grace, bountifully bestowing unmerited blessings upon us. As the God of hope (Rom. 15:13), He gives to the believer the prospect of a bright future.

In this article, let us consider Him as the God of Peace, by reviewing the Scriptures where this appellation is used.

The political world is in a state of chaos and confusion, with rumours of wars and rumblings of international suspicion and distrust. Men’s hearts are indeed failing them for fear. Ours is an age of rush and bustle, of pressure and tension, so that the individual knows little rest; that is, unless he finds rest in the God of Peace.

Strife, variance, hatred, and divisions are the works of the flesh and are not of God. Satan delights in these things and is the instigator of all that causes turmoil and unrest. By contrast, we read that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33). His dwelling place is peace, He delights in peace, and He dispenses peace because He is Peace. He is the God of Peace.

His Presence

“Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen” (Romans 15:33).

In this verse the title is used in connection with His presence with us. We may be devoid of many of the luxuries, or even the necessities of life. Health may fail; position and popularity may wane. Death may deprive us of loved ones, and circumstances may separate us from those we hold dear to the heart. Friends of former days may fail us, turning their backs upon us, but He hath said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

His promise to Moses is given to us as well, “Certainly I will be with thee” (Exod. 3:12). What peace should fill our hearts through the assurance of His constant companionship and His abiding presence!

His Promise

“The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20).

In this passage the God of Peace is associated with His promise to us. Because of repeated adversities and manifold trials, we may feel that the evil one is about to overwhelm us. Faith falters and we are ready to admit defeat.

No! He tells us that the dark night is about to be dispelled by the sunrise. The banner of victory is soon to be unfurled and the Captain of our Salvation will lead us upward to glorious triumph. He is coming soon to quell the uprising of the devil and his host. Our Lord will set up His righteous kingdom and reign in absolute power and great glory. The once-proud head of Satan will be

crushed in ignoble defeat, and the last promise of Genesis 3:15 will be fulfilled.

Though now we are in the midst of conflict, let us look upward and claim His promise. Then, indeed, we shall have peace within, knowing that in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him (Rom. 8:37).

His Pattern

“The very God of peace sanctify you learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of Peace shall be with you” (Phil. 4:9).

The God of Peace and His pattern for us is the thought that the above verse conveys. Our troubles and distresses are frequently allowed of the Lord because of our lack of conformity to His will, or because of our neglect of Himself. We live out of touch with Him and show little concern for His purpose for us, namely, that we should be conformed to the image of His Son.

There are five progressive steps in following the pattern: seeing, hearing, receiving, learning, and doing. By way of illustration let us consider the little lad in school. He first sees the lesson as it is written on the blackboard by the teacher; then he hears her explaining it to the class. Next, he copies it down in his note book; in other words, he receives it. That night at home he studies the lesson that he might learn it. At school the following day he is called to put into practice what he has learned, as he writes his answer on the blackboard or on the test paper.

Similarly, there are precepts and instructions which we see in the Word of God to which we must also give heed; we must give ear to hear. Furthermore, we must also

accept the Word of God without question or dispute; we must meditate upon it until it becomes a part of us. Finally, and most important, we must be doers of the Word and not hearers only. In our lives, daily we must manifest what we have been taught. Only when this is so, will we in the fullest measure be conscious of the presence of the God of Peace.

His Preservation

“The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes. 5:23).

Here we have His preservation of us. While ours is the responsibility to follow the pattern, we are readily aware of the fact that we need a power above and beyond ourselves if we are to gain the victory in the face of temptation and the satanic power that is arrayed against us.

The God of Peace desires to sanctify us wholly; that is, He would set us apart for His glory, separating us from defilement.

The pascal lamb of Exodus twelve was to be kept for four days. This was not only that it might be proven without blemish, but also that it might be guarded and preserved from anything that would render it unfit for sacrifice.

Similarly, it is the purpose of God that we should be kept from falling; preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ when we shall be presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude V 24).

His Pleasure

“Now the God of peace… make you perfect In every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sightt, through Jesus Christ” (Hebrews 13:20-21).

Finally, we have the God of Peace and His pleasure in us. For the words “make perfect” one translation uses the expression, “make you what you ought to be.” It is akin to the phrase used in connection with the sons of Zebedee who were “mending their nets” (Mk.1:19). They were washing and repairing the nets (making them what they ought to be, perfect) for useful service again. This is what the Lord wishes to do with us.

Notice, the Lord works this in us; this is made possible through Jesus Christ. The nets are not left to swish themselves round and round in the water in a futile attempt to weave again the broken strands. No, the net is in the fisherman’s hands where it rests submissive to his will and his working.

Why a Children's Series? (Aug 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 8, Aug 1960.

E. B. Sprunt

In many parts of the country, there are complaints of declining interest in Gospel meetings, with few, if any, unsaved attending even special campaigns. As a result, a number of assemblies have all but discontinued any attempt to reach souls with the story of the Saviour's love. With them, evangelistic efforts are a thing of the past and the Sunday night Gospel meeting has been turned into a ministry meeting.

Apathy on the part of the unsaved, however, does not excuse us from fulfilling the Lord's command in Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." When Paul and Barnabas found the Jews unreceptive to the Word (Acts 13:46), they turned to the Gentiles who had an ear for the Gospel. Let us follow this example and seek out those who will gladly receive His Word.

Nor need we look far, because today in most places there are boys and girls who may easily be persuaded to attend children's meetings. When the Lord sent us "to every creature", He meant the young as well as the old. In fact, His warning to the disciples was, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones… these little ones which believe in Me" (Matt. 18:10,6).

If the grown-ups have no ear for the Word, let us direct our attention to the young, remembering that the child of today is the adult of tomorrow. Let us seek to win them for Christ in the days of their youth, before the evil

days come and the years draw nigh, when they shall say, “I have no pleasure in them” (Eccl. 12:1).

The Need of the Children

There are many children right around us who have never heard the plain Gospel story. Some have parents who are indifferent to religious matters and so do not send their youngsters to Sunday School. Others go to places where the teaching is “modernistic”, or they are associated with one of the satanic cults which belittle the Person and work of Christ.

Recently, we had a special campaign in an area that was being populated by new immigrants from Europe. The Lord had brought the mission-field right to our door! When these children were contacted, they were eager to come to a place where folk took an interest in them. They had a surprisingly good knowledge of English, in spite of their being so short a time in the country, and their keen minds were receptive to the Scripture lessons. Who would deny these precious little ones the Christ-commanded privilege of hearing the Gospel?

Because children are easily impressed, we should seek to make impressions for God upon the tender hearts. They should be saturated with Gospel truth; this may best be accomplished by regular night-afternight repetition of the lessons and verses. Six hours a week is better than only one hour on Sunday. The devil uses so much of the week to store their minds with evil.

Nor let us belittle the possibility of a child being brought to Christ. Remember His reference to “these little ones which believe in Me.” Every boy or girl that is truly converted is not only a soul saved from Hell, but with

proper shepherding and teaching will also be a life saved from sin for useful service for the Master.

The Growth of the Sunday School.

In most cases, the majority of those who come to the meetings during the week either go elsewhere on Sunday, or have no Sunday School affiliation. If these children are shown kindly interest, they may quite readily be encouraged to become regular scholars in the Sunday School. If nothing else, a series for children is an effective way of advertising the fact that the Assembly has Sunday School.

Moreover, children who have been coming to the Sunday School will gain added enthusiasm through a rousing series and will thereby be restrained from needlessly absenting themselves or straying to another Sunday School. Children enjoy activity and dislike being associated with a place that appears to be lifeless. They can certainly be kept interested through a special campaign.

The Testimony of the Assembly

Experience has shown that parents gain confidence in an assembly that shows a sincere interest in their children. Often their appreciation will lead them to attend the Parent’s Night at the close of the series. After this first contact with the Christians, strangers feel less apprehensive about a second visit. An effective follow-up campaign may result in these folk becoming regular attenders at Gospel meetings and later becoming true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In some cases, contact is made with born-again believers who have been affiliated with other groups. As

they learn the truth of God through subsequent visits, they may be led by the Holy Spirit to identify themselves with those gathered in Christian simplicity in the Name of the Lord alone.

A successful children's series thus acts as a tonic to the assembly, and more so if spirits have been low because of declining interest among the adults and a lack of blessing in the preaching of the gospel.

Need any further arguments be presented to impress upon us the importance of a special gospel effort with the children? Let us unitedly join the ranks of those who "brought young children to Him … and He blessed them" (Mark 10:13, 16).

* * *

Suggestion of the Month

The building and maintaining of Sunday school attendance requires a steady effort by many people working together along various lines of approach. The first step in a comprehensive program is the establishment of a complete, up-to-date Cradle Roll, with accurate listing of names, addresses, birth-dates, etc. The over-all program for the entire Sunday school should be co-ordinated by the superintendent. Every teacher should keep tab of babies expected by the families of his or her pupils. Visitation prior to, and following, the new arrival cannot fail to build good relations between the family and the Sunday school. Special packets with literature and record forms for carrying out such programs are now available from some publishers. More information will be supplied on request.

Working Together (Sept 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 9, Sept 1960.

E. B. Sprunt

A well-organized team of helpers, working heartily, energetically and harmoniously, augers well for the success of a children's series. In this article we propose to outline some of the duties which should be detailed in advance of the opening of the series.

One feature of a children's series is that, where the number of helpers is very limited, the meetings may still be carried on, with some adjustment or curtailment. It is a definite advantage, however, to have all available help in your campaign.

Transportation

Assuming that you have conducted an advertising campaign to publicize your meetings, the next point to be considered is the matter of getting the children to your hall. Strangers will be more inclined to let their children come to your series if transportation is provided, especially when the weather is cold or the evening is dark. It is possible to reach new housing areas by this means and contact those who have not previously attended your Sunday School.

Usually it is sufficient to have certain specified stops, where the children may congregate, such as school gates, or convenient corners. When doing so, however, be sure that your cars are at the spot ahead of time.

It is advisable to have the light burning inside the car so the children may see the driver and other friends in the car before they venture to step inside.

It is advantageous to have one or two brethren in charge of transportation to be sure that cars are on hand to pick up children as needed. The Christians may then contact these brethren to see whether extra cars are needed, or where the children should be met.

