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*"The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light"*

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He became man, in order that He might taste death for everything, and having died was raised and then crowned as a victor, having achieved His object and laid the foundation for creation's *ultimate* restoration. The student will decide for himself which of the two senses to accept; or he may elect to hold both. For both are true.

As these outlines are intended merely to act as guides, little more need be said as to Psalm 8. But the student should exercise great care in reading Hebrews 2 to identify the pronouns properly. Sometimes "him" refers to the first Adam; sometimes "him" refers to the Lord Jesus. From v. 5 to the end of v. 8 the "him" refers to the first Adam; but in v. 9 the "him" (see R.V.) refers to the second, i.e., Christ.

The damage wrought by sin in man can be undone by faith in the Saviour of sinners, but it yet does not affect his body. It will do that only when he is raised from among the dead in a coming day; when Christ comes back again a second time. Creation itself awaits the *material* benefits of the work of the cross; but the sinner may even *now* receive its *spiritual* blessings in salvation from sin.

## HOW TO STUDY AND UNDER- STAND THE BIBLE

A Study of Proverbs 2: 1-5

BY I. M. HALDEMAN, D.D.

### 1. *The Bible must be accepted as the Word of God*

"My son, if thou wilt receive *My* words" (v. 1). Do not try to prove it first and then accept it. Accept it first and allow it to prove itself.

There is no better way to test the truth or falsity of a thing than to give yourself up to it. This was the attitude of the Thessalonian Christians; as it is written: "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13).

If you take the attitude of unbelief or doubt when a friend seeks to impart a matter to you, the friend will refuse to impart it. If you take the attitude of doubt in face of the message this book seeks to give to you, it will not speak to you. No matter how much you read or study; no matter how much intelligence, education or culture you may have, it will be no more to you than so much cold paper and dry ink.

Our Lord went into a certain part of the country, but could not do many mighty works there. And this is the startling reason given why He seemed to fail: "*because of their unbelief*" (Matt. 13:58). The Living and the Written Word are one. The same principle of action governs each—the Bible will not disclose its wonders nor reveal its powers to unbelief nor, even, to doubt.

### 2. *Study of the Bible requires obedience to the Bible*

"Hide My commandments with thee" (v. 1). "Be ye *doers* of the Word, and not *hearers* only, deceiving your own selves." (James 1:22-25).

He who does not obey the Word, who does not translate it into the practice of his daily life, is like the person who eats but whose system does not assimilate the food, builds up no tissue and gives him no strength; so is it with him who is disobedient to the Word, it does not become a part of him, builds up no spiritual tissue, gives no spiritual strength; he is of those who are "ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the Truth".

### 3. *Study of the Bible demands the attitude of listening*

"Incline thine ear unto wisdom" (v. 2).

The word "incline" is "listening", "hearkening". In New Testament language it means to take heed; as it is written: "Take heed therefore *how* ye hear" (Luke 18:8). That is, be careful of the way, the manner, in which you hear. Give full, complete attention; listen for the slightest accent or emphasis.

If you were in the presence of a king and listening to him you would be alert to hear each syllable. How much more when it is the Living God who is speaking to you from the pages of this Book. The Lord God is a great Grammarian. He is a marvellous Constructor of sentences. He puts enormous value upon a preposition or a conjunction; His uses of tenses are again and again an apocalypse in themselves. Take up a verse, study

it, and study it again. Read it over several times before you attempt to study and search out the meaning; let the cadence, the rhythm and the peculiarity of the arrangement, fix your attention. A word sometimes holds in itself a multiplicity of meaning and shades of meaning.

It is worth while to become skilled in the craft of Bible study; keep the eyes open; keep the ears open; be tuned up to the note and power of expectancy. Do this and you will attain by practice and the special grace of God to that most blessed of all attainments: *Spiritual discernment*. Without it the Bible will be only a partial book to you. Incline thine ear. Listen. Hearken.

