

The True Enjoyment of Bible Study

By MARTHA W. ROBINSON

This article is published in commemoration of the ninety-sixth anniversary of the author's birth. It is taken from a letter written about 1920 in reply to the question of one who had asked about the advisability of attending Bible school. The accompanying picture is from a snapshot taken in 1914.

THE QUESTION of attending a Bible school or taking courses depends both on the pupil's state of experience and the kind of school. The result of Bible school work, etc., is a little disappointing sometimes, in this, the training seems to quench the originality and abandonment of the Holy Spirit, and the young preacher comes out stereotyped, or I might say, a little imitative, rather than in the power of the Holy Spirit. True preaching to bear fruit for souls should be living, abandoned, and original, in that the Holy Ghost guides and brings out the truth, and it is not something just received mentally.

Sometimes another difficulty is that the pupils seem to know about the Bible just *those things they have been taught*;

that is, they have not a sufficient grasp or knowledge of the Bible itself so they can go on independently without a teacher, and *continue* to grow in further knowledge and love of the Word. A minister cannot go on in God's work depending upon *past* instruction—his Bible study has to keep pace with his experience and service. He must be advancing and deepening in Christ as he preaches and serves. In fact, it isn't just as one is *taught*. The best *teacher* and the best plan may fail un-

less the pupil is really a Holy Ghost student.

The true enjoyment of Bible study is the great light of Himself—the light of Jesus—the finding of His presence as you study. Also, the truth of the Word is written to be *discovered* by the *soul*—when *praying* over the Word, rather than to be taught by a teacher, though both ways are scripturally appointed. Our desire has been to get the people to not so much have expositions and explanations of the Word from teachers as to be able to take their own Bibles and know them, having just enough guidance and suggestions from teachers to give them light how to so take up the Word. That is to our mind the true preparation for preaching.

There are two sides for a young minister's preparations. One is his service and ability to be among men and fill a minister's place, preaching, etc. Another, and the important side, is the deep, spiritual walk with God—the daily grace, the power to live in all places and under all conditions just for Jesus. Without this latter equipment,



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one had better not take the former service. The first is a necessity, of course, for a minister, and yet if he had that, and the second is lacking, he would fail.

Now, in your own case, it, of course, depends upon your special experience and present knowledge of the Word, as to what is most needed in your Bible study. Once the Bible is a familiar book, and opened to you, and is your *own*, a Bible school or course might *then* draw you *on* in your grasp, and would not press you to try to grasp mentally what you have not yet received in your experience. Otherwise, one's knowledge of the Word is apt to be imitative rather than original, mental rather than guided by the Holy Spirit.

Really, a Bible school is apt to put you through a course not regarding your *personal* need. To take a student (who is unfamiliar with the Word, who has not himself lived in it) beyond his capacity and teach him things he is not yet in need of and cannot grasp spiritually is sometimes a great loss to him. It is necessary to first find out his need, and add to his knowledge enough to make the Bible real. A pupil should have to get into the Bible on his own responsibility. I mean in his own heart and love. Most large Bible scholars have taken training that way. Great men who do great things for God are taught of the Holy Ghost. Many Pentecostal preachers have not been trained men. They learn the Bible as they live and serve. However, many pupils need *some* instruction to get started rightly. Even in following a course, this personal study is greatly needed in *addition*.

I would not like to be misunderstood as meaning study and education and opportunity of certain kinds of training are not useful and desirable—if one is already abandoned in the Holy Spirit and able to keep subject to Him, and receive these instructions and training in the Spirit—and God does make use of them.

Blessed Is He That Keepeth His Garments

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offers us His own divine nature, we ought to take it.

The wise virgins were not satisfied to prophesy and speak in tongues. They were not satisfied just to have their lamps burning but they took oil in their *vessels*. That's Pentecost. It's to bring the whole body under the control of the Spirit of God. That costs something.

Jesus says, "Buy of me gold, tried in the fire, that you might be rich." And when He says, "I have not found your works perfect before God," first of all, He talks about the tongue. If any man offend not in word, that man is a perfect man. Well, dear Lord, do you expect me to be holy like that? Why, He is my holiness. He is my white garment. If I don't grasp it, I'm a great fool. The Shepherd works within me perfection.

Now, who are these three frogs? They are unclean spirits, that come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. They do a lot of harm. But they don't do as much harm as your tongue can do. I have travelled through the whole world now for many years, and everywhere I find people talking as they please.