

## 2 Timothy 2:15

This discourse was delivered by Dr. Lyle Cook at the Waco, Texas convention in October, 1969.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth."

Manna, Jan. 9, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7) All of the Lord's consecrated people should realize that they have come into the present grace and truth, not by their own wisdom nor by the wisdom of others, but through the wisdom and grace of the Lord. The same thought should be entertained by all who serve the Church of God as ministers, servants, in any department, in any manner responsible to the Lord for their position in the household of faith, and their opportunities to serve as the Lord a mouthpieces should be felt and confessed. But failure to confess it implies a failure rightly to appreciate it.

Manna comment Sept. 17, "Every true child of God must have a definite individual Christian character which is not dependent for its existence upon the spiritual life of any other Christian. He must from the Word of Truth, proclaimed and exemplified by other Christians, draw those principles of life, etc., which give him an established character, a spiritual individuality of his own. So positive and definite should be the spiritual individuality of every one, that, should even the beloved brother or sister whose spiritual life first nourished ours and brought us forward to completeness of character fall away (which the Apostle shows is not impossible--Heb. 6:4-6; Gal. 1:8), we would still live, being able to appropriate for ourselves the Spirit of Truth.

Manna comment, Dec. 20, There is much significance in that word "study" and only the studious find the narrow way to the divine approval and acceptance. The comment goes on to list several ways that we can study in obedience to the text, but in this consideration the intent is to focus on the study of God's Word to learn His will for us, to learn the Divine Truth. Learning is symbolized by eating and by drinking. Meat, bread and water are frequently used to denote the Divine Truth, for these every-day matters bring apt illustrations to our minds and help us to grasp spiritual applications more easily. All these must be divided into usable portions before they can be appropriated to our use. We might have access to a whole lake-full of water to quench our thirst, but for the majority of us, a glassful would be much more practical and satisfying portion than attempting to quench our thirst from the lake directly, especially if it were an "active" body of water with a moving surface. Likewise, meat is a staple of life for most, but we would not be able to satisfy our hunger even though we had a whole side of beef if we had no means of

dividing it into usable portions. In the instance of bread, its division is taken for granted, and the saying, "breaking of bread" is proverbial, because it is practically impossible for us to eat it in the loaf. It must be divided. Now the lesson--all that the Laodicean Messenger claimed was that he was used of the Lord to divide the Lord's Word into edible portions, into "bite-sized" units, something we can understand and comprehend--into understandable language. (Reprint page 1868, par. 1)

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them." (Jer. 15:16) "Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O Beloved." (Cant. 5:1) "And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up." (Rev. 10:10) "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." (Matt. 5:6) There are several points worth noting when contemplating these God-given symbols:

1. One must have humility of mind, otherwise satisfaction with one's low standard of righteousness will prevent discernment of the heights and grandeur of the divine perfection.
2. One cannot hunger and thirst after that which one does not in some measure comprehend.
3. One must be sympathetic to the world or one would not long for the incoming kingdom and its justice.
4. This quality of hunger and thirst after righteousness uncontrolled by the other of these graces of the spirit has led many worldly people into wild excesses, where-as the child of God, although having this same hunger and thirst in a larger degree than others, yet, under the control of the spirit of a sound mind, instructed from the Word of God, rests in his promises and waits for their fulfillment, patiently submissive, and assured of the victory of righteousness in God's due time, which he adopts as his also.
5. The fulfillment of this promise is in the First Resurrection.
6. Nothing in this promise implies a miraculous filling or satisfying: the thought connected with the illustration rather, is, that hungering and thirsting after righteousness, one will make use of one's time, knowledge and opportunities for seeking the bread of eternal life, which satisfies, and the water of life, which truly refreshes; and that in proportion as these are sought and found will be the blessing. We have the Lord's guarantee of the blessing for all who are in the attitude of mind to seek and to use the spiritual refreshments he provides.
7. As part of our consecration vow "we are to manifest a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that we may be filled!"
8. This will require energy, as energy is expended in natural eating. Milk is given to babies and requires merely swallowing, for they have neither the energy nor the equipment (teeth, muscles, knives, etc.,) for assimilating solid nutriment, while meat and other items of diet that require considerable mastication and reduction to nutriment elements is given to adults who have this ability. (Heb. 5:13, 14)
9. The object in giving babies milk is that they will grow and become strong enough to eat solid food and grow to adulthood. Malnutrition is one of the commonest causes of failure to properly develop. The spiritual application of these natural lessons is so obvious that explanation is not necessary.

