

## Home Class Work.

(From a Presbyterian Standpoint.)

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Written for the Review.

Reference was made, in a previous article, to what a "Home Class" is, namely, studying the Bible and recording the result. Now, how would you start a Home Class, in a school connected with a congregation?

Some one has to resolve that it is necessary, and that it can be done. This someone, might be the Sunday School Superintendent or an Elder or any Church worker. But let us say that it is the Minister. He knows who are his actual workers, and also who might take up this particular branch, and who would be the best to oversee or superintend it. These likely persons are called together, full explanations made, and then considered prayerfully; for the matter deserves both thought and prayer. Well, it is decided to try. A list is made of those likely to join, and a few given to each to visit, and to invite to join. Now, it is the general experience that very few decline to accept this invitation kindly made with Christian courtesy. Do not burden any worker with a great many names, only just as many as they can conveniently go over, and let them report the result at a meeting of all the visitors. In one Presbyterian School of four hundred or over in a City Church, a dozen of these workers started, and in a couple of weeks had over one hundred enrolled. The result of their first year was, that not only these continued, but the school itself increased. In one country parish such a Home Department was enrolled, as numerous as the school itself, and the school continued just as large as before. But mark you, with this difference, that between the Home Department and the School, twice as many in that congregation were studying systematically God's word.

Again, it is well to remember that these visitors should visit at regular intervals, and report regularly to their Superintendent as this work needs oversight, just as much as any school work. It is well also, that the visitors should confer together in regard to the work and encourage one another.

The minister can render valuable aid in counselling the workers, and also by referring to the study of the Bible in his sermons; but he should be relieved from any actual work, for his own regular duties are quite sufficient for any man. It is found that the system can quite efficiently be managed by ladies, and in most of our congregations, they are the ones who have the time, and possibly most ability to do this work, if they are started.

The visitation can be extended much further than within the congregation. In some places those who do not go to church or school can be invited. This wider invitation comes under the head of House to House Visitation, which has produced such marked results in some of the States, and has been partially attempted, in some parts of our own country. It is well to extend gradually, and to work within the congregation first, allowing circumstances to govern the extension.

In the previous article on this subject, reference was made to this system, as of advantage to schools closing part of the year, either in winter or in summer. We need stirring up in regard to Bible study. We need the very best helps we can buy. Really good ones do not cost much. Some prefer the *Sunday School Times* which is very elaborate, possibly too much so for the inexperienced. Peloubet's, especially the *Teacher's Quarterly*, is very useful. Mrs. Kennedy's *Quarterly* for the Primary cannot be surpassed, though some like Mrs. Crafts *Quarterly*. The *Westminster Teacher* of the Philadelphia Presbyterian Board is very good; there is nothing better. These all cost forty to fifty cents a year, and are of good workmanship and sound doctrine. They are mentioned simply as specimens, to offer variety; for some like one, and some another. The main point is to get the help that suits you best. But as a good workman needs good tools, do not waste your time on inferior and unreliable articles, because they are cheap. Use the Bible first, then take the assistance of the Teachers Notes.

There is yet another system of record, and that is the "envelope." This envelope is marked with the Sabbath of the quarter, just like the card; and the idea is, that Sabbath by Sabbath, a thank offering can be placed in it. This money can be used if desired to defray, first the Home Class expenses, or passed into the general school funds, or possibly devoted to some special mission

These Home Classes, formed thus into a Home Department, can be connected with the main school in various ways. On certain days, for example at the *Quarterly Review*, they can be invited to visit the main school, and can be recognized in the exercises. They can be allowed to use the school library. They can be invited to the School Anniversary or Picnic. In fact, in some way, it matters not how, they can be made to feel that they belong to the main body of Bible students in that Church. There can be special meetings also, or reunions, of the members of a class; this cultivates class sympathy and is sometimes effective. You see the great object is, to get all within reach of the workers of that particular Church or School, to study the Bible. "All" is a broad word: there are always some, whose duties prevent regular attendance at School, commercial travellers, railway men, telegraph and telephone employees; in country parts, those in charge of cattle. In many a home, there are invalids, the "shut 'n ones." There are mothers with young children. There are nurses and domestic servants. Now every one of these comes under the heading "All." If you think this system will not be a help to them, just try it for awhile, and see the results. In some of our homes, there is an objection to Sunday schools and a preference for home instruction. The parents say they instruct their children. It is a good plan to suggest, in these cases, that this system of record keeping be tried, and the home instruction regularly marked down on the card. Would it not help the Minister and Session to know by facts before them, that there was definite Bible study amongst the families under their charge?

Much more might be said about this home class work, for the details in full, form books, but these explanations may suffice to produce some action. At present, cards or envelopes can be had, at the rate of two or three for one cent, from the Home Class Secretaries of the various Provinces. But the main point is, first to grasp the value of this simple system of record keeping by a stroke in the space for that particular Sunday, and second, to be filled with the paramount importance of Bible study. Let no one imagine there is no need of prayer, for every visitor as well as student, needs to pray, and if there are difficulties, perhaps to give thanks for that privilege. You know anybody can do easy work. Workers may meet with indifference, let them study those "Overcometh" in the early Chapters of Revelation. Let them remember that last great command, in the end of Matthew's Gospel, with the encouragement before it. "All power," is given unto Him in whose name we go forward. May many of our Presbyterians, who naturally as such specially advocate Bible study, decide to go forward, and seek to gather all within their reach into regular systematic study of God's Word.

## The Value of a Day.

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He has a great part of the secret of living well who knows the value of a day. It is in the use of small things that a man's character is best seen, and he who takes care of the days knows right well that the years will take care of themselves. To be thoughtful of the employment of each day is the way to pack the year with golden acts and delightful thoughts and refreshing memories. A day seems a brief space, the loss of which need not concern us. But it is in itself a complete portion of time. It is as that thoughtful and judicious noter of facts observed, "Every day is a little life, and our whole life is but a day repeated." Day by day time comes and passes, the rising and the setting sun measuring it for us, portion by portion. And this is the divine appointment, and so time is given us by the day, and the promise commensurate with it, "As thy day thy strength shall be." And we are taught the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." Thus God instructs us to measure time by days. His spiritual dealing moves along the same time scale, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts." "Boast not thyself of the morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." This truth was so wrought into the nature of men in the past that when one was asked the question, "How old art thou?" he answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."