

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GOD'S WORKMEN

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

GOD'S approval should be the highest aim of every one who professes to believe in Him as the Creator, and especially of those who accept Him as their Father and who claim to hold the precious relationship to Him of children. His will should be their highest law, and it should be a part of their daily and hourly pleasure, as it is their privilege, to seek to know His will and to do it. This implies study, consideration – not a mere formality of thoughtless reading, or perfunctory worship, but the diligent use of every available means to learn what is His will.

The Apostle Paul gives Timothy the advice contained in our text, and urges him to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." And the intimation is that the ability rightly to divide the Word of God is to be gained by the study of His Word. The truth of astronomy might give us some knowledge; yet we see that some who have devoted their entire lives to astronomy have lost sight of God, and have become atheists. Guided by the Word of God, any study may be helpful. But it must be viewed, considered, received, from the standpoint of the Revelation of God.

The word *workman* suggests the thought of being engaged in service. This injunction of the Apostle applies to all who belong to the Church of Christ. We are God's servants. A great work is going on; this work is the calling out of the Church class from the world. The Church that is called out is said to be the Temple of God, whose "living stones" are being chiseled and polished and made ready for their places in the building. [R5512 : page 232] We are

the *workmen*. We are seeking to prepare ourselves for God's presence, for God's Kingdom. This preparation is our first duty; we are to prepare ourselves and to help to prepare others.

TRUE CAUSE OF MUCH FAILURE

The fashioning of these "living stones" is the development of their character. Each one thus engaged is working out his own salvation. We are God's laborers in doing this work in ourselves. But if we would have Divine approval, we must have the Divine wisdom – "which cometh down from Above," and which we learn from the Word of God. – James 3:17.

Apparently a great many professing Christians, after they have given much time to the cultivation of their brain – spending years in seminaries – will eventually find that they have failed both to have the Lord's ideal accomplished in themselves and to do much good to others. This seems to be the result of a failure rightly to divide the Word of Truth. In that Day many shall say, Lord, Lord, we have prayed and taught and done many marvelous things in Thy name! Some of these the Lord says He will not recognize as His Elect. He may have a place in which He will use some of them, some day, yet for this special place He wishes those who are anxious to know and to do His will rather than to know how they may please men, or how they may receive large emoluments or honor of men. Those who are anxious to know His will are most sure to have His will done in them.

MISAPPLICATION OF SCRIPTURES

The expression, "rightly dividing the Word of Truth," implies that the Word of Truth may be studied, may be handled. We see many ways of handling, or dividing, the Scriptures. Many Scriptures applicable long ago are quoted as appropriately due now, and vice versa; and those which belong to the future are quoted as

applicable now, or in the past. There is a general liability to error in not discerning how to divide them aright.

Rightly to divide the Word of Truth, then, is to make such a prayerful study of it as will enable us to place things where they belong. For instance, if we fail to distinguish between the begetting of the Holy Spirit, and the quickening of the Holy Spirit, and our spirit birth, and get these all confused, we shall do harm. It is not merely the seeking to show a variety of doctrines, but the seeking to make clear what we give to others, that is the part of wisdom. The Apostle was showing Timothy that, as an Elder of the Church of Christ, he might present the different features of the Truth in such a way as to confuse his hearers, who then would not know what they believed. Thus they would be in just the condition to accept whatever teaching any one brought them, especially if that one should happen to ridicule their belief.

This seems to be the condition of many today. Evidently there are many who have been serving or attempting to serve God, who have not been giving out "meat in due season," but who have been giving out truths in a very confused way. It is for us, then, to be on guard and seek carefully to follow the instruction of the Apostle, [R5512 : page 233] "Study to show thyself approved unto God." Do not mind so much what men may say or think, but seek the approval of God first.

It is proper for us to seek the approval of the holy, of the saintly; but God's approval should have the precedence. We must be *workmen*, not idlers and drones; for these will not have any place in the Kingdom. God is calling to service *now* those who are willing to serve under disadvantageous conditions. We are, therefore, to remember that we are to be servants; and that unless we find the proper service, we cannot have a place in this company which God is training. If we wish His approval, as expressed in His Word, we are to see that the conditions as there outlined are fulfilled in our

case. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." We are told to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." (1 John 2:15.) We are not to set our hearts upon these things. Our hearts are to be set upon the doing of the Lord's will.

The Lord intimates that those who will be faithful to Him will have the opposition of the world. "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." Therefore, if we have no opposition, we lack this evidence of acceptability with Him. We are to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and to see that our lives are in harmony with it. At the same time we are to seek to present God's Word to others, that they may enjoy the same privileges and blessings.