Attendance

If possible, keep a record of all the children who come to your meetings, with their addresses and ages, for future follow-up work. If the child is permitted to write his own name on the card there is less danger of getting an incorrect name or number. Younger children, obviously, must be given assistance in this, but older children with them will spell the names for you. Accuracy in these records should be stressed because of subsequent visitation work.

Ushering

After the children are registered, be sure that they are ushered promptly to a seat. Those engaged in this work should be pleasant with the children but firm in maintaining order from the first, or the children may get out of hand and noisy or rowdy.

Singing

The children being seated, the meeting is now ready to commence. This is an important time and the song-leader is a key figure in the success of effort. He should have a pleasant, friendly manner that commands the

attention of the children and at the same time sets them at ease.

The song-leader should be able to pitch the hymns to the right key and to carry the tune with a strong, clear voice. The singing should be lively and bright, but the hymns or choruses chosen should be those which convey a definite Gospel message. It is better not to teach the children words which apply only to one who is a Christian. Frothy, meaningless choruses which have a catchy tune, but no spiritual message should be given no place at all in your service.

In the opinion of the writer, the song-leader should not be changed from night to night. The children get to know the leader after a night or two and are therefore better able to respond when he directs them.

The song-leader should choose his own hymns and choruses, though an occasional favourite from the audience may be included. Of recent years there has been a strong emphasis on new choruses. Why not try reverting to some of those good old-fashioned hymns of the faith? They have been used of the Lord in leading many souls to Christ.

The Doorman

Unlocking the door may appear to be a very minor role, but it seems advisable to include a short item on this topic because it contributes in part toward successful meetings.

The doorman should be on hand in good time so the children will not be kept outdoors too long. Neighbours will resent noisy youngsters congregating around your hall awaiting admittance. Also, thoughtful parents will

dislike their children being forced to remain outside too long, especially on dark, cold or rainy nights. Children should be instructed not to come too far in advance of the hour of meeting.

When the doorman lets the boys and girls enter the hall, he should insist that they do so in an orderly fashion, standing in line, or sitting quietly until attendance is registered. He may permit them to talk in a low voice, providing they do not get out of hand.

The Speaker

Not everyone is fitted for speaking to children; it is a gift from the Risen Head of the Church. This ability may develop through teaching a small group in a Sunday School class. In a special series, however, the speaker should be one who has the faculty for winning the children to himself, of holding their attention while he speaks and of making the message simple and plain so the young hearts may take it in.

It is not necessary to build too large a structure in one lesson. A single point taught by a Bible text and illustrated by story or object-lesson will become a nail fastened in a sure place. Be sure the point is hammered home well! Subsequent nights allow for adding precept upon precept until the children have learned the lessons concerning sin and salvation.

Prayer

Every member of the assembly can become an active worker in your children’s campaign by becoming a prayer partner. In fact, this is vitally important to the success of the campaign. We are workers together with

Him and prayer keeps the campaign in touch with Heaven.

Let us ever remember that it is God, and He alone, who gives the increase. Without His presence and blessing no children’s series will be truly successful.

Publicizing Your Children's Series (Oct 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 10, Oct 1960.

E. B. Sprunt

When planning a series of children's meetings, much thought should be given to methods of advertising your campaign. Obviously you cannot expect children to attend if they do not know of your meetings; therefore a good publicity campaign should be conducted. The purpose of this article is to offer some helpful suggestions as a guide in this planning.

In most centres, the results of radio or newspaper advertising do not warrant the heavy expense. Handbills distributed from door to door are often discarded before their message is conveyed to interested children.

Attractive blotters, distributed to children in the vicinity of schools, are in most cases effective in announcing meetings. However, the ball point pen has lessened the demand for blotters among students.

On occasion, we have used a card, printed in the form of a ticket, which states that the bearer and friends will be admitted free to "Happy Hour Meetings". Children like to get something for nothing and so will not be inclined to discard a ticket which they think is of some value.

There is an advantage in allowing space on the back of the card for the child to write his name, address and age. This will save time in registration work and will help you to retain an accurate permanent record of all

those who attend. As an added inducement you may offer a prize for bringing the card, properly filled out.

In preparing the card or blotter, use words which will appeal to the child's mind. For this reason we suggest using some title for the series, such as Happy Hour, rather than colorless expressions like, Children's Gospel Meetings, or, Special Meetings for Boys and Girls. The use of Happy Hour will often reach those who normally would not be inclined to attend religious services, or those who might not be permitted to come because of religious bias. A word of caution should be added here: let your advertising maintain the dignity and restraint which should characterize the work of the Lord.

When distributing the advertising matter, be sure to display a cheerful smile and a happy mien which will make a favorable first impression on the kiddies. Also, whenever possible, try to catch the name of as many children as you can, without asking them directly. This may be done by a quick glance at the books they are carrying, or by hearing some other child call to them. You will be pleasantly surprised at the way children will be drawn to you when you address them by name. Once you make a favorable contact with a child, try to induce him to bring his pals with him to the meetings.

Be constantly on the alert to prevent a child from corralling a handful of blotters or tickets; there is no point in needlessly wasting your advertising. The writer usually holds only one or two dozen cards in his hand, concealing the remainder in an inside coat pocket. If the children begin crowding in an unruly manner, give out the cards in your hand and then stop until order is restored.

Tom Wilkie and James Gunn (of the editorial staff of Food for the Flock) were engaged in pioneer work in a small Ontario town some years ago. When adult interest in the campaign waned, they decided to try children's meetings.

Brother Wilkie obtained a supply of Gospel medals and took his stand near the schoolyard gate just at dismissal time. Without saying a word, he allowed the medals to run slowly through his fingers from hand to hand. Soon he was surrounded with youngsters, attracted by the glitter and tinkle of the medals on display.

"Gimme one, Mister!" shouted one. "May I please have one, Sir?" asked another, more politely.

He maintained his sphinx-like silence until the corner was packed with curious, clambering children. Then he announced the meetings, promising a medal to each child who would come. That evening there was a large and attentive audience, yet advertising expense was negligible.

Undoubtedly, the best form of promotion is to contact the children through other children. Use those who come to your Sunday School as a means of reaching their friends. Various contests and prizes may be employed to get the children working to bring others to your meetings. Be sure, though, that the children work to win, because rewards which are earned too easily are not appreciated. Develop a spirit of competition among the children and watch your attendance grow.

Some months ago, I was standing outside a school in Minneapolis, waiting to distribute announcements of our meetings. As the first children came out of school I tried

to sell them on the idea of coming to the services, but they did not seem to be enthused.

Just then I caught sight of a girl whom I recognized as having come to similar meetings two years previously. When another girl said, “Hello, Ruth”, as she passed, I was quick to pick up her name.

“Hi, Ruth!” I said, “Do you remember the Treasure Chest we had at the children’s meetings two years ago?

At first she looked puzzled, but soon recalled who I was and her face broke into a sunny smile. “Oh, it’s Uncle Ernie!” she exclaimed. “Sure, I remember; and I liked the stories we heard too. If you are having more meetings, I will be there tonight.”

She not only came, but she brought others with her. Working enthusiatically, she won first prize in the contest for building up the attendance. One night she brought twenty, I believe, to the meeting, including several adults who had never before been inside the hall. I feel confident that the precious seed of the Word, planted in the heart of this dear girl, will eventually become fruitful in her salvation.

When children come to your meeting for the first time, speak kindly to them and welcome them without making them feel conspicuous. If possible, let them sit with friends whom they might recognize in the audience. Try to call these newcomers by name a few times and be sure to bid them good-bye at the closing, saying that you hope to see them again the next evening.

More is accomplished through fewer children, if they come regularly night after night, than through a large crowd that comes once but never returns. Strive,

however, to have the largest possible number attending the most possible nights.

Scripture assures us that in all labor there is profit, so put forth your best effort toward increasing your attendance.

General Procedure (Nov 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 11, Nov 1960.

E. B. Sprunt

Have you been wondering how a special series of meetings for children is conducted? Let me take you to witness an actual campaign, and as we observe the procedure we will add a few comments and suggestions. This, I believe, will be a profitable experience.

By way of introduction, it should be pointed out that some weeks prior to the commencement of the meetings, the brother who was to act as director called together several brethren of the assembly who were active in Sunday School work.

When this committee met, they also invited one brother from each of two other assembly Sunday Schools in the area, as well as the one who had been invited as special speaker for the campaign. These brethren were invited for the sake of fellowship and to offer suggestions that might be helpful.

The organizing committee, in turn, made an outline of all the duties that would be performed, and appointed certain brethren to be responsible, at least two for each office. These included the following: contests and prizes, publicity and advertising, transportation, registration and follow-up, ushering, singing, etc.

On the opening day of the campaign, all the schools in the area were visited and announcement cards were distributed to the children as they left the schoolyard.

Cards had also been given to all the Sunday School pupils.

Transportation

The children were instructed to meet at certain strategic points, such as the school yard gate, and well-lighted street corners in the area. Those in charge of transportation then arranged for cars to pick up the children and bring them to the hall. Usually the same car and driver took the children back at the close of the meeting and it became general practice for these children to be met regularly by the same person nightly after that. Where drivers found they had too many children for one carload, a call was made to the two brethren in charge of transportation and another car was promptly sent to help out.

Registration

Those responsible for registering the children were on hand well in advance of the announced starting hour for the meeting. As the children entered, they were directed through a basement door to a long row of tables. Names, addresses and ages were taken. To speed up this work, space for this data was provided on the advertising cards, so that in many cases the child merely handed in the card and the information was transferred to the registration card later, when the children had been seated.

In this particular hall, an identification badge was pinned onto each child the second night he came — prepared from information given the first night — and each badge was numbered. Thereafter attendance was recorded speedily by merely ticking off the number of

the child, as noted on the badge. Surprisingly, these badges were prized by the children, many of whom wore them to school. This became an added means of advertising the “Happy Hour Meetings.”

Ushering

As the children were registered, they were directed upstairs to the main auditorium, where they were promptly seated, filling in front seats first. In this way, the children were prevented from running around in a noisy, rowdy manner.

The ushers should give the children a warm and friendly greeting, but should be reasonably firm in restraining unnecessary commotion. Ushers who do their job well contribute greatly to the general behaviour tone of the meetings.

Singing

The song-leader was enthusiastic and he kept the children singing well. He chose most of the hymns and choruses himself, to be sure that the Gospel was presented in song. Occasionally, he called for a selection from the audience. He sang pieces that were well-known by most, and selections that did not have difficult tunes.

