

The REFLECTOR

"Profitable Teaching"

By J.F. Dancer, Jr.

1

In the last bulletin I suggested future articles dealing with the various levels of learning. The purpose being that we, as teachers of God's word, would be more successful in our teaching and that we would realize the work that must go into profitable teaching.

The first level of learning has been designated as the "ROTE LEVEL". When one learns on this level it simply means that he (or she) learns to repeat something from memory and has little or no thought as to the meaning of that which he (or she) has learned to repeat. This level of learning is necessary in that it gives a foundation for more. It is the level we generally strive for in the efforts to teach small children. We repeat things in their hearing, encourage them to repeat them, and by means of repetition we impress the facts in their minds.

In this way one learns the "books of the Bible", the "apostles", the "genealogies", songs, prayers and scriptures. The mind of a child is such that it cannot fully understand the meaning behind the songs, prayers, and scriptures. It is simply a matter of being able to remember and repeat what was presented by the teacher.

There is nothing wrong with this level of learning with small children. And the aim of the teaching of this age group is such so as to encourage the child to simply remember what they were told hoping that as the child matures in mind that they will be able to understand more fully the things already planted there.

But a great problem arises here -- many who teach never strive for more than this even as the child becomes a youth and then an adult. The teacher feels a feeling of satisfaction in teaching teenagers and adults when they are able to repeat what he has presented in class -- many times never taking the time to see if the students understand what they are saying.

AS A TEACHER - what is your aim? Just to be able to conduct a class in such a way so the students will be able to repeat what you told them? Or does it go beyond this???

AS A STUDENT - are you satisfied with being able to repeat what the teacher said? Have you worked upon yourself to the extent that you can give the correct

answers to the questions asked because you remember what the teacher said the answer was? Do you ever wonder WHY this is the correct answer?

ROTE LEARNING is good as a basic foundation and is as far as a teacher (or student) can go in early years but we can't stop there!

2

The second level of learning has been called the "RECOGNITION LEVEL". This simply means the student has learned to recognize the meaning given to Bible passages by the one who teaches. Or, it might mean that one is simply able to pick the correct answer out of several incorrect ones.

This is the type learning that is gained by "true or false" questions, or by "multiple choice" questions. A question is asked and the correct answer is given in the midst of some incorrect information. The student has to simply sort out the correct from the incorrect. He simply recognizes what he has been told and picks it from the material given.

Again, this type learning (and therefore this type of teaching) is good in that it is a step above the "rote level". The students have advanced to the point that they not only can repeat things from memory but they can also sort out what the teacher has said from other comments. The tragedy is in the fact that although some advance to this level of learning, may never go beyond it. This is all right with those who have matured only a little but is not sufficient in those who are becoming (or, are already) adults. It means they can recognize an answer provided by the teacher but they still do not grasp the meaning of what they are saying. They actually did not make a personal response and the truth of what they said has not been incorporated into their own thinking.

AS A TEACHER -- (especially in high school and older classes) do I seek to get the student to simply be able to recognize what I have told them is correct? Or, am I striving that they really grasp the meaning of both the question and the answer?

AS A STUDENT -- am I satisfied to simply be able to make a grade of 100 on things such as "multiple choice" and "true or false" questions? Or, am I actually interested in being able to understand what the questions and the answers mean. It is important to be able to question figures and to be able to

recognize the truth when it is placed in the company of error, but this is not the ultimate end in studying (or teaching).

Many of our adults have never progressed beyond this kind of learning. They recognize TRUTH when they see it (or hear it) but have not developed the ability to make application to their own lives. Many times they are not even able to separate truth from error when terms are used with which they are not familiar as they have been "programmed" to pick out answers and not to do much real THINKING. This is not enough.

3

In previous articles we have discussed the "rote" level of learning as well as the one called "recognition level". In this article we will deal briefly with the next step up in the pattern of learning. This is called the "restatement level". This goes beyond simply the ability to repeat what a teacher has said. It even goes farther than the ability to pick out a correct answer as it appears in the midst of several that are not correct.

This is the ability to take a Bible verse (or a statement from the teacher) and relate it to other ideas and then express (or restate) it in words of our own choosing. It is at this point (or level) of learning that the Bible begins to have any real meaning. It is here that one actually begins to understand what he has been taught. It shows that some ideas have been mastered, that they have become a part of one's own thinking.

How many times have you heard the following comment: "I have no comment on this passage but believe it means exactly what it says"? I am not disparaging the idea that the Bible means what it says but many times this is used as a crutch to keep from admitting we don't understand what is said enough to restate the idea (or lesson) in our own words. By the time one is in junior high school (or that age) he should be beginning to do some thinking of his own. One should have the ability to grasp the content of many Bible passages and restate them in terms of his own choosing. This is not a time for a simple quotation of a memorized statement or a reply in words that the teacher said. It is a time to express oneself. It is a time when a student thinks enough to find words to express ideas.

