

The Inductive Method of Bible Study.

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"What is the inductive method?" It may seem strange or commonplace to say that the inductive method invites the student to begin his work with the Bible itself. And yet to do this is its first mission. Neither notes nor comments, dogmas or confessions, topics or moral and religious lessons, form the starting point of work, but the Bible itself. To the Bible for the facts from which to make your induction of any kind. First to the Bible, then to results by induction. Another man's finished work, doctrinal or religious, is not provided. Not oranges picked, packed, and brought to market, but the grove, within every man's reach where ripe fruit hangs on the branches, stands before the student who is to begin inductive study of the Bible.

First of all, you are to turn to the text of the book itself; the setting of the text, historical, chronological, and geographical, it may be; and the whole text as an organic structure. You are beginning the book of Ezra. Begin by reading the book through "without note or comment;" this, if you can, at one sitting. Then do it again, and as often as you can. Your first requirement is to obtain a clear view of the text of the prophecy. Examine it, ply it with questions, cross-examine it with searching questions. Pump out of the well of living water every bucketful of text you can. With the book closed, test yourself as to how much of it you have ground into your thinking.

Proceed in like manner to its historical setting. Who wrote the book? To whom did he write? When did he write? What is there in the land, the people, their customs, religion, character, that has to do with the writing of that book? What relation does it sustain to other prophecies and other books?

You have been studying not scraps from the text, not verses, not sermon texts, but the whole text. You want to discern its structure and purpose, hunt after its analysis; for the structure of the whole is the key to the meaning of each individual part. You must not pause to exhaust yourself with word-study or verse-study. You are not seeking an aggregation of details. You will wish to examine these details only as they constitute the solution from which the crystal comes.

The inductive method objects to the common habit of confining Bible study to chosen passages, "bleeding members torn from the living body," kodak snatches of broken landscape here and there. It wants to map out the whole. It insists on studying the entire book. And all this is but saying that the inductive method views the Scriptures as literature. They are to be studied as any literature is studied, as all literature is studied, in the setting of its times,

by a survey of its structure, and the text of the book itself.

The new method is inductive, by a harmless play on the word in another way. It induces to study. It invites each student to the luxury of doing some studying for himself. The members of a class are not young birds in a nest, with eyes shut and mouths open to take what the teacher has taken pains to gather and drop in. They are chicks to scratch with the mother hen for themselves. They are students in a class-room; students preparing for a class-room. They are more than the victims of an exhorter, or the idle listeners to a sermon or lecture that some other man is sending forth.

The inductive method, however, excludes neither religious exhortation nor practical application and doctrinal deduction. It may be even more truly evangelistic than methods made up of exhortation and application. It does not fear to trust the student with his Bible for practical applications of its own, and it does not hesitate to clinch the lessons that actually come from the text. But it does not begin with them. To the Bible first. There is battle, stern battle, real battle. But the battle opens by getting the men into line of battle.—*Baptist Teacher.*

Book Notice.

At the Place which is Called Calvary. By EDWARD H. BURGESS, Minister of the Gospel. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is an unconventional, plain, practical series of sermons on such topics as "Jesus, our Friend," "Is not this the Carpenter's Son?" "Setting the Plumb-line," "Christian Humility," "Burdens and the Burden-bearer." They are helpful, uplifting, encouraging. Such preaching as this cannot fail to do good. The sermon which gives its title to the book is one written for communion service, and is a practical and forceful treatment of an important subject. We understand that the author is a Canadian, and that he has in press a book on loyalty to Queen and country.

IN THE PENITENTIARY.—"What brings these young men to this penitentiary?" said the inspector, as he walked with the warden through the workshops. "Well," was the reply, "the average young man don't like to work nowadays. But he must have money. If he is not wealthy he must get it in some other way, and he wants a 'short cut' to wealth. He steals it, or he gets into bad company and they are all arrested and sentenced, when perhaps only one of them did most of the crooked work. Having fallen into bad company he finds it hard to break away even when released to begin life over again. So he falls again."—*Sunday-school Missionary.*