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A table of contents for *Christian Brethren Review* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_christian-brethren-review.php

Bible Study: Methods and Means

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[p.123]

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Nearly twenty years ago, when he was editorial secretary of the Scripture Union, Morgan Derham wrote: 'Bible Study is one of the most frequently praised and most consistently neglected activities in the Christian community today.'¹ Limited impressions suggest that even in this do-it-yourself age it still remains necessary to plead with Christians to do Bible study for themselves. The purpose of this paper is to suggest ways and means by which some Christians may be encouraged to get started on Bible study and others who already engage in it may be stimulated to extend and deepen their, involvement.

But first it seems desirable to ask some basic questions: What is Bible study? Why should a Christian study the Bible?

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF BIBLE STUDY

What is Bible study?

It will be helpful if we try to make some distinctions here, whilst recognizing that absolute distinctions are neither possible nor desirable and that in practice the various activities mentioned overlap and coincide.

Bible study is not the same as Bible reading. Obviously you cannot study the Bible without reading it; but you can read it without studying it. Bible reading is an essential part of the Christian's life-style but it is not Bible study. Let me illustrate the difference. When I read a novel (say D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*) I read it basically for enjoyment. I read it as quickly as possible so as to be swept along by the action of the story. If I come across a word that I don't know, I don't bother to look it up in a dictionary (I probably haven't got one with me!); if I read a statement that I don't immediately understand, I don't let it hold me up; I just keep going, satisfied with understanding

[p.124]

the general sense. But one of my sons has been studying English literature at school. When he is given a novel like this, first he reads it through a few times to get the gist of it; then he studies it. He looks up the words that he doesn't know; he wrestles with the statements that he doesn't immediately understand. He finds out about the author and tries to discover his purpose in writing. He notices his style, his use of metaphors, his allusions, and so on. He studies the characters within the novel. He may even read

¹ A. Morgan Derham, *A Christian's Guide to Bible Study* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1963), p.8.

other books about the novel or the author. There is the same sort of difference between Bible reading and Bible study.

Bible study is not the same as meditation on the Bible. Meditation is fixing on one verse or phrase of Scripture and thinking about it: chewing it over in your mind; considering its possible implications and ramifications; seeing how it applies to your life; allowing it to make an impression on your heart and to produce a response towards God. All this is vital to healthy Christian living, but it is not Bible study.

Bible study is not the same as reading books about the Bible. Bible study may well involve referring to various books, but they should be regarded as aids to Bible study. Reading books about the Bible—whether commentaries, introductions, expositions, or daily explanatory notes (e.g. those produced by Scripture Union)—can contribute greatly to an understanding of the Bible, but it is not Bible study per se and such writings should never be allowed to become a substitute for personal Bible study.

Bible study is not the same as listening to Bible addresses. Jim Packer claims that the NT pattern is that public preaching of God's Word provides the main meals of the Christian—the chief means of grace—whereas personal Bible reading and study are like supplementary snacks—not intended to be the complete diet.² We may agree that it is essential that Christians should hear the Bible expounded by those whom God has gifted to minister it to the church: personal Bible study is no substitute for such ministry. But the converse is also true: listening to Bible teaching is no substitute for personal Bible study.

What then is Bible study? Briefly, it is the personal investigation of the meaning of the Bible. It is an individual grappling with the biblical text in order to understand it better.

Why should a Christian study the Bible?

Why not just read the Bible, meditate on it, listen to Bible addresses or read published explanations of it? A few reasons may be suggested.

To make it one's own.

Educationalists tell us (and experience confirms) that we remember very little of what we hear in a talk and not

[p.125]

much more of what we read. But if we discover something for ourselves we are much more likely to remember it. The whole point of Bible study is for the individual to engage with the text in such a way as to come to a personal appropriation of it.

To make sure one understands the Bible. It is very easy to read the Bible and not really to understand it. It is dangerously easy to misinterpret or misapply a statement

² J. I. Packer, *God Has Spoken* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1965), p.91.

of Scripture by taking it out of its context and failing to understand its function within the total purpose of the particular book of the Bible. Bible study aims to attain to a correct understanding of the meaning of the text and thus helps to ensure that the devotional use of the Bible and the attempt to live by the Bible are placed on a firm footing.