Contests

Ten or fifteen minutes were allotted to singing and opening prayer, and then it was time for the “Treasure Chest,” which was a large box or trunk, chained to look as though it had come from a pirate ship. Certain selected children came forward one at a time. With the audience as judge, each child was required to repeat one or more verses of Scripture that had been taught on

previous nights. By repeating correctly, he was allowed to pick a key from a bag, or box (no peeking of course!).

If the key was the one that fitted the padlock on the chained chest, he was permitted to select any of the wrapped packages inside the chest. These prizes ranged from Bibles to ball-point pens, from wallets to watches; something that was quite an incentive for the child to learn his verses. Only one prize was given each night, so the contest was not too expensive. A small consolation prize was given to those who said the verse correctly, but failed to select the right key.

The Message

At the opening of the lesson period, a brief review of the previous lessons was held. This served to deepen impressions which had been made on the young hearts. The continual repetition made sure that the messages would not soon be forgotten.

A nightly campaign makes it possible to follow a series of related lessons, in which one point is pressed home each night. In the campaign under review the speaker spoke of a number of persons who were associated with the Lord Jesus in His crucifixion.

Closing

After the message, a suitable hymn or chorus was sung, always one that would deepen spiritual impressions, and then the meeting was closed in reverent prayer. An opportunity was given for the children, if interested, to have a private conversation about eternal matters with the speaker or the teachers, but no emotional appeal was made.

The children were dismissed a row at a time, in a quiet and orderly manner so as not to take the edge off the messages.

The Son of God (Part 1) (Feb 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 2, Feb 1961.

Most Bible commentators agree that Mark presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the Perfect Servant. It is, however, significant that the book opens with the words, “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

This statement does not refute the suggestion of His being seen as the Servant in the second Gospel. Rather, it dispels any implication that Jesus Christ ceased to be the Son of God when He became the Servant.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses, we are told, every word shall be established. Here we find triple testimonies from three spheres to confirm the fact of His Sonship. First, there is the testimony of the Prophets; then the testimony of Deity, and finally the testimony of Creation.

The Prophets

In Isaiah 40:3 and in Malachi 3:1, reference is made to one coming as the forerunner of the Lord Himself, to prepare His way. These passages are used in Mark 1:2-3, to introduce John the Baptist as the herald of Jesus Christ, the Coming One.

Thus the first and last of the Old Testament prophets combine to attest to the fact that this One is God the Son. They are, in effect, representative of all the prophets who wrote to bear witness of Him.

The triplet of prophetic testimony is completed by John the Baptist himself, the last and greatest of the prophets of the old dispensation. He preached the coming of One

greater than himself, the latchet of whose shoes, John confessed, he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose (vs. 7).

Elsewhere we are told that John bore record, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God.”

Deity

From the early books of the Bible we gather that it was a common thing for the Lord to speak from Heaven directly to His servants and to His people. This experience, however, became less and less frequent as the hearts of the people grew increasingly hard and as they enjoyed less of the consciousness of His presence in their midst.

Consequently, the prophets and the holy angels became the medium whereby God spoke unto the fathers, until such time as He sent His own Son into the world as the Living Word.

The audible voice of God the Father was no longer heard, except when it was necessary to give assurance that Jesus Christ was indeed His Son.

For example, when Jesus came up from the water, after having been baptized of John in Jordan, God the Father said, with the voice from Heaven, “Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (vs 11).

Again, on the Mount of Transfiguration, when Peter proposed making three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elias, this same voice was heard from the heavenly cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son: hear Him” (Mk. 9:7).

Finally, in John 12:28, when Jesus cried with troubled soul, “Father, glorify Thy Name”, there came a voice from Heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

On this latter occasion, sad to say, the people were so bereft of spiritual perception that they did not recognize the voice as that of the Father. Instead, some said that it was an angel that spoke, while yet others passed off the phenomenon with the supposition that it was merely the rumbling of distant thunder.

Nevertheless, the evidence of God the Father stands to give threefold testimony to the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit, as the Third Person of the Godhead, also has a distinct part in the heavenly testimony to the Divine Sonship of Jesus of Nazareth. Previous reference has been made to His descending upon Him in the form of a dove on the banks of Jordan.

Notice also verse 12, “Immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness.” The resultant privation and temptation was not a surprise attack plotted by Satan; rather, it was according to the definite plan of the Spirit. It was the means the Spirit would use to display, under the most severe tests, the perfections of this distinctive Man, in order to establish beyond dispute that He is indeed the Son of God.

Creation

Let us now consider the sphere of creation for further testimony to the Divine Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ. One would be reminded of the statement in Romans 1:20, “The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead.”

Much is made of the miracle which was displayed when Daniel was cast into the den of lions. No less marvellous is the fact that Jesus, when tempted in the wilderness, was with the wild beasts (vs 13) and yet He was not harmed by them in any way. Being God the Son, He possessed the inherent power to shut the mouths of these beasts, even as He did those of the lions in Daniel’s day. These naturally ferocious animals, by their subjection to Him, gave mute but forceful testimony to His being the Son of God, the ordained Ruler of the coming millenial kingdom of peace.

Similarly, the ass’s colt submitted placidly when the Lord rode into Jerusalem. What other man could gain immediate and complete control over such a fractious animal upon which no one had ever before been seated? This is the way the brute beasts give testimony to their recognizing Jesus as the Son of God.

Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee (vs 16) would recall the incident in chapter four where the elements attest to His Sonship. As He was asleep in the hinder part of the vessel, you recall, a great storm of wind arose and the waves filled the ship. Rising from slumber, He displayed His divine power with the words, “Peace, be still.” At once the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

The disciples were thus led to exclaim one to another, “What manner of Man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?” This is but further testimony to His Sonship.

Surely it was not by mere chance that on a certain occasion a fish found a coin in the sea and took it into its mouth. Nor was it by sheer coincidence that this same fish should open its mouth again to take the hook which Peter cast into the sea. It happened because Jesus, as the Son of God, was in control of His creatures.

Finally, the unclean spirit is forced to give due recognition of Jesus as the Holy One of God (vs 24). When the demon came out of the tormented man, the people were all amazed and questioned among themselves, saying, “What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him.”

Nor was this an isolated case of power over the demons. He cast out many (vs 34), throughout all Galilee (vs 39). Perhaps the outstanding case occurs in chapter five, where the demoniac was made perfectly whole as his legion of demons entered into the herd of swine, causing them to run violently down a steep place to be choked in the sea.

Thus, in Mark, chapter one, the words of the prophets, the witness of the Godhead and the testimony of creation would lead to the undisputed and irrefutable conclusion that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The Son of God (Part 2) (Mar 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 3, Mar 1961.

In our previous study of Mark chapter one, consideration was given to the testimonies of the Prophets, the Godhead, and Creation as they combine to reveal the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Let us now focus our attention on the evidence which He Himself revealed to attest His being the Son of God. In doing so, let us keep in mind His words in John's Gospel, "I am one that bear witness of Myself" (Jno. 8:18); "Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true" (Jno. 8:14); again, "I have greater witness than that of John: for the work which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (Jno. 5:36).

Those who carefully consider His words of testimony will surely be like the people when He was here on earth, of whom it is written, "They were beyond measure astonished, saying, "He hath done all things well" (Mark 7:37).

His Preaching

His preaching is mentioned three times in Mark chapter one. He preached in Nazareth (vs 14), where, as Luke 4:17 reveals, He read from the book of the prophet Esaias. He preached in Capernaum (vs 21), and finally, He preached throughout all Galilee (vs 39).

The order is significant, and sets a good example for those who would aspire to go forth into His ministry.

He first preached where He had been brought up, then He preached where He was making His home, and finally He went forth to the regions beyond.

From the public ministry of our Lord Jesus, we may observe three characteristics. First, it was with grace. Acording to Luke 4:22, when He completed His brief discourse at Nazareth, the people marvelled at the gracious words (or, words of grace, R.V.) which proceeded out of His mouth. He did not display harshness or sternness like the Pharisees.

Secondly, His preaching was with authority (Mk. 1:22). The scribes were accustomed to read to the people that which others had written, probably a combination of the writings of Moses and the traditions of the elders. This One, because He spake with authority, as God the Son, caused His hearers to be astonished.

Thirdly, His preaching was accompanied with power. For example, when He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, He cast out demons (vs 39). The common people had never witnessed anyone who could so work miracles along with his preaching. He was, as Peter declared on the day of Pentecost, “Approved of God by many miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him” (Acts 2:22).

It is possible for one to have authority to speak, but not the power to put into effect. Others may have strength and power, yet no authority for exerting it over others. In Jesus Christ we find One who, because of being God the Son, has both authority and power. His authority and power, however, were always accompanied by grace.

His Persuasion

There was a persuasiveness about the Man of Galilee, even apart from His preaching, which magnetically drew followers after Him. One day, as He walked by the seaside, He saw Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea. A little farther on, the two sons of Zebedee were mending their nets. When He called these four busy men, they responded straightway and followed Him.

In doing so, they first of all left their lifetime occupations. These were not idle men eager to be hired, nor were they disgruntled and seeking for another form of employment. According to Luke 5:9, they had just attained to their greatest success, with a record catch of fish, yet they left all for Him.

As the Amplified New Testament puts it, “They left their nets, yielding up all claim to them.” They left all that was once so dear to them, and let others take full possession. They did so, remember, not for more lucrative gain but for earthly loss. Later these very men, on occasion, became penniless.

Morover, they left their worldly associations. They turned their backs upon the home town with all they so dearly cherished there. They forsook all that had been their life, and the future they had hoped would be so bright.

Perhaps hardest of all, they left their natural relations. Surely it was not easy for these sons to turn immediately away from their beloved father. Can you not visualize old Zebedee with his tear-stained eyes, gazing after his departing sons? His weather-beaten face, covered with salt, sweat, and sea-spray, wearing a strange expression

of wonder and grief, as he turned to assist the hired servants in gathering up the draught of fishes. “Why are they leaving me now?” he must have asked.

These men left all because of the persuasive personality of Jesus of Nazareth; but they did not leave on sudden impulse or because of a mere emotional appeal. They became associated with Jesus Christ because, as Peter says, “We believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Jno. 6:69). Their very act of following gives testimony to the fact of His Sonship.

His Power

The last half of the first chapter of Mark is taken up with accounts of the power which Jesus of Nazareth displayed in the performing of miracles.

