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AN ACROSTIC ON STUDY

For the Bible Student

By A. NAISMITH, M.A.

Christ is the greatest Teacher who ever lived: His teaching is ideal yet realistic. His enemies paid Him a most remarkable tribute when they said, 'Teacher, we know that Thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man, for Thou regardest not the person of men' (Matt. 22:16), acknowledging—

- i. the Veracity of the Teacher;
- ii. the Inerrancy of His teaching;
- iii. the Impartiality of His attitude;
- iv. the Fidelity of His presentation.

Jesus said, 'Learn of Me' (Matt. 11:29). The word *manthanō*, translated 'learn' is from the same root as the word *mathētēs* disciple.

For study in any branch of knowledge concentration is essential. Emerson wrote, 'Concentration is the secret of success in politics, in war, in trade,—in short, in all management of human affairs'. And this applies to the acquisition of spiritual as well as secular knowledge. What shall we study?

I. THE SCRIPTURES. The Scripture of truth is the *Word of God*. See John 5:39, 46, 47. In the study of the Scriptures, one or two reliable translations in addition to the Authorized Version, at least one good Concordance such as Dr Young's, Strong's or Wigram's, and 'The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge' (Bagster), with its plenitude of suggestive references, will be found exceedingly helpful.

In the Bible itself there are four words that indicate the ideal method of Bible study:

(i) *Read* (1 Tim. 4:13). 'Give attention to reading', both in private and in public. Read the Bible right through, from beginning to end, commencing to read where God commenced to write. Read it continuously, and not in a rambling fashion, and read it repeatedly and prayerfully, making notes where necessary.

(ii) *Search* its pages to find hidden treasure (John 5:39). Research in any sphere is a process of investigation with the object of benefiting oneself and others.

(iii) *Compare* (1 Cor. 2:13). Using first telescopic methods, compare the different portions into which the Bible is divided, then one book with another. Then, compare subjects taught and words used, adopting the microscopic method for the comparison of minute details. The arrangement of both Old and New Testaments follows a Divine plan, presenting books of Principles, Practice, Precepts and Prophecy in perfect order.

(iv) *Meditate* (Ps. 1:2). Knowledge apart from meditation has little or no practical value. Meditation leads to the application to the life of truths apprehended in study, builds character and finds expression in useful service.

2. **THEOLOGY.** This is the Science of Divine things. It reveals *the Wonders of God*. The children of God should want to learn all they can about their Father. Those redeemed by the Son of God will have a desire to know all they can about their Saviour. The Bible is the story of God. It is a Book of Divine Revelation. Its theology presents God as a Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. **THE UNIVERSE.** The universe in which we live is not only the creation of God; it is a display of the *Works of God*. In Ps. 19:1-6 David tells how God is revealed in creation inarticulately, and in the remainder of the Psalm how He has provided an articulate revelation of Himself in His Word. Every branch of study dealing with the universe or the animate and inanimate things that compose it should lead us to God.

4. **DOCTRINE.** This is the word usually applied to that Divine teaching given to us systematically in the Scriptures, and enlightening us as to the *Ways of God*. It is comprehended in the term, 'the faith once for all delivered to the saints' (Jude 3), and is called by Paul in his last letter, 'the good deposit'. In the Bible, doctrine is distributed as revealed truth. In studying doctrine we must adopt the synthetic method, gathering and building up the great subjects enunciated in the various portions of the Scriptures.

5. **YOURSELF.** You are the *Workman of God* as well as His workmanship. Paul charged Timothy, 'Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine' (1 Tim. 4:16). The word 'study' is found only twice in the Authorized Version of the New Testament, and is the translation of two different Greek words.

- 1 Thess. 4:1, 'Study to be quiet and to do your own business and to work . . .'
- 2 Tim. 2:15, 'Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed'.

The two words in the original indicate the attitude necessary for study. In Thess. 4:11 the word means 'be ambitious'. Without ambition there is no urge to study. In 2 Tim. 2:15 the word means 'be diligent'. The realization of an ambition depends on diligence in application of the powers of mind and body to the task. The context indicates the results of Bible study in the Christian life. In the former Scripture the culture of the soul in godliness is the outcome of the 'study': in the latter it is the culture of the mind in truth that is in view.

Therefore study: **THE SCRIPTURES. THEOLOGY. THE UNIVERSE. DOCTRINE. YOURSELF.**

'He was marvellously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.' 2 Chron. 26 : 15, 16.

Uzziah seems to have been the type of a variously busy and successful man. He had all sorts of irons in the fire. So many energetic interests and tastes with both faculty and opportunity for developing them must have made his life much more agreeable and lively than most royal careers. His architecture and his agriculture, his war organizations and his engineering spread his name far abroad, for 'as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.' Yet the end of his story is a strange contrast—a leper, dwelling in a several house and cut off from the house of the Lord. Where was the turning point? Probably in the words: 'He strengthened himself exceedingly.' It had been God's help and strength before and he had risen very high. Then he thought he was strong and he was brought fearfully low. 'Marvellously helped till he was strong.' Then who would not be always weak that he might be marvellously helped?

F.R.H.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Having returned from furlough and resumed the so-called 'office chair' it is with great thankfulness to the Lord for all His mercies both personal and in relation to the editing, printing and publishing of the Magazine. The latter valuable services have been in the able hands of Mr W. J. Redwood, and now it is his turn to take a very-much-needed change and rest—in the salubrious climate characteristic of New Zealand. Please remember him and his wife in your prayers.

We must render our most grateful thanks to the Lord for all His help and guidance during the year in spite of the difficulties we often have to experience. But for the Lord's help in every detail we could not continue. Our readers are asked to remember this ministry of the Magazine in their prayers daily. We look for your fellowship in this way. No other motive than the desire to promote a deeper love for the Scriptures and a more intelligent understanding of its teachings rules.

We thank all who have sought to make the Magazine known to other students: And we specially thank those who have so often written in appreciation of the articles. But perhaps more than all we must thank those who so readily have given us help with the articles of various kinds, specially those who have provided the excellent serial studies now appearing. May the Lord abundantly reward them in His own way for this great ministry—A.McD. R.

THEY KEEP SAYING IT

'Personally I find the articles and studies very helpful, and it also shews us the wonderful wisdom of our God and His Word'—Durham, England.

'I have the past four years' copies bound It is the finest magazine I know for really thoughtful and scholarly work'—A Missionary Doctor.

'I have derived much help and profit from your excellent magazine'—Scotland.

'I would like to say how much I appreciate your magazine. . . .'—Cheshire, England.