To check up on the preacher. The writer of Acts pronounces the people of Berea 'more noble' than those of Thessalonica 'for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true' (Acts 17:11). And that was (apparently) *before* they became Christians! No Christian teacher or preacher is infallible. What he says (or writes) must be tested by reference to the biblical revelation. No belief should be held and no practice adopted which the individual Christian is not fully convinced is scriptural. But in order to be able to judge in these matters the Christian must have come to grips with the Bible for himself and mastered its contents.

To be able to teach others. Quite clearly, the preacher, the Bible class leader and the Sunday School teacher need to study the Bible. And it is the call to communicate the message of the Bible to others which constitutes the main motivation for Bible study for many Christians. Nevertheless, all Christians should eventually be in a position where they can open up the Bible and show to any inquirer its basic teaching.

The reasons outlined here may not add up to an inescapable argument for Bible study on the part of every Christian. Obviously, for considerable periods of history Christians have had little or no opportunity or ability to engage in Bible study. It cannot, therefore, be insisted that it is an *essential* feature of the Christian life. But in modern times, when standards of general education are much higher and aids to Bible study abound, it is quite reasonable to expect all Christians to do some Bible study, if only of a simple nature. When we consider the amount of study that people are prepared to put not only into preparation for a career but also into mastering some interest or hobby, it is not unfair to call on them to put the same sort of effort into mastering the Bible.

[p.126]

METHODS OF BIBLE STUDY

There are a number of different ways by which the Christian may be involved in Bible study. He or she³ may choose to study various parts of Scripture simply according to interest or inclination; on the other hand, the demands of a teaching syllabus may dictate the areas of study. Such study may take place once a week or even more infrequently. Some, however, will follow a scheme of Bible study such as *Search the Scriptures* (IVP) which covers the whole Bible in three years and provides questions on each day's passage (requiring at least half an hour per day). Others will make use of the wide range of correspondence courses provided by agencies like the Emmaus Bible School, the Fishers Fellowship, or the Navigators and by Bible colleges such as the London Bible College or the Bible Training Institute, Glasgow.

³ The last thing I want to do is to suggest that only males are expected to engage in Bible study! For convenience, however, 'he' will stand for the Christian, whether male or female.

For many Christians, who might find it hard to study on their own, the Bible study group provides an excellent way to get started.⁴ Under an experienced leader, members of such a group can be introduced to the methods and principles of Bible study and can benefit from the stimulation of a shared activity. (For further details, see the books listed below.) A church-based or area-based Bible school, such as those run for many years by George Harpur in Glasgow and other parts,⁵ is an excellent way to introduce people to the joys and benefits to be derived from serious and systematic study of the Bible.

The simplest method

Bible study begins at the point when the reader asks himself questions about what he has read. Thus it is the Scripture Union method, which provides a list of questions to ask oneself after reading the set passage (not the reading of the explanatory notes), that transforms Bible reading into Bible study. (It also encourages meditation.) The sort of questions suggested are as follows:

What does this passage teach me about God—the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit?

What does this passage teach me about the Christian life? Is there a command to obey, a promise to claim, a warning to heed? Is there an example to follow or an error to avoid?

What is the main lesson of the passage?

When the reader has thus grappled with the biblical text for himself, he may well read the published explanatory notes in order to confirm, correct or supplement his own findings.

More detailed study

Once a person has begun to ask generalized questions like those above,

[p.127]

he is likely to realize that the details in the passage prompt further questions as to their meaning and significance which demand a more thorough form of Bible study.

In his book *Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty* (Pickering & Inglis, 1950), Merrill C. Tenney outlines ten methods of Bible study. They are as follows:

(1) The *synthetic* method: which surveys a biblical book as a whole; (2) the *critical* method: which investigates questions of authorship, destination, etc.; (3) the

⁴ It is recognized, of course, that house groups perform other valuable functions which make them important for all Christians, whether or not they engage in individual Bible study. See John Mallison, *Building Small Groups* (SU).

⁵ See 'An adventure in teaching Bible-study' by George Harpur in *The Witness*, June 1962.

biographical method: which discovers what can be known of the author and of the characters mentioned; (4) the *historical* method: which explores the political, cultural, historical and religious background of the book; (5) the *theological* method: which studies the main arguments and teaching of the book; (6) the *rhetorical* method: which looks at the author's ways of expressing his message; (7) the *topical* method: which traces the main and incidental subjects mentioned in the book; (8) the *analytical* method: which analyses the book section by section, attempting to formulate an outline of the whole book; (9) the *comparative* method: which compares the teaching of the book with that of other parts of Scripture; (10) the *devotional* method: 'by which the truths ascertained through the various means already described are integrated and applied to the needs of the individual' (p.207).