His healing power was neither confined to any one place nor restricted to any certain favorable circumstance. He worked in Capernaum and also throughout all Galilee. He is seen delivering the sick in the synagogue, in the home, and in the great outdoors. Some were made whole by a touch of His hand, while others were delivered from demons by a mere word from His lips.

His miracles were never tainted by any selfish or ulterior motive, nor by a desire for vain-glory. Always He acted for the glory of God His Father and for the welfare of others.

It is little wonder that the people were deeply impressed; as we read, “They were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him” (vs 27).

Such mighty power belongs to God only. Therefore, when this same power is displayed by Jesus of Nazareth, it reveals Him as God the Son.

His Pity

The closing verses of the chapter bring before us a miracle which is one of His greatest, because it is a miracle of condescending grace.

A leper came to Him and, kneeling before Him, earnestly besought His healing, cleansing blessing. Luke, being a physician, adds that the man was full of leprosy.

Previously, there had been a time when the first spot of the dread disease was discovered, when the priest beheld the tell-tale evidence in the skin and pronounced the poor fellow a leper, utterly unclean.

As such, according to the law of Moses in Leviticus 13, his was the outside place, where he must dwell alone. Forbidden from approaching others, lest he defile them, this poor leper must often have seen people turn from him and flee at the sound of his mournful cry, “Unclean! Unclean!”

But this Jesus of Nazareth, of whom he had heard, was not like other men. The leper, quite possibly, had been informed of the incident in the synagogue at Nazareth, when the people sought to put Jesus to death because of His reference to the cleansing of Naaman by the power of God.

Was this what led the despairing creature to fall on his face and beg that he too might be made clean? Did he discern in this Preacher and Healer those traits which

marked Him out as the Son of God? One would be inclined to think so.

Who but the Son of God would deign to do what Jesus did? He actually touched the man! Yet, coming in contact with leprosy, He was not thereby defiled. Moreover, He had compassion on the leper; He loved him.

Then, in a display of His divine power, Jesus spoke the words that made the leper perfectly whole and able to pass the most rigid inspection of the priest. By loving the leper, and touching him, and making him clean, Jesus clearly showed Himself to be the Son of God.

This is He who set His compassionate and infinite love upon fallen man, who stooped down to where the sinner was, and, with His healing touch cleansed him from all sin. This is the story of the Cross.

Surely we must take our stand alongside the centurion of Mark 15:39, and say with him, “Truly this Man was the Son of God.”

Follow Up Work (Mar 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 3, Mar 1961.

A special series of children's A meetings usually provides many excellent new contacts for the Sunday School. The full value of these contacts will be lost, however, unless a diligent follow-up campaign is carried out. The purpose of this article is to give helpful suggestions for this important phase of children's work.

Plans for follow-up should be discussed prior to the start of the series so that initial steps may be carried out during the meetings. Delay lessens the chance for good results.

If a series runs for two weeks, it is advisable to visit the neighbourhood schools with advertising matter on the Monday of the second week to remind the pupils that the meetings are continuing. The more frequently you contact the children the greater is the possibility of inducing their regular attendance.

When a child comes to meetings for several nights, and then misses two or three, a telephone call often will bring him back, and others with him. Most youngsters will respond to any show of interest in them. Wisdom should be used in the matter of those children who come without the knowledge of parents who are opposed to the Gospel.

There are advantages in announcing a Parents' Night at the close of the series, at which time a small reward may be given to each boy and girl who brings an adult. Folk are more likely to permit their children to join the Sunday School after they have seen the way the service

is conducted and have heard the Bible lessons that are being taught.

Another suggestion is to hold a special rally on the Sunday following the series, to which parents and new scholars are invited.

Sometimes an announcement is made with great stress, “Any boy or girl who does not go to another Sunday School is welcome to come to ours.” Why make such restrictions against a child who may be going to a place where the clear Gospel is not taught, or where “damnable heresies” are being instilled in the young minds? Extend a hearty invitation to every one, and be sure that all who come are made warmly welcome.

Consideration should be given to the possibility of following up the special series with a children’s meeting, or hobby class, one night a week in order to maintain effective contacts with those youngsters whose parents take them elsewhere on Sundays.

Some groups plan their special campaign as a wind-up to their winter’s craft class or weekly meeting. In this event, be sure to retain names and addresses of all who attend, so they may receive announcements when activities are resumed.

Above all, a visitation program should be conducted following the series, if at all possible. After the area is mapped out, listings should be taken from the attendance records and volunteer workers assigned to specified areas. In this way, visits may be made systemmatically and without overlapping of calls.

By means of the data card, the caller is enabled to address the parent by name and make reference to the

children. After sincerely expressing appreciation for the young ones coming to the meetings, a warm invitation should be given to the whole family to attend the Sunday School and Gospel meetings.

There are advantages in sending out the visiting team two by two. A person with limited ability, or with lack of confidence, may be paired with one who is experienced and gifted in visitation work. Also one may be able to pick up an opening for favorable comment, or to answer difficult questions, which the other is not able to do.

Persons making the calls should not be offensive nor argumentative, nor should they become unduly verbose. If. however, the one being visited shows definite signs of interest in spiritual things, present the Gospel in a kindly and concise way, avoiding pressure on the first contact.

It is advantageous to keep a record of all calls made, with a notation of reactions and other information which will be useful on subsequent visits to that home.

Where such door-to-door visitation cannot be conducted, a letter should be sent to each home, inviting the family to activities at the hall or chapel. By this means an opening is made for possible visitation at a latter date.

Special functions or variety programs may be used as another means of maintaining contacts. One Assembly holds an annual dinner for ex-scholars, to which all who formerly attended the Sunday School are invited for a re-union.

Others have successfully held Mother and Daughter or Father and Son Banquets, the expense of which is not large when the potential results are considered.

When such special gatherings are arranged, it is imperative that there be a good representation from the assembly, so the strangers will not feel conspicuous or get the impression that they have been led into something that is only half-hearted.

Let the program be conducted without stiffness or too much formality; otherwise the visitors will feel ill at ease. On the other hand there should be an air of dignity and reverence that befits the people whose God is the Lord and that characterizes the place where God's honor dwells.

If there is group singing, the wise song-leader will choose well-known hymns with a Gospel message, or choruses which have been Sunday School favorites, so that all will be able to join in the singing. Many a hard heart has been softened, and more than one sinner has been won for the Lord as a result of hearing again an old-time Gospel hymn that has been forgotten since Sunday School days.

Especially in the cast of the Ex-Scholars' Dinner, it would be advisable to have a few reminiscent remarks by an old-time teacher or superintendent who could recall incidents that occurred when the visitors were children in the Sunday School.

The speaker for the evening should be one who is interesting and forceful. He should present the Gospel in a plain, pointed manner and withal he should be brief. People have a general aversion to after-dinner speakers. The audience, therefore should not be bored with a long, dry message.

What is D. V. B. S.? (Apr 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 4, Apr 1961.

E. B. Sprunt

Said a preacher to a younger servant of the Lord, “Though I have not seen you for some time, I have been reading of your activities. What is this B.V.D.S., where you have been teaching?”

“The initials actually are D.V.B.S.,” was the reply, “And they stand for Daily Vacation Bible School. We call it school because we try to teach the children something; Bible School because Bible stories and verses of Scripture are taught. It is called Vacation Bible School because the sessions are conducted during the summer while the children are not attending regular school. It is termed Daily Vacation Bible School because classes are held every morning for two weeks. What better name could you suggest, Brother?”

The writer of this article finds difficulty in believing that the older preacher was as ignorant as his question would imply. However, personal conversation with a number of people has led to the conclusion that there are Christians who are genuinely interested in the welfare of young souls, but are not well acquainted with this phase of children’s work. For such this article is written in the hope that it will be helpful to them.

As the name implies, the schools are held during summer vacation period. Most sessions commence soon after the children finish their school year, that is, the latter part of June or early July.

Some groups have found the last two weeks of August to be a good time, because the youngsters are weary of vacation and eager for some diversified form of occupation. Actually, the time selected depends on local conditions.

In some areas, shops and factories close for two weeks the end of July or the first of August. This results in a general exodus of people from the district to vacation spots, leaving only a few children for the Bible school. Perhaps an even greater problem is that few Christian helpers are available at that time.

The dates, whatever they are, should be set well in advance and, if possible, at a time that will not conflict with other Vacation Bible Schools in the district.

Publicise your D.V.B.S. well and strive to get the maximum attendance for the first morning. When this is the case, lessons and projects will run more smoothly and the children will make an extra effort to come each morning in order to keep pace with others in the class.

Do not become discouraged if your numbers are not very large the first year of your school. Time is required to win the confidence of parents, but they will be more favorable when they discover how much the children are learning. Soon others will be induced to come.

The prime purpose of gathering the children together is to teach them, not entertain or amuse them. What should be taught? Certainly, teach the Scriptures, allotting a definite time for memory work. Let your children be like Timothy, of whom it is written, “From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15).

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, but one should specially emphasize those passages which are able to make them “wise unto salvation.”

We would stress the importance of accurate memorization. The care taken in this regard, along with constant repetition of the verses being committed to memory, will so engrave the Scriptures on the mind that the children will never completely forget them.

Teaching should also include Bible Stories and Scripture lessons which will illustrate important truths relative to the Gospel and “the things that accompany salvation” (Hebrews 6:9). Timothy was enjoined, “Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them” (2 Tim. 3:14).

Teaching a series of associated lessons has advantages over choosing topics at random, day by day, because one is able to build a progressive lesson structure during the two weeks of school. Prior to the lesson, a short review of previous studies will deepen impressions on the minds of the children and prepare the way for introducing the new message.

Publishers of religious literature have placed on the market a variety of materials for Vacation Bible School, such as Directors’ Manuals, Teachers’ Lesson Outlines, Students’ Work Books, etc. Much of this is not essential and a percentage is actually not beneficial.

Some of the material appears to be prepared on the assumption that all the children from the age of nine or ten are already saved. Other lesson outlines are watered down to become palatable to such a wide range of

religious beliefs that there is little or no opportunity to present the plain clear Gospel through them.

A few years ago, Gospel Folio Press of Grand Rapids prepared material based on “The Wordless Book”, with lessons on the sin of man, the sacrifice of Christ, salvation through His blood, etc. This set, however, may be no longer available.

Zealous teachers perhaps unduly stress the need for Manuals, lesson guides and work books. There are places where the children have responded equally well without all these expensive items.