Don't get the idea that when this level has been reached that one has "arrived". Not so, this is a necessary step in learning

Mt. Airy, North Carolina

MORMON CHURCH

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Gentlemen:

I read with much interest your attractive 8-page advertisement in the October issue of the **READER'S DIGEST**. Some of the things I read in your advertisement immediately brought some questions to mind on my part. I am no authority on the Mormon religion. However, I have spent considerable time with the Bible. This is what prompts the questions and especially since you mentioned that the Bible was one of the "Mormon's sacred books" and since you stated that the Mormons were committed to spreading "the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people everywhere."

First, my attention is drawn to what you call these young men who are sent out, as you religiously call them "elders." As one familiar with the Bible, this is confusing to me. The word "elder" means an older man, and to qualify to be an elder in the Biblical sense in the Lord's church, one must be married and the father of children (1 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 1:5-7).

Then, I read on the fourth page of your advertisement: "The Mormon doctrine of Eternal Marriage holds that Mormon marriages are forever. Men and women married in a Mormon Temple, form a holy relationship that will endure beyond the grave, in reunion with each other, and in life everlasting with God and the Savior."

This brings another question. Have you never read the words of the Lord in Matthew 22:23-30? Your teaching is just the opposite of what He taught in the Bible (which you claim as one of your "sacred books").

Furthermore, you continued in your ad by speaking about "baptism by proxy" which the Mormon Church practiced and saying that the deceased wife of this man could join him in his conversion and in Eternal Marriage.

If I read the Bible correctly, it seems to me that the nature and guilt of sin is personal (Rom. 3:23 etc.) and consequently salvation must be on a personal basis. The great commission instructed that the gospel be preached to every person, and "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:15, 16) "Every one" was to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). They were further admonished: "Save YOURSELVES from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Peter said: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that YOUR sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). Acts 17:30ff states that "ALL MEN EVERYWHERE are commanded to repent" because ALL MEN must personally face God in judgment. Paul says that in judgment "EVERY KNEE shall bow" and "EVERY TONGUE shall confess to God. So then EVERYONE of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:11, 12). No one can accept Christ for us, be baptized for us, nor live our lives for us. It is a personal matter. And when death comes, no one can die for us, for each of us must "walk that lonesome valley."

Your advertisement in more ways than one leaves me confused. You quote the great commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," and speak of the

"commitment to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people everywhere" by the Mormon Church. You call the Bible a "sacred book." But then you speak of "the divine revelations that led him (Joseph Smith) to establish the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (in the last century).

This seems like a great contradiction to me since you claim to be working under the great commission and to be spreading the gospel commissioned by Christ. The preaching orders involved preaching what was revealed to them in the first century and it involved "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I HAVE COMMANDED you" (what Christ commanded, Matt. 28:18-20). They were to preach the message that was commissioned then (at that time) "unto the end of the world." That commission was not to preach a "revelation" that came along hundreds of years later. Jesus had told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them into ALL TRUTH (John 16:13). This the Holy Spirit did, and it has been written down in the New Testament Scriptures. Jude wrote that the faith had once for all been delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). We are warned that if we add to or take from the Holy Scriptures the plagues mentioned therein will be added to us and our names taken from the book of life (Rev. 22:18, 19). See also Galatians 1:8. It looks to me like all these Scriptures should tell us something.

Then to add to the confusion, it is said that Joseph Smith established the "Church of Jesus Christ" in the last century about 1900 years removed from Christ. I humbly say this doesn't make sense to me for Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ established His church in the first century. From Acts 2:47 onward it is spoken of as a reality, something in existence then (Acts 8:1; Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2 etc.). These are some things that caught my attention in your ad in the **READER'S DIGEST**. Like I said, I don't know much about the Mormon religion, but I have studied the Bible. My knowledge of the Bible has prompted me to ask these questions. If you people believe the Bible to be the Word of God, perhaps it would be good for you to clear up the confusion. The **READER'S DIGEST** is read by millions of people and the relationship of the Mormon religion to the Christianity of the New Testament is not clear, especially to me.

Sincerely,

James E. Gibbons
James E. Gibbons

The Churches of Christ...

We believe religious division is bad. Jesus prayed for unity (John 17). And later, the apostle Paul begged those who were divided to unite in Christ (1 Corinthians 1).

