

# Understanding

G. Davison

Sept/Oct 1975

In writing to Timothy, his "dearly beloved son," the apostle Paul urged him to consider what he was saying, assured that if he did so the Lord would give him understanding in all things (2 Timothy 2: 7). One wonders how much real spiritual exercise is expressed in looking out some of these divine mysteries in these rather lukewarm days! We are more and more in need of real Bible study if the precious truths which were recovered for us at such cost by men raised up so specially of God are to be valued by us. With this in mind, I venture to call the attention of Bible students to two synonyms which have been of great help, in the hope that any who care to look them up may be helped also.

The first is in John 6, that wonderful chapter which sets the Lord before us as bread in a fourfold way — "true bread," v. 32; "the bread of God," v. 33; "the bread of life," v. 35; "living bread," v. 51. Our Lord spoke of Himself thus as One who could be appropriated in order that His own might obtain and be sustained in spiritual life in their souls. Note this second suggestion — "*sustain*" as well as obtain.

With this in view, two words are used by the Lord when He speaks of "eat" and "eating." The first (vv. 50, 51, 52, 53, 58) suggests "appropriation" — when we first gladly turned to Him in order to obtain salvation and eternal life. But our Lord uses another word — in vv. 54, 56, 57, 58, a word which rather carries the thought of "assimilation." Obviously we must "appropriate" before we can "assimilate," but do we study these precious truths with a *view to assimilation*? We must note also that while our Lord had spoken much of His flesh and blood, His death as a door to us to enter into life, He changes in v. 57 from these elements to "ME."

"The aorist, 'has eaten,' it is the thing done; where it is *trogo*, I am an eater of Christ, I go on eating. I feed on Him. It is first feeding on His death, and then feeding on *Him* continually" (J.N.D.). May we seek the help of the Spirit to "appropriate" these truths, and then they will become "assimilated" into our new moral beings. Only thus can we hope to enjoy in all its fulness the blessing of eternal life.

The other word we have in view is "know." It has been pointed out that two Greek words are translated "know," each having a different objective in view. These two words are — *gnosis* — objective knowledge, and — *eido* — subjective knowledge. A lengthy footnote explaining these two words is found in the New Translation (J.N.D.) of 1 Corinthians 8. We must have these truths "objectively" presented to us before we can enjoy them "subjectively" in our hearts. It becomes a test as to how much we do really *possess* the spiritual ministry we have been privileged to listen to. The note in 1 Corinthians 8 says, "Objective knowledge may pass into conscious knowledge, but not vice versa." Here again, the two thoughts of "appropriation" and "assimilation" seem to be in view. While we may thank the Lord for every additional thought received, we ever carry about in our hearts truths which we never forget — we know at all times and in all places that our sins are all forgiven; we know we have passed from death unto life, and many more such blessings are our constant joy; yet, so long as we are in this world and privileged to hear the ministry of God's word, we may have many more objective truths presented to us which we would seek grace in the power of the Holy Spirit to assimilate. Thus may we be more able to represent our Lord and to accomplish the will of God in our service for Him.