Indeed, there is something to be said for the old-fashioned and almost neglected practice of obtaining lesson messages while kneeling alone with God, with an open Bible as the main textbook.

A singing period in Vacation Bible School affords an excellent opportunity for teaching by means of Gospel choruses or good old-time hymns. We would strongly advise against following the modern trend toward light, frothy songs which have little more to offer than a lilting tune and a few catchy phrases.

Teach hymns and choruses which have a definite Bible message. Do not instruct unconverted children to sing words which only a true believer may use. Why teach children, “Thou shalt not bear false witness,” and then instruct them to sing lies?

Most Vacation Bible Schools find it advantageous to include handicrafts or hobby work in their programs. This is used as an inducement to the children to come to your class, and also gives them a sense of achievement

because they have something to show to their parents afterward.

Where a Parents' Night is arranged for the conclusion of the Bible School, more adults will be attracted when the children's hand work is put on display. A good point of contact is provided for talking with the mother as the teacher comments on the work that has been done by the child.

Wisdom should be used to keep the craft work from taking pre-eminence over the true purpose of the school, which is the teaching of the Word of God. Wherever possible plan projects that will permit the including of a Bible verse.

For example, pieces of plywood may be cut into fancy shapes and designs. After being sandpapered smooth, stained and decorated with a picture from an old greeting card or magazine, a good Gospel text may be pasted beneath the picture. Be on the lookout for every possible means of getting the Gospel into the homes.

Use your Vacation Bible School as a means of adding to your Sunday School and also as an instrument for contacting the parents that they may be brought to Family Bible Hour or Gospel meetings.

What is D.V.B.S.? It is another excellent means of bringing the Gospel to the children and of seeing precious souls brought to the Saviour. Let us not carelessly overlook this opportunity of doing service for our Lord Jesus Christ.

A Day at D. V. B. S. (May 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 5, May 1961.

E. B. Sprunt

How would you like to come with me to see how a Vacation Bible School is conducted? Seldom are two schools conducted exactly alike, but obviously we do not have time in one article to visit them all. Instead, we will make this a composite picture, incorporating interesting and desirable features from a number of places of the writer’s experience.

As we drive down the road leading to the Sunday School building, the children are already wending their way toward the same place. Most are carrying Bibles and many have work books or other study material provided by the teacher.

Those cheery faces and the happy waves of the hand extended to us show that these youngsters are not attending Bible School under duress. Without exception they are delighted to be going to another session.

Do you notice those two girls walking side by side? The younger one is only five years old and her big sister is proudly bringing her for the first time. In this particular school only those of school age are enrolled, because in previous years their facilities were overtaxed by little toddlers who obviously were sent only because mother wanted them out of her way for a couple of hours.

Watch that car pulling up to the front of the building! A teacher is arriving with three children. No! Not three! Six more come tumbling out from the back seat. The

oldest girl in the group explains that she and her brother came to the Vacation Bible School last year, but during the winter her family moved to a new housing development two miles away.

The children were so eager to get to Bible School this year also that the teacher arranged to pick them up. It really was not far off her usual route. In turn, these youngsters rounded up six of their chums and a younger brother to come too.

Children are not encouraged to come too early, but promptly at 9.30 a.m. the audience is called to order. The next fifteen minutes are spent in singing bright choruses and Gospel hymns.

Between songs the leader opens in prayer. Incidently, did you notice that he was short and to the point? He has learned that long sermonized prayers tend to weary the children and create a restless atmosphere.

At 9.45 the children move off to their class rooms, with others of their age group. There the teacher goes over the memory verse for the day, conducts a short peppy quiz of the lessons taught previously, and then brines the new lesson to the class.

One teacher uses flannel-graph, another a blackboard, while a third is adept at telling a graphic story. In short, each one uses the method for which she feels most fitted and which suits the age and temperament of her group.

The Bible is given a prominent place, with the children reading a passage of Scripture together at the start of the lesson. They also are encouraged to look up references in the course of their class study.

The younger children are dismissed for recess at 10.10 a.m., so they may line up for orange drink and biscuits before the older scholars come along about 10.15. The movement of the tiny feet, by the way, is the hint to the other teachers that their dismissal bell will be ringing in five minutes.

At 10.30 the bell brings a halt to the refreshment time and play period, with the boys and girls returning to their respective classes. The next thirty minutes are devoted to crafts or some form of hand work.

Observe how the teachers loosen the reins of discipline somewhat, but still keep a steadying hand to prevent the class from becoming rowdy or noisy to the distraction of other groups.

At 10.55 a warning bell is the signal for all craft work to stop. Five minutes is just enough to get things cleared up and put away neatly until the next day.

At 11.00 a.m. the bell rings again and the children march in an orderly fashion, class by class, to resume their place in the main auditorium.

A kindly, “No running, boys,” or a restraining, “Take it easy, no shoving!” is usually sufficient to control over-eager youngsters.

A short hymn or song and a brief word of prayer make way for the speaker to bring his story message to the whole group. This lesson, as is the case with the ones given in individual classes, is centred around a Bible verse and is related to the lessons of the previous mornings.

In a kind and sincere way, the speaker closes his remarks with an appeal to the children to give heed to

the words that have been spoken, and to make the Lord Jesus their personal Saviour. No emotional stir or pressure is used, however.

The director gives a few announcements, mentions the attendance figures for the day, and then closes the day's session with prayer.

The children are now on their way home by 11.35 a.m., in good time for lunch and an afternoon of play. One is convinced that many of these young hearts will retain deep and lasting impressions. God has promised the sowing of good seed will result in fruit unto eternal life.

Honestly now, doesn't that day at Vacation Bible School beget within you a sincere desire to become engaged in such a worth-while activity for the Lord?

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23 - 24).

Precepts From the Preacher (Aug 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 8, Aug 1961.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there It shall be. He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and In the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

It would be presumptuous to assume that The Preacher in writing the Book of Ecclesiastes by divine inspiration, had Sunday School work or Child Evangelism specifically in mind. Nevertheless, in chapter 11, verses 1 to 6, there are some suggestions which, lifted out of the context, may be thought-provoking to those who have an interest in the spiritual welfare of the young.

“Cast thy bread upon the waters.” This is a strange expression, difficult to understand. At a certain season, a small group of devout Jews were seen by the water’s edge, literally casting their bread upon the waters. It

was explained that they were casting their sins, figuratively, into the deep, in order to obtain divine forgiveness and remission. We know that there is remission only through the blood of God's Lamb, who died at Calvary.

Some commentators have suggested the casting of seed upon the waters, as with the growing of rice, to obtain a harvest. One translation says, "Cast thy bread upon the face of the multitude." This would imply the giving of spiritual food to those who are hungry for the Bread of Life.

Some years ago, at a Sunday School Teachers' Conference, the question was asked, "For best results, how many pupils should there be in the class?" The brother who replied read Ecclesiastes 11:2, "Give a portion to seven and also to eight." One can find Scripture for almost anything!

Work among the young, however, is divided into two fields; the multitude of faces, as in children's meetings, and the seven or eight in the Sunday School class. The Preacher gives three precepts which are suggestive of the activities in which a faithful worker should be engaged: cast, give, sow.

"Cast" suggests an attitude of self-sacrifice; it is the opposite of greed or covetousness. The God-fearing worker is enjoined to a life of self-denial and sacrifice for the welfare of those precious children who are brought under his influence.

The second precept is, "Give." Reference to a concordance will show that the word thus translated is given a great latitude of meaning. In each case, it seems

to emphasize the recipient of the gift and the attitude of the giver.

One would consider the children in their need for spiritual food: without the Bread of Life they will surely perish. Our Lord placed in our hands the Gospel, which is the only remedy for the dying multitude. In doing so, He said, “Give ye them to eat.”

Notice that each one is to be given his portion. This means that we must constantly guard against showing partiality among the children. There are some who, by their winsome appearance and sparkling personality, gain the prominence. Remember, though, that the shy, timid tot stands equally in need of a portion. Give to each and to all whatever the Lord has entrusted to you from Himself, and do it lovingly.

The third precept is, “Sow.” This suggests carefulness and wisdom. To the casual observer it may seem that the sower is casting away his seed with reckless disinterest as he strides across the field. But no! Years of experience have developed a skill in scattering, so that he puts the right seed in the right soil, and always the right amount too.

The Gospel worker among children must choose his lesson material carefully, as seed is selected. He must diligently plant the Word in the good and honest hearts of the young. He must go forth weeping, watering the seed with his earnest prayers, if he desires to come again with rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves of a spiritual harvest.

The Preacher, in our passage, not only gives us these three precepts —cast, give, sow — but he also reminds us of three things which we do not know. This lack of

knowledge should spur us to greater efforts in service among the young.

First of all, we know not what evil shall be upon the earth (V. 2). We little guess what sinister influence may soon be at work to undermine the faith of those now in our care. Nor can we tell how much longer the privileges of hearing the Gospel and the truths of God will be afforded to them. Privileges now taken for granted may soon be denied. The Master says, “Work … for the night cometh, when no man can work.”

Secondly, we know not the works of God (v. 5). We know not how marvellously the Lord is able to use even a little portion of the precious seed of the Word, causing it to germinate and to produce fruit unto eternal life. Ours is the responsibility of sowing the seed, and of watering it with our prayers. God has pledged to give the increase.

Thirdly, we know not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good (v. 6). We cannot discern what the results will be, but we go forth in hope, wondering whether this or that, or both alike, shall be blessed of the Lord into producing that which will be to His eternal praise and glory.

Finally, let us consider the precious promise which is given to us as an incentive to cast, give and sow. “Thou shalt find it after many days.”

The full results of children’s work are not immediately seen: perhaps not until the passing of many days. Yet the promise of God has been given, and by faith we may accept it at face value. Only in the Coming Day, when all the sheaves of harvest are gathered in, will the full story be unfolded. Then shall the sower and the reaper rejoice together.

Preparing the Lesson (Oct 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 10, Oct 1961.

Are you a Sunday School teacher who will permit social and secular activity to crowd out that which is spiritual? As the hour of gathering approaches, do you sometimes become flustered and exclaim, “O Dear! I have forgotten about my class! What is the lesson story, and where is the Scripture passage?”

Then follows a hasty search for the Lesson Manual. “Let’s see; where did I put that thing when I came home last Sunday?” A few fleeting glances are taken at the pages, while you are in the car on the way to school. During opening exercises a frantic effort is made to cram into the mind some details of the story and a heading or two.

