

"STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED"

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." – 2 Tim. 2:15.

THIS TEXT does not say, "Study the Scriptures," but "Study to show thyself approved" – study to know what God would approve. And yet it means, first of all, to study the Revelation He has made. Then, after having come to some knowledge of the Scriptures, we must meditate upon them and consider how the Word is applicable to all of life's affairs. Thus we would study the nature of everything that we come in contact with, as to whether it is good or evil. The word "study" here is used with very much the same thought as when the Apostle says, "Study to be quiet."

Evidently the central thought of this expression is the approving of ourselves to God, not to men. It is proper enough that we should have the approval of all good men and good women. But our *study*, primarily, should not be along this line. First, we should *study to please God* – to be approved of God. We notice that there is a contemplative study, such as David speaks of when he says, "I meditate upon thy Law day and night" – to see how that Law would work out its height and depth, its length and breadth of influence upon himself. And so the Apostle's thought here is that it should be our chief aim to please God.

"*Rightly dividing* the Word of Truth" would signify the *proper application* of the Word of Truth; the understanding of how and when and where it should be applied and what was the purpose and thought and Plan of the Divine Mind in the giving of this Word of Truth, the Word of God's Message. Up to the advent of our Lord, God's Message had been given chiefly through the Old Testament Scriptures. Then God's Message was attested by Him who came from heaven. Additionally, our Lord left twelve chosen Apostles to be His special mouthpieces, to increase the Word of Truth, to increase the Word of

knowledge, to increase the Word of explanation of the Divine Plan. Everything, therefore, that Timothy could [R4838 : page 184] recognize as being the Lord's Message he was to give heed to. For instance, one part of God's Message applies to the past, a part applies only to the Jews, still another part applies to Christians in the present life, and yet another part to their future hopes.

WE SHOULD HAVE CLEARER LIGHT THAN HAD OUR FOREFATHERS

And so, as we get the matter rightly divided before our minds, we get the true understanding, the special enlightenment needed in our day, and we are enabled to rightly divide the Word better than did our fathers, so that today we can see, as our fathers did not see, the teaching of God's Word respecting the "high calling" and "restitution" – the spiritual portion of blessing for the Church and the human portion of blessing for the world. We also see something about the times and seasons – *which* apply to the Church and *which* to the blessing of the world.

Thus, in our Day, to rightly divide the Word of Truth necessitates the taking cognizance of everything that seems to be of the Lord and that throws any light upon the Word, and thus we may be able to "rightly divide" it. We must always bear in mind that in the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," and that the Lord also said of the *Apostles*: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

We are not to forget that the Lord promised that He would guide His people in the way of the Truth and show them things to come. We are to "*study*" to show ourselves approved – *study* the doctrine and endeavor to have our course of conduct harmonize with it – *study* to perform faithfully the duties of a loyal soldier of the cross of Christ.

The Christian soldier must *study* to perform even the smallest duty in a manner creditable to his calling; he must not permit himself to

become entangled with other things which do not relate to his duties as a soldier and thus be side-tracked. The Christian soldier who turns aside to seek some personal, temporal advantage to the detriment of his duties as a soldier is to that extent an unfaithful soldier and likely to be drawn out of the ranks entirely. [R4839 : page 184]

"*Study* to show thyself approved." Study the *Word*; study *yourself*, that you may become well acquainted *with yourself*; that you may know your talents for service – in what direction they lie, and what are your weak points and how they may be guarded against – that you may know both your abilities and your shortcomings. Then *study* to avoid error and to shun all foolish questions and profane and vain babblings. Remember that only "the foundation *of God standeth sure*"; that all other foundations are worthless and that all other theories must come to naught. But "The foundation *of God standeth sure*, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are *His*." And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." – 2 Tim. 2:19.

WE SHOULD STUDY TO MAKE OUR IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS MORE AND MORE ACTUAL

There is much significance in the word "*study*" and it is important to note that this Divine injunction is given to the *Church*, to those who are believers in Christ and who have consecrated their lives to His service. Having been reckonedly cleansed from sin, we are to give all diligence to the work of *studying* to make this reckoned cleansing, this *imputed* righteousness, an *actual* thing, to the extent of our ability. It is purely of Divine grace that we are *reckoned* righteous before we are *actually* so. Looking at our hearts and seeing in them, not only our good and honest intentions, but also our desire for righteousness and our efforts to become righteous in the way He would approve, God accepts the will for the deed. Accordingly, He *counts* us as righteous *now* and treats us as His children, since we have been redeemed from the curse and have accepted His gracious provision for reconciliation.

LET US STUDY TO SEE THAT OUR LIVES ARE AN HONOR TO THE CAUSE WE ESPOUSE

Let us, then, *study* our hearts to see that we are striving daily to *cast out* all the old leaven of sin; to be sure that we are not content to allow it to *remain* in us and *work* in us; otherwise we prove by our course that our love for righteousness is growing weaker. Happy are those who find that they are not merely working down the leavened mass occasionally and allowing it again and again to ferment, but are *casting it out*, by constantly resisting sin, by cleansing their thoughts, words and deeds with the Truth and cultivating the blessed "fruits of the Spirit" – love, joy, peace, etc.

Only the *studious* find the way to Divine approval and acceptance. Let us *study* to see that our lives are an honor to the cause we have espoused; that we abstain from even the appearance of evil; that we are circumspect in all our conversation, in our conduct – watching our thoughts, our lips, our lives. Let us *study* to be diligent in every duty, performing it with a ready mind and with joy and gladness of heart. Let us never lose sight of the fact that we are *soldiers*, and that as true soldiers we are to learn to "endure hardness."

A soldier has many trivial duties to perform and he is as really doing his duty as a soldier when he is polishing his armor, foraging, cooking his meals, cleaning camp or building bridges for the army to pass over, as when he is fighting the enemy. Such things are incidental work, but are necessary and entirely consistent with his commission as a soldier and should not be regarded as entanglements and hindrances. These duties cannot be disregarded nor carelessly done without a measure of unfaithfulness.

WHATEVER OUR CAPTAIN HAS RECOGNIZED AND APPROVED IS PROPER FOR US

So with the Christian soldier. The routine of life – housework, shop work, daily toil, anything, everything, incidental to a proper and honest

provision of "*things needful*" for ourselves and those dependent upon us for support, as well as for provision for the prosecution and care of the Lord's work – all this is a proper part of our engagement as soldiers of the Lord.

The Apostle Peter was as truly serving the Lord when catching the fish from whose mouth he got the coin with which to pay his Master's taxes and his own, as when proclaiming, on the day of Pentecost, the "raising up" and ascension of the Lord. The Apostle Paul was as truly a soldier of the cross and doing his proper work as such when making tents (rather than be chargeable to any) as when at Mars Hill he preached Jesus and the resurrection. *Whatever* is done with a view to the glory and honor of our Lord, the Captain of our salvation, or for the benefit of any of our fellow-soldiers, or for our own *preparation* for this warfare, or in the discharge of obligations which our Captain has recognized and approved, is proper work for us as soldiers and is not *entanglement* in the affairs of this life.