Reprint page 3735, paragraphs 1 to 3; reprint page 2586, paragraphs 7 to 9.

There is apprehension on the part of some in regard to studying the Lord's Word voiced by the apostle in 1 Cor. 8:1, "Knowledge puffeth up." It is well that we weigh every statement Of the Lord with carefulness to be edified thereby. The balance of the scripture helps: "But charity edifieth." Edify means to instruct, especially, to instruct or improve morally or spiritually. Charity is defined by Strong as affection or benevolence. The goal the Lord has for giving us knowledge is that we will develop benevolent affection--the Christ-like character.

"The just shall live by faith." "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." "Earnestly contend for the faith once delivered." "All men have not faith;"--do not have any knowledge of God, or any trust in him. "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is of faith." (1 Tim. 1:4) So, we are to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." How could this proper faith be developed without study and the acquirement of knowledge of divine things? "Perfect love cannot be attained without knowledge, faith, courage and overcoming." (Songs in the Night, Dec. 14th) "To grow thus in grace and not grow in knowledge is impossible. . " Manna May 14th.

"If we could get love alone without getting knowledge it would be very much to be preferred above getting knowledge alone without getting love, but God has otherwise arranged, namely, that we must have knowledge as the basis for love, and that we must have love as the outgrowth of the knowledge if we would be acceptable to him as members of the elect church. Hence, we are to grow in grace, and to this end incidentally we must grow in knowledge, because how could we love God if we knew him not, and how could we develop his character-likeness except as we would be sanctified through the truth?" (Reprint page 4042, par. 8) We are counseled not only to find the whole armor of God, but to put it on, and to wear it. "Every reasonable opportunity should be used by the Lord's people to obtain a knowledge of the divine plan--even to the extent of sacrificing; . " "It is a great privilege for Christians to study the Lord's Word, yet a great deal of study is done to no purpose. Study which is not put into practice is worse than a waste of time." (Manna Jan. 19th) The goal or objective that the lord has for giving us the Truth and the Holy Spirit, enabling us to understand His Truth, is that we might develop characters like unto our Master's. What were the outstanding characteristics of our Master? 1. Supreme love--reverence for God. 2. Entire heart Loyalty-Reverence for the divine revelation, representative, God's Word. 3. Careful study to know and understand the divine revelation, and complete obedience thereto in letter and in spirit. 4. Uncompromising devotion in promulgating the Truth. ~. To summarize: he was led or activated by the spirit of the Truth. He demonstrated benevolent affection, (*agape*) divine love, for us to strive for as our goal. *Agape* (love) is based upon justice. How can we

know Justice without knowledge? The acquiring of knowledge and understanding is not the goal, it is merely the necessary first step toward the development of benevolent affection--the Christ-like character.

That knowledge and its acquirement bring responsibility that few are willing to assume, and can be a dangerous thing, is recognized even by men of the world. This is also true of divine knowledge revealed for the Lord's people. "Many are called but few are chosen," and "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand," are not just poetic phrases but are stark statements of the great numbers of those who will evidently fail to gain the spirit of the Truth and fail to gain the necessary Christ-like character resulting from the knowledge of divine things and its proper practice. These scriptures indicate great odds, but there is no other way to gain the desired 144,000 copies of our dear Master.

The basis Of literal study is reading. Some of the following may prove helpful in reading:

1. Read as rapidly as you can--push yourself in reading, your comprehension will be greater. Don't try to think out all the ramifications while reading. leave them until later. If the meaning isn't clear after re-reading a sentence or paragraph, go on, then re-read the article or chapter again. (Bro. Russell recommended the friends read article three time!)
2. Use a ruler under the line being read, or under the second line.
3. Use a pointer to "lead the eye" along smoothly, and thus avoiding the unconscious habit of many to go back to be sure of same word, thus interfering with smooth, progressive movements of the eye along the line.
4. Cover a chapter at a time, or as much as possible, the meaning will be better retained.
5. In studying, our thought should be, "What is the Lord's thought, message, lesson to me in this sentence or paragraph?"

