

THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST

In the hope of strengthening the children of God, who have placed themselves in the school of Christ, we would offer a few practical suggestions on methods of study and discipline. And first we remark, that none should expect to make progress in the truth who do not devote time and patient, persistent effort to it. Who would expect to become proficient in any branch of mathematics, science, or philosophy, without such study? And how much more important is Bible study.

The Bible seems to be an unfailing mine of wealth, at least none have ever yet exhausted its treasures; and we must give it patient, faithful study, if we would attain that degree of proficiency in it which the great teacher has a right to expect, and which the exigencies of the time in which we live necessitate. If Paul said we should need the whole armor of God to be able to withstand the fiery darts and wily arts of the adversary in this evil day, in all probability we shall not be able to stand, with much less than the whole armor.

We well know the difficulties and disadvantages under which many labor. We know the business, household and family cares that press upon the majority, but did you ever think that this very pressure of seeming necessity, is permitted to give you an opportunity to overcome and to sacrifice? If all the hindrances were taken out of the way your privilege of running the narrow way for the high calling would be gone. The Lord says, Be not overcharged with the cares of this life (Luke 21:34,) and again Paul says, "God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13.

If, then, you are strongly tempted to be overcharged with the cares of life, know this, that such is not the will of God, and look out for the way of escape which he indicates. We are all more or less the creatures of habit, and generally we cling to them long after the necessity which first demanded them has passed. The brethren generally have their hours of labor fixed by the prevailing business customs, and have their evenings left free from care for study, but if they should find business demanding all their time and all their effort for any length of time, this is not the Lord's will; they are being overcharged and oppressed of the devil for the very purpose of retarding their spiritual progress; and a way of escape by change of business, or otherwise, should be sought with the Lord's assistance.

With the sisters the case is somewhat different; they have their time and arrangements more at their own command, but habit and early training prompt them to spend all available time in care for many things which ought to be dispensed with. Habits of close economy prompt many to do things which might be done by others, long after the necessity for such economy is past. And so they carry burdens themselves long after their children are able to share them. That daughter will be much better prepared for the after duties of life who early learns to share a mother's cares; and so, also, that son who learns early to feel and share the father's cares. Thus, much valuable time may be gained and utilized in the study of the word of God.

We know also that many have not formed habits of study and consecutive thought, yet all these difficulties may be overcome. It should be borne in mind also, that mere reading is not study. To take a Bible or a paper and sit where we are subject to interruptions, etc., is not study. Your children could never prepare their lessons for school in such a way. How then, you ask, shall we study? First, we would say, have some regular place, and time also, if possible, as

free from interruptions as you can make it. Let the helps for study all be there. Then read critically, searching out references, and endeavoring to bring the subject in hand clearly before your mind. Take one subject at a time and master it before you leave it. Keep a file of your old papers on hand and within easy reach, and make an index of subjects. We are sorry to find that some have given away back numbers, which cannot now be replaced, but we hope none will do so in future. If you want sample copies for friends you can send for them.

After studying any subject, take pencil and paper and write out your understanding of it. This will greatly aid you in thinking and searching out all the evidence supplied in the Word on every subject. As you thus study you will be surprised to find how beautifully the Scriptures will fall into harmony on the line of truth, and how lack of harmony will reveal and expose error. Some will think they cannot do this because they have not been used to so studying, but the sooner you get used to it the better. It is possible for all, and your ability will increase with practice. You will then have a certainty of knowledge beyond the painful shiftings of doubt – a full assurance of hope well worth your most careful effort. The Spirit also will help our infirmities and lead such into all truth. "He that seeketh findeth."

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