An alternative and simpler classification of methods of Bible study distinguishes two main approaches: the analytical and the synthetic.⁶

The analytical approach

This approach can be used on a verse, a chapter or a complete book of the Bible. Here we will consider its application to the study of a book of the Bible, since this should be seen as the normal scope of consecutive Bible study and as a reminder that there are real dangers in taking a verse or even a chapter out of its context. (Although it is recognized that different books of the Bible may need somewhat different methods, lack of space forbids more than a generalized treatment.)

The first stage is to look at the book as a whole. It should be read through a number of times, preferably in various versions. The following questions should be kept in mind and rough notes made (including the appropriate reference) as answers to them are discovered during reading. (Each question could well be placed at the top of a piece of paper.)

What type (genre) of literature is this? (How does it compare with other books of the Bible?)

What can I discover about the author and his purposes in writing?

[p.128]

What can I discover about the identity, situation and needs of the addressees?

What are the main themes of the book?

Then an attempt should be made to produce an outline or analysis of the structure of the book, giving an overall title (according to its apparent theme) and dividing it into sections and subsections each with a heading or description (according to its contents).

⁶ A. M. Derham, *op. cit.*, p.37.

At this point a Bible dictionary, an Introduction (e.g. those by Harrison and Guthrie) or the introductory section of the appropriate commentary could well be consulted to confirm, correct or supplement the personal discoveries and conclusions. A fuller, revised and more permanent set of notes could now be made.

The second stage involves working through the biblical text one paragraph at a time (according to the divisions in your Bible or your own analysis), keeping in mind the literary genre, the overall structure, the purpose, and the flow of the narrative or argument. First, an attempt should be made to paraphrase (in writing) the contents or argument of the paragraph and to relate its function to the overall purpose of the book. Then, the paragraph should be worked through sentence by sentence and even phrase by phrase. (Verses will not always be the most sensible units of study.) Two main questions face the Bible student at this point: What does it say? What does it mean?

To answer the first question necessitates the use of a number of versions of the Bible. The student is advised to use one version as his normal 'working' Bible: this is particularly important for the purpose of memorizing verses and passages as well as for developing a general familiarity with the biblical text. Either the *Revised Standard Version* (which is used as the basis of many modern commentaries and Bible study schemes) or the *New International Version* would seem to be the most suitable. A more literal translation such as the *Revised Version* or the *New American Standard Bible* is extremely valuable (despite the somewhat archaic English of the former) for a close study of the text by those who do not read Hebrew or Greek. *The Interlinear Greek/English New Testament* (Bagster) will bring the non-linguist even closer to the original text (and may encourage him to begin learning NT Greek). Almost any modern English version will convey the sense of the original text and make the sort of impact on us that it had on its first readers. For the whole Bible there are *The New English Bible*, *The Jerusalem Bible* and *Good News for Modern Man: Today's English Version*; for the NT only there are translations by various individuals such as J. B. Phillips and William Barclay. Remember that whilst all translations include some measure of interpretation, some of these

[p.129]

modern versions contain a considerable amount of paraphrasing. The *Living Bible* is a particularly free and personal paraphrase which is hardly suitable for careful study.

At this point, note should be taken of whether the translations largely agree in substance on the meaning of a sentence or phrase, or whether there are considerable differences which point to problems in determining or understanding the original text. In such instances it may not be possible to come to a final conclusion (there are times when we have to deal with probabilities and even possibilities) and care must be taken to resist the temptation to adopt the translation that simply appeals most.

To answer the second question (What does it mean?) involves considering each statement in relation to the author's purpose and the situation of the addressees (as far as these are known or may be surmised). At this point, if it is an NT book, use should be made of the marginal references (included in most Bibles): not to find parallel statements in other NT books, but to discover possible allusions to OT passages which

may lie behind the NT writer's expressions and which will help us to understand them better. Use should also be made of a Bible dictionary for help with historical, geographical, cultural and religious references as well as with difficult words.

Finally, having worked through a paragraph on one's own, a number of commentaries should be consulted for confirmation, correction or supplementation of one's findings. On the one hand commentaries should not be disdained—the experts have been gifted by God for the benefit of the church—and on the other hand they should not be treated as infallible. That is why it is best to use more than one commentary—where they agree there is clearly a high degree of probability, where they differ there is clearly room for differences of opinion—and above all to read them critically with one's own impressions of the text kept in mind.