What shall we study, what is safe to study, dependable? This seems to be a question in the hearts of many. The answer would most likely be, "The Bible, God's Word, His message to us!" However, this poses a problem, in that many have tried to comprehend the Bible teachings through diligent study and have not unlocked mysteries. Has not the Christian world had the Bible for centuries? How much have they comprehended of its teachings? Have we not all tried to study the Bible and found it difficult or impossible to understand? Have we anything that unlocks, or opens the Bible to our understanding--which makes the Bible clear, reasonable and harmonious? We know of only one source of such help--the Studies in the Scriptures, The Tabernacle Shadows, and the associated writings of Charles T. Russell, the Laodicean, Seventh or Harvest Messenger. We recommend the Studies in the Scriptures and Tabernacle Shadows for study, because they are organized Bible study. Organized topically, chronologically, dispensationally, and make the Scriptures reasonable and harmonious as nothing else can do!

It has been the policy of the Lord to use human messengers to explain and "update" his people's understanding of his Word throughout the ages. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. 4:11) "He shall give his angels (messengers) a charge concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways." (Psalm 91:11, Manna Nov. 17th) That is, God will raise up some faithful pastors and teachers who will "watch for your souls as they that must give an account." True, there shall arise false teachers, perverting the Word of the Lord and seeking by cunning sophistries to subvert your souls, but if in simplicity of heart God's children require a "Thus saith the Lord" for every element of their faith, and carefully prove all things by the Word, they will be able to distinguish readily the true from the false. And having done so, the Apostle Paul (Heb. 13:17) counsels us to have confidence. The Lord, our Shepherd will care for the true sheep. "Light (Truth is sown for the righteous, and gladness (the joys of the Truth) for the upright in heart." (Psa. 97:11, Manna June 19th). The true children of God love the Truth because they have an affinity for it. . . . When they have found the Truth they recognize its value; they prize it, and meditate upon it. . . . They say, It is just like God: it is the manifestation of his glorious goodness, the reflection of the loving, benevolent, wise and just character. And therefore they love the Truth and the God who gave it: they treasure it up in their hearts and con it over again and again; and as they look into it, and admire all its symmetry and beauty, they strive more and more to conform their own characters to the same lines of beauty and seek to commend it by word and conduct to others, that they also may be blessed by it. (See Manna Dec. 27th).

Someone will say, "When I study God's Word I study the Bible itself, for then I am sure that I have God's Word!" Of course, the Bible is God's Word in a condensed form. It might be likened to a reference manual which is the supreme authority or final resort. (Isa. 8:20) But which of us received the Truth from the Bible without the help of God through God's Message to us through the Laodicean Messenger, Bro. Russell? The Studies in the Scriptures and the Tabernacle Shadows have proved to be the key to the unlocking of the treasures of Truth contained in the Bible, and none of us have gained that understanding directly from the Bible. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel (my people--some of them) doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isa. 1:3) where they got the Truth, and how great a miracle it was to be able to comprehend with all saints the glories of God's Word (the Bible ) by being enlightened as to its meaning by the Laodicean Message. (Reprint page 4044, paragraphs 1 to 4). It can be misleading to quote brief excerpts from an article, so it is strongly recommended that these articles be studied into. We quote that brief part that seems to bear out the point in discussion. So, another quote (Reprint pages 4684 and 4685), "The plan of reading twelve pages of the Studies in the Scriptures each day, tried by so many, results in more

Bible study than any other way that we know of." "The six volumes of Scripture Studies are not intended to supplant the Bible." "If, then, the Lord has provided us with something in our day that other days than those of the Apostles knew nothing about, no matter how good nor how wise they were--for us to ignore the line of teaching which has been thus developed would be, in our judgement, to ignore the Lord's providences. It is for each one to think for himself, however, and to guide his conduct in every way accordingly. If the six volumes of Scripture Studies are practically the Bible topically arranged, with Bible proof-texts given, we might not improperly name the volumes--the Bible in an arranged form. That is to say, they are not merely comments on the Bible, but they are practically the Bible itself, since there is no desire to build any doctrine or thought on any individual preference or on any individual wisdom, but to present the entire matter on the lines of the Word of God. We therefore think it safe to follow this kind of reading, this kind of instruction, this kind of Bible study.

Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible itself (by itself), but we see, also, that if anyone lays the Scripture Studies aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years--if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he has merely read the Scripture Studies with their references, and had not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures. . . "We might remark that quite a number of the friends in the Truth are making it a rule to read twelve pages of the Scripture Studies a day, and that we do not know one who has been following this course and making use of the various means of grace the Lord has provided (Dawn and testimony meetings and Sunday meetings and Pilgrim meetings and the Berean lessons, Manna texts, etc.), who has gone out of the Truth."

"The Word of God is not merely the Bible, but it includes sermons, tracts, books, etc., in proportion as they contain and truly represent the message of God's dear son. This brings the matter still more closely home, and it implies that we are not to be ashamed of any of the doctrines presented in the Bible, nor to be ashamed of any literature which in the Lord's providence has been prepared and which represents his truth and expounds and illustrates it." (Reprint page 3777, par. 5: Songs in the Night, Feb. 20th). If we have become ashamed of the Scripture Studies, it is equivalent to being ashamed of the Lord himself, and he apparently considers it so. (Luke 9:26)

Someone will ask, "How can we continue to have confidence in the Scripture Studies when they contain mistakes?" The question has an apparently logical basis in the

expectation that the Church would be completed shortly after the ending of the Gentile Times in 1914. Let us note carefully what Bro. Russell brought to our attention as the teaching of the Scriptures regarding the date 1914 as the ending of the "Gentile Times and the conclusion (with his reasoning and scriptures bearing upon same) as to what would occur soon thereafter. (Jer. 23:28) For the establishment of the 1914 date, please re-read Chapter IV "The Times of The Gentiles" in Volume II. For the latter see article entitled "LET YOUR MODERATION BE KNOWN", reprint page 5249; and reprint page 5496, paragraphs 3 to 7; and reprint page 5350 paragraphs 2, 9 and 11; and reprint page 5449, paragraphs 3 to 7; and to show that he did say that these were his expectations, see reprint page 4110, paragraphs 1 to 3.

There is a problem of the 40-year harvest, too, in the minds of many. (and used to trouble me also!) The 40-year harvest that was shown by the parallels to end at 1914, but things are going on apparently as before (1914). Please re-study Study VII "The Parallel Dispensations" in Vol. II. We have the vantage point of time to help us appreciate just what has happened to the "Nominal Spiritual Israel" since 1914. They have fallen (from the Heavenly or spiritual realm or level to the earthly, natural or human level--as well as from Divine favor), the harvest having been completed before 1914. If anyone can point to a few who have come out of the nominal systems since then be not confused, for the few can be disregarded. Think how many came out before 1914! "These parallels follow the nominal systems to destruction in both cases, and do not indicate the time of the glorification of the New Creation!" (Foreword Vol. II)

Let us note a few of our Pastor's comments on mistakes in the Harvest Message: "If I knew of errors in the Dawn, I assuredly would contradict and correct them!" (Reprint page 1537, par. 1) "During the 35 years of the harvest time in which we have been proclaiming these truths we have had nothing to discard, nothing to reject as erroneous." (Reprint page 4472 last par.) "The fact is that we are teaching no new doctrine and disowning no old doctrine." (Reprint page 4474, par. 1) "To cease to print and circulate the Scripture Studies because everything suggested therein has not been, apparently, fulfilled, would be like rejecting our Common Version of the Bible because the chronology given in the margin throughout is known to be incorrect to the extent of a number of years." (Reprint page 5496, par. 7; see also reprint page 5950 "Should our views change we will state the change in no uncertain terms." Reprint page 5872, par. 4.

