

"Over" is the "Summary" end of Robert A. Traina's METHODICAL BIBLE STUDY (developed when teaching at NYTS; published by Asbury TS/52/68). Before interpreting your first text using this form, study carefully "over" [pp.229-31 in Traina--the book can be purchased in the NYTS Bookstore in the Library]. — 1970

SEE

INQUIRE

ANSWER

SUMMARIZE

EVALUATE

APPLY

ASSOCIATE

At the outset of this study reference was made to John Dewey's definition of "method," in which he indicated its concern with "the crucial points where conditions of growth have to be carefully maintained and fostered."<sup>1</sup> Using this as a basis for surveying the preceding discussion, one may review it in seven simple words: see, inquire, answer, summarize, evaluate, apply, and associate.

The first crucial point of methodical study is to learn to see. For observation is the link between the subject and the object. Through it the mind becomes aware of the components of a passage, and induction thus has its beginning.

The major components of a passage are four in number: terms, structure, general literary forms, and atmosphere. These, then, should be the objects of the seeing eye. This is especially true of structure, which is so important in literary communication and yet is perceived only by the observer who diligently searches for it.<sup>2</sup>

But to become aware is not enough. The purpose of awareness is to supply the mind with the stuff on which to work. And this work begins when the mind inquires into the meaning of that which it has perceived. This therefore is a second crucial point where growth needs to be maintained and fostered. For unless curiosity and inquisitiveness are developed, the results of observation will be like fruit which is picked but not eaten.

However, inquiries in turn are helpful only if one attempts to answer them, and if one succeeds in answering

them properly. This can be accomplished only through the development of the re-creative attitude, which causes one to stand in the shoes of Biblical authors in order to feel as they felt and to think as they thought. And whatever exegetical practices and aids are used should be employed in such a way as to promote re-creation.

When these re-creative answers have been made, then one's task is to integrate and summarize them in order to discover the primary message of a passage, which consists of a number of interrelated elements upon which an author depends for the communication of his ideas. Thus if one is to discover his message, one must interrelate one's interpretations of the various elements used in the passage.

The next crucial step involves the need to evaluate the message of a passage. For one must discover its exact worth and relevance before one will know how to benefit by it. This is necessary because the various parts of the Scriptures were written in and addressed to concrete historical situations which span hundreds of years. An effort must therefore be made to determine which truths are local and which are of universal value on the basis of the universal Christ.

When universal truth has been discovered, one should then find the situation to which the truth is relevant. And to such a situation one must apply the truth, not only in theory but also in actual practice.

When one has thus studied several passages, one is ready to begin a task which should occur continuously during one's lifetime. This task is to associate the passages one studies with each other and with the extra-Biblical data of experience. In this way one will develop a Biblical data of proper culmination a correlated Biblical view of life. These, then, are the crucial steps of methodical study which need to be maintained and fostered. And there is only one person in the world who is able to maintain and

foster them. That is you. In your hands lies the decision as to whether you will train yourself in such a way so that God's Spirit can use you in the interpretation of the Scriptures. This book has merely been suggestive. It contains some guide-posts which point out the *methodos* to a fruitful study of the Bible. Now all depends on the traveler!