The result is a miserable day for all concerned. The children are restless and do not listen to what is being said. The teacher, frustrated, becomes short-tempered and likely picks up a throbbing headache to boot.

Honestly, now; is this the way to do the work of the Lord? Is this serving Him with the whole heart? At the Judgment Seat of Christ, could you expect to receive a reward for that sort of thing, or to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant?”

By contrast, when your subject is well prepared beforehand, you are able to greet the children with a smile as they enter the class. You have time to discuss their little problems with them and you face the lesson period with calm confidence. You are ready to teach and the children are eager to listen.

Would you like some helpful suggestions for the preparation of your lesson? That is the purpose of this article, and we will consider the topic under three main headings.

Choosing the Subject

The preparation of every lesson should commence with the knees bowed in prayer. Enter into the presence of the Lord with an open mind and, as you quietly wait on Him, He will burden your heart with a message to meet the need as He knows it.

Many Sunday Schools now use a lesson manual, so that the teacher has the subject selected beforehand. Even where this is the case, pray that the Lord will direct your mind into original thoughts and avenues of approach.

Lesson outlines should be used to assist you in your personal study and to provide added information about the lesson, the characters and the places mentioned.

Never try to use another person's material in its entirety or you will find yourself in the position of David wearing Saul's armour. He felt more confidence in God when he went forth to meet Goliath with the five stones which he himself had gathered.

Where uniform lessons are not used by the Sunday School, the teacher may find definite advantages in following some line of consecutive study. This enables a week-by-week review and the truths of the previous Sunday form an introduction to the new subject. Make your impressions through frequent repetition and the Word will not soon be forgotten by the children.

It is well to keep the pace moving rather rapidly from week to week, where consecutive study is being used.

Otherwise the children may lose interest. It took Moses forty years to lead the children of Israel through the wilderness, and many of them became discouraged before the end of the journey.

Collecting the Material

Having settled upon a lesson topic, the second important step is the gathering of material relative to the subject.

The first source of supply, obviously, is the Bible itself. Carefully and prayerfully read the passages that have to do with the lesson. Become thoroughly acquainted with each word, and be on the lookout for thought-suggesting expressions.

Read that which precedes and that which follows, to get a better grasp of the setting. Consult other passages of Scripture where the characters, places or events may be mentioned. For example, Stephen's discourse in Acts 7 sheds light on the incident of Moses going out unto his brethren.

A Bible Dictionary, Concordance and reliable books and commentaries will provide added information to give a clearer mental image of the action of the lesson and the background to the story.

Constructing the Lesson

Having gathered as much material as possible, the next important step is to sort it out and to set it in order. From all the thoughts and suggestions that you have gleaned, select those which will have a direct bearing on your lesson and omit all that is not relative.

Do not feel that you must use all your subject matter. Glean as much as possible, but use only that which has a

direct bearing on that point of the lesson which you are trying to drive home to the heart.

Set out your thoughts in consecutive order so that you may deal with one idea and then move progressively to the next, working steadily toward the ultimate goal. Such an outline will prevent you from wandering in circles or going aimlessly through the lesson.

Have one definite truth which your lesson is to present and work toward that object. Make a short pointed application so closely related to the lesson as you have taught it that the truth will be obvious to the minds of the children.

Having prepared your lesson, pray over it again that God will use it for His glory and the blessing of the class. Go forward with your confidence in God, not in yourself or in your own achievement or preparation. He is a great God and is able to use for His own glory that which He has given through the study of His word. He will reward all that is done diligently and heartily unto the Lord.

“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Rom. 14:7-8).

Presenting the Lesson (Dec 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 12, Dec 1961.

Did you have a rough time with your class last Sunday? In spite of your careful preparation of the lesson and your prayerful attitude before going to the school, did things not seem to go right at all?

Perhaps the fault lay in your manner of presentation. You may have gone to great lengths to gather material; you may have endeavoured prayerfully to set it down in an orderly fashion. Yet in the class the lesson fell flat because it failed to appeal to the children.

The Approach

The very first sentence in your lesson is most important. If it arouses the interest of the children, you have gained their ear. This is the first requisite to success. How may this be done?

Let us assume that we are teaching the lesson about Jacob and Esau. If we begin by discussing twins in a general way, we will gain the ear of the class, because each child is interested in the subject. With very young ones, though, it would be well to explain exactly what twins are. They may suppose that children are twins merely because they dress in identical clothes, or because birthdays fall on the same date. They may overlook the fact that twins have the same parents and are the same age.

Make it a rule always to approach your subject with some matter of common interest and something of genuine appeal to the children.

The Aim

Even before you commence to teach the lesson, be sure you have a definite goal before you. Ask yourself what specific point of truth you desire to emphasize and then work toward that end.

If you try to aim at too many targets you are sure to hit none of them. When you have one objective before you, there is less danger of wandering away from the subject.

Let us assume that in the story of Jacob and Esau we are going to stress the great difference between them; that is, their attitude toward God and the birthright. Jacob wanted it above everything else, while Esau counted it of little value. This is revealed in the incident of the mess of pottage. It may be contrasted to the physical difference in their appearance.

The Action

Keep your lessons alive and your children attentive by using the element of suspense and keep the story moving rapidly.

In our story under consideration, there are several action scenes. Describe the parents waiting for nineteen years for the children they so much desire, until Isaac began to pray to God, claiming the promises made to his father Abraham.

You may refer to Rebekah’s eager anticipation of the birth of the promised twins and then her bitter disappointment when the first was a boy but deformed. Describe the ugly red goat-like hair which covered his whole body.

Hold the class in suspense while Rebekah wonders what the second child will be like, and picture her delight when he is smooth-skinned and normal in every way. Little wonder she made the younger one her pet!

Further action comes into the story when Esau, hating the gaping eyes of people, turns to the wilderness for solitude and becomes a skilled hunter. Dramatize his stealthy stalking of a deer, the drawing of the bowstring, and the slain beast being carried home where Esau made the savory meats from his own special recipe.

The lesson moves quickly on to the day when Esau tries so hard but fails to make a kill. You may picture the arrow missing by a fraction, or a sudden gust of breeze startling the deer a moment before the arrow flies.

Depict Esau at the close of his unsuccessful day, famished with hunger, passing the tent of Jacob and smelling the tempting aroma of Jacob's big pot of steaming lentil soup.

(The Scriptural expression "mess of pottage" suggests anything but savory meat to most children. Use language that is close to their common usage and words that are readily understood.

Let the children listen in as Jacob and Esau drive their bargain and let them watch as Jacob ladels out the soup and adds bread as a bonus.

The story reaches its climax, however, years later when Isaac, blind and frail, supposes himself on his death bed. The teacher can find plenty of action as Esau stalks his deer while Rebekah and Jacob prepare the substitute dish and plan the disguise.

Be sure to emphasize the bitter lamentation of Esau when he learns that he has lost the blessing.

The Application

Children seem to stop listening when the teacher concludes a thrilling suspense story and then tries to tie on an application at the end.

A more effective way is to tell the story in such a manner that the application is fairly obvious. Make partial applications during the course of the story, but be brief and pointed so as not to lose the interest of the children.

Work your final application right into the conclusion of the lesson so that it really becomes a part of the climax. While the children are softened and sobered because of Esau's lament, remind them of the similar sorrow of those who make light of God's salvation when worldly things are alluring, only to find that too late the desired blessing of God is no longer available.

Present your lesson prayerfully and carefully; tell the story clearly and graphically, and then make your final application soberly and pointedly. Beyond that, let the Holy Spirit do the pressing and the urging for decisions. Ours is to sow the seed; the giving of the increase belongs in God's hands.

Mr. and Mrs. Christian (Jan 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 1, Jan 1962.

It all began with a dog chewing the head off a neighbour's chicken! The subsequent series of events gives further evidence to the truth of Romans 8:28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

The principals in this story desire to remain anonymous, in order that the Lord may have all the praise and the glory. We shall therefore refer to them under the pseudonym of "Mr. and Mrs. Christian."

During their early Christian life. they had been happily associated with saints in a large city where the things of the Lord were so precious to their hearts. It was quite a jolt, therefore, when the husband was transferred to a smaller centre many miles away from this fellowship of saints.

They wondered what purpose the Lord had in such a move and what service they could do for Him in the new location. For three years they sought to witness for Christ, distributing tracts in the whole area, but with few contacts and little evidence of blessing.

Then they began to build a house in a new section of town, moving in before the building was completed. It was their intention to have a Bible Club for children and some cottage meetings for adults, when the construction work was finished and the place was furnished. God accelerated the program, however, and began His work before the carpenter's work was finished.

One day several children came to the door, excitedly exclaiming that the dog had broken out of the yard, taken a violent dislike to a neighbour's chicken and chewed off the bird's head.

Mrs. Christian was quite upset, feeling that this unfortunate incident would put them in an unfavorable light in the vicinity, in spite of her sincere apologies and her offers to make full restitution.

She invited the children into her home, offered them cookies and a drink, and while they sat down to enjoy the refreshments, she told them a Bible story.

The youngsters had such a happy time that they eagerly accepted an invitation to come back again. Before long these youthful visitors were returning, and bringing little friends too, to listen to stories from the Word of God.

Mr. and Mrs. Christian saw possibilities for the development of the class, so they arranged for the children to come regularly, at a specified time.

One day a mischievous boy, while waiting for the class to start, prodded a bee's nest in a tree and was badly stung about the face. This apparent reverse was also used of the Lord. It brought the Christians into touch with the parents of the boy and they had an opening to present the Gospel. Later that whole family was won for the Lord and gathered into assembly fellowship.

Mr. and Mrs. Christian diligently followed up all contacts that they had with children and visited every home which had an open door. In fact, they entered any door that was not tightly closed upon them. As a result, the children's work grew and souls were led to the Saviour.

As the Lord seemed to lead, they eventually gathered together a handful of believers who had seen the truth of meeting in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. An extra room was added to the house and the little company came there to remember Him in the breaking of bread.

Today the assembly meets in a comfortable chapel, with about fifty saints sitting down to worship and to keep the feast of remembrance. Most of these are the fruit of the children's work. Every week during the school term, Mrs. Christian and her sisters in the Lord conduct Bible Clubs in the homes, and there is a large Sunday School at the chapel.