4. *The whole heart must be given up to the successful study of the Bible*

“Apply thine heart to understanding” (v. 5).

The man who would get anywhere in the world must put his heart into whatever he seeks to do. The half-hearted man is defeated before he starts. This is particularly necessary in any study. The man who would become a good mathematician, a scientist, a linguist, must put his heart into it, have a purpose, a sincere desire to attain, to know.

*Application*—that is the word. And in no study, in no range of effort is application of the whole heart and being so necessary as in the study of the Word of God. The Spirit of God is very sensitive, He is the essence of sensitiveness; the slightest bit of indifferentism on the part of the student, his unwillingness to persist, is met by a shutting out of the responsive action of the Word.

The Word of God lies below the surface. There are statements in which there seem to be no disclosures—all seems impenetrable, a mystery; there are paradoxical statements, statements that at times seem flatly to contradict other statements; nor are these things accidental. The very construction is a test, a test of sincerity, of heart. If the heart is in the study and faith insists, suddenly there will come a flash of light, solution to the problem, answers to the questions.

5. *The Bible can be studied only with Prayer*

“If thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding” (v. 5).

The Apostle Paul prays the spiritual eyes of the Ephesians may be opened to the Truth. He says: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (Eph. 1:18). On that Sunday night after His resurrection our Lord met His disciples in the upper room and it is written: "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45). The Lord opened the understanding of Lydia, the seller of Tyrian purple; "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14).

And *why pray?* It is all plain enough. To be sure, the writing is there; but that writing is as much a revelation today as when first given. Only through the power of the Spirit can you read and understand. The Living God alone can take the veil off the mind, alone reveal the Book till it becomes a revelation. The prayerless man cannot read the Bible intelligently. He cannot divide it. Read, study, know the Bible without prayer?—The thing is impossible. The man who wants to know, who feels his inability, will cry out to God for light. The indifferent, surface reader will go on and pray not and—*find not*.

He who would study the Bible with joy and find it a continual revelation of the mind and will of God must learn to bend his knees in prayer and cry unto the God who gave it to open mind and heart and understanding.

6. *The Bible must be studied with the same inspiration, the same effort and energy with which men seek after silver*

"Thou seekest her (understanding) as silver" (v. 4). Silver in its final term stands for money.

Money is the purchasing medium of power, leisure, self-culture as well as self-gratification. It is the lever by which men lift themselves into position, into the place of authority, the uplook and envy of others. Next to God money has the closest approach to omnipotence. This is the declaration of Scripture; "Money answereth all things" (Eccl. 10:19).

The Word of God is compared to silver. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6). Silver signifies intrinsic value. Holy Scripture is all that silver is when tried out in the fire and freed from dross, it is the pure Word of God and not of man. If silver in the last analysis is money, the Bible in its last analysis

is Truth. The truth about God and man, the truth about the other side of death, the truth about salvation and the things God has prepared for those who love Him. If money brings its compensation for a time and yet, as riches, may take wings to itself and flee away, the Bible brings compensation in blessings no money on earth can buy and blessings that do not take wings nor fade away.

But if you would have the Bible to be to you as the value of silver and more than the purchasing power of money, then you must put into your study all the effort of purpose and all the energy of determination to know and understand it. If you cannot do that; if you cannot make every other book secondary to it; if you cannot exalt it into the place of supremacy in your life, purposing in your heart that you will go according to the demand of its precepts; if you are not willing to spend time upon it and pour out prayer for the understanding of it; if you cannot say with the Psalmist: "Thy Word have I hid in my heart" (Ps. 110:11); if with the Prophet you cannot say: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16), then you are not seeking the wisdom, the truth of the Bible, as men are seeking for silver, and the Bible is not of as much value to you as money is to men. And yet, we are told to buy the Truth and sell it not; pay any price for it, the Truth which this Bible essentially is, and sell it not—do not give it up for anything that earth may offer you.