Overlooking the important Biblical discussions of divorce, which seem to be plentiful at the moment, a central truth that we need to teach is that marriage is a permanent alliance. And such is clearly the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 19:3-12. In the marriage contract, the two become "one flesh" and "what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (v. 6) Because of "the hardness of your hearts" Moses allowed divorce, "but from the beginning it was not so." (v. 7)

In India, marriages are still made by parents. That is neither shocking nor disagreeable to the young people. Many young Indians told me they would not want to assume such an awesome, lifetime responsibility. The American way of divorce seems scandalous.

The basic problem with romantic marriage, as opposed to arranged marriages, is the emphasis that it places on sex. And this is precisely why the concept flourishes in our society. Romance and sex are the supreme goods in our time. Too many Christians, I fear, spend more time making themselves beautiful than making themselves righteous.

Let me make two obvious points. First, marriage among Christians simply must not be based on physical beauty, and we must teach our children not to be corrupted by the norms of western society. Christian women must be taught that they are beautiful as they are righteous (1 Pet. 3:1-6). My sons must be taught that if they are to select their own wives (as opposed to letting me make the choice), they must acquire a taste for those moral qualities more important than physical beauty. And it seems to me that I see more wholesome Christian girls than I do boys with good values.

Second, all of us in this perverted

society need to try to put sex in its proper perspective. Sex is a natural and healthy part of our physical being. But the sex drive, like other natural drives, is controllable. Indeed, it is properly controlled within the institution of marriage. But sex is not central in marriage, no more than eating is the central to existence. Healthy marriages can only be constructed on this understanding.

Finally, we could be compelled by circumstances to abstain from sex. That may be only answer in many cases of modern divorce. Unthinkable as it seems in modern America, every society has recognized the need for spiritual celibacy. Millions of priests, nuns, gurus, sadhus, and other "holy" men and women attest to the capability of humans to be celibate. In 1 Cor. 7:1, the apostle Paul recommended it under the prevailing circumstances. In Matt. 19, Jesus advised that becoming a "eunuch" was preferable to promiscuous divorce and that, while physically difficult for many, celibacy was a state that some accepted for spiritual reasons.

We must constantly fight being captured by our culture. We must stress our counterculture beliefs: marriage is for keeps; beauty is more than a pretty face; salvation is more important than anything even sex.

-Ed Harrell
Via "The Messenger"

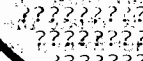
ASSEMBLE
FOR
ITEMS OF WORSHIP

Hebrews 10:25
Acts 20:7
I Cor. 14:15
I Cor. 16:2
Col. 3:16
Eph. 5:19

PREACH
TEACH

Matt. 28:18
I Tim. 3:15
I Thess. 1:8
Phil. 4:15-17

SOCIAL-RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES



I. A PLACE (rent, borrow, buy
or build)

1. LIGHTING
2. SEATING
3. COMFORTS: heating,
cooling, restrooms,
water.
4. Stands, tables etc.

II. MATERIALS

1. Song books
2. Communion ware

I. A PLACE (rent, borrow, buy
or build)

1. LIGHTING
2. SEATING
3. COMFORTS: Heating, cooling
restrooms, water.
4. PULPIT STAND. ETC.

II. MATERIALS

1. Workbooks-tracts
2. Black board
3. projector--mimeo.
4. Public address.

I. A PLACE (rent, buy, borrow, build)

1. Kitchen-Camp
2. Dining room
3. lighting
4. Comforts: Heating, cooling
restrooms, water, etc.

II. MATERIALS

1. FOOD
2. Cooking ware
3. Tableware
4. Games

WE DO NOT ASK FOR THE PASSAGE THAT SPECIFICALLY NAMES THESE ITEMS -- JUST THE PASSAGE THAT

AUTHORIZES THE AREA OF ACTIVITY FOR THE CHURCH THAT INCLUDES THESE ITEMS.

to learn (or to teach) but is not the end.

AS A TEACHER -- do I strive to get students to be able to restate what I have taught them? Or am I content if they go away with the simple "parrot type" learning that enables them to repeat what I have taught?

AS A STUDENT -- am I really interested in being able to state in my own words what the Bible teaches? Am I willing to put out the effort that is essential to reach this "restatement level" of learning? This is not to minimize the ability to quote scripture, or is it hinting that the Bible does not "mean what it says". It is simply an effort to get each of us to be sure that at the times we simply "quote" that this is not a "cop out" in our learning.

4

Lawrence O. Richards in his book "CREATIVE BIBLE TEACHING" says, "While it's vital to understand the Bible as content, this in itself is not enough. The Word of God is more than information; it is a point of contact with God Himself.... To discern the appropriate response to a Bible truth, we must see the relationship between that truth and our lives." He goes on to say that this is the level of learning that can be (and is) called "the relation level".

