

RE BEREAN STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – Brother Bohnet's interesting letter in February 1 TOWER, re Berean Studies, suggests to my mind that you might be pleased to have me recount our experience in the Church at Los Angeles, where I believe the Berean Bible Studies *originated*, in the form of "*Outlines*," as we then called them. We had had some very unsatisfactory experiences in the Bible Study by book, chapter and verse, which we tried for about one year, if I remember correctly. But we were continually "running up against" verses which had not been explained in DAWNS or TOWERS, and whose proper interpretation we could only "*guess at*," and the result was that some combative spirits in the meeting would *insist* upon their private and personal expositions being accepted by the congregation, to the ultimate disruption of the meeting. This we found so unedifying, so unprofitable, that we were led, I believe by the Lord, to the arranging of *Topical* Bible Studies on various subjects, with questions and references to be examined by the members of the class before coming to meeting.

I do not believe any other Church has received the benefit enjoyed by the Los Angeles congregation in these studies. And I can account for it only in this manner: –

First – the class *studied the questions at home*, studied as though each one was to *lead the meeting*, studied as though upon each member rested the *responsibility* of seeing that the *Truth*, and *that only*, was clearly set forth in *every statement* made in the class. (You see we were so far away from headquarters that we were not favored with Pilgrim visits more frequently, during that period, than about once in three or four years, and we had no brethren among us who were gifted with the talent of public

speaking, and thus we were thrown upon our own resources, and compelled to depend upon the Lord and each other for our "edification in the most holy faith"!)

Secondly, the leader *called upon individuals by name*, to answer the questions. As we are only "children of a larger growth," I believe the feeling that we would probably be called upon personally to answer a question incited us to study more than if we thought, "Oh, I won't be called on; it does not matter whether I study or not." There is in all of us a *little pride*, which must be appealed to sometimes.

Again, our aim was *not to leave a single question until every member in the class had a perfectly clear understanding of the matter*, even though we were often obliged to spend two, three or four meetings on *one question* alone. *Every member was encouraged to ask questions*, not to be ashamed of his ignorance, but to realize we were all students in the School of Christ, all learners at the feet of the Great Teacher!

Again, we studied to bring up Scriptural quotations which would *corroborate*, or *seem to contradict*, our accepted position on any doctrine, and thus we were enabled to "put on the whole armor of God" to such an extent that the various Pilgrim brethren who visited us afterwards mentioned *especially the knowledge* manifested in the Los Angeles Church, as well as their *growth in the fruits of the Spirit*, due to the application of this knowledge. (Pardon what might *seem to be* undue laudation; I refer to it only as a *proof of the good received* by us in the *Berean method* of Bible Study.)

As some of the friends seem to think *you*, dear Brother, "*got up*" this method and are "*forcing it upon the Church*," perhaps the above may assist them to a better understanding of the matter. You are at liberty to use this letter as may seem to you best. Praying his continued blessing upon you,

Yours in the service of our blessed Lord and Redeemer,

G. W. SEIBERT.