The success of the work, to a large degree, can be traced to the excellent follow-up program that has been conducted. Whenever a child is contacted through Sunday School, Bible Club or special children's meeting, his home is visited shortly afterward.

The parents may say that they have their own church and so the children will not be able to come to Sunday School. In such an event an invitation is given to the mid-week Bible Club. By this means many children hear the Gospel and a good percentage eventually become Sunday attenders as well.

When scholars absent themselves, a telephone call or personal visit is made promptly, to enquire as to the reason. In the case of sickness, friendly sympathy is offered. If the children are staying away because of carelessness, they are usually won back by the kindly interest shown in them.

Frequently contests are conducted to encourage the pupils to bring their friends and neighbours to the

Sunday School or meetings. The prizes offered are Bibles or attractive Gospel texts as a further means of getting the Word of God into the homes.

During a recent children's campaign in this chapel, over 150 children were contacted by home visitation or telephone calls. As a result, attendance was close to the 200 mark and some precious souls were won for the Lord.

Since we are workers together with God, it is imperative that we do our part diligently and whole-heartedly. God works when His people have a mind to work with Him. This fact is exemplified in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Christian.

No Sunday School Today (Apr 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 4, Apr 1962.

E. B. Sprunt

“No Sunday School Today.” Such was the sign that greeted six-year-old Debbie Richards on the afternoon of December 31st. As usual, her father had dropped her off at the Community Hall, intending to call back for her when the session was concluded.

The public hall, however, was being decorated for a gala New Year’s Eve party, so the Sunday School was cancelled for that day. Little Debbie decided to walk home, rather than wait in the cold for her father to return at the end of an hour.

On a lonely stretch of road, the tot was attacked by a pack of wild Indian dogs famished with hunger, and aroused by the scent of the Richard’s shepherd dog on the girl’s clothing.

The mauled and mangled body of the child was found some time later by one of the villagers, and a posse was hurriedly formed to hunt down and destroy the pack of killer dogs. But it was too late to save the life of the girl who had been turned away from the door of her Sunday School.

There is an increasing trend toward closing down our Sunday Schools for the summer months, because so many children and teachers are away for vacation or week-end trips. Soon the matter will be discussed again at some Sunday School Teachers’ meetings. Local circumstances will be a contributing factor in the

decision, and the writer of this article does not attempt to lay down a hard and fast rule.

Before you plan to close your school, however, let this story weigh upon your mind. A precious young life was lost because Sunday School was closed to make way for a frivolous party. Could it happen to the children of your school?

No, there is little likelihood of an attack by wild dogs, but what of those figurative beasts to which your children are exposed? While your classrooms are idle the forces of evil are still busy corrupting the young minds.

Most of your regular scholars come Sunday after Sunday out of habit. During the vacation time, while that habit is being broken, another habit is being formed by the child. By the time Rally Day comes round some of these children may be so tightly bound by the new controlling influence that they no longer desire to come to Sunday School.

The result means not only a scholar lost to the Sunday School, but a life lost to evil or immoral practices. Yes, even beyond that, a soul is lost for Eternity.

Let the Sunday School teacher ponder this thought before carelessly planning a week-end excursion that will leave the class without an instructor, or with a last-minute substitute who has no contact with the children and little in the way of suitable message for them.

Of course, there are counter-arguments that may be raised. Our children are only under the sound of the Gospel for one hour a week, and then, perforce, they are exposed to the influence of evil for the balance of the

week. But that one hour can be like a cable to keep the child in contact with that which is right, and to restrain from a drifting into places of peril or danger. The love and devotion of a kindly, godly teacher will also affect the child that a standard of integrity and uprightness is fixed upon the young mind. A protective barrier is raised against the rising tide of evil.

Loose the cable, remove the break-wall, and the child is deprived of his only contact with Calvary. He is allowed to drift away with the currents of corruption. As he swirls beyond your reach, he may look back at you with a reproachful eye, and exclaim, “Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul!” Psalm 142:4.

Admittedly, this is an era of stress and strain, when people are working under pressure for fifty weeks of the year. For most individuals a vacation, with change of activity and surroundings, is essential to maintain physical and mental health.

When planning that vacation, be sure to make arrangements for your Sunday School class as well. Select as a substitute the very best person available as an instructor of your children during your absence.

Remember that David, before he went to visit his brothers in the valley of Elah, left his sheep in the care of the keeper. He did not leave them to wander across the hills of Bethlehem until his return. They would not have been there when he came back!

Where the substitute teachers are also in short supply, it may be feasible to let one teacher take a combined group comprising children from two or three classes of similar ages. This is especially suitable where the

summer attendance is reduced considerably because of families on vacation, or off on week-end trips, etc.

Rather than close the school completely for the summer months, it would be well to consider, as an alternative, the possibility of having an open school, where all the children, or all the children of certain age groups, are gathered together in one room, while an interesting and gifted speaker addresses the whole company.

The session should be sufficiently appealing and lively to make the youngsters feel it worth their while to attend. Never let them form the impression that the program is merely a makeshift arrangement.

Scholars should be encouraged to come regularly, even during the summer months. In fact, some special form of contest or award may be used as a means of recognizing those who make a definite effort to come during the hot weather.

Any form of assembling is better than closing the doors and completely leaving the children exposed to the unrestrained influence of evil.

In the days of Ahab, the people of Israel were seen as “scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd” (2 Chron. 18:16). Would you want the Lord to look down from Heaven and say that of those little ones whom He has entrusted to your care?

The faithful Sunday School teacher will seek to emulate the Good Shepherd, who careth for the sheep, and who is ready to lay down His life for the sheep.

Follow Up Work (Apr 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 4, Apr 1962.

It is not possible to report accurately what follow up methods should be used after a special campaign among children. This is one phase of the work that is very important, however.

Those who have come regularly during the two weeks should be invited orally and by letter to come to the Sunday School. The attendance cards should be distributed among the teachers so they may personally visit the children who would be in the age group of their classes.

In this way, Sunday School attendance may be increased considerably, and often parents are encouraged to come to the Gospel meetings too. Even more important, the teacher is able to follow up the spiritual impressions made on the young hearts and may have the joy of winning some for the Lord.

Let us ever remember that the soul of a child is of no less value than that of an adult. The Saviour said, “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones” (Matt. 18:10).

Scripture Memorization (May 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 5, May 1962.

E. B. Sprunt

Some time ago, a conference speaker told of a Roman Catholic boy who regularly attended an evangelical Sunday School and took a great interest in the Bible lessons.

Eventually someone told the priest about the young lad and the church official stormed into the boy's home, angrily demanding that he no longer be permitted to attend the Protestant Sunday School. Though nominal Catholics, the parents were so cowed by fear that they agreed to carry out this harsh order.

When asked if he had been given any Protestant literature, the boy stated that he had received a copy of the Bible. Thereupon the priest commanded that the book be destroyed. The lad objected strongly at first, but finally yielded up his precious volume, under the combined pressure of the priest and his parents.

"You may take my Bible," he exclaimed, "But you can never take from me the seventeen chapters that I have committed to memory!"

The Christian teacher should never minimize the value of Scripture memorization. Every effort should be used to encourage the pupils to learn special passages from the Bible, in addition to the weekly Golden Text.

This practice should commence with the very youngest group. Of Timothy it is written, "From a child (a young child) thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are

able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

Children will surprise you by their faculty for remembering, even at an early age, when given the proper inducement and assistance. The writer is acquainted with a boy who, shortly after his sixth birthday, stood before the whole Sunday School and repeated all 42 verses of John 19, and did so without making even one slight mistake.

If your scholars are reluctant to study their lesson texts at home, it is imperative to teach them in the class. Print the verse on a large card and display it so that it may be readily seen by all. Let the children read it aloud in unison several times; then call on them one by one to repeat it from memory, while the others watch the card for mistakes. The words will become indelibly impressed upon the mind when learned through both eye gate and ear gate.

Like the muscles of the body, the memory will develop with use. It is good exercise for the children to learn to recite passages of Scripture. Their minds will more readily remember lessons that are taught them, even at day school or other branches of learning.

Accuracy should be demanded when the children are repeating the passages of Scripture. One reason for this is that it will teach the child the value of thoroughness and attention to detail, which are excellent character traits.

The chief reason for memorizing portions of the Bible is spiritual, not natural. The Holy Scriptures within the heart of a child are able to make him "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

“The Word of God is quick (living) and powerful” (Heb. 4:12). It possesses, in itself, a dynamic power, surpassing anything that we, using our own phraseology, may say or teach concerning Bible Truths. The life-giving character of God is in His Word.

To the Thessalonians, Paul could write, “Ye received the Word of God ….the Word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thess. 2:13). Therefore never minimize the potential effect of the Bible verses which are planted, like precious seed, in the hearts of the boys and girls.

All Scripture is profitable, we are told, but some passages, above others, will tend to make wise unto salvation. The ones which present in clarity the truths relative to the Gospel should be first emphasized.

How thrilling and encouraging it is to meet those who, having been taught the Word of God while young, committed it to memory, and to hear them tell how the Scriptures were brought back to mind in after life to lead them to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some time ago a young man gave such a testimony. Brought up in a Christian home and in a Sunday School where the accurate memorizing of Scripture was featured, he somehow drifted away and was in the world, many miles from home.

One night while camping, he lay alone on his cot unable to sleep, as the Spirit of God worked upon his heart, bringing him to a sense of his sinfulness before God and filling his heart with a fear of the judgment to come.

He had no Bible at hand, but there in the darkness verses he had learned when a boy in Sunday School

came to mind. Seeking divine light and spiritual life, he repeated such glorious texts as John 3:16, and Romans 5:8. He thought also of John 5:24, through which many have been given the assurance of eternal life.

Memory then took him to Isaiah 53, where he slowly recited verse 5, that told him again of the suffering Saviour. Though he knew the story of the Cross so well, he could not bring himself to say, “With His stripes I am healed.”

But memory took him on to the next verse. He knew that the first clause was true, because he had gone astray. He mentally agreed, also, that the second clause was true of him, for he had turned to his own way.

Then the Holy Spirit, through the Word, gave him one more look at the Saviour and it was settled. “If the first two clauses of the text are true, then so is the last clause,” he said. “Since the Lord laid upon His Son the iniquity of us all, then my sins were in the bundle.”

He was brought into the blessedness of salvation through the effectual working of the Word of God which he had learned years before when a boy in the Sunday School.