The ending of the Gentile Times in 1914, and also the ending of the forty-year Harvest Period of Nominal Spiritual Israel in 1914, led Bro. Russell, and the church also, to surmise that the Harvest would end, and that the Church would be glorified soon thereafter. This was a conclusion, and not the clear teaching of the Scriptures, and Bro. Russell stated it so, but this appears to be the basis for the feeling by some that the

Messenger was wrong, had made mistakes, and hence was unreliable in the field of chronology. And, if wrong in the field of chronology, must be unreliable in other areas, too. Hence, the Adversary has dealt a master blow to the faith of some of the Lord's people, causing them to doubt the Harvest Message along many lines, but especially as to just where we are on the stream of time. This was very evidently allowed by Divine Wisdom to act as a test, a sifting obstacle to eliminate those who do not study to be sure of what they believe and to find the answers to such questions as, "Why did the Messenger tell us that the Nominal Church Harvest would be only forty years long, when it appears to be still going On?" "The Parallel Dispensations," Chapter VII, of Vol. II has previously been referred to, and it gives the basis (evidently divinely given) for the forty-year length, and it is satisfying to us. "The Harvest Is Not Ended" (Reprint page 5950 Par. 14) explains that, "The parallel belongs to the nominal Jewish system, which went to destruction, and to the nominal Gospel church, which is now going to destruction." (Written in Sept., 1916) At that time it was not so easily seen as today, sixty-four years after. Some will say, "Yes, but we still have the nominal church with us!"--But do we? Only by comparison can we really receive the full impact of what has really happened. Just because they meet in some of the same buildings, still follow some of the old forms and rituals, and call themselves by some of the old names is not sufficient proof that they are the same. "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen (and is no more?--no she still exists) and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." (Reprint page 5050 par. 1 and 2) "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues!" (Rev. 18:2) She must still be existing to be in line for her plagues. "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth." Rev. 6:13. "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." (Rev. 12:4) All these symbols picture the fall of the nominal church from the heavenly realm of spiritual enlightenment and understanding to the earthly, natural realm of darkness pertaining to spiritual discernment--natural-mindedness. "Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations (all the nominal systems) shall serve the king of Babylon (Satan) seventy years." (Jer. 25:10, 11) Thenceforth the combination of the fallen nominal church and the world, by whom she has been taken captive, will be called "Babylon." They have lost The Faith, and have no faith, do not believe the Lord's word, do not teach the Lord's Word, even believe that God is dead! Only by comparing the church nominal at the early part of the Harvest Period with its plight today can we appreciate the great desolation it has sustained, and its great fall. (Jer. 51:42) And so we believe that Bro. Russell was faithful in relaying to us the Lord's message accurately, as the Lord revealed it to him, and clearly indicated what were his conclusions resulting from that Message--and the reasoning leading thereto. The parallels were not mere

conclusions, the result of reasoning alone, but were indicated in the Scriptures, and we believe they are correct.

There is something else that we sometimes hear brethren say, surely unthinking how damaging it can be to confidence in the reliability of the Harvest Message, which is, "His later thought is" "In the later Towers," etc. Bro. Russell acknowledged the statement "the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," (Prov. 4:18) as applying to himself, also. His understanding grew more clear, and he was able to express himself more accurately as the years drew on. This is not to say that he was wrong in earlier expressions. One item was in regard to the calling of the covenant covering the New Creation as the New Covenant, but later recognizing it to be the Grace or Sarah Covenant. His testimony was, however, that it didn't change his thinking, but that a better understanding was passed on to those who might be interested in such. (1916 Foreword Vol. VI; reprint page 4476, par. 9 to 11) In harmony with his better understanding, he did change a word occasionally, particularly when it would comply with Bible usage. A long article, but good, starts on reprint page 4472, and deals with this subject of wording changes. On page 4474 par. 1, he summarizes: "The fact is that we are teaching no new doctrine and disowning no old doctrine. . . we debated for a time whether or not it would be worth while at all to make the very few changes in "Scripture Studies" necessary to bring them up to the light of the moment. . . " Other lists of wording changes: on page 5649 he says, "These are all trivial and do not alter the real sense and lesson. . . " On page 5749, paragraphs 13 and 14-"We know of nothing so