

HITTING THE BOOKS

It is that time again – time to get back to school and back to studying those books. For many children, there is an air of excitement that comes with the first day back to school. For others, the first day is met with a long frown, knowing that the summer fun is over and there are 180 homework-filled days of classes until next summer. No matter how it is looked upon, getting back to school is a time of opportunity. Making new friends and Friday night football may highlight the fun of school, but there is also an opportunity to introduce individuals to the Truth of God's Word. Though in many ways, God has been "expelled" from our public school systems, being a good example or letting our lights shine will give glory to the God of Heaven (Mat. 5:16). Unfortunately, many children today know very little about Jesus and His Church, and sadder still, some children probably have never even heard about Jesus. Our young ones can be a shining beacon for Jesus as they attend school. By addressing teachers as "ma'am," or "sir," and by turning in their homework on time and as instructed, our children are showing forth an example of respect for authority. By obeying their parents in the presence of friends, our children are glorifying the God-ordained home. By saying, "No," when offered an invitation to a dance or an unruly party, our children demonstrate to others that there is nothing wrong with not going along with the crowd. Children will not just have the opportunity to teach others, they will also see and learn, on a much smaller scale and in a controlled environment, the evils of this world. They will see children who are disobedient to their teachers and to their own parents. They will see parents failing to discipline their children. They may be lied to, cheated on, picked on, cursed at, laughed at, mocked, and on and on. No parent desires such to occur to his child, but we all know that it is a realistic part of life in this world. Not one adult can honestly say that none of these things has never happened to him. There are bad things (and bad people) in the world. Our children are going to see them, either now or later. Therefore it is imperative that they are well-trained to deal with such things now as they are growing up. If parents do not train their children to deal with worldliness, someone will, and who knows who that someone will be and what they will say. In Jesus' prayer, as is recorded in John 17, Jesus did not pray that His disciples be taken out of the world, but that through study and understanding of God's Word, Jesus' disciples could be protected from the evil of the world (John 17:11-17). Ultimately, getting back to school is a great opportunity for our young people. The education they receive will help them to be industrious and profitable citizens when they become adults. Plus, Winter Break will be here before they know it.

Christians should never take a "break" from "hitting" the Book of all books – the Bible. The Bible is God's only means of correspondence to man today. We should all read and study it as often as possible. It is a marvelous Book that, though studied all of one's life, an individual could never attain all the knowledge and wisdom contained therein. Even the Apostle Peter noted that, in the epistles of Paul, there are "some things hard to be understood" (2 Pet. 3:16). Some people believe these "things" are too hard to understand and give up or simply believe what "the preacher" says. However, that same Peter also wrote, "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Sometimes our answer may have to be, "I don't know. Let me study that further." But every Christian should and must be able to answer the question, "Why are you a member of

the Church of Christ?.” For the answer to this question is the answer to “the hope” that resides in every faithful Christian. Though there are things in the Bible that are hard to understand, God’s plan to save man is not one of them. Because of the love of God and His Christ (John 3:16), all men have the opportunity to be saved through faith (John 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession (Rom. 10:9-10), baptism (1 Pet. 3:21) and a life of faithfulness (1 John 1:7-9). God adds such obedient individuals to His Church (Acts 2:47) and it is this Church that Christ will present before the throne of Heaven on the Last Great Day (Eph. 5:27). Every Christian can share this reason for hope with others and lead them towards the light of God’s Word.

Let us encourage our children as they begin a new year of school and let us take this opportunity to reexamine our study habits as well.

- *Brad Green*