

‘WATCH YE! STAND FAST IN THE FAITH.’

BEREAN SCRIPTURE LESSONS,—SUGGESTIONS AND OUTLINES FOR PROFITABLE CLASS STUDIES.

FOR some time past we have been receiving letters inquiring how little gatherings of the Lord's people can use the hour of their Sunday gatherings most profitably. Some of these letters are from brethren chosen as Elders or leaders, saying that they are quite incapable of getting up a ‘sermon’ and find it impossible to prepare even a Bible Study in an attractive and interesting form, though the dear brethren, full of love for the Truth, do not complain, but rather encourage them.

Other letters are from those who take no public part and who, while sympathising with their meeting-leaders in their endeavours to imitate nominal church purveyors, are wishing and praying for the opening of some ‘door’ of help which will make the ‘assembling of themselves’ more profitable to all.

It was in response to this ‘cry’ of the Lord's people that we prepared the WATCH TOWER Bible,[†] in the margins of which, in addition to the Scripture references, we gave DAWN and TOWER references. In the front of that Bible, which so many of you possess, we gave some suggestions on ‘Berean Bible Study’, and in the back part we gave extended references and also a *Topical Index*. It was our hope that these would meet the requirements, but we find that they do not. Many of the Lord's earnest ones have so long been used to ‘swallowing’ whatever was offered them as spiritual nutriment that they had never learned how to feed themselves at the Father's table. Others who knew how to get at the food properly found their time so consumed in the ‘things needful’ and pressing that they had little time to prepare lessons of a profitable kind for themselves or others, even after the matter had been outlined as in the *Topical Index*.

THE BEREAN STUDIES NOW PROPOSED.

Appreciating the needs, we requested some of the ‘Pilgrim’ brethren to give examples of these Berean Studies at the various places visited. However, even this did not serve the purpose, because the visits of the ‘Pilgrims’ being few and more like those of the apostles of old, the friends begrudged the time of even one service—particularly since it requires several meetings of the Berean type to demonstrate its value and arouse the proper enthusiasm.

Now as meeting all these requirements we are having prepared Outline Lessons for each month of this year, beginning with March. One peculiarity about these lessons is that they do not *teach*, but merely question, and refer the student to the Scriptures and the WATCH TOWER publications bearing thereon. Thus thought is stimulated and the Truth the more clearly impressed.

The thirty questions of the March Lesson following might serve for thirty Sundays; but having so much good food we can afford to fare sumptuously and take several questions for each meeting. As to how many, would depend somewhat on the number in attendance, and how accustomed they are to analytical study, and how expert the leader of the meeting. It might be well for the classes to appoint several of the seemingly capable brethren to lead in turn, that the most able in this respect might be discerned. These will probably be found amongst those you have already chosen as Elders.

If the class be a small one, of say seven, it might be well to apportion to each *one* question for the *following* Sunday. The Elders, for instance, might be requested by vote to make such apportionment of the questions. A week for the examination of the one question should enable each one to bring on the next Sunday thoughts and texts and WATCH TOWER and DAWN quotations that would be helpful, interesting, profitable to all. As all are WATCH TOWER readers

[†] Out of print. An incomplete PDF version, ‘Berean Scripture Study Manual’, which includes the *Topical Index*, can be found online:

assignments can be made by number, thus: Brother A—, question No. 4; Sister H—, No. 5, etc.

Where the class is larger, say twenty to forty, the questions would best be apportioned to seven or eight of the most capable members of the class to present the answers to the questions. In any event, each subject or question should be open to *general* discussion after [R₃₅₁₈: page 73] the presentation

of the formal reply by the one appointed to that service.

So used the thirty questions below should furnish abundant food for profitable study by the largest classes for nearly or quite a month. Our prayers go with these suggestions, that the result may bring praise and honour to our Lord and strength and victory to his people.

—Zion's Watch Tower, March 1, 1905—