This level of learning (and thus, of teaching) is one that can logically follow that of the "restatement level". As a result of one understanding what the Bible says sufficiently to restate it in one's own words, it is then possible to relate the truths to our own present day world. Otherwise, we are just knowledgeable of facts of the Bible and their setting in the time in which they were written.

But the Bible was written to apply to lives of people in generation after generation. It is extremely needful that as a result of Bible study we can "relate" Bible teachings to 20th century problems and lives -- mine and those living in my acquaintance. We can never make the proper response to a Bible teaching UNLESS we are able to make some sort of relation between that truth and our own life or time.

AS A TEACHER - do I ever try to get my students (especially those of junior high age and above) to relate the Bible principles I teach (either from a verse by verse study or by using some sort of study help) to our present day time and our own lives? You cannot do this without trying. You can get the students to memorize passages, names, dates, etc. You can get them to remember what you told them. You can even get them to restate what you told them in their own words. NOW, you should work that they can relate this knowledge to themselves.

AS A STUDENT - am I content to be able to repeat what the teacher has said? Or, have I gone the step beyond this in that I am able to state in my own words what has been presented? And, then do I try to relate the Bible truths to today's problems and to my own life? As you study, does the question ever come to your mind, "How am I supposed to react to this lesson?"

It is on this level of learning that one gets down to "brass tacks" and to an honest application of the Bible. To

change lives God's word MUST be applied to lives. You can never be what God wants you to be UNLESS you are willing to "relate" to God's word - neither can I. I should strive to relate to every Bible principle.

5

The goal of all sincere Bible teaching ought to be that covered in this article. It has been called "the realization level". Here are Bible truths actually applied in daily living to one's life. It is called the realization level in that it refers to one experiencing (or realizing) what is involved in letting the Bible be the daily guide to a way of life.

This goes beyond just "relating" what the Bible says to life. It actually involves LIVING as the Bible teaches. It is one thing to understand what the Bible says and to be able to see how it applies to life and another thing to actually respond according to Bible teaching. The following quotation from "CREATIVE BIBLE TEACHING" by Lawrence O. Richards is very important. Note it carefully: "The Bible teacher must teach in such a way that his students, understanding the truth of God, discover and are lead to make an appropriate life-response to the God who speaks to them through His Word. Only thus learned can God's Word transform."

Profitable teaching is that teaching which actually "profits" those who listen. One is truly profited, not by just being able to quote his teacher (or the scripture), nor by just being able to restate it in his own words, nor by the ability to apply in theory what he knows the Bible to teach. One is truly profited when he takes Bible truths and lets them become the guidelines by which he lives day by day. Until we have done this we have not accomplished the most good.

AS A TEACHER - do I try to get my students to see how the Bible relates today and then to make it work in their own lives? True, I cannot force this response. But, am I teaching to this end? The response naturally depends upon the attitude of the individual student and other influences than mine alone as a teacher. However, my goal in teaching ought to be that this response would be the end in view. Too many times the end in view is just to fill up the time or to cover so much material in a class period, or, maybe just to have an opportunity to display my own knowledge of what the Bible says.

AS A STUDENT - do I actually try to put the things I hear in class (or in sermons) to work in my life? Am I content to just KNOW, or do I want to KNOW if it REALLY WORKS? It is a good way to examine my own self as I try to see in my own life the principles I can see in the teaching of Jesus. Do I study to just find out what Jesus taught or am I trying to learn how I should live?

This concludes the series on teaching. I pray that the response will be that which I intended - better teachers and students!

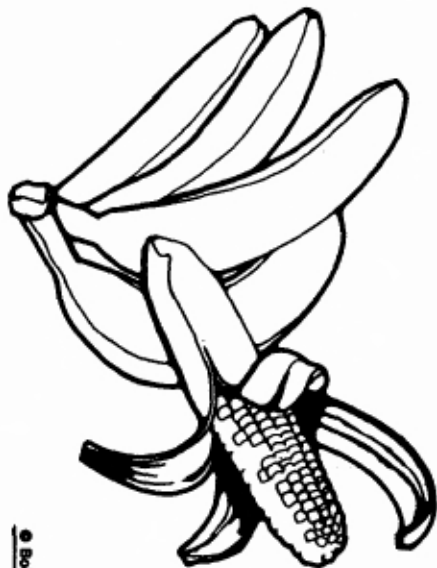
MOVING?

Send us your NEW
and OLD addresses.
We need them BOTH.

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WOULD NATURE MAKE THIS MISTAKE? the evolutionist says it did

Talk about faith -- he's got it! Getting corn from a banana is nothing. He gets everything by starting with one cell and changing species millions of times. We even got our animals from the same one cell beginning -- you do believe that, don't you? After all, we do want to be rational and scientific. -- Jere E. Frost