7. *If you would study and understand the Bible you must search it as men search for hid treasures*

"If thou searchest as for hid treasures" (v. 4).

This proposition is a parallelism of the other and yet has a distinctive thought. The thought is that treasure does not lie on the surface. This is true not only of such treasure as gold and silver, but precious stones, the jewels of earth. To get those treasures men must search for them. They must be willing to dig for them, go down into the depths for them; the deeper they go the richer they find.

It has already been suggested that the truths of God do not all lie on the surface of the Bible. There are truths there that lie open on the page so plain, so distinct that he who runs may

read no matter how swiftly he runs. There are truths there, promises and pictures of things glorious which the simplest mind may behold with delight; but there are truths, very jewels, to which diamonds are common stones, so far under the surface that the passerby, he who reads upon the surface alone, will never see, never know.

Our Lord Jesus Christ reveals this in His admonition to the Jews. To them He said; "Search the Scriptures" (John 5:39). He did not say "read". He said, "search"; and that means, "examine", go down into the depths.

Compare Scripture with Scripture; take up a thought in the New Testament, go back and find its origin in the Old Testament, take up the types and follow them out into the anti-types. Study the relation of this world to the purpose of God and see revealed in the Word how this world was fashioned and made, that it might be the arena for the revelation of the heart of God. The Word reveals the Cross, where the beating of His heart of love can be seen.

Here are seven rules. Follow these rules and there will be two results:

1. "*Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD*" (v. 5).

That is, you will find yourself filled with reverence, with wonder and adoration. Step by step as you follow the Spirit while He seeks to guide you into all truth you will feel a profound awe stealing over you. You will have a revelation of the being of God, the wisdom and the genius of God; with the Apostle you will find yourself saying that this is, indeed, not the word of man, but in very truth the Word of God.

But there will be a second result of this study.

2. "*Thou shalt find the Knowledge of God*" (v. 5).

Not merely knowledge from God, not merely knowledge about God, but, knowing God. This is the knowledge of which our Lord Jesus Christ speaks. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:5).

But apart from this Bible there is no revelation of Jesus Christ. Here you must come to find Christ, listen to Christ and know Christ. Here you must come through Him to know and be conscious of God in your soul. Where there is no Bible there



is no knowledge and no consciousness of God in the soul. This Bible then is a nexus with God. Study it as it should be studied and you will have in your soul the consciousness of the eternal God as revealed in His Son.

## EXEGETICAL STUDY OF COLOSSIANS

### Chap. 4: 2

#### Concluding Exhortations

Having dealt with the relationships in the family and household, Paul now turns to make an appeal for the distinctive "atmosphere" in which alone such relationships can function smoothly and in a manner pleasing to God. A prayerless Christian home is a spiritual tragedy to be avoided indeed!

#### Verse 2

*Tē proseuchē proskartereite, grēgorountes. en autē en eucharistia* (continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving). The present tense of the verb *kartereō* with *pros* has the meaning of persevering attendance (on a person or some duty), see e.g., Acts 10:7—those "who *waited on* (Cornelius) continually." So the believer needs to maintain his or her prayer life with assiduous care; the great Enemy of prayer and the soul is ever ready to weaken us just there. Linked to the exhortation, therefore, is the challenge to "watch therein". It may be freely rendered "stick to your praying and stay awake while praying" (Robertson). It is not merely watch for the answer, but to be alert and eager in praying, not careless or sluggish either in the act or habit of prayer (cf. 1 Thess. 5:6; Eph. 6:18). In this way thanksgiving will always be an accompaniment of prayer. "Ceaseless prayer combined with ceaseless praise was the atmosphere of Paul's spiritual life" (Beet).

#### Verse 3

*proseuchomenoi hama kai peri hēmōn, hina ho theos anoixē hēmin thuran tou logou.* (Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door for the word). Cf. Rom. 15:30;