Having worked through a paragraph or section in detail to determine its original meaning, the student can move on to three other questions: What does it teach? How does it compare with what other parts of the Bible teach? How does it apply to Christians today? To answer these questions requires an understanding of the principles of biblical interpretation (see Part B), a good knowledge of the Bible as a whole (though marginal references and various reference books will help here), a grasp of the nature and purpose of the Bible (see Part A) and above all reliance upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The synthetic approach

This approach usually treats the Bible as a whole. It traces a topic or

[p.130]

theme right through the Bible: What does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit? What does the Bible teach about marriage? It can also be applied to smaller sections of the Bible such as a single book, the Gospels or the epistles of Paul: What do we learn about evangelism from Acts? What do the synoptic Gospels say about the kingdom of God? What did Paul teach about sin?

Since this approach has a number of pitfalls for the unwary, it is probably best not to undertake it until a fair amount of work has been done in analytical study.⁷ One of the main dangers is that of taking statements (often called 'references' or 'verses') from various parts of the Bible regardless of their specific meaning and purpose in the original context and treating them as absolute and normative. Each statement must first be studied in its context before it is placed into any kind of synthesis. When dealing with the Bible as a whole, it is usually best to begin by organizing the statements (together with their references) under biblical books or writers before attempting to divide them into categories or put them under headings.

If a single book is being studied, the book can be read right through and references to the appropriate topic can be culled and noted. If the Bible as a whole is being studied, it will be necessary to make use of a concordance. The pitfall here is that of thinking

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.50.

that topics are strictly linked with particular words. In the case of some topics (e.g. baptism) the study of the occurrences of a single word (in its various verbal and noun forms) will give a fair coverage of the biblical teaching. Word studies on key biblical terms such as holiness, grace, righteousness, redemption, can be very helpful, providing it is remembered that a study of such words does not exhaust the biblical teaching on a particular topic and providing an analytical concordance is used which distinguishes the various Hebrew and Greek words in the original (see the section on concordances below).

For a thorough study of a biblical doctrine recourse will probably need to be made to a Bible dictionary or even to a handbook on systematic theology (e.g. T. C. Hammond's *In Understanding Be Men* (IVP) or L. Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* (Banner of Truth). In the first instance, however, these should be used to ascertain the relevant biblical references; classification and interpretation should be ignored. Only when the student has done his own work on the biblical references—seeking to organize them into categories (or aspects) under headings and to summarize their teaching—should he consult the dictionaries and manuals for confirmation, correction and supplementation of his findings.

[p.131]

The value of writing

The writing of notes has already been mentioned, but its importance needs to be stressed. Harold St. John tells how he once visited a young university student who proudly showed him his scientific notebooks. After examining these proofs of the student's industry with pleasure Mr. St. John said, 'And now show me your Bible study books.' The poor student replied with embarrassment, 'I haven't any, and, indeed, I don't treat the Bible in that way, I should not know how.'⁸

Bible study should surely be treated at least as seriously as any secular study; and if Francis Bacon was right when he stated that 'Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man',⁹ the Bible student should take the trouble to make extensive notes. Rough notes should be made at all times and some kind of final writing-up should be done in a presentable form.

Wide margin and interleaved Bibles are expensive and of limited use: they can be useful for recording alternative translations, adding biblical references and even noting references to passages in other books; but the amount of space provided is too small for preserving all one's findings in Bible study and the notes made at a particular time take on a fixed form which may inhibit further thought. The practice of underlining and marking one's Bible has similar drawbacks and also results in a biblical text which is harder to read; but it may be helpful if it is confined to a study Bible and not applied to a copy used for general reading.

⁸ Harold St. John, 'The Joys of Bible Study', *The Bible Student* XXXI, (1960).

⁹ Francis Bacon, *Essays*, 50, 'Of Studies'.

Keeping the aim in view

It is essential that the Bible student should constantly bear in mind the purpose of his study. Bible study is not the same as the study of secular literature, although many of the methods will be identical. Christian Bible study should never be purely academic. The final aim is not Bible knowledge but the knowledge of God: not only to know about God intellectually but to know him as a person, experientially, and to discover his will for one's life. That is why Bible study must be preceded by prayer ('Lord, speak to me'), followed by prayer ('Thank you, Lord, for teaching me... Help me to put it into practice'), and all the time carried out in the consciousness that the Bible is God's Word.

