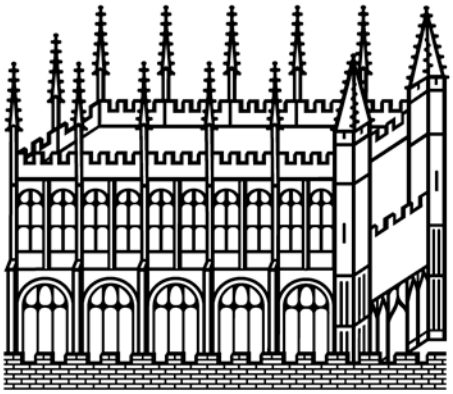

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AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

FIRST EPISTLE

TO

TIMOTHY

(WITH A TRANSLATION OF AN AMENDED TEXT)

BY

WILLIAM KELLY

SECOND EDITION REVISED

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Though commentaries of late years have not been wanting on the New Testament in general, and some of a more partial nature yet including the Pastoral Epistles, 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 for the most accurate conveyance of truth rather than mere rhetoric, as often 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 Authorised 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.

London, July 1889

CONTENTS

		PAGE
Translation of an Amended Text		vii.—xiii.
Introduction	... ...	1
CHAP. I.	1, 2	7
,,	3, 4	10
,,	5-7	13
,,	8-11	16
,,	12-17	26
,,	18-20	33
CHAP. II.	1-4	41
,,	5-7	49
,,	8-10	58
,,	11-15	66
CHAP. III.	1-7	75
,,	8-13	87
,,	14, 15	92
,,	16	100
CHAP. IV.	1-5	109
,,	6-10	118
,,	11-16	124
CHAP. V.	1-8	129
,,	9-16	138
,,	17, 18	144
,,	19	157
,,	20, 21	159
,,	22	162
,,	23	166
,,	24, 25	168
CHAP. VI.	1-5	171
,,	6-8	185
,,	9, 10	190
,,	11-16	198
,,	17-19	210
,,	20, 21	217

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

CHAPTER I

Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus according to command of God our Saviour and Christ Jesus our hope, [2]to Timothy genuine child in faith : grace, mercy, peace from God [the] Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. [3]Even as when setting out for Macedonia I besought thee to remain in Ephesus, that thou mightest charge some not to be strange teachers, [4]nor to pay heed to fables and endless genealogies, such as furnish questionings rather than God's dispensation that is in faith. [5]Now the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned ; [6]which [things] some, having missed, turned aside unto vain talk, [7]desiring to be law-teachers, not understanding either what they say, or whereof they affirm. [8]Now we know that the law [is] good if one use it lawfully, [9]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, [10]fornicators, sodomites, menstealers, liars, perjurers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound teaching, [11]according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I was entrusted. [12]I thank Him That strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that He counted me faithful, appointing [me] unto ministry, [13]though before I was a blasphemer and persecutor and doer of outrage. But I had mercy shown me because I did [it] ignorantly in unbelief; [14]and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love that is in Christ Jesus. [15]Faithful [is] the word and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. [16]But for this cause mercy was shown me that in me, [as] chief, Jesus Christ might display the whole longsuffering for an outline-sketch of those that

should believe on Him unto life eternal. [17]Now to Him who is King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible, only God, [be] honour and glory unto the ages of ages. Amen. [18]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, [19]holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust away made shipwreck concerning the faith; [20]of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

CHAPTER II

I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men, [2]for kings and all that are in high rank, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all piety and gravity. [3]For this [is] good and acceptable before our Saviour God, [4]Who desireth that all men should be saved and come unto full knowledge of truth. [5]For [there is] one God, one Mediator also of God and men, Christ Jesus a man, [6]Who gave Himself a ransom for all, the testimony in its own times, [7]to which I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I speak truth, I lie not), a teacher of Gentiles in faith and truth. [8]I wish then that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting; [9]in like manner also that women in seemly deportment adorn themselves with modesty and sobriