First and Second Timothy

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Preface

An Exposition of the Two Epistles to Timothy

With a Translation of an Amended Text. Third Edition.

Editor’s Note to the Third Edition.

During the years; 1884-7, Mr. Kelly wrote his Notes on the two Epistles to Timothy, which appeared serially under his editorship in The Bible Treasury (Vols. 15 and 16). In July 1889 these Notes were published in single volume form as an Exposition of these Epistles. In 1913 a second edition revised followed in two volumes, now succeeded by the present issue in a single volume. No change in the substance of the Exposition has been made, but slight modifications of phraseology in the expositor’s remarks have occasionally been introduced by the editor for the help of the reader. Also, care has been taken to verify the numerous references in the text and in the footnotes.

A brief summary of the two Epistles, also by W. K., is added1 as a further aid in studying Paul’s final charges to Timothy in view of his own imminent decease, and of the rapid perversion and widespread abandonment of the truth of God by the Christian profession. The present need of this particular instruction is evident. What was but a trickle in the first century is a raging devastating flood in the twentieth. In the solemn warnings and authoritative counsel of the apostle, inspired of God, as they emphatically are, the Holy Spirit has provided an impregnable defence against that roaring, threatening flood. Let us walk around our Zion and count her towers

and mark well her bulwarks; so may we stand fast in the evil day of apostasy.

W. J. Hocking March 1948

1 See pages 335-348. [file 2timothy.doc]

Preface

Though of late years commentaries on the New Testament in general, and some of a more partial nature yet including the Pastoral Epistles have not been wanting, there seems room for further help. Especially is it desired by such as seek to understand these Epistles each as a whole, next as compared one with another, and lastly as forming a portion of the scriptures still more comprehensively.

The inspired word, though in Hellenistic Greek, has nothing to fear from the minutest research. The slightest change of construction is instructive; so is the choice of case or number, of comparison or collocation, still more of tense or mood, where more than one might have been employed. The particles and prepositions are never loosely used, any more than the article, but always for the most accurate conveyance of truth rather than for mere rhetoric as often is the case in classical writings. Here it is sought to transfuse the apostolic expression as exactly as one could, even at the risk of shocking ears accustomed to the beautiful smoothness of the Authorized Version, and notwithstanding the fact that there is now a Revised Version open to almost everybody who can read English, the result of united labours on the part of many respected names, few of whom may be themselves quite satisfied, as the mass of intelligent students are less so.

My hope is by grace to contribute somewhat to the better understanding and enjoyment of this part of the divine word. But personal dependence on God is indispensable for spiritual profit, even for souls at rest in His love through faith in Christ and His work. If there is plain (I trust neither unkind nor arrogant) speaking, do we not owe this one to another, in truth which concerns the moral glory of God, to say nothing of the effect on man? May His Spirit deign to use this little work to magnify the Lord!

W. Kelly, London, July 1889

Introduction to 1 Timothy

The first Epistle of Paul to Timothy.

Of the so-called Pastoral Epistles the First to Timothy now claims our attention. It is a solemn charge of the apostle to his young fellow-servant in that place of trust which had been assigned him Timothy was not an elder, but was set to guard the doctrine, order, and conduct of the elders, as well as of the saints in general. And so distinct is his position from all the modern as-well-as-possible arrangements of Christendom, that one wonders how an Episcopalian, or a Presbyterian, or a Congregationalist, can venture to appeal to it. And yet, in their opposing systems, they all do cite it with similar confidence, but this (is it hard to say?) proportioned to their failure in intelligence to see its bearing. Men are apt to be more arrogant where they have least reason.

For what analogy can honestly be traced between Timothy's position and that of a diocesan bishop, not to speak of a spiritual baron with claim to control hundreds of clergy in a given area? Development is not faith, but the avenue to corruption; and this becomes the ruin of that which bears the name of the Lord. Again, Presbyterianism is herein more distant than Episcopacy from the church in apostolic times, because it denies and dispenses with a superior authority to ordain, losing sight of the evident truth that power comes from above. Thus the Lord Who chose the apostles invested them with title, themselves or by delegates where fit or when requisite, to choose elders for the saints, and to appoint deacons chosen by the saints. Never in those days was such a thought as a mere elder ordaining elders. More

remote still from the divine idea and primitive practice is the congregational plan of the people choosing their own religious official. All alike depart from the truth in setting aside, not only the direct and constant supply of gifts from the Lord as distinct from local charges (if these were ever so duly appointed, whereas it is wrongly done as we have seen), but the actual presence and free action of the Holy Spirit in the assembly. This they agree to count a by-gone state of miraculous power, instead of owning His being with us for ever and the consequent abiding responsibility of the Christian body as long as it goes on here below.

Timothy's charge was in its measure that of an apostolic delegate, besides doing the work of an evangelist or discharging ordinary ministerial functions. He was not only to teach, but also to enjoin others not to teach strange doctrines. This is a frontispiece so indelibly graven in the Epistle that the difficulty is in understanding how it could be overlooked, if one did not know the eagerness with which men neglect plain truth and catch at appearances to justify themselves in that strange anomaly, unknown to God's word, the minister of a church. Scripture speaks often and seriously of ministry; and we, as believers, should honour gift for the Giver's sake, value it in itself for its exercise of love, and hail it as a priceless blessing for souls. But beyond doubt a minister of Christ and of the church is alone according to its spirit and letter; and his responsibility is immediate to the Lord Jesus the Head, though no one ought to question his liability to just scriptural discipline (like other members of His body) for walk or doctrine.

One innovation, come in, drew another dark shadow with it, most offensive to a rightly taught spiritual mind,

namely, that a certain circle of the assembly is his flock, and that he is their minister. Man's thoughts always fall short of God's word, and his will recklessly cuts through the most sacred obligations to his own loss and to the Saviour's dishonour. For the gifts are distributed in the one body, and the elders or overseers are set in the flock or church of God, not each church having its own minister and each minister his own church: an arrangement painfully calculated to foster the jealousy of the minister and the avarice of the flock. It may have been as ancient as you will; what matter if it were of the second or even the first age, if it were not of the Lord through His apostles in His word?

Ministry, like the church, is a divine institution and therefore must not alter from its original. We may not have all the church once had; but therefore should we reverently cherish all that remains, which we may be assured is all that best suits our present condition and the Lord's glory, Who regulates all in wisdom and love. If the church is morally a ruin (and who that knows what it was would deny the sin and shame of its present states) Christ abides ever faithful and true, with all the resources of love, in the seat of power and glory. He will never abdicate, nor even relax, His functions while we need Him. People forget or never knew that He only became Head of the church since He sat down at God's right hand in heaven; and since then no change has ever passed over Him, nor can do so while the work of gathering the church is in hand.

But it became very and sadly different with the church, as His word warned that this was to be. For departure from the faith was to set in, as grievous wolves would also, not sparing the flock; the mystery of lawlessness

was to work; men were to have the form of piety denying the power thereof; evil men and impostors would wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Hence we ought to be not at all surprised if even good men be drawn away by their dissimulation, as Barnabas was and even Peter in a measure in the very earliest days. (Gal. 2:11-13).

And these Pastoral Epistles let us into the confidential communications that passed between the wise masterbuilder and his associates. For government supposes the evils and disorders which need to be checked or exposed, and shows us, not what the assembly has to do in given circumstances, but the duty of a man of God like Timothy or Titus. It does not follow that these Epistles were at once the common property of all saints. They were addressed to individuals in a special place, and may only have been copied and circulated later on when the difficult and delicate matters which drew them forth had passed away The truth and exhortations would always abide, even if no one could claim the peculiar place to which prophecy designated Timothy, as it had Paul and Barnabas in their place before him (Acts 13:2).

1 Timothy 1

“Paul, apostle of Christ2 Jesus according to command3 of God our Saviour and Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy, genuine child in faith: grace, mercy, peace from4 God [the] Father and Christ Jesus our Lord” (vers. 1, 2).

The character of the Epistle accounts for the opening expression. Paul here is not a “called” apostle, as to the Romans; nor this “by the will of God” as in 1 Cor.; nor as in the varying forms of his other letters; but he is apostle “according to command of God.” The holy propriety of the language is plain when we remember that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write in words taught of Him. That the Epistle was written for others rather than for Timothy is a remark unworthy of a Reformer; Calvin is sometimes too bold.

It is important to heed and understand the way in which God is here presented, as in the Epistle to Titus — “God our Saviour,” a blessed title of His relation to all mankind. Without this, church government ever tends to be dry and narrow. Timothy was to regard God thus that his heart might be kept large and fresh, notwithstanding the details of care for that assembly in general, or for individuals whatever their position around him. The coming, and above all the cross, of Christ has revealed God in a love that rises above the sins of rebellious and lost man, as decidedly as above the trammels and ordinances of Judaism. Till the people under the law had manifestly and totally failed, the way was not clear for the full revelation of His grace toward man as such. The middle wall of partition stood; the veil was not yet rent.

The death of Christ not only broke the last tie with the Jews but opened the door of faith publicly to Gentiles no less than Israel. There is no difference, as in their ruin, so in His grace and redemption for sinners that believe on Him. The law by which God governed Israel tended to give Him the semblance of a national god who cared only for the chosen people. The gospel of His grace makes plain that, after the grand moral experiment for man to learn what he is, God is now displaying Christ for what He is Himself; and He is God our Saviour.

It was good for Timothy as it is good for us to weigh this blessed character of God. It might have seemed to the superficial spirit of man more consistent to have employed here an ecclesiastical title, as rule in that sphere was to occupy the Epistle so fully; but it is not so; and God is as good as He is wise. He, Whose authority works by desired and chosen instruments, would have His character to the world shown as Saviour. Not of course that all men are saved, but that believers are, and that all are now called to believe on the Lord Jesus and thus to be saved.

Thus, if there be command flowing from divine authority (and what is there of good without it? See John 12:50; John 14:31), there is also His character of love toward man which cows from the depths of divine grace, sovereign and full, and hence issues in a call of glad tidings to every creature on earth. It is the activity of His nature, now righteously able to work far and wide in everlasting salvation, whatever His special design for those who are saved; it is authority which insists on ways consistent with His word and nature, resenting a pretension to superior holiness, which, despising God’s order, becomes a prey to Satan.

But salvation known even now and here is not all. We have Him by Whom it came as “our hope,” even Christ Jesus, Who will present us in the glory of God commensurately with His salvation. Oh, how that blessed hope has been lowered! (ver. 1).

In presence of such things (and now there are far worse before us) Timothy had need of “mercy” as well as of “grace” and “peace.” And the apostle greets him with prayer accordingly (ver. 2).

“Even as when setting out for Macedonia, I besought thee to remain in Ephesus that thou mightest charge some not to be strange teachers, nor to pay heed to fables and endless genealogies, the which (αἵτινες) furnish questionings rather than God’s dispensation5 that is in faith” (vers. 3, 4). To teach different things from the word of God is to be a strange teacher. What hypotheses are to the man of science, speculations are to the teacher: snares to divert us from the divine deposit of revealed truth. True science bows to facts and seeks to discover their general principles or associations, which it calls laws. Similarly does the believer and the teacher. To go beyond the written word is to stray and mislead.

But when men begin to be teachers of strange doctrine, they ever venture into the region of the fabulous and give heed to myths and interminable genealogies. So did the love of the marvellous work early among Christians. Imagination is never faith, which, as it delights in knowing God and His will, so trusts in nothing but His word, however thankful for such as minister it. Imagination is the natural resource for those who know not the truth: the truth in Christ is the only perfect

preservative from it. We are not distinctly told whether these faults here warned against had a Gentile or a Jewish root: if like those denounced in the Epistle to Titus, they were Jewish. From either side they issued in the Gnostic reveries and wickedness of a later day, which were especially opposed to the Old Testament, whereas these apparently made much though wrong use of it.

The “endless genealogies” were a vain effort to solve without Christ what is otherwise insoluble, and thus be lost in wandering mazes of the mind, apart from conscience the one inlet by grace into all truth. For conscience alone gives God His place and us our own effectually before Him. Without conscience the heart may be attracted, but can never be trusted till it find its rest in God’s love and truth, the very reverse of a vain confidence in self. Then with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. And the known grace which forgives every sin takes away all guile from the spirit: for there is no more to conceal, all being judged and gone. One can then pray and praise: one desires teaching and guidance, and can call on others for and in fellowship of joy in the Lord. How dismal the descent to human speculations with its shadowy myths, and endless genealogies! These are occupation for the restless mind which knows not the truth and which alas! now turns from it to these husks for swine.

The apostle does not finish his sentence. Timothy would understand without question; so ought we. But he lets us know his judgment of speculation as being productive of barren questionings for the mind. God’s dispensation

is, on the contrary, in faith. It is faith that He uses both to dispense and to receive.

The notion that in verse 5 “commandment” has anything to do with the law has wrought widely and disastrously, not merely so as to lose the true scope of what the apostle urges on Timothy, but alas! to insinuate the direct reverse of the truth. If the word had meant “command” or “injunction” as in verse 1, there would not have been one whit more of real ground for dragging in the law: only those carried away by sound would have thought of it. For “command” there even is in relation with God, not as Judge according to law, but as our Saviour in mercy. It is accordingly well to adhere to the strict expression in verse 5, as it stands related to verses 3 and 18, which it would be absurd to connect with the law. It is rather in contrast, as an evangelical charge on which the apostle insists with his wonted force, and incisive keenness, and antithetical-manner, which go for nothing where the ordinary confusion prevails. For thereby the blessing here and truly bound up with the gospel is attributed to the law. The apostle is really explaining, in connection with his charge to Timothy, how God’s dispensation that is in faith acts.

*“Now the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned; which things some, having missed, turned aside unto vain talk, desiring to be law-teachers, not understanding either what they say, or whereof they affirm” (vers. 5-7).

* There is not the least need of the parenthesis (here to ver. 17 inclusively) marked by Griesbach, Scholz, Knapp, Lachmann, et al.

The apostle is setting the face of Timothy against those who would put the Christian under law. He does not allow their motives to be good in guarding souls from evil ways, nor does he fear their outcries against his teaching as antinomian. He maintains that the end of the charge he is giving is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and unfeigned faith. These are the effects of the gospel brought home to the believers; of which things the law is essentially incapable. It may convict of the enmity and impurity of the heart; it may prove that the conscience is evil; and it is not of faith in any way, as we are told expressly in Gal. 3:12. The law works out wrath, not grace, and thus becomes death, not life; not because it is not good and holy, but because man is evil, ungodly, and powerless. It is by faith that the heart is purified (Acts 15:9) in virtue of obeying the truth unto unfeigned brotherly kindness that we may love one another out of a pure heart fervently (1 Peter 1:22); and so it is through the word of God; but it is the word that is evangelized, not the law but the gospel contrasted with it.

Those whom the apostle characterizes were Judaizing adversaries; and he tells them plainly that they had missed their aim. Could they really pretend to a pure heart, or a good conscience, or unfeigned faith? They were manifesting not love but vain talk. Through Christ the feeblest Christian walks in truth and love. Being loved perfectly we love: the heart is purged according to the efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice, as the conscience is made good by it; and faith, knowing that all the evil and ruin are fully met in Christ’s death and resurrection, now rests at ease without feigning anything, because all good is truly given of God and secured in His Son.

But, cries a would-be law-teacher, does not Rom. 13:10 (“love is the fulfilling of the law”), identify the “charge” here with the “law” after all? The very reverse is proved by it: for the Christian, in the new nature which characterizes him now, does love, not as requirement under law, but as the outflow of his life in Christ. Love worketh no ill to one’s neighbour; love therefore is the fulfilment or full complement of law, but this result is by being under grace, and not law. The interpretation of too many, ancients and moderns, is the very principle here denounced. Their ignorance, according to the apostle, is complete. They understand neither what they say nor the question on which they thus dogmatize. At the same time grace, while it detects and rejects the misuse of law to puff man as he is and obscure the intervention of divine mercy in Christ, vindicates its true place as a matter of spiritual knowledge of which all Christians are conscious.

“Now we know that the law [is] good if one use it lawfully, knowing this that law is not laid down for a righteous person, but for lawless and insubordinate, for ungodly and sinful, for unholy and profane, for smiters of fathers and smiters of mothers, for murderers, fornicators, sodomites, men-stealers, liars, perjurers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine (teaching), according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I was entrusted” (vers. 8-11).

The fables of human imagination were evil and incapable of any profitable use. Truth is the answer to the wants of a troubled heart and the questionings of an exercised conscience; but endless genealogies were trash and could only give rise to questions.

But there was another and more subtle danger — man's misuse of God's law, which has misled more widely and permanently, and alas! godly souls, too often. But this is not God's dispensation which is in faith, any more than it is the end of the charge to Timothy. Yet the law is good, if one uses it lawfully. Have the misusers the inward consciousness that law is not made for a righteous man but for lawless and unruly, and for other evil-doers? Far different was their thought. Herein, then as now, men betray their inability to discern God's revealed mind. Law does not contemplate the good but the bad. Law is enacted to detect, convict, and punish. Law never made a "just man," still less "the good" man, if one may cite the distinction in Rom. 5:7. It is a sharp weapon to wound and kill transgressors; it never was designed to form motives of integrity or a walk of true righteousness. Its excellence lies in its unsparingness of evil; and man is evil, and this by nature. Grace, not law, saves sinners. Not law but grace teaches us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-13).

Here theology revolts from the truth, and even good men ignore the source of all that made them what they are through the redemption that is in Christ and the faith that casts them thus on God. It matters not that the apostle elsewhere declares that by law is knowledge of sin, that it works wrath, that it is the power of sin, that it is a ministration of death and condemnation, that as many as are of its works are under the curse, that it was added for the sake of transgressions. They will have it

that the law was made for the righteous as a rule of life, though it is the plain unavoidable inference from the words before us that this is precisely what the apostle explicitly denies of all law. It is Christ Who above all acts by faith on the believer's soul. Hence he needs the word of God as a whole throughout his life, and the Spirit helps him to apply it in practical detail. Such is the Christian's secret of true morality; which in divine wisdom binds the heart up with the Saviour habitually, and makes the written word to be matter for constant pondering, for comfort and conscientious application in the Spirit, but all in the sense of the true grace of God in which we stand and are exhorted to stand. For such exceeding privileges are meant to deepen our dependence on God and our confidence in His love day by day.

Entirely is it not only admitted but insisted on in scripture that the Christian is bound to do the will of God at all cost, and is never free to gratify the flesh. He is sanctified unto the obedience of Jesus Christ no less than to the sprinkling of His blood (1 Peter 1:2). Self-pleasing is Satan's service. But the law is not the measure of God's will for the Christian. It was for Israel; but we, even if by nature Israelites, were made dead to it through the body of Christ, that we should belong to Another — to Him that was raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God (Rom. 7:4). This is now the method of divinely-wrought freedom from the law, only to obey God with a nearness, fulness, and absolute devotedness unknown to a Jew.

Can anything be less satisfactory, yea more nugatory, than the ordinary assertion of the divines that Paul still leaves it open, so far as the scripture speaks, for the law

to be the directory of Christians, and that he simply means to exclude it from justifying the soul? Now it is undeniable that in Rom. vi. and vii. he is treating of Christian walk, not of believing in order to justification; and he there lays down that we are not under law but under grace, and this as a principle of dealing on God's part, the expression of which is therefore put anarthrously, so as to go beyond "the" law, though fully including it. It is just the same here; so that Dean Alford errs in thinking that verse 9 does not go farther than verse 8 where the article appears. It is not "the" nor "a," but "law" as such; and the οὐ negatives any such thing as law being enacted for a righteous person. Against the fruit of the Spirit, as the same blessed apostle whites in Gal. 5:23, there is no law. The general form is intended in all cases with or without prepositions, where the article is not. Winer has misled people by his list of words (Pt. iii. § 19), which really fall under rule. Bishop Middleton was nearer the truth, though he mistakenly made prepositions exceptional.

It is a mere assumption, not only groundless but anti-scriptural, that law is made for a righteous man as well as a sinful, so that "the apostles meaning doubtless (!) is that it was given, not for the purpose of justifying the most righteous man that ever lived, but for restraining the wicked by its threatenings and punishments" (Macknight's Apostolical Epp. 512. Tegg, 1835). This is to subvert, not to expound, scripture. Nor is Whitby in the least better, who takes it as "to condemn the righteous." Justification and condemnation are out of the question here, where the apostle speaks of the object contemplated in the enactment of law, and declares it to be, not for righteous, but for sinners.

And is it not painfully instructive to see how an error once let in works to ungodliness? For those who so strenuously contend against the uniform doctrine of the New Testament, and place the Christian under law as his rule of life, contend that, if he offend as we all do too often, he is not under its curse! Is this to establish the law, or to annul it? If Christ died and bore its curse, and we too died with Him and now are no longer under law but under grace, the truth is kept intact, the authority of law is maintained, and yet we who believe have full deliverance. If we were really under law for walk, we ought to be cursed, or you destroy its authority; if we are not under it, the true provision for one's sin is Christ's advocacy with the Father, which brings us to repentance by the washing of water with the word.

Law then is established for lawless and unruly, ungodly and sinners, unholy and profane, beaters of fathers and beaters of mothers. Such are the pairs in this dark list of human depravity: first, the inner spring of self-will and its more open insubjection; next, irreverence God-ward, end evil man-ward; thirdly, impiety end positive profanity; fourthly, insolent violence towards parents, without going so far as killing. Compare Ex. 21:15. For this last extreme introduces the general group, wherein one follows after another — murderers, fornicators, sodomites, men-stealers (or kidnappers), liars, perjurers, and if anything else is opposed to the sound doctrine.

Truly the law is a ministry of condemnation: what then can minister life, righteousness, and the Spirit? The gospel of salvation based on Christ and His work, which faith only receives; "and the law is not of faith" as we repeat from scripture. Blessing is inseparable from Christ; and it is of faith that it might be according to

grace. They then that are of faith, whose principle is faith, are sons of Abraham and blessed with the faithful Abraham. Those that speak of law may speak out of the abundance of their heart, as they certainly do out of want of faith, and never show the good works for which they call, but prove the wretchedness of slighting Christ. For the Spirit is sent to glorify Christ, and will never decorate nor deceive self by vain hopes of amelioration.

But the apostle is careful to add the concluding clause, “according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I was entrusted” (ver. 11). The glad tidings may not assert man’s condemnation, which is assumed in the strongest way. It is occupied with good for the worst of sinners, for it is the message of grace from the God Who was glorified in the Son of man and Who has now glorified Him in Himself, before the kingdom comes wherein He will display His power and glory to every eye. The gospel only went out to all the creation under heaven after the proved guilt and irremediable ruin of all mankind; so that, as God’s righteousness is therein revealed from faith unto faith, therewith is revealed, not such temporal judgment as we see under law, but God’s wrath from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men that hold the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

For it is the gospel of God’s glory, not “the glorious gospel,” as the Geneva Version led the way unhappily for the Authorized, but, as Wiclif, Tyndale, and all others, “the gospel of the glory”. Such is the hope in which we rejoice, and such the standard by which He would have us measure and reject all evil; a standard therefore which suffers no compromise in view of man’s hardness of heart, as the law did, but is absolutely intolerant of all

that is antagonistic to God's nature and presence on high. And God is now revealed as "the blessed God," because He speaks to us, not in Sinai's fire and darkness and tempest and words yet more awful, but in the fulness of grace and truth of Christ Who declared Him on earth and is now set down in the heavenly places, where we who believe are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Him. The atonement once accomplished and the Saviour gone up into glory, God was "happy" in acting freely in love to the lost; for grace could then reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 5:21).

Such is the gospel which the apostle (here and in Titus 1:3) says was entrusted to him; as in Gal. 2:7 he says it was and is, the abiding state, and not the fact only which here sufficed. The Authorized Version alone of English versions is accurate in this.

The gospel with which the apostle was entrusted gives occasion for the words that follow down to the end of verse 17. It is singular that this is one of the passages on which a distinguished rationalist rested to impugn the genuineness of the Epistle; whereas in fact his remark goes to prove the blindness of unbelief. It attests the incapacity of the doubting school in general (Schleiermacher being one of their ablest minds, and perhaps the least objectionable in his ordinary tone) to seize the admirable links, and not least such as do not lie on the surface but reveal themselves to those that search the word as God's word and feel the truth as well as understand it. The apostle had given emphatic expression to himself as entrusted with the glad tidings of the glory. Light from Christ's glory had, even literally, shone on, and into the heart of, Saul of Tarsus. Hence it

is not doctrine here, but an outburst of thanksgivings, which breaks forth and links together his own case, as the readiest and deepest and most conspicuous object to be found of sovereign grace, with the message he was called to deliver.

Perhaps it was the wish to connect these verses with the foregoing, from lack of the spiritual insight to discern their intimate connection without any outward mark, which added the copulative (“And”) of the common text (ver. 12). The most ancient copies and versions do not countenance it. Nor is it needful to begin a doxology, which could not be repressed from a heart over-flowing at the recollection, and in the present enjoyment, of the Saviour’s grace.

6“I thank him that strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that he counted me faithful, appointing me unto ministry, 7though I was a blasphemer and persecutor and doer of outrage. But I had mercy shown me because I did [it] ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love that is in Christ Jesus. Faithful [is] the word and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. But for this cause mercy was shown me that in me, [as] chief, Christ might display the whole long-suffering for an outline-sketch of those that should believe on Him unto life eternal. Now to the King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible, only8 God, be honour and glory unto the ages of ages. Amen” (vers. 12-17).

The heart of Paul glows in thanksgiving to our Lord for the inward power conferred on him. Not only was he called to be a saint but appointed to service, for. that

Christ deemed him faithful. It was immeasurably enhanced by another consideration never to be forgotten, — what he was when thus called: he had been before this a blasphemer, a persecutor and an insulter, which all persecutors might not be. It was therefore not merely high colouring, but the genuine feeling of the soul that he was foremost of sinners: and no man who ever lived was more competent to form an adequate judgment of sin. He knew what sinners were, in as large an experience as any man could grasp. Yet did our Lord call him, who, as he says himself, even compelled the saints to blaspheme, and who was exceedingly furious in persecuting them outside their own land, even breathing out threatenings and slaughter in his hatred of the name of Jesus; which, believed in, gave him power to go forth and persevere in an endurance beyond what this world has ever seen, in not labours only, but in sufferings for Christ. The Lord did indeed account him faithful, and this from the day of his conversion, an elect vessel (as He said) to bear His name before both Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel, in that astonishing path of trial for His name, of which the apostle says nothing, except only when it was as it were wrung out in his “folly” as he calls it, by the bad state and real folly of the worldly-wise Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:16 et seq.).

For the love of Christ proved its own strength in appointing to His service, not merely one apostle whose confidence in his own affection for Christ met with a speedy and most overwhelming humiliation that so he might by grace be a strengthener of his brethren and a bold preacher of the glad tidings assured even to those who denied the Holy and Righteous One, but also another arrested in the mid-career of unmitigated

hatred of His name and haughty contempt of His grace, whom He was calling to the highest and largest conceivable place of service, minister of the assembly His body, and minister of the gospel proclaimed in all the creation that is under heaven (Col: 1:23-25). Who but “Christ Jesus our Lord” would have felt, thought, acted thus toward either Peter or Paul? Such a Saviour and Lord was He to both; and thus were they each fitted to give the best effect to the testimony of His grace without the smallest palliation of their sins respectively.

“But,” says the one before us, “I had mercy shown me because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” Assuredly there was no lack of sincerity: not a doubt clouded his conscience. He thought he ought to do much against the name of the Nazarene, armed as he was with the authority and commission of the chief priests, confident of the strictest Pharisaic orthodoxy as well as scrupulous practice, and satisfied of an unbroken succession in the religion of the true God from its enactment at Sinai, not to say from the garden of Eden.

Still the power and glory which struck all down as far as concerned Saul in his person, and revealed to his soul, in a light beyond the sun at noonday, that the crucified but glorified Jesus was the Jehovah God of Israel, changed all in an instant, and without a question-proved all he had loved and venerated to be in hopeless enmity against God. Grace, truth, glory — all-centred in Him, Who in convicting him of the worst sins, saved him to be His servant-witness, while taking him out from among the people and the Gentiles, to whom He thenceforward sent him on the lifelong errand of His own matchless mercy.

No doubt he was ignorant, and unbelief was the root of it; but this is a different state from that of those who, after receiving the knowledge of the truth, sin wilfully or fall away to religious forms in preference to Christ and the Spirit's testimony to His work. The heavenly Christ was Jesus Whom he had been persecuting in His members. It was all over with himself, as well as with his religion: Christ was all to him, and Christ he owns in all who loved Him, Whose name he had till that moment anathematized. It was his ever after to live and die for Him Who died for all that they who lived should no longer live to themselves but to Him Who for them died and rose again. It was sinful unbelieving ignorance. "But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love that is in Christ Jesus", the contrast of unbelief and hatred when he knew only the law. And so with the deepest feeling he can commend to others his own compressed summary of the gospel: "Faithful is the word and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; but he adds, "of whom I am chief."

In vain do men seek to limit either "sinners" on the one hand, or "chief" on the other. The apostle knew the truth incomparably better than they, be they Fathers of old, or modern Germans, Catholics, or Protestants. His very aim is to sweep away all comparison, to overturn all self-righteousness, and to meet all despair, laying man in the dust and exalting only the Saviour Who abased Himself and saves to the last degree those that disobey not "the heavenly vision."

Nor was it only a question of mercy in saving the foremost of sinners, there was also a purpose of grace toward others. "But for this cause mercy was shown me

that in me, as chief, Jesus Christ might display the whole long-suffering for an outline-sketch of those that should believe on Him unto life eternal." It is impossible to exceed the energy of the expression. Nor need we wonder, if his case was to be a standing pattern or delineation of divine love rising above the most active hostility, of divine long-suffering exhausting the most varied and persistent antagonism, whether in Jews or in Gentiles at large; for who had in either exceeded Saul of Tarsus? How will not the Lord use the history of his conversion to win the hardened Jew by-and-by! How does He not turn it to the account of any wretched sinner now! Profoundly does the apostle delight in that grace which can thus make the pride and wrath of man praise Him, both at present and in the future day, through the faith of our Lord Jesus, without Whom all must have been only ruin and wretchedness, closed by everlasting judgment. "Now to the King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible, only God, [be] honour and glory unto the ages of ages. Amen."

As those that believe on Christ unto life eternal are not a mere people under earthly government to enjoy and attest the blessings of a just rule and a divine ruler, so God is here owned and praised as King of the ages in His supremacy above all passing conditions and circumstances of the creature here below. But He is also confessed as "incorruptible" in face of that which has shamelessly departed from Him in heaven above and on the earth beneath, turning even His dealings and revelations into self-aggrandizement or self-indulgence to His dishonour; as "invisible," where unseen powers have availed themselves of what is seen to play into the idolatry of the fallen heart and evil conscience; as "only"

or “alone,” where the world’s wisdom freely gave its worship, begrudged to the alone true God, to created objects on high and around and below which, excited its admiration, hopes, and fears, and so was led on by Satan to deify him and his hosts under names which consecrated every lust and passion to man’s own ever-increasing degradation. “To Him that is King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible, only God, be honour and glory,” not now merely as the basest-rivals may have had, but, “to the ages of the ages” — time without end, “Amen.” The Authorized Version is here inaccurate; and so is any commentator that carps at Bp. Middleton’s just and necessary correction. The article really goes with Θεύς, “God,” binding together all between as descriptive. If ἀφθαρτῳ κ.τ.λ. were in immediate concord with τῳ βατιλέι they could not be anarthrous.

The “charge” here clearly connects itself with verses 3 and 5, which refer to the same thing, not to verse 15 in particular however momentous, the practical purpose follows to the end of the chapter. The man of God must be prepared to war the good warfare.

“This charge I commit to thee, child Timothy, according to the prophecies on thee going before, that by them thou mightest war the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust away made shipwreck concerning the faith; of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may be taught not to blaspheme” (vers. 18-20).

As the Holy Spirit said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them (probably through one of the prophets at Antioch, Acts 13:2), so it appears that Timothy had prophecies leading the way to

his work. Indeed in the case of the apostle the Lord had revealed his mission from his conversion. That the prophecies were uttered over Timothy at his ordination is absolute assumption. It was certainly not a part of the service whence the first and greatest of those sent to the Gentiles went forth recommended to the grace of God by the laying on of their brothers' hands. The prophecy preceded and led to that separation for gospel work; and so analogy, if not express intimation here and in chapter 4:14, compared with 2 Tim. 1:6, might give us to infer for Timothy.

It is no mere battle but a campaign that the apostle puts before his "child" and fellow-labourer. He must war the good warfare, but he is not asked to go at his own risk. The Master had given the word: if ever so gentle, sensitive, timid, he might trust Him, Who by His servants had prophesied about Timothy. There is no necessity, nor sufficient reason, to understand with the grammarian Winer that in these prophecies lay his spiritual protection and equipment, the armour as it were in which he was to wage his good warfare. This is to narrow and emphasize unduly the forge of the preposition. The English Authorized and Revised Versions seem to me more simple and correct. So again the transient form of the verb (adopted by Tischendorf and Tregelles on the meagre authority of the first hand of the Sinaitic and the Clermont MSS.) does not commend itself in comparison with the ordinary text (as in all other copies) which has the present. Observe also that "faith" as an inward state is different from "the faith" or truth believed.

But condition of soul has much to do with warring the good warfare. Faith must be kept up, bright and simple

and exercised, the eyes of the heart ever on the things unseen and eternal. Withal a good conscience is imperative. For if faith bring God in, a good conscience judges self so as it keep sin out. This, of all moment for every Christian, is pre-eminently needful for him who is devoted to the service of Christ. There is nothing which so hardens the heart as the continual giving out of truth apart from one's own communion and walk. Take the extreme case of Judas falling under the power of the devil; but look also at Peter, who was far from a traitor, himself betrayed into the denial of his Master. Here, however, it is the maintenance not only of faith, but also of a good conscience, "which some having thrust away made shipwreck concerning the faith."

Rarely, if ever, does the heterodox soul maintain a good conscience; and as there cannot be a good conscience without faith, so on the other hand, where the conscience becomes practically bad, the faith is lowered, and it is well if it be not at last wholly perverted. A man is uneasy at continuing burdened with the sense of his own inconsistency. He is thus tempted to accommodate his faith to his failure, and what he likes he at last believes to the destruction of the truth; or, as the apostle puts it here, "some, having thrust away" a good conscience, "made shipwreck concerning the faith."

The apostle gives examples then living; "of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may be taught not to blaspheme."

This is not ecclesiastical discipline, or excommunication pure and simple, but the apostle's own act of power. Indeed it is questionable whether the assembly ever did or could, without an apostle, hand over to Satan. Certain

it is, that in 1 Cor. 5 the apostle connects himself with a similar exertion of power: “For I, as absent in body and present in spirit, have already judged as present as to him that so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (ye and my spirit being gathered together with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ) to deliver him, being such an one, to Satan for destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

So another apostle exercised the power given him of the Lord to deal extraordinarily with Ananias and Sapphira when they sinned unto death (Acts 5). The Lord, it would seem, thus by His servant judged them by so solemn a chastening that they might not be condemned with the world.

But if, according to scripture, the assembly be not invested with such power, it is none the less under obligation to purge out the old leaven “that ye may be a new lump, according as ye are unleavened.” The standing is the ground of responsibility. If unleavened by and in Christ, we are bound to tolerate no leaven. Practice must be conformed to principle, and so the Spirit works by the word; not by high or heavenly principle brought down to low and earthly practice. “For also Christ, our passover, was sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” If the assembly cannot and will not judge those that are within, it forfeits its character as God’s assembly. Hence, even in the lowest condition, that which claims to be God’s assembly is bound to put away the wicked person from among them. Responsibility to put out of church

communion is the inalienable duty of the Christian assembly whenever a professed member of Christ can be justly designated as a “wicked person.” But this is a distinct thing from the apostolic power of delivering over to Satan, which might or might not accompany that extreme act of the assembly.

It is well, however, to notice that even the apostle’s act of delivering over to Satan, here spoken of apart from the assembly, had the merciful as well as holy object in view, “that they may be taught not to blaspheme.” It is a consoling thought that even such evil-doers are not irrecoverably beyond the reach of divine grace. The terrible sentence which befell them was, on the contrary, to teach by discipline those who refused to be taught by the truth, whose unjudged evil led them to depart from the faith which condemned them. Even Satan’s power in dealing with the outer man, and perhaps in the infliction of anguish of mind, may be used under the hand of God to bring down the haughty spirit and make past blasphemy to be seen in all its offensive pride and opposition to God.

It is singular that Calvin, on this passage, chooses rather to explain it as relating to excommunication, of which not a word is said, though probably this may also have been the fact. But the opinion, as he calls it, that the incestuous Corinthian received any other chastisement than excommunication, he ventures to say, is not supported by any probable conjecture. Now this confusion we have seen to be in direct opposition to the plain declaration of 1 Cor. 5, which distinguishes the apostolic energy and its effects from the inalienable call of the assembly to put away those who cast deliberate and manifest affront on the Lord’s name. It is only when

Paul joins himself to the assembly that he speaks of delivering to Satan. When he treats of their purging leaven that had entered, he speaks of putting out, and not a word more.

In short, then, delivering over to Satan was not a form of excommunication from the church, but an effect of apostolic power, which might or might not accompany the act of putting out, and which manifested its effect in bodily pains or even death itself. The distinction is of importance for this reason among others, that we can see clearly how the obligation abides to purge out the leaven that has got in; whilst it would be unbecoming to arrogate to the assembly that which scripture never speaks of apart from an apostle's power. Those who have Christ Who was sacrificed as their centre cannot escape from the holy responsibility of keeping the feast with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, purging out what practically denies and dishonours Him. Power is another element, and as distinct from form as from duty; and, power or no power, we are bound to do our duty, as in the end of 1 Cor. 5 it is no less obvious than momentous, if indeed we are Christ's.

2 Such is the order in D F G P, a few cursives, and some of the ancient versions.

3 The Sinaitic gives the stupendous error of "promise" instead of "command," from assimilation perhaps to 2 Tim. 1:1 in a wholly different connection.

4 "Our" is not in the more ancient and excellent copies.

5 All the older English Versions are wrong from Wiclif to the A.V., misled by the Syriac and Vulgate. The Clermont uncial is doubly wrong, text and correction; Vat. 1761 is the only cursive that supports the error. The

Complutensian editors and R. Stephens are right; not so Erasmus, Colinaeus, Beza, and Elzevir.

6 Most copies, none first-class, add “And” as in Text. Rec.

7 The article in the best MSS. goes with

πρ. which forbids the rendering “him who” or “me who” as with the common text.

8 “Wise” is an interpolation here and in Jude 25. In Rom. 16:27 it is right and most suitable. Its omission here Bengel calls “magnifica lectio”: so the oldest and best MSS. and Vv.

1 Timothy 2

From those who had been within, now so solemnly delivered over to Satan, the apostle turns to our relationships with those outside, especially such as are in authority.

“I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men, for kings and all that are in high rank, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all piety and gravity. 9For this (is) good and acceptable before our Saviour God, Who desireth, that all men should be saved and come unto full knowledge of truth” (vers. 1-4). It is not here the counsels of God in all their immense extent and heavenly glory, but rather what is consistent with the nature of God revealed in Christ and published everywhere by the gospel. Such is the character of our Epistle, and is the ground on which the apostle insists upon a spirit of peace on the one hand and of godly order on the other. In accordance with this he exhorts that the saints should be marked by a desire of blessing for all mankind: the very reverse of that proud austerity which the heathen bitterly resented in the later Jews. It was the more important to press this gracious attitude, inasmuch as it is of the very essence of the church to stand in holy separateness from the world, as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ. With light or harsh minds this separation easily degenerates into a sour self-complacency; which repels from, instead of attracting to, Him Whose rights over all it is the prime duty of the church to assert, Whose glory and Whose grace ought to fill every mouth and heart with praise. From a misuse of

his privileges a Jew was ever in danger of scorning the Gentile, and not least those in high place, with a bitter contempt for such of their brethren as served the Gentile in the exaction of tribute, the sign of their own humiliation. In their national ruin they had more than all the pride of their prosperity, and judged their heathen masters with a sternness ill-suited to those who had lost their position, for a time at least, through their constant yielding to the worst sins of the Gentiles.

The Christian is in no less danger. For on the one hand he is entrusted with a testimony of truth far beyond what the Jew had; and, on the other, his separation does not consist so much in external forms. Hence he is in continual danger of making good a separation to God, not in the power of the Holy Ghost in truth and love among those who cleave to the Lord, but in peculiar abstinences and prohibitions, in an effort to differ from others, and so in a claim of superiority for themselves. This evidently exposes the unwary to self-deception, as it tends to build up that which is as far as possible from the mind of Christ — a bitter though unconscious sectarianism.

Here we see how the Spirit of God guards the saints, so that their separation, however holy, may savour of God’s grace and not of man’s pride. Supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, are to be made for all men. It is not only that they ought always to pray and not to faint; nor again that they should only pray for all saints and especially for those identified with the testimony of Christ. But here we find an exhortation to every variety of prayer on the broad basis of God’s relationship with all mankind. The saints have to answer to this if they would not be false to the truth. They, too, have a

corresponding relation, The very gospel by which they were saved should remind them of it; for if the church in its union with Christ, or rather if Christ and the church, be the special witness of divine counsels, the gospel is no less the standing witness of God's grace to the world. The saints therefore, knowing both, are responsible to bear a true testimony to the one no less than the other. And in practice it will be found that exaggeration in one tends not only to lose the other, but to corrupt that which becomes the exclusive object. For Christ is the truth; neither the gospel nor the church has a right to our love undividedly, but both in subjection to Christ. And we are called to bear witness to "the" truth as we are sanctified (not by this or by that truth, but) by "the truth."

Such is the danger today as it was of old. Saints like other men are apt to be one-sided. It looks spiritual to choose the highest line and stand on the loftiest point, and fancy oneself to be safe in that heavenly elevation. On the other hand, it seems loving to steer clear of the church question so constantly abused to gratify ambition, if not spite and jealousy (and thus scattering saints instead of uniting them holily around the Lord's name), and to devote all one's energies, in the present broken state of Christendom, to the good news which wins souls to God from destruction. But this is to surrender the nearest circle of Christ's affections and honour. The only course that is right, holy, and faithful, is to hold to all that is precious in His eyes — to love the church with all its consequences on the one hand, and on the other to go out to all mankind in the grace that would reflect the light of a Saviour God. As in Ephesians

and Colossians the former truth is most prominent, so the latter is here. Let us seek to walk in both.

The Authorized Version wrongly connects “first of all” with the making supplications, etc., as both the Syriac, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Estius, Bengel, et al. So had Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Geneva; not Wiclif nor the Rhemish (cleaving as usual to the Vulgate) nor Beza. For the apostle means that he thus exhorts, as being first of all in his mind for his present purpose. The exhortation had a great importance in his eyes who would have God’s character of grace truly presented in the public as well as private intercourse of the saints with Himself. The God Who gave His own Son to die for sinners in divine judgment of sin could not be taxed with slighting sins, whether of corruption or of violence; but oh, the love of Him Who gave His Son to die for sinners that they might be saved through faith in Him!

Therefore does His servant first of all exhort to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings for all men, but specifying “for kings and all that are in high rank.” So the godly in Israel had prayed for the city which chastised them for their sins, and sought its peace; whereas the false were habitually rebellious, save for occasional gain or other selfish ends. But now that God had fully shown Himself out in Christ, what became His saints in presence of all men, and especially of sovereigns and rulers? The continual going forth of earnest love on behalf of all men, for which they should ever be free who are delivered from dread of evil and a bad conscience, who are peaceful and happy in their own near relationship with God as His children, who can therefore feel truly and deeply for all that are far off in

unremoved death and darkness, and are as ignorant of their own real misery as of the blessed God Himself. The exalted place of those in authority would only make such the more especial objects of loving desire that sovereign goodness might control them and their officials in order that the saints might lead a quiet and tranquil life in all piety.

The reader will notice the abundance and variety in expression of the saints' prayers. "Supplication" implies earnestness in pressing the suit of need; "prayer" is more general and puts forward wants and wishes; "intercession" means the exercise of free and confiding intercourse, whether for ourselves or for others; and "thanksgiving" tells out the heart's sense of favour bestowed or counted on. Of all interpretations perhaps the most singular is in Augustine's Epistle to Paulinus (149, Migne), where the four words are assigned to the several parts of the communion service! Witsius, on the Lord's prayer, is nearer the mark than any other I have noticed. From first to last the terms bespeak the overflowing charity of the saints who know in God a love superior to evil, and withal never indifferent to it nor making light of it (which is Satan's substitute) — a Father Who makes His sun rise on evil and good, and sends rain on just and unjust. It is of all moment that the children keep up the family character, and that love should be in constant exercise to His praise. What can men think, feel, or do, about such as love their enemies and pray for those that use them despitefully? Paroxysms of persecution pass quickly, and the saints are let live peacefully in all godliness and gravity; for nothing makes up for failure in piety before God and in a practically grave deportment before men.

“For this [is] good and acceptable before our Saviour God, Who desireth that all men should be saved and come unto full knowledge (or, acknowledgment) of the truth” (vers. 3, 4). The spirit of the gospel the apostle would have to permeate the conduct as well as the heart of the saint. Activity in goodness becomes those who know our Saviour God, Whose own heart goes out in compassion toward all men, not alone surely in present mercies without number, but also that they might be saved. This however cannot be unless they come to the knowledge of the truth. Hence the gospel is sent out to all the creation. Here human weakness, if it be not worse, betrays itself. Those who believe in the large grace of God too often leave no room for His positive and living links of love with the elect, once children of wrath even as others. Those who are sure of the special nearness of God’s family as often overlook what is patent here and elsewhere all over scripture — that love which Christ made known personally and proved triumphantly in His cross whereby it is free to flow out in testimony to all the world.

“Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him” (John 13:31). Now that His character as Judge of sin is vindicated in the expiatory death of His own Son, His love can freely go out to men on the express ground that they are ungodly, enemies, and powerless (Rom. 5:6-10). He is both able and willing to save the vilest, but not without acknowledgment of truth. Therefore He commands all men everywhere to repent and believe the gospel; also the saints, while walking as members of the one body of Christ, are called to walk in love toward all, and to testify the love that can save any by the faith of Christ. If men are lost, it is through their own will

opposing the truth; it is not God's will, Who, desiring their salvation, gave His Son, and has now sent His own Spirit from heaven that the glad tidings might be thus declared to them in the power of God our Saviour.

This gives occasion to the broad and weighty statement of divine truth which follows.

"For [there is] one God, one mediator also of God and men, Christ Jesus a man, Who gave Himself a ransom for all, the testimony in its own times, to which I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I speak truth, I lie not), a teacher of Gentiles in faith and truth" (vers. 5-7).

The unity of God is the foundation-truth of the Old Testament; as it was the central testimony for which the Jewish people were responsible in a world everywhere else given over to idolatry. We must add that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was that one Jehovah, His proper name in relationship with His people on earth. "Ye are My witnesses, saith Jehovah, and My servant Whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He; before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and beside Me there is no Saviour" (Isa. 43:10, 11).

But during the Jewish economy, God, though known to be one, was not known as He is. "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel" (Ps. 103:7). He dwelt in the thick darkness, even where He surrounded Himself with a people for a possession, and. a veil shrouded what display there was of the divine presence; so that the high priest approached but once a year, with clouds of incense and not without blood lest he die. It was only Jesus Who

made Him truly known, as we see (where it might least have been expected) by that act of incomparable grace in which He was fulfilling all righteousness when baptized of John in the Jordan (Matt. 3:13-17). There, as the Holy Spirit descended on Him, the Father from heaven proclaimed Him to be His beloved Son. The Trinity stood revealed. It is in the persons of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that God, the one God, is really known. Without Jesus this was impossible; when He takes the first step, the Trinity in unity shines out, — love and light wherein is no darkness at all. How infinite is our debt to the Word made flesh, Who deigned to tabernacle with us, Only-begotten Son Who declared God and revealed the Father!

Thus, as we need, we have an adequate image of the invisible God; and this Jesus is “mediator of God and men,” though mediation of course goes farther than representation. For there are two parts in it — His manhood and His ransom, both of special moment if God is to be known, and if man, sinful man, is to be suitably blessed in the knowledge of God.

The Mediator is a man that God may be known of men. The Absolute is divided from the relative (and we, indeed creatures universally, are necessarily relative) by a gulf impassable to us. But if man cannot himself rise to God — and those of mankind who are by grace righteous would most of all repudiate and abhor so presumptuous a thought — God can and does in infinite love come down to man, to man in his guilt and misery with an endless judgment before him.

This, however, does not meet all that is wanted, though it blessedly manifests the love of God in the gift of His

own Son that we through faith might have life, eternal life, in Him. Yet even this free gift, immense as it is, does not suffice, for we were lost sinners; and so we needed to be brought to God, freed from our sins, and cleansed for His presence in light. He therefore sent His Son as propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). Herein indeed is love, not that we loved Him (though we ought to have so done), but that He loved us, and proved it in this way, divine and infinite, in the Person of His Only-begotten Son sent to suffer unspeakably for our sins on the cross that we might through the faith of Him be without spot or stain before God (where otherwise we could not be), and that we might know it even now on earth by the Holy Ghost given to us. So here it is said that He “gave Himself a ransom for all.”

Hence, as God is one, it is important to remark the unity of the Mediator. Here the Catholic system, and not Rome only, though Rome most, has sinned against the truth. For the oneness of the Mediator is as sure, vital, and characteristic a testimony of Christianity as the oneness of God was of the law. It is not only that Christ Jesus is Mediator, but there is this “one” only. The introduction of angels is a base invention that savours of Judaism. And who required it at their hands to set the departed saints, or the Virgin Mary, in the least share of that glory which is Christ’s alone? The Head of the body, Who also is Head over all things, can admit of no such fellowship. He only of divine persons is Mediator; and though He is so as man, to claim partnership for any other of mankind (living or dead makes no real difference as to this) is not short of treason against Him. Not only is it untrue that any other in heaven or earth shares in mediation, but the assertion of it for the highest of creatures is a lie of

Satan, as subversive of Christianity as polytheism was the direct and insulting denial of the one two God.

And most solemn and affecting it is to see that, as the Jew (called to bear witness of the one God) broke down in the foulest adoption of heathen idolatry, so Christendom has betrayed its trust at least as signally in the especial point of fidelity to its transcendent treasure and peculiar glory. For the Greek church is in this respect only less faulty than the Romish; and what are Nestorians, Copts, Abyssinians, et al.? The Protestant bodies are doubtless less gross in their standards of doctrine; but the present state of Anglicanism shows how even its services admit of an enormous infusion of objects before their votaries which detract from the glory of the Lord Jesus.

There is however another and an opposite way in which professing Christians may be false to the mediation of Christ, not by adding others which practically divide His work and share His honour, but by supplanting and in effect denying mediation altogether. It is not open Arians or Unitarians alone who are thus guilty, but rationalists of all sorts, whether in the national bodies or in the dissenting systems. The incarnation, if owned in terms, is really robbed of all its glory and blessedness; for if Christ Jesus were but “a man”, why or how could He be mediator of God and men? Superiority in degree is no adequate basis. It is His divine nature which makes His becoming man so precious; as it is the union of both in His person which gives character to His love, and efficacy to His sacrifice, and value to His ransom. Here the faithlessness, not of the party of tradition, but of the school of human reason and philosophy, antipodes as they are in Christendom, is as painfully conspicuous.

God is only an idea and therefore unknown; as He Who alone can make Him known, or fit man to serve and enjoy and magnify Him, the one Mediator? Jesus, is ignored in His divine glory, His manhood being cried up perhaps, but only, if so, to set aside His deity, and to assume a fresh honour to the human race.

Thoroughly in keeping with the large character of the Epistle, it is here said that He “gave Himself a ransom for all.” It is not special counsels, which cannot fail of accomplishment, as in Ephesians 5 where Christ, it is said, loved the church, or assembly, and gave Himself up for it; and so the apostle there goes on to say, as he does not here, that He might sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present the church to Himself glorious, having no spot or wrinkle, or any of such things, but that it might be holy and blameless. Here the same apostle treats of the answer in the Mediator’s work to God’s nature and His willingness to save, in face of man’s will who, as His enemy, expects no good from God, and believes not the fullest proof of grace in Christ’s death, nor would be persuaded when He Who died in love rose in righteousness from the dead to seal the truth with that unquestionable stamp of divine power. It is “a ransom for all,” whoever may bow and reap the blessing; which those do who, renouncing their own proud will for God’s mercy in Christ, repent and believe the gospel.

“Its own times” came for “the testimony” when man’s wickedness was all out in its hatred, not merely of God’s law, but of God’s Son. As long as it was but failure in duty or violation of commands under the law, divine patience lengthened out the day of probation, whatever the enormous provocation from time to time, as we see

in the inspired history of the Jew. But the cross was hatred of divine love and perfect goodness. of God in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their offences; but Him even thus, yea perhaps because it was thus, they would not have at any price, hating Him without a cause, hating Him most of all for a love beyond all when “made sin” for us.

Thus was man, not Gentile only but Jew if possible yet more, proved to be lost; and on this ground the gospel goes forth to all, “the testimony in its own times.” It is salvation for the lost as all are, for him that believes; God’s righteousness (for man universally had been shown to have none), — God’s righteousness unto all (such is the universal aspect of divine grace) and upon all that believe (such is the particular effect where there is faith in Jesus). Therein God is just and justifies the believer.

Here it is “the testimony,” and accordingly its direction or scope “unto all,” rather than the blessed result where it is received in faith. And therefore to “the testimony”, it is consistently added “to which I was appointed preacher (or herald) and apostle,” giving the first place to that which was not highest but most akin for proclaiming it, though not leaving out but bringing in for its support the apostleship. For indeed the apostle was not ashamed of the gospel, but emphasizes clearly his own full and high relation to it (“I speak truth, I lie not”), and closes all up with the title of (not a prophet to Israel as in probationary times of law, but) “a teacher of Gentiles in faith and truth.” For now sovereign grace was not only the spring but the display in Christ Jesus the Lord. Where sin abounded, grace over-exceeded that, even as sin reigned in death, so also grace might

reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5:21).

The call to prayer for all had brought in as its basis the character of God as Saviour, shown in the gift and mediation of Christ, the testimony of which goes forth at this time to all mankind. And who could so well bear witness as the apostle Paul, and this in the Gentile field so emphatically his own, alike for preaching and teaching?

This naturally leads to the detailed injunctions that follow in gracious interest about men with God, wherein Paul is guided by competent wisdom, power, and authority from Him Who appointed him to the testimony.

“I will (wish) then that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting; in like manner also that 10women in seemly deportment adorn themselves with modesty and sobriety, not with braids and gold or pearls or costly apparel, but, what becometh women professing godliness, by good works” (vers. 8-10).

It is not merely a gracious acquiescence but his active wish or will. It is positive apostolic direction. “I will then that the men pray in every place,” not all the constituents of the assembly, but the men in contrast with women. This is of great moment. Title to pray belongs to “the men” as a whole, not to women; for public prayer is in question. There is no thought of a particular class among the men; yet is the apostle regulating the house of God. Prayer, then, is not restricted to the elders, even when elders were in full form. It belongs to “the men.” Nor has it only to do with gifts, though of course gifted men might form a large

part of such as prayed. And this is so true, that the apostle adds “in every place.” It may be that there is no allusion to a different practice among the Jews or the heathen. Certainly there is no trace of polemic purpose. Nevertheless Christian practice is most evident in the words — the fullest liberty for prayer on the part of “the men,” and this not in private only but in public.

The direction entirely coincides with the spirit of the instructions in 1 Cor. 14:34. Only there the assembly is prominent, which had been previously shown in 1 Cor. 12 to be formed by the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. Here the ruling of the apostle is more general, as marked by the words “every place.” It would be a false inference, instead of holding both, to set the one (as people often do) against the other. There is complete liberty for “the men,” but absolute subjection to the Lord11 Who acts by the Spirit and leads thus to the glory of God. Man is incompetent to guide the assembly. The Lord ought to be looked to, and in fact is “in the midst” of those gathered to His name, as Matt. 18:20 shows: another scripture of the highest importance for the saints, as the resource of His grace for even “two or three” at any time.

Not that the Jews were so restricted in the synagogue as many suppose. Scripture furnishes proof that in the early days of the gospel considerable latitude was left to take part in reading or speaking, and it is to be supposed in prayer also. But Christianity, while it teaches liberty, brings in immediate responsibility to God as it was founded on the Divine presence in a way altogether unknown to Judaism, not to speak of the heathen.

It is most instructive therefore to observe that, where scriptural order is laid down most precisely, the apostle himself rules liberty for “the men” to pray “in every place.” Who abrogated it? It is impossible to deny that this apostolic direction has no place in Christendom. It would seem disorder on the most important occasions. Only one official has the title ordinarily in every place. He may associate with himself one or more of a certain rank ecclesiastically. Hence it is not open to “the men” to pray “in every place”; and accordingly no man of right feeling would think of invading the imposed regulations of such societies.

Nothing therefore can more distinctly demonstrate that a revolution, somehow or another, has intervened; for modern order is irreconcilable with apostolic. And this is quite independent of “gifts”; for prayer is never in scripture treated as a question of gift. Undeniably our Epistle treats of godly order, when it was in all its purity and fulness, when apostles were on earth still and elders were or might be in every church, and “gift” abounded in every form; yet prayer “in every place” was open to “the men.” Now, on the contrary, the exercise of such a title would utterly clash with the order of every denomination in Christendom. The question therefore is one of the greatest importance, not practically alone, though never was prayer more needed, but as a matter of principle; for surely all Christians are called to walk according to the fullest revelation of the truth. We ought every one of us to be where an apostolic direction, plain beyond controversy, can take full effect.

What can be thought of the statement [by Alford] that “it is far-fetched and irrelevant to the context, to find in these words the Christian’s freedom from prescription of

place for prayer”? It is far better to own the truth, like Chrysostom and Theodoret, etc., of old, or like Erasmus, Calvin, etc., in Reformation times, even if it condemn our ways. “Far-fetched” it is not, but the unforced and sure meaning of the sentence in itself, whatever be people’s practice. “Irrelevant to the context” it is not, for what can be more proper, after exhorting prayers to be made of whatever character to lay down liberty of praying on the part of “the men” “in every place”? The scriptural doctrine of the church, and its history in apostolic times confirm not its relevancy only, but also its immense moment and prove that such a practice must have been followed until the habits which sprang up later at a post-apostolic date made it seem disorderly. Prayers on public occasions were thenceforward confined to the ordained officials. But from the beginning it was not so: as we read here, it was the apostle’s will that “the men” should pray “in every place.”

But right moral condition is carefully maintained, “raising up holy hands, without wrath and doubting,” or perhaps “reasoning.” The holiness expressed is that of pious integrity, not of a person set apart, ὁσίους not ἁγίους. It did not become men at the time conscious of evil not duly judged to take so solemn a part, if any, in the assembly. Again, if the evil were known to others, such a part taken must be an offence to their consciences. But the highest motive of all is that which should never be wanting — a sense of the presence of the Lord, and of the state which befits each of the saints so sovereignly blessed in His grace.

Hence “wrath” too is expressly forbidden. Unseemly if it intruded into any action of a Christian kind, it was

peculiarly unbefitting for one who was the mouth-piece of all in prayer. So also “doubting” was most unseasonable there, being more or less a contradiction of the dependent confidence which is expressed to God in prayer. If souls lay under any of these disabilities, it became them to seek restoration of communion with God: else public praying might become a positive snare through a hardening of conscience in such circumstances.

Thus subjection to scripture in the church, where duly carried out in private and public, ever tends to true happiness and holiness; which mere form is apt to destroy, especially when the form is based on tradition opposed to scripture.

“In like manner also that women adorn themselves with modesty and sobriety.” The Lord in no way ignores women as the Rabbis were apt to do; nor were they pushed into an unseemly or even shameless prominence as in heathenism. Public action was not their place. The word is that they should adorn themselves “in seemly deportment,” which includes not dress only but bearing. And hence it is added, “with modesty and sobriety,” that shamefastness which shrinks from the least semblance of impropriety, that self-restraint where all is inwardly ruled. The apostle does not hesitate to deal plainly and unsparingly with the common objects of female vanity in all ages: “not with braids (that is, of hair), and gold, or pearls, or costly array.”

This ought to settle many a question for an exercised conscience. Take the last only. How often do we not hear a plea for the most expensive attire on the ground of its economy in the end! But those who are waiting for

Christ to come need not look so far forward. Negations, however, do not satisfy the mind of the Spirit; “but what becometh women professing godliness, by good works.” Such is the adorning that the Lord approves; and women have therein a large and constant sphere, δὶ ἔργων ἀγαθῶν “by means of good works,” not here καλώ (honourable, right, fair) as in Matt. 5:16; Gal. 6:9; 1 Thess. 5:21; but ἀγαθός as in Gal. 6:10; 1 Thess. 5:15, of which we have an instance in Dorcas (Acts 9:36). Where intelligence takes the place of this activity in good, sorrow soon ensues for others, and later on shame for themselves. Real spiritual power would have hindered both; whereas vanity likes and encourages this practical error, only to find in the end its intelligence all wrong. If blind lead blind, both will fall into a pit.

The apostle now turns to further details which correct female tendencies of quite another kind, but not a whit less important to heed if as Christians they seek to glorify the Lord. Perhaps they are even more called for in these times, as men growingly lose sight of the divine order in their craving after the imaginary rights of humanity. How many now-a-days are in danger from a misdirected zeal or benevolent activity, without due reverence to the written word! To such finery in dress might be no attraction, nor the frivolous changes of worldly fashions. Their very desire to abound in good works, by which the apostle wished them to be adorned, might expose them to a snare; and the more, as no fair and intelligent mind can doubt that women (to say nothing of natural capacity or culture) may have gifts spiritual as really as men. It was of moment therefore to regulate the matter with divine authority, as he now does.

“Let a woman in quietness learn in all subjection. But to teach12 I permit not a woman, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness. For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman quite13 deceived is involved in transgression; but she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety” (vers. 11-15).

The apostle had already laid down most salutary principles in 1 Cor. 11:1-16, whence he had deduced that the man is woman’s head, and that the head uncovered became him, as the covered head became her. He is called of God to public action, she to be veiled; for man is not from woman but woman from man, though neither is without the other in the Lord, while all things are of God.

Again, in 1 Cor. 14:34 is laid down the imperative regulation that the women are to keep silence in the assemblies, “for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law.” They were forbidden even to ask their own husbands there. If they would learn anything, let them ask at home; “for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the assembly.” What can be more distinct and peremptory than this? The ingenuity of will, however, has found a supposed loophole. The word “speak,” say they, means only to talk familiarly or to chatter. This is wholly untrue. It is the regular word for giving utterance, as may be seen in 1 Peter 4:10, 11. Here, “as each hath received a gift,” they are called to minister it as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; and the distinction is drawn between gifts of utterance and those of other spiritual service. “If any one speaketh,” he is to do so “as God’s

mouthpiece; “if any one ministereth,” he is to do so as from strength which God supplieth, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” Now here it is the same word for “speaking” as is forbidden to the women in the former scripture. It is speaking in public, not prattling. The prohibition therefore is complete. Woman’s place is a retired one; she is to learn in quiet with entire submissiveness.

But there is more here. “I permit not a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness.” This clearly is not limited to the assembly; as the apostle traces the ground of it in the constitution and natural character of woman. “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” Her subsequent formation out of the man is never to be forgotten by such as fear God and believe His word. All other thoughts are presumptuous theory in forgetfulness of the truth which goes up to the beginning. An individual woman may be comparatively able and well-instructed; but under no circumstances is leave given for a woman to teach or to have dominion over a man; she is to be in quietness. Thus absolutely does the apostle guard against any reaction from the abject place of women in ancient times, specially among the heathen; or any imitation of the peculiar prominence given to her sometimes in oracular matters, as among the Greeks and especially the Germans of old.

Had then women no seemly or suited, no good and useful, place in Christianity? None can deny that they have, who see how honoured were some of them in caring for the Lord Himself in His ministry (Luke 8:1-3), who know how He vindicated Mary that anointed Him when the apostles found fault under evil influence. Certainly He put no slight on Mary of Magdala, if His

resurrection interrupted the plan of those who brought their spices and ointments after His death. Not otherwise do we find the action of the Holy Ghost when the Lord went to heaven. Mary the mother of John Mark gives her house for the gathering together of many to pray; and the four daughters of Philip were not forbidden to prophesy at home, though even there authority could not be rightly exercised over a man. Lydia is a beautiful example of Christian simple-heartedness and zeal; her house too has honour put on it for the truth's sake. Nor was Priscilla out of place when she with her husband helped the learned Alexandrian, mighty in the scriptures, to know the way of God more thoroughly. Romans 16 pays no passing honour to many a sister, from Phoebe who served the church at Cenchreae, commended to the saints in Rome as a succourer of many and of Paul himself. Prisca or Priscilla again is coupled with her husband as his fellow-workers in Christ, who not only for his life laid down their own necks, but wherever they went opened their house for the assembly. But need we dwell on all the cases and the beautifully discriminating notice taken of them?

We may say of Evodia and Syntyche that there is not the smallest reason for conceiving them preachers, because they shared the apostle's labours in the gospel (Phil. 4:2). That they joined their efforts with Paul in that work is no warrant for the inference that they preached. In those days a woman's preaching must have seemed far more egregious than her venturing to say a word in the assemblies of the saints. Even in private where they might exercise that which was given them in the Lord, they must never forget the form and the reality of subjection. In public all teaching was forbidden. Such is

the testimony of scripture, and nowhere with greater precision or breadth than here.

The apostle adds another reason, “Adam was not deceived; but the woman quite deceived is involved in transgression.” The man may have been in a certain sense worse. He followed the woman in wrong against God, where he ought to have led her in obedience; and he did it knowingly. She was beguiled outright; he was not. Her weakness therefore, and its dangerous effect on man, are urged as an additional plea, why she should be in quietness, neither teaching nor ruling; let her own sphere be at home (1 Tim. 5:24).

The next words have suffered not a little through speculation. Some have yielded to Wells, Hammond, Kidder, Doddridge, Macknight, et al., and endeavoured to invest them with a direct reference to the Incarnation. But there is no sufficient reason for any such thought. The Authorized Version gives substantially the true sense, which is also maintained by the Revisers, although they affect a more literal closeness, which, tempting as it may be, seems really questionable here and unnecessary. For there is no doubt that in the apostle’s usage as well as elsewhere, the preposition with the genitive (as with the accusative also) may mean “in a given state,” no less than the more common sense of the instrument used or the medium passed through.

Dean Alford’s remarks are as unhappy yet a characteristic specimen of his exegesis habitually as could be desired: “saved through (brought safely through, but in the higher, which is with St. Paul the only, sense of σώζω see below) her child-bearing (in order to understand the fulness of the meaning of

σωθήσται, we must bear in mind the history itself, to which is the constant allusion…What then is here promised her? Not only exemption from that curse in its worst and heaviest effects; not merely that she shall safely bear children, but the apostle uses the word a. purposely for its higher meaning, and the construction of the sentence is precisely as reference, 1 Cor. 3:15."

Now we may well agree with him that Chrysostom's interpreting τεκνογονìα of Christian training of children, as others of the children themselves, is beside the mark and indeed unfounded; but so is his own confusion of the government of God with the "higher meaning" of eternal salvation, which is not here in question. This very Epistle (1 Tim. 4:10) furnishes decisive proof that the preservative goodness of God in providence is fully maintained in Christianity, though His grace in the gospel goes deeper, higher, and for ever. Dean Alford enfeebles the "higher meaning" by misapplying such an assurance of providential care as the text before us supplies. There is no doubt of saving grace in Christ for the believer; but to turn this word aside from its obvious relation deprives us of the very object in view, viz., the comfort of knowing that while God does not set aside the solemn mark of divine judgment from the first in the pangs of child-bearing, it becomes in mercy an occasion of His providential intervention. Redemption clears away the clouds, so that the light may shine on all the path of the saint; and woman meanwhile shares the suited blessing in the hour of nature's sorrow. The forced elevation of scripture not only fails in power of truth, but darkens or takes away its precious consolation for the pilgrim now on earth.

The promised succour however is conditioned by abiding “in faith and love and holiness with sobriety.” One feels how important such a proviso is at a moment when human and even worldly feelings often encroach even on children of God. Where is family pride here? where the gratification of the wish for an heir of filthy lucre, or the hope of wide-spreading influence in that world which crucified the Lord of glory? Nor need one doubt the wisdom of the peculiarity in grammar which gives individuality to the deliverance vouchsafed in mercy, while it urges (not on the “children” as some have thought, nor yet on the husband and wife as others, but) on Christian women generally the qualifying call to abide in all that fits and strengthens the sex for the due and happy and godly discharge of their momentous duties. It is continuance in faith and love and holiness “with sobriety,” which is pressed on saintly women; who doubtless could already say with Christians generally that God had saved them according to His own purpose and grace which was given them in Christ Jesus before time began.

9 The authority for omitting

γάρ “for” is small but ancient — A17 67corr. Sah. Memph. Cyr. All others accept it.

10 The Received Text has the article here which all the best MSS. discard; and rightly, for “the” women as a class have no such title predicated of them, but they (persons of that sex) are called on individually to please the Lord by heeding His servant’s word.

11 Neander (Church Hist. i. 253) lays down emphatically that “the monarchical form of government was in no way suited to the Christian community of spirit”. But what is

it if the Spirit form the saints in continual dependence on Christ? Is this not essentially theocratic? It is quite consistent with godly order, and with a system of gifts, as well as with unity.

12 The emphatic place is restored in accordance with A D F G P many cursives, Vulg. Goth. Arm. etc., and so I imitate in English.

13 The best MSS. sustain

ἐξαπ. for

ἀπ. in Text. Rec.

1 Timothy 3

The character and qualifications for the local charges of bishops and deacons are next laid down. Timothy, though not an apostle, had a position superior even to the higher of the two, and he is here instructed in that which was desirable for each office. The prohibition of women from the exercise of authority naturally led the way, when their case was fully disposed of, to the due requisites for such as might desire the good and weighty work of overseeing the house of God. It is a question of government here, rather than of gifts, whatever the importance of gifts for the right discharge of the office. Women were excluded: but all Christian men were not therefore eligible. Certain weighty qualifications, and circumstances morally clear, were to be sought in such as desired to do this excellent work.

Hence one sees the mistake such as Calvin make when they talk of “ordaining pastors.” For “pastors and teachers” the apostle treats in Eph. 4:11 as Christ’s gift for the perfecting of the saints. Ordination there was where either government or even service in external things was the object, and the only lawful authority descended from Christ through the apostles whom He chose (or apostolic delegates, such as Timothy or Titus, specially commissioned to act for an apostle in this respect) to appoint the bishops or elders and the deacons.

No doubt apostles hold an unique place. They stand the first in point of gifts (χαρίσματα, 1 Cor. 12;

δόματα, Eph. 4); but they were also the chief of appointed authorities with title to appoint subordinate

authorities in the Lord's name. Hence they, and they only, are seen in scripture appointing presbyters and deacons, either directly or through an authorized deputy in a given sphere like Titus. Never is such a fact heard of as a presbyter ordaining a presbyter or a deacon. It destroys the whole principle of authority descending from above as stated in scripture; but, whatever else may or must go, scripture cannot be broken. (John 10:35).

If we are familiar with scripture, we shall soon learn that evangelists and pastors and teachers are simply Christ's gifts, without question of ordination any more than prophets, whom none (but fanatics that neglect scripture for their own quasi-divine communications) would think of ordaining. They are all alike bound to exercise their gift in immediate responsibility to Him Who gave and sent them for ministerial work, for edifying the body of the Christ.

Ye men who call for order in this matter, why do you not heed the order of the Lord, alone recognised in holy writ? Is it that you are so prejudiced as to see nothing but the traditional order of your own sect? Beware of giving up all principle, and if you know your own order to be scripturally valueless, of being content with any order, provided it be human and contrary to God's word. I am grieved deeply for you, my brethren, if the only order you decry is that which is solely founded on and formed by obedience to scripture, alike in what is done or not done. Search and see where you are as to this good work; search the scriptures whether these things are so. God caused His word to be written that it might be understood and obeyed.

The Catholic error is the confusion of ministry and rule with priesthood, and this error is fundamental. It flows from ignorance of the gospel, and is of either Jewish or heathen extraction; where the living relationship of children reconciled to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is unknown. All Christians are priests (Heb. 10:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6). Nor is it a question of words or title only, but of fact. They are brought nigh to God by Christ's blood. Having a great High-priest they are exhorted now to come boldly to the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16), yea, into the holies by the blood of Jesus, by the way which He dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil. None but a priest of the highest dignity of old did so, tremblingly and once a year; whereas "brethren" as such are now free to do so habitually (Heb. 10:19-22). But all Christians are not ministers in the word, only those to whom the Lord by the Spirit has given the gift: "Having gifts then differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy..." (Rom. 12:6-8).

The Protestant mistake is the confusion of gifts with offices or charges.14 The gifts were in association with the body of Christ, as we see wherever they are spoken of. Local charges are never found mixed up with gifts, though individuals might have both. It was when Christ ascended on high that He gave gifts, some beyond controversy to lay the foundation, as the apostles and prophets; others, as evangelists, pastors, and teachers, to carry out the work in its more ordinary shape. Such is the true source and character of ministry in the word. For ministry is serving Christ the Lord in the exercise of whatever gift may have been given for any purpose of His love. Hence, even in its humblest form, it is

essentially in the unity of His body, and not limited to this or that locality: whereas local charge, which has government for its aim, is based on the possession of qualities chiefly moral (with or without specific gift in the word) which would give weight in dealing with conscience, or righteous aptitude in the discharge of external duty.

The importance of this distinction is great because men quite ignore the real permanence and universal character of gifts, and merge all in the local charges, which have come to be regarded as inalienable and exclusive fixtures, one of them the minister, the other (singular or plural) being a subordinate office, and in some places the noviciate to the higher grade. The truth seen in scripture is that where the assemblies had time to grow up a little, the apostles used to choose elders or presbyters for the disciples (never the disciples for themselves); which as clearly shows that there were assemblies which as yet had them not, and might, as some, never in fact have them, for want of apostolic authority (direct or indirect) to appoint them: a comforting consideration for those who cleave to scriptural order and shrink from make-shift, believing that the Lord Who so ordered things is worthy of all trust, without inventions of our own in default of that order.

“Faithful [is] the word: if anyone is eager for oversight, he is desirous of a good work. The overseer [or bishop] therefore must be irreproachable, husband of one wife, temperate, sober, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker,15 but gentle, not contentious, not fond of money, one that ruleth well his own house, having children in subjection with all gravity, (but if one

knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he care for God's assembly"), not a novice lest being puffed up he fall into the devil's charge [or judgment]. But he must also have good testimony from those without, lest he fall into reproach and a snare of the devil" (vers. 1-7).

"Bishopric," or "office of a bishop," misleads here; because the modern office, with which most are familiar, so greatly differs from the primitive reality. For. there were in each assembly several, with co-ordinate governmental duties of a circumscribed nature, however valuable and to be honoured in their place. Hence it appears best and wisest, as well as most consistent, to call the function "oversight" and the functionary "overseer," in accordance with the Authorized Version of Acts 20:28, where the elders of the Ephesian assembly (ver. 17), who met the apostle at Miletus, are so designated. There it will be observed that it is not episcopal rulers of many dioceses or of separate assemblies, still less the several chiefs! that are styled and called presbyters, because they must have been of the lower grade to attain the higher. But the elders, or presbyters, are called "overseers" or bishops; and this of the single assembly in Ephesus.

What honest man of intelligence can deny that this passage is incompatible with either Episcopacy, or Presbyterianism, or yet Congregationalism, the three distinctive claimants of Christendom? For it is death to "the" minister of the latter two no less than to the "prelate" of the former. They are, all of them, manifest inventions since apostolic times, in collision irreconcilable with the plain facts and the all-important principles of the days when the divine word regulated those who called on the name of the Lord. And wherein

is antiquity to be accounted of, if it be human? What are they but shades of contending earthenware, a pretender higher than any of these, the Papacy, being by far the weakest and the worst of all spiritually, Other scriptures as Acts 14:23; Acts 15; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1 might readily be enforced in confirmation; but to an upright soul I feel it enough to stand on the footing of a single passage of God's word, and so no more is added now. "The scripture," we repeat, "cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

The formula, "Faithful is the word", with which the apostle here opens recurs in this Epistle, though found but once respectively in the Second to Timothy and in that to Titus. Here it appears three times; on the first (1:15) and third (4:9) occasions with the suited addition, "and worthy of all acceptation," which could not properly be in the case before us, any more than in the Second Epistle (2:11), or in that to Titus (3:8).

It is a question of government in the assembly; and faithful is the saying: whoever is eager for oversight desires a good or honourable work. Moral qualities, not gifts, are the requisite; and also personal or relative circumstances of good report. Hence to be husband of one wife was sought as well as a character free from reproach. How many evangelists God has deigned to bless, who had once been shameless sinners in violence or in corruption! Not such could the overseer be. Again, if a man had more than one wife, he was (not to be then refused fellowship; for many a Jew or Gentile so situated might believe the gospel; but) ineligible to be a holy guardian of order according to God among the saints. Self-restraint and moderation and modesty or good order were sought in one set over the rest: else the

appeal to others must be undermined by his own shortcomings. It was also of moment that active love should be proved in hospitality, as well as intelligence or aptitude to teach, if one were not necessarily a teacher. Yet sitting over wine, and the quarrelsome character it breeds, could not be tolerated for this work, but a gentle uncontentious spirit, free from the love of money, and used to rule well his household, with children subject in all gravity. For there too practical inconsistency would be fatal; and so much the more, as God's assembly needs far more care than one's own house.

Further, one newly come to the faith, "a novice," was objectionable (not of course for the exercise of any gift confided by the Lord, but) for this delicate position in dealing with others, "lest being puffed up he fall into the devil's charge (or judgment, κρῖμα). "Condemnation" is too strong an expression and not the sense intended. The allusion appears to be to the remarkable passage in Ezekiel 28:11-19, where the king of Tyrus is set forth in terms which seem to reflect a still more exalted creature's fall through self-complacency and self-importance.

The whole is wound up by the demand that he should also have good testimony from those that are without "lest he fall into reproach and a snare of the devil." This of course has nothing to do with creature vanity or pride, occupied with its own position as compared with that of others. It points to the danger from an ill reputation; for if not kept in the presence of God, and how hard is this in having much to do with others! what advantage the consciousness of that would give to the enemy, both to calumniate and to entangle! For one in so public and responsible a place, if the report be not good,

Satan knows how to cover him with shame in his desire to avoid hypocrisy, or to lead into at least the semblance of hypocrisy, if he shrink from shame.

It is not an ordinary saint who suits the serious and honourable work of overseeing; nor can one be surprised, unless vitiated by ecclesiastical tradition or by the pride of man unjudged, that an apostle, or a specially qualified apostolic man, is the only one seen in scripture competent to nominate presbyters. Never was the assembly, whatever the piety or intelligence of those who made it up, entrusted with a choice so difficult to discharge. Such are the facts of God's word; which entirely fall in with the principle that authority does not come from below, whatever may be the theories of men ancient or modern, but from above. It is from Christ the Lord, Who not only gives gifts as Head of the church, but is also the source and channel of all true authority, as has been already noticed.

It is generally assumed that "deacons" or "ministers" (as some prefer to translate, in order to guard from confounding them with the lower or earlier grade of clergy, so familiar in modern times) answer to "the seven" (Acts 6:3; Acts 21:8) who served tables in the daily ministration at Jerusalem. It is true that "the seven" are not so styled; and that elsewhere there is no thought of "seven" deacons. It is also true that in Jerusalem at the first there prevailed a state of having all things common wholly peculiar to that place and time, which created the necessity for the apostles to appoint the same, both to allay murmuring of others, and to allow themselves leisure for continuing steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word. Admitting however all due to the early form and order in

Jerusalem, I agree with others that substantially the same office is in view. “The seven” served as deacons in the circumstances proper to that day; as others served elsewhere in a more ordinary way. In Jerusalem at least they were chosen by the disciples, and the apostles laid their hands on them with prayer.

“Deacons likewise [must be] grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of base gain, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also be first proved, then let them serve as deacons, being blameless. Women likewise [must be] grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let deacons be husbands of one wife, conducting (ruling) [their] children and their houses well, for those who have served well as deacons gain for themselves a good degree, and great boldness in faith that is in Christ Jesus” (vers. 8-13).

Manifestly the requirements for the deacons are not so high as those for bishops or overseers, though there be somewhat in common. Their duties are of a lower character. Gravity was sought as well as the absence of deceit. These would naturally be required even in the commonest intercourse of life; and failure in them would bring contempt upon such an office. For if every Christian is called to walk after Christ, surely not less is a deacon to reflect His light even in the commonest things he has to do. Again, he must not be given to much wine, nor be greedy of base gain: either would be ruinous to the due fulfilment of his functions, and to the confidence which he ought to inspire in others. Far fuller we have seen to be the demand for the bishop, who must be without reproach, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach: which are not said of

the deacon save so far as gravity may approach. In this they do strongly meet — that as the bishop was not to be long (or quarrelsome) over wine, so the deacon was to be “not given to much wine.” And as the deacon was not to be greedy of base gain, so the bishop was to be no lover of money. There is no question of aptness to teach for the deacon as for the bishop; but even deacons must hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. So indeed is it binding on every saint; but if laxity were allowed in office-bearers, what could more stumble the world, grieve the saints, and dishonour the Lord?

It may be worth while to remark that “mystery,” as it never means what is unintelligible, so it is never applied to an institution or sacrament. “Stewards of the mysteries of God” means those called and responsible for bringing out the special truths of Christianity. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are never so described; and the term cannot be with propriety predicated of them as rites but at most only of the truths represented by them. Deacons, however, are not called “stewards” of the mysteries of God, though they must hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, that is, the distinctive truth of Christianity. Of course the Old Testament abides of divine authority for every conscience and of exceeding value for every Christian. But we have further revelation in the New Testament, and that of truth wholly unknown to saints before Christ. “The mystery of the faith” expresses the truth which had never been revealed before, the general system of that which is commonly called Christianity beyond what was known of old, though of course confirming it in the most interesting manner and in the highest degree. That truth

deals with the conscience in the closest way and purges it.

But it is also possible that high truth might be held with habitually low practice. This could not be in a deacon as it is unworthy of any Christian. He was called to hold the mystery of the faith “in a pure conscience.” Others might not be able to judge directly of the state of his conscience, but an irregular walk is the clearest proof that a man’s conscience cannot be pure. Where that was evident, it was permitted, yea incumbent, to judge this.

Even here there was to be care in the gradual introduction of deacons to their duties: “and let these also first be proved, then let them serve as deacons, being blameless.” Proving them first might bring out their unfitness for the work; for there are many saints even, who cannot bear a little brief authority, and that which outwardly raises such soon exposes to moral degradation. To walk blamelessly in the least of such new duties was no small testimony of their fitness to serve in all.

Women in the nearest relationship with them are not forgotten. They in like manner “must be grave, not slanderers, sober (temperate), faithful in all things.” The duties of their husbands would give them opportunities of knowing much of a delicate nature; they were therefore to be both grave and not evil-speakers, sober or temperate, faithful in all things. None but such could help their husbands aright; those who were otherwise would not only hinder but lead to constant difficulty and scandal.

Nor was it only that the bishop must be husband of one wife, deacons must be the same. Polygamy was thus

being dealt a death-wound. No matter what might be the qualities and competency of a Christian, he could not even be a deacon if he had, like many in those days, more than one wife. This was strictly ruled for all who held office in the assembly, whatever might be the forbearance of grace whilst “the powers that be” tolerated things otherwise.

Further, like the bishops, deacons must rule their children and their houses well. It was not allowable in those that served even in outward things that disorder should reign among their children or in their households. The assembly of God is set in this world, till the Lord come, to manifest His will and to please Him.

But deacons, like the seven, were not tied only to that service which they were appointed to fulfil; for those who have served well as deacons gain for themselves a good degree and great boldness in faith which is in Christ Jesus. So we see in both Stephen and Philip who were of the seven: the one being greatly honoured of God as a teacher of the truth; the other being largely used to spread the gospel where it had never yet penetrated. This,was to gain for themselves a good standing, and no one who reads the Holy Spirit’s account of their testimony and its effects can doubt their great boldness in faith that is in Christ Jesus.

The presence of an apostle was an incalculable boon both for founding and for building up the assembly in any place. But what do we not owe also to his absence? Therefore he wrote, as here to Timothy, so at other times to this or that assembly, and thus he gave us in a permanent form the mind of the Spirit as applied to the

instructive wants, difficulties, and dangers of the saints here below.

“These things write I to thee, hoping to come unto thee rather quickly; but if I should tarry, that thou mayest know how we ought to behave in God’s house, seeing it is a living God’s assembly, pillar and ground-work of the truth” (vers. 14, 15). Thus the loss of the apostle’s presence is turned to profit, not of Timothy only but of us also. From detailed duties we are now in presence of the great truth that God has a house on earth where each Christian has to conduct himself aright. Our relationships are always the measure and mould as well as the ground of our duty. How solemn, yet how precious it is to know that God has His dwelling-place on earth with which every believer has to do in faith and practice!

No doubt this was meant to act on Timothy’s soul; but the form of the phrase indicates that it was not limited to Timothy; it is so expressed as to take in any and every saint in his own position. It is no longer now an overseer, or a deacon, or their wives. All is on the broadest ground, yet what could act more powerfully on conscience than to find oneself called to behave suitably to God’s house? All the English versions from Wiclif to the Authorized refer the call to Timothy only and his personal duty. I cannot but agree with the Revisers that the application is purposely left more general. Perhaps however “how men ought to behave themselves” is hardly so happy as “how one ought to behave oneself.” It seems too vague, even as preceding English Versions are rather too limited.

In the Old Testament God had His house on earth. It was not so always. In the earlier dealings of God with man He had no such dwelling-place here below. There was none when man was unfallen in the brief sojourn of Eden; still less was there during the long sorrowful years of fallen man's history till the flood. Nor was it a privilege vouchsafed to Noah when God established His covenant and "set His bow in the cloud for a token between Him and the earth." Not even the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had it yet vouchsafed to them, though Jacob did say in his fear, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven!" More correctly did he add "This stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house." As yet, God had not actually any house which He could own on earth, though faith might anticipate it.

On what then is God's house based? On redemption. Hence as Exodus is pre-eminently the book of redemption, it is precisely that book of the Old Testament which first and most fully treats of God's house. For the second book of Moses naturally divides into three parts: first, the evidence of the people's need of redemption; secondly, the accomplishment of redemption in all its fulness; thirdly, the great consequence of redemption in the founding and ordering of God's house or tabernacle with all its appurtenances, and the surpassing glory of His presence filling that in which He was then pleased to dwell.

But, in accordance with the general character of the Jewish economy, the dwelling of God was but typical, manifesting itself after an external sort. And as the law was the ground-work of God's government of His people,

so the glory that dwelt in the sanctuary had a judicial character, whatever the long-suffering that bore with a stiff-necked and guilty people from generation to generation. When patience with the idolatry in the people, the priests, the kings, even of David's house, must be, if continued longer, the sanction of their apostasy and of His own dishonour, that very glory judges them by the power of Babylon (mother of idols) and is seen slowly departing from their midst, though not for ever, but assuredly till He come Whose right it is to restore this and all things. Compare Ezekiel 1-11; Ezekiel 40-48.

Meanwhile Christ has come; but the people would not have their King, the Anointed of God. For the time they have forfeited all, having both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and driven out the apostles, "pleasing not God and are contrary to all men, forbidding the Gentiles to be spoken to that they might be saved, filling up their sins always, so that wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. 2:15, 16). But their greatest evil is the occasion of God's greatest good to man. Israel's rejection of the Messiah has brought about the redemption that is in Christ Jesus through His cross, blood-shedding, and resurrection.

And now God deigns to dwell not merely in the midst of a people externally, but most really and intimately in His own and with them for ever by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. "Ye are God's building," says Paul to the Corinthian assembly.... "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:9-16. Compare also 2 Cor. 6:16). The same truth applies also individually, as we have seen it collectively: "Know ye not that your body is the temple

of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). In both cases God's dwelling-place is maintained by the presence of His Spirit, not by a mere outward display. "Ye also are builded together for God's habitation in virtue of the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22), the reality and permanence of which indwelling is measured by Christ's having obtained an eternal redemption. What a call to holiness, not only in personal walk but in our joint responsibilities! Those who truly believe and appreciate this incomparable favour are of all others under the deepest obligation to behave accordingly.

But the apostle adds "which" (or "seeing that it") "is a living God's assembly." This description gives great force to God's house, placing it in direct contrast with that of a dead idol, the boast and shame of all Gentiles everywhere. Form without life is valueless under the gospel; though life acts and shows itself in forms for which scripture is the only adequate authority, for it is God's word and not man's. And "wherein is he to be accounted of?" Nor does a dead assembly suit a living God. But the point above all remains — not what they are, but what He is. It is His assembly: let those there never forget it.

Further, the assembly is characterized as "pillar" and as "groundwork," or support, of the truth. Christ is the truth, and so is the written word, as well as the Spirit. They all are the truth, either objectively, or in power. But the assembly is the pillar on which the truth is inscribed and upheld before the world which believes not in Christ, receives not the word, and neither sees nor knows the Holy Spirit. The truth is not in faithless

Judaism; nor is it in Mohammedan imposture; if possible yet less in the abominable vanities of heathendom. The church is the responsible witness and support of the truth on the earth. There only might men see the truth (compare 2 Cor. 3:2, 3), if they could not read a letter of the scriptures. Alas! how great the ruin of the pillar, if we judge the privilege and the responsibility of the church by the word as it bears on its actual state. He who so weighs before God all the failure will never take things lightly, but will search the same word in order to find how grace provides for the path of the faithful in such circumstances; so that one may neither acquiesce in evil nor give way to unbelieving despair, but may judge oneself as well as the departure of Christendom in order to do God's will in faith.

There is not a single good reason to sever the last clause from the assembly, and to connect it with "the mystery of godliness," as is done chiefly by Germans of the 17th and 18th centuries (including even Bengel). Not only do I agree with Alford and Ellicott in their rejection of a dislocation so abrupt and artificial, but I maintain that it would strip the assembly of its essential place which is here defined, and that it would detract from, instead of adding to, the true dignity of "the mystery of godliness." It is a construction therefore burdened with almost every conceivable objection, without one genuine merit, and in my judgment the offspring of not ignorance only but deplorably low and wrong views of the church's place and duty here below. Scarcely better is the reference to Timothy as made by some ancients and moderns. To the assembly alone is the true application.

The assembly, or church, of God then is in no way the truth, but is its responsible witness and its support on

the earth before all men. Not the church but Christ is the standard and expression of what God is and of man and all else, as revealed in Holy Writ, the one daily and perfect rule of faith, the word that abides for ever. So far from being before the word, so as to formulate the truth, it was the word making known Christ which the Spirit of God used to quicken and fashion those who compose the church. Thus to the truth the church in God's grace owes its being; without the truth, or rather by abandoning it (for, to be the church, the truth must have been possessed and maintained), the faithless church becomes not null only but the special object of divine judgment. Its privileges furnish the measure of its guilt; nor has anything more helped on its ruin than the fond assumption (in the teeth of Rom. 11, 2 Thess. 2, and of many other warnings) that the ancient people were broken-off branches that the now favoured Gentile might be grafted in never to fail or to be cut off, as rebellious Israel has been!

Hence the propriety of the striking summary which follows as the conclusion of the chapter: not the heavenly relationship of the church, but the fundamental truth set forth in the person of Christ, and graven, not only on the hearts of Christians as such, but on the assembly for its public confession, its habitual praise, and its practice every day.

"And confessedly great is the mystery of godliness: He Who16 was manifested in flesh, was justified in Spirit, appeared unto angels, was preached among Gentiles, was believed on in [the] world, was received up in glory" (ver. 16).

The introductory clause is most instructive as well as impressive. “Mystery” means a truth once secret but now fully divulged, never a sacrament, (though important in its place and for the purpose intended of the Lord). The secret (now revealed) of piety or godliness is the truth of Christ. He is the source, power, and pattern of what is practically acceptable to God-His person as now made known. True life is living by the faith of the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me (Gal. 2:20). To look on Him or for Him as a Jew once might in faith is not enough. Here He stands revealed in the great essential lineaments of the truth. The church lives, moves, and has its being in presenting Him thus to every eye and heart. Men may disbelieve or gainsay to their own destruction; but to present the truth of Christ is, we may say, the reason of the church’s existence, rather than the admirably good results which flow both for each saint within and for those without who come to believe unto their own eternal blessing.

Some doubtless will cry out as if “He Who,” as in the Revised Version, grievously displaces “God”, as in the Authorized Version which follows editions formed on the more modern copies. But weigh well the better attested reading, and soon you may happily learn how much more exact is the relative in this connection, as it also really supposes the self-same truth in the background. For where would be even the sense of saying that Adam or Abraham, that David, Isaiah, or Daniel, or that any other human being, “was manifested in flesh”? An angelic creature so manifested would be revolting for the end in view, and could no more avail than a man. If only a man, no other way than “flesh” was open to him: the mightiest “hunter before the Lord,” the subtlest wit,

the most consummate orator or poet or warrior or statesman, “he also is flesh,” no less than the least one born of woman.

Not so the one Mediator between God and men; for though He deigned to become man, He was intrinsically and eternally divine. But for the counsels and ways of grace, He might conceivably have come as He pleased, in His own glory, or in His Father’s, or in that of the holy angels, without emptying and humbling Himself to incarnation and atonement. Here the opening and immeasurable wonder of the truth is the glory of Him Who was born of the virgin and thus manifested in flesh. So in the kindred passage of John 1 it is written (John 1:14), “The Word became flesh,” where it had been carefully laid down before (John 1:1) that “The Word was God,” as well as “with God,” in the beginning before He made anything in the universe created by Him.

1. “Manifested in flesh”; not only is this a truth to test every conscience: what an appeal to the heart! what infinite love to ruined and guilty sinners, for whose sake He was thus manifested to the glory of God! He came to make known, as only He could, God as light and love, Himself the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man, Himself the Son of man that came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. Herein is love, not that we loved God (as we ought according to the law, but we did not, yea, we hated both Father and Son without a cause), but that He loved us and gave His Son a propitiation for our sins. And herein was laid the new and everlasting ground of God’s righteousness, where man was proved hopelessly unrighteous, in the cross and blood of Christ, that God might be just and the justifier of him that

believes in Jesus. Here however it is not the work done in infinite love that God might righteously do His will in sanctifying us through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; it is His person in the state in which alone that work could avail — the Son incarnate, “He Who was manifested in flesh.”

2. Next, we are told, He “was justified in Spirit.”17 He was as truly man as any; but His state was, as that of no other, characterized absolutely by the Spirit of God, from the beginning right through life and death, in uninterrupted energy of holiness and incorruption till He rose from the dead and took His seat on the right hand of the Majesty on high. His unvarying life was to do God’s will, the only Man Who never once did His own will. He felt, spoke, acted, uniformly in the Spirit: as He was conceived in the virgin’s womb, so He was in due time anointed, and finally marked out Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection (cp. Rom. 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18). It was His perfection as Man in the midst of an evil and ruined world to do, not miracles only but, everything in the Spirit’s power; where we who believe have to follow in His steps, endowed with the same Spirit now given to us in His grace; but we, with our old man, which He had not to save, but to die for it on the cross, and which therefore was crucified with Him that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin, having died to it (Rom. 6:6).

3. He “appeared to angels.” The Son of God was made visible to angels, not only on marked occasions as specified in scripture from His birth of woman till He ascended on high, but generally we may say through His incarnation. But is this all that the clause implies? May

it not also describe, what appears more characteristic, that, when He ceased to be seen among men on earth, not even the chosen witnesses beholding Him conversant with them more, He was an object of sight to angels? The earthly scene closed, He certainly has to do most expressly with all the angels of God, seeing they worship Him. Nor can any condition be more outside the ordinary way in which a Jew thinks of the Messiah, even when glory dawns on Immanuel's land. However this may be, I should not be too bold as to it.

4. "He was preached among Gentiles." Here the sphere of preaching is not merely beyond habitual Jewish expectations but in contrast with it. They looked for Him to reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His ancients gloriously, and no doubt to have the nations for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, but still set as Jehovah's King upon His holy hill of Zion, Israel the centre of that wide circle of blessing and glory here below. Such is to be the display of the kingdom when He comes again and shall have cleared away the apostate and rebellious despisers. But here it is the secret which the Christian knows now — Christ "preached among Gentiles," instead of reigning over Israel. This indeed is the evident truth, and would be plain and simple enough to us, if Gentile boasting did not darken it by claiming Israel's place as now indefeasibly the portion of Christendom, to the denial of the ancient people's hopes, as well as to the destruction of all right perception of our own, incomparably brighter, even as the heavens are higher than the earth.

5. So again, He "was believed on in [the] world" exactly describes the essential difference in this sphere from that which prophecy held out and which God will make

good in the age to come. Then every eye shall see the Son of man, and a dominion will be given Him, and glory, so that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; and this dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away (as the old empires did), and His kingdom shall not be destroyed (as the last or Roman Empire must, though it be revived by the power of the pit, in order to meet the peculiar judgment of God on its surpassing lawlessness and self-exaltation in the last days). Christ now is an object of faith only, not yet reigning in power over the world, as Rev. 11:15 announces.

6. He “was received up in glory.” Such is the suited and worthy close of this concise but comprehensive form of sound words, so as to leave fresh on all souls that read it the bright impress of Christ in glory. For if He came down in love, as has another admirably remarked, He went up in righteousness. The work given Him to do He accomplished at infinite cost to Himself and perfectly to God’s glory, even where all might have seemed hopeless — as to sin, and a world of sin. The adequate answer to the cross of the suffering Son of man (Who had thus glorified God) was that God should glorify Him in Himself and this straightway (John 13:31, 32).

And such accordingly is the righteousness of which the Spirit when come at Pentecost afforded evidence to the world. The world had proved its unrighteous hatred in rejecting Him Whom God raised from the dead and set at His own right hand. This exaltation is the righteousness which the presence of the Spirit sent down from heaven demonstrates: the crucified Son of man sits on the throne of God. And here we have the same glorious fact which completes the circle of the

truth embraced by the Spirit of God in “the mystery of piety”. How wonderful to find it all in a few facts of our Lord Jesus! But the wonder melts into worship, as we bear in mind that if He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also Who ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill up all things (Eph. 4:9, 10). He that emptied Himself to become a servant was in Himself God and Lord. The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand, as Isaiah (Isa. 53:10) foretold.

14 Some try to eke out the error by the argument that “presbyter” is priest writ large. Very likely the English word is etymologically due to that Anglicized exotic. But in fact of usage they are wholly distinct, and “priest” in every version, save the corrupt Rhemish, represents not its ancestor which really means “elder,” but the sacrificial officer ἱερεύς.

15 Text. Rec. has here the clause,

μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ, “not seeking gain basely,” taken apparently from ver. 8 where it is all right, yet more probably from Titus 1:7.

16 Dr. Scrivener, though with hesitation from his own first impression with that of others in the past, no longer (second Ed. 552-6) denies A to have read ὅς (with C F G. etc. and almost all the ancient Vv.), rather than Θεός, “God,” as in most copies followed by the Text. Rec.

17 It is well known that some have thought that

ἐν πν. (in Spirit) here does not refer to the Holy Spirit but to the spiritual principle in our Lord as a man. Now admitting that there was this spirit in Him and that σάρξ

(“flesh”) does not express it, anyone subject to scripture may soon satisfy himself that the phrase here employed is not proper to convey any such thought, which would require the article, as in Matt. 5:3, Matt. 26:41; Matt. 27:50; Mark 2:8; Mark 8:12, Mark 14:38, Luke 10:21 (in the true text) John 11:33; John 13:21; John 19:30, Acts (18:5), Acts 19:21, Acts 20:22, et al. These may suffice to prove that where one’s own spirit is meant, the article is the correct form of expression. On the other hand, proof is no less abundant that πν., with or without such prepositions as ἐκ, ἐν, διά, κατά, does express as regularly the state or power of the Holy Spirit characterizing men, in contrast with mere nature, often of course with ἁγ. which I do not cite, but also without, as Matt. 22:28, Matt. 12:43, John 3:5, John 4:23, 24; Rom. 8:4, 9, 13; 1 Cor. 2:4, 13; 1 Cor. 7:40; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 3:3; Gal. 4:29, Gal. 5:5, 16, 18, 25 (twice); et al. The real difficulty might rather be when the intent is to present the Spirit objectively, which requires the insertion of the article, as in Matt. 4:1, Matt. 12:31, Mark 1:10, 12, Luke 2:27 where grammatically Simeon’s spirit only might be meant, but we know from the context, as in the other cases very clearly, that the Holy Spirit is the thought.

1 Timothy 4

The assembly, in its practical and responsible standing before men as the witness of God’s revealed truth and will, naturally leads the apostle to treat of Satan’s efforts to undermine and falsify the truth, not without warning on God’s part.

“But the Spirit saith expressly that in latter times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and teachings of demons, by hypocrisy of legendmongers, branded in their own conscience, forbidding to marry, [bidding]18 to abstain from meats which God created for reception with thanksgiving by those faithful and fully acquainted with the truth. Because every creature of God [is] good, and nothing to be rejected when received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified through God’s word and intercession” (vers. 1-5).

The mischief here set out is not the wider and later evil of 2 Tim. 3:1-9, when Christendom would be but men professing the Lord’s name, a form of piety with the denial of its power, no better than heathen in reality (cp. Rom. 1:28-32), though with the semblance and the responsibility of God’s final revelation of grace and truth in Christ. Still less is it the frightful apostacy of 2 Thess. 2:3-12, which is to close the age before the Lord Jesus be revealed in judgment from heaven to introduce the new age and the kingdom of God to be manifested in power and blessing universally over the earth. No such absolute or comprehensive enmity to the gospel and the Lord is seen here, but rather a sentimental and intellectual affectation of ascetic sanctimoniousness, the

germs of which were even then at work and which were soon to develop into the Gnostic sects. It was human pretension, and not the faith of the holy communications of the divine mind nor the submission of heart to His will Who cannot but direct us for His glory through the corruptions of a world ruined by lust.

Here the liberty which characterizes those who have the Spirit is supplanted by a systematic bondage of man's will, setting up to be holier than God, and founded on airy conceits, which, being exaggerations of the imagination, are never the truth which in the highest degree they claim to be. It is not the ease but the pretentious effort of the flesh inflated by the enemy, which at a later day brought in the oriental error of two divine principles, an evil as well as a good: the good having to do with the soul and characterized by light; the evil with the body and characterized by darkness; the God of the New Testament in contrast with the God of the Old in its ultimate Manichean form of heterodoxy. The root of this is apparent here. Slight on the creatures of God issues in slight of the Creator. Nor is the error dead yet, though it may retreat into cloudy phrases, shunning collision with the truth. In our day it has taken the shape of death to nature and neglect of relationships. It is the same principles which the Holy Spirit denounces here as the denial of fundamental truth, with which the highest revelations are never inconsistent. He that wrote to the Romans wrote also to the Ephesians, and the same apostle is the author of the Epistles to the Colossians and to the Hebrews. So it will always be found that those who are most truly versed in the mysteries of God are careful to maintain the

immutable truths of His nature and the due place of the creature.

Here all was at fault. “Some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and teachings of demons, by hypocrisy of legend-mongers.” There were thus three parties in the abandonment of the faith; first, the victims of the errors, secondly, the unseen power of evil, the spirits or demons that misled, thirdly, the legendmongers who were the medium. This shows the importance of a correct translation. For it is not meant that the demons were the utterers of lies in hypocrisy, any more than that they were branded with a hot iron in their conscience. And this probably led to the softening down of the true phrase. Restore the medium, and any such necessity disappears. A man may utter falsehoods in hypocrisy. We can scarcely talk of a demon’s hypocrisy; and scripture certainly gives no warrant for attributing conscience to a seducing spirit. But this is exactly true of the false teachers who were carried along by these unseen agents of evil. They were the hypocrites, and they had “their own” conscience branded in distinction from the unhappy but less guilty men who were led astray by their means.

They forbade to marry and bade men to abstain from meats which God created for reception with thanksgiving by those faithful and fully acquainted with the truth. There was the assumption of extraordinary purity. But the wiles of the devil were in it; for the assumption impeached God’s institution of marriage, the bond of society here below. And God is not mocked. The result soon showed that the evil one was its author, for the deepest moral corruption was the consequence.

Grace may call a servant of God for special and worthy reasons to a path inconsistent with the married relation, because its duties could not be fulfilled with the due accomplishment of the objects of that path. So we see in the apostle Paul himself, as he lets us know in 1 Cor. 7. But this very chapter maintains the ordinary rule of the marriage state, as elsewhere he exhorts that it should be every way in honour. Only the call of God is paramount. Yet he that is so called respects and never despises the ordinary rule because of that exception. Error lays hold of the exception (for even error cannot subsist without a scrap or show of truth) and converts the exception into a human rule. It is Satan occupying the place and rights of the Lord; his aim is to bring God into contempt and lead man dazzled with the vain hope of higher holiness into the depths of corruption. It is the truth (and no lie is of the truth) which sanctifies.

So in bidding men to abstain from meats the same disrespect of God appears. He created them to be received with thanksgiving. No doubt all mankind were meant to share the benefit and do so in their measure; but many partake like brutes without real thanksgiving, often without even the form. The faithful thoroughly acquainted with the truth receive such gifts from God and give thanks. Satan exalts some to such a height of philosophic folly as to deny that they come from His hand Who reconciled them to Himself by the death of His Son; then to imagine them to be the temptations of an evil being; finally to conceive that there is no such thing as creation or consequently a Creator. So that the error if but a little in beginning becomes the beginning of a very great evil.

Here, again, the importance of fasting is in no way impaired by the thankful reception of daily bread. Rather do both things go together in every sound and godly mind. But the wiles of the devil were shown in availing himself of abstinence from food. Fasting is admirable in its own place and for special reasons from time to time as the grace of God may direct. Wholly opposed is the delusion of seducing spirits, which the legend-mongers turned into a law, as in the eschewing of marriage: “Because every creature of God is good and nothing to be rejected when received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified through God’s word and intercession.” Thus the ordinary prohibitions of the law disappear, for in this respect as in others the law made nothing perfect. The gospel, the full revelation of Christ, whilst it rises to the glory of God in the highest and stands in presence of the inscrutable depths of God’s most holy judgment of sin in the cross, vindicates all the ways of God in creation as well as in providence. Hence the Christian, if not the Jew, can say that every creature of God is good and nothing to be rejected; but there is the proviso — “if received with thanksgiving.” An ungrateful saint is an anomaly. The simplest believer cannot more than the most intelligent overlook the kindness as well as the wisdom of God, Who created all things and has Himself said, “I will in no wise fail thee; neither will I in anywise forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

But the apostle adds a reason which confirms the thanksgiving of the believer; “for it is sanctified through God’s word and intercession.” Thus is the use of every creature of God guarded. It is no mere indiscriminate licence; but as the restrictions of a law for a circumscribed people vanished before the light of the

gospel, and the goodness of God was heard declaring that He had cleansed what Jewish prejudice would have to be common (“to the pure all things are pure”), so the receiver proved his faith in “God’s word” by the answer of his “intercession.” Not their will but His word sanctioned the use of every creature good for food; and their hearts, brought to know His grace in salvation, draw near in that free intercourse which is assured of, as it springs from, His love made known to us in Christ and His redemption. But it is an intercourse based on His grace, which takes in the least things as not too little for God, as it has learnt in Christ that the greatest things of God are not too great for His children.

The word

ἐντευξις is here translated “intercession,” in order to keep up its speciality in accordance with its sense elsewhere, as in 1 Timothy 2:1. “Prayer,” though seemingly less harsh, and as in all the earlier English so still in the Revised, is too vague to express the free intercourse which grace has opened with God for His children. I admit that “intercession” sounds inadequate; but I know no better counterpart in our language and therefore have ventured to explain what appears to be conveyed. If God’s word communicated the reality and extent of His gracious will, the faithful can speak unrestrainedly their heart’s sense-of His loving bounty. Thus all that is received is “sanctified.” For, now that we know Christ dead and risen, here too we can say that the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. And all things are of God Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ (2 Cor. 5:19, 20).

Thence the apostle turns to a more precise application and, at the close, to what is yet more strictly personal. (vers. 6-16).

“Setting these things before the brethren, thou wilt be a good servant of Christ Jesus,19 nourished in the words of the faith and the good teaching which thou hast followed up. But the profane and old-womanish fables refuse, and exercise thyself unto piety; for bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but piety is profitable for all things, having promise of life that is now and of that which is to come. The word [is] faithful and worthy of all acceptance; for unto this end we 20labour and 21suffer reproach, because we have our hope set on a living God Who is Saviour of all men, especially of faithful [men]” (vers. 6-10).

The language employed is of studied moderation. Suggesting these things to the brethren Timothy would be a good minister of Christ Jesus. Dignity does not lose by lowliness in any: in a young man it is most becoming, and gives the most weight to a solemn warning. The object of all ministry is the exalting of Christ, but this cannot be at the expense of truth or holiness. The substitutes of the enemy may look fair and certainly flatter the flesh; but God’s word alone can be trusted. He infallibly secures not one thing only but all in the harmony of his revealed will. Human tradition is as worthless as human imagination, and both if accepted will be found in the long run only to supplant God’s word, and play into the power of the enemy through yielding to the will of man. To lay before the brethren what the Spirit expressly speaks is good ministry; — it is to serve Christ Jesus. So He Himself walked and served here below. His food was to do the will of Him that sent

Him and to finish His work. What more blessed than so to walk and serve Him now? Men are best kept where Christ alone is the object, as He is the source of all power in the Spirit to guide and sustain. He called and He sent forth at His charges. How different the moral effect, for the minister as well as for others, of serving a society, even if that society were the church of God as the mistress of the service! He who seeks to please men cannot be thoroughly Christ's bondman. We cannot serve two masters.

Timothy, in putting forth divine truth, would be a good servant of Christ Jesus: "Nourished in the words of the faith and in the good teaching which thou hast followed up." This is of moment. To go on well in Christ's service one must be trained or nourished up in the words of the faith. To give out, one must take in. But the proper material is not the science or literature of men, but the "words of the faith." The good teaching, which Timothy had already followed up closely, yields matter for the right service of Christ Who repudiates the wisdom of this age. The words of the faith are ever beyond the age and above it. It is to Christ's dishonour to mingle with them the persuasible words of man's wisdom. The Holy Ghost has been given that there should be no lack through God's bounty and also the most complete preservative against the seductions of the prince of the world.

What can be more contemptuous towards the constant snare of Jews as well as Gentiles than the apostle's exhortation: "The profane and old-womanish fables refuse"! So he characterizes that which takes the place of God's word, the food of faith. Where there is no healthy appetite of the new man, fabulous dreams have

ever had an attraction for the heart and mind of man; and these which surely abound in proportion to distaste for divine revelation. They stimulate, they inflate, they in a measure satisfy nature. But the true God is not there, nor Jesus Christ Whom He has sent, and least of all where they dare most profanely to conceive and set forth either God or His Christ according to their own imaginings. What can be more offensive than the pseudo-evangels about the Lord? How palpable the darkness in contrast with the true light which shines in Him according to the Gospels! How absurd, indeed morally impotent and positively mischievous, the imaginary miracles of His childhood! How holy and wise and perfect the glimpses we have of the truth in the Gospel of Luke!

From old-wives' fables Timothy was to turn away. But, says Paul, "exercise thyself unto piety." Service of Christ is admirable; yet there is no greater danger if piety be neglected personally. It is of prime moment that this be kept up in the soul, as otherwise the comfort and joy as well as the sorrows and dangers of His service are most absorbing. The lightminded Corinthians were in great peril from the neglect of piety (1 Cor. 9:24-27). The apostle had therefore transferred the exhortation and for their sakes applied it to himself, when he told them that he was in the habit of buffeting his body and leading it captive, lest, after having preached to others, he should be himself reprobate or rejected. Not that he was careless of holiness and piety, but that they were. But he makes himself the example, unlike as it was to his way, that they might be warned of a very real danger for their own souls, not at all in distrust of God as to himself.

Here as in 1 Cor. 9 the figure of “exercise” appears to be taken from the public games and the necessary preparation for them, so familiar to the Greek mind. Timothy was to be in constant training: “Exercise thyself unto piety, for bodily exercise is useful (profitable) for a little, but piety is useful (profitable) for all things, having promise of life that is now and of that to come.” The allusion is evident. Outward exercise profits physically or as he says strictly, “bodily exercise is useful for a little.” Piety is spiritual exercise and demands as constant vigilance, as holy self-restraint, as complete subjection to the revealed will of God, even as training for the games called for habitual abstinence from every relaxing habit and for daily practice toward the end in view. How little the latter goal! How transcendent the former! Piety is profitable for all things, having promise of life that is now and of that to come. Christianity does not take tithes like Judaism, but can allow no reserve though all be grace. It has and from its very nature must have the entire man, dead to sin and alive unto God, right through the present life into eternity. And this wide practical scope of godliness is pre-eminent in these pastoral Epistles; not so much heavenly privilege or dispensational peculiarity is enforced as a sound and devoted life according to godliness. This the apostle presses on Timothy, as Timothy was bound to press it on others.

Hence the repetition of the formula so frequent in these Epistles: “The word is faithful and worthy of all acceptation; for unto this end we labour and suffer reproach, because we have our hope set on a living God Who is Saviour of all, especially of faithful [men].” It is no question here, it appears to me, of Christ’s work in

the salvation of the lost who believe. It is of the living God as such that the apostle speaks — of God in His character of preserver of men, as also Job speaks (Job 7:20). God's providential care and government are before us, wherein nothing escapes His notice. So He clothes the herbage of the field and nourishes the birds of heaven which sow not, nor reap, nor gather into granaries. So He makes His sun rise on evil and good, and sends rain on just and unjust. How much more prized are not His own than many sparrows, even the hairs of their heads being all numbered!

No Christian could forget for a moment the infinite privilege of eternal life and redemption, of heavenly hope and everlasting glory; but, in presence of these unseen and eternal things, he might to his own great loss as well as to the Lord's dishonour overlook the constant daily and special care of God in the ordinary matters of this life. Against such an error, this verse (10) as well as the previous context would guard the soul. The highest privileges do not supersede nor even enfeeble the unchanging truth in its lowest range of application every day. It is the unfailing mark of the heterodox where it is so; and this let faithful men note well. It was never more rife than now. Grace never disparages law nor despises nature; but an intellectualism which avails itself of privilege to destroy responsibility and relationship is guilty in both respects.

"These things charge and teach. Let none despise. thy youth, but be a pattern of the faithful in word, in conduct, in love,22 in faith, in purity. Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Neglect not the gift that was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the elderhood.23 Bestow care on

these things; be wholly in them; that thy progress may be manifest to24 all. Take heed to thyself and the teaching; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt save thyself and those that hear thee" (vers. 11-16).

Here we have plain personal precepts for Timothy. Absence of assumption gives more, not less, weight to a solemn charge or a faithful teaching; and there was the more need for admonition as he was young, though any who despised him on that account was inexcusable. But it was a serious reason for Timothy himself to cultivate such speech and manner of life, such love and faith and purity as ought to disarm even the naturally froward with whom he might have to do among the believers.

The adjoining terms give conclusive proof that the "reading" was not personal study but rather the public recitation of scripture for general instruction, since the "exhortation" and the "teaching" must refer to others; the importance of his own walk had been carefully insisted on just before.

Hence, immediately after, he is reminded of that gift of grace which was imparted to him, the ground of his ministry: for no practical grace, however momentous morally and for God's glory, entitles a soul to go forward in Christ's service without such a gift. It was, as we are told afterwards (2 Tim. 1:6), through the laying on of Paul's hands that the gift was in Timothy; but none the less were the elderhood associated with the apostle in the imposition of hands. They were its comely witnesses and his honoured associates, though only to apostolic power under the Lord was the gift really due. And this is not more fully borne out by the facts and the language elsewhere than by the nice distinction of the

prepositions in the account given in the two Epistles to Timothy. So little are they to be heard who assume either vagueness in a style strikingly precise, or a love of mere variety without intentional distinction in phrases more exquisitely correct than in any work of any classic of antiquity, however accurate. Here only, in inspired writ, can we be sure of the exact expression of the truth without affectation of any kind.

The connection of “prophecy” as well as of the “laying on of hands” is well illustrated by Acts 13:2, 3, where the Spirit designated Barnabas and Saul for the special mission to which they were separated; and their fellow-labourers thereon laid their hands on both, conjointly commending them to the grace of God for the work they were about to undertake among the Gentiles. There is, however, this marked difference among others, that none of those who then laid hands on these already blessed servants of the Lord pretended to confer a gift on either. It was simply fellowship in commending men superior in position and power to themselves; and it seems certainly to have been repeated with Paul and Silas in Acts 15:40, as perhaps often. In Timothy’s case, 25 through the apostle was given a gift which he must not neglect. Use of means that the gift be turned to the best account is of moment; but the gift from the Lord for ministerial work must be there as a foundation. “Bestow care on these things; be wholly in them that thy progress may be manifest to all.” Diligent following up is called for, without distraction from other objects. Thus only is there growth and advance, which all fair men cannot fail to see.

But there is another caution of prime value, which if attended to entails rich blessing: “Take heed to thyself

and the teaching," and do so in this order. Vigilant and holy self-restraint is needed by no man so much as a teacher of the truth; for nothing corrupts one to the Lord's dishonour and the stumbling of souls more than a careless behaviour combined with the highest doctrine. A consciously low walk ever tends to drag down the testimony in order to seem consistent; as the maintenance of the highest truth without a corresponding walk directly leads into hypocrisy. In doing aright in both, "thou shalt save both thyself and those that hear thee," says the apostle. Salvation often as here means safeguarding all through this life.

18 This is a case of what the grammarians call Zeugma, where another verb is implied by the context, as in 1 Tim. 2:12.

19 The preponderance of ancient and excellent authority favours this order against that of Text. Rec., which has not the support of a single uncial in its primary reading. — Other variants in this verse and the three following are not worth recording here.

20 "Both" is not represented in the oldest copies, nor, in any ancient versions, contrary to Text. Rec. — But ἀγωνιζὸμεθα "we strive," or "we combat," is supported by prn A C Fgr Ggr K and eight cursives against the rest which have ὀνειδιζόμθα as in Text. Rec.

21 Ibid.

22 "In spirit" stands in the Text. Rec., but against the best MSS. and all the ancient Vv.

23 The Sinaitic has some slight support against all the rest in the strange blunder of "the elder."

24 The Text. Rec. adds “in” as in the margin of the Authorized Version. But “to” is the true reading. Did the Authorized Version owe it to the Vulgate?

25 Bengel is utterly wrong in construing “prophecy” with the elderhood, and in including Paul in that elderhood.

1 Timothy 5

Having thus generally exhorted Timothy as to his own walk and work, reminded him of the gift conferred, urged on him practical piety and devotedness, and lifted him above all fear from his youth, the apostle goes into full details for his guidance in maintaining order among the saints so favoured of God.

“Reprimand not an elder, but exhort [him] as a father, younger men as brethren, elder women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity. Honour widows that are widows indeed; but if any widow hath children or descendants, let them learn first to show piety toward their own house and render requital to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and left desolate, hath set her hope on God and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that devoteth herself to pleasure is dead while living. And these things charge, that they may be irreproachable. But if one doth not provide (neglecteth providing) for his own and especially his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever” (vers. 1-8).

It is not the official elder who is here in view but any brother advanced in years. Of course the exhortation would apply if possible more to an elder in the official sense. But Timothy was not to speak harshly to an elder generally; he was rather to exhort him as a father. We can all feel how much is implied in this injunction; had we to reproach a parent about any fault, how much reverence would be due! What tenderness in touching that which we might rightly condemn! The humility of

grace and respect alone would become us. Indeed love was to characterize his bearing toward younger men also. As brethren, Paul would have him to regard them, and elder women as mothers. Younger women he was to view as sisters in all purity: such is the especial guard in the latter case.

This is practical Christianity in a servant of God, dear to the apostle; and particularly as Timothy was called to act when things were decaying. Order was not the less necessary because it was apt to be forgotten; the nearness of relationship into which the saints are brought by grace exposes to peculiar danger. Nothing is more opposed to Christ than an official position without the need of the full flow of love; so that speech as weld as conduct should be always in grace seasoned with salt. And it was the more necessary in a comparatively young man. If no one was to despise his youth, Timothy was called to give no occasion of stumbling in anything. To this rule the apostle himself submitted that his ministry might not be blamed: “in everything,” says he, “commending ourselves as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; by glory and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers and true; as unknown and well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and possessing all things” (2 Cor. 6:4-10). Never did the apostle exact so

much as, if we may so say, from himself. In dealing with Timothy, Paul is the best example of what he enjoins on Timothy toward others.

Next comes the important case of those who had lost their husbands, and the more so as women were in the old world of that day: “Honour widows that are widows indeed.” Such is the introductory exhortation, and therefore the word used, “honour”, is expressly of the most general bearing. Some if not many might not need material proof of care; but due regard was to be paid to all that were really widows. By this he means that they lived in a way which marked their habitual sense of this loneliness and that they bowed to it as from God. The later ecclesiastical class may have been founded on such a passage as this; but no such thing really existed as yet so far as scripture informs us. The context makes plain the meaning of the real widow. She had no immediate relations to take care of her, and therefore was the more to be an object of honour; and if destitute, that honour would certainly imply support more or less according to her need. But it is a mistake to limit honour to such a provision, as many a real widow might have no such necessity. “Honour” here as elsewhere must be preserved in its own proper and broad meaning.

“But if any widow has children or descendants, let them learn first to show piety to their own house and render requital to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God” (ver. 4). Such a widow in distinction from those of verse 3 is commended to the immediate relatives, who must learn their duty if they did not know it. Singular to say, most of the ancient Fathers as well as some of the modern Germans, including Winer, understand the widows to be the persons thus to learn:

so Chrysostom, Theodoret and others among the Greeks, Jerome, etc., among the Latins, and even Luther and Calvin of Reformation times. But the Syriac stands with others in the true view that it is the children or grandchildren who are called to learn, as best agreeing with the context, besides being of intrinsic soundness morally. Affectionate and pious respect was due from the younger to the widow of their family; and herein lay the strict sense of rendering requital. The church was never intended to swamp the family. Rather should the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ deepen the sense of every duty as well as enlarge the sphere of active love.

Among our English translators Wiclif of course is misled by the Vulgate: "But if any widow hath children of sones, learne she first to govern her hous…". Tyndale translated ἔκγονα "neves"; and so it is in the Protestant versions that followed down to the Authorized; which word at that day seems to have been used for grandsons or descendants generally, though now restricted to the issue of a brother or sister. It is no mistake in the common translation, therefore, but only an antiquated usage which seems best replaced by "descendants." The Rhemish Version, as usual, cleaves to the error of the Vulgate: "let her learn first to rule her own house…" The true sense we have seen to be the duty, not of the widow, but of her immediate kin in descent, though as usual the apostle puts it in the largest possible form. If the ἔκγονα or descendants were exhorted, it is not merely the χήμα or widow who is to be cared for, but οἱ πρόγονοι, the progenitors.

Only the Geneva Version among the English ones escaped the strange and general error of confounding

piety or godliness with ruling one's own house; for which there is no real ground in the phrase or its context.

"Now she that is a widow indeed, and left desolate, hath set her hope on God and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day" (ver. 5). Such is the picture that the apostle draws of the widow who is commended to the church's honour. "But she that devoteth herself to pleasure is dead while living" (ver. 6). The inconsistency of the habitual life in the latter case was most offensive to the apostle's spirit, as it ought to be to all who feel what becomes the house of God in this world. We can never form a right judgment of becoming conduct if we do not bear in mind our relationship to God and the Lord Jesus. How unseemly to despise the chastening of His hand! Was a woman wholly to forget her desolation? Were she happy in the Lord (and this no chastening is intended to touch), the last thing she would indulge in is pleasure, Satan's sorry substitute in the world for happiness above it. Enjoyment of God and His Son not only makes us realize the more the bitterness of a ruined world and of all genuine sorrow in it; but it lifts the heart clean out of it to the things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God. It was therefore of great moment to command these things that the saints concerned might be without reproach.

"But if one neglect providing for his own, and especially his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever." Even nature teaches the contrary. What can be more distressing than, with the possession or even the profession of Christian privileges, to fall short of ordinary righteousness or of family affection? To neglect care for one's relatives and especially for those

that compose the household is in the apostle's energetic language to have denied the faith and to be worse than an unbeliever. Unfeeling selfishness is a denial of the faith; for what has not God given to us in His own Son? He who confesses such grace is bound to manifest fruit in accordance with the Christ in Whom he believes. If he refuses, how many heathen would put such a man or woman to shame! It is usually an effort to lay one's own burden on others without any adequate reason, and contrary to the strongest dictates of not love only but propriety. Certainly God's church was never meant to be a club for the exercise of covetousness, but to be a school of divine love, and of righteousness unto holiness. And woe be to those who despise the importance of these injunctions, whether the motive be the lowest personal interest, or the pretension be that Christianity is so high as to exclude these natural relationships! Self, and not Christ, will be found at bottom to be the root of the latter as of the former. Only He gives scope and force to all scripture; whereas error may often hide itself behind one part of the word, which it misuses to deny another part. Faith welcomes and submits to it all. "By faith ye stand."

Next the apostle treats of special provision for a widow who had none bound to care for her. Grace is the life-breath of the saint and of the assembly; but the grace is in harmony, not conflict, with righteousness. There are circumstances and limits which cannot be neglected without loss to man and dishonour to God.

"Let a widow be enrolled not less than sixty years old, wife of one man, witnessed of in good26 works, if she reared children, if she entertained strangers, if she washed saints' feet, if she relieved afflicted [persons], if

she followed up every good27 work. But younger widows refuse; for when they wax wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having as accusation that they slighted their first faith. And withal they learn also [to be] idle, going about the houses; and not only idle but also tattlers and busy-bodies, speaking things that are not fitting. I will therefore that the younger marry, bear children, rule the house, give none occasion to the adversary for railing; for already have some been turned aside after Satan. If any believing [man or woman] hath widows, let [such an one] relieve them, and let not the assembly be burdened, that it may relieve those that are really widows" (vers. 9-16).

Here is much more a widow in a privileged if not official position. But there is no indication of a diaconal class, the age being adverse to any great activity of personal duties of the kind; nor yet of a presbyteral sort, though the least limit of sixty years might be claimed in its support. But there is a total absence in the context of any such functions, whatever scholars may argue from Fathers, Greek or Latin, in order to confirm the idea that female superintendents are in question. The apostle appears simply to contemplate such widows as the assembly is bound to put on the list of its care and bounty; and hence he speaks of past life and ways, not of future duties less or greater.

There is therefore a certain gradation in those described: 1st., widows in general; 2nd., widows really; 3rd., widows on the list of the assembly's special recognition. But no trace appears of an organized, still less, ordained, class of widows, known as this is to have existed afterwards. There is first an age sufficiently advanced for the list, irrespective of any disabling

malady which might commend the youngest person if destitute to gracious consideration. Next, it is required that she have been wife of one husband. With this may be compared Luke 2:36, 37, though it has no direct bearing on 1 Tim. 3:2, which consequently derives no illustration from it. Then her general character in respect of reputable works is insisted on. Rearing of children (not necessarily her own) is not forgotten; as well as the exercise of hospitality to strangers. Even this alone would not bear the Christian stamp; and the apostle adds that lowly act, so consecrated to deeper meaning by our Lord Himself in John 13 — washing saints' feet; which would be sure to receive an immense impulse from that blessed example, though alas! turned to vanity or a sectarian badge in days of degeneracy. Relief to distressed people in any form follows, and general diligence in whatever called for active benevolence. Widows known so to have lived were to be remembered especially by the assembly, without a word of investing them with ecclesiastical functions for the future. When cared for, they would not assuredly cease to care for others: godly and gracious habits do not so change; and the assembly was not to neglect but honour widows of such a sort.

Younger widows on the contrary Timothy was directed to decline — certainly for the list of which we have just heard, like older ones suitable otherwise; and perhaps even more generally. The apostle adds a reason which would not fail to act on the sensitive spirit of the labourer he is addressing. It is of deep value to see how Christ, and not moral or prudential or personal considerations, weighs in the apostle's mind. So should it be with us. The young widows are judged according to

their relationship to Christ. They of all perhaps might have been expected from their personal experience of sorrow to feel that the time is straitened, and that the fashion of this world passes (1 Cor. 7:29-31). But they lose sight of Christ and His dealings with them and look out for themselves. Instead of seeking to please Him, they wax wanton against Him, and cannot rest without a return to that estate which had just closed for them. Nothing of vows of or office appears here, but what became a younger widow looking for Christ, as all saints are called to wait for Him.

Failure in faith entails serious consequences on those that bear the Lord's name. Others may be restrained more by character, value for social opinion, or other motives inferior though common in the world. But professing Christians, when they take a true position and swerve from it, fall lower than others; and none so much as those who pique themselves on their fidelity. Faith alone keeps up lowly dependence on the Lord. Those of whom the apostle treats, having cast off their freshness of faith, slip lower and lower. "And withal they learn to be idle, going about the houses," i.e. known as of the saints generally; "and not only idle but also tattlers and busybodies, speaking things not fitting." It is severe, but how true! Was it not called for and wholesome? How often from what seems a little departure great evil ensues? To believe the word of God is to be warned and kept by grace.

Just as in 1 Cor. 7 while the apostle tells us what his judgment is, he lays not down all in the way of commandment (vers. 25, 40). So here, "I will that the younger marry, bear children, rule the house, give no occasion to the adversary for railing: for already some

have turned aside after Satan." This was most painful to one that loved the assembly. "She is free to be married to whom she will — only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:30).

It seems singular that the English Versions since Tyndale should, after "younger", have supplied "women"; for widows only are meant as Wiclif properly rendered. The Rhemish seems exact by expressing neither; but the Greek form precludes the necessity of adding females, and the context is decisive that the apostle speaks of none but those who had lost their husbands.

How different from scripture is the enforced celibacy of nuns, not to speak of monks and priests also! To what moral enormities, as well as wretchedness, this daring encroachment on God's prerogative has given rise for ages! Yet no doubt need be that it grew out of a desire for thorough devotedness. The due limits are laid down in Matt. 19:11, 12 and in 1 Cor. 7 as well as here. The unmarried state has its advantages where grace gives the due inward condition, which would surely fit into suited external circumstances and issue in such a life and service as we see in the apostle himself. But this is not given to all, nor is it of man's will but of divine grace. Make it a law, and the grace is destroyed; and a speedy result of sin, shame, and misery proclaims the wisdom of God's ways and the folly of Christendom's. Presuming to do better, they have notoriously fallen not only into the violation of common morality, but into unspeakable turpitude, covered with the veil of hypocrisy, to the ruin of souls and the present worldly advantage of those whose unswerving instinct is doing evil that good may come, whose judgment is just.

The external authority for the shorter reading (ver. 16), πιστή (A C F G P etc., with some ancient versions and Fathers) is so decided as to sway the chief modern critics, the Revisers, et al.; but the sense resulting is strange and unsatisfactory. Why should the support or relief of a young widow be cast on a believing woman peculiarly? Is this like the sobriety, the largeness, the wisdom, of scriptures. That a believing man or woman should be appealed to on the behalf of such a needy connection is very intelligible; and the text which exhibits this is given by D K L and most of the cursives, with some ancient versions and Fathers. The direction in verse 16 is in no way a mere repetition of the principles laid down in verses 4, 8. In the earlier case (4), if a widow had children or descendants, they were, before others could be rightly called on, to learn pious care for their family in requital of their parents; and this is enforced (8) as a duty of providing so plain that failure in it is denounced as a denial of the faith, and even worse than an unbeliever. Then after describing a widow that is entitled, not here to respect simply as in 5, nor yet to censure as in 6, but to be placed on the list of the assembly's support (as in vers. 9, 10), we are confronted with the delicate question, especially for such a one as Timothy, of younger widows, whose dangers are set forth, answered by the apostle's will about them. This is followed by the call on any believing man or woman connected with such that relief should be given to those that were truly widows. There is no question here of scandal, or of unfitness for official duties: indeed the latter is nowhere, save in men's imagination now or in fact at any time posterior to the apostolic age.

As we had elders in respect of years (proved by the contrast of youngers and of the two sexes) brought before us in the beginning of the chapter, we have here the apostle's injunctions as to official elders or presbyters.

"Let the elders that preside well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those that labour in word and teaching. For the scripture saith, An ox when treading out corn thou shalt not muzzle, and Worthy [is] the workman of his hire" (vers. 17, 18).

It is remarkable how much we may and ought to glean from these few words, decisive as they are of important differences among Christians, and not least of all since the Reformation. For the revival then lay more in shaking off the main hindrance in Christendom to free reading of the Bible, and in a measure to the recovery of the gospel, than in any real intelligence of the assembly or of ministry, or indeed of like matters. Men's notions got cleared of gross superstition, but church truth was the less learned, because it was assumed that there was little or nothing to learn; and so traditional error as to what is of such moment rests on the mass of Christians to this day.

The business of the elders was to rule or take the lead among the saints. They were responsible to see to godly order in public and private; and hence, as we saw in chapter iii., qualities were looked for which would give them moral weight, not only in cheering the weak and timid and tried, but in repressing the forward, and rebuking the disorderly. They are therefore quite distinct from the gifts, of which we hear so much in Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4, and elsewhere. Hence we

must distinguish, as scripture does, a pastor from an elder. For as the latter is never enumerated among the fruits of Christ's ascension, the former is incontrovertibly treated as a gift of His love, no less than apostles, prophets, and evangelists, for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of the ministry, unto the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12).

The two might be united, doubtless, in the same person. But eldership was a local charge, which needed the authority of an apostle, or an adequate person acting definitely under apostolic commission, to make the desired choice of fitting men. This is clearly shown in Acts 14:23; where, we are told, that Paul and Barnabas chose or appointed elders for the disciples in each assembly. That the disciples chose elders, whom the apostles ordained, is a fiction, perhaps due to the wholly different case in Acts 6 of "the seven," whom the saints at large did select and the apostles appointed over the business of the "tables". The reason of this procedure seems plain. The saints, as they contributed of their goods, were left most wisely to look out from among themselves brethren so endowed as to inspire the confidence of all. But the "gifts" are given by Christ, not by the church, and therefore in this case He alone chooses; and, as authority also is from Him Who invested the apostles with power to act for Him on earth, we see them, directly or indirectly, choosing elders accordingly. Hence Titus was sent for the purpose of appointing elders in every city of Crete (Titus 1:5). Never was the assembly told in scripture to choose such. Directions also are here given to Timothy only, not to the assembly in Ephesus. Authority and power are from above.

So we see both gifts and elders not only subsisting, but this together, in apostolic times. Thus in Acts 15:2, 32 we hear of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and of Judas and Silas as chief men or guides among the brethren; but these are also described as “prophets,” and so they exhorted freely at Antioch, and are never viewed as “elders”. “Gift” is in the unity of the body of Christ, and might therefore be exercised as freely in one place as in another. An elder was a local charge, exercised in the particular assembly for which it was appointed; and this, it would seem, not singly but more than one in each church. The distinction will be found sustained everywhere in scripture, and rests on the difference of principle already explained, while both might be found harmoniously working together, as was seen in early days. Let us be subject to the word of God.

The practical bearing of all this is as immediate as it is important. Men have confounded the local charges with the gifts to the immense dishonour of the Lord and to the decided loss of all concerned. Again, economic desires have concurred with the democratic principle (now more rampant than ever) to swamp both gifts and elders by that singular invention, the minister of a church, instead of that which is exclusively found in scripture — a minister of the church. And godly souls are so little versed in the truth as to imagine that this upturning of all ecclesiastical truth and order, as far as this subject is concerned, is so unimpeachably sound that there is no sect at all where the like disorder does not reign: so ruinous is the force of tradition and habit against the confessed meaning of God’s word.

It will be argued of course that we ought to have elders, though we have neither an apostle nor an apostolic

commissioner to appoint them. But “scripture cannot be broken,” as it must be if either an assembly, or a person without the due authority, usurp apostolic functions. It would be holier and humbler to own that we lack apostolic authority as a living reality; and that therefore, though there are no doubt very many among the believers possessed of the qualities required in an elder, it would be more seemly to search the scriptures whether divine principle does not provide for godly order without our assuming what is beyond our power and title. There were many assemblies of old which had not enjoyed the intervention of an apostle to this end and which had no apostolic vicar sent to do this work. Yet the great apostle himself exhorts the saints to own and honour those who laboured and were over them in the Lord, even though they had no official status as elders (1 Thess. 5:12).

So to the saints in Rome (where, it would seem, apostles went to be prisoners or to die) these are the words: “Having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, [let us occupy ourselves] in ministry; or he that teacheth, in teaching; or he that exhorteth, in exhortation; he that giveth, in simplicity; he that presideth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:6-8). Now here it is expressly a question of gifts direct from the Lord, Who gave and still gives what is needful — yea, far more than is barely needed — for His saints; still though there is no trace of a charge, we find rule as well as teaching and other ministry in their midst. Neither order nor doctrine therefore need fail for want of elders. Base is the spirit that despised an elder.

The service was a great boon, and so was most thankfully received and owned and honoured when given. But where they were not and could not be, was it faith to say “we must have elders”? How much better to have used such things as they had, praising Him Who, whatever the lack or the weakness, never fails in His faithful love, but is the same yesterday and today, and for ever!

Similar is the lesson of 1 Cor. 16:15, 16: “Now I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they set themselves to the saints for ministry), that ye also be subject to such and to every one that joineth in the work and laboureth.” It is the same principle; for though the apostle had been in Corinth it was but a youthful assembly, and of elders we have not a word, while of gifts a great deal. But did means even there fail, however ill the use they had made of what they had? Let others judge what the apostle here enjoins — of all moment for us today.

Gal. 6:6 proves that the duty of the saints towards one “that teacheth” is not dependent on elders. Of Eph. 4:11, 12 enough has been said for our present purpose; and Phil. 1:1 compared with verses 14-17 suffices to show that the fullest order consists with the freest preaching, and that the apostle’s joy is triumphant even where motives were sadly mixed. Col. 2:19 is not silent on the joints and bands that knit together the body and so contribute to growth. It is in 1 Thess. 5:12, 13 that we find luminous and full instruction on this head; where two things are equally plain, that these saints, but lately converted, had not elders yet that they had simple and sufficient means in God’s grace for their orderly walk together. More might be added; but this is surely

enough. There were circumstances in apostolically owned and founded assemblies where elders were not; and this affords comfort and instruction in times when they cannot be in the due manner. But the written word prescribes amply for all times. Only a single eye is needed to ensure the light of God.

Where elders exist, those that preside well were to be deemed worthy of double honour. For honour was due to an elder as such, double honour if he did his work well. There is no comparison with any preceding class. And "honour" means what it says; though it would be strange honour that could neglect their wants. But there is especial value, beyond that double honour, due to those that labour in word and doctrine. This also is notable and instructive. Ruling was the aim of their institution; but if they laboured in word and teaching, it had peculiar price in the apostle's eyes. All did not so labour. They were not "teachers," though aptness to teach was sought in one eligible for the office. The Presbyterian system may be far from a resemblance; but others surely are more distant still; while in all sects the minister is in contrast with the facts of scripture.

But to make "double maintenance"28 out of the text is as mistaken as to deduce from it two classes of elders — lay elders that shared the government without maintenance, and clerical or ministerial elders that taught publicly as well as privately. The truth conveyed is opposed to both of these contending schemes, as divine truth never can really mix with any polity of human origin. But false interpretation begets and fosters pseudo-criticism. Thus even so ripe a scholar and able a reasoner as Bp. Bilson,29 under the influence of a foregone conclusion, would resolve the participles with

the article in verse 17, like the participle without it in verse 18, as if they were alike conditional. “Presbyters if they rule well are worthy of double honour, specially if they labour in the word:” or, “Presbyters for ruling well are worthy of double honour, specially for labouring in the word.” To bear such a sense the construction ought to have been anarthrous: with the article as it stands in each clause, it is a described or defined case, and not a conditional one, and the true force is given in the Authorized Version as well as the Revised. To take those “labouring,” in the sense of travelling from place to place to visit the churches is not only without the least foundation but opposed to the clearly revealed fact that the elders were, as such, local charges, and had no title from their office save to rule or preside in the assembly in which they were appointed.

The true meaning then of the apostolic injunction is that the elders that preside well should be counted worthy of double honour — honour in their office, honour because it was excellently filled, with especial distinction for those of the elders that labour in word and teaching: which clearly all might not do and some could not equally do. For presiding is a delicate and difficult task, demanding tact and moral courage more than public exposition or the like, and assiduous perseverance, in the face of frequent discouragement and trial as well as opposition, calls for such “labour,” rather than moving from place to place like an apostle, prophet, or evangelist, from all which eldership is wholly distinct. “Honour” is the right version and sense, not “maintenance” or “price” though, as we have seen, it often means so elsewhere. But here such a force is only tolerable in eyes rendered dim by the mist of evil

influence and habits in Christendom. “Honour” however, as the true and larger word, would imply this where support was needed, as is suggested by the quotations that follow in verse 15.

In every case then, whether they were needy or above need, those that rule well are to be held worthy of double honour. For such an elder if wealthy or with competent means, would it be truly honouring him to give him a salary or even money? He who wrote now to Timothy impressed the very reverse in the strongest way from his own example on the elders of the assembly in Ephesus assembled at Miletus (Acts 20:33-35). But here it was important to indicate that an elder who rules well is to be deemed worthy of such honour as would neither let him want nor turn him aside from his absorbing work to provide the bread that perishes. Such men ought no more to be forgotten than the evangelists (1 Cor. 9), though the latter may labour “without,” the former “within.” Indeed the same scripture (Deut. 25:4) is cited, though it be from the less to the greater in both cases, a remarkable witness to the depth of God’s word below the surface. In the citation there is a difference in the order, as well as in the word for “muzzle,” κημόω [B D F G] in 1 Cor. 9:4 being the more technical, φιμόω in 1 Tim. 5:18 the more general, but both meaning the same thing.

There is a second scripture cited which calls for more notice as presenting matter of peculiar interest, arising possibly from its cast. The workman [is] worthy of his “hire,” or “wages,” may be proverbial; but the apostle quotes the phrase expressly as “the scripture.” Whence did he draw it? From the Gospel of Luke (Luke 10:7); for so it stands there to the letter, not in Matt. 10:10 where

the Lord declares the workman worthy “of his food.”30 Surely this is the more instructive (not to speak of its bearing on the date of our Epistle as necessarily subsequent to Luke’s Gospel), as it is a decisive instance of an apostle’s quoting from another inspired man as “scripture.” So Peter in his Second Epistle (2 Peter 3:15, 16) speaks of “our beloved brother Paul’s” epistles as part of “the scriptures.” It is unwarrantable to contradict Theodoret and Theophylact, who say that one citation is from the Old Testament and the other from the New. Everywhere else no doubt the two apostles speak of the Old Testament as scripture; but each of them as here predicates scripture of the New at least once, which is as authoritative as if said a dozen times. It was uncalled for save here; but here it is of all importance, let Wieseler, Baur, or others, reason as they may. It is put, not as only explanatory of the first, but as an added and distinct quotation.

It is not only, however, a question of paying honour to the presbyters that take the lead well. They were exposed in the duties of their office to frequent misunderstanding and detraction. Those whom an elder had to rebuke for a fault, might, and, if unbroken, would resent it; and the ill-feeling would, if unjudged, betray itself in evil speaking. Others again, if arrested in their unruly and factious ways, would, if not brought to repentance, cherish a hard and bitter spirit against such as warned of and put a stop to their mischief. These or the like admonitions might at length issue in positive charges against one or another in local charge who had given umbrage in his duty, or perhaps acted imprudently. Timothy, who was not a mere elder but in a peculiar position of superior authority, doing in his

measure apostolic work, was liable and likely to hear damaging reports, and he is therefore cautioned by the apostle. For we are, or should be, not ignorant of Satan's devices.

"Against an elder receive not an accusation except at [the mouth of]31 two or three witnesses" (ver. 19). The principle of the law for extreme cases righteously applies to what is analogous not only in things but as to persons also. None so open to the assaults of the disaffected; and therefore divine wisdom checks the tendency to entertain such charges unless gravely supported: else oversight would become a dreaded work to exercise, instead of a good work to which a grave brother might aspire. One cannot therefore agree with Chrysostom, et al. that it is a question here of age as at the beginning of the chapter, but of an office which called for a guard not so requisite ordinarily. Scripture gives no countenance to the democratic self-importance which loves to reduce all to the same dead level. There are differences in administration, which are not only recognized of God but carefully provided for in their moral consequences, as we see here and elsewhere. A Christian like an Israelite might be charged by a single witness, though confirmation was needed to convict him with a serious result. An elder could not even have a charge preferred against him rightly, save on the testimony of two or more. Righteousness takes the circumstances into account, and not souls merely; and Timothy must respect the authority of others whose fidelity might imperil them, if he would not undermine what the Lord had set up, not only in his own place, but in all that are set to discharge variously the duties of preserving the truth, godliness, and order.

“32Those that sin rebuke [or rather, convict] before all that the rest also may have fear. I testify [or charge thee] before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels that thou keep these things apart from prejudice, doing nothing according to partiality” (vers. 20, 21). The first of these has nothing specially to do with the elders, but breaks into the larger field of the saints in general. And as the apostle, while sustaining the elders in a work which must provoke the injurious tongues of the unruly, was far from sheltering an elder when impeached on adequate testimony, so here he insists that there should be no sparing those that are guilty of persistent wrong-doing. To limit the range of τὸυς αμαρτανοντας (ver. 20) as if it meant only “the sinning” presbyters naturally leads to think of “the rest” of that class to the loss of a solemn injunction in no way restricted, as “before all” ought to demonstrate. It would seem that the conjunctive δέ was inserted chiefly by Western influence under the prejudice that the passage as a whole has that narrow, instead of the general, reference with which last its absence from the best and most authorities falls in. The Authorized Version like the other Protestant English versions weakens the effect by omitting the verb “have,” which adds to the permanence of the fear produced. We can understand the better then how solemnly the apostle adjures his young fellow-labourer in a task so serious and demanding such moral courage, especially from a tender gentle spirit, not to speak of his youth, which had danger for himself as well as from others already pointed out (1 Tim. 4:12).

But the sense of God before his soul, with Whose presence he binds up “Christ Jesus,” would give firmness and decision, and keep love and obedience

indissoluble and active, in contrast with the moral laxity which usurps the name of that holy affection, though as far from it really as God is from fallen man whose evil will is allowed. There is but one article in the first part of the apostle's ground of appeal, not because it is one person, as Gr. Sharpe hastily supposed, but to mark their entire association, which could not be unless they stood on the same level of divine nature and glory. The one article τοῦ simply identifies the two persons in a common object, as the τῶν following marks off the "elect angels," however exalted, as having no title to be so identified. Christ Jesus could be and is put with God as on the same ground: not so the elect angels, though introduced connectedly, yet apart, as witnessing now, not merely in the future scene of glory. Compare 1 Cor. 11:10. Reference to any angels save those that kept their own first or original estate would be here altogether incongruous.

It may be well to notice also that the Authorized Version seems to lose the distinction between προκρίματος and πρόσκλισιν, words, as far as the New Testament is concerned, only found here. For the former refers naturally to "prejudice" which condemns a case before hearing or duly hearing it; as the latter expresses an undue inclination or "favour" for one side, even if one should hear both. Timothy is admonished by the most sacred associations to watch against any bias either way. Now "preferring one before another" is partiality; whereas "prejudice" (the marginal alternative of the Authorized Version, not "preference" as in the Revised Version's margin) is the true counterpart.

We now come to an exhortation which, I doubt not, has been pressed improperly into the interpretation of verse

20, from which it is quite distinct, so as to bind all these verses into an intimately connected whole. We have seen reason to infer that this is an error, and that verse 20 bears generally on offenders, instead of being confined to sinning elders, though there is no sufficient ground to exclude both 19 and 20 from the charge in 21. But verse 22 opens out a new thought, and there again the apostle would have his young colleague alert on the watch-tower: “Lay hands quickly on no one, neither be partaker in others’ sins; keep thyself pure” (ver. 22). It has been assumed that the act of laying on hands here pertains to the instituting of elders. But this is a hasty thought; for even if it were the fact, which is very probable, that hands were laid on elders when chosen, it is certain that imposition of hands had a far larger connection, and that it was a sign of blessing conferred or of fellowship in commending to God’s grace, when there was no question of the presbyterate. “The seven” (Acts 6) had apostolic hands laid on them, which gave dignity to a work easily apt to degenerate, though the apostles themselves till then did not disdain to fulfil it. Hence it is not improbable that a similar form of inauguration may have been when elders were appointed. But scripture has carefully veiled it, if it were so; and, it is but a little venture to say, most wisely; for its omissions are never without design, any more than its insertions, or the manner of them. May it not have been on the same principle that Mary’s interposition (John 2:3) was not encouraged, and that Peter’s word to our Lord (Matt. 16:23) after a high commendation of his confession of Himself, drew out the sternest rebuke ever by Him administered to a disciple? Was it not foreseen that a superstitious meaning would, in process of time, be assigned to the act, against which scripture raises its

silent protest if people only knew how to profit by the omission?

In not a single instance are hands said to be laid on presbyters. Hands were laid on Timothy, and even the elders joined in doing so, when the apostle conveyed the gift of God that was given then. Hands were laid on Barnabas and the apostle himself when prophecy named them for a special mission, for which the Spirit separated and sent them forth among the nations (Acts 13:3). But it is extreme and ignorant prejudice that could confound either of these very distinct cases where hands were imposed, with eldership, or even with what people call ordination. Assuredly Barnabas and Saul were already recognized as most honoured servants of the Lord. Compare Acts 9, 11, Gal. 1, for the one who, though greatest by far, was the younger in that work. This (and it is by no means all that might be adduced) is ample to prove that laying on of hands has in scripture a more extensive application than the very narrow one to which some have reduced the verse before us, even it if were without doubt applied to elders, which in scripture it undoubtedly never is.

The true deduction therefore is that the injunction has no special, if indeed any, link with elders, but was meant to warn Timothy against haste in all such acts. What has been drawn from scripture still more decidedly confutes Dr. Hammond’s notion (revived of late by some at home and abroad) that the words refer to that act on the absolution of penitents and their re-admission to church-fellowship. Euseb. H. E. vii. 2, Concil. Nic. can. 8, Suicer’s Thes. ii. 1576, Bingham’s Ant. xviii. 2, 1, clearly indicate this as an early ecclesiastical custom; but that it has the smallest title to be scriptural remains to be

proved. Huther, who is not often to be commended, is right in claiming for the reference the large extent of its usage in scripture, rashness in any part of it being a danger in proportion to its importance.

The full bearing of this first command gives perhaps the more significance to the words that follow, “neither be a partaker in others’ sins; keep thyself pure.” Haste in according that well-known sign of fellowship, even if not the conveyance of spiritual power as sometimes, might accredit fair-seeming men, ere long to develop into enemies of the cross of Christ. What a sorrow would not this occasion to so sensitive a heart as Timothy’s! Especially then he would do well to bear in mind the danger of sharing their sins by haste on his part.

Then follows the closing appeal: “Keep thyself pure.” Chastity to which Wiclif and the Rhemish Version confine this last word is but part of what the apostle impresses on Timothy. The purity required emphatically in himself would the better help to guard against looseness in sanctioning formally men who would make sad havoc of the flock of God or dishonour the Master by forsaking the work through love of the present age, if they did not fall into gross sins or bring in privily heresies of perdition.

That these exhortations are not so confined as has been supposed, but embrace godly and moral order, after speaking of elders in good and evil, seems plain from what follows in verse 23: “Be no longer a water-drinker, but use a little wine on account of thy stomach and thy frequent illnesses.”33 This appears to be a parenthetic statement of touching consideration for the scrupulous mind of Timothy, if he thought personal purity

incompatible with what his weak bodily state demanded. How striking the juxtaposition! Nor was it a private letter, which would no doubt have corrected the mistaken and injurious asceticism of this young servant of the Lord, but have left others to suffer similarly from that day to this; and especially in this day of ours which popularly regards the revival of ancient Gnostic error, as if it were a course of special moral worth, yea, a weapon of divine temper to exalt man and win the world. But he is indeed a poor believer who could hesitate between all the opinions of medical men (were they agreed), and all the arguments of teetotal reformers on the one hand, against those few words of the apostle on the other. For they are but dust, God's own is an inspired word — that which can never decay. The provident care which thus anticipated and delivered from the snares of men in ancient or modern times is thus to be remarked with thankfulness. Alford's modification seems beneath grave notice and due to the error of regarding all this context as bearing on the prescription of Timothy's duties as to elders; whereas we have seen that it has far broader aims.

Nor should we omit to notice the caution thrown in, whilst maintaining liberty as to every creature of God, and duty to use what is beneficial in weakness — "a little wine": why "a little" if it were no more calculated to excite than water? The nature of the wine is thus intimated, and the impropriety of indulging in excess guarded against.

From this measure of digression, dependent on the call to keep himself pure, the apostle resumes the more direct connection of not partaking in others' sins (ver. 22). "Of some men the sins are openly manifest, going

before unto judgment, and some also they follow after; likewise also the good works are openly manifest, and those that are otherwise cannot be hid" (vers. 24, 25). A holy mind seeks not to occupy itself with the sins of others, save when duty calls for it imperatively. But there is no excuse for the carelessness which would expose one to be continually deceived. It was therefore of importance to lay down principles of divine wisdom to guide where mistake is easy and its consequences might be deplorable. If the sins of some men are notorious and point to that solemn judgment where there is no mercy to mitigate the just doom of those who despised it in their contempt of God's truth and grace, there are some also whose sins follow after; and this is surely no less dreadful in the reality if appearances be saved, the deception of which is apt to ensnare not others only but the guilty themselves, making the end still more bitter though most righteous. On the other hand a like difference is found in that which grace produces; for the works that are comely are openly manifest, and those that do not come thus at once into notice cannot be concealed any more than He could Who is their source (Mark 7:36). That this flows out of and is connected with the warning given to Timothy against sharing another's sins, and especially in sanctioning unworthy workmen or discouraging such as might be vessels meet for the Master's use, is true. But to confine the instruction to the choice or rejection of candidates in the Lord's work seems to be the narrowness of man's mind and foreign to the studiously comprehensive terms of the apostle, in which he looks at things large and deep and far beyond.

Yet was it no mean man who thus commented: "Some there are who offer themselves to ordination, whose

scandalous lives are known beforehand; and run, before their tender of themselves to this holy function, into just censure; others' offences are not known, till after they be ordained. Likewise also, on the contrary, the good works and holy carriage of some that put themselves to the holy calling are well known and approved beforehand; so as thou needest not scruple about laying thy hands upon them; and as for them that are otherwise, if thou do diligently enquire after their demeanour and conversation, they cannot be hid from thy notice; so as thou may refrain to admit them." So Bp. Hall (iv. 429, 430, ed. Pratt, 1808).

Yet such a limitation, through attaching verses 24, 25 strictly to the preceding context, reduces the thought immensely below the unforced bearing of the words, when seen to rise to the Lord's judgment by and by; while the latter, if allowed fully, would in no way hinder the profit which the true meaning affords for present use. The truth, when understood as the Holy Spirit presents it, is invariably better than man's thought however bright, or his tradition however prevalent; and Christ is the only way.

26 Those two words are not the same. The first means good in the sense of comely, fair, honourable; the second answers to good in the shape of benevolent acts.

27 Ibid.

28 There are cases where

τιμή means price (as Matt. 27:6, 9; Acts 4:34 Acts 5:2, 3, Acts 7:16, Acts 19:19, 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Cor. 7:23); but these are all in the New Testament. Extend it to "maintenance" in 1 Tim. 6:1 or to the verb in v. 3, and

see what would result. “Double maintenance” or “price” here would be a heathen, not a Christian, idea.

29 The Perpetual Government of Christ’s Church, ed. Eden, Oxford, 1842, pp. 9, 191.

30 Dr. Bloomfield (Rec. Syn. viii. 269) is therefore short of the truth in referring to Matt. 10; the elder Rosenmüller errs in saying that Paul added it de suo; and Heinrichs wanders still farther.

31 The earlier English Versions had “under,” probably influenced by the Vulgate. The Pesh. Syriac seems nearer the mark. “Before,” as Winer prefers, suits magistrates better than witnesses with whom the accused were confronted. This however is the textual rendering of the Authorized Version, with “under” in their margin, as in Wiclif, Tyndale, Cranmer, and those of Geneva and Rheims, which is at least better. For the point pressed is not “before,” or “in presence of” witnesses, though Dean Alford says it is literally, which would be ἐνώπιον, ἔμπροσθεν, or ἀπέναντι according to the shade or emphasis required, and hence not “confronted with” as Mr. T. S. Green has it, but at the consenting testimony of two or three. In Heb. 10:28, it is the dative (not genitive as here), and hence with a slight increase of forge, where again the older English Vv. give “under” save Wiclif who has “bi”. The sense is that the despising transgressor died without mercy, but on the testimony of two or three. Were it judges, dicasts, or the like (as in 1 Cor. 6:1), ἐπί might well bear the sense of “in presence of,” but hardly with “witnesses.” “To” Titus well gives the sense in 2 Cor. 7:14. [N.B. — “Dicasts” were Greek officials of the law.]

32 Lachmann and Alford insert in brackets

δέ “But,” with A D, some Latin copies, Gothic, or al.: but all other MSS and Vv. reject.

33 Paley (Works, vol. v. 298, ed. vii.) remarks that in such an Epistle “nothing but reality, that is, the real valetudinary situation of a real person, could have suggested a thought of so domestic a nature. But if the peculiarity of the advice be observable, the place in which it stands is more so.... The direction to Timothy about his diet stands between two sentences as wide from the subject as possible. The train of thought seems to be broken to let it in. Now when does this happen? It happens when a man writes as he remembers; when he puts down an article that occurs the moment it occurs, lest he should afterwards forget it.” It may be quite true that no forger of Paul’s name writing in an after-day would have thought of such an intercalation, which, in its indifference to what men generally would account literary order, would surely have been avoided, especially in the dignified ideal of an apostolic letter to his vicar. But does not Paley’s tone reveal a painfully human standard of regarding an inspired work? Were it only the correspondence of “a man,” the comment would be unobjectionable, but what irreverence to talk of Paul’s putting it down the moment it occurred lest he should afterwards forget it! Calvin however speaks with even greater laxity mentioning without a reproof that some suppose the sentence thus introduced was not written by Paul! and pleading his custom of intermingling a variety of things stated without arrangement! Besides, he dares to hint that a marginal note may have found its way into this passage through the mistake of transcribers! What! where not a single MS., uncial or cursive, not a single Version of east or

west, not a single early ecclesiastical writer, Greek, Latin, or aught else, attests either an omission or an insertion in this passage? It is therefore demonstrably Paul's; or else we have absolutely no certainty for the genuineness of anything the apostle ever wrote.

1 Timothy 6

From matters of ecclesiastical and moral order the transition is easy and becoming to the due feelings and conduct of slaves, a burning question for the house of God on earth where materials lay so abundant for mischief at the hands of men rash, heady, and unbroken. Some have yielded to their subjective notions bred in the unhealthy swamps of modern licence, and, with no appreciation of the apostle’s gracious wisdom any more than of his stern disallowance of self-assertion, dare to question the inspired claim of the passage or even its genuine Pauline character. Suffice it to say that to the believer every word is as seasonable and wholesome in itself as the importance of the exhortation is plain for that time and any other. Nor is one without hope of sufficiently indicating its value as we weigh it clause by clause in its bearing for our day on souls who owe domestic service, where the pressure of bondage no longer exists.

“Let as many as are bondmen under yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and the teaching be not reviled. And those that have believing masters, let them not despise [them] because they are brethren, but the more let them serve, because they that partake of the good service are faithful and beloved. These things teach and exhort. If any one teach differently, and accede not to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is according to godliness (piety), he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but sick about questionings and word-disputes, out of which cometh envy, strife, revilings, evil suspicions, wranglings

of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness (piety) is gain" (vers. 1-5).

The law given by Moses had done much to mitigate slavery in Israel, and this not merely as to a Hebrew sold for debt or selling himself through poverty. A year of release came round speedily, after which his abiding servitude was quite voluntary, with a blessed Antitype in view familiar to the instructed Christian. The old and still prevailing British boast is but an echo of the command that a slave who escaped among them should not be delivered to his master but was free to live unoppressed and free, where he pleased in their midst (Deut. 23:15, 16). This was not however in regard to his social position merely, but still more to his religious status. In this the law of Moses stands in contrast with other codes, yea, with selfish and haughty Christendom. For Jewish slaves were entitled among other privileges to circumcision, enjoyed expressly the Sabbatical rest — indisputably a boon to none more than to them, and had their place at the solemn assemblies of the year, joining in the feasts like others, and in the fruits of the sabbath of the land every seventh year, as well as in the universal joy and liberty of the jubilee. Still it is fully allowed that the law made nothing perfect, as everywhere else so here also; and that in view of Jewish or human hardheartedness not a little under the law was tolerated which was far from God's mind, till He came Who is the truth in grace. Christ changed all, and the bondman became His freedman, as the freeman rejoices and is honoured in being His bondman. There can now be neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, no male and female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus. Circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian:

what matters one or other now? Christ is all things and in all. All is grounded on His death and resurrection Who, ascended into heaven, has formed an entirely new and heavenly relationship, of which the Holy Spirit actually come is the power.

Such is the Christian teaching, and no class seems to have reaped the blessing more bountifully in God's grace than the slaves who heard the gospel. Here we have most wholesome precepts to which Timothy was called to give heed, and this in view of false teachers, ever ready to abuse the truth for their lusts, as political leaders too have done from time to time in the world's history.

The first verse, as a maxim of the widest sphere, urges as many as were under yoke as bondmen to deem their own masters worthy of all honour. Some might cry up other masters, others might dislike or disparage their own: neither spirit is of faith or becomes the Christian; and a slave, if a Christian, is no less responsible than another to reflect and live Christ. It is no question what their own masters might be, Jew or heathen, vain or proud, immoral or self-righteous, mean, ambitious, or what not. If God's providence had cast their lot under the obligations of bondmen, they were responsible to Him for counting them worthy of all honour, not because they deserved this or that praise, but simply as being their own masters. The possession of eternal life, redemption, and glory in prospect, was meant as it is calculated to lift the heart into moral elevation; inasmuch as this can only be truly the case through the sense of sovereign grace on God's part to a guilty sinner, saved at the infinite cost of His blood Who has thus

secured the blessing, and waiting for Him to come, one knew not how soon, to consummate his heavenly hope.

It is not often the Rhemish Version can justly lay claim to exactness, but here through adhering to the Vulgate it may. All the older English seem to me to have failed, as well as the Authorized Version, in not regarding "servants" or slaves as part of the predicate. And so I understand the Pesch. Syr., though somewhat vague, whilst the Philoxenian reflects the more ordinary view. This gives undue prominence to "being under yoke," whereas the true force is but complemental. It seems to be only a full description of all in bondage, not the peculiar case of some; and hence the general duty of all such fellows. How solemn for the inconsiderate and unwatchful Christian in such a position to remember that his failure toward his master causes God and His truth to be evil spoken of! To light minds their conscious knowledge might expose to a slighting of their own masters more or less destitute or even opposed. But doing the truth in all lowliness and honouring each his own master is the simple, true, and efficient way of bringing glory to God and the truth.

Next come the special circumstances of such as had believing masters. This privilege might seem to promise only comfort and blessing; and doubtless the difference of the atmosphere would be great. But every position has its snares and difficulties; and both masters and servants, if believers, would be as apt to expect a great deal mutually, as sometimes to be sorely disappointed. Hence the apostle guards with care the exception: "And let those that have faithful masters not despise them, because they are brethren, but the more serve, because those that partake of the benefit are faithful and

beloved.” It is needless to remark that the Rhemish with Wiclif is nearer the truth, not the other English translations which since Tyndale treat the last clause as part of the predicate This beyond just controversy the article forbids, the force of which they overlooked. On the other hand Beza, Bengel, et al. are quite mistaken in the thought that the article with εὐεργεσίας points to God’s beneficence in Christ, which would make here the poorest sense possible. The article is really by implication due, as often happens, to the previous phrase, μᾶλλον δουλευέτωσαν. Faith does exalt the lowly and humble the proud; but it does not misuse communion in the Spirit to equality in the flesh. Rather would it teach the believers because they know this or that, instead of despising their masters, to render the more service, because those that reap their good service are believing and beloved. And there was then, as now, urgent need to impress these lessons on souls, particularly on such as are in the subject-relationship. With these the apostle uniformly begins, when as in Ephesians and Colossians he exhorts both. A carnal acquaintance with the gospel readily falls in with the selfishness of the humbler class which shuts out Christ, and breeds socialism, the basest caricature in Christendom.

But it seems a strange division which severs that which follows from the foregoing, by taking “These things teach and exhort,” either as the beginning of a new paragraph, like Green, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Webster and Wilkinson, Westcott and Hort, Bengel, Matthaei, or as the end of the previous one, like Ellicott and the Revised Version. It is better with Alford, Bloomfield, et al., to regard this as an unbroken context;

and the more as the denunciatory warning which now commences stands in more evident contrariety to the exhortation just concluded. “If any one teach differently [or play the strange teacher] and accede not to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is according to godliness, he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but sick about questionings, and word-disputes, out of which cometh envy, strife, revilings, evil suspicions, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is gain” (vers. 3-5).

Thus plainly does the apostle prepare his younger colleague to watch against the strange teaching that would undermine the truth in these things, and substitute the proud and reckless will of man under fair pretences.

Some may think it strange that the apostle should speak so decidedly to Timothy; but let them weigh the moral judgment which this eminently sober servant of the Lord pronounces under the immediate power of the inspiring Spirit. None that fears God will tax him with undue severity; yet does he unqualifiedly condemn any man who taught a different teaching from what has been laid down. To undermine the relation of a servant to a master was heinous in his eyes, and not less so because fair pretexts and high-sounding professions were put forward. For the duty of subjection flows from the relation; and it is strengthened, not relaxed, by the faith of those concerned. In every case supposed those under yoke are assumed to be believers: else they would not fall under the apostle’s scope. In the latter case those in authority are represented as believers. In no case is a disrespectful, still less a rebellious, spirit tolerated; but

every approach to it is repudiated as dishonouring God and the truth.

Nor is this all. For to teach otherwise is not to accede34 to sound words, even the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the teaching that is according to godliness. The Spirit of God descried socialistic principles impending, if not then at work, which drew out so sweeping and unsparing a rebuke. Can one conceive any censure more suited to check and destroy such a tendency? Who that knows what it is to be a sinner, owing every mercy to grace in Christ, would dare to persevere in a line of direct antagonism to His words Who is the Lord of all and the ordained Judge of quick and dead? Who so satisfied with his own theories and pleadings as to despise the apostolic declaration that his doctrine was incompatible with that which is according to godliness? There is such a thing as, after knowing the way of righteousness, turning back from the holy commandment delivered to us. No true-hearted saint would trifle with so awful an admonition from such a quarter. He who would persist in trusting his own heart, spite of it, must reap the bitter fruit in the ruin not only of his testimony but of his soul; for God is not mocked, if man deceives himself. Corrupt teaching is of the enemy, and, if unjudged in the light that grace gives to expose it, cannot but issue in the worst results, especially for such as teach error where Christ is named, and consequently all are responsible to set forth Him Who is the Truth.

Here too there is no excuse on the score of abstruse thought or of delicate shades of expression. It is a question of fundamental morality, or, as the apostle puts it, “the teaching that is according to godliness.” How

blessed for us that Christ covers all truth, the highest and the humblest alike, our heavenly privileges and our most commonplace responsibilities! Nor is anything more perilous than the vaunting spirit that treats these ordinary proprieties of every day as of no moment, in its one-sided zeal for union with Christ on high or the special glories of the Spirit's ministration. It is clear that our apostle gives no quarter to such shortsightedness; and the less where it is arrogant and vituperative as it is rash and shallow. He is himself the best example of a teaching which rests on foundations morally broad and deep, on which alone can be safely built that which melts into the light and glory of God's presence.

Hear how the apostle lashes the offender: "He is puffed up, knowing nothing, but sick about questionings and word-disputes." Is it not a faithful likeness of mind at work without conscience or heart, where Christ is only made the means of exalting the church, instead of the church subserving His glory?

We are sanctified by the, not by a, truth; but human one-sidedness (which ever boasts of its measure as being all that is worth hearing, and so much the more, the narrower it is) is but the knowledge that puffs up. Think of Paul or even Timothy glorying in their friends as the men of intelligence in contrast with Peter or Apollos and with those who appreciated either! No; they left such vain comparisons to the carnal Corinthians. Love builds up. This was the apostle's aim even in his withering exposure of the true character of this empty inflated teaching, which availed itself of the richest grace and highest truth to set aside the plain duties of every day in human relationships. And a great mercy it is, when simple souls who understand little else take their stand

on the Christ they know, rejecting the sacrifice of common morals, whatever the showy pretensions which accompany or even extenuate such laxity. Their conscience, not yet depraved, assures them that it cannot be of God to treat grave sin lightly, while cultivating extreme zeal for ecclesiastical pretension or yielding to excessive pre-occupation with our peculiar and heavenly privileges. Partial views are but "knowledge," apt to minister directly to the egotism that cherishes only those who hold with self exclusively, to the disparagement, not only of saints less informed, but of those who, better taught and subject to Christ, cleave to the truth unreservedly.

With self-judgment are we best kept both in the sense of our littleness and in love to all the saints, instead of being puffed up in self-complacency and contempt of brethren generally. It is the budding of Gnosticism which is thus nipped by the apostle in more than one passage of the Epistle, though the evil afterwards assumed a far more subtle and malignant shape. But, whatever its form, it is the inevitable enemy that dogs the steps of the truth, ever claiming the highest value for its own chosen line, but none the less betraying its alien source and nature, not only by its pride and party-working, but by its palpable neglect of the teaching that is according to piety. This the truth promotes because it is the revelation of Christ to the soul, and in Him Who fills all things we learn practically as well as dogmatically that, as there is nothing too great for us who are by grace made one with Him, so there is nothing too small for God Who went down to the dust of death in the person of His Son. The most despicable position on earth

through the grace of Christ becomes the fairest field for magnifying Him in our body, whether by life or by death.

And equally sorrowful is the fruit: “whereof (out of which) cometh envy, strife, revilings (or blasphemies), wicked (evil) suspicions, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness (piety) is gain.” They are the unmistakable works of the flesh excited by the hopes of turning piety to a selfish account. Far different is it when faith is at work through love! There the fruit of the Spirit cannot be hid in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance (Gal. 5:22, 23); for Christ is the object, not self veiled under deceptive appearances, which on that account is only the more loathsome to God, and which therefore breaks out ere long into confusion and every evil work.

The last clause of verse 5 in the common text and the Authorized Version is rejected by all critics as destitute of adequate authority, though the Syrr. et al., favour the insertion. It seems to correspond with the last clause of 2 Tim. 3:5, which is unquestionably genuine, though not in exactly the same terms. Here the exhortation is out of place: for it is only the hypothetic case of some one guilty of insinuating the false principles in question; whereas in the Second Epistle it is an evil state that is positively predicated with directions how to act then. Further, the insertion in this First Epistle interrupts the connection of the apostle’s words, as any one can see in the context before us.

The selfish evil of making piety a means of gain has been fully exposed. It is really to turn Christ’s name to the account of present and worldly interests; it is an abuse

of grace, an abandonment of truth, save in profession, and also a taking forethought for the flesh in order to satisfy its lusts; it is as alien as can be conceived from all that the Holy Spirit is now working on earth to the glory of God the Father.

“But piety with contentment is,” says the apostle with emphasis, “great gain. For we have brought nothing into the world; because neither can we carry anything out. But having food and covering we shall be therewith satisfied” (vers. 6-8).

Piety as a cloak of covetousness, piety paraded in order to rise in the earth and acquire wealth, is a reversal of that which is everywhere in scripture shown to be a genuinely Christian expectation. When the Corinthians betrayed the desire thus to make the best of both worlds, the apostle reproved them in terms cuttingly ironical: “Already ye are filled full, already ye are rich, ye reign as kings without us; and I would indeed that ye did reign that we also might reign with you. For methinks God hath set forth us the apostles last as men sentenced to death; for we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are in honour, but we are despised. Even to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat; we are become as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things unto this day” (1 Cor. 4:8-13). This speech of his was in grace, but it was unmistakably seasoned with salt. He could not but blame, but it was in loving admonition that they

might be sound in the faith and saved from ruinous practice flowing from false principle.

The true course is that which is urged later by the apostle in 1 Cor. 7:29-31: “But this I say, brethren, the time that remaineth is shortened; in order that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as weeping not; and they that rejoice as rejoicing not, and they that buy as not possessing; and they that use this world as not using it to the full; for the fashion of this world passeth away.” We are but pilgrims and strangers, passing through a world to which we no longer belong; we are of the Father, His gift to Christ, Whose witnesses we are now called to be, as we wait for His coming to be with Him and to share the glorious inheritance along with Him. It is His will to assign us our lot meanwhile; and piety would own with thankfulness His disposal of us, whether as a test of our subjection of heart or as a sphere of serving Him from day to day. For there is nothing right for our souls where He has not His place. It is not enough that there be “contentment.” This alone would be but a heathen sentiment; as in fact not a few pagan authors have expressed it prettily, though (it is to be feared) it was rather what they could see to become man than what they really made good in their daily conversation. The Stoics who most affected such language were hard rather than happy men. Even had they succeeded in practice, how far short of Christ was their self-complacent contentment!

What is here declared to be a great means of gain is “piety” with contentment. This is a state wholly opposed to the pagan self-reliance which leaves out God and dependence on Him. “Piety” cherishes confidence in

Him, and looks up to Him habitually, as to One Who does not and cannot fail in His gracious consideration of every need, difficulty, and danger, all being naked and laid bare to His eyes with Whom we have to do. With piety “contentment”35 is the fruit of knowing His love and the assurance of His will as good, acceptable, and perfect. As the same apostle said to the Christian Hebrews, “Let your conversation (or conduct) be without love of money, satisfied with present circumstances, for Himself hath said, I will never leave thee, neither will I forsake thee: so that taking courage, we may say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid: what will man do with met;” (Heb. 13:5, 6). It is the same principle at bottom; but here it is the harm for one’s own spirit that the apostle warns against rather than the apprehension of mischief from others, which he would remove from the believers of the circumcision. Piety with contentment is great gain.

This he illustrates and enforces by the homely yet all the more impressive facts of man’s beginning and end here below; which all can see, but on which only men of faith act: “For nothing have we brought into the world, because neither can we carry anything out” (ver. 7) This is urged with such characteristic brevity and compressed ruggedness that one need not wonder if words once brought in to explain have crept into the text of not a few manuscripts. These apparent interpolations differ. In one of the earliest (D. or the Clermont MS.) which contains an addition prevalent in the West, “[it is] true” appears; and so it substantially stands in the Vulgate, Gothic, et al. Among the Greek early writers as in several late uncials and the mass of cursives, “[it is] manifest” is the word (“known” in the Syr. being

perhaps fairly equivalent). The oldest authorities do not allow καί or ἀλλά for ὅτι, but give as the text what is here translated; which turns man's entrance into the world with nothing into the solemn reminder that thus it will be at the close, so that the two-fold truth may bear on the believer throughout his course. Compare Job 1:21, which is an anciently expressed sentiment, and as simple as sure. But piety with "contentment," alone makes its weight felt and forms the walk in accordance with the truth.

"But having food and covering we shall be therewith content (satisfied)" (ver. 8). The words translated food and covering are both in the plural which may indicate the variety in each case provided of God. The "covering" too is not limited to clothing, and should not be so translated, as it takes in dwelling as well. The future seems more forcible than the exhortatory tense, and better suits the passive voice. Little reliance can be placed even on the oldest and best MSS. which too often interchange the long with the short vowels, as in this case. The critics generally of late incline to the future.

Let the Christian reader study also the words of our Lord in Matt. 6:19-34, and delight his soul in the incomparable fulness and dignity of that blessed discourse.

With the godly contentment of the Christian, the apostle next contrasts the restless, sorrowful, and perilous path of covetousness in its mildest form. It is a worldly lust to be judged and disallowed like any other.

"But those that desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many unwise and hurtful lusts, such as sink men into destruction and perdition. For a root of all evil

is the love of money, which some eagerly seeking were led astray from the faith and pierced themselves through with many pains" (vers. 9, 10).

As usual, under a plain and unostentatious exterior, the language of the apostle bears the witness and conveys the power of divine wisdom. It is not here the possession of wealth which stands in the soul's way. This the Lord had laid bare in the rich young ruler who went away sorrowful, because he valued his great wealth too highly to follow Christ at all cost. Moses suffered what the suffering and glorified Son of man never sanctions. The law made nothing perfect. The introduction of a better hope not only gives us to draw near to God instead of maintaining the old distance, but in Christ detects and judges the flesh and the world as enmity against God. Outward advantage becomes a spiritual obstacle. Man is evil; and God alone is good; and the cross becomes the door of salvation from a God to Whom all things are possible, if they that have riches enter with difficulty the kingdom of God. And all things are possible to him that believeth. For faith makes Christ all, which the young man did not: else he had not gone away with a fallen countenance from Him Who never fails to give peace to the most tried believer, and fills with joy the most forlorn.

Here it is the far more common class whose purpose it is to become rich. What does such a desire betray? Discontent with the calling in which one is called; distrust of God's will, goodness, and wisdom in His dealings with each; the same unbroken, unjudged thirst for the things after which the Gentiles seek. Does not our heavenly Father know what we have need of, and what He deems fitting for us? The word of our Lord is,

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not dig through nor steal; for where thy treasure is, there will be also thy heart” (Matt. 6:19-21). Child of God, where is thy treasure? Is it Christ in heaven? If so, happy art thou! If it is wealth or distinction, the Lord warns, There also will be thy heart. What can be more false and beguiling than the fond fancy that prevails among many in direct contradiction of Christ, that, while the life is absorbed in the struggle for riches, the heart is not there but is true to Him! It is not for want of solemn admonition that a Christian can thus stray. The character, the state, is proved in what we are set on and live for from day to day. “If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body will be bright.” And if the whole body in one be found dark, is it not because the eye is evil? “If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great the darkness!” (Matt. 6:23). So the Lord detected the source and motive, and exposed the blindness that results.

The apostle here dwells briefly on the effects of such a purpose however veiled. They fall into temptation and a snare and many unwise and hurtful lusts, such as sink men into destruction and perdition. But oh! the unbelief of believers where an object other than Christ and opposed to His will and glory carries them away! It is not the riches themselves which are the worst danger, though thereby the path is made more difficult; but the lack of faith that counts them the Lord’s, not our own, and that therefore seeks only to be faithful as a steward according to His mind and to be blessed in doing His

will. It is our own will or purpose that is so often wrong and to be dreaded most.

To fall into temptation is quite different from being tempted. The fact of being tempted is trying; but blessed is he that endures temptation. The Lord Himself knows what sore temptations mean, none so much. For as God cannot be tempted by evil things, and Himself tempts no one, thus neither was the Second Man (however the first was at once to his own ruin and that of the race) unto God's dishonour. But Christ suffered whilst being tempted, instead of weakly yielding to present gratification and lying down afterwards in unavailing sorrow. Temptation in His case, however complete, was apart from sin; whereas Adam was drawn away and enticed by lust with all its bitter results. Christ had no sinful temptations within, as we have. He never fell, never entered into temptation, as He warns us to pray against. To "enter" is fatal, as we see in Peter's case, though through the Lord's intercession his faith did not fail absolutely, and, when turned back or restored, he was used to confirm his brethren.

"A snare"36 goes yet farther than temptation, and supposes the deceived soul caught in the net of the enemy, whence only the grace and power of the Lord can extricate.

Further, the desire of riches is not alone, but is also the parent of "many unwise and hurtful lusts." It feeds vanity. It engenders pride. It ministers to selfishness. It suggests and promotes ambition, and so may be the means of corrupting others. How truly we hear of many unwise and hurtful lusts in its train!

As the way is sad and evil, the end (and here it is shown fully) is unspeakably wretched: “Such as (or, seeing these lusts) sink men into destruction and perdition.” Of course this is said of “men,” not of “saints;” but not the least terrible examples are of those who took their place and were once perhaps without question recognized among the confessors of Christ. The more we may know and possess, the less hopeful and the more unconscientious is our departure, when it comes, from what becomes His name. Their course and end mark such only as “men.” “Destruction” is the general description of their ruin; “perdition” is still more awfully precise. It is part of the snare and folly to presume on the bearing of the Lord’s name as if it must preserve those under it from the baneful consequences of the unbelief which slights the word and gives loose rein to the will. But God is not mocked, and those who sow to the flesh must reap corruption. The end of these things is death, and not the less but the more irreclaimably. where the word which should be living becomes a dead dogma, under which God’s calls to holiness, in disallowance of self and the world, are not heard, and the unwary soul drops into a more and more hardened hypocrisy. Who has not known such instances? Are they exhausted? Is your soul or mine to pay no heed?

“For a root of evil is the love of money, which some, being eager after, were seduced from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many pains (pangs)”. This is a solemn but not too sweeping sentence, which we all should ponder; though some more than others, as the apostle implies, are exposed to the poison. Wealth practically means the possession of much more than we need for ourselves or for the poor from day to day, of

what is over and above godly use, of what therefore can only be for show or indulgence, for lavishness or for hoarding.

The language of men betrays their mammon-worship. They conceive money, and the love of it, a root of "goods." God pronounces it a root of "evils"; and not merely possible but actual τῶν κακῶν, the evils that exist, subtle or important, of the flesh and of the mind. So the Lord had admonished the disciples against the cares of the age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, entering in (Mark 13:32).

Christianity is no doubt of faith and the "faith;" but, when real, it is a life more than a creed. It is Christ living in each believer, as the apostle says of himself as a saint, not officially, so as to be a sample of the household of faith (Phil. 1:21). But so deadly a root of evils is the love of money that its seductive influence from the faith is singled out for the forefront of resulting danger. And this may help to explain the strength of the language in Eph. 5:5 where a covetous person is styled an idolater, as in Col. 3:5 covetousness is declared to be idolatry. Be it that πλεονεξία there employed goes beyond φιλαργυρία here used; still the latter is at least included in that unsatisfied greed which becomes pre-eminently an absorbing idolatrous passion that excludes true homage to the true God.

But the apostle in no way limits the mischief to causing souls to wander from the faith, though surely nothing can be more disastrous. The eager pursuit of money is wont to pierce its votaries through with many pangs or pains. It is hard in that case to avoid deceit here, dissimulation there, hard words and ways to one, soft to

another, taking selfish advantage of men and things and times, without account of heart or circumstances, and still less of Christ before God. It is not only failure but success that inflicts the many pangs; yea, the most successful in general have their disappointments, and therefore all the keener.

Still it is hardly exact, I think, to say “the” root, though one knows what has been pleaded on its behalf; because “the” implies naturally an exclusive force, and the love of money, deep and wide as it may be, is not the only root of all men’s evils. But our language hardly admits of a simply anarthrous usage like the Greek, and therefore we make use of the indefinite article, though it may be feeble.

In contrast with those who, through that root of evils, not more wounded themselves than they dishonoured the Lord, Timothy is now exhorted to cultivate all that is suited to and worthy of His name.

“But thou, O man of God, fee these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, meekness of spirit.37 Combat the good combat of faith; lay hold on the life eternal whereunto thou wast38 called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. I charge [thee]39 in the sight of God that preserveth (keepeth alive) all things,40 and Christ Jesus that witnessed before Pontius Pilate the good confession, that thou keep the commandment, spotless, irreproachable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in its own times He shall show, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable, Whom none of men saw nor can see; to

Whom, be honour and might eternal. Amen" (vers. 11-16).

"Man of God" is a phrase of common occurrence from the Pentateuch, and throughout the historical books of Old Testament scripture. Continually applied to a prophet, it regards him as one identified with the interests and character of God in deed and in truth, though of course liable to failure, and thereon to suffer chastening. In the New Testament it is found nowhere save in the two Epistles to Timothy, here predicated of the one addressed in order to stimulate and warn; in the Second Epistle open to all who in an evil day make good in faithful and holy devotedness to God what is implied in it.

Timothy as a man of God is called to shun the worldly lusts, foolish and hurtful, against which the apostle had been warning. It is vain to affect zeal for what is good, if so dangerous a snare be indulged, source as it is of all evils. But persevering avoidance of evil can hardly be, unless there be also the zealous pursuit of righteousness and godliness, of faith and love, of endurance and meekness of spirit. Practical consistency with one's relationship is indispensable, as is reverent affection Godward, the light of the unseen let in on the present and the activity of the heart in what is good, the spirit made up to bear evil, and this with meekness, not with resentment and impatience. Such is the morally beautiful path traced here for his young fellow-labourer by one who knew it familiarly and deeply, though its perfection be found only in our Lord Jesus here below.

But more than this is called for, if He is to be magnified in our body, whether by life or by death. The figures are

taken as often from the games so familiar to that day. “Combat the good combat of the faith.” Flesh or sight would seek only present things. Christ must be in view.

“Lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou wast called and didst confess the good confession before many witnesses.” As in “fleeing” and “pursuing,” the work is regarded as expressly continuous: not so in “laying hold” of the eternal life. It is a single act, and duration is excluded from the thought, all being summed up in its completion, like the waking up righteously once for all in 1 Cor. 15:34 compared with the habit of not sinning. It is the prize at the end of which faith could have laid hold now, as the good confession is a thing done, not of course done with, nor on the other hand in process of doing. It is the simple act in itself, which is expressed in the aorist, as ought to be well-known. The Authorized Version is doubly wrong in “hast” professed, and “a” good confession. The Vulgate may be supposed to have influenced all from Wiclif downwards. The endeavour to bring in the whole ministry of Timothy as covered by a good confession, as Calvin contends, seems as unfounded as, and only less objectionable than, the strange “oblation” imputed to the phrase by the author of the “Unbloody Sacrifice” (i. 223, ed. of Anglo-Cath. Library). Into what vagaries men wander who slight the truth of Christ for objects of their own!

The apostle rises next to a solemn admonition in this connection, as he does towards the close of his Second Epistle. “Quickening,” or creating however, is not the thought, but “keeping alive.” Here all the older English versions like most others have followed the received reading; not that which suits the context, which has also the better authorities. How Dean Alford could adopt the

right reading but give a rendering which suits the wrong, seems unaccountable; but so it is. The usage in the New Testament as in the LXX distinctly points to saving alive or preserving; and here “all things”, not persons, are in question, though some go so far as to teach the contrary. God, Who is the source of life, is also the preserver of all things: on this he who espouses His cause in a hostile scene can reckon and needs to reckon.

Besides, there is One no longer seen, to Whom faith looks with assurance, for not consolation only but also for unfailing support: “Christ Jesus that witnessed before Pontius Pilate the good confession.” He is on high to succour His servants, but He was here as none else “the faithful Witness,” the good Confessor. What cheer to the spirit of him who might flag through timorous counsels or the demoralization of compromise, that dire and corrupting pest for the mouth and heart when evil thickens among the faithful on earth! He has to follow His steps in this as in all things; and if he knows his weakness, as surely he will increasingly in the arduous combat, he has but to spread it before His sight Whose grace suffices and Whose strength is made perfect in weakness. What a joy and honour consciously to witness the “good confession” where our Lord did so before us, He without what we have so abundantly, and with such aggravation as none ever had or can have again!

To have the truth is of capital moment; and this can only be by faith of God’s word. “By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer” (Ps. 17:4). Thus only can we escape the lie of the enemy who deceives the whole world. But another thing there is, only second — that confession or witness which our lips and lives owe to Him Whose grace has given us the

truth; and this not only though chiefly to His honour, but in love according to His will for those that lie as the world does in the wicked one. that they may be sanctified and saved. Before Pontius Pilate, the overwhelming fact came out that (not only did the Gentiles know not the truth, but) the Jews would not have it when before their eyes and ears livingly in Him Who, while the Messiah, was infinitely more. The chosen nation was as unbelieving as the nations generally, and hence as more guilty, so also more unrelentingly cruel unto blood, though it were the blood of Him Who was Jehovah's Fellow. Jesus confessed Himself not only King of a kingdom not of this world, but born and come to bear witness of the truth that every one who is of the truth might hear His voice. As the Jews alleged, He made Himself equal with God; He was, He is, the Only-Begotten Son of the Father. No wonder even hard-hearted Pilate was afraid, till Caesar's, the world's, friendship was seen to be at stake: and so, like the Jews who tempted him, he perished in enmity to God. Such is the end of all indeed, who, as they believe not with the heart to righteousness, confess not with the mouth to salvation, though in this passage no doubt "good confession" is more precise.

The charge to Timothy was "to keep the injunction (or commandment) spotless, irreproachable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is important to notice the accuracy of the thought as well as of the language; and the more so, as erudite ignorance takes the unhallowed licence every now and then of apologizing for scripture, as if even the apostle's Epistles were deficient in the exactitude which the schools, as they think, alone possess and impart.

But the unction from the Holy One gives quite another character and precision from that which is fed by the midnight oil of human training. This alone forms in the believer the mind of Christ, which, in its surface and in its depths, is alike beyond the wisdom of this age. Take as an instance the epiphany or “appearing” of our Lord (ver. 14) which is never confounded with His “presence” (παρουσία) or “coming:” the one being bound up with questions of our responsibility in service or testimony, as in the case before us, the other as simply and regularly (unless specifically modified41 otherwise) presenting our hope in all the fulness of divine grace. It will greatly help the Christian student to search the two words and contrast their connections throughout the New Testament.

On the great and instructive theme of the Lord’s return, whether to receive His own to be with Himself above, or to display them already with Him when He comes in judgment of the quick for the kingdom, the distinction becomes evident on examination, as it is of the deepest moment in conducing to an intelligent grasp of revealed truth or of God’s counsels and ways. In sovereign grace Christ will come to gather us together on high to be with Himself for ever; but He will appear also to put down all evil and reign in righteousness; and when He is manifested, we shall be manifested with Him in glory. The object and character differ as much as the time: where grace in its due heavenly power is meant, it is His “coming” to fulfil our hopes: where government and responsibility are in question, it is His “appearing,” “manifestation,” or “day,” as any soul subject to the word may ascertain in searching the scriptures.

And such is the clear connection here, not only as introducing His “appearing” but as following it: “which in its own times He shall show, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings (lit., of those that reign) and Lord of lords” (lit., of those that exercise lordship). None can deny that as Timothy’s responsibility was involved directly in the words preceding, so in these the display of the Lord’s glory is no less distinct; neither of which appears to be the thought where His coming for our translation on high is revealed. One might add its “own times” or seasons as naturally and characteristically mentioned along with His appearing; whereas no such language ever accompanies the gathering of the saints to meet the Lord above. His appearing ushers in the kingdom, as in 2 Tim. 4:1. In its course, first and last,:He will judge living and dead. But this is clearly government rather than grace; at least it is not grace in its heavenly fulness but in contrast with it.

It is not denied that even those who are one with Christ, members of His body, His bride, are also to be viewed as servants to receive each his own reward according to his own labour. And hence the apostle speaks of the saints, responsible for each gift to be used in Christ’s service now, awaiting “the revelation” of our Lord Jesus Christ Who shall also confirm them to the end, unimpeachable in the “day” of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:8). But here again we see how responsibility brings in the “day,” etc., whereas grace in its heavenly privileges is ever linked with His “coming” and “presence.” As Christ has to do with both, so shall we; but they are quite different; and it is ruinous to the truth, if we, contrary to the word of God, confound things that are there kept invariably

distinct, though occasionally but rarely both may be stated together.

We may notice that even our Lord Himself is here brought forward in just the same way, as Jesus Christ the righteous owned and displayed by God in the glory of that great day. The Spirit speaks of His unseeable and inaccessible glory: our Lord Jesus Christ is the One Whose appearing will manifest God's glory before the universe in its own seasons.

This manifestation it is which gives occasion for the striking doxology which closes the section, where God as such is presented as He "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable, Whom none of men hath seen nor can see; to Whom be honour and might everlasting, Amen." On the other hand, "the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh (not Israel only) shall see it together" (Isa. 40:5). But it will be in the appearing of our Lord that God will show His various glories, He "Who only hath immortality," in and by Him Who died and rose and lives again for evermore, the King of those that reign and the Lord of those that rule, in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, Himself God and Lord, deigned by His abasement unto the death of the cross to lay a new basis in a ruined world, so that grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

All testimony of faith is now seemingly as vain as was the good confession of Jesus our Lord; but His appearing will be the display of divine power, glory, and righteousness to the confusion of all that doubt as well as of proud rebels. Ere that day man will have shown his "rights" to be unmitigated wrongs, and his liberty,

equality, and fraternity (vile, false, and selfish as they ever were) to be only the prelude to the most galling slavery of man and Satan that the world ever saw. God will show our Lord's appearing in its own due times, not merely for the overthrow of apostate wickedness, but for the establishment, in the peace and blessing of man bowing to Jesus, of His own honour and might eternal. May our portion be with the present substantiating energy of faith which the apostle desired for his dear young fellow-servant! It is all revealed by His word to act not only on: his soul but on ours.

Besides, the apostle lays it on Timothy to enjoin the wealthy saints in solemn and searching tones, the counterpart of which it was uncalled for to give to the poor, who never fail to find uninspired abundance of exhortation. The rich are apt to pass easy muster, not because they have not special difficulties and dangers, but because both poor and rich and even those who should be above either are disposed to be less outspoken with them than is well for all and to the Lord's praise. But not so did Paul walk or direct his fellow-servant.

"Those rich in the present age charge not to be high-minded nor to set their hope on uncertainty of riches, but on a42 God That affordeth us all things richly for enjoyment; to do good, to be rich in good works, to be liberal in distributing, ready to communicate, laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, that they may lay hold of (on) the real43 life" (vers. 17-19).

As our Lord designated wealth "the mammon of unrighteousness," in the same spirit are the wealthy here characterized as "rich in the present age." It was certainly not to exalt in their eyes or in those of others

what the flesh is sure to overvalue, while it hides the great responsibility of those who have it. Yet there is no fanatical credit given to the garb or habit of poverty, no sanctimonious eschewing of ordinary food or shelter among the abodes of men, still less is there a hint of the superior worth of the monastic life. These anilities were reserved for the deeper gulfs of superstition. But those who are rich in the present age (“this present evil age,” as the same apostle stamps it in Gal. 1:4) have need especially to be on their guard, and to hear, not the voice of flattery so likely to be at hand, but the solemn admonition of the Holy Spirit, that they be not poor toward God in view of “the day of eternity” (2 Peter 3:18). Certainly riches toward God consist neither in lavishing on oneself or one’s own, any more than in laying up for either.

Charge them then, says he, “not to be high-minded.” What so readily or so generally generates haughtiness as the possession of money, The Lord in the parable (Luke 16:1-9) already referred to lays the axe to the root, when He calls on the disciples to make to themselves friends with, or out of, the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails they may be received into the eternal tabernacles. The grand principle, He insists, is faithfulness in that which is another’s (God’s), Who will commit to us in glory the true riches — our own and much too, if faithful here and now in a very little. Self-appropriation was the ruinous theory or practice (or both) for the rich man that lifted up his eyes in Hades, being in torment, and forgot that, in a sinful world which breaks the law and rejects the Messiah, wealth is no true sign of God’s favour.

In effect the Lord would have His own sacrifice the present in view of the future, counting that not their own but His, and therefore with all the freedom and cheerfulness that He loves in a giver, with their eyes set on that which seems His only which He will give to be their own with Him for ever. Does this seem folly to any who flatter themselves that they are wise and prudent! What will your wisdom and prudence prove in that day? Our true wisdom as Christians is moulded by the cross of Christ. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Following Christ is the surest cure of highmindedness, as it ensures also the scorn of the world. “Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself” (Ps. 49:18): what do they feel at the walk of one who can truly say, “To me to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21)?

But there is a danger kindred to highmindedness which is next warned against: “nor set their hope on uncertainty of riches.” On this too many a philosopher of old moralized in vain: not that his words did not sound wise and grand, but that their effect was powerless; for he was either a selfish hypocrite who decried wealth in others to get it for himself as much as possible, or he denounced wealth with a cynical haughtiness of mind more extreme than in any man of wealth. Well then does the apostle first warn against highmindedness, and next on building one’s hopes on the stability of what so quickly takes wings and flies away, whence the possessor is so often summoned in the midst of his self-aggrandizing plans. “Uncertainty of riches” indeed: how true and expressive!

One is never quite right, however, without what is positive; and hence the apostle urges that those addressed should have their hope set, not on a

foundation so sandy, “but on God That affordeth us all things richly for enjoyment.” There cannot be conceived a sentence more completely condemning the spirit of asceticism, which is fairer in appearance than the love of ease and luxury. But they are only forms of selfishness, however opposed: neither savours of God, Who has not left Himself without witness of His goodness toward men, even among the heathen allowed to go on their own ways. Surely it is not less among His own family of grace, though He may for higher ends give them the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings, being conformed unto His death. But He is none the less the God of all grace, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. And as to real superiority over all circumstances, where there was no wealth of the present age, who could testify better than the apostle? A prisoner in Rome, yet able to write thence, “I have learned in whatsoever state I am therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and know also how to abound: in everything and in all things I am initiated both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer want. I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me....And my God shall fulfil every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:11-19). The ungrudging and bountiful Giver of all loves a heart that responds to His grace, as far from legality as from licence.

But He looks also for activity in good on the part of the godly rich, as He Himself is unwearied in good (Acts 14:17). Hence follows the call “to do good, to be rich in good works.” There is an important shade between the two acts, although it is not easy to express the difference except in a paraphrase. By the first

(ἀγαθοεργεῖν) is meant doing, works of kindness or goodness to others; by being “rich in good works (πλουτεῖν ἐν ἔργοις καλοῖς) is meant abounding in fair, upright, works, comely in themselves: the first relatively, and the second absolutely, good works. And very important it is to note how both are pressed in close connection here and elsewhere, for men in general laud the one which affects man, and forget or disparage what is of yet greater moment, what is good in itself before God. Flowing from faith and love, how acceptable are both!

Even this does not express all the generous outgoing of heart the apostle would have the rich exhorted to seek. He adds, as if he could not remember the poor enough, “to be liberal in distributing, ready to communicate,” which, I presume, goes beyond cases of pressing need, where calls arise peculiarly suitable for men of ample means, as in the varied circumstances of the Lord’s work and witness. How many opportunities of promoting His glory, which are not of a kind one would like to lay as a burden on the assembly as a whole! “Charge the rich in the present age.” There is a divine way for all; and those whose privilege it is especially can hear His voice, as the apostle takes care that they shall.

But there is also encouragement specially significant and cheering to those in view: “laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, that they may lay hold on the real life” (ver. 19). Here again we may see the close correspondence with Luke 16:11 where “the true” is re-echoed by the last remarkable expression of the apostle, “that which is really life.”

Anxiety for ourselves is one of the snares carefully shut out by our Lord from the disciples: were it even “for the morrow,” it is unworthy of confidence in the Father’s provident love. He knows that we have need of food and raiment, and He will surely provide. We have to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, with the assurance that all these things shall be added unto us (Matt. 6:33). So the apostle bids us in nothing to be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known unto God (Phil. 4:6).

Here he enjoins on the rich saints to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come by their generous giving to others. It may not seem good common sense, but it is the surer way of grace in faith. To be consistent with Christ is to treasure up for ourselves, and all the better when so done that the left hand knows not what the right hand does. For that our Father sees in secret is a cardinal truth in Christian practice, as it is also to have by-and-by reward with Him Who is in heaven. Let us then with patience wait for it, as here laying up for ourselves a good foundation for the future, that we may lay hold on the life that is life in earnest. What is now so misjudged even by saints not only slips but disappoints, just because it is not habitually to live Christ, which, if it have its brightness in glory, has here its reality of exercise and enjoyment too.

The conclusion is a solemn appeal, which was never more seasonable than at this moment, when the vanity of scientific speculations misleads souls increasingly to despise revelation.

“O Timothy, keep the deposit, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the falsely-named knowledge, in professing which some missed the mark concerning the faith. Grace [be] with you*” (vers. 20, 21).

* The critical reading (the plural) seems confirmed, contrary to what at first sight would appear natural, by the end of the Second Epistle, where after the benediction to Timothy individually, we certainly close with η χάρις μεθ᾽ υμῶν without question of σοῦ. Those with him if not all the saints at large are in view.

“The deposit” here, as in 2 Tim. 1:14, means the truth entrusted by God through His chosen instruments, divine revelation conveyed in words taught of the Holy Spirit, the pattern of sound words which Timothy heard from Paul among many witnesses. It is neither the soul nor its salvation on the one hand, nor yet on the other the ministerial office, nor even the grace of the Spirit. It is the perfect communication of what God is in nature, ways, relationship, and counsels. This revelation alone gave, as inspiration now alone secures. It is not only the material of ministry, but its safe-guard, as it is of those to whom it is ministered; for grace would vouchsafe to all an unerring standard. This the church, the assembly, is not nor in the nature of things can be: the church is not the truth, but its pillar and base, as the truth calls out each member of Christ, forming and fashioning the whole. There only among men is the truth plainly inscribed and maintained. Where else is the word of God responsibly attested or presented here below?

Doubtless Timothy had a special place according to the favour shown, the truth unreservedly made known, the

position given, and the charge and work assigned, as we see from the first to the last of this Epistle. But if we may not overstep our measure or intrude into the peculiar duties of that honoured colleague of the apostle, we are no less bound in our place to guard that truth which is now entrusted to our keeping. It is the declared tower of safety in these last days of deception and self-will — to acknowledge and receive every scripture as being inspired of God.

But along with adhesion and subjection to the truth goes the necessity of watching against the false. And so Timothy is exhorted to turn away from “the profane babblings and oppositions of the falsely-named knowledge.” What more thoroughly undermines the power of the truth confessed than the allowance of theories which flatter man, occupy the creature, and, as they ignore or debase God and His Son, so will be found at last really to deny both? “This is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3). All must be false where the true state of man is unfelt, and where consequently the real character and intervention of God because of that state is left out; for the intervention of God to triumph in His grace over sin and Satan has formed relationships on which our duties depend. “The falsely-named knowledge” attempts to fill the void which unbelief ever finds because it does not really know God and His Son, possessing it only with its profane vapourings and antitheses. It cannot face the stern fact of utter ruin by sin; it shirks therefore the revelation of pure grace and of a righteousness which is God’s and which can justify the ungodly when man was proved to have none for Him. If it introduces Christ at all, which may often be

and largely too, it is not as the Saviour of the lost to God's glory, and as the Judge of all who believe not and so are unjust and have done evil, but only as the flower that adorns the race and bears witness to the moral perfectness of which humanity is capable.

God revealed in man, Christ rejected even to the death of the cross, yet in that cross an efficacious sacrifice for the guiltiest by faith of Him; and now man in Christ accepted in the holiest, and sending down the Holy Spirit to make all that is believed good to those that believe — this is the truth which defeats those babblings and oppositions. And as the centre of it all is He Who was manifested in the flesh, a divine person yet man, the truth is perfectly suited to each soul, Jew or Gentile, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free. It is independent of ruin or development, of learning or the lack of it, forming the believer inwardly and outwardly according to its own character by the Holy Spirit, Who sets Christ as the object and pattern before the eye of faith.

No wonder then that the apostle was not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. And the gospel is not, as is so often thought, a mere display of mercy irrespective of God's moral glory; for therein is revealed God's righteousness by faith unto faith. The law was God's just claim on man; the gospel is the glad tidings of salvation as the fruit of Christ's death and resurrection, and therein of God's undertaking for man and delivering him that believes. It is God's, not man's, righteousness, and hence is is revealed to faith, so as to be as open to the Greek as to the Jew, faith (not law) being the only source and way and principle of blessing for a lost sinner.

In this Epistle, however, it is not our privileges as God's children or as members of Christ's body that we see developed, but the broad and deep foundations of the divine nature and glory as the Saviour God dealing with all mankind through the mediation of Christ. And, in keeping with this, it is not here the heavenly wealth and beauty of the church, but its moral order as the responsible witness and true defender of the faith before the world, the misuse of the law being denounced, and the profane fables and logomachies of man's imagination yet more, which, if they begin by promising showy and superior sanctity, soon betray their worthlessness and worse by grievous moral laxity. Hence the importance given throughout to everyday duty which the grace and truth which came by Jesus strongly enforces, while making the yoke easy and the burden light.

"The falsely-named knowledge" always subjects God and His revelation to the mind of man. Thus man acquires the place as far as possible of judge ever agreeable to his self-importance, and withal necessary to veil from himself his own guilty and ruined estate in the sight of God. Nay more, in the fulness of his presumption, he avails himself of the human medium to deny inspiration in any true force, so as to sit in judgment upon that word which, our Lord declares, shall judge him at the last day (John 12:48). Thus, in criticizing what God is in the communication of scripture, Who He is gets utterly lost; and sinful man in effect sets up, perhaps without suspecting what he does or its heinous sin, to judge God Himself!

The manner in which God is now and then presented in this Epistle appears to be directly suited to meet and

expose such airy and daring speculations, which developed later into all the many vagaries of Gnosticism, sometimes subtle and bewildering, at others low and licentious, but always destructive delusions. The King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible, only God, and with that, one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Christ Jesus a man, Who gave Himself a ransom for all; God the Creator and Giver of every creature, the living God the Preserver of all, specially of the faithful; God Who preserves all things in life, Who is about to display the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, whilst He dwells in light unapproachable, Whom no man has seen nor can see — God so revealed consigns to their own nothingness the profane babblings and oppositions of the falsely-named knowledge; as the humble and godly walk produced points to its excellent and wise and holy source, in contrast with the degrading ways which falsehood entails, and on none more surely than on those who once called on the name of the Lord.

Here accordingly the apostle briefly touches on the effect of this spurious knowledge: “in professing which some missed the mark [or erred] concerning the faith.” It is sad to know men loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. But there is a deeper sorrow over those who once seemed to run well, thus fatally erring about the faith, not only the victims of folly and evil, but dishonouring blindly the Name which is above every name.

“Grace be with you;” so the most ancient copies say, though one might have expected “thee” as in most manuscripts and some of weight. But compare the closing words of the Second Epistle. There it is the more striking, because they follow a strictly individual prayer

that the Lord should be with Timothy's spirit. Yet I am not aware of a single MS. there that favours the singular, and scarce any version save the Peschito Syriac. The comparison appears to confirm the judgment of Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort, as to the close of the First Epistle. The benediction is of few words, but, as ever, weighty. Timothy did surely need grace, and the grace of the Lord would be sufficient for him; but it is the common need, the unfailing support, of all others, who therefore are not forgotten, even in a confidential communication to a tried fellow-servant.

London: C. A. Hammond, 11 Little Britain, E.C.1

34 Bentley's conjecture is singularly confirmed by the Sinai MS. which reads προσέχεται (with an itacism). Still there is no sufficient reason to abandon the common text supported by all other authorities.

35 The Peschito Syr. seems to take

αὐταρκείας in the-objective sense of "our sufficiency," or the use of it, a sense no doubt possible, and as in 2 Cor. 9:8 legitimate, but here inconsistent with the scope of this passage.

36 Not a few MSS. (three of them uncials), versions, etc., add "of the devil:" but this is superfluous if not narrow, no doubt due to 1 Tim. 3:7 37 The older reading πραῦπάθειαν seems stronger than the ordinary πραοτήτα, meekness.

38 καί "also" only in some inferior witnesses

39 σου "thee" is not in the best copies.

40 Authorities are divided between two words that are like, the Sinaitic with the less weighty witnesses supporting the Text. Rec., but A D F G P the critical text.

41 As for example, the presence or coming of “the Son of man” brings in His judicial aspect, and is therefore necessarily tantamount to His “appearing” or “day.”

42 Living” is here added by inferior authorities (and so Text. Rec.), which favour ἐν also, rather than επί.

43 The ordinary reading is “eternal” as in the lesser witnesses and Text. Rec.; the primary (Vv. as well as MSS.) give “that which is really life.”

Introduction to 2 Timothy

The Second Epistle To Timothy

This Epistle to Timothy is the admirable complement of the earlier communication. Men have discussed largely the interval between them; but even if it were briefer than many suppose, the change of circumstances and consequently of aim, treatment, and tone is immense: yet we know, from all scripture and from experience also, that great revolutions may occur within a little while. It is the last written word of the apostle, which imparts peculiar earnestness, gravity, and tenderness to all he has to say. No other form is so good for suitable exhortation, and this from one who was made “minister of the church” (Col. 1:24, 25) in a fuller sense than any other.

Order in the assembly, moral weight and worth in all, especially in those who govern or administer publicly, was urged in the First Epistle with the seriousness proper to the theme. Here the soon-departing apostle, whilst longing for Timothy’s presence (1 Tim. 1:4; 1 Tim. 4:9, 11, 13, 21), lays on the heart of his beloved fellow-labourer his final injunctions and personal call in view of deep and growing disorder. Such a ruin-state however (and it is incomparably worse now), he implies, would only give the better occasion to make manifest those who abide true to Christ and cleave to His grace in the midst of the prevailing generally-fatal declension which he could not but describe. It would furnish no doubt every facility for the flesh and the world in possession of the Lord’s name; but therefore all the more energy,

endurance, and courage would be due to the Lord from the devoted and godly.

Hence the more than wonted sublimity and tender solicitude of the apostle, the remembrance of Timothy's tears, the reminiscences of his conscientious fidelity in the past, the cordial recognition of real faith, even where the surroundings might be untoward. Hence too Paul reminds Timothy of that gift of God which was in him through the imposition of his own hands. He, therefore, was peculiarly required at so critical a moment to serve boldly in faith, conscious of that special grace which deigned to use him and to work by him to the glory of Christ. Indeed, peculiar as might be the power and place thus given to Timothy, it was in full accord with the character of the gift of the Holy Ghost to every Christian; for "God gave us not a spirit of fear (cowardice), but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." What all therefore have and should manifest, Timothy was to carry out in his own prominent position, and to suffer evils (hardship) with the gospel, hateful as it was to the pride and religiousness of the world which persecuted its heralds. How vain to endure thus except with and according to the power of God!

Hence, he of all men was not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of Paul His prisoner. To those who merely look on from a distance, to readers in a drawing-room or students in a library, such shame might seem impossible save for the most cowardly and base. But the enemy knows how to bring about a state of feeling, even among Christians, where it demands the most simple and steadfast faith to stand by those who suffer for Christ and the gospel as Paul then did. This tide had been setting in for a long while and had now, as

far as the apostle was concerned, arrived as its height. A thousand excuses might be made, a variety of seemingly good reasons might be pleaded, the result was that the mass of his brethren were ashamed of Paul! and, what was, if possible, sadder still, of the testimony of our Lord, which he takes care to place before himself, as they, doubtless, quite ignored and forgot it in the pressure of peril and disgrace.

And how deep though blessed is that testimony! an already possessed salvation from God, and a holy calling, “not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has been made manifest now by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who annulled death and brought to light life and incorruption through the gospel, whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher [of the Gentiles]”. It was for this cause Paul was also suffering these things. Never was there a more worthy reason. Certainly he was not ashamed: how terrible to think that any Christian could be! how humbling that even such as had once known Paul were! For if ever there was a servant whose life and labours, whose spirit, ways, and speech harmonized with the gospel, was it not Paul? Yet were brethren ashamed of the testimony of our Lord and of him His prisoner, when zeal and affection ought to have been most drawn out to him. Many a faithful servant proved utterly weak in the hour of trial; not a few were painfully inconsistent in detail, though sincere and honoured of God in the main. Paul stands well-nigh alone, according to his earnest expectation and hope that in nothing he should be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always so even to the end, Christ should be

magnified in his body, whether by life, or by death (Phil. 1:20). Then it was his first imprisonment; and his desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, was not yet to be gratified. To abide in the flesh was more needful for the saints; and, having this confidence, he knew that he was to abide and continue with all. Now it was his second imprisonment; and Christ was to be magnified by his death, but in nothing was he put to shame, least of all was he ashamed of the gospel or of the hardship in prison and in death which the gospel entailed.

With the gospel, with the testimony of our Lord in every part, with Christ Himself, was Paul bound up. He knew Him Whom he had believed and was persuaded of His ability to guard that which he had committed to Him against that day. Therefore did he exhort Timothy to have an outline of sound words which he had heard from him in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; and to keep, by the Holy Spirit Who dwelleth in us, the good thing that is entrusted.

This deposit refers to no unwritten tradition, nor to any humanly drawn up formula, but to the written word since Christ. It was the more important because Timothy knew how all in Asia (the Roman province where he had laboured so long and diligently) had turned away from Paul, not from Christ or the gospel, of course, but from him who had beyond all presented its distinctive and unadulterated truth, and who best represented its unwearied labours and its sufferings. And, if more than one brought such a pang to the apostle’s heart, how touchingly he recalls the faithfulness of one, Onesiphorus; for whose house he beseeches mercy of the Lord; “for he oft refreshed me and was not ashamed

of my chain, but when he was in Rome, he sought me diligently and found me (the Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day)". It was indeed just in keeping with the habitual love of Onesiphorus where he ordinarily dwelt; for the apostle adds, "and in how many things he administered at Ephesus, thou knowest very well." If we love the truth, we shall not fail in affection toward those that are identified with it. Party-zeal is the flesh's parody of it. God will have love and faith to be a living reality here below; and, in the world as it is, one must increasingly suffer. But He will be sanctified in those that are nigh Him, ever noticing both what He values and what He hates.

The apostle (2 Tim. 2), calls his child to be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ, with relation to others, not only in holding the truth fast, but in transmitting it duly - a work no less delicate than important. "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also". The communication of the truth is here in question, not the conferring of authority as on elders and deacons locally. Faithful men were to be the objects of his care for these offices; but also they needed to be taught by such an one as Timothy, himself taught of the apostle, in order that they might be able to teach others. Here, too, the apostle summons him to take his share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus; for what things, within as well as without, demand greater self-denial or expose to greater trials? In three figures the apostle sets forth what is needed by those who would thus serve the Lord aright. "No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of life, that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier." The servant

must make up his mind to refuse all distraction. Next, “if a man also contend in the games, he is not crowned except he have contended lawfully.” The manner in which he serves is of the highest moment and claims entire submission to the will of the Lord Who is served; so the athlete was bound by the rules of the games. Lastly, “the labouring husbandman must first partake of the fruits.” If love leads to toil, certainly labour must precede the fruits. All this the apostle would have Timothy to consider, and assures him of the Lord’s grace in giving understanding in all things. Faith should be intelligent.

From him that labours in teaching the transition is easy to the truth taught, and happily (for God thinks of the simplest) its sum is set forth in few but profound words, and in that one Person, Who is the object of our faith, the wonder of angels, the satisfying delight of God. “Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel.” It is not so that theologians would present it, nor even as had the prophets; it is as God would have the apostle impress Timothy and us. The historic order would have begun with His relation after the flesh, His Messianic position, the fulfilment as far as His Person went of promise and prophecy; but Paul’s gospel, which faithfully asserts this foundation truth, gave the emphasis to that resurrection from the dead which supposes the work of redemption already done and man in Him entered on the new estate according to God’s heavenly counsels. And this enlarges the character of Christ’s suffering, which above all the workman should not shirk, as the blessed apostle so deeply tasted of it in his gospel-service: “In which I suffer evil unto bonds as an evil-doer; but the word of

God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with everlasting glory. Faithful [is] the saying; for if we died with [Him], we shall also live with [Him]; if we endure, we shall also reign with [Him]; if we shall deny [Him], He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He abideth faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."

On this Paul makes personal appeal to the end of the chapter that Timothy would not only urge truth fundamental and practical, but would avoid word-fights and profane babblings of even more destructive tendency, specifying the unholy dream of the resurrection so past as to make the present an enjoyable scene. Thus some of the fathers taught, and worldly religion prospered then as now.

This leads to a development as instructive in itself as it is characteristic of the Epistle. The false teaching is met by the apostle's pointing out both sides of the seal as God's sure foundation: [The] Lord knoweth those that are His; and, Let every one that nameth the name of [the] Lord depart from unrighteousness. Whatever come, the Lord is sovereign, and His confessor is responsible to Him. Here very suggestively the state of the church is anticipated: "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some unto honour and some unto dishonour. If therefore one purge himself from these [the vessels to dishonour], he will be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work." Zeal as a good workman, however, would not suffice. Timothy must flee youthful lusts (not carnal or worldly ones only), and pursue

righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Isolation is never right as an object, though sin must never be sanctioned. But foolish questions must be eschewed, gentleness be cultivated, and not least in setting right opposers, if God might give them repentance and waking up from the devil's snare for His will.

But in 2 Timothy 3 an awful picture is displayed: not merely some erring here and there, but a far more prevailing condition of decay where they could no longer be spoken of as disciples or faithful but as mere "men," not of course heathen or Jews, but alas! calling themselves Christians, for they are said to have a form of piety but denying its power: the morally awful fact of men, with the external light and privileges of Christendom, no better at bottom though less gross than the heathen, whose picture is drawn by the same hand in the latter part of Rom. 1. They may and do loudly claim to be the church in unbroken succession; but the word is, "from these also turn away." Doubtless all are not equally mischievous: there are weak victims, not without moral faults, and chiefs like those that withstood Moses. But Timothy had intimate familiarity with a life of godly and suffering and patient devotedness, as well as with truth in divinely given form and power; and all that would live godlily in Christ would suffer persecutions, as surely as evil men and impostors grow worse and worse.

Hence the inestimable value of those from whom Timothy had learned, and of the written word known by him from childhood. This gives the apostle the occasion to predicate of every scripture (be it Old or New Testament) qualities that constitute it the only abiding

rule of faith, not only the fullest source, but the sole unfailing and perfect standard of truth. That they all were “God-inspired” implies this in one word to the mind that knows God.

Even then (2 Tim. 4) the apostle charges Timothy most solemnly before God and Jesus Christ Who shall judge quick and dead; and this therefore by His appearing and His kingdom, for here it is no question of heavenly grace, but of responsible service. and therefore a powerful motive to stimulate and strengthen his beloved child, both in preaching and in reproving, rebuking and exhorting, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For a time shall be when they will not hear sound doctrine, but according to their own lusts will heap teachers to themselves, having itching ears, and will turn away their ear from the truth and will have turned aside unto fables. This departure from the truth may not be the apostasy, nor the revelation of the man of sin; but it seems the worst development of the last days before that future crisis, and without doubt it has long since arrived. Yet more to impress Timothy, the apostle speaks of his own departure as a time close at hand. His course was run. He was awaiting the Lord’s appearing to crown him, and not him only but all who love His appearing.

With a variety of personal notices deeply interesting in many ways the letter closes. He would hasten Timothy’s joining him before winter, and it would seem that the sending of Tychicus to Ephesus may have been to facilitate this, Luke only being with the apostle. Of Demas’ departure he speaks with pain, of others simply as a fact. But he begs his cloak left at Troas, the books, and especially the parchments: death before his eyes in no way hinders duty, the Lord’s appearing demands it. A

dangerous man is not forgotten; nor the fact that not one stood with him in the hour of danger, but the Lord did Who would do so to the end, preserving him for His heavenly kingdom. Salutation from himself and others follows, and the wish for His presence to be with Timothy’s spirit, Who had delivered him, and Whose grace he would have with them all.

The Exposition

2 Timothy 1

The opening salutation of the Epistle as usual is instinct with the spirit of all that is to follow. Deep seriousness and tender affection pervade the whole. It is no longer a question of order in the house of God on the earth when the apostle is obliged to speak of a great house where are not only gold and silver vessels, but also wooden and earthen, and some to honour and some to dishonour. Then not discipline only, but purifying oneself from these at all cost becomes a paramount duty, if one is to be personally a vessel to honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work. It is a question in short of the firm foundation of God with its unfailing comfort on one side and its inalienable responsibility on the other. But, thank God, come what may, that foundation stands, whatever the disorder of the house; and the consequent obligation of the faithful abides, the more peremptory for His glory because of general defection. Faith never despairs of good, never slights evil, and is free only to please God, instead of easing self by the choice of the lesser wrong.

It could not be, however, in these circumstances, but that a tone of importunate earnestness should prevail. Therefore is the need urged more than ever of courage and endurance, as well as of high jealousy for the will of God and detestation for the evil way of man — of man now alas! associating the Lord's name with the worst wickedness of Satan. The modest but apparently timid character of Timothy called forth the apostle's heart under the power of the Holy Ghost to prepare him for the arduous labour and conflict which lay before him on

the speedy departure of his spiritual father. Even more thoroughly and with less exception do its exhortations apply to the faithful now, than do those of the First Epistle because there was more of the official element in the First, whereas what is moral predominates in the Second. Be it ours therefore to profit fully from this consideration. For unquestionably the difficult times of the last days have long since come, and the darkness of the closing scenes of lawlessness are already casting their shadows before.

“Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus, by God’s will, according to promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timotheus [my] beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God [the] Father and Christ Jesus our Lord” (vers. 1, 2).

It is observable that here, as in the First Epistle, Paul puts forward his. great commission. Intimacy was never meant to enfeeble that divinely-given place and authority. Sometimes the apostle might merge it; as we see with gracious beauty in his Epistle to Philemon, where authority would have jarred with the chord he wished to strike in that valued believer’s heart. Here apostleship was demanded, not only by the nature of the First Epistle, but in order to give weight to the moral directions of the Second. The path of Christ which lay through the perilous dilemmas of the last days required the highest expression of divine authority. Without this sanction even the most necessary step of righteousness must expose the man of God who took it in faith to the charge of innovation, of presumption, and specially of disorder because the general state of Christendom was itself one of fixed, traditional, and all but universal departure from God’s word.

But in the First Epistle it is “apostle according to the command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope.” This is evidently more in relation to mankind, since much to the saints is external as compared with the terms of the Second Epistle. “By God’s will” is here, as in 1 and 2 Cor., Eph., and Col. It was requisite or wise at first, and it abides to the last. The “will” of God admits of a far larger and deeper application than-His “commandment,” however important the latter may be in its place. Many, who would shrink from insubjection to a commandment of God, might be comparatively little exercised about His will, which takes in a vast variety of spiritual life exercised outside the range of a formal injunction. We may observe a kindred distinction which our Lord draws in John 14 between His commandments and His word (vers. 21, 23, 24). This addition in the Second Epistle quite falls in with its broad and deep character.

But there is more difference still. Paul was apostle “according to promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus.” This clearly connects the closing Epistle of Paul with the opening one of John, where eternal life in all its fulness in Christ is the characteristic doctrine. Not that this was ever absent from the Pauline Epistles. We see it in those to the Romans and the Corinthians, to the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, if possible still more brightly and in practical power. But here “life” is in the most prominent way bound up with his apostleship and of course, therefore, with the entire bearing of this, his last written, communication. The Spirit of God for the first time puts it undoubtedly in the fore-ground.

But I think that the method employed has not been at all rightly apprehended. The preposition (κατά) holds its more ordinary sense — “according to” — in conformity with, rather than in pursuance of, or with a view to the fulfilment etc. Not the object and the intention of the apostleship are expressed thereby, but its character. Undoubtedly Paul’s apostleship did further and made known the promises of eternal life; but the truth revealed here is that he was thus called of God according to, or in keeping with, this promise of life. His office was not merely to be minister of the gospel in the whole creation under heaven; nor yet only to be also minister of the church which is Christ’s body (Col. 1:23, 24). He now for the first time describes himself as by God’s will apostle “according to promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus.” Never did Timothy, never do the faithful, need so much the comforting strengthening knowledge of that life as in view of the horrors and dangers which this Epistle contemplates. If aught be real in a world of vain show, it is the life which is in Christ; it is eternal, as it is meant to overcome by faith. Without that life even the power of the Holy Ghost might work in a son of perdition. “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Thy name, and by Thy name cast out demons, and by Thy name do many powers? And then will I avow unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, workers of lawlessness” (Matt. 7:22, 23). Power without life is most ominous and fatal; with life, most blessed and eminently characteristic of Christianity. We shall see this carefully put forward for our consolation in this very chapter of this Epistle. But life has indisputably the prime place in the character here given of Paul’s apostleship. No one had prophecy as he had; none knew all mysteries and all

knowledge like him; and who, as he, had all faith, so as to remove mountains? But he had also that love which is of God, surpassed perhaps by none; for he lived the life which is in Christ Jesus. We can but admire, therefore, as we here read of his apostleship characterized, not by display of spiritual energy, but “according to promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.”

Life, like faith, is individual, yet obedient and therefore valuing, next to Christ, the walking to His glory with those who are His. But do any walk well together who have not faith to stand alone if His will requires it? Life therefore is thus brought forward in this capital place. If ever its value was felt more than before, it was now: the strait of times called for all that is of Christ. Glory on earth had been the idol of the Jew at his best; heavenly glory in and with Christ is the Christian hope; but one has now life in Christ, a “promise” incomparably beyond those to Abraham, David, and any other worthy. We have it in Him now, and with Him shall manifestly have it when glorified. The earth, the world, was the theatre of God’s dealings, and will be of His kingdom in power and glory when Christ appears and reigns. But as Paul was apostle according to promise of the life that is in Christ, so we having Him have that eternal life which will enjoy its own proper sphere at His coming above the world of which its nature is wholly independent.

“To Timotheus, [my] beloved child.” In the First Epistle he was designated “true” (γνησίῳ) child. It might have seemed impossible to have missed the intended difference. For the words necessarily intimate in the latter case that Timothy was no spurious son but his genuine child, and this not merely in “the” faith as an objective possession but in “faith” as a real living

principle in the soul. In the former case there is the express declaration of the apostle's positive and personal affection, which was apparently no formal or unmeaning phrase. Yet a German annotator of some repute (Mack) asks, "Can it be accidental that instead of γνησίῳ τέκνῳ, as Timotheus is called in the First Epistle 1:2, and in Titus 1:4, here we find ἀγαπητῳ? Or may a reason for the change be found in this that it now behoved Timotheus to stir up afresh the faith and the grace in him, before he could again be worthy of the name γνησίον τέκνον in its full sense?" And this shallow remark, which misses the true inference from the use of the designation in Titus (who never draws out the strong feelings of the apostle as Timothy does in both Epistles, and yet is styled no less γν. τ.), has had the most deleterious influence on Dean Alford's general comparison of the two Epistles, and misled him on not a few details of importance. Bengel, Ellicott, and others are much more correct in this; so that the regret expressed for their misapprehension might have been well spared. The failure in discernment really belongs to those who affect to see loss of confidence in the Second Epistle; and it is only made conspicuous by allowing more love. "More of mere love"! is a strange phrase, and unworthy of a saint, who ought to know better its real and inestimable worth.

"Grace, mercy, peace from God [the] Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." Here we have the same words precisely as in the First; and as to both so famous an expositor as Calvin dares to apologize for the apostle, if it be not to censure him. "He does not observe the exact order; for he places first what ought to have been last, namely, the grace which flows from mercy. For the reason why God

at first receives us into favour and why He loves is, that He is merciful. But it is not unusual to mention the cause after the effect for the sake of explanation."44 Such is his comment on the first occasion, which is repeated substantially on the second. It is plain that the scope of the blessed wish of the apostle has escaped him. For grace is the general term for that energy and outflow of divine goodness which rises above men's evil and ruin, and loves notwithstanding all; and so is most correctly, as it is uniformly, in the first place in the salutation, whether to assemblies or to individual saints. "Mercy" most appropriately finds its place in the desire of God's pitiful consideration for individual weakness, need, or danger, and so is found not only in 1 and 2 Tim., but also exceptionally and of special purpose in Jude, as it disappears from Philemon where the assembly in his house rightly modifies the formula. But mercy being thus subordinate, however sweet individually, with unquestionably good reason holds the second place. By none is it doubted that "peace," being an effect rather than a spring, is found where it should be, as indeed each and all have been shown to be. Yet how sorrowful and humiliating that such apparently unconscious but real disrespect to scripture should stand unchallenged in the final shape as well as in a modern translation of Calvin's writings, who is generally allowed to be in nothing behind the very chiefest Reformers! If reverence for God be attested by trembling at His word, may we be warned by such an example.

It is interesting to note how often in the last words of an old man one hears the recall of earlier facts in his life or recollections. Inspiration does not set this aside. The apostle speaks now of his "forefathers," as he reminds

Timothy of the faithful predecessors in his family. “I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience how unceasingly I have the remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy, calling to mind the unfeigned faith that [is] in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and, I am persuaded, in thee also” (vers. 3-5). There is a difference in the way in which Paul speaks of his forefathers as compared with the female line of believers before Timothy. He does not affirm that his ancestors were faithful in the same sense as were those of his child in the faith. It would not seem to be more than what he predicates of “our whole twelve tribes” in Acts 26:7. He however assuredly served God with pure conscience and could speak of giving Him thanks in the remembrance of Timothy. It was not merely a gracious affection for his sorrowing and anxious fellow-labourer; but he had the remembrance of Timothy in his supplications unceasingly, whilst night and day he longed to see him. Both were true. One cannot conceive a grosser delusion than that faith destroys affection. There is no life so influential as Christ’s, no bond equal to that of the Holy Spirit.

But there is more to be observed here: Paul remembered Timothy’s tears, without particularly telling us why he shed them. The context however, implies that it was the bitterness of parting from his revered leader; for the joy, with which the apostle desired to be filled, would be in their seeing one another again. No doubt there was the added feeling for Timothy, but the Spirit of prophecy had over and over again predicted the bonds and imprisonment, if not death, that awaited Paul.

Again, we may notice there was this further for which the apostle was thankful to God: “calling to mind the unfeigned faith which [is] in thee” — faith deeply called for in the increasing perplexities of God’s people here below.

It is indeed great joy to think of a beloved soul here and there, thus marked out by the Spirit, not only in time but for eternity; to think of such as an object of God’s love, and in the nearest relation to Christ. It is a sweet comfort in shame and sorrow to look on a friend who by “unfeigned faith” is witness for God in an unbelieving world. Such was Timothy in the apostle’s eyes, which, if they were soon about to close on that world, looked back at the faith which dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and in his mother Eunice, as he emphatically adds, “and, I am persuaded, in thee also.” Timothy was not the less but the more dear to the apostle, because he had been deeply exercised and severely sifted. But he could not leave him under possible discouragement, nor simply bring before him those who had preceded him in faith, nor cheer himself in a merely general way. He adds, “For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (ver. 6).

This gift (

χάρισμα) was the special energy of the Holy Ghost imparted to Timothy. There is no reasonable doubt that it is the gift spoken of in 1 Tim. 4:14. Only there it is said to have been given through prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the elderhood; here. through the laying on of Paul’s hands. The presbyters were associated with Paul; but the power was solely in the

apostle. He only was the divinely employed channel of so great a gift. And this is indicated by the difference of the prepositions “with” and “by.”

But the apostle takes occasion to speak of that which, thank God, is not special and in no way calls for prophecy. Rather is it the abiding spring of power for the church of God, the standing privilege guaranteed by the Lord (John 14-16) to every believer in the Lord resting on redemption during this present interval since Pentecost. Hence the change of language: “for God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but of power and love and sobriety of mind” (ver. 7)

What can be more comforting now in the utter ruin of the outward character of the church, which caused the apostle such intense grief when he descried its beginnings! Signs and wonders, if they could be in consistency with God’s will and glory, had been no such source of joy and blessing. They were most important in their season and for their end. They attested the victory of the risen Man over Satan; they proclaimed the beneficent power of God just vested in the hands of those that were His, and in the midst of a ruined creation. They were calculated, as they were used, to arouse the attention of a dark and slumbering race to the new ways of a God active in goodness, Who was putting honour on Him Whom man had rejected to his own shame and irreparable loss.

But there is a still deeper grace in the permanence of the Holy Ghost given to the Christian as also to the church. And the more so as we learn how every truth has been enfeebled, every principle corrupted, all the ways of God not only misunderstood but misinterpreted,

so that His testimony as a whole is wrecked in Christendom. Nevertheless, as the firm foundation of God stands, and as the Head of the church is exalted at His right hand infallibly to love, cherish, and nourish His body, so is His great gift to us unrevoked, and is not a spirit of cowardice. To supplant it alas! might well seem to become us, when one realizes the present ruin of all that bears the name of the Lord here below. On the contrary, He is given to abide in and with us for ever, and His gift is that of power and of love and of a sound mind. This was meant to cheer Timothy; and we have yet deeper need. So much the more therefore ought it to cheer us as nothing else can.

For we must remember that the Spirit of God is given us for present enjoyment and service. It becomes us therefore neither to sit down helplessly in dust and ashes, nor to show how unbroken we are, if not profane, in saying, while we go on with wrong, that Christ will set all to rights when He appears in glory. The more we are led of Him, the more deeply we shall feel that, as the evil around is irreparable, we must now cleave to His name, separate from evil and be associated godlily. We shall not give ourselves up to despair, but rise in faith and faithfulness. We shall be strengthened in obedience, and filled with the divine cheer of the Lord’s presence, as we keep His words and look for Him from heaven.

The consciousness of the Holy Ghost in us will be power, not to work miracles, but to do the will of God, as this will draw us out in the love of God, and impart a sober judgment of all that becomes His saints in the midst of ruin. This is worthy of Christ in an evil day; and what can we desire more till He Himself comes, the crown of divine goodness and glory?

In the path of Christ the time surely comes when faith is put to the proof. It is one thing in the confidence of grace and at the summons of the truth to turn one's back on the fairest pretension opposed to His name; it is quite another to stand firm and unabashed when not only the world turns from us, but desertion sets in among those that confessed Him. How few can stand the loss of valued associations, not to speak of their taunts and persecutions! This abnormal state was dawning on the sensitive and distressed spirit of Timothy. It has long been the ordinary experience for the faithful in Christendom. What a frightful illustration of it even recent years have furnished!

"Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but suffer hardship with the gospel, according to the power of God, Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times everlasting, but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, Who abolished death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel, whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher" (vers. 8-11).

It is only ignorance of self which makes it to many difficult to understand why Timothy should be thus ashamed. When the tide of blessing is at the full there is little or no room for shame. It is far otherwise when the ingathering is small and when the love of the many waxes cold, when the world becomes more hardened and contemptuous and the saints cower under its reproaches. Faith alone keeps the eye upon Christ and the heart warmed with His love in an atmosphere so

chilling. His reproach (for it is Christ's assuredly) becomes then glorious in our eyes; and "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). For the testimony though it may seem to fail is none the less the testimony of our Lord, and the suffering witness under the unjust hand of human authority is His prisoner. "Be not therefore ashamed" is the word. Grace identified the witness, who may not be perfect, with His testimony which is absolutely so. Why should we ever stand for that which is less than divine' We are not called to suffer or to bear shame for anything but Christ. He has still His objects, precious in His eyes, here below. Be it ours to find our lot only there, and let us not be ashamed in a day of grievous departure.

But more; Timothy was called to "suffer evil (hardship) along with the gospel" as an object assailed and involved in all possible trial. It is a grievous blank where a servant of God has only the gospel before his soul, lacks heart for the glory of Christ as Head of the church, fails in faith to enter into the mystery of Christ and His body, and takes the scantiest interest in the joys and sorrows which those blessed relationships entail. It is wrong to be absorbed even with the gospel, so as to abnegate our part in these high and heavenly privileges and consequent duties, so near to Christ and inseparable from God's counsels and Christ's love. But there is the opposite error, which though more rare is at least as dangerous and even more dishonouring to Christ because it is more pretentious and seductive — the danger of occupying the mind and life with the truth of the church and its wondrous associations to the depreciation of the gospel and the despising of those

who faithfully addict themselves to this work. The apostle to whom we are indebted more than to any other inspired instrument for the revelation of the church not less strenuously insists on the all-importance of the gospel. Christ is most actively and supremely concerned with both, and so should His servants, though one might be neither a teacher on the one hand nor an evangelist on the other. Still more responsible, because of the grace given to him, was Timothy, being both an evangelist and a teacher. He is here enjoined to suffer evil with the gospel, but according to the power of God. Nothing can show more forcibly the deep interest in it to which he was called. When worldliness enters, suffering hardship disappears. When the church becomes worldly, one gains honour, ease, emolument; and so it is with the gospel when it becomes popular. If the gospel and the church engage the heart and testimony according to Christ, suffering and rejection cannot but ensue. Timothy, therefore, was called to take Christ's part in the gospel; and God's power would not be lacking, however he might suffer.

The gospel is well worth the while, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes," being entirely above the distinction which the law or circumcision made. It is of the Spirit, not of the flesh, not national now but personal. God "saved us." It is the fruit of His work in Christ; and that work was finished on earth, and accepted in heaven, and abides for ever, complete and unchanging. Men may be moved away from the hope of the gospel by ordinances on the one hand or by philosophy on the other. Both are of the world, and almost equally worthless; both are absolutely inefficacious to save, though one be a sign, the other

purely human. But God “saved us and called us with a holy calling.” Here “holy” is emphatic and most suitable to the Epistle and the state of things contemplated. Always true, it was urgent now to press its “holy” character. It is a calling on high or upward, as we read in Phil. 3:14, in contrast with the earthly things in which men find their glory to their shame. It is a heavenly calling, as we see in Heb. 3:1, which those needed especially to consider who were used to the external calling of Israel in the land. It is God’s calling with its hope in and with Christ where the creature disappears from view and His eternal counsels for the glory of His Son are developed for the soul, as in Eph. 1 and 4. But now in the growing declension of such as bore the name of the Lord the apostle binds together God’s salvation with His holy calling. An evil time is not at all one for lowering the standard but for unveiling it and for pressing its importance.

Further, being divine, God’s salvation and call are not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace. Even the saint was to pray, “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified” (Ps. 143:2). There are good works in every saint: “For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10); they are not only to be fair morally but they ought to be such as suit those on earth who are united to Christ in heaven, responsible to reflect heavenly grace — no longer earthly righteousness merely. Such works alone are properly Christian. “Against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:23). But they are quite distinct from those of legal obedience, were it ever so exact. Nevertheless

God's salvation is according to Christ's work, not ours. Nor is it of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of God that showeth mercy (Rom. 9:16), according to His own purpose and grace, Who would thus perfectly honour the Son as we do in our measure by our faith.

This, again, was given us in Christ Jesus before everlasting times, a most weighty and blessed truth. It is not merely security assured without end, but grace given in Christ Jesus before time began. It was not so with Israel: they were called in time. God's purpose about us, Christians, was in eternity before any creature existed. To make it only endless security in the future is to lose this wondrous fact of the divine will about the saints who are now called in Christ to His glory. Their blessing was a counsel bound up with Christ before the world was or any question of creature responsibility entered: God purposed to justify His love and glorify Himself in having us with Christ in His presence and like Him of His own sovereign grace; therefore are we so much the more bound to walk, now and here, as He walked, in righteousness and holiness of truth as the new man after God was created (Eph. 4:24).

But the manifestation of this purposed grace to us came in with Him Who was manifested in flesh and justified in the Spirit. Even so, though all depended on the dignity of His person, and awaited the completion of His work, and His return as man into that glory whence He had come as God the Son that thus it might be the Son of man Who had glorified God in Himself; and this straightway (John 13:31, 32). Manhood, now that the infinite work of suffering for sin was accomplished, was in His person at least raised from among the dead and glorified on high according to the fullest counsel of God.

His purpose and grace was no longer a question of gift only as before the ages of time, but manifested now through the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, having annulled death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel.

This helps to the more distinct understanding of verse 1; for it is the promise of life, that which is in Christ Jesus, fulfilled. Grace was thus distributing its incomparable stores. Death was brought to naught as Satan's empire over sinful man, and Jesus was manifestly Lord of all and Conqueror over all hostile power and Giver of infinite blessing in communion with God His Father; and all this in truth and righteousness. For sin had been borne and borne away, as the gospel declares to all men in itself and applies the good news to ourselves by faith individually.

Where is man's wisdom then? For ever put to shame in His cross of which it was ashamed. Where is the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us? Effaced for ever and taken out of the way by Him Who nailed it to the cross, as the resurrection cast its glorious light on the incorruption of the body pledged to us in Him risen. No wonder the apostle told the Roman saints long before that he was not ashamed of the gospel, destined to be imprisoned and slain and cast out in the person of its witnesses in that city more than in any other that professed it, not to speak of the loathsome imposture and harlotry which supplanted and still supplant it there. No wonder the apostle there imprisoned for its sake, and anticipating the speedy pouring out of his blood as a drink-offering (2 Tim. 4:6), adds with triumphant thankfulness, "unto which [gospel] I [emphatically] was appointed a preacher, and an

apostle, and a teacher [of Gentiles].” Some few high and varied authorities (A 17) omit “of Gentiles,” which from the character of the Epistle seems to me probably right; and the rather as the copyists were profoundly insensible of such a trait but disposed to assimilate the second letter to the first, where “of Gentiles” has its suited and certain place.

The apostle no sooner introduces himself and his appointed place in service than he names those sufferings of his which were at least as wonderful as his labours.

“For which cause also I suffer these things; yet I am not ashamed; for I know Whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have entrusted [or, my deposit] against that day. Have an outline of sound words, which [words] thou heardest from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. The good thing entrusted [or, the good deposit] keep through the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us” (vers. 12-14).

No one was more remote from superstitious penalties or self-righteous pains; yet where was ever such a life-long endurance in the most varied ways for the testimony of Christ? “In stripes beyond measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Five times from Jews I received the forty stripes save one; thrice I was scourged with rods; once I was stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I spent in the deep; in journeyings often; in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from Gentiles, in perils in town, in perils in wilderness, in perils at sea, in perils among false brethren; in labour and toil, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and

nakedness" (2 Cor. 11:21-27). And this is but the mere external part in what he calls his "folly," that is, in speaking of himself instead of Christ, extorted from him as it was by the detractors at Corinth. But what a life of love such sufferings indicate, what devotedness to Him Who had appointed him a herald and apostle and teacher!

Was he "ashamed" then? Rather did he boast of what humanly speaking is a humiliation. If it is needful to boast, says he, "I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity," "most gladly therefore will I rather boast of my infirmities [not faults or sins assuredly], that the power of the Christ may dwell upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits, for Christ; for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10). As that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God, so to the spiritual mind there is nothing so glorious for a saint here below as reproach, rejection, and suffering for Christ's sake and His testimony. This was the cause for which Paul was suffering then as all through his course, since the Lord said, "I will show him how much he must suffer for My name" (Acts 9:16). But it was also great grace that, instead of complaining like Jeremiah, he should abound in courage, joy, and triumph, NOT shame.

Was Paul then a man of iron constitution, a heart of oak, which threw off all blows and wounds, as if unfelt? "Ye know," said he to some who should have known him well, "that in weakness of the flesh I preached the gospel to you at the first; and my temptation which was in my flesh ye did not slight nor reject with contempt; but ye received me as an angel of God, as Christ

Jesus" (Gal. 4:13, 14). His circumstances were as trying as his health was infirm; yet went he on for years, night and day, admonishing each with tears, coveting no one's silver or gold or clothing, but his hands ministering to the wants of others as well as his own. Truly in nothing was he ashamed; but with all boldness of grace, as always, so now also magnifying Christ in his body whether by life or by death.

What sustained him? "For I know Whom I have believed." It is faith, but it is the Person Who is believed, and a real inward knowledge of Him thereby formed. No other knowledge has such sterling value for eternity; yet there is communion with God in it now, as now the Holy Spirit communicates it through the word. The voice of Christ is heard and believed and known; for there is, though the channels may be many, but that One, and the voice of any other is only the voice of a stranger. His words are spirit, and they are life; and that life depends on Him Who is its source; Who draws out confidence the more He is known without enfeebling dependence. In Him we have redemption through His blood; and as He is, so we are in this world: acceptance is complete and perfect, according to the glory of His person and the efficacy of His work.

Hence the apostle adds, "and I am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit — that which I have entrusted unto Him — against that day." By "my deposit" is to be understood all that I as a believer entrust to the safekeeping of God, not only the security but the blessedness of the soul and the body, of the walk and the work, with every question conceivable to be raised in the past, present, or future. As responsibility is clearly in question, the reference is as usual to "that day," which

will declare the measure of every saint's fidelity when each shall have his praise from God. The coming or "presence" of the Lord, as is well-known, is the aspect of pure grace when all shall be caught up in the likeness of the Lord to be with Him for ever.

This leads the apostle to impress on his fellow-labourer an all-important exhortation regarding his own service of Christ with others. "Have an outline of sound words, which thou heardest from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (ver. 13). "Hold fast" goes far beyond the force of the first word, as "the" form is also unwarranted. Timothy had been used to hear the things which are freely given us by God spoken in words, not which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, or, as they are here described, "sound words". But there had been no formula which he was called and bound to keep; simply the truth conveyed in divinely taught expressions, which, heard before from Paul, he was to heed jealously now that the end of that mighty testifying was near.

For man is not competent to set the truth in new forms without trenching on it and thus impairing if not corrupting the testimony of God. It is not enough to have the things of the Spirit; the words in which they are conveyed need to be of the Spirit also, in order to communicate God's mind in perfection; and hence, to be a rule of faith, we must have God's word. Now that the inspired authorities no longer exist, scripture only is this; and it is as distinct from ministry on the one hand as from the assembly on the other.

Ministry is the regular service of Christ by gift to communicate the truth, whether to the world in the

gospel, or to the saints in the truth generally. But even if not a word were amiss (which is rarely the case — indeed far otherwise), it is not inspiration and therefore in no way a rule of faith.

Still less can the assembly be rightly so viewed. It is responsible to receive and reflect the word of God. It is the pillar and stay of the truth, the responsible keeper and corporate witness of holy writ; as Israel of old was of the law and the prophets, the living oracles committed to them. But scripture itself abides the rule of faith.

And hence in this last Epistle of Paul we have the reiterated forms which urge the duty of taking heed to the sound words heard from the apostle. Outline or sample of such words he was to have, the authority of which was imprinted on them from God; for Timothy was no such authority, and less if possible were the saints who were to profit by them. But Timothy's state of soul was much for their happy use with others; and therefore "with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" has its importance. Memory, however exact, would not suffice. Faith and love, which have their power in Jesus Christ, would make them so much the more impressive.

The verse that follows appears to me to summarize what its predecessor exhorts in detail: "Keep the good deposit through the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us" (ver. 14), the latter having a sort of antithetical reference to verse 12. There it was the apostle resting with holy satisfaction on God's keeping what he had entrusted to Him. Here is the other side, in which Timothy is called to keep what he was entrusted with, for which God provides help in the Holy Spirit that dwells in us. For the Spirit given

abides with us for ever. He may be grieved by our sins and folly; but He does not abandon the saint since redemption. He is there, when self-judgment corrects the hindrance, to act in His own gracious power to the glory of Christ Who sent Him down for this very purpose.

It will be noticed that the Spirit's dwelling is not said to be "in thee", but "in us". So it is in scripture habitually, and is incomparably better than if predicated of Timothy alone. On him had been conferred by apostolic prerogative a special gift; but he or any other saint shared the unspeakable boon, for Whose mission it was expedient that even Jesus should go away (John 16:7). This is the common and characteristic power of the Christian; and therefore it was fitting that, while Timothy should be reminded of One so competent to help our infirmity, he should have it clearly before his soul that the saints at large have the divine Spirit no less truly dwelling in them. It was well for both him and them to have the comfort and the stimulus of so blessed, yet solemn, a fact indelibly before them.

We cannot too strongly urge that the precious privileges with which God's grace in Christ has invested believers are standing facts, and not mere ideas or transient feelings. They are indeed calculated to exercise the mind and fill the mind to the full, and wretched is his state, who, possessing what so transcends human thought or affection, seems to estimate them less than the passing things of the day or the trifling objects on which man spends his care. But the life of Christ, His death and resurrection, redemption through His blood, union with Him on high, His intercession at God's right hand, are facts on which the soul can rest, no less than

on His Deity and His humanity in one person. Just so is it with the presence of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, and His varied operations in the assembly and the individual. The believer stands in divine present relationship with them all, which are as certain and infinitely more important than the links of natural kin or country, which nobody in his senses disbelieves. What a reproof to the thoughtless saint! and what solid cheer to the trembling heart! We have only to reflect on what grace has made ours in Christ to run over with thanksgiving and praise.

There is more, however, than hardship or suffering to be faced in the testimony of our Lord, and no one proved it more than the apostle. To be persecuted by foes may be bitter, though glorious for His sake Who really entails it as the world now is. But what is this to compare with desertion by friends? Here, the life that is in Christ finds fresh scope. For glorifying the Lord in such an experience how deep the value of the word, and how energetic the power of the Holy Ghost which dwells in us! A single eye to Christ alone can sustain in it, and as the apostle was then feeling it to the uttermost so does he not hesitate to bring it before the tender spirit of his beloved child.

“Thou knowest this, that all that are in Asia turned away from me; of whom is Phygelus and Hermogenes” (ver. 15). Of these two we may be wholly ignorant. Not so Timothy any more than Paul, who singles out their names as the most painful examples of the abandonment which cut the apostle to the heart. Timothy knew well what made their heartlessness such a distress to the servant, such a dishonour to the Master. It is not Christian to treat such conduct with contempt any more

than with resentment. We can afford to hear all, however humbling as well as grievous. For we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Their defection would prepare Timothy and countless others for that which might be similar in its kind and time. Scripture records nothing in vain. It is true that we are nerved and strengthened for the conflict by looking not to deserters but to the Captain of salvation. But it is well to be prepared for that which has been, for what might be, not to say for what from the same causes is sure to be, from time to time. And it was the more important to speak of it to Timothy at this time, because he was so soon to lose the cheering presence and burning exhortations of the one who was writing to him, at least to lose his voice as a living man, though ever to be heard, ever to abide as the word of the living God.

Let us consider more precisely what appears to be meant by these affecting words. Asia, pro-consular Asia, had been the scene of signal triumph for the gospel. It was there that the word of the Lord mightily grew and prevailed, and this in its capital city, Ephesus. To the saints there the apostle had written his most elevated and richest Epistle, with the singular feature of there being no occasion to occupy himself or them with faults or dangers then existing in their midst, though not without warning against the worst and lowest evils into which Satan might betray, and betray so much the more surely if that height of grace and truth were departed from or despised. And Timothy knew Asia well, especially Ephesus. There the apostle would have him remain when he himself was going to Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3) that he might keep up the testimony which had

been planted there and guard the saints against all the trash of man which Satan would use to supplant it.

But now, the apostle can assume that Timothy knew that desertion of himself which filled his heart, not with dismay but with grief. Such is the effect of divine love shed abroad in the heart, and Paul would have Timothy to feel it according to Christ. This, undoubtedly, adds to the anguish but it delivers from selfishness as well as from acrimony. And Timothy needed to have it brought before him thus, even though he knew the fact. The language supposes, it would seem, a definite act, rather than a general state, though no doubt there was an antecedent state which prepared the way for that act to affect them so unworthily.

It is true that turning away from Paul is very different from forsaking the gospel or the church, from giving up this truth or that. But where the Lord was giving His most honoured servant to suffer, not for any failure of his own, but for the divine deposit, for His testimony here below, that any should desert such a servant at such a time would be lamentable: how much more so that the desertion should be general and in a moral sense universal where the truth was best known and grace could be brought out in all its height and depth and breadth as nowhere else! I should judge from the context that the fact which brought out this most deplorable and guilty desertion was the apostle’s imprisonment. The enemy took advantage of human shame put upon the greatest servant of the church and of the gospel. And those who had been the abundant fruit of his labours in divine power did in effect join the world in spirit, cowering under its shame where faith and love ought to have given them identification with

the apostle's suffering as bringing glory to the name of Jesus.

But the turning away from Paul was not absolutely complete even in Asia. There was at least a bright exception, as a time of general evil is ever used in the grace of God to bring out singular fidelity and devotedness. "The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus; for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; but being in Rome he sought me out diligently and found [me]; (the Lord grant him to find mercy from [the] Lord in that day). And in how many things he ministered at Ephesus thou knowest very well" (vers. 16-18). The contrast helps much and definitely to show us where the general defection lay; and the Lord repaid "the house of Onesiphorus" with compound interest the grace He had bestowed on its head. "He often refreshed me," says the gracious apostle: how like the Master Who could say to the poor disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as My Father appointed unto Me..."! (Luke 22:28, 29).

But Paul also singles out the crucial fact: "and was not ashamed of my chain." Love evinces its truth, character, and power in the hour of need. How was it with "all that were in Asia"? They were evidently ashamed of it. Fleshly prudence blamed the zeal for Christ which gave the occasion; and worldly spirit shrank from all solidarity with the imprisoned apostle. How did the Lord regard such selfish timorousness" The Holy Spirit marks its baseness indelibly on the everlasting page of scripture. But He singles out the blessed exception of one whose heart crave the more to the apostle, not merely in the province of Asia, but in the proud

metropolis where the apostle was bound. “But being in Rome he sought me very diligently”;45 and not in vain. He found the deserted apostle: “the Lord grant him to find mercy from [the] Lord in that day”! This, it is true, we are all awaiting in faith (Jude 21); but none the less sweet or comforting is the apostle’s prayer, surely not less efficacious than that of an Abraham of old for the present government of God. Nor is this all that is said; but he appeals to Timothy as knowing very well how much service Onesiphorus rendered in Ephesus. The apostle does not limit it, as the Authorized Version does with others, to ministering to himself: the general phrase leaves room for what was personal, of course, but it implies much more, as the apostle carefully states. None knew this “better”46 than Timothy who needed no further explanation.

44 “Secundum hoc, hoc est, Misericordiae nomen, praeter suum morem interposuit, forte singular) erga Timotheum amore impulsus. Porro, non servat exactum ordinem: quod enim posterius est priore loco posuit gratiam scilicet quae ex misericordia manat. Nam ideo nos in gratiam initio recipit Deus, et deinde amore nos prosequitur, quia misericors est. Verum non est insolitum, causam subjungi effectuii, explicationis causa” Calvin, (Opp. vii. 438. Amstel. 1607).

45 It is the comparative in both verse 17 and 18, not the positive nor the superlative: a favourite Greek idiom, which if the ellipse were expanded would express, “more diligently than could be expected” (ver. 17) and “knowing better than to require more said of it.” (ver. 18).

46 Ibid.

2 Timothy 2

In strong contrast with that desertion of the apostle which had overspread the saints of proconsular Asia is the call to Timothy with which chapter 2 opens.

“Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men, such as shall be able to teach others also” (vers. 1, 2).

There only is the source of all real strengthening of the soul from God — “the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” The apostle’s presence and teaching wrought invaluably for the blessing of saints; but he could tell the dear Philippians, “even as ye always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). At all events, whatever might disappear of the highest authorities or of the lower dependent on their appointment, God was there abidingly to work in the saints both to wit and to work according to, or for, His good pleasure. And as the saints in Philippi give us the proof of the power of the grace in Christ to keep and strengthen to all obedience, so the turning away from him that called them in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel which is not another found its sad but sure warning in the Galatians. They were equally as the Philippians the fruit of the apostle’s labour, and in spite of the infirmity in which Paul at the first preached to them, no small trial to him or them, instead of slighting or spurning they received him as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. Now so weakened were they by the legal

zeal of those who desired to shut them out from the apostle that he needed to ask, if he, for whom they would have plucked out if possible their own eyes and given them to him, — if he was become their enemy in speaking the truth to them. It is good, he adds gravely, to be zealously sought in a good thing at all times, and not only when I am present with you (Gal. 4:13-18).

This then is the secret at all times and under every change of circumstance; but it is most appropriately urged on a confidential fellow-labourer of timid character and not of the highest rank, when the apostle had in full view the ruin of the church's testimony and his own speedy departure. None need wonder at the emphatic terms in which he exhorts his child to draw on the rich and ever-flowing stream. Faith in the grace of Christ alone drinks freely and has within that living fountain springing up to eternal life; faith in Him, Who is now glorified, alone has rivers of living water flowing out from within. Whatever the want, His fulness is the same, undiminished, accessible, and free; whatever the danger, He has overcome the world and the devil, He Who suffered for us, yea, for our sins once for all; and He knows all and has all power and authority Who hears our every appeal and loves ourselves unchangingly. Timothy needed this grace to strengthen him. It is revealed to us and as true for us who need it no less in our place. It is equally open to us and sure for us. Oh, that we may look to Him confidingly in our wants for ourselves and for others!

But there is more than encouraging ourselves in the Lord when distress abounds and difficulties press and dangers impend or affright. If the truth in Christ is needed to deal with and quicken dead souls, no less is it

requisite and valid for the saints. Here it is a question of forming and furnishing those who are to instruct others.

We must distinguish the uses of divine revelation. The word of God is the standard of truth: nothing else is or can be such a test, and in its wondrous fulness, not one word of which is in vain, there is the special touchstone of Jesus Christ come in the flesh, Whom the Holy Spirit always leads a true witness to confess, as the spirit of error ever shirks or denies. But in a general way we may say that the apostolic deposit puts faith or unbelief to the proof. A Jew now would own perhaps sincerely all the ancient oracles called the Old Testament. Is he therefore a believer? Assuredly not, because he does not hear, he rejects, the apostles (1 John 4:6). Ye are of God, says the beloved disciple to the little children, the actual family of faith, and have overcome the many false prophets that are gone out into the world or the evil spirit animating each: because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they [as] of the world, and the world heareth them. But this does not finish what he had to say and they to weigh and hold fast: We are of God; not “ye” only as born of Him, being begotten by the word of truth; but we as His inspired witnesses in communicating that truth which beyond all tests souls since the rejection of Christ. He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Here however it is the means of communicating the truth rather than the word acting or employed as its standard. As it is a question of edifying, there is no call for such trenchant and solemn appeal. Scripture is no doubt the fullest, most exact, and absolutely reliable

means of conveying the mind of God; but His grace uses many other things from the nursery to the dying bed. Among these sound, competent, gracious and intelligent ministry has a capital place. And the apostle's present charge to his beloved associate is really with the view of providing for efficient service in this kind. No man on earth, we may presume, had enjoyed so largely as Timothy the privilege of hearing the greatest of the apostles. Here he is admonished to bear in mind that what he had received was not for himself only but for others, and in order that the best results should be attained by grace through such as had capacity to teach faithfully. In ministry or service of the word it is only fanaticism, not faith, to deny the importance of competency; as we hear the Lord in the parable of His own dealing with His servants, giving talents, sovereignly indeed (to one five, to another two, to another one), yet to each according to his several ability (Matt. 25:15). It is not that ability is gift, nor that the talents (His goods) are to be confounded, as in popular parlance and even in vain-glorious theology, with the several ability of each servant. Not only does every scripture that treats of the theme speak of "gifts" as wholly differing in source and character from any one's ability, but even in the parable, which learned ignorance regards as abounding in loose drapery, they are distinguished in the clearest way.

We have also to take note of another prevalent misconception of this verse. By many excellent and erudite persons the apostle is supposed here to lay on Timothy the responsibility of ordaining to ecclesiastical office. Now of this there is absolutely nothing said. 1 Tim. 3:1-7 does present the qualities requisite for an

overseer, or bishop; and undoubtedly the bishop must be apt to teach (διδακτικός, though not necessarily a διδασκαλός or teacher). But ruling was characteristically their duty; and so it is said in 1 Tim. 5:17, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those that labour in the word and teaching.” The fallacy is that others might and did not teach who were not elders; which is at direct issue with the facts, words, and principles of the New Testament on this head. Not an expression in our verse 2 enunciates eldership or implies it. The full meaning of the whole and of every part is satisfied by not going beyond faithful men instructed by Timothy, as the apostle directs, so that they might be competent to teach others also.

Let us weigh a little the nice phraseology of the apostle that we may the better appreciate its wisdom as well as its consistency with the truth revealed elsewhere. The apostle had kept back nothing that was profitable from so confidential a companion. He had nearly accomplished his own course and the ministry which he received from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. He shrank not from declaring to others not so near nor so honoured as Timothy the whole counsel of God. So here the things which Timothy had heard from him among many witnesses, these he was to commit to faithful men. As the matter testified was not done in a corner, so the apostle had openly brought out the precious truth in the presence of many witnesses. The Lord had already pointed out that men do not put a light in secret, nor under the corn-measure, nor under the bed; the apostle was an unwearied and whole-hearted witness for Christ unto all men of what he had

seen and heard, yea and of the things wherein the Lord was to appear to him. And the “many witnesses” among whom Timothy had heard these things from Paul would not only encourage to the greater spread of the truth but confirm the communications made. For here not inspiration is predicated of the many witnesses, but exact information in order to the confirmation and propagation of the truth. If Christ is the true Light, His own also are the light of the world. To be the salt of the earth is not enough, however good: activity in grace is called for — light diffusing itself and dispelling darkness. For this suited vessels are requisite; not learned, nor even educated, but “faithful men”. To them was Timothy to entrust what was revealed of God, in order to build up souls and give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. Nor as a simple fact is it assumed that faithful men are necessarily men who are able to teach. It is rather “such as” shall be competent to teach others also. All is as simple as it is beautifully precise.

The apostle now resumes what is rather personal than relative, though he gradually enlarges into what is comprehensive as well as of the deepest importance for the servants of Christ.

“Take thy share of suffering hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one on service entangleth himself with the businesses of life, that he may please him that enlisted [him]. But if one also contend [in the games], he is not crowned unless he have contended lawfully. The labouring husbandman must first partake of the fruits” (vers. 3-6).

It will be noticed that the words “thou therefore” disappear. They were in all probability an importation,

perhaps, inadvertently, from verse 1, where the emphasis is of intention and moment. Here such an emphasis is not only uncalled for but would be improper. The timid sensitiveness of Timothy wanted the personal appeal to cast him upon the grace in Christ Jesus for inward strengthening; and this very especially in communicating the truth to faithful men such as should be qualified to teach others also. This is ever a delicate task; and one that demands much moral courage and tact which His grace alone can supply, let the competency be what it may. It was therefore emphatically so to Timothy.

Here too, but without any such prominency, Timothy is exhorted to take his share in suffering hardship, but not "with me" as many understand besides the Revised Version. Really it narrows and spoils the force. The Greek warrants only the general thought of sharing ill with his comrades, Paul or any other. It is left purposely large. This association is lost by the false reading of the Received Text, followed by the Authorized Version, as already alluded to. Not personal emphasis but general share is the thought rather than with Paul in particular. Nor does the particular passage in 2 Timothy 1:8 warrant "with me," but expressly "with the gospel" which is personified by the great apostle. There is the difference however that our verse does not express with whom he was called to share affliction, nor should we supply it. The construction evidently differs from that in the preceding chapter, and the sense is best left in the vague of the original.

But Timothy's share of suffering is defined. It was to be as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. The "fellow-soldier" of the Clermont MS. goes too far, if it be not also

irreverent. In an enemy's land who could wonder that Timothy was called to take his share in suffering?

This naturally leads to the more generally applied figure of verse 4. "No one when on campaign entangleth himself in the businesses of life, that he may please him that enrolled him." The force of the allusion is as evident as its universal truth. Who in the Roman empire was ignorant of the fact? No doubt furlough might allow of relaxation, and completed service, of perfect liberty; but to Christ's servant here below is no furlough and no discharge from his duty. Hence the apostle does not speak simply of a "man that warreth" as in the Authorized Version, but of one on actual service, and therefore he can stamp the truth with an absolute negative. "No one when serving entangleth himself with the affairs (or businesses) of life." It is surprising that the Revised Version follows the Authorized alone of all the English versions in the needless qualification of "this life". It is the more improper, because scripture had already appropriated the demonstrative pronoun not to βίος but to ζωή (Acts 5:20). It would however be a gross error to think that for the servant of Christ this excludes occupation, if he judge under any circumstances that he is called to provide things honest with his hands or his head. The apostle himself is its best refutation. The workman whether in the gospel or in the church is worthy of his hire. But many a valued man may serve Christ either way or in both, who does not give up his so-called secular employment. He might be assured even that the measure of his gift did not create such a claim on the assembly as to warrant it. And even the greatest of labourers felt it his joy and would not have his boast made vain in declining to use his power in the gospel for

himself: so penetrated and filled was he with the spirit of that grace in God which is the source of the gospel itself (2 Cor. 11:7-9). To entangle oneself in the businesses of life means really to give up separation from the world by taking one's part in outward affairs as a bona-fide partner in it. The servant of Christ is bound whatever he does to do it unto the Lord and therefore in conformity with His word. In everything he serves the Lord Christ; nor is this bondage of the law but liberty in the Spirit, though he be the Lord's bondman. As the soldier on campaign has to please him that enrolled his name, so evermore has the Christian servant to please the Lord. He Himself has said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30).

But there is a second illustration of great moment. "And if also one contend in the games, he is not crowned unless he have contended lawfully." What can be conceived more needed or weightier in practice' The servant of Christ is called to be as careful as an athlete; but if so, he is bound to observe the revealed will of the Lord, no less rigorously than those who took their part in the games of Greece. General fidelity ought never to be sought or allowed as a cover for delinquency. Nor can the highest excellence in the highest objects excuse a departure even in small things from truth or righteousness; as he who infringed in any way the law of the games was therefore excluded from the chaplet of victory.

There is a third maxim which has been singularly misunderstood by truly spiritual minds. Yet the structure of the sentence is not really obscure.47 The difficulty is due rather to a certain prejudice as to the sense or its application. The figure is taken from agriculture, not

from military service nor from the well-known games. The stress is on the “labouring husbandman”. The love of Christ must constrain and brotherly love must continue, in order that the servant of Christ persevere unintermittingly in his labours. Hence we find in the former Epistle (1 Tim. 5:17) that, while the elders that rule well were to be counted worthy of double honour, those are distinguished “especially” that labour in the word and in teaching. So here, where the general service of Christ is in question, the labouring husbandman ought first to partake of the fruits. Impossible that God could deign to be a debtor to any. “Each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour,” whether the planter or the waterer or any other (1 Cor. 3:8). For God is not unrighteous in any case to forget our work and the love shown to His name. But the labour of love has especial value in His sight. This may be in very young saints (1 Thess. 1:3), no less than the work of faith and the patience of hope. It is most blessed where the servant of Christ is sustained in such labour. “The labouring husbandman ought first (whatever others may, and before all) to partake of the fruits”. It is rather a truism that he must labour before partaking of the fruits, or “labouring first must be partaker of the fruits” as the margin of the Authorized Version says. But this is not the sense of the phrase in any grammatical construction of it possible, nor, if it were, could it afford so grave or so cheering a call to the labourer.

Thus in the three maxims of verses 4-6 we have first the object or starting-point; then the ways or means guarded, as well as the end; and lastly encouragement along the road for him who labours in love, as faith does.

The bearing of that which the apostle had just inculcated was of deep meaning and great value, but by no means obvious. Hence it would appear he adds, “Apprehend what I say; for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things” (ver. 7). Such is the true text, not “the things which” (ἅ) in detail, as the Text Rec., but “what” (

ὅ) as a whole. This makes all the more pertinent the assurance, not prayer merely, which follows, “And the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things,” as large in its range as minute in its ramifications. On this he can count who has an unction from the Holy One, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

“Remember Jesus Christ raised out of [the] dead, of David’s seed, according to my gospel, in which I suffer unto bonds as an evil-doer: but the word of God is not bound. For this cause I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation, that [is] in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. Faithful [is] the word: for if we died together with [Him], we shall also live together; if we endure, we shall also reign together; if we shall deny [Him], He also will deny us, if we are unfaithful, He abideth faithful, for He cannot deny Himself” (vers. 8-13).

The apostle in these verses recalls to the person of Christ, the touchstone and substance of the truth, but to His person according to Paul’s gospel bound up indissolubly with His work. “Remember Jesus Christ, of David’s seed, raised out of the dead according to my gospel.” Christ is at once the object and the fulfilment of the promises, but He is incalculably more. He is raised from among the dead, the Beginning, the First-born of

the new creation. He is as thus risen the head of an entirely new system. From first to last this is the teaching of Paul. He affirms of Jesus, the Son of God, that He was born of David's seed according to the flesh. but that He was marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of dead men, as stated in the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 1:3, 4).

But here is there not a practical rather than a dogmatic aim before the Spirit of God? Even as Messiah, the Lord Jesus must be risen from the dead. If any one was entitled to earthly honour and glory, it was the Son of David; but, according to Paul's gospel, He passes through death into resurrection. Such is the only mould of blessing, the world and man being as they are. No statement can be stronger. As Head of the church there would be no wonder; but for the Seed of David it is surprising, yet most true. For the church itself has no existence, save on the ground of His being the risen Head, and in heavenly places. In heaven only could the Head be, in order to give a heavenly character to those who are united to Him by the Holy Ghost on earth. But Paul's gospel insists on the great fact of resurrection from among the dead — even for the Messiah. And this alone is true of Him in that character now — He is risen, but not reigning. Much less is the Christian reigning as yet.

On the contrary, after that gospel the apostle says, "I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor." Things in the world are wholly out of course. Nothing is settled in order according to God, though His providence governs, and every soul is called to be subject to the powers that be. They may reign, and we are commanded to honour

the king habitually, as indeed to honour all men passingly; but we are called to forego all thought of honour now for ourselves. We are called to the communion of Christ; it is our proper honour to share in our measure what the apostle suffered so largely. All thought of present ease, of establishment here below, of a constitution settled and stable in the sight of men, violates the truth before us, as indeed every other presentation of it now to the saint, or to the church as a whole. He that had most of true honour as a Christian in the gospel declares that he suffers as a malefactor unto bonds.

In plain contrast with this, we read of the Corinthian saints reigning without the apostle, who speaks there also of God's setting forth "us the apostles" last of all, as men doomed to death (1 Cor. 4:8, 9). Christ knew the death of the cross as none ever did or could; and Paul was yet to know death, as His faithful martyr. All for him was true. With the Corinthians alas! how much was false. They had slipped in heart from sharing His rejection. Indeed as yet they had scarcely known it. They had received Christ for eternal life and redemption; they as yet knew nothing of dying daily (1 Cor. 15:31).

So here the apostle solemnly anticipates the danger, for Christians generally, of settling down here below. This is incomparably more serious. Levity of thought and feeling, the power of nature, the activity of the flesh, may be sad in young saints; but immeasurably worse is it, when old saints depart from the high and heavenly standard they have learnt. Such was the danger now, and the apostle is here awakening Timothy to his own anxiety about it. We see the evil in a gross form when the Christian body acquired power and honour and

earthly glory in the days of Constantine and his successors; but the mischief was at work extensively, it would appear from this Epistle, at the time the apostle was writing. The power of the resurrection from among the dead meets the evil for all that have ears to hear. It is wholly past as a living thing for those who accept earthly grandeur as a right estate for the Christian now. He who is most right before God must be content to suffer most before men, as the apostle was seen doing unto bonds.

But suffering wrongfully, even unto bonds as a malefactor, did not hinder blessing. “The word of God is not bound.” On the contrary, such circumstances attract fresh notice. A class wholly new have their attention drawn to the revelation of God. The name of the Lord comes before magistrates, officials of the law, soldiers, seamen, governors, and perhaps even crowned heads. It may be the world’s shame that so it should be, but rejection is the path of the Christian, the true glory of the church, till Jesus reigns. The preacher himself may be a prisoner; “but the word of God is not bound.”

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they also may obtain salvation, that [is] in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.” Here was a most dauntless heart, and the eye undimmed by present sorrow, for it was single, and his whole body full of light. If Christ loved the elect — Christ Who suffered for their sins, Paul could use language boldly, yet truly, for he shared His love, though it was Christ’s alone to “bear our sins in His own body on the tree.” No man, no saint, no apostle, shares that atoning work; yet it is not presumption for the feeblest saint to suffer with Him any more that to hope for glorification with Him. If we are children, then heirs

— heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together (Rom. 8:17).

But here the apostle goes farther; “I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they also may obtain salvation that [is] in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.” How few would venture to say these words as their own souls’ experience from that day to this! Nevertheless we may earnestly desire it in our measure; but it supposes in the believer not merely a good conscience and a heart burning in love, but himself thoroughly self-judged, and Christ dwelling in his heart by faith. The apostle openly declares it to Timothy; and surely it was meant to act powerfully on his fellow-labourer’s soul, as also on ours. It is not that the salvation of the elect is uncertain: the Lord Jesus will surely guard that according to all His gracious power and the unfailing counsels of God. But as another apostle says, If the righteous is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and sinner appear? (1 Peter 4:18). It is indeed with difficulty that the elect are saved, though saved they assuredly will be; but as it needs all the resources of divine grace, so it calls for all the love of Christ in laborious service, and, what is also most effective, it hails the endurance of all things for their sake.

Nor is this all that the apostle has to urge on this theme. “Faithful is the word; for if we died together with Him, we shall also live together; if we endure, we shall also reign together.” He does not add as to this word “worthy of all acceptation”; for it is a saying for saints rather than for sinners as such; but the saying, beyond a doubt, is faithful; for “if we died together with Him, we shall also live together.” There is no Christian who died not

with Christ. It is the very truth which every baptized soul confesses in his baptism, even were he dumb. And it is lack of faith, not lack of speech, which makes it untrue of any.

Accordingly, the apostle is urging, not what is beyond almost any to say, lest it might be presumptuous and vain, but what all that are true must join as the confession of grace and truth from the starting point. It is the hypothetical clause, which is decisive, yet no Christians ought to shrink, nor can they truly shrink, from it; for Christ it was Who, having suffered all, gave all freely. And “if we died with Him,” which is indisputable for the believer now, “we shall also live with Him.” It is of the bright and blessed future Paul here assures us, though it is equally true that we live now because He lives, or, as it is put elsewhere, Christ lives in us. But here the living with Him remains before us as a hope. Here, and now, we are to bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 4:10); by and by it will be nothing but living with Him.

So, “if we endure, we shall also reign together.” Here need be no question; it is suffering now, not yet reigning with Him. The reading in some ancient authorities of Rev. 5 or 20 (that the saints reign now) is unequivocal error. It is wrong morally as well as dogmatically. We shall reign with Christ; but even He sits on the Father’s throne as yet. He waits to receive His own throne; and so do we much more. Were our hearts right, we should not wish to reign without Him; as we should have a sounder faith, if we held, that He is not reigning yet, but gone to receive a kingdom, and to return. He will come in His kingdom, which He has not yet received. Till then we are called to endure, not to reign; when He shall

appear, we shall appear with Him; when He reigns, so shall we with Him.

But there is solemn caution, as well as sure expectation of glory. “If we shall deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He abideth faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.” There was danger in a day of declension particularly of departure not only from this or that divine principle but from Himself, and this permanently. Nor does the apostle bolster up the saints in what is the most dangerous of delusions, that there is no danger. For dangers abound on all sides; and we ought to know that grievous times were to come in the last times. Denying the Lord, so far from being impossible for a servant of His, is exactly what scripture shows us to have been the fact in one most honoured, who had thought that for him, of all men, it was impossible; yet was Peter on the eve of it. No doubt this was but a passing act, however shameful and deplorable, however repeated then, and with aggravation; yet the all-overcoming all-forgiving, grace of Christ rose above and effaced it, turning it even to never-to-be-forgotten profit, and fruitful blessing. But where it is a course of life, as here (“if we shall,” not merely if we should as an act), the consequence is, as it ought to be, the necessary vindication on God’s part of His injured majesty: “He also will deny us.” God would cease to be God, if He acquiesced in the dishonour of His Son. The believer bows and believes, adores and serves. The unbeliever, and the denier if possible yet more, may insult now, but both must ere long honour Him in judgment, “that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father” (John 5:23).

There is a closing sentence of great weight, “if we are unfaithful, He abideth faithful”; and this for the most convincing and glorious of reasons, “for He cannot deny Himself.” It may at first hearing seem to take from the ease and flow of the sentence to read “for”, as we ought on good and ancient authority. But on reflection this really adds not a little to its force; because it is not a mere independent addition to confirm the foregoing: the ground or proof of His abiding fidelity lies in the blessed feet of His unchanging truth.

Now Paul turns to another class of dangers, not so common, but rising from verbal disputes to profanity and impious daring and corruption of fundamental truth. Some shrink from the least consideration of such snares; but nothing is gained by shrinking from what we ought to face, if our delight be in what is holy, good, and true, instead of curiously prying into evil. It is the light which makes everything manifest; and light we are in the Lord. Light is the congenial element of the new man, as love is its activity.

“Of these things put in remembrance, testifying earnestly before the Lord that they fight not about words, to no profit, for subversion of those that hear. Be diligent to present thyself approved to God, a workman not to be ashamed, cutting straightly the word of truth. But shun profane babblings, for they will advance unto greater ungodliness, and their word will eat up as a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus, [men] who concerning the truth went astray, saying that the resurrection hath already taken place, and overthrow the faith of some” (vers. 14-18).

Here Timothy is called not to understand merely but to put others in remembrance of the great vital truths that the apostle has laid down. He is also charged in the sight of the Lord to warn against word-fights, profitable for nothing, and calculated to subvert the hearers. This is a most wholesome caution needed widely and in all ages. There are real differences even among Christians, more or less serious in disguising or perverting the truth, But those who value the truth, especially if there be no aggressive zeal, are particularly apt to fall into distinctions without a difference. Zeal of this sort makes them doughty word-warriors. How true that this is useful for nothing, while it is readily available for subverting those who hear! For the word-warrior knows when to stop, the simple who hear pass on and are punished There is much vanity, and little, if any, sincerity in such disputes; they tend not to edification, but to real and very grave mischief. The charge to Timothy is no less a duty for those who have moral influence in the assembly and seek the Lord's glory there at any time.

But there is also a more positive and personal call in verse 15: "Be diligent to present thyself approved to God a workman not to be ashamed, cutting straightly the word of truth." Example sways more than precept, and those who teach others have especial reason to dread failure or carelessness in themselves. Further, every pious man knows that the first of all obligations is to stand right with God. Timothy therefore was to use diligence to present himself approved to God in the first instance. Where this was not true, his words might be right enough in themselves, but his work would lack blessing, and himself be ever liable to shame. In fact his course would be more or less hypocritical. There could

be no courage before the enemy, where the conscience was not good before God. One must seek to be approved alike in conduct and service, approved to God if shame is to be avoided even now. Again, what confidence can there be in drawing out and applying the word of truth with an unwavering heart and hand? The scripture needed might otherwise condemn oneself. A man without conscience might speak out boldly; he that feared God must tremble in blaming another for a wrong which he knew in himself. It is of all importance therefore! that the workman should present himself approved to God: otherwise his testimony cannot but be timid, feeble, and uncertain.

But there may be a further duty as regards the profane babblings of pretentious men, never so self-satisfied as when they err most. This evil had already set in, as the article appears to show. They were not unknown but existing follies among those who bore the name of the Lord. Timothy was not called to occupy himself, still less to engage in controversy, with them. The apostle's word is "avoid" or shun. This again is an exhortation of divine wisdom. Some conscious of ability to dissect and oppose evil are prone to meddle with these vain profanities. It is not wholesome for themselves; it may injure the saints, who valuing the labourers may saturate their minds with these dreary efforts, which as a general rule inflate instead of convincing the guilty parties. To Titus a very similar exhortation is given by our apostle for an analogous evil (Titus. 3:9). Time is too precious save for that which edifies; and he who undertakes to contend with every evil dreamer may succeed in vanquishing them, but he is in imminent danger of getting serious harm to himself. It is a good thing to be zealously

affected in good always; it is not well to turn aside and deal with evil, unless to do so be the sternest duty.

The apostle adds another reason in this case, “For they will advance unto a greater degree of impiety, and their word will eat up as a gangrene.” This statement clearly proves the uselessness of meddling with what is not only vain but profane. There was no fear of God in those who so indulged, and the fear of God is the beginning of all that is good for fallen man. Till conscience is reached, it is useless to expect that the precious revelations of God will not be misused; and this is especially true of such as profess to believe the gospel. Guilty of profanity, they need not arguments but repentance. Nor was anything more likely to touch their conscience than that so gentle and gracious a labourer as Timothy should avoid their words. They will advance to further ungodliness, “and their words will eat up as a gangrene.” Discussion would rather flatter their self-importance, and could not possibly stay so destructive an evil.

Again, the apostle points out that this frightful evil in the bosom of the saints once, if not any longer, was no imaginary evil to haunt souls, but a fact for salutary fear and horror: “Of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus, who as to the truth went astray,” or literally, missed the mark, saying that “the resurrection had taken place already, and overthrow the faith of some.”

It is of deep interest to weigh the character of this error. It was not ignorance of the truth so much as exaggeration. It was the exalting of present privilege to the denial of our hope at Christ’s coming. No doubt they piqued themselves on higher truth than others taught, and on superior intelligence. This is an extreme danger

for those who have a real thirst and value for the truth of God; if not watchful, they are the most liable to be ensnared.

But the remedy is simple and sure when men cry up their wares as being above all “precious”, and therefore depreciate the tried and faithful servants of the Lord as being those teaching on altogether lower ground. The saints will find it invaluable to cleave to the truth they have always received since they knew God, or rather were known of Him. These pretentious claims will sooner or later prove subversive of foundation truth and plain duty. The saints may not be able quickly to discern the worthless or evil character of what vaunts itself; but they do know the treasure they already possess, of which these new views would deprive them. They have only to hold fast the faith, the common faith, which the high teachers despise; and as they thus resist the devil, he will flee from them.

But those by grace endowed with a more discerning eye are permitted to see more. That the resurrection is past already, though put forth as the expression of the highest present privilege, does in fact undermine the truth set forth pre-eminently for help and guidance throughout this Epistle. God saved us with a holy calling according to His own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before time began. Christ annulled death, and brought life and incorruption to light by the gospel. This we believe and know, not to speak of the mystery of Christ and of the assembly. But these true and blessed privileges are given us, so much the more to suffer with joy and endure in faith and patience now, and wait for Christ and His appearing to bring in His kingdom, when we shall also reign together with Him.

But the error of the resurrection already past is fatal to this endurance meanwhile. It would, if true, entitle us now to reign as kings, to take our ease, to enjoy present honour and glory; and thus it is directly framed and calculated by the enemy to thwart the will of our Lord, Who calls us to share His sufferings till we are glorified together. Hence it is false as a doctrine, it is ruinous for practice, and it destroys all communion with Christ, as sharing His: affections in separation from the world. It would be hardly possible to discover any delusion more opposed to the truth in its character and consequences for the soul and the walk, as well as in counteraction of the moral glory of the Lord. Well can we understand therefore that its teachers “overthrow the faith of some.” And if it were so then, how much more widely extended and settled do we find the mischief now, when Christ’s coming is no longer before the saints as a constant living hope, and the resurrection of the body is practically nothing to them, satisfied that after death their souls go to heaven! The world becomes then a scene of present enjoyment. Association with a once dead and rejected Christ is unthought of. They flatter themselves that they have attained to a wisdom higher than was known by the apostles in those earlier days, now that they have learnt to enjoy the best of both worlds.

The truth cannot be undermined without the most withering consequences, both morally and ecclesiastically. It is not only communion interrupted between Christ and His own, but divergence from and opposition to His mind, more or less distinctly. Those who undermine may of course be deceived themselves; they may flatter themselves as contributing a higher

testimony. But truth is never at issue with truth: in Christ all is in harmony. To say that the resurrection is past already is both the index of the grave heterodoxy at work destructive of our proper hope, while professing to give advance of privilege, and also the ready instrument of deep and rapid progress in evil. For when the resurrection comes, there will be no more need of watching unto prayer, no more endurance of affliction, no more the good fight of faith: all will be settled in power, glory, rest, and enjoyment.

That we are dead and risen with Christ is true and holy, and cannot be too urgently pressed on the believer from first to last of his career; but we, groaning within ourselves, as having the first-fruits of the Spirit, also await the adoption, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23). This will only be at Christ's coming, which the enemy would also conceal and rob us of, the most influential of all hopes for such as love Him and would know the fellowship of His sufferings. How crafty and pernicious then the device which, turning our hope into an expression of high privilege now, would thus annul our heavenly hope, destroy communion and walk, hide Christ from our heart's longing, and make rest in present things a wise and right thing!

Such was the error of Hymenaeus and Philetus: profane babblings truly, and sure to proceed farther in ungodliness, and a very gangrene in its devouring corruption. Such error is the overthrow of faith wherever it is accepted.

"Nevertheless the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, [The] Lord knoweth those that are His; and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord

depart from unrighteousness. Now in a great house there are vessels not only of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earthenware, and some unto honour, and some unto dishonour. If one therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, serviceable for the master, prepared unto every good work. But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (vers. 19-22).

It may be well that the reader should know how much speculation has wrought about "the firm foundation of God." Some have conjectured that it is the doctrine of the resurrection, others the promises, some again election. Further, it has been supposed to be the church, or again, with better reason, Christ Himself. But there seems no sufficient ground for defining the foundation in this place. If the Holy Spirit has left it general, why should any seek to limit the thought? The object clearly is to mark what abides firm and of God in the midst of confusion and ruin; and to use that immutable foundation for the comfort and good courage of all who desire to do His will. Doctrines, promises, election, are out of the question; and the church, or the believer, is rather that for which provision is made in the midst of the existing disorder. On the face of it, the house cannot be the foundation; and it seems unreasonable to argue that Christ Himself should be said to have this seal: "The Lord knoweth them that are His"; and "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

Nothing more simple or important if the firm foundation of God be taken in the abstract; those who stand upon it are on the one side comforted, on the other solemnly admonished. The state of things was such that one could

no longer suppose all who composed the church to be members of Christ's body. Carelessness had allowed a harvest of weakness and shame; the godly were compelled to fall back on the assurance that the Lord knoweth them that are His, but along with that they could not but press Christian responsibility — "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

It will be noticed that here it is no question of "Christ". but of "the Lord". "Christ" is the proper expression where grace known and enjoyed is before the heart; "the Lord" as properly comes into use where profession and responsibility hold good. Even if there be no real communion, there can be no doubt that such is the case in the clause before us; and such is the reading of the best and most ancient authorities followed by all modern critics, even though they may have no notion of the difference in the truth intended.

There is, however, a great deal more, and of paramount importance, in that which the apostle adds, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earthenware, and some unto honour, and some unto dishonour." There we have a living picture of what the church was becoming. How different from the view given in the First Epistle! (1 Tim. 3:15) There the house of God is said to be the church of the living God, the pillar and stay of the truth. It is the church on earth, God's habitation in the Spirit, as that which alone here below presents and maintains the truth-before all men. The Jews had not the truth, but the law; the Gentiles had only vanities, and corruptions, and dreams of men. The assembly of the living God held forth the truth before all eyes. But now, in the Second

Epistle, the influx, not only of ease instead of suffering, and of timidity instead of courage, and of false doctrines, even in fundamentals, gave occasion for the Spirit of God to represent a far different condition. It is not that the Spirit of God has abandoned His seat, but He no longer characterizes the house as that of the living God. It may assume a greater appearance, but there is far more unreality. “In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earthenware.”

Long before, the apostle (1 Cor. 3:5) had prepared us for that which might be built even upon Christ Himself. Who among even true servants is like Paul, a wise master-builder? Every one therefore should take heed how he builds thereon. One might build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones; another, on the contrary, might build upon it wood, hay, stubble; too many, a mixture of both. And the day shall declare, as the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. That which abides is proved to be acceptable to God, that which cannot stand the fire will be so far loss to the workman, even though he himself shall be saved. Here in the Second Epistle to Timothy the apostle is looking not at the process but at the result. In a great house there are not only precious vessels but the commonest — “and some unto honour, and some unto dishonour.” God’s house therefore is here regarded as reduced to a human comparison. It was becoming just like what we find among men on the earth; it has no longer that exclusively divine stamp which one used to expect in God’s house. Failure in many ways has vitiated the testimony; and the result is that mixture which is so

abhorrent to God and to those who love His will and Himself.

What is to be done then? Are we to accept His dishonour, and to lie down in despair? Or must one be bound hand and foot to unity, and to shut one's eyes to all the sin and shame? A lowly-minded saint would feel bitterly the dilemma, and could not satisfy his soul by verbal protests against the evil he was sanctioning by his actual life and ways. In such a state it is well to humble one's self, and like Daniel to confess the sins of all one is associated with, as well as one's own sins. But is this all? Thank God, it is not; the apostle immediately gives precise and authoritative direction. The most timid need not fear to follow; the heart most oppressed is entitled to be of good cheer; and those who cleave to the allowance of evil under the plea of not breaking unity are rebuked and confounded by the apostle's call, "If one therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour".

When the assembly is in its normal condition, and an evil-doer, however gross, is among the saints, the word is, "Put away from among yourselves the wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:13). But here it is the converse. Evil may prevail in an assembly, and the moral sensibility be so low that the mass refuse to purge out the old leaven: the vessels unto dishonour have influence enough to remain in spite of all efforts for their removal. What then? The apostle commands that the God-fearing man should purge himself from them. This meets the conscience if it were of only one; but the self-same principle, it is plain, applies to all who discern the evil, after patient waiting on the assembly and every scriptural means also employed in vain to rouse the

conscience. At bottom it is evidently the same principle of separation from evil which in 1 Cor. 5 is applied to put the evil-doer out. In 2 Tim. 2 it is a far more developed case where the well-doer, having striven without effect to correct the evils sustained within, is bound to purge himself out. Impossible that the Spirit of God would seal evil under the name of the Lord Jesus. We are unleavened as surely as Christ our passover was sanctified for us. “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor. 5:8). The assembly which professes to be of God cannot bind Christ and known evil together. If any therefore bear the Lord’s name, who, under the plea of unity, in the love of ease, or through partiality for their friends, tolerate the evil which scripture shows to be hateful to God, a godly man has no option, but is bound to hear the divine word and to purge himself from these vessels to dishonour.

Doubtless this application of God’s immutable holiness to guide the saint in these sad and difficult circumstances is a novel one. The apostle only gave it in the last Epistle he ever wrote. The reason is manifest: no occasion as yet had risen to call for so serious a word. Disorders had often been, and some of extreme character; but hitherto the saints, however faulty, had broken down, and obedience at last had prevailed. No need had ever existed for a just abandonment of those who had walked together in the assembly. But here the Spirit of God brings before the apostle’s eyes a new and still more appalling result of the increasing power of evil: Whenever vessels to dishonour are forced on our acceptance, we have no choice: the honour of the Lord is

above all other considerations; and, whether it be the most valiant, or the most timid, we are alike called to obey the apostle's command which applies to this state. Let us only be sure that the evil does really call for absolute separation; and, further, that patient and godly remonstrance are duly applied to get the evil judged, rather than to separate. But if it be sheltered and sustained to the dishonour of the Lord and His word, there is no alternative but to purge oneself out.

In these circumstances, to give up conscience is in effect to give up God and His Christ; humbly but firmly to purge oneself from the vessels of dishonour is to be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, serviceable for the Master, prepared unto every good work. So it is ever found in experience: godly separation costs much but gains more. He that separates lightly for a mere idea or for reasons of his own is but sounding brass, and gathers profit for neither himself nor anyone else; yea, he is a standing reproach against the Lord and His word where it truly applies. But the saint who purges himself out with the deepest pain to himself and godly sorrow for others, and the rather because he believes them to be the Lord's, enters into fresh blessing, and renews, as it were, all that is proper to a saint, with fresh power to his own soul. "He shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, serviceable for the Master, prepared unto every good work." Such an assurance is the more comforting, because he must make up his mind for the keenest shafts from those he has left behind, as well as from all who confound easy indifference with love for the church of God. Besides, he might dread a narrow circle for his affections, and a contracted sphere for his work. How gracious that the Lord should forestall all

these apprehensions and give him the promise, if he have gone through the great trial with God, of enlargement of heart in all that is for His glory!

It may be noticed that there is no such thought as quitting the house, though some have fallen into this misconception in their zeal for holiness. But we could not, and would not, so long as we bear the Lord's name. An apostate no doubt has abandoned His name. But to purge one's self from vessels to dishonour is here laid down as a positive duty, and, so far from being presumption, it is simple obedience to the word of the Lord if done rightly. It is therefore the path of true and divinely given humility, whatever be the terrorism sought to be exercised by those who seek dominion over the faith of the saints. Purging oneself from evil-doers within the house is not to leave the house, but to walk there as one ought according to scripture.

So it was at the Reformation. Luther, Calvin, Zwingle, Cranmer, did not leave the house of God when they rejected the mass, the worship of the saints, the authority of the pope, and other evil doctrines and practices. On the contrary, they were learning, however slowly and imperfectly, to renounce what disfigured that house, and was most antagonistic to Him Who dwelt there. It was only the gross bigoted ignorance of Romanists which taxed them with leaving the house of God. The papal party assumed, as other pretenders are apt to do, that they exclusively form that house; whereas, as far as the Reformation went, the godly among the Protestants sought to purge themselves from vessels to dishonour, while the Romanists crave only the more pertinaciously to the evil, and thus became increasingly guilty. But both were in the house all the

same; only some more acceptably to God, others more offensively, than before.

The principle applies no less when the godly amongst Protestants and Romanists began to discern the true character of the church, and the wrong done by prevalent error and evil practice, not merely to the members, but to the Head of the body. This led, through a better knowledge of the written word, to the distinct conviction of the injured rights of the Holy Ghost in the assembly as well as in ministry. And those who were thus taught of God clearly saw that they must carry out the truth in faith practically, and so seek to glorify the Lord. It were wretched and ungrateful to grieve the Spirit by treating all they had learnt as mere ideas for discussion or criticism of existing thoughts and ways. But by thus acting faithfully as far as they knew, did they thereby leave the house? The very reverse; they were only striving, in deference to scripture and in dependence on the Lord, to behave themselves better in that house. Christendom is not given up by walking more according to God's will in the true path for Christians, whether individually or corporately. And the self-same principle is no less valid at any time, no matter how truly gathered the saints may once have been. Vessels to dishonour cannot enjoy Christ's sanction, and ought to be intolerable to the faithful. "If one purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel to honour."

But the tendency is great to press this searching truth on others, and to claim, without saying so, an immunity for ourselves: so readily does the assembly slip away from the faithfulness of the Lord when really leaned on, to set up a gradually growing plea of indefectibility. For faith degenerates into superstition the more rapidly as

spirituality declines, love decays, knowledge becomes more self-complacent, and forms displace reality. A new and pettier Rome soon develops and is cried up as the only right thing. Yet the truth abides for the Spirit to use for Christ's glory, whenever the eye is, or is made, single. We are bound, if we would please Him, to sift ourselves by His word even more rigidly than others.

Nor does the apostle forget personal dangers when one might be pre-occupied with public evils: "But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (ver. 22). It is of high moment, especially in the circumstances of clearing ourselves from what ensnares many a saint, and perhaps had ensnared ourselves too more or less in times past, that we should not give occasion to them that seek it. In vain do you testify against that which is ecclesiastically offensive to God, if you fail in conduct plainly enough to be seen by those virtually censured by you. Hence the care of Paul to urge earnestly on Timothy to beware of that which might hinder or trouble, and the rather then and thus. Lusts youthful must be shunned, not only worldly or carnal but "youthful", such as impetuosity, self-confidence, levity, impatience, or the like. Nor is it enough to watch against what elders might chiefly resent: he was to pursue practical consistency or righteousness, to walk in faith, not mere human prudence or policy, to hold fast love, not selfish interests, and to maintain peace, not allow strife nor push for his own will.

But more, he is encouraged to do all this in personal association and mutual action "with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart". I cannot agree with a German's suggestion (followed by Alford, Ellicott, et al.)

to remove the comma after “peace,” so as to separate “with those that call…” from the verb, “follow”, and connect it only with the substantive “peace”, immediately preceding. Heb. 12:14 has no real analogy with the clause; for to limit the pursuance of peace to those that so call on the Lord would give the poorest possible sense, as being such as presented the least strain. Not so: the faithful man, if he purged himself from vessels to dishonour, and walked in self-judgment and cultivation of ways pleasing to the Lord, is cheered with the prospect of companionship in his path. He need not fear isolation, as he loves the communion of saints. God will not fail to work in those whose hearts are cleansed by faith. Let him then pursue that path, not doubting but with good cheer. He will not be alone; he is to follow after the way that is acceptable to God “with those that call on the Lord with a pure heart,” i.e., true-hearted saints, in contrast with the promoters or defenders of pravity in word or deed.

Thus is the will of the Lord made plain for a day of ruin. It is not for the faithful to abide in evil with empty protests, after the resources of patience are exhausted. It would be presumption in the face of scripture to stay in the vain hope of mending that which is publicly maintained and justified. The unmistakable call of God is to purge oneself out, and, carefully watching against one’s own dangers, to follow the path of righteousness, faith, love, peace, not in pride or carelessness of isolation, but in the fellowship of the like-minded that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

From instruction on a large scale so impressive and opportune from that time and ever after, the apostle

returns to exhortations of a more personal kind which none the less abide for us in all their value.

“But foolish and ignorant questionings avoid, knowing that they beget contentions. And a bondman of [the] Lord must not contend, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness instructing those that oppose, if haply God may give them repentance unto acknowledgment of truth, and they may wake up out of the snare of the devil, taken as they are by him, for His will” (vers. 23-26).

Earlier disputes, as in Romans 14-15, were very different, and far more respectable morally. For they arose chiefly from respect for Old Testament revelation in souls long familiar with the habits formed by it, and who were more or less jealous of that liberty which the Gentiles had entered with joy from their debasing servitude to idols. But the Greek mind, used to the frivolous discussions of philosophy, when not fully emancipated from mere intellectual activity, or not really kept in subjection to God’s word, proved a fertile source of danger and evil, even to those not beguiled by such heterodoxy as had been exposed in verses 14-18. The grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ feeds the soul, lets in the bright light of God, draws out worship, and issues in fruitful ways of goodness and righteousness. Not so “the foolish and ignorant (or uninstructed) questionings”, which Timothy is here enjoined to eschew. Nor could any words characterize these debaters more truly in themselves, or more cuttingly for such as indulged in or admired this mischievous trifling in the things of God; just as infidels wince under the proofs of their irrationalism, and sceptics smart when their credulity is made manifest.

The article is here apparent, though it cannot well stand in an idiomatic English version; it supposes the well-known custom of those alluded to, fruit of their will and self-confidence.

But the apostle appends a consequence greatly to be reprobated by one who loves the peace of the saints and seeks their edification. Such questionings “beget contentions,” or fights. This is natural enough among men: human will breaks out in this way, yea, takes pleasure in strife for the mastery. Whence come wars, and whence fightings among you? says James. Is it not thence — from your pleasures which war in your members? (James 4:1). At bottom, it is the spirit of the world at enmity with God. Among those that bear the Lord’s name it is deplorable, a witness really against Him instead of to Him and of Him. Yet the very earnestness of conviction may expose to the danger, where Christ is not before the eye, and we hang not on His grace. Let us never forget that grace and truth came by Him, not one or other only, but both. If grace is a snare when divorced from truth, truth fails to win apart from grace; it may even repel and harden: how much more the foolish and ignorant questionings which beget contention! They promote Satan’s aims, not the interests of Christ.

“But”, further, “a bondman of the Lord must not contend [or fight], but be gentle towards all.” So the Lord had taught and practised; and the disciple is not above his teacher, but every one that is perfected shall be as his teacher, and must expect, not return, similar ways in word and deed. But are not some so trying as to deserve snubbing, at the least? He ought to be “gentle towards all;” for it is not a question of human disagreeableness,

but of presenting Christ duly. It is easy enough to wound or overthrow a man; but what if it grieves the Holy Spirit of God and dishonours Christ? Are we, as we should be, resolved to bear in patience and to win in the irresistible might of meekness?

Again, he is to be “apt to teach”. Many saints are dull of heart to receive fresh truth, and to distinguish things that differ. It is natural to censure, and for some even to ridicule. Aptness to teach supposes not ability in the word only, but love to the saints, and faith in the Lord Jesus Who is served. This one has to cultivate; for the trials and the difficulties are enough to make one weary. Having the Lord before us encourages the heart. How much He has had to bear with even in the most faithful!

“Forbearing” therefore most appropriately follows. For it is sad to think of the uppishness of some, of the ingratitude of others, not to speak of positive evil returned for good in the service of the saints. But is not the service of the Master well worth all trouble even now? And what unexpected blessing He gives by the way! And what joy and glory at His coming!

Accordingly, it is well to seek grace that one be found “in meekness instructing those that oppose.” For none other was the path of Christ, and in this way only can one hope to correct those that set themselves as antagonists. This alone may disarm them; grace is pleased so to work. And the apostle puts this as a possible and desired contingency, “if haply God may give them repentance unto acknowledgment of truth.”

This last phrase occurs in the First Epistle (1 Tim. 2:4), as also in the Second more than once (2 Tim. 3:7), and always in this anarthrous form. The reason is not that

the preposition (εἰς or any other) gives licence to omit the article where otherwise it would be required, which is a most unreasonable and even a barbarous notion, though, as we all know, it is laid down by Bp. Middleton in his able “Doctrine of the Greek article”, and endorsed by commentators so respectable as the late Dean Alford and Bp. Ellicott, to say nothing of one so loose on this as Winer. It is an error, notwithstanding, which every portion of the New Testament, of the Septuagint, and of all Greek literature refutes, as any scholar may discover by bringing a single chapter closely to the test. The omission of the article depends on a principle wholly independent of the preposition: only the absence of the Greek article in such a construction is more frequent than elsewhere, because prepositions are used very often where character is intended, rather than a definite object set before the mind. Where the latter is meant, with or without a preposition, the article must appear; where the aim is characteristic, it has no place; and such is the case in the phrase before us.

But it may be profitable to speak briefly of “repentance”; for it goes far more deeply than many think. It is rather a moral question than a mental one, though no doubt there is a change of mind of the utmost gravity. But in repentance the soul is subject to God. His word judges, instead of being judged. There is therefore a moral revolution in the heart which takes God’s side against itself, and condemns not only the acts of evil which rise before the conscience, but the entire ground and state of being which gave rise to them. Repentance, therefore, is as distinctly towards God, as faith is towards our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is in fact exalted by God’s right hand to give repentance as well as remission of sins (Acts

5:31; Acts 20:21). Acknowledgment of truth follows as the fruit of repentance, without which neither truth is divinely received, nor has its acknowledgment any value in God's sight. Life, eternal life, is from God, and in His Son.

This, then, the Lord's servant was to seek "in meekness", not setting down, which quick wit and stubborn will would naturally effect, but setting right, as grace loves to do, if it may be with those who oppose themselves; to get rid of persons, even though troublesome, does not occur to his patient mind. Nevertheless such opposition is most serious; and the apostle lets us see this by that which he subjoins immediately — "and they may awake up out of the snare of the devil, taken captive as they are by him, for His will."

This is a remarkably complicated sentence, and saints eminent in godliness and scholarship have understood it very differently. Thus the Authorized Version stands by no means alone in treating the words as referring only to the enemy; so the Syr. and Vulgate, followed by Wiclif, Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Rhemish. The Revised Version on the other hand, with Wetstein, Bengel, Wakefield, and Mack, though slightly differing otherwise, supposes not one agent to be in question, but three, the devil, the Lord's servant, and God. Their version accordingly of verse 26 is, "And they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him (the Lord's servant) unto the will of God." In their margin they give that which appears to be the truer sense, "by the devil" (not the Lord's servant) unto the will of God; and so the Geneva Version, Alford, Ellicott, Hammond, Wells, et al. The two

pronouns in the Greek, being different, naturally, though not necessarily, point to two parties: but to bring in “the Lord’s servant” here seems as forced as the reference to the enemy is simple and consistent, though Dr. Bloomfield, I see, thinks “so violent a construction is utterly inadmissible”! So Beza prefers (in his note to the fourth edition, 1588), though he translated as others, lest he might seem somewhat bold in a matter so sacred, “ne videri possem in re tam sacra audaculus.” In his fifth edition, 1598, he corrects his translation thus, “et sanitate mentis recepta ex diaboli laqueo, ab eo captivi facti, convertantur ad illius voluntatem.” All doubt henceforward disappears from his note.

47 The notion of a transposition of

κοπιῶντα πρῶτον is unworthy of Wakefield’s Silva Critica i. 155 and not confirmed by Winer’s reference to Xenoph. Cyrop. I. iii. 18. And the Ethiopic V. exhibits a loose paraphrase, not a real rendering. The old expositors are as uncertain as most moderns.

2 Timothy 3

The word-disputes, the profane babblings, with greater impiety in the vista, the heterodoxy of some who said that the resurrection had taken place already, the great house becoming more and more characterized by vessels to dishonour, which made separation from them imperative, the foolish and uninstructed questionings which begat contentions, and whatever betrayed the snare of the devil, gave occasion to the solemn announcement with which chapter 3 opens: — “But this know, that in [the] last days grievous times shall be there” (ver. 1).

Let us weigh a little at length its import and bearing, as well as the general testimony of the New Testament; for as, on the one hand, no statement can well be more at issue with the prevalent judgment of mankind, and even with the cherished expectations of God’s children in our days, so, on the other hand, next to fundamental truth individual and corporate, the just and true estimate of what is going on, and how it is to end — whether in progress toward triumphant blessing, or in course of the most humiliating and guilty declension from God to meet His unsparing judgment — is most momentous. Nor does scripture leave the least solid ground for doubt on the question. The difference morally is complete; for it affects the habitual aim of our labour and testimony, as well as the character of our intercourse with God, whether in or out of communion with His mind. Faith in our Lord and His work is no doubt the essential thing; but a mistaken expectation damages the soul indefinitely in proportion to its influence. It is the hope of a man

which mainly determines his practical life. He is what his heart is set upon.

Now the scripture before us is most explicit. Difficult or grievous times were to set in; not “perilous” merely, as in the Authorized and all the older English versions, as well as the Rhemish (faithful to the Vulgate). The times are so characterized because of iniquity abounding under a fair Christian show, “a form of godliness” with a real denial of its power. Can one conceive of a state more repugnant to Him Who dwells in the assembly? or more pregnant with difficulty for a godly man to judge and in which act aright? He hates presumption, he seeks humility, he loves his brethren, he is bound to be faithful to Christ, and he cannot go on with evil, individual or collective. It is a strait of times truly for heart and conscience.

And this trying condition for the Christian is declared to ensue “in [the] last days.” Winer (Greek Gr. N. T. iii. xix.) attempted to account for the omission of the article as usual, by setting it down as one of a most miscellaneous class of words which dispense with its insertion. One is surprised to see how easily men like Dean Alford and Bp. Ellicott are satisfied with an evasion so irrational and transparent. For that long list of words comes under the invariable principles of the language; and insertion of the article in each instance can be shown no less than omission; so that the statement of the case is not only partial, but misleading. The true solution is that Greek regularly, far more than English, exhibits the anarthrous form when the design is to designate a characteristic state rather than a positive fact, place, condition, person, or date. The article here would have made the period too restricted; its absence enlarges the sphere, as

the Holy Spirit intended, Who knew the end from the beginning. We in our tongue can hardly avoid saying, “The last days”; but the Greek could express himself more accurately than those who are compelled to use the same expression for what may be less or more definite.

The phrase plainly covers the closing days of the Christian economy, however long God may be pleased to protract them, the time generally which precedes the coming of the Lord, when an end will be put to the present ways of God, and the kingdom will come in displayed power and glory. Waterland’s suggestion of “at the end of the Jewish state” is as he puts it a mistake48; for it is at the approaching end of the Christian profession, as well as of the Jewish. If the Jews believe not yet, Christians ought to be expecting the return of the kingdom to Israel in God’s due time, when our Lord appears to receive the homage and blessing of the godly remnant, about to become thenceforth a strong as well as holy nation, His first-born son elect here below. But as there were incipient workings of the evil already apparent to Him Who inspired Paul to write thus to Timothy, we can the better feel how much more correct is the anarthrous construction employed, than if the insertion had fixed it exclusively to the days immediately preceding our Lord’s future advent.

In the preceding Epistle (1 Tim. 4:1-3) a prophetic warning had been given, but of evil quite distinct in time, character, and extent, from what we have here. Instead of “last days”, the Spirit spoke expressly of later, or after, times, i.e., times subsequent to the apostle’s writing. Instead of a widespread condition of “men” in Christendom, he there spoke of “some” only. The

language suits and supposes but few comparatively; which only controversial zeal could have overlooked or converted into a prediction of the vast if not worse inroad of Romanism. It is a description of certain ones to depart from the faith into fleshly asceticism, paying heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons, in the hypocrisy of liars branded in their own conscience, forbidding to marry, [bidding] to abstain from meats which God created to be received thankfully. This was a high-flown abuse of grace to deny the creature, and to dislocate the God of grace from the God of creation and law; but the followers are carefully discriminated from the more daring and corrupt misleaders. Gnosticism is the real evil aimed at, even then beginning to work, as we may gather from 1 Timothy 6:20 in the same communication to Timothy. But limited as it stands in the word, and as it became in fact, it discloses how the Spirit of God guards us, if we heed scripture, from anticipating victory for the gospel, and how He rather prepares us for defection to God’s dishonour.

But in 2 Tim. 3:1 the view is a larger field, not of course to the exclusion of faithful and godly souls, where the eye traverses a general state of decadence from the power of grace and truth, where, as we shall see when we come to the scrutiny of details, those that bear the name of the Lord, and are therefore responsible to walk as dead unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord, return as a general description to what the Gentiles were before they heard and professed to believe the gospel. It is the counterpart of the great house in 2 Tim. 2:20, wherein are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also wooden and earthenware, and some to honour, and some to dishonour. Here, however,

we have, not a symbolic figure, but a plain matter-of-fact account of a return to heathenism practically. Even the Corinthians, low as they had sunk, are reproached by the apostle with carnality and with walking “as men”, instead of as children of God in the power of the Spirit Who dwelt in them. Here those spoken of are “men”, with the guilt of indifference to, and repudiation of, all the savour of Christianity, while still retaining its form. From such, however little developed then, Timothy was called to turn away: how much more, when all is out in the full display of evil, should a faithful man turn away now?

Yet 2 Thess. 2: gives us to descry very far worse at hand. We ought not to be deceived in any manner, whatever the success of false teachers with some of the Thessalonian saints so young in the faith as they were. We know that the Lord is coming Who will gather us together, sleeping or alive, unto Himself, and therefore we need not be quickly shaken in mind, nor yet troubled by any power or means, to the effect that the day of the Lord is present. We know that it cannot be unless first there have come “the apostasy” — not a falling away, as substantially in all the well-known English Versions as well as the Authorized. It is not “discencioun” (Wiclif), nor “a departynge” (Tyndale), as Cranmer’s Bible repeats in 1539, and the Geneva in 1557, nor “a revolt”, as in the Rhemish of 1582. It is “the apostasy”, and nothing else: worse there cannot be, unless it be the person who is its final head in direct antagonism to God and His anointed, the man of sin, the son of perdition, whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the Spirit of His mouth and destroy with the manifestation of His presence.

“The apostasy” is a general state though one is far from denying that there will be even then godly ones, some to suffer unto death, and acquire a heavenly degree, and others to escape for ulterior purposes of divine blessing and glory here below. But the apostasy means Christianity abandoned, and witness for God put down all but universally, in the sphere of Christian profession. Now this is the state, issuing in the boldest claim ever to be made on earth of Messianic place and divine glory, which immediately precedes the shining forth of the Lord Jesus from heaven, allotting vengeance to those who know not God (Gentiles), and to those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus (Jews).

Here we carry on the clear, harmonious, and ever accumulating proof that the Holy Spirit thus far bears witness, not of increasing good and ultimate earthly triumph for the gospel and the church here below, but (whatever the gracious and active work of God ordinarily, and especially at certain great epochs of blessing) of evil growing and irremediable generally, till at last it sinks so low that the mass abandon even the name and form of Christian profession in the apostasy; and the Antichrist, the last head of towering hostility to God, rises so high that the Lord appears from heaven with the angels of His power, and in flaming fire, to exact as penalty everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His might. The expectation of good prevailing over the world as the result of human means before the Lord appears is not only a dream of vanity, but that which reverses the awful picture which scripture presents of things becoming worse beyond example and imperatively calling for divine judgment, after which only is the knowledge of

Jehovah to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea The Lord indeed had already decided the question both parabolically and prophetically. For what is the instruction as to this of the wheat field in Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43? While men slept, the enemy of him who sowed good seed in his field sowed darner there; and the mischief done from early days was irremediable by man: only divine judgment can deal with it aright. Now the field is the world under the kingdom of the heavens, the Son of man being exalted, and the devil His enemy, who insinuates fatal mischief, legality, ritualism, gnosticism, asceticism, heresy, antichrists, Romanism or Babylon, and other evils, through his sons; all which causes of stumbling or offence cannot be got rid of till the Son of man shall send His angels in the completion of the age (not “the end of the world”, which altogether misleads, for “the age” closes more than a thousand years before “the world”).

Hence it irresistibly follows that the Lord predicts the continuance of hopelessly prevalent evil within the sphere of Christian profession till in the consummation of the age, He employ His angels to execute judgment on the quick, and diabolical and all other evils are thus cleared out of His kingdom, while the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father. For all things are to be headed or summed up in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth — in Him in Whom also we obtained an inheritance, being heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (not His mere inheritance like Israel here below) (Eph. 1:10, 11; Rom. 8:17). The notion of good reigning in the world at any time under the gospel or the church, is as false as that righteousness shall not reign when He takes the

kingdom in manifest glory over the earth, and the new age begins long before eternity in the full sense of a new heaven and a new earth. No wonder therefore that we read of grievous times in the last days which precede wrath from heaven.

And what again did the Lord intimate of the moral state before the Son of man comes in His day, to speak only of His prophecy in Luke 17:22-37? “And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed.”

It is clear that the Lord compares the state of men (careless, selfish, godless, guilty, dead also to what He, the rejected Messiah, had suffered for their sake) to that which brought on the two most solemn judgments which Genesis records at the deluge and at the destruction of Sodom by fire. Will the revelation of the Son of man in His day be less righteously called for? No; the last days of the Christian era are to be times of excessive, abounding, and audacious lawlessness as well as impiety, when longer patience on God’s part is impossible, and the time is arrived in His counsels for displacing the first man of sin, weakness, and shame by the Second, exalted over all creation in visible power and glory on His own throne, as He is now in heaven on the Father’s throne.

It is notorious that theologians are not found wanting — indeed their name is Legion — to blunt the sword in their hands by misapplying our Saviour's words, some to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, others to the end of the world when the Lord sits on the great white throne. One representative man, who need not be named, as remarkable for the splendour of his oratory as alas! for the deadly error against Christ's person into which he was betrayed, sought to comprehend with these two events the Lord's appearing in the judgment of the quick. But scripture is not thus limber and indefinite, as falsehood loves to make it, but living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword. It cuts on one side and guards on the other, as is evident in this instance, where the nice discrimination between the two men and the two women (Luke 17:34, 35) respectively is incompatible with either the ruthless slaughter of the Romans, or the universal standing of all the dead to be judged at the end. The judgment of the quick at the Lord's appearing will be in truth as sudden and vivid "as the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven." This applies in no way to Titus' invasion, which notoriously allowed the believing Jews to escape, as even Luke 21:20-24 distinguishes it carefully from the Son of man coming afterwards on a cloud with power and great glory. To confound the latter, like Luke 17:22-37, with Titus' sack, is no true exegesis, but abject and unmistakable confusion; and so it is with the wholly contrasted circumstances of Rev. 20:11-15, when there will be no question of returning to home or field, no difference at the bed or the mill. The Lord here refers exclusively to the day of His appearing to judge living man on the earth, and the Jews especially; and His

words leave no room for progress in good but in evil before that day.

The personal followers and inspired servants of our Lord do not speak differently. Because of prevalent evil, corruption, and violence, James exhorts, “Have patience therefore, brethren, till the coming of the Lord… “Behold, the Judge standeth before the door” (James 5:7, 9). They were therefore to take, as an example of suffering and of having patience, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. It was not to be a time of triumph for right outwardly till the Lord come. The days were evil, the last days grievous times. Those who endured we call blessed. This is the very reverse of righteousness at ease and in present honour.

Peter, in his Second Epistle especially, is still more explicit: “There arose false prophets also among the people, as there shall be also among you false teachers, who shall privily bring in heresies of destruction, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Peter 2:1). The evil characteristics, with solemn warning, are set forth at length throughout chapter 2; and in 2 Peter 3:3, 4, Peter adds that “in the last of the days, mockers shall come with mockery, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” Even now, materialism and mockery prevail among men of the world surprisingly; still more according to the apostle will they be stamped just before the day of the Lord. There is wondrous long-suffering of God in saving even such; but the day will surely come with condign vengeance on Christendom, thus drinking

itself drunk on the basest dregs of positivism and impious raillery. Grievous times then in the last days!

Jude, brother of James, depicts the evil in colours darker if possible than Peter; for he in the Spirit fastens his eyes, not merely on the unrighteousness to prevail as the time of the world's judgment draws near, but on thankless apostasy from the highest privileges of divine goodness, "turning the grace of our God into dissoluteness, and denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 4). Nothing can be more tremendous than this short Epistle as a whole, nothing plainer than his identifying those before the eyes of the saints as just the class of whom Enoch prophesied as objects of the Lord's judgment: "But ye, beloved, remember the words spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they said to you, that at the end of the time there should be mockers walking according to their own lusts of ungodliness" (vers. 17, 18). Can anything be more certain than that this holy witness warns of grievous times in the last days? To be set with exultation blameless before the divine glory at Christ's coming is the hope, not the church nor the gospel triumphing on the earth previously.

There remains but one more to cite; and "the disciple whom Jesus loved" writes with at least equal plainness of speech: "Little children, it is the last hour, and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have come many antichrists, whence we know that it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18). This is assuredly incontrovertible. The antichrist will be the chief object of the Lord's consuming and annulling judgment when He shines forth in His day; but the many antichrists even then doing their destructive and malignant work proceed

without a break, till the judgment He will execute clears the scene for the reign of righteousness and peace. It is not that grace meanwhile does not save and associate with Christ on high. For “as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:48, 49). The cross morally closed the hope and history of the earth in relation to God, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven giving a final appeal: this rejected, all henceforth is bound up with Christ in and for heaven, to which the gospel calls all who now believe. And the world, and especially the world-church Babylon, becomes the object of God’s judgment to be executed by the Lord when He appears, as we have shown by overflowing but not yet exhausted testimony. It is when the iniquity is full that the blow falls. The times are grievous now, how much more so before that day?

We have now to enter on the detailed examination of the evil characters which the apostle points out as impressing on the last days the stamp of “grievous times”. The first and last words are remarkably and painfully instructive. It is Christendom which comes before us; yet those bearing the Lord’s name can only be designated as “men”, morally as corrupt and violent as the heathen (compare Rom. 1:29-31), if not so gross, yet having a form of godliness while they have denied its power.

“For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, uncontrolled, fierce, haters of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, pleasure-lovers rather than God-lovers, having a form of godliness, but

having denied the power thereof; and from these turn away" (vers. 2-5).

If the Holy Spirit has thus minutely qualified the evils which render the times grievous, to me it does not seem reverent to pass them over sicco pede,49 as if His designations were either intelligible on the surface, or unworthy of deep meditation for our better profit. Far more to be admired than this levity of the Genevese Reformer is the spirit of one in our own day who devoted an entire treatise to the laudable endeavour that we should learn what the apostle would have Timothy to know; and the rather, as the days in which we live display in a far more developed degree the dark features, which in the germ were even of old coming to view.

The apostle had laid down other things of prime importance; but Timothy was "to know this also", and assuredly we know imperfectly what we only apprehend in a dim and hazy light. He who writes to us with the utmost precision would have us read and study with attention. The practical duty ("and from these turn away"), can be but imperfectly discharged if we are not clear who and what the characters are whom one is thus called to have done with. We are bound so to discern, not in one case only, but in each and all, that there be no mistake. If charity may plead, holiness and obedience are imperative, and especially with such as may fairly be charged, in measure like Timothy, with care for sound doctrine, and order, and godliness.

"For men shall be lovers of self." Such is the opening characteristic, so grievous to the Lord and His own in those bearing His name. Justly does it hold the first

place in this list of Christ-dishonouring professors; for it is a very mother of evils, as it directly contravenes the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning His children. Christ died for all indeed; but the moral end was that those who live (whatever others do who remain dead) “should henceforth not live unto themselves, but unto Him Who for them died and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:15). “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34, 35). For “every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:1-3).

Thus, loving God proves that we truly love His children;, as obeying His commands proves that we truly love God. So the first condition of discipleship, if we hear our Lord (Matt. 16:24, Mark 8:34), is denying self, the clean contrary of loving it. Oh, what a pattern in Him Who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might become rich! Fully do I admit that such love as we are called to is not the original unfallen condition of Adam, still less of course the hateful and hating state of man now; it is what we see and know in the Second Man, the last Adam; it is to be imitators of God, as dear children, and to walk in love as the Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour (Eph. 5:1, 2). As having put on the new man and sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, no other standard could be set before us; in awful contrast with which

stand lovers of self, and so much the more sadly, if baptized to Christ's name and death.

Say not that self reigns only outside among the profane; show me where it does not reign among true believers throughout Christendom. The world loves its own, says the Lord: is this as true of His members scattered as they are in parties, national and dissenting, each the rival of the other? And this false position with its isolating effect has told powerfully on souls to wither all true sense of unity on earth, and to hold out mere progress of party, or at best labour for individual blessing instead of the glory of Christ in the church which is His body.

Next, they shall be "lovers of money." Let believers hear the judgment of one who scanned their ways not untruly, though with no friendly eyes: "As far as we are enabled to discover, they testify no refusal to follow the footsteps of the worldly in the road to wealth. We look in vain for any distinguishing mark in this respect between the two classes of society, That which is 'of the world,' and that which is 'not of the world.' All appear to be actuated by the same impulse to push their fortunes in life; all exhibit the same ardent, active, enterprising, zeal in their respective pursuits."

Can any serious person deny the enormous impetus given to the love of money in our own days; and this, among those who profess the Lord's name as keenly and commonly as in the careless world? Doubtless, as has been remarked, the recent discoveries of fresh sources of wealth, and the remarkable inventions of men, and the habits of far-spread enterprise, not to speak of growing luxury, which have followed in the train, have

helped on this eager quest of gain. But the fact is unquestionable, and the effect most mischievous; yet who lays it to heart, or judges it as a sin of the first magnitude? And has it not been accelerated and justified by that new and increasing peculiarity of the last (eighteenth) century, those religious and philanthropic institutions, the offspring and the pride of ecclesiastical divisions, which avowedly depend on the collections, and subscriptions, and donations, of money? Certainly our Lord has ruled otherwise in the Sermon on the Mount, and His inspired servants have both acted and written for our admonition in terms meant to make the service of mammon intolerable, and to refuse a place in the church for the covetous.

“Boasters” follow; and who fails to hear its hollow voice to-day? It follows as close on the track of money-loving, as this love on self-love. And the materials which furnished the means of gratifying the love of money have built up the pedestal from which the empty vaunts of the boasters are heard on all sides. If you doubt it of religious profession, your ears are assuredly dull of hearing, and your eyes, It seem”, see not. For all is blazoned before the world, whether of religious contributions, or of charity to the poor, or aught else that occupies men publicly.

And then this enlightened age of ours! Who does not sing its achievements? Who does not praise its science physical if not metaphysical, its chemistry if not its learning? Say not again that these boasters are the mere devotees of natural philosophy. Alas! it is from professedly pious theologians that we hear the hasty and ignorant premises that Geology declares one thing, Genesis another; and the base conclusion is that Genesis

must bow down and worship Geology at what time is heard the sound of cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music! For the spirit of vain glory has banished all sense of pain and shame when God's word is thus dishonoured; and even those who preach it are not ashamed to swell the chorus of the "boasters".

Can one wonder that we have "haughty" next? They present an evil more deeply seated than the "boasters", though not so loud in its vain expression. They are the proud against whom God ranges Himself; the most akin to Satan's fault; the most alien from the mind which is in Christ Jesus, Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondman, being made in the likeness of men, and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, death of the cross (Phil. 2:5-8). Thus it is that appreciation of Christ is our only sure and holy deliverance; for pride hides itself under so many veils, which may deceive itself as much as others, and none more than the mere professor or even the real Christian who walks with the world. Grace gives true lowliness, which consists not so much in thinking all the evil we can of ourselves as in thinking of Christ and not of ourselves at all. When we have seen Him, as He is, we can see ourselves not worth thinking of, save before God to judge our ways when faulty. We can then, readily and without effort, each esteem the other as more excellent than ourselves, regarding each not his own things but each those of others. Is it possible to draw a sketch more unlike what prevails in Christendom? "Proud" or

“haughty” is the truest designation of the type that abounds.

Then come “blasphemers” and “disobedient to parents”, which fittingly fall next and in due order and together. For self-exaltation paves the way for unworthy thoughts and slighting words against God, and self-will against parental authority is the natural result. Some greatly to be respected for their spiritual judgment understood the first of the pair to mean “evil speakers” in general. But this appears to be out of harmony, not only with its companion, but with “slanderers” in verse 3, which it would thus render an almost needless repetition. “Blasphemers” would therefore seem to be right here, as it is the natural and full force of the word, unless the requirements of the context should tone it down, as is sometimes the unquestionable fact.

Further, it is the liberalism of the day which has given occasion to the unprecedented spread of blasphemy on the one hand, and of disobedience to parents on the other. For it is now more and more accepted, that authority — and above all, divine authority — is nothing but the bugbear of unenlightened ages, and that there is no inflexible standard of truth and righteousness! Thus public opinion assumes to decide, and society becomes the supreme power on earth, with its ordinances (i.e. the laws and the commands of magistrates, who act in the name and for the welfare of the society!) binding on all its members, but not authorizing one national society to govern another, still less entitling its officers to rule contrary to the will of the society, or to exercise greater power than it pleases!

I have purposely adopted the ideas and words of an able, learned, and pious advocate of this impious scheme, which contradicts all that the godly in the past have gathered from scripture, especially such passages as Rom. 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-18. On the texts there is the less reason to dwell as almost all who read these pages reject on principle that wretched fruit of the French Revolution, or rather of the infidel philosophy which gave so deep and strong an impulse to it, not only immediately, but also from our own land for a century before. Blasphemers began to assert their lawless will, not without the reproof of public law and to the horror of believing ears. But gradually restraint gave way, and men have got to think that every form of blasphemous iniquity, which can count so many heads, is entitled to its representation in the high places of the earth. For after all what the Christian calls blasphemy is the religion or school of thought sincerely accepted by others, who are no less entitled to be heard as themselves, and to rule if they can command a majority! For, again says their pious oracle, what human power can pronounce authoritatively upon the truth of a religion, when every nation, or part of a nation, will with equal zeal maintain the truth of its own? Thus God is excluded, where He is most of all needed, and the creature, in all the aberrations of his guilty will, is worshipped rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever. Amen.

As indifference to blasphemers, nay, the right to plead the cause of their party, is now the order of the day, so religious men, nationalist and dissenting, seek their support, making common cause with these open enemies of God and His Son, in order to promote their

party measures and political ends. All the old hatred of blasphemy, all the once burning indignation against daring impiety, has well-nigh disappeared from Christendom, yea, is treated by the diabolically spurious charity of our times as no less effete, disreputable, and cruel, than the burning of witches, the prosecution of necromancers, or the denunciation of astrologers. You may not libel a man; his character is sacred and of the utmost importance. Say what you like of God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; if you will, denounce Their ways and character; deny Their being; defame divine revelation. It is your right as a man to say what you think of God or His word, of Christ or His cross! Never before this nineteenth century has the world seen such unlimited licence to blaspheme; and nowhere is it more rampant and shameless than in Christendom, Catholic and Protestant. Who can doubt then that “blasphemers” characterize the grievous times in the last days? or that they are already have in a most aggravated form?

And surely the marked and growing lack of reverence to parents, the increasing self-will of the young, cannot have escaped the notice of any observing Christian. So this was to be, according to the warning of inspiration. “Disobedient to parents” follows “blasphemers”; and most suitably as to order; for parents stand in a position altogether unique toward their children. As it is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 12:9-10), “Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened as seemed good to them; but He for profit in order to our partaking of His holiness.” If not God but forms are in men’s

thoughts, real obedience of a parent is nowhere; submission is only where it is unavoidable; where then is the conscientious and loving heart to pay honour and obedience?

And the most serious element in this general ruin of so primary a relationship is that the parents are as much or more to blame than the children, the mothers no less than the fathers; and this neglect is confined and peculiar to no class, but is pervading every grade of the race. The multitude of societies and devices to care for the young in our day is not the least striking proof of the plague which has set in permanently; for the appalling growth of the evil called out the efforts of pious men to stem it, however superficially, by the Sunday Schools, Homes, Reformatories, and such like. And now they would fain forget the frightful root of this evil in their own class and in every other, glorifying their benevolence in so partial a remedy. Relaxation of discipline, or even its abandonment, on the parents' part cannot but breed disobedience in the children; and in the face of such a prevalent snare, all other means of correction are but the feeblest reeds to avert a gathering storm.

Nor should we overlook the next pair of humiliating characters in these last days: "unthankful, unholy". These appear to be as appropriately set together as their two predecessors were, and indeed all those described hitherto: not that those who read them unconnectedly do not glean instruction from each and all, but that the observance of them jointly gives order, and adds to the harvest. Now what an anomaly is a professing Christian who is thankless! He professes to have life in Christ, and the forgiveness of sins; he is

baptized to Christ's death whereby he died with Him to sin; he is under grace, not under law, that sin should not have dominion over him; he is in Christ and so freed from condemnation, and has received the Spirit of adoption whereby to cry Abba, Father. For if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. All this individually belongs to the believer. Think next of the precious privileges he enjoys as being of the body of Christ, in the worship, in the apostolic doctrine, in the fellowship, in the breaking of bread, in the prayers; not to speak of that holy and wholesome and most needful discipline which attaches inseparably to those who keep the feast on the sacrifice of Christ. But why need one set out these countless blessings which all saints share in His Name and by the Spirit of our God with which scripture seems? To be "unthankful" then, while bearing that Name which ensures all to the believer, is the extreme of ingratitude.

"Unholy", or impious, naturally and one may say necessarily, follows at once. For thankfulness cannot but be where the heart dwells ever so little on those precious and exceeding great promises, now made sure in our Lord and enjoyed in the power of the Holy Spirit, whilst we wait for glory unfading and eternal, of which He Who has sealed us is earnest. To profess what we believe not is to play the hypocrite; and if we can speak of natural honesty remaining under a Christian mask, indifference to reality and familiarity with forms both contribute to bring about that contempt of the Holy One, Who is trifled with, and of all that pertains to His service, worship, and will, which constitute the character of the "unholy".

The fact too that the word designating “holy” here is not ἅγιος (separate from evil to God), but ὅσιος (holy in the sense of gracious and merciful), shows yet more how one is justified in classing “unholy” with “unthankful”. For grace unfelt soon ends in grace despised, scorned, and trampled on: the consequence of unthankfulness is unholiness, a profanity in this kind.

Christ is He Who concentrates all grace, and is thus designated “chasid” (Ps. 16; Ps. 89; etc.), as men so described are regarded as piously upright. The reverse of this is intended here, and perhaps even these few words suffice to show how true of Christian professors in our day is this apostolic description. It is not merely the lack of gracious affections, proper to those whose profession implies God’s mercy in Christ, but the impious presumption that stands in direct opposition. It is a question neither of injustice nor of impurity.

We have now to examine a still more numerous list of qualities that follow: — “Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, uncontrolled, fierce, without love (haters) of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, pleasure-loving rather than God-loving, having a form of godliness (piety), but having denied the power thereof; and from these turn away” (vers. 3-5).

It is singular that the Authorized Version, alone of the old English translations, gives the simple, full, and unambiguous meaning of ἄστοργοι; which in Wiclif’s Version and the Rhemish, following the Vulgate as usual, is rendered by the feebler phrase “without affection”. Tyndale, followed by Cranmer, has “unkinde”, as the Geneva “without charitie”. But beyond controversy these representatives lack precision of rendering.

Now, as to the characteristic itself, it is hard to exaggerate its gravity even among mere natural men: how much more among those who bear the Lord's name! For there is no human centre and safeguard greater than home with its manifold affections and the duties which it involves. The light and the grace of Christ truly known give strength as well as provide a new object which puts each element in its true relation to God and man. There may be occasions peremptory for His glory that all must yield, and then the things that are become as though they were not, rather than turn to His dishonour; but such cases are rare, and His name ordinarily adds beyond measure to all that God has ever owned as His order here below. But here we learn of a dark and ominous change when Christendom in general not only exhibits indifference to all these ties of family life, but tramples them down as contemptible and would rid itself of them as unworthy nuisances. It affects cosmopolitanism as the true ideal, and as this is wholly unreal and inoperative, the issue is unmitigated selfishness, a barren waste without objects given of God for the heart, where self-will can run riot according to its own waywardness.

Very suitably next to this void of natural affection stands the quality "implacable", which, springing from the same root of selfishness, flows into a far larger circle and indeed one without limit. Some few authorities of all kinds invert their relative order; but this would seem strange disorder morally, compared with the true place of each as represented by the best witnesses, though the Sinaitic is not alone in omitting the first of the pair, nor the Peschito Syr. Version in dropping both: all these variations being plain errata. For as the lack of natural

affection is a horrible result of spurious Christian profession, so the consequent but wider implacability is next pointed out as its companion, instead of that universal love which is loudest in theory when there is least exercise of it in practice. Nay, the fact is really worse; for ἄσπονδοι goes beyond the breaking of truce attributed to the word in the Authorized Version and other translations, and expresses rather the lawless state which refuses to incur any such obligation. It is bad enough to fail in keeping faith; it is much worse as here when men's hearts say, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. 2:3).

In Rom. 1:31 we read that God gave up the heathen to be ἀσυνθέτους, ἀστόργους, as the Text. Rec. adds ἀσπόδους against ample authority of the highest character. There the apostle comes from the more external "covenant-breakers", or (more generally) "faithless", to the want of family affection (ἀστόργους) and the more personal "unmerciful", or pitiless; here as predicting the departure of Christendom he goes from within outwards; only for "covenant-breakers" he gives "implacable" or defiant of bond. And what spiritual eye can fail to see how this impatience of obligation permeates men, who once were rigidly faithful in the observance not of promise only but of all the implied ties of the life that now is? Nothing dissolves more than grace despised; whereas even law is feebleness itself compared with grace reigning through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Optimi corruptio pessima.50 Then in joint order comes the character of "slanderers", or "false accusers", as in the Authorized Version, the same designation as is appropriated to the arch-enemy, the devil. Is it not a

solemn issue that the Holy Spirit should have thus to describe not mere heathen, but men bearing the Lord's name in the last days, It is easy to dissipate and whittle away the awfulness of these charges by the plea so natural for ignorance to make and to receive, that these evil characteristics have always been. In a sense it is so. But the word of the Lord cannot be broken; and, though enough rose up while the apostle lived to make it a practical question then, it is certainly true that, as the departure from the word and Spirit of God went on, these evils grew and spread apace; and that our own days look on an enormous increase of this harvest of shame and sorrow, which all the changes rung on Ecclesiastes 7:10 are vain to get rid of.

The universality of detraction and evil-speaking is as notorious in our day as is its virulence, and far worse in the religious than in the profane world, the endless divisions or sects giving it an incalculable impulse. Moral worth, Christian character, spiritual intelligence, known service, perhaps for ever so long, wholly fail to disarm malicious criticism, if they do not rather furnish the incentive to activity for those moral levellers envious of all superior to themselves. It is the more base in those cases where the assailed would avail themselves of no natural resource, offensive or even defensive, following Him Who, when reviled, reviled not again, when suffering, threatened not, but committed Himself to His care Who judges righteously (1 Peter 2:13).

"Uncontrolled" we have next, rather than "incontinent", which usage limits to lack of self-restraint in uncleanliness, whereas the word really takes the fullest range in the indulgence of recklessness of action, as the

preceding word does in spirit and speech; so that the moral connection is evident.

This again seems the unforced precursor of “fierce”, without gentleness, and despising it, yea, is its marked reverse. How heart-breaking to know that so it is, as the Holy Spirit declared it should be, among those who profess His name Who said in the fulness of truth, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of He; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29); or as Isaiah said of Him, “He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street” (Isa. 42:29). But there alas! they walk, as if to suffer, and above all to suffer wrongfully, were the utmost evil to be dreaded, and as if Christ in His path of trial and rejection and all-enduring grace were a beacon to shun rather than a model that we should follow in His steps. Civilisation boasts of its long and gradual rising up from a savage state, which certainly was not that of primeval man, nor of man under God’s government throughout the ages. It is therefore most humbling to note the fall into a truly savage spirit of man after centuries not of civilization only but of Christian profession.

None can wonder that this is followed by “without love for (haters of) good”, which appears more exactly and completely to represent ἀφιλάγαθοι than “despisers of those that are good”, as in the Authorized Version. It is indeed a very decisive advance in evil; for many, whose unbroken will carries them away passionately, are sincerely ashamed of their intemperance and deplore the excesses of these short fits of madness, as they value and admire those who in patient continuance of good work seek for glory and honour and incorruption, with eternal life — the end (Rom. 2:7). A heathen could say, I

see and approve of what is better, I follow the worse; and an apostle gives as the last degree of evil in such that they not only practise things deserving of death, but take pleasure in (or consent with) those who do them (Rom. 1:32). Here in Christian professors it is the kindred enormity of a total disrelish for good. Just as among the Jews, impiety destroys the moral landmarks: “woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20). Surely the Lord’s name is blasphemed on their account who misrepresent His name.

This introduces another shade of wickedness, the “traitorous”, or “traitors”, that form of malice which betrays others to ruin without scruple. Of this bitter baseness among the twelve the Lord tasted as none ever did or could; and here we are warned of it as a characteristic to prevail in Christendom, existing even then here and there when the apostle wrote, but like the rest to spread and deepen as the last days linger out more and more. So it was and will be among the Jews before the end comes; as here it will be among those who corrupt the gospel.

“Heady”, or “headstrong”, again describes those who rush inconsiderately and determinedly in pursuit of their own will, whatever it may cost to gratify it, rather than the habit of abandoning even to destruction others who confide in them. We can easily understand that the gospel, in an unexampled way and measure imparts knowledge to the most unlettered; and that this acts as powerfully as injuriously on those who, really ignorant of themselves and of God, have no living sense of grace toward others, any more than they feel the need of it for

themselves. From some such source as this appears to flow.. the “headstrong”; as these are hard by the “puffed-up”, or high-minded souls, besotted with self-conceit: no less cruel than contemptible evils in those who, as ostensible heirs of the kingdom, ought to know the blessedness of being poor in spirit, of mourning, of meekness, of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, of being merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers, as well as counting it all joy when persecuted for righteousness’, and above all for Christ’s, sake (Matt. 5:1-11). Alas! headiness and highmindedness leave no room for any one of those precious qualities which our Lord forms in all that are His. Do not both now prevail wherever you look in Christendom?

And who can deny the manifest and extraordinary development, not now for the first time, of course, but more than ever in our own day, of “pleasure-loving rather than God-loving”, among those who would be deeply offended if they were not owned as Christians? For when in this world’s sad history was ever known such an incessant and wide-spread whirl of excitement, in change and travel, in sweet sounds, pleasant pictures, and sensational tales, to speak of nothing lower in sensuous enjoyment? No doubt, steam and telegraph have circumstantially helped on this eager and universal pursuit of pleasure, rather than a care for God and for His will, but in this closing age of indifference pleasure-loving in Christendom is remarkably confirming His word.

Time was when superstition allied to liking for adventure undertook pilgrimages, and organized crusades, neither of these in the least expressing the

grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, but either of them nobler naturally than pleasure-trips, private or common, to the most renowned, strange, or distant lands, perhaps round the world even, craving after some new and piquant fillip for minds jaded and listless. Need we add the love of gain and even sometimes of gambling brought into bazaars and the like in aid of avowedly Christian objects, with every natural or worldly attraction to swell the funds? What shall we say, if we may say anything, of the pleas for “muscular Christianity”, a phrase which to pious ears may seem a mere worldly jest, but which others take in sober seriousness as a right thing and commendable, though only to be defended by the sheerest perversion of God’s word?

For truly the Holy Spirit here says of all these characters of evil, “having a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof.” In this lies the peculiar heinousness of it all. None can wonder that the unrighteous should do unrighteously still, or that the filthy should make himself filthy still. The horror is that those who under the name of the Lord put forth the highest claim should neither practise righteousness, nor be sanctified still. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than baying known to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, A dog turning back to his own vomit, and, A washed sow to wallowing in mire (2 Peter 2:20, 21). If you wish to find all these unchristian evils in a plain and concentrated form without a blush, nowhere can they be so readily found as in that which arrogates to itself the name of “Christian.” Yet those who, in our own land as well as over the world

have the evidence of this before them habitually, can see in it nothing that defiles, but claim it to be undefiled, because their own mind and conscience are both defiled.

But God is not mocked, and the apostle exhorts to faithfulness. He had already called Timothy to know what the mass of Christians now refuse to learn. But this is not enough: “And from these turn away.” It was then the duty, when such persons appeared, to have nothing to do with them; now that the evil is incomparably more developed, that duty is still more imperious. Yet I am grieved to notice the strange error of one51 who has written on the subject with surpassing ability. He will have it that the apostolic injunction, rightly translated, means that Timothy was to “turn these away.” How any one with any real, however moderate, knowledge of the Greek tongue could so misunderstand a very simple phrase, it is hard to explain or conceive; but such is the fact. No version known to me sustains any such view. The Authorized Version is substantially, the Revised Version quite, correct, unless it be in giving “also” for “and”, verse 5, as is done here in connection with “know” in verse 1. It is not authoritative action, still less ecclesiastical dealing, but apostolic direction for the conscience of Timothy (or in principle of any “man of God”) who would not endorse what is hateful to the Lord and corrupting for souls.

That the evils of which the apostle forewarned were then at work appears yet more from the description which follows.

“For of these are they that enter into houses and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led by various lusts, always learning and never able to come unto

knowledge of truth. And in the manner that Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth, men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall not advance farther; for their folly shall be very manifest to all, as theirs also became" (vers. 6-9).

It is not enough in the ministry of Christ that one should have good and holy ends before one; the means ought to be as unexceptional as the avowed aim: where it is not so, where the measure adopted to attain the object are unworthy of Christ, it is to be feared that the real end in view is no better. At any rate, and always, the man of God must consider habitually, and with rigour, as before God the ways he pursues, lest the enemy entrap him into the hateful snare of doing evil that good may come, which is sure ere lone to emerge into the blindness of unmitigated evil in both ways and ends, to the deep dishonour of Him Whose name is made to cover all. Oh, what has not been done "to His greater glory"! The day will declare in Christendom at least as great wrongs against God and man, as in heathenism, and with far greater hypocrisy.

"For of these are they that enter into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led by various lusts" (ver. 6). The works of the Christian are not to be ἀγαθὰ only, but καλά, not only animated by kindness and benevolence, but characterized by rectitude and comeliness. Nothing can justify underhand manoeuvres: Christ does not ask such service at the hands of any; He repudiates it. "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good (i.e. honourable) works, and glorify your Father that is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). It was to be as the lamp on the stand shining for all who are in

the house. The evil-doer naturally shuns and hates the light, and comes not to the light lest his works should be reproved or shown as they are. But he that does the truth comes to the light that his works may be made manifest that they have been wrought in God (John 3:20, 21). How sad when those who profess Christ, the only true Light, are actuated by the spirit of darkness in creeping into the houses (of the saints, I presume) and leading captive silly women!

The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, and its ways are well-pleasing to the Lord (Eph. 5:9, 10). But to condescend to the path of intrigue, in order to win the weakest ones of the weaker sex, is beneath the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. Even if those who sought thus to advance the truth were ever so pure-minded, to get thus into houses is indefensible as being, of ill appearance and report: still more if the aim there was to make personal devotees of those so exposed to the snare as the ones whom the apostle brands as “silly women, laden with sins, led by various lusts,” even though not necessarily of a gross character. In all ages religious officials have found a ready ear in females, who become effective in their influence on families: not truth, but the leaven of doctrine thus spreads with the greatest rapidity till all become assimilated.

The suited material for this subtle working is that which appeals strongly to nature, while it pretends to be peculiarly superior to it; and no rank and file are so pliant and persuasive as “silly women”, who thus seek zealously to make up for the sins with which they are laden, whilst they indulge in new lusts differing from those of the past. Thus have been accomplished

disastrous changes in primitive times. Has the enemy left off these devices in our day? Some can remember a picture not unlike the original many years ago, when almost all distinctive truth was thus destroyed most extensively. Are we to flatter ourselves that the self-same way of error, so successful in the past, no matter what the circle, will not be reproduced again and again in the present while the Lord tarries?

But their secret and fleshly ways are never those which the Spirit of truth generates; they suit the propagators of tradition and form, in which the sentiment or the intellect of man can find tangible objects by which to distinguish their own set. We can thus understand the divine wisdom in burying and concealing the burial place of Moses from those who were far from appreciating aright that blessed servant of God when he was alive to speak and act for his Master. And the Lord has Himself warned us that it is the same spirit of unbelief which slew the prophet and the righteous man (who spared not their sins), and yet built and adorned their tombs when they were departed. For this the Jewish scribes and Pharisees gave themselves credit in His day; but the proof of His truth in their hypocrisy soon appeared when He sent unto them apostles and prophets, teachers and preachers, some of whom they killed, as others they persecuted from city to city; so that all righteous blood from Abel downwards might fall on that Christ-rejecting generation, as it will ere long on the still guiltier Babylon, before Jerusalem shall once more, and far more truly and fully, be the holy city; and the house shall be no longer desolate nor theirs only, but the LORD God’s; and Israel shall behold their long

despised but most gracious and glorious Messiah, blessing Him as He that comes in the name of Jehovah.

But, to return to our painful subject, there is another description of those victims and instruments of evil, which deserves to be weighed: “always learning and never able to come unto knowledge (ἐπίγνωσιν, full knowledge, or acknowledgement) of truth” (ver. 7). With all their quickness of apprehension such women fail in spiritual mind, confounding things that differ, instead of distinguishing them, without which true progress and real knowledge are impossible. It is Christ before the soul, to Whom the written word answers by the power of the Holy Spirit; this only opens the truth and gives courage in its acknowledgement to God’s glory. Without it there might be constant occupation of the mind, proud of its acquisitions, but no growth or separative power through the word, nor joying in God through our Lord Jesus, nor ever the ability, as is said here, to come to full knowledge of truth.

The magicians of Egypt are invoked as the pattern of the misleaders; and this remarkably by names otherwise in scripture unknown to us: “And in the manner that Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth, men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith” (ver. 8). Now the manner in which these adversaries wrought was by imitating Moses as far as possible. This they could only do within limits till the power of God rising in its display made it hopeless for them to follow. In Christendom imitation is easier, as it is not a question of miracle, but the semblance of truth; and striking it is that the new and withering seductions of the enemy are characteristically imitations of truth, so close as to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect (as

will be the case with the Jews by and by). The old bodies of Christendom contain the foundations of the faith in a great measure; those more showy deceptions hold out higher promise as to the hope of the saints, and the church, and Christian privilege, but they sink far below common orthodoxy or they fail in ordinary righteousness. And no wonder, if their guides are “men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith.” Soaring far higher and alluring the sanguine and unstable far more in what is less known, they betray ruinously those blessed and vital truths to which all saints cleave, however ignorant or prejudiced they may be otherwise.

Hence God does not fail to raise up a standard against the foe, and His imperilled saints profit by the warning. So the apostle declares here: “But they shall not advance farther; for their folly shall be very manifest to all, as theirs also became” (ver. 9). The comparison tells no less in the dazzling counterfeit, which was calculated to perplex and mislead, than it does in the exposure of the snare itself. This done, its efficacy for mischief is at an end, and the folly of its authors and advocates is too plain to injure more. Have we not known the enemy thus defeating himself under the mighty hand of God? Let us not forget how much we owe to the watchful grace of our Lord, Who thus vindicates His word and Spirit after man’s misuse of both. If Satan cites scripture evilly or falsely, the Lord does not leave scripture for argument, but answers in a way absolutely and at once convincing — “It is written again.”

From the unmasking of these various forms of evil, then germinating within the sphere of Christian profession,

the apostle turns to the very different path and walk of his fellow-labourer.

“But thou hast followed52 closely my teaching, course, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings; what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that desire to live piously in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted. But wicked men and impostors shall advance for the worse, deceiving and being deceived” (vers. 10-13).

It was energy of unfeigned faith and love, acting by the Spirit in the life which is in Christ Jesus, which thus drew out Timothy. Unbelief stumbled and made not only difficulties but opposition to that which attracted and sustained the young fellow-labourer, because it was to his soul the living witness to a rejected but glorified Christ. He was not ashamed, as were many, of the testimony of our Lord or of Paul His prisoner. Whatever might be the timidity of his character naturally, in faith he found strength, giving glory to God. The promise of life was an assured reality, and he too suffered evil along with the gospel according to the power of God, Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before ages of time, but now manifested by the appearing of our Saviour (2 Tim. 1:8, 9). Christ in short decided and drew him onward in a path otherwise impossible.

Now Paul’s “teaching” has justly the first place in that which acted on Timothy: not truth only, but cast in the mould of the apostle’s mind, heart, and moral force,

where the person and heavenly glory of Christ governed with a power unequalled. And this in the main we also have as God was pleased to give it permanence for our instruction, and' cheer, and warning, and general blessing in Paul's Epistles, to speak of no more, though we cannot have what Timothy enjoyed so largely — speaking "mouth to mouth," as another apostle expresses it who laid great store on such communications, as compared with paper and ink and pen (2 John 12; 3 John 13, 14). Yet each has its excellency, and all is surely ordered in its season; so that, while recognizing what Timothy had for the help and furnishing of his soul, we can own the wisdom of the Lord in our portion.

Then the "course" or "conduct" of the apostle had its great value as a practical expression of the truth which swayed his judgments and feelings habitually. There is no better comment on the inspired word than that found in the walk of those subject to it, whether individually or in the assembly. If this be true generally of all the spiritual and intelligent, so far as they are led in obedience, what a bright illumination of Holy Writ was there not, in one privileged as Timothy was, perhaps beyond all others, with the intimacy of the great apostle so long and so variously!

"Purpose" shone in that life of ceaseless serving the Lord Christ with a splendour which none but the malignant could misinterpret, none but the dark and blind overlook. From the time that there fell from his eyes, as it were scales, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared to both those of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and

also the Gentiles, that they should repent and believe the gospel (Acts 26:19, 20). He preached the kingdom boldly; he shrank not from declaring the whole counsel of God. And in the midst of these labours night and day, he could say, as perhaps no other with equal truth, “One thing [I do], forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13, l 4).

Practical, present, living “faith” it was that kept alive the holy fire in the heart of the apostle; and this accordingly is here pointed out for fixing its place on Timothy’s memory, and stimulating him to perseverance in the like path. For indeed, as there is but one path, even Christ, for all that are His, so it is faith alone that finds and pursues it with patience: we walk by faith, not by sight, as by faith we stand. No other means suits the children of God, and none other glorifies God Himself, Who would be owned immediately by them, as they thus derive fresh blessing in the enjoyment of His light and love. If “faith” be then the ever ready, ever needed, means of direction and power for all, how much more for those who have the added and most trying service of the Lord in the word! What did it not recall to His genuine child in faith of calm reckoning on God against all appearances? What of gracious answers even beyond expectation? For God will not be outdone even by the truest heart, and grace will ever flow beyond the faith which it creates and exercises.

“Long-suffering” too had Timothy seen in Paul as nowhere else. For in truth it is no fruit derived from earthly source but that which comes of Him Who was and is its fulness, now on the throne of God. Least of all

was it natural to Saul of Tarsus, who speaks of himself as once a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, that is, a man characterized by insolent overbearing. But boundless mercy was shown, and wondrous “long-suffering” was the fruit, in Paul.

“Love” wrought there, love seen and known and proved in Jesus our Lord, love reproduced by the Spirit as the energy of that nature which is light in its principle. For if all the godly become by grace partakers of divine nature, in him who was given to write 1 Cor. 13, love wrought mightily. Nor if knowledge spoke haughtily and to the stumbling of the weak, did any man deal so trenchantly with it as he who beyond all his fellows knew all mysteries and all knowledge? Timothy truly had a rich sample of “love” before his eyes.

“Patience” therefore did not fail, though put to the proof in the utmost variety of form and degree. As we read 2 Cor. 11, we think a little of what Timothy had beheld or known in so many details. “The signs of an apostle” were wrought among the saints in all patience, by both signs and wonders, and by works of power.

This is followed by “persecutions”, and “sufferings”, as the trials in which the “patience” or endurance was manifested. And the same chapter (2 Cor. 11) accordingly furnishes in the most unobtrusive way such a roll as no hero of the world could match. Yet the apostle was pained to the quick to say a word about them; “I am become foolish,” he said; “ye have compelled me.” For him it was a real pain to recount what they should have otherwise learned or remembered; though he could add, “I take pleasure in

weakness, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits, for Christ's sake."

Timothy was thoroughly acquainted with what things happened to the apostle at Antioch (of Pisidia), and at Iconium, and at Lystra. It was in this order that persecution befell Paul; in the reverse that he and Barnabas made their return journey, establishing the souls of the disciples converted a little before (Acts 14). In all these sufferings and opposition Jews played the guilty part of inciting the Gentiles against the word of life and those who preached it. Hence, when they came to close quarters, stoning was the method employed. What occupation for the ancient people of God! What anguish for him who so loved them, even when not a blow fell on him! But if the apostle recalled the vivid recollections of Timothy, for he was of Lycaonia, and brought to the knowledge of Christ through the apostle at this very time, he could say, "What persecutions I endured, and out of all the Lord delivered me."

A twofold statement concludes this part of the Epistle, which those who look for progress in Christendom as a whole would do well to ponder. For the apostle speaks as generally as he lays down the truth positively. Not a hint does he give of a temporary interruption to be followed by blessing and triumph for the gospel. That the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea, is certain; that the nation shall seek unto the Messiah, and that His resting place shall be glorious, cannot be questioned by the believer; but none of these things shall be before He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips slay the wicked. Till then, however truly the gospel may save individuals here and there, or even affect communities,

especially where it is mixed up with law and rendered earthly, — till the Lord is revealed in judgment of the quick, those that are in heart godly must suffer, and evil men must advance to greater impiety. Partial appearances deceive; the word of God abides for ever.

Thus, on the one hand, the apostle declares, “Yea, and all that desire to live piously in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted” (ver. 12). It is wise, and even incumbent on saints, to make up their minds thus to suffer for righteousness, and for Christ. They will then think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among them which comes upon them to prove them, as though a strange thing happened unto them.

On the other hand, they will not be appalled that the world, yea, the professing mass, grows distinctly worse as a whole in the face of every testimony of God’s grace and truth. On the contrary, they will cleave the more to the word which the prevalence of evil only confirms, while conversion goes on actively. “But evil men and impostors shall advance for the worse, deceiving and being deceived” (ver. 13). Can words more graphically, as well as accurately, set out the real character of the progress for him who bows to scripture? If we refuse this subjection, a blinding power is already upon us, and we are led astray ourselves as we mislead others in the measure of the error and of our influence.

Timothy was not to be given to change. Truth remains immutable, though the most spiritual have to appropriate it increasingly: not the church, nor an apostle, but Christ is the Truth objectively, and the Holy Spirit as inward power. That wicked men and the jugglers of imposture should shift is to be expected; for

all have not faith, which lives and grows and thrives in subjection to the truth. Hence the charge that follows: —

“But abide thou in those things which thou didst learn and wast persuaded of, knowing of whom thou didst learn [them]; and that from a babe thou knowest the sacred writings that are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture [is] God-inspired, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction that is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished thoroughly unto every good work” (vers. 14-17).

There is no surer indication of the Holy Spirit’s energy than when an active mind (and the revealed truth does give holy freedom and unbounded exercise) abides in the things we are taught of God. Some beyond question are more than others prone to doubt because of difficulties, speculative or practical. Happy the heart which faces every word and fact without a thought of abandoning those things which it was once persuaded of on divine authority, or, as the apostle puts it here, “Knowing of whom thou didst learn them”!

If the plural form (

τίνων) be preferred, which certainly rests on very good and ancient witnesses, it was Paul not alone but with the rest of those whom the Lord chose to bear testimony to the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. The inspired men of the New Testament presented an entirely new and deep and heavenly revelation, answering to His displayed person and work, and the relationships dependent on Christ, for which the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven gives energy. Thus the

power is to obey. Timothy, like every other, was sanctified by the Spirit to obedience (1 Peter 1:2). He had a most honourable position, but no licence to act without the word of the Lord, Who sent the Spirit to guide into all truth, as well what was coming as what concerned more directly Christ and the church in actual testimony. He was thus glorifying Christ, reporting all, as only He could, to the saints, and this by chosen witnesses, so that our prime joy, not to say duty, is to believe and obey. Doubtless God has set in the church, as it has pleased Him: first, these; next, those; and so on, in no small variety of place according to His sovereign will and unerring wisdom; but obedience of faith runs through the life of each, if they walk and serve according to God. And this the apostle is here laying down for Timothy with the utmost care. Can we think that the exhortation was not deeply needed? and the more, because it is given in an Epistle intended for the perpetual remembrance, not only of such as might share Timothy's service, but of all who seek to please the Master.

Nor was it now only that Timothy had reverently listened to the words of God. To thousands of saints and to many a minister of the word, from among the Gentiles, it was a new thing; and the gospel received into the heart opened the way for valuing and profiting by the ancient oracles of God. But with him it was a different order, though the result may be substantially similar. But, in fact, the apostle reminds him, "That from a babe thou knowest the sacred writings that are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus" (ver. 15).

It is painful to observe the slight done to the scriptures in Christendom, even where Protestant feeling prevails. The importance of the Bible for the poor, many will allow who are far from availing themselves of it on their own account. Not only does Popery proscribe the simple and habitual reading of it (as if the book of God were rank. poison for man because it is so sure to undermine and overthrow Romanist dogma and practice), but not a few who count themselves far removed from the Latin church discourage that heed to it from the earliest years, which is here, by the highest authority, commended in Timothy. It is in vain to decry it as "letter", or to discourage the young as unrenewed. He who was inspired to lay down the safeguards against the difficulties of the last days, does not hesitate unqualifiedly to express his satisfaction in that which their wisdom ventures to disparage. This should be enough for faith, if a Coleridge joins hands with sacerdotal pride on one hand, or with rationalistic indifference on the other, in attacking what they dislike as "bibliolatry."

The true and humble-hearted have but to go on unmoved in the midst of these changing fashions of hostile opinion, cleaving to God and to the word of His grace, while eschewing every plausible plea of man. For the true ground is not man's right to the scriptures, or man's competency to interpret them, but God's title to deal in the Bible with every heart and conscience, which the Holy Spirit alone can guide into any and all truth. Those who interdict the free reading of scripture are blindly striving to hinder God from addressing Himself to man. Let them judge how great such a sin is against God as well as man. They may reason now, but what will

they say another day for their rebellion against His rights? Surely the apostle was as far as possible from rationalism. He did not believe in the power of man to make divine truth his own. Even the sacred writings are only able to make wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. This however they are. Without faith in Christ salvation and wisdom from above are alike impossible.

But we are carried a great deal farther in verses 16, 17: “Every scripture [is] God-inspired, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction that is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished thoroughly unto every good work.” No more suited, valuable, and weighty sentence appears here or in any part of the word of God. There are kindred sentiments of exceeding moment, which do ever fit in most appropriately where they occur; but the one before us is clear, full, and impressive in the highest degree. It gives divine character to every part of the Bible, excluding of course such words or clauses as can be shown on adequate evidence to be interpolations.

First, it is important to observe that the subject of the opening sentence is anarthrous. The sense therefore is not “all”, but “every”, scripture. If the article had been inserted, the words which follow would have predicated that which is said of the known existing body of holy writ. The absence of it has the effect of so characterizing every part of the inspired word to come, as well as extant. Is it scripture? Then it is God-inspired and profitable, etc. This is affirmed of every atom.

Next, it is known that versions and critics of reputation differ somewhat where the unexpressed but necessarily

implied copula should be inserted. It is not always seen that this is a comparatively slight difference. The substantial sense abides. The Revised Version, with several, prefers to render thus: “Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable....” The Authorized Version with others have it thus: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable....” I have no doubt it is more correctly translated above: “Every scripture [is] God-inspired and profitable....” What is common here to the Authorized Version and mine is that the apostle asserts inspiration by God and profitableness about scripture; whereas, according to the Revisers, divine inspiration is assumed, and its profit seems rather awkwardly asserted, “is also....” After all, the difference is practically small. In the Revised Version that is assumed for divine inspiration which in the other is directly affirmed in the first place, with defined and varied profit following after.

Scripture then, that is, everything which comes under the designation of scripture, is inspired of God; not merely holy men of God spoke, borne by — under the power of — the Holy Spirit; but every thing written in the Spirit with a view to permanent guidance of the faithful is inspired of God. Thus simply believed must necessarily exclude error from holy writ; for who would say that God inspires mistakes, great or small? Those who so think cannot really believe that every scripture is inspired of God. Time was when God’s word was of course inspired but not yet written; now it is in infinite mercy written by His gracious power Who knew the end from the beginning, and would provide an adequate and perfect and permanent standard for every need spiritually on earth. Hence it is written, and, to be

divinely authoritative, is inspired of God: not the sacred letters of the Old Testament only, but the writings of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament the foundation on which the church is built (Eph. 2:20).

Indeed, it is the prophetic character of gift which especially is in exercise for writing scripture. The apostles as such governed as well as began the church. But some were prophets who were not apostles; and the church or assembly was built on the foundation of both. This explains the true source of the authority in the holy writings of Mark and Luke. To attribute it to Peter for the one, and to Paul for the other, betrays the worthless character of early tradition, such as appears in the speculations of Eusebius of Caesarea. For whatever may be the value of his history of his own times, or of those not long before, his account of the apostolic age has more value as a contrast with the inspired record, short as this is, than as a true reflection. It even abounds with plain ignorance and error, and never rises to the spiritual bearings of what he sets before us. The inspired account in what is called “The Acts of the Apostles” is impressed with the dignity, depth, power, and design of scripture, as decidedly as any other book of the Bible. A similar remark applies to Luke’s Gospel, as well as to that of Mark. They are scripture, and inspired of God, each having an aim laid bare by the contents, wholly distinct from that of Matthew and of John, yet no less certainly divine; each therefore contributing its own elements of profit proper to each, and found in none other as in them, though others furnish what is not therein. This is characteristic of inspiration, and is found nowhere but in scripture.

It is full of interest to observe that in 1 Tim. 5:18 the apostle quotes Luke as scripture. Some might hastily affirm that the last clause of the verse was drawn from the apostle Matthew, (Matt. 10:10). But a closer inspection proves that Paul cites from Luke 10:7, though he who disbelieves in verbal inspiration might cavil and evade its force. He, however, who is assured on God's authority that inspired men spoke, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth (1 Cor. 2:13), gladly owns that the apostle of the Gentiles cites literally from the Gospel of his own fellow-labourer. It is as if God meant to confirm the principle by Paul's not only quoting Luke, but quoting his Gospel no less than Deut. 35:4 as "scripture". He knew and refuted beforehand the sceptical theories which blindly seek to deny the authority of both.

We all know that Peter in his Second Epistle (2 Peter 3:16) speaks of all Paul's Epistles as "scripture". This again is beautiful in that late communication of the great apostle of the circumcision. But it is not so generally seen, though it is no less certain, that in the preceding verse Peter renders testimony to Paul's having written to the believing Jews, who were the objects of both his own Epistles. Thus we have it on inspired authority that not Barnabas, nor Silas, nor Apollos, nor any other then Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. A few words of inspiration are decisive against endless argument.

Verses 10, 11 had reminded Timothy of his special opportunities and his personal knowledge of the apostle's teaching, course, and life, individual and ministerial, with a solemn supplement (vers. 12, 13) as to the godly and the wicked, whether in resemblance or

in contrast. Verse 14 is a grave exhortation for Timothy thereon to abide in those things which he thus learnt and was assured of, based on his knowledge of their character and authority from whom he learnt them, as well as on his familiarity from infancy with the ancient but living oracles of God, which, though of themselves incapable of quickening, or of imparting spiritual power, were able to render him wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus (ver. 15).

Then in verse 16, comes a dogmatic conclusion of the subject, as plain as it is momentous, in the form of an apothegm which most naturally conveys what the Authorized Version reflects, save the opening word which, better translated, enlarges its scope considerably: “Every scripture [is] inspired of God, and profitable….” It thus covers all that might be added by inspiration of-God, as well as what had been so given already. It expels from the field not only the bold cavillers at the divine word, but with no less peremptoriness the unworthy, though professedly orthodox, apologists, who surrender the holy scriptures, either in detail all over the Bible, or, sometimes, in whole books, through a compromise with the adversary.

For what is scripture useful or “profitable”? We must not regard the passage as an exception to the general principle which governs all the Bible. It lays down only what is in harmony with the context. Nor is any other place to be put beyond this in wisdom as well as power and interest. We are thus compelled to eschew partial search, if we would seek really to understand the mind of God revealed in His written word; we must read and study the scriptures as a whole. With Christ before us we shall not peruse in vain. Beginning at Moses and all

the prophets our risen Lord expounded in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself (Luke 24:27); and this said of the Old Testament is yet more evidently true of the New. We err, therefore, when He, the constant object of the inspiring Spirit, is not our object; but the manner is as different as the books which compose the Bible; for each book has its own peculiar design, and all contribute to form a perfect whole. “Profitable”, accordingly, is limited by accordance with the character of this Epistle. Other uses are shown elsewhere.

First in order is the profit of every scripture “for teaching”, or doctrine. Of this there cannot be a finer or richer instance than the Epistle to the Hebrews, wherein the grand truths of the gospel are elicited in a way equally simple and profound from the words and figures of the Old Testament. Can any means be found so well suited to help the believer to its clearer understanding and application in other parts? One truth rightly apprehended prepares the way for another. For no new truth supersedes that which you have already, but rather confirms it and helps to more.

Next stands its use “for conviction”. The Epistle to the Galatians may be taken as a salient example. See how admirably the apostle employs “the blessing” and “the curse” in Galatians 3, to illustrate the promise and the law, which these saints were confounding as millions since have done yet more. Take again the Seed, not many but one, in the same chapter; and the principle of a mediator in the law confronted with One God promising and sure to accomplish. Take in Galatians 4 the still more evident application of the two sons of Abraham to deliverance from the law, with prophecy

brought in to illustrate, and the final sentence from Gen. 21:10 to convince the Judaizers of their ruinous mistake.

Thirdly, comes “for correction”. Here we may refer to the frequent and telling use of the Old Testament in the Epistles to the Corinthians as a signal illustration. Almost every chapter of the First Epistle furnishes samples, of which 1 Corinthians 10 is brimful.

Fourthly, who can mistake the Epistle to the Romans as the brightest and most palpable specimen of scripture used “for instruction in righteousness”? And in this, as in the others, not only is the Old Testament so applied with divine skill, but its own supplies of instruction are to the same end.

Thus is the aim distinctly and perfectly met: “that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted unto every good work.” So it was in Timothy’s case, so also for every other who follows a like path. It is the Holy Spirit’s injunction, expressly in view of grievous times in the last days.

48 Rightly understood, the judgment of Israel, of the Gentiles and of Christendom takes place about the same time in the consummation of the age, as our Lord shows in Matt. 24, 25; and to this agree Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Deut. 4:30; Deut. 31:29, Job 19:25; Isaiah 2:2 Ezek. 38:16, Dan. 2:28, Dan. 10:14, Dan. 12:13, Micah 4:1, in all of these passages the “latter” or “last days” are foretold.

49 Sicco pede means dry-footed, that is, passing on without wading in to solve the difficulties.

50 (The corruption of good is the worst form of evil.)

51 J. A. Bengel in his Gnomon of the New Testament.

52 The main witnesses ACFG support the aorist, the majority give the perfect, as in 1 Tim. 4:6 (with but small exception), which has greater present force.

2 Timothy 4

Having thus laid down the sacred deposit, new as well as old, in its divine authority and edifying fulness, the apostle proceeds in the beginning of the fourth chapter to urge the earnest ministration of it with all solemnity.

“I testify earnestly [or, charge] before God and Christ Jesus that is about to judge living and dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all long-suffering and doctrine” (vers. 1-2).

Here there is no small discrepancy, not only as to the right reading among the ancient witnesses, but also as to the just reflection of the original text. That text which has been vulgarly received accredited a connecting particle with the preceding chapter, or at least with its closing topic. This, a more careful examination, or certainly a more spiritual judgment, would have shown to be uncalled for and out of place; as well as the personal emphasis of the subject. On the contrary, Paul evidently desired rather to put forward God Himself and the risen Man, Who is to deal with mankind supremely in the coming day. The order of His name, and the omission of “the Lord”, are sustained by the best authorities of every kind, and fall in admirably with the context. It would seem also that the conjunction before τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν was not understood, and got supplanted by the preposition in order to ease the construction; which really had for effect to alter the connection of the sentence by severing “His appearing and His kingdom” from the verb at the beginning, and attaching them to the judging of the quick and dead as a date.

So it stands in the Authorized and other Versions; but if we connect “His appearing and His kingdom” with the verb, a choice of version lies open to us. For we may regard the accusatives as the complement of διαμαρτύρομαι, and translate as in Deut. 4:26, which some prefer, in the sense of calling Christ’s appearing and His kingdom to witness against Christendom. But this seems far from a just analogy. Heaven and earth we can easily apprehend as thus invoked; but how about summoning Christ’s appearing and His kingdom? It would be harsh indeed. How could Paul call Christ’s future appearance and His kingdom to witness then, as Moses invoked heaven and earth that day to witness against Israel? The construction is therefore not really the same.

Christ’s appearance and His kingdom are therefore suited and most impressive grounds of appeal by which he was solemnly charging Timothy, or others like-minded and responsible, to preach the word. The acuss. object) appears thus quite untenable. Hence most prefer, with the Revisers, to understand the apostle to testify earnestly, without specifying Timothy, before God and Christ Jesus, and by His appearing and His kingdom, as that which gave the charge incalculable weight and awe. If κατά be read, it is hard to see how it can be connected with the verb; for where is the sense of “I charge [thee] at His appearing and His kingdom”? The preposition compels us to make these words dependent on the participle.

Turning from this brief but dry discussion of text and translation, which nevertheless is a duty owing to the proper clearance of scripture, obscured as it has been by defective knowledge and insight, we may now the

more intelligently admire the apostolic appeal. That solemn testimony, of which Paul speaks, is before God and Christ Jesus, Who is about to judge living and dead. This is looked at as ever imminent; or, as another apostle puts it, Christ “is ready to judge living and dead” (1 Peter 4:5). Only our text speaks of the judgment as a continuous process, the other sums it up in its conclusion. The continuous character of our Lord’s judging is made if possible more evident in Acts 17:31, where its object is defined clearly as the habitable earth, not the dead (whose judgment will follow in its season) but the quick: a truth, which, though owned in the ordinary symbols of Christendom, has practically dropped out of mind even for earnest and sober Christians, who are apt to fasten their eyes exclusively on the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15).

In this solemn matter they, and the Jews, fall into opposite faults. For the Jews were full of the earthly judgment which the Messiah is assuredly to execute over all the earth, when no nation can escape; whilst they in effect; thought little or nothing of the everlasting judgment of the dead. But the Lord Jesus, as Peter solemnly testified to Cornelius, is the One ordained by God as Judge of living and dead (Acts 10:42).

As we know the generality of Christians slur over the judgment of living men on the earth, it is the more important to unfold it somewhat at length. Nothing demonstrates the need of this more than the citation of 1 Cor. 15:51, 52, and 1 Thess. 4:16, 17, as bearing on the judgment of living and dead. “We, the living that remain”, we who without having fallen asleep shall be changed, are not in the least included in the mere quick and of course not in the dead, of the text before us. “We”

are Christian believers, who consequently do not come into judgment, as our Lord ruled in John 5:24, but shall be changed without death any more than judgment, and brought up with the dead but risen saints to meet the Lord Jesus at His coming.

There is no such thought in scripture as a future judgment of those spiritually alive, though all must be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ. This to "the spiritually dead" will of course be nothing short of coming into judgment; but the saints will be none the less manifested there that they may know even as they are known, and that each may receive the things done in the body, according to those he has done, whether good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10). Having Christ as their life and His redemption, they were saved even here by grace through faith; they are not to be put on their trial there, as if the salvation of God were a doubtful thing. For such it will simply be manifestation in this solemn but blessed way, and this with special view to the place of each in the kingdom; for there is the revealed certainty among the saved of each receiving his own reward according to his own labour. But judgment by-and-by for him that has eternal life and is saved is not only flat contradiction of the express word of Christ, but irreconcilable with all that eternal blessing which the gospel attests as due to Him and His work for the believer.

The passage then does not speak of the heavenly saints, still less of those privileges of grace which are theirs in Christ, but of the judgment to come which awaits quick and dead when He is revealed to this end according to the scriptures. Other passages of holy writ show that the quick are to be judged, not only when Christ appears in glory, but all through His kingdom, which is said to be

“for ever”, because it closes only with the dissolution of the heaven and the earth that now are, and the subsequent judgment of the dead, the wicked dead, who small and great stand before the throne. Their manifestation is judgment in the fullest and eternal sense; because, having rejected Christ, or at the least failed to profit by any and every testimony God gave them, it remains only that they be judged each according to his works. Their works being evil on the one hand, and on the other not one found written in the book of life, all they themselves were cast into the lake of fire. Theirs is therefore a resurrection of judgment: so the Saviour calls it in John 5:29; as that of believers is a resurrection of life — life for the bodies of all who through faith had here below received life in Christ for their souls. The apostle however is here treating of judgment, first of the quick on earth at and during the kingdom of Christ, and lastly of the dead before it is given up to Him Who is God and Father, that God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) may be all in all, in the eternal state.

It will be observed that the contextual language of the apostle is most precise and explicit. When he thus testifies before God and Christ Who is about to judge quick and dead, he adds “and by His appearing and His kingdom”. “His coming”, or presence, would not at all have suited; for unless it be specially qualified (as by the term “of the Son of man” et al.), it has no proper relation to the divine dealings in judgment, but rather to God’s counsels of grace. Hence the presence or coming of Christ is connected with the translation of the saints on high. When it is a question of judicial action, “His appearing” is the exactly right expression as it is here;

and either this, or His revelation, or His day, will ever be found in this connection.

Accordingly here “His appearing” is followed by “and His kingdom,” with no less accuracy; for “His appearing” alone would not have sufficed for more than the earlier judgments to fall on the guilty living generation of that day. To cover His judging the world throughout His long reign, and particularly the dead which remain to be raised for judgment at the close, we need and have “His kingdom” also. Every word is written wisely; all is required to complete the full picture of His judging. Hence we see the mistake of those who speak of the “modificated eternity” of His mediatorial kingdom (regnum gratiae) to be succeeded by the kingdom of glory to commence at His ἐπιφάνεια, or appearing. Not so; the reign for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-7) does begin, to speak generally, when Christ is manifested in glory (as the preceding chapter, Rev. 19 clearly points out). And it may be described as a “modificated eternity”, because it introduces His kingdom, a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all previous kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever, i.e., as long as the earth endures (Dan. 2:44). It is absurd to apply this to the church (or to the gospel) now; for the church, if true to its principles, is called ever to suffer, not to reign, till He appears in glory. The bride is to bear herself in holy separation from the world, cast out like her crucified Master, till glorified with Him at His coming. The eternal scene which knows neither end nor modification is after the kingdom is given up, the kingdom given Him as Man, and shared by Him with the risen saints, reigning

together as they suffered together, but given up at the end, when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For Christ must reign till then; throughout eternity God as such, not the exalted Man, will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

With this in view, then, the apostle gives the charge, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all long-suffering and doctrine.” The structure of each verb implies prompt action. This of course is quite consistent with persevering continuance; but continuance might be, and often is, without such intensity of devotedness as is here insinuated by the rapid succession of pressures on Timothy, which did not put even a particle to connect one with another. Proclaiming the word has the first place; urgent heed to the work in season, out of season, follows up the preaching; convicting in the sense of proving home or reproving is enjoined as a wholesome duty, even though irksome to a tender spirit; rebuke comes afterwards as necessary where fault was plain or out? as on the other hand encouragement or exhortation, where this rather was called for. In every case there was to be all long-suffering and doctrine. Who was sufficient for these things? Timothy’s sufficiency, as the apostle’s, was from God. So may ours be in our little measure!

There is a fresh reason which the apostle now puts forward for urgent and assiduous zeal in every possible way — another grievous feature of the grievous times of the last days.

“For the time will be when they will not endure sound teaching; but according to their own lusts they will heap

up to themselves teachers, having an itching ear; and from the truth they will turn away their ear, and will be turned aside unto fables" (vers. 3, 4).

It is not here the leaders whose fault is in the foreground, but the people. Elsewhere we see false teachers, and self-willed chiefs, misleading such as put their trust in them. Here, though the time was not yet come for so widespread evil, the Spirit of God speaks of it as imminent: "For the time will be when they will not endure the sound teaching." This is clearly descriptive of the prevalent state to overspread Christendom, not among Jews nor heathens. It supposes those who were used to hear the truth. But now the truth becomes unpalatable, and "the sound teaching" of it cannot be endured: a truly frightful time for men bearing the name of the Lord. For it is evident that out of an impure heart they must call on Him. Sound teaching is ever welcome to those whose desire is to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and this that all may issue in a life of increasing obedience and devotedness.

How deep and bold then the enmity of heart when those who have every motive to love the truth, far beyond those of old, will not endure it! "Oh, how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day." "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" "It is time for Thee, LORD to work: they have made void Thy law. Therefore I love Thy commandments like gold, yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right: I hate every false way." "Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the

simple. I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for Thy commandments." "Thy word is very pure; therefore Thy servant loveth it. I am small and despised; yet I do not forget Thy precepts. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me; yet Thy commandments are my delight. Thy testimonies are righteous for ever: give me understanding, and I shall live."

These are but a few extracts from a psalm (Ps. 119:97-144) devoted as a whole to setting forth the characteristic virtues of divine revelation as possessed by the house of Israel before Christ, and therefore very short of the later and yet more profound communications since redemption, and Christ's ascension, and the personal presence of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, all of which incalculably blessed facts enhance what God has revealed since. Yet we can see, and especially as in a composition which by the Spirit expresses the feelings of the heart, how deeply the sound teaching of that early day was valued; as it will be as much or more when God in the latter day stirs the godly remnant to say in heart, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah." The full Christian testimony comes between the advents of the Lord, and so yet more after the early days of Jewish enjoyment before the children relish the word beyond what their fathers did. In that interval comes Christianity, as well as the corruption of it in Christendom, one of the direct symptoms of which is the disgust at, and intolerance of, "the sound teaching" here announced.

But there is also positive evil, as well as the dislike of what is divine. And whilst both evils have long verified

the solemn warning of the apostle, it is easy to understand that the dark sketch of a time then at hand becomes more and more dismal as the Lord tarries and lawlessness acquires audacity and force. The prevalence of education in modern times leads to a great deal of reading even in the humblest class; so that the desire to hear what pleases the mind, the taste, and the natural aspirations of man, modified as all is by the governing spirit of the age, becomes even more active and pretentious. “According to their own lusts they will heap up to themselves teachers, having an itching ear.” Can there be a more graphic anticipation of what is found everywhere in our day, at least where the Bible is universally circulated? Even this is sometimes openly left out by men calling themselves Christians. But Satan can, and does, sadly neutralize it where it is nominally in use as a mere suggester of themes for the adventuresome and profane wit of man. Indeed no other book is so fertile in raising and satisfying the most profound enquiries as to God and man and all things. And the intellect can readily cast aside its authority while it enters on its flight of universal discussion, being as doubtful of the divine as it is credulous of the human. Christ, the centre and expression of grace and truth, is practically lost, and the more guiltily because it is in the sphere where once He was all.

What becomes of those who, having once known, turn their back on His glory? First, as we have seen, according to their own lusts they heap up to themselves teachers, having an itching ear. The full revelation of God, though no longer held in faith, leaves a craving to hear something new; and for this end heaps of teachers are resorted to in profound unbelief of the word of God

and of the power of the Spirit to guide into all the truth. The efficacy of neither can be enjoyed, where redemption does not purge the conscience and where Christ Himself is not the object and rest of the heart. God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; because he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life eternal (Gal. 6:8). If openly unrighteous man give himself up to pleasure, religiously unrighteous man occupies himself zealously with teachers, both in default of having Christ. In Him alone can God or man find life, objects, and satisfaction; in Him faith finds all fully. Without this all is a waste for one's own lusts to heap up what can never satisfy; and the less if there be departure in heart from Him known ever so slightly: an itching ear can aggravate but can never remedy.

"Heaping up teachers" is but the excessive carrying out of an evil principle which prevails in evangelicals of all sorts, established as well as dissenting. It passes as a maxim among them that one is as free to choose one's teacher, or minister, as to choose one's doctor, lawyer, or any other professional help; and this, on the ground that they are paid for their services. No wonder that superstition revolted from ideas so gross in spiritual things, and clothed ministry with mystic rites in order to elevate it above matters of everyday life and to retain it within a strictly clerical enclosure; as others fell back on patronage to redeem it from the vulgar and keep it as much as possible within more refined hands directly or indirectly.

But scripture rises far above these earthly and contending schemes of men, and shows us that Christ is

the source of ministry, not merely at the starting-point, when He chose the twelve and the seventy, sending them forth on their respective missions, but as the risen, glorified, and ever-living Head, Who gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11, 12).

It is in vain to argue that this mode of working could only be when Christ was here upon earth. The remarkable fact is that the grand revelation just referred to in Eph. 4:8-13 ignores all action of this kind on the earth, and speaks only of ministerial gifts conferred on the church by our Lord, since He ascended up on high. Now this is to set them on a ground which cannot change till our Lord comes again. Till then He never ceases to be the unfailing spring of supply; and, as if to make this certain and clear even to reluctant ears, it is added, “till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (ver. 13). Scripture allows of no other source, and assures of this one for every need of saints now on earth. But we must always bear in mind, what the same Epistle (Eph. 2:20) distinguishes, that the apostles and prophets constitute the foundation on which we are built; the evangelists, pastors, and teachers, are those gifts which carry on the work. As this is the unforced and unequivocal intimation of God’s word, faith reckons on Christ’s faithfulness to the wants of souls and love to the church which is His body.

Hence there is no room for men’s own lusts in choosing, any more than in rejecting, those whom Christ has given

to do ministerial work. The gift is proved by the energy of the Spirit in effecting what it is given for: the evangelist by winning the unconverted to God; the pastor and teacher (not always, though often, united) by leading on and instructing the saints. It is on the same principle as a believer is recognized by his good confession of Christ, not in word only, but in deed and truth. Neither crown nor congregation, neither bishop nor patron, have anything to do with the choice.53 All such human gifts or calls are wholly irregular, not unscriptural only, but anti-scriptural, whatever pleas good men may have set up for each of them. Those whom Christ gives for spiritual service the Christian is bound to own, as he has to beware of all whom Christ did not so give. The sheep know His voice in His servants; and they know not the voice of strangers. Assuredly, the sheep may err in this case or in that; for they are in no sense infallible, and they have to act responsibly by grace. But the Lord's eye is on all, and He honours His own word, as He loves His own sheep. The sad and shameful fact is that for centuries the sheep have let slip their looking to Him in this matter, and have accepted one or other of those human ways which ignore His giving the needed supply spiritually. And as some have sinned by the unwarrantable system of one man concentrating all gifts in his person or authority, so others by heaping up to themselves teachers after their own lusts.

The only remedy is looking in faith to God, and to the word of His grace which furnishes the true key to the fact that the gifts still abide, rarely indeed concentrated, but as the rule distributed in no small variety and measure of spiritual power. In the present state of God's

church they are, like the saints, painfully scattered as well as shrouded and hindered. But no change of circumstances alters the vital constitution of the church, any more than it does the principle of those members of it which are so important for its extension and well-being, namely, the gifts before us. What the faithful ought to do is to judge themselves by God's word to learn how far they have departed, and in order to submit themselves to His will, knowing that he who does so abides for ever (1 John 2:17). None but Christ's gifts have His title and competency in the Spirit; and no saint can justify himself in refusing such or in accepting other men whom He has not so given; for either way is to deny His rights and to prefer man's will against Him. But heaping up to themselves teachers (and is it conceivable that these could be His gifts when consenting to His dishonour?) is yielding to men's own lusts, to the excess of self-will in despite of Christ.

But there is more still. "And from the truth they will turn away their ear, and will be turned aside unto fables" (ver. 4). Here is the fatal result. Who can measure the dishonour thus done to God and His word? Who can tell the loss to their own souls, not only by their alienation from the truth, but by their actual appetite for imaginative falsehood? So Satan would have it, who likes no one thing so much as a direct affront put on Christ, which all this implies. Thereby evil ensues in every way. The conscience is no longer governed by the sense of God's presence. Grace is unfelt, and thus the constraining power of Christ's love no longer operates. The holy fear of displeasing God vanishes. There is no consciousness of being set apart by the Spirit to the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. As

He is altogether a nullity to such, so the god of this world blinds their thoughts that the radiancy of the gospel of Christ should not shine forth. There is no treasure consequently in the earthen vessels, any more than ever bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in the body; still less is there exposure to death on account of Jesus, that His life also might be manifested in their mortal flesh, so that death should work in them but life in the objects of divine love (1 Cor. 4:4-12).

Hence present things fail not to rush in and fill the void according to Satan's pleasure. The age asserts its influence, and the world is loved and the things that are in it. On the one hand, the poor saints seem vulgar and forward; and the trials of the assembly become odious and contemptible. On the other, how much there is in the world that begins to look fair and pleasant! Then excuses sound plausible for the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. How narrow-minded and weak appear the once decided grounds to stand aloof! Thus as the word of truth is the means of practical sanctification, so the fabrications of the enemy undermine and supplant till there is nothing that the Holy Spirit can use to warn the soul or deliver from this corrupting and malignant power.

The "fables" here are not qualified as "Jewish", as in Titus 1:14, nor are they connected with "genealogies" as in 1 Tim. 1:4 which points in the same direction. It seems a sound deduction therefore to regard them as of a larger character, and open to the workings of Gentile fancy no less than Jewish. But it is vain to speculate on what was then impending. Suffice it for us to know that they are here unlimited and are the sure accompaniment

of turning away from the truth. One of admirable judgment infers from the structure of the phrase that their being already turned aside to fables leads them to turn away their ear from the truth. [See note in J. N. D.'s New Translation.]

Very different from that melancholy and humiliating picture of the course of Christendom is the stand to which the apostle proceeds to exhort Timothy.

"But be thou sober in all things, suffer evils (hardship), do an evangelist's work, fully perform thy ministry. For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is all but come. The good combat I have combated, the course I have finished, the faith I have kept: henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me in that day; and not to me only, but also to all those that love His appearing" (vers. 5-8).

Here therefore, as in 2 Timothy 2:1, the charge is emphatically personal. To be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus has its own weighty place. But more is needed for a workman and leader in a day of general and dangerous declension, when intoxicating influences were as rife as they were various: "But thou, be sober in all things." Vigilance (γρηγορεῖν) is not the thought as in the Authorized Version, nor yet a sound mind (σωφρονισμός), however nearly allied, but sobriety of judgment. The Greek answers fully to the English usage, and from the primary sense of drinking no wine comes to the ready metaphor of being sober, or wary, in all things. Timothy was to stand clear of that which might excite or stupefy, in contrast with those drifting into a mass carried away from the truth into fables.

Further, he is called to “suffer evils”,54 or hardships, and this in the most general way. In 2 Tinothy 1:8, it was to suffer evil “with the gospel”, a favourite personification of the apostle, who was not ashamed of it, and would have the faithful servant identified with its afflictions here below. 2 Tinothy 2:3 presents the different thought of Timothy’s taking his part in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, without expressing or understanding any special comrade. Here all idea of “staring” is left out. Readiness to endure ills in his place and service is what the apostle claims. Paul did not lay a burden on his young colleague which himself had not long and fully borne. It is but fellowship with the Master’s sufferings here below: only these, without of course speaking of the unique sorrows of atonement, went far deeper than those of His servants, which differences such as have experienced most would most freely own.

The next call appears to be often strangely misunderstood, as if the apostle meant Timothy to do an evangelist’s work, when he had not that gift, and consequently was not really an evangelist! For such a construction there is not the shadow of a sound reason. The danger rather was that the increasing difficulties and troubles of the assembly might distract the young and sensitive labourer, calling him to forego the exercise of that which was truly his gift without, though not his only one, because of the demands from within. Work so blessed to which the Lord has called him must not be intermitted. The evangelist is not a preacher only: work of faith and labour of love in quest of souls characterize him who presses the glad tidings on souls individually as well as publicly.

But it is a mistake not to be passed over, that the evangelists did not form a special and separate class. It is more correct so to designate them than even the teachers, for Eph. 4:11 couples the pastor with the teacher in a way in which he joins the evangelist with no other class; yet is the teacher elsewhere viewed as a distinct gift, though here, as often in fact, combined with pastorship. All gifts were certainly subordinate to apostles; yet neither evangelists nor any others were missionaries of the apostles, but of the Lord. He it is Who sends labourers into His harvest, as He is the Lord or it. The apostles were servants, though set by God first in the church. They could not send; still less could the church in this sense. Nor is it well founded to say that this was the work to which Timothy was called when he journeyed with the apostles. In all probability Timothy evangelized when privileged with that companionship; but the gift in itself had no connection with such a journey. On the contrary, Timothy would properly be intent on learning all he could in such circumstances, as it would be his joy to serve in every way personally and ministerially, if one may so say, to give the greater effect to the beloved and honoured chief, as this is implied in Acts 16:3; Acts 19:22.

That this is no question of working as subordinates and missionaries of the apostles is made still clearer by the case of the only one whose course as an evangelist is traced in the Acts. Philip officially was one “of the seven” (Acts 6:5), but as a gift was an evangelist, and he is so designated (Acts 21:8). When his office lapsed through the dispersion of all who composed the assembly in Jerusalem, he is seen (Acts 8) in the active exercise of his gift as an “evangelist”, and with signal

blessing both to a whole city and to an individual. In no case is Philip seen journeying with an apostle, but rather as one of a special and separate class. The apostles, on hearing that Samaria had received the word of God, sent Peter and John who put the seal of the Spirit on Philip's work (Acts 8:14-17); for indeed lowly love had wrought, and rivalry was as far from the evangelist as fording it from the apostles. But the characteristic of what is described is the free and sovereign action of the Lord; and as the two apostles did not think it beneath their exalted place to evangelize "many villages" of the Samaritans during their return to Jerusalem, so Philip went on his unfettered way under the Lord's direction, evangelizing "all the cities" till he came to Caesarea. There was no question of a sphere circumscribed by the presence or the absence of an apostle. The world is in principle the evangelist's province: journeying or abiding is a question of his subjection to the Lord.

Lastly, Timothy is told "fully to perform (

πληροφόρησον) his ministry" (ver. 5). It seems more than πλήρωσον (Acts 12:25; Col. 4:17), judging by the emphatic usage of the word where it occurs as verb or noun elsewhere. To translate with Beza, to "give full assurance of thy ministry," may sound more literal but hardly suits the subject before us' which wholly differs from faith, hope, or understanding. For these mean subjective enjoyment, the other would be objective proof; neither of which can rightly apply here, but filling to the full the measure of his service. Evangelizing, however incumbent on him who has the gift, was not the whole of the ministry which Timothy had received in the Lord: to fulfil all of it he is here enjoined.

A weighty and affecting enforcement follows in the approaching departure of the apostle: “For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is all but come” (ver. 6). The Authorized Version by no means conveys correctly the form; “now ready to be offered” is in several respects different from “am already being poured out,” which exactly reproduces the original. It is not the first time that the apostle employs the same figure of a drink-offering. To his beloved Philippian brethren, he had written a little before, “But if also I am poured out as a drink-offering (libation) on the sacrifice and service of your faith...” (Phil. 2:17). Now he drops all condition, as his release is before his eyes. He speaks as though the libation were already being made. Again, ἐφέστηκεν is hardly the same as ἐνέστηκεν, though the difference be the merest shade, which is sought to be expressed in “is all but come,” as compared with “is present,” or “come”. “Is at hand”, as in the Authorized Version, is the true rendering of neither, but of ἐγγύς or ἠγγικεν.

Few even of the apostles could say as Paul does at this solemn moment, “The good combat I have combated, the course I have finished, the faith I have kept” (ver. 7). The imputation of vainglory to the apostle, with death (and such a death!) before his eyes, is unworthy of anyone but a rationalist. It was of the utmost moment, not only for Timothy but for all who might follow, to know what grace can, and does, accomplish amidst the general wreck. Neither 1 Cor. 4:3, 4, nor Phil. 3:12-14, is inconsistent; whereas Phil. 4:13 affords direct ground for its realization.

How are we to account for such inability in some to conceive the power of grace by faith? Is it not that so

many excellent men, through a false system, are still grovelling in the fleshy combats of Rom. 7, and ignorant of that deliverance which Rom. 8 proclaims in virtue of a dead and risen Saviour, that is, of our death with Him and the power of the Spirit of life in Him. Under law they look for failure, and failure is theirs according to their unbelief, however grace may interfere sovereignly spite of the error.

But that battle of which the apostle speaks is the honourable combat which befits the soul set free, who has Christ before him, and has to face in his measure what Christ faced in the days of His flesh. It is the holy struggle for God's glory in a hostile world, end not merely the struggling against self in the despairing strife of Rom. 7. The latter we learn experimentally to teach us what we are even when converted, and also that the law aggravates our distress instead of giving us practical victory. Then we find that victory comes solely from giving ourselves up as good for nothing to find all in Christ dead and risen. Thenceforth begins the proper and good combat of us Christians, now not converted only but delivered, those in whom the Holy Spirit works in power with Christ before our eyes, Whose grace is sufficient for us. Paul had triumphed day by day, and so we also are called to defeat the enemy here below.

Next Paul writes, "the course I have finished." There is the general idea of the games narrowed to the race only; and he looks back on the course as "finished". At an earlier day in writing to the Corinthians, familiar as they were with the Isthmian Games in their neighbourhood, he had applied the theme to the life and service of the saints in general, introducing himself as an example of one running not uncertainly, not beating the air but

buffeting, or bruising, his body, and bringing it into bondage instead of surrendering it to relaxation, and indulgence, and luxury (1 Cor. 9:24-27). In Phil. 3:13, 14, we hear him expressing the utmost ardour of devotedness in that race for the prize. The general reference recurs in 2 Tim. 2:5, in just the same spirit in which it was first urged in 1 Cor. 9:25. Now the apostle applies it to his own case, not for self-applause, as a bad conscience and an envious heart might think, but transferring these things in application to himself for Timothy's sake, and for all who afterwards in faith read these words. Boasting was far indeed from one who had one foot in the grave and all his heart with Christ in heaven.

Finally, he adds, "The faith I have kept." This Christendom has sought to make easy and sure by the regular profession of the three creeds. But alas! all who look below the surface know how pitiable is the failure, when the most heterodox leap over all bounds in the solemn and habitual repetition of every word; while godly, but weak souls, are too often stumbled at that in them which they fail to comprehend; and thus on both sides endless mischief ensues. The faith was really kept when creeds did not exist. The word and the Spirit of God are all-sufficient for him whose eye is on Christ by faith. And then keeping the faith to the end, as Paul did, was a blessed test of fidelity to the Master. How many have turned aside, following their own minds and lusts, without creeds at first and now with them! The creeds are but puny and human barriers and of necessity powerless, the inventions of men when the word and Spirit of God were losing power through unbelief.

The sense of all being closed here below is what gives force to his looking onward to the kingdom, and this prospect now follows most appropriately (ver. 8). For responsibility and service are bound up, not with the Son's coming to take us to the Father's home, but to the Lord's appearing, when fidelity to His name on earth, or the lack of it, will be made manifest.

It will be observed that it is the epiphany of the Lord which is presented in these pastoral Epistles rather than His presence or coming; because it is throughout a question of work done in and for the Lord, with its specific reward "in that day" from His hand. It is not heavenly grace with the blessed issues of Christ's love in heaven before the day shines. Here the necessary principles of righteousness and of order, ecclesiastical or moral, are laid down, and the work on that foundation is insisted on, with its reward to the faithful. Both aspects are true and important, each in its place, and can never be confounded by us without loss. Which of the two is before us in verse 8 is beyond controversy: "Henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall award to me in that day; and not only to me but to all those that love (ἠγαπηκόσιν have loved and do love) His appearing." Is not this precious? The promise is sure to the apostle, but he is careful to ensure it to all that love the Lord's appearing, which will put all evil down, judge the indifferent as well as the rebellious, and establish peace and righteousness over the earth, with the display of all the saints in whom He is glorified.

The apostle now turns to his companions in service with varied expression of feeling; and to Timothy first as one specially near to his heart.

“Use diligence to come unto me quickly; for Demas, having loved the present age, forsook me and went unto Thessalonica; Crescens unto Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. Take up and bring Mark with thee, for he is useful to me for ministry. But Tychicus I sent unto Ephesus. The cloak which I left behind in Troas with Carpus bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments” (vers. 9-13).

Without doubt, deep solemnity pervaded the apostle’s spirit in the thought of his speedy departure and especially of the Lord’s appearing; and no wonder: it is the goal of responsibility, the moment when all shall be brought to light and the mind of the Lord pronounced accordingly. Early in the Epistle Paul had expressed his great desire to see Timothy, whom he regarded with especial affection. Now he urges upon him to be zealous in coming quickly to him, and assigns the reason. He was deserted by a fellow-labourer. This affected his heart deeply. He felt, therefore, the greater wish to have Timothy with him. It would be the last opportunity, and as we saw in the first chapter, his mind called to remembrance the past, so here he could not but look onward to the future, as he thought of those who were to continue the work of the Lord here, when he himself was gone.

Not long before, in writing to the Colossians, the apostle conveyed to them the greetings of Luke and Demas, with those of Epaphras and his own (Col. 4:19-14); and in writing to Philemon, probably about the same time, he conveys the salutation of Demas once more to his dearly-beloved Philemon, distinguishing him with others as his fellow-labourer (vers. 23, 24). Now he has the sorrow to write, as one reason more for Timothy’s

presence, “For Demas deserted me through love of the present age, and proceeded unto Thessalonica” (ver. 10).

This is sorrowfully explicit. To say that Demas left the apostle to go on an evangelistic tour is to slight the word, blot out the revealed motive, and to confound his case with that of the others who follow. It has been conjectured that the departure of Demas for Thessalonica was due to love for his birth-place. Others have guessed that it was for trading. We are not at liberty thus to speak; and the less because the Holy Ghost stamps the motive as love for the present age. The first was rather the fault of Mark and Barnabas in earlier days; but it had no deep root, and grace had long given self-judgment. The failure of Demas was far more serious, not merely because it was late in the day, but because love of the present age utterly opposes the moral purpose of Him Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age. It is not said that Demas forsook Christ, still less that Christ forsook Demas; but the sin was a grievous one, as is the endeavour to put the stigma of it on evangelizing. This was an insult reserved for folly and bitterness. Preaching the gospel is certainly not everything, but it is the foundation of all, as the evangelist is the gift of Christ. It is mare than probable that the fellow-labourers took their share in gospel work, as we know the apostle Paul always did with the utmost zeal and devotedness; but here it is not expressly said of anyone. To drag it in and connect it with the only one who is named as sinning against the Lord, is a very great affront to Him, unless it were said as an idle jest; but, if so, it is a jest that manifests a heartless feeling against the gospel or

its heralds, Of Crescens, we are only told that he went to Galatia. This is the sole mention of him in scripture. For what purpose he went we are not told, but it can scarcely be doubted that it was in the Lord's service. Tradition, and this the earliest, tells us that he went there to evangelize; but a later one speaks of him as labouring in Gaul. And it is well to note now that two of the earliest uncials (the Sinaitic and the Rescript of Paris) read here Gaul for Galatia, as do several cursive manuscripts, the Ethiopic Version of Rome, and other authorities. So early did ignorance or evil intent tamper with the copies of holy scripture.

Of Titus we are told that he went to Dalmatia. We may gather from this that he had finished his work in Crete, had joined the apostle, and was now gone in another direction. This is the last notice of him which scripture affords. There is not the smallest ground, therefore, for the tradition that he was diocesan of Crete. A singular fatality of error appears to pervade these extra-scriptural notices, which seem to be mere legends of imagination, grafted upon a mast superficial use of scripture. It is altogether an exception to find a single one of the old traditions containing an atom of truth. How deeply then should we feel the blessing of having God's perfect word!

"Only Luke is with me. Mark take up and bring with thyself, for he is to me profitable (useful) for ministry" (ver. 11). It is interesting to observe that the verse brings before us these two inspired writers of Gospels. They were not apostles, but are none the less authoritative. They were doubtless prophets, which gift was in exercise indeed for Matthew and John also, in so writing the prophetic writings, or scriptures, as the

apostle designates the Books of the New Testament in Romans 16:26.

The context of this passage is decisive, not to speak of the absence of the article, that the Authorized and the Revised versions are wrong in giving “the scriptures of the prophets.” For the apostle is speaking of the “revelation of the mystery which had been kept in silence through times everlasting, but now is manifested.” In Old Testament times the silence was kept; now is the time for its manifestation by New Testament prophets, who, instead of testifying to Israel only, make known that mystery, according to the commandment of the Eternal God, unto all the nations for obedience of faith. It is the gospel in short, and here specifically Paul’s gospel in contrast with the law. And it is only confusion to mix this up with what God had promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures at the beginning of the Epistle (Rom. 1:1-5), where accordingly there is no allusion to “the mystery”, which is fittingly introduced at the close only.

Luke, then, was the only companion of the apostle. He had been his fellow-labourer during much of his ministry; he abides with him before his death. But, not content with this, the apostle desires Timothy to take up Mark on his way and bring him along with himself, for he adds with exceeding grace, “he is to me useful for ministry.” We know how greatly grieved Paul had been with Mark’s desertion in early days, and how it had led even to a breach with Barnabas (Acts 15:37-10). But this was long blotted out by the healing goodness of God. And already the apostle had joined Mark with himself as one of the few fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God which had been a comfort to him; as in the same Epistle

to the Colossians he alludes to charges they had received to welcome him if he came to them (Col. 4:10, 11). But now he goes farther and reinstates him in personal nearness of service to himself, the very thing in which he had originally failed. In nature a breakdown is irreparable, not so where grace prevails; for “we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37).

“But Tychicus I sent unto Ephesus.” The Revised Version is right, the Authorized Version wrong; for the apostle draws a slight distinction here, which is expressed by “but”, rather than by “and”. The others had proceeded on their own responsibility. Tychicus was sent by the apostle to Ephesus. Here, again, it is in vain for us to conjecture the special object of his mission. We may assure ourselves that faith in the Lord and love to the saints were the motives. But it is well to take notice of an authority that sent him, to which none can now lay claim.

Here follows (ver. 13) a new command by Paul of exceeding interest in the midst of these interesting notices of his fellow-labourers: “The cloak which (that) I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments.”

Some pious men have allowed themselves the narrow and unseemly thought that inspiration is confined only to matters of spiritual truth. This is to lose a great deal of the grace of the gospel, and to shut out from our souls the interest which the Lord takes in what concerns the body as well as the mind. The truth is that the grace of our God occupies itself with everything that relates to us, and our wisdom is to take up nothing in which we

cannot look for the favour, guidance, and blessing of the Lord. Such is the wondrous fruit, not only of the incarnation of the Son, but of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. He makes the body the temple of God. If it were not so, the ordinary matters of this life would be left outside and clothed with nothing but a human connection. We wrong the Lord and defraud ourselves of much where we do not bring Him into even the least of the things that perish: “Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

Hence the cloak that the apostle left with Carpus at Troas is not left for an uninspired note. It forms a direct part of this solemn Epistle, written for all times. God led His servant to direct Timothy to bring it, when he came. Winter was approaching, and the cloak would be needed. It is good for our souls to believe that God takes a personal interest even in so small a matter. Where God is left out, even saints become a prey to personal vanity or worldly fashion.

But Timothy was to bring also the “books”, “especially the parchments.” The latter were probably not yet written upon: as being valuable material and suited to transmit more permanently, we cannot doubt that the apostle destined “the parchments” for the edification of the saints and the glory of the Lord in an especial manner. “The books” may not have been inspired writings, and the indefinite language here used would rather imply the contrary. But they were not therefore devoid of interest to the apostle, even with death and the appearing of the Lord before his soul.

From fellow-labourers gone or sent away and from the desire to have Timothy with him, the apostle turns to an open adversary and to those who forsook him in his recent hour of need.

“Alexander, the coppersmith, did (lit., showed) many evil things against me: the Lord will render to him according to his works; of whom be thou ware also, for he exceedingly withstood our words. At my first defence no one took my part, but all deserted me: may it not be laid to their account. But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, that through me the proclamation might be fully made, and all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of a lion’s mouth. The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve for His heavenly kingdom; to Whom [be] the glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen.” (vers. 14-18).

We may profitably notice the different form which evil takes in the several adversaries of the apostle. Phygellus and Hermogenes were prominent in personal disaffection (2 Tim. 1:15). Among those who, in Asia, turned away from Paul, Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17) have a far darker character, for in their case profane folly wrought, and this, advancing to greater impiety. They were teachers, it would appear, but not of God. “Their words”, said the apostle, “will spread as a gangrene.” The character of their error was the destructive fable that the resurrection has taken place already, which, as it overthrew the faith of some, could not but falsify the walk and testimony of all led astray by it. But even as to these, he does not deal with the same solemnity as John applies in his second Epistle to those who denied the person of Christ; for this demands the strongest reprobation of the Christian heart, as nothing

else ought. Of Demas (2 Tim. 4:10) we have seen enough already. The smith, Alexander, appears rather in the character of an active personal enemy of the apostle; and the more, because he seems to have been once in fellowship, which would give him no small advantage in mischief as in opportunities. The many evil things may not all have come to effect, but he did them and showed what he was in doing them.

Yet one cannot but feel that the critical text, which follows on the highest authority, is a great relief to the spirit: “the Lord will render to him according to his works.” That this verb should be turned into the optative, as in the common text, with a few uncials, most cursives, and many of the ecclesiastical writers, et al., one can understand; for man readily falls in with Jewish feeling. On the other hand, that the Lord will render him according to his works is a certain truth which every Christian conscience must feel; while it also is truth in special accordance with these pastoral Epistles which bring into distinctness the Lord’s appearing.

Against Alexander, Timothy also was to stand on his guard. It is clear, therefore, that he was an adversary still bent on evil to the saints and on opposition to the work. The gentleness of Timothy’s character might expose him to a mistaken kindness, where caution was imperatively required: “for”, says the apostle, “he exceedingly withstood our words.” More than the apostle had warned or entreated the evil-doer, and it may be Timothy himself among others.

The apostle now turns to his own great and recent trial at Rome, and the experience, bitter in many respects, but not without deep thanksgiving to the only One Who

never fails and Who gives us to know that all things work together for good to those who love God — to those that are called according to purpose. “At my first defence no one stood with me, but all deserted me: may it not be laid to their account!” (ver. 16). How keenly painful and humiliating this was to the apostle few can estimate, because so few make the least approach to him either in faith or in love. Not a soul on earth could feel as he felt what such failure was to the Lord Himself; which feeling gave, therefore, immense emphasis to his prayer, “May it not be imputed to them.” Psalm 105:13-15 makes evident what the Lord felt of old when His chosen ones went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people: “He suffered no man to do them wrong, yea, He reproved kings for their sake, saying, ‘Touch not Mine anointed and do My prophets no harm.’“ Now, He may let any or all men do them wrong, and for the present may reprove neither kings, nor subjects, nor serfs, when they scorn His anointed, and do His servants all the harm they can. Another day He will render to each according to his works. But what does He feel now? What in any place where His own betray and desert those He honours, and those who, for His sake, served them best in the hour of deepest need? May it not be laid to their charge!

Christ, however, never fails. So the apostle in verse 6 says, “But the Lord stood with me and gave me power.” This was more than strengthening him personally — “gave me power that through me the proclamation might be fully made, and all the Gentiles might hear.” Thus, to Christ’s glory, and in suffering for His sake, did the apostle bear witness of the truth, and the gospel, and the Lord, before the highest authorities that govern

the world. There was no fawning on great men, no patronage on the world's part. "And I was delivered out of a lion's mouth." Whether this alludes to the Emperor in particular, or to his representative in a more general way, men say they are not able to determine. The phrase clearly means rescued from most imminent or overwhelming danger.

But the apostle enlarges as he looks onward. "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work" — not necessarily out of a lion's mouth another day, but from all real evil, and "will preserve for His heavenly kingdom." Earth might yield still more of sorrow and of human persecution to the uttermost. For the apostle it was no question of flesh being saved, but of preservation for the Lord's heavenly kingdom, to Whom be the glory unto the ages of the ages. His and our every prayer may well end in a continual Hallelujah.

The apostle now salutes some that were dear to him, whose names are familiar to us throughout the inspired history.

"Salute Prisca and Aquila and the house of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left at Miletus sick. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus saluteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. The Lord [Jesus Christ be] with thy spirit. Grace be with you" (vers. 19-22).

"Salute Prisca and Aguila and the house of Onesiphorus." The two former were early associates, who remained faithful to the last. With them he associates the household of Onesiphorus, of whom he made mention at the close of the first chapter of this Epistle. The apostle deeply felt the identification of

Onesiphorus with his own circumstances as a prisoner: “He often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.” He was no longer in Rome, though perhaps not then at Ephesus, his usual dwelling place. When he was in Rome, he zealously sought out the apostle and found him. God prospers earnest love for Christ’s sake. It was indeed no other love than what the apostle had proved at Ephesus, and nobody knew better than Timothy what service had been rendered there. These dear saints now receive together the last salutation of the apostle, once more the prisoner of Christ.

“Erastus abode in Corinth; and Trophimus I left at Miletus sick.”55 There was no compulsion in regulating the labours of his fellow-ministers, even by an apostle. They were servants of the Lord, and none would have pressed this more solemnly than Paul, none have shrunk more than he from setting up a directive authority between the Lord and His servants. There were urgent calls elsewhere, no doubt; but Erastus abode at Corinth. It was he probably who was once treasurer of the city. Very different were the circumstances of Trophimus. Him the apostle left at Miletus sick. Miraculous power was never used by the apostle either for the relief of a brother or even for the progress of the work. Here, again, the Lord only was looked to, and His glory was the sole motive either for working miracles or for abstaining. So we find in the former Epistle the apostle prescribing to Timothy that he should be no longer a water-drinker, but use a little wine for his stomach’s sake and his often infirmities — just as any Christian friend might do at this present time, but without having the Spirit’s inspiration. This abides now in the written word. Certainly there was no miracle in Timothy’s case,

any more than in that of Trophimus. Miracles as a rule were signs for unbelievers, not a means of cure for the household of faith.

“Do thy diligence to come before winter” (ver. 21). In verse 9 he had said, “do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.” The repetition with the defining words, “before winter”, is surely not in vain. He had told Timothy in verse 13 to bring the cloak left at Troas with Carpus. But he no doubt would also warn Timothy to start before wintry weather would expose him to such a voyage as he himself had known (Acts 27); and he would give him the opportunity of helping Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also. The Spirit of God deigns to think of the most ordinary things of this life. The body is for the Lord, not merely the soul; and the Lord is for the body (1 Cor. 6:13). It is, therefore, not only moral debasement which should be far from the saint, but vanity and worldliness. On the other hand, the Lord condescends to think of that which might be a physical comfort. He has no pleasure in His servant shivering with cold; still less does true devotedness to the Master show itself in objects less plain, any more than in enduring vermin. Superstition revels in these wretched ways; scripture is not less sober than it is holy. Tradition is the pride of man and the sport of Satan.

“Eubulus saluteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren” (ver. 21).

The apostle was careful to promote love, and he sends the salutations of several by name, not of men only, but of a woman, as well as of the brethren generally. If a woman was put first; and with good reason, in verse 19,

a woman is, with no less wisdom, put last of those personally named in verse 21.

The fabulists have spared the first-named. The second it has been sought to identify with the vile friend of the vile epigrammatist Martial, in order to build up the romance of his subsequent conversion to Christianity, and marriage with Claudia, a supposed royal maiden of Britain, here assumed to be the Christian companion of the apostle! One admits the ingenuity of the mosaic formed out of small pieces of Martial 1:32; 4:13; 5:48; 6:58; 11:53; and of Tacitus Agric. 14, Ann. xii. 32, as well as of the dubious but possible inscription found at Chichester in 1723 (Horsley's Brit. Rom. p. 192, No. 76). But it will be noticed that in our verse they are not classed together as a pair: Linus separates them; and there is a Linus in the Spaniard's epigrams, as well as a Pudens, and a Claudia, and a Claudia Rufina whether identical or not. That Romanists should seize on the Linus here mentioned as bishop of Rome in apostolic times is natural. But it is certain that the earliest extant record of this is a sentence of Irenaeus which is palpably unfounded on a point far more important than the identity of Linus. Speaking of Peter and Paul, he says, θεμελιώσαντες οὖν καὶ οἰκοδομήσαντες οἱ μακάριοι ἀπόστολοι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, Λίνῳ τὴν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς λειτουργίαν ἐνεχείρισαν. Now it is demonstrable from scripture that the church in Rome cannot boast like Corinth of an apostolic foundation. There were converts thence from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10). The apostle Paul wrote to them an elaborate Epistle, wholly ignoring Peter's ministry there, much more his episcopate there for 25 years! according to the Chronicle of Eusebius. Paul himself is only known as a

prisoner in Rome, though he may have edified them after his discharge, before he was a second time in bonds and his martyrdom that followed. As for Peter, the apostolate of the circumcision was his allotted province (Gal. 2:7); and though we do hear of his unhappy visit to Antioch (Gal. 2:11), not a word is said of Rome. We only know of his labours outside Judaea in the east (1 Peter 5:13), not in the west. His Epistles are both addressed to the Christian Jews far east of Rome; whereunto if he went at all, it was to die for Christ, not to found the church there, still less to join Paul in ordaining Linus to its episcopate. Even the Benedictine editors confess and do not pretend to solve "difficultates quibus primorum Petri (!) successorum tum chronologia, tum successio,..." Eusebius and Theodoret make Linus to succeed after Peter's death; and so Baronius and de Tillemont. The Apostolical Constitutions (vii. 46), and Ruffinus (Praef. Clem. Recog.) hold that Linus was appointed bishop at an earlier date, while the apostles lived and moved elsewhere to the regions beyond; with which the words of Irenaeus are quite consistent; and so Bp. Pearson and Fleury the historian. Epiphanius adds to the confusion by the assertion that it was Clement who was ordained by Peter (!) for the Roman see, while he and Paul pursued their apostolic labours, as Tertullian had affirmed before him. All the differences of the ancients are far from being here stated. The only thing certain, when we leave scripture, is the uncertainty of human tradition.

As to those whose salutations appear in verse 21, their names were too common then to build on personally. One thing is sure, that they were Christians; those of whom Martial writes, were heathen, who never, as far as

we know, submitted to the righteousness of God. Martial came a young man to Rome only about two years before the apostle's death, and did not at first take up letters. His epigrams, as far as is known, were after, most of them long after, when his Pudens and Linus and Claudia were still heathen.

"All the brethren" are added by the apostle who would not forget the least, dear to Timothy as to himself. How strange, not to say unaccountable, that the great apostle Peter, if in Rome then as tradition boldly declares, should have no place, even where persons so little known have their names indelibly inscribed by grace! Can it be believed that Peter was at Rome with "our beloved brother Paul" at his first defence, when no one took his part, but all forsook him? or that Paul could have written, "only Luke is with me"? It is too plain that tradition is untrustworthy, and fails wholly in those moral elements which ever accompany the inspiration of God.

There is good and ancient evidence for "the Lord Jesus Christ" in the last verse (22), the Alexandrian and two cursives adding "Jesus" only. Though one or two cursives may omit the clause as a whole, there is no doubt of the "Lord", which, it may be noticed, is the prevailing designation throughout, save where special reasons have "Christ Jesus". But the prayer is that He be "with thy spirit". Such was the last inspired desire of the apostle for Timothy, with "grace be with you" for those in general with Timothy, which is marred in the Pesh. Syr.'s making Timothy the only object in the second wish as in the first. It is the expression of a heart that could feel fervently for all, yet knew how to make a difference.

53 This is quite compatible with the congregation choosing persons to dispense their gifts or bounty, as We see this is clearly of the Lord from Acts 6. Diaconal service is quite distinct from Christ's gifts for spiritual service-in the word. Where man gives, he is warranted in choosing, where the Lord gives, man's title is excluded, it is his obligation to receive. Such is the principle, which all scripture sustains. Again, the choice of elders in scripture was clearly apostolic directly (Acts 14:23) or by delegates (Titus 1:5), as being a question of government which the Lord vested in the apostles. Gifts descend from Christ immediately, even though some gifted men might also be elders or deacons; but the gifts themselves are wholly distinct from these charges. An apostle was in the highest sense both an organ of government, and a gift of the ascended Christ.

54 It is the aorist here and in both the exhortations that follow — the simple act when the occasion arises, not the constant duty as in νῆφε "be sober," which precedes.

55 The following remarks in Paley's Horae Paulinae, chap. xii. No. 1, may interest the reader: —

1. "In the twentieth verse of the fourth chapter [of 2 Tim.], St. Paul informs Timothy that 'Erastus abode at Corinth.' The form of expression implies that Erastus had staid behind at Corinth when St. Paul left it. But this could not be meant of any journey from Corinth which St. Paul took prior to his first imprisonment at Rome, for when Paul departed from Corinth, as related in the twentieth chapter of the Acts Timothy was with him. And this was the last time the apostle left Corinth before his coming to Rome; because he left it to proceed on his way to Jerusalem, soon after his arrival at which place

he was taken into custody, and continued in that custody till he was carried to Caesar's tribunal. There could be no need therefore to inform Timothy that Erastus staid behind at Corinth upon this occasion, because, if the fact was so, it must have been known to Timothy, who was present, as well as to St. Paul.

2. In the same verse our Epistle also states the following article 'Trophimus have I left at Miletus sick.' When St. Paul passed through Miletus on his way to Jerusalem, as related in Acts 20, Trophimus was not left behind, but accompanied him to that city. He was indeed the occasion of the uproar at Jerusalem, in consequence of which St. Paul was apprehended; for 'they had seen,' says the historian, 'before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.' This was evidently the last time of Paul's being at Miletus before his first imprisonment, for, as hath been said after his apprehension at Jerusalem, he remained in custody till he was taken to Rome.

In these two articles we have a journey referred to, which must have taken place subsequent to the conclusion of St. Luke's history, and of course after St. Pauls' liberation from his first imprisonment. The Epistle, therefore, which contains this reference, since it appears from other parts of it to have been written while St. Paul was a prisoner at Rome, proves that he had returned to that city again, and undergone there a second imprisonment."