Finally, a reminder: Bible study, like all study, is hard work and requires consistent, disciplined application; but it is also a most satisfying and enjoyable occupation.

'I delight in your decrees;
I will not neglect your word.' (Ps. 119:16)

[p.132]

AIDS TO BIBLE STUDY

The following annotated list is only a selection of the many aids available for all levels of Bible study. It is largely confined to conservative and evangelical works (most of which should still be in print, but some would need to be borrowed from libraries or friends), although there are, of course, other books which the discerning reader would find very helpful.

Bibles

In addition to the various translations available (some of which are mentioned above), there are a number of study Bibles which are of varying degrees of helpfulness, but which should never be used as the sole source of reference. Based on the AV/KJV are *The New Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford), *The Thompson Chain Reference Bible* (Eyre and Spottiswoode/Kirkbride) and *The Companion Bible* (Bagster/ Zondervan). Both Scripture Union and Eyre & Spottiswoode publish RSV study Bibles; *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (OUP) is a non-conservative work also based on the RSV. *The Open Bible* (Nelson) is an edition of the NASB.

The Bible student is well advised to have at least one copy of the Apocrypha (available either separately or incorporated in a Bible and in AV, RV, RSV, JB, NEB, or GNB translations) for study of the intertestamental period and as a background to understanding much NT thought. A copy of *The Septuagint Version of the Greek Old Testament* (Bagster), which has an English translation, would also be a worthwhile acquisition, since it was the Bible of the early church and is extensively quoted in the NT. A Synopsis (in which the first three Gospels are arranged in parallel columns) is invaluable for any close study of the Gospels. English editions are published by

Nelson (ed. B. H. Throckmorton) and by Black (ed. H. F. D. Sparks), and a Greek/English edition by the United Bible Societies (ed. K. Aland).

Concordances

Most concordances are based on the AV/KJV. *A Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha* (Warne) by Alexander Cruden is the simplest: it enables one to find the reference to any text provided one knows at least one of the key words. A popular edition of *Strong's Concordance* (Pickering & Inglis) fulfils the same function. Smaller concordances (including those bound into study Bibles) are of more limited use because of their incompleteness.

The following are better for word study because they indicate the

[p.133]

original Hebrew or Greek words and yet require no knowledge of these languages: Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Lutterworth); James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Abingdon/Baker/MacDonald). *The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament* (Bagster) and *The Englishman's Creek Concordance of the New Testament* (Bagster) are very useful for those who have some acquaintance with the Hebrew and Greek alphabets.

Some concordances on modern versions are also available: *The Complete Concordance to the RSV* (Nelson); C. Morrison, *An Analytical Concordance to the RSV of the New Testament* (SCM); E. W. Goodrich and J. R. Kohlenberger, *The NIV Complete Concordance* (Zondervan); *The New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Hofman). *The Modern Concordance to the New Testament* (DLT) is intended for use with various versions of the Bible.

Dictionaries and other reference works

The Bible student should have an up-to-date Bible dictionary. Older ones should be used with caution: many of the historical, archaeological and linguistic details will be obsolete or even inaccurate. Probably the best at present is *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (IVP) in three volumes. The revised *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Paternoster) in four volumes will shortly be available in Britain. The major non-conservative work is *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Abingdon/SPCK) in five volumes.

For the beginner the best buy is the *Lion Handbook to the Bible* (Lion) which combines the functions of a dictionary and a commentary. *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Lion) forms a convenient supplement. Also useful are H. Sundemo, *Dictionary of Bible Times* (SU) and *Marshall's Bible Handbook* (MMS).

W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words (Oliphants) is still useful; but the best treatment of NT words and concepts is *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Paternoster) in three volumes. The OT equivalent to Vine is M.

F. Unger (ed.), *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Nelson); a larger work in two volumes is *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Moody). A Bible atlas (which usually contains much more than maps), such as *The Oxford Bible Atlas* (OUP), can be helpful but is less necessary if one has a Bible dictionary or even an edition of the Bible with maps.

More advanced students will find the following helpful: R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (IVP); D. Guthrie, *New Testa-*

[p.134]

ment Introduction (IVP) and *New Testament Theology* (IVP); G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Lutterworth).