God has promised that seedtime and harvest shall not fail. If we sow the seed of the Word, God has assured us that He will give the increase. Never underestimate, therefore, the power of God’s Word nor the value of Scripture memorization.

His Service (Sept 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 9, Sept 1962.

On returning from a Christian Convention Bro. W. G. Smith was asked, “How many servants of the Lord were at the conference?” Eyebrows were raised in astonishment as he replied, “I would say there were about two hundred and fifty.”

“Two hundred and fifty preachers for one week-end conference!” someone exclaimed. “No!” was the reply, “Not preachers, but servants of the Lord. About 250 believers met together on Lord’s Day morning to break bread, every one of them saved that they might serve the Lord in one way or another.”

There is a rich blessing in store for young Christians who grasp the scriptural truth that we have been saved for a definite purpose. It is not only that we should escape eternal punishment and be sure of a place in Heaven; the Lord has a work for us to do for Himself while we are here on earth.

In this article we shall consider the topic of service under four main headings: Why? Where? How? and When? May the Lord, as you read, stir your heart to realize your responsibility and to esteem your privilege.

Why?

Serving the Lord is an Evidence of Obedience. Unconverted people desire their own way; they are children of disobedience. This is a characteristic trait of the natural man. Conversion is an about-face; regeneration imparts a new nature. Those who are led

to faith in the Man of Calvary, exclaim, like Saul of Tarsus, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” Being born into God’s family, we are to be obedient children.

Serving the Lord is an Evidence of Affection. The Thessalonians turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, as a labour of love. When we think of the Saviour’s love that led Him to suffer and die for our sins, our hearts should be filled with a love for Him that constrains us to serve Him. In John 21, Peter was enjoined to give evidence of His love for the Lord by feeding His lambs and tending His sheep.

Service for the Lord is also an Evidence of Compassion for those who are lost in sin, or those that are afflicted and tried. The Son of God was moved with compassion when He saw the multitudes. If we are truly His, we should follow His example, being similarly stirred to do whatever we can that others may be brought to the One who alone can fully meet their needs.

True service is also an Evidence of Humility. There is no place for pride or self-exaltation. He who would serve God acceptably will not aspire to a place of pre-eminence, where he will be head and shoulders over others. Rather, he will follow the example of his Master, stooping low to the very feet of the saints. Paul sought no flattering titles nor did he aspire to any high office. With all lowliness of mind he esteemed others better than himself, choosing to be called the bond-servant of Jesus Christ.

Where?

The second question for our consideration is, Where should we serve the Lord? So many young people feel an

urge for the far off mission field because of fancied glamour and glory. A colourful book, or an illustrated missionary talk, makes the distant land so appealing. Your field of service may be right on your own doorstep!

The Ascending Lord commissioned His disciples with the words, “Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The order is significant.

They were first enjoined to be Witnesses in Jerusalem. In other words, they were to return home; their service was to commence in their own immediate area. When the healed demoniac of Mark 5 sought to go forth with the Lord, he was told to go home to his friends and tell them.

Never think that the Lord’s work involves only the mission field. Consider Colossians 3, where it is revealed that active and acceptable service for the Lord may be performed in the family circle. The wife may do so by her subjection to her husband and by the rearing of her family in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Children will please the Lord by obeying their parents in all things. Before you witness for Christ in the uttermost parts of the earth, begin at Jerusalem; that is, start at home.

In an enlarging field of service, the disciples were to be Witnesses in all Judaea. We, too, may reach out to our neighbours, to our school mates, or to those with whom we work, witnessing to them for the Lord. Do not suppose that you will have courage to speak of Christ in far-away lands if you have not enough heart to tell your friends and acquaintances that you belong to Him.

There is plenty that you can do for the Lord in your own vicinity, if you have a mind for the work. Assist in every way possible with activities of your assembly; be helpers together by prayer and by your presence at all the meetings.

You will notice that the one to whom the Master said, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant!” was not then ruler over five great cities. Rather, he was commended because he had been diligent in that which was least.

In the ever widening circle of service, they were also to be Witnesses in Samaria. This entails more than preaching in an adjacent province or an adjoining country. They were called to serve in a sphere that was against the natural desires of the heart. John 4 reveals that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.

In obedience to the Lord and impelled by love for Him, we too at times must do that which is unpleasant. We must be ready to face prejudice, opposition and even open hostility. True service for Him requires a complete submitting to His will, though it may be hard on the flesh.

Finally, the disciples were enjoined to be Witnesses unto the World. The Gospel message is to be proclaimed to every creature, for God is no respecter of persons.

Our interest in the Gospel should broaden out to the ends of the earth. It may be that the Lord will open up the way for you to evangelize in some distant land. More likely He will permit you to be a partner in the work by your prayers, or by strengthening the hand of some of His servants by sending them gifts of fellowship to supply their necessities.

There is much to be done; let us be busy where we are and the Lord will direct us into other avenues of service as He sees fit.

How?

It is possible to be very active and zealous yet not be pleasing to the Lord. Paul reminded the Corinthians that in the Christian race some may outrun others and at the last be disapproved of Him.

We should serve Heartily, as unto the Lord (Col. 3:23). Of Hezekiah it is written, “In every work … he did it with all his heart, and prospered” (2 Chron. 31:21). The Lord deserves our best at all times.

We are also admonished to serve Him Reverently, with godly fear (Heb. 12:28). There must be due recognition of His Lordship and an attitude of respect for His person and His name. He would have those who serve Him to comport themselves with a dignity and sobriety that is in keeping with His highness and holiness.

Furthermore, we should serve Him Steadily, not spasmodically. There are those who are so energetic and enthusiastic at times, yet later they become almost inert. The Bible says, “Be ye stedfast … always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

Finally, we should serve Him Unselfishly, not pleasing ourselves. Personal gain or comfort must be forgotten in the overwhelming desire to do the will of Him who calls us to be workers together with Him. Even Christ pleased not Himself (Rom. 15:3), and He has left us an example, that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. 2:21).

When?

So many Christians relegate service to some time in the future. The Lord in the parable of the two sons says, “Son, go work today in My vineyard” (Matt. 21:28). There is no time to lose, start now.

First of all, the Need Is Great. There are perishing souls all around us, in the neighbourhood, in the school, in the shop. “Say not ye, There are yet four months … lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are ripe already to harvest” (Jno. 4:35).

Moreover, the Time Is Short. The day of grace is quickly drawing to a close; the night cometh when no man can work. Let us therefore redeem the time, because the days are evil.

For those who serve Him, the Blessings are Abundant. Whenever a sinner is brought to Christ, both sower and reaper rejoice together.

If you are active for the Lord, faithfully witnessing on His behalf to your friends, you will be less susceptible to the alluring influence of this present evil world and the temptations of the devil will not easily entice you.

When Nehemiah received a subtle invitation from the enemy to meet in the plain of Ono, he was able to say, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?” (Neh. 6:3).

Finally, we should commence serving now because the Reward is Eternal. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, every one will receive praise of Him, according to that which has been done for His glory. The crowning reward, in that coming day, will be to look upon those who have

been brought to Christ through our efforts and to hear the Lord proclaim, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

Remembrance Day (Nov 1967)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 13 No. 9, Nov 1967.

He was only eight years old and so did not understand the significance of November 11th. He knew nothing of the great war which ended on that date in 1918. In his Ontario school he had heard the teacher speaking of Remembrance Day and he concluded that it must be a time to do something special for someone who should not be forgotten.

That is why he made the folder of heavy white paper. On the front cover he neatly printed the words, Remembrance Day Greetings. Then he drew a cross, a stout one, such as might be seen as a cenotaph or a grave-marker. Around the base of the monument he drew some bright red poppies, coloring them carefully with his pencil crayons. He had seen something of the design on the posters displayed at his school.

Inside the folder was his message. It read:

Dear Father;

Thank you for the gift you sent me. I still remember you and hope for you to come back soon.

Love,

Douglas.

It would never have been given an award by the directors of the Hallmark Greeting Card Company, but to a father separated from his loved ones that little card was priceless. Its message meant so much to him!

To us the card could be an object lesson illustrating the value that our Lord places on our worship. For the believers, Remembrance Day comes, not once a year, but on the first day of every week. It is an opportunity for sending a message to our Beloved One who is absent.

The first thing about the card to attract attention was the cross. When we come together to break bread, our prime attraction is the Cross of Calvary. We gather to show forth the Lord's death, and we meditate upon His suffering and His sacrifice.

But in our feast, there is also a remembrance of His burial, even as the boy's card showed a tombstone. Yes, our blessed Saviour stooped low into death for us, and then His body rested for three days in a new tomb.

The young artist did not know that the poppies of Flanders fields were said to have brighter blooms because they had been nourished by the blood of thousands of fallen soldiers. The flowers seem to speak of life out of death. In our service of remembrance, we rejoice in One who is risen again from among the dead. His tomb is empty. He has ascended in glorious triumph.

As we worship and remember Him, what is the message that we send heavenward? Surely, like the lad, we are thankful to our Heavenly Father for His great gift to us. We are grateful for the sacrifice which cost God so much and which procures so much for us.

The bread which we break, and the wine which we sip, are symbolic of the broken body and the shed blood of our Lord. They are the reminders of His death for us. By the very taking of these emblems we are sending a

message to Him, telling Him that we still remember. How this must gladden His heart!

I recall a little fellow a few years ago sending a letter to his Daddy who had been away from home and in far off Alaska for two months. The letter, in part, said, “I do not quite remember what you look like.” Why did the boy not remember? Because it had been so long since last he had been in his father’s presence. What a tragedy when we fail to discern the Lord’s presence because we have been so long out of touch with Him! During the week we should be continually seeking His face. Then we will have no trouble in remembering Him on the Lord’s Day.

When we partake of the Lord’s supper we send yet another message heavenward. Cloaked in the language of the little boy, we say, in effect, “We hope for You to come back soon.” “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death, till He come.” What a blessed hope!

By our remembrance of the Lord we give Him expression of our love. The father was delighted with the one word that closed his boy’s note. Love! We do not need flowery language or a multitude of words to express our affection for the Lord. Peter could say, in all sincerity, “Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee!” This is the expression of the heart when in the presence of our Beloved Saviour and Friend.

Often we are occupied alone with the breaking of the bread, and with the blessing we get out of the meeting. Actually, the purpose of our coming to break bread is that He might receive from us thanksgiving, praise and love. How much that means to the One who once was despised and rejected of men!