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GOOD, BETTER, BEST IN BIBLE STUDY

EVERY influence which makes for respect for the Bible as the Word of God is commendable. The Bible Study practiced in Great Britain and Ireland fifty to a hundred years ago; namely, the committing to memory of verses and chapters and the use of the Book as a reader in the Schools, had its advantages. Those who thus became familiar with the text of the Bible had a valuable store of information, if later they became Christians and sought the meaning of God's Messages.

Other Bible Study attempts were made in various denominations in so-called Bible Study Classes. These, however, were hampered by the denominational Creeds. Occasionally able teachers informed their Classes respecting the historical setting, discussed the writer of the Epistle, the journeying experiences, etc. Sometimes he ventured off into doctrine; but on such occasions, unless he was very discreet and held down the Class, the result of the lesson was somewhat of a dispute and a general tangle, which left the Class more confused than before.

Another style of Bible Study which for a time found favor, consisted of a number of Christian people reading a chapter, verse about. Each, after reading his verse, would make such comment as he pleased. If there were forty verses in the chapter there were as many little comments. When the meeting closed there was a feeling of a measure of refreshment in having handled the Bible, having read some interesting verses, and having communed [R5919 : page 200] with each other; but very little knowledge of God or His Plan of the Ages was gained by such Bible Study.

It is only of late – within the past ten years practically – that the Bible has been studied after the manner we mention as Berean Studies – searching the Scriptures. Now all over the world Berean

Classes are in operation. Great blessing and great enlightenment are resulting. [R5919 : page 201] For this kind of Bible Study, a textbook is used and also a question-book. The textbooks are the various volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES. In these volumes the teachings of the Bible have been collated and brought into an assimilable form. For instance, if the lesson appertains to the Holy Spirit, the study on the subject brings together the teachings of the Bible from every part and sets these in orderly array before the Class. If the subject be "The Man Christ Jesus," it is similarly treated. If the subject be "The Logos," it is treated in like manner. If the subject be "Justification," "Sanctification," "The Glorification of the Saints," each subject is treated systematically – brought to the minds of the Class and laid open for discussion, with references to various parts of the Bible in which these things are stated.

It does not surprise us, therefore, that those of God's people who have learned the value of this method of Bible Study and who follow it have a clearer understanding of the Word of God than others. While, therefore, we commend any kind of Bible Study, we especially commend this form which the Lord has blessed above all others for the enlightenment of His people in this Harvest time. This method is for the advantage of the entire Class. An able leader is not so indispensable. One danger with able leaders with any other method of Bible Study is that their ability sometimes goes in a wrong direction and misleads.

These Berean Studies, however, place the entire Class in a position of advanced scholarship in the Word of God, because they have the entire subject under discussion open before them. Nevertheless, even in a Berean Study and when the questions are used, a skilful leader, who is humble-minded, will prove a great assistance to the Brethren. And this is the case in nearly every Class the world around. We want the dear readers of THE WATCH TOWER to know just why we so earnestly recommend to them this Berean form of Bible Study. Nor should we wonder if the Adversary

would work against a method which has been so blessed of the Lord. We urge upon all a comparison between the results in their minds, their hearts, their lives, as between Berean Bible Studies and all other kinds of which they may have knowledge or have tried in the past.