Commentaries

The Bible student should begin by acquiring a one-volume Bible commentary such as *The New Bible Commentary Revised* (IVP) or *A Bible Commentary for Today* (Pickering & Inglis). The standard non-conservative work is *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (Nelson).

Later, he can begin to collect commentaries on individual books of the Bible. The main current conservative series are the *Tyndale Commentaries* (IVP); the fuller *New International Commentaries* (Hodder & Stoughton/Eerdmans); *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Pickering & Inglis) which will cover the whole Bible in twelve volumes; and *William Hendriksen's NT Commentaries* (Banner of Truth). *The Bible Speaks Today* (IVP) is a simpler but a very helpful series of expositions of some biblical books. *The New Century Bible* (Eerdmans/Oliphants/ MMS) has some volumes (NT) by conservative writers.

Non-conservative commentaries, if used with an awareness of their presuppositions, will often be found helpful. Volumes on various biblical books may be found in the following series: *Anchor Bible* (Doubleday); Black's NT Commentaries; Cambridge Bible Commentaries; *New Clarendon Bible* (OUP); *Old Testament Library* (SCM); *Torch Bible Commentaries* (SCM); *SCM Pelican NT Commentaries*; William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible* (St. Andrew Press) is more popular.

Older commentaries are of varying degrees of usefulness and accuracy. Some may be picked up in second-hand shops; some are reprinted by publishers like Banner of Truth Trust. Older one-volume commentaries still in print include *Matthew Henry's Commentary* (MMS); Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Zondervan); F. B. Meyer, *Bible Commentary* (Kingsway).

Bible Study

Studying God's Word (IVP), edited by John Job, is an excellent description of various methods of Bible study. H.-R. Weber, *Experiments with Bible Study* (WCC) is a valuable work from a different background.

Schemes of Bible study include *Search the Scriptures* (IVP), edited by A. M. Stibbs, and various booklets of questions (published by SU, IVP, Kingsway, etc.) intended for group study but also useful for individual study. Books like F. Foulkes, *Pocket Guide to the NT* (IVP) and J. G. Machen, *The New Testament* (Banner of Truth) contain questions and suggestions for further study. Bible reading notes (e.g. those published by SU and by Crusade for World Revival) often include

[p.135]

questions for study. I. H. Marshall, *Christian Beliefs* (IVP) and R. Bewes and R. Hicks, *The Pocket Handbook of Christian Truth* (SU) can also be used as the basis for Bible study.

Group Bible study is dealt with in Derek Copley, *Home Bible Studies and How to Run Them* (Paternoster); M. Kunz and C. Schell, *How to Start a Neighborhood Bible Study* (Neighborhood Bible Studies); and Mary Garvin, *Bible Study Can Be Exciting* (SU). Walter Wink, *Transforming Bible Study* (SCM) introduces a new kind of Bible study which incorporates the insights of psychotherapy.

The serious Bible student will need to read books on biblical interpretation, such as Alan Stibbs, *Understanding God's Word* (IVP); and for the more advanced there are B. Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Baker) and I. H. Marshall (ed.), *New Testament Interpretation* (Paternoster).

The novice will require introductions to the Bible, such as John Stott, *Understanding the Bible* (SU); John Balchin, *Let The Bible Speak* (IVP); H. Mears, *What the Bible is All About* (Gospel Light); S. Baxter, *Explore the Book* (Zondervan); R. Brown, *Let's Read the Old Testament* (Victory Press).

Biblical languages

None of the works listed above requires a knowledge of OT Hebrew or NT Greek, but even a superficial acquaintance with these languages (e.g. ability to read the alphabets) will open the door to a further range of helpful literature. Apart from correspondence courses (e.g. London Bible College; Wolsey Hall) and evening classes (available in some areas), the following books make it possible for someone to learn the basics of these languages: R. K. Harrison, *Teach Yourself Hebrew* (EUP); T. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (DLT); J. F. A. Sawyer, *Modern Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (Oriel Press); W. S. LaSor, *Handbook of Biblical Hebrew* (Eerdmans); D. F. Hudson, *Teach Yourself New Testament Greek* (EUP); J. W. Wenham, *Elements of NT Greek* (CUP); M. Whittaker, *NT Greek Grammar: An Introduction* (SCM).

John W. Baigent, "Bible Study - Methods and Means," *Christian Brethren Review* 31, 32 (1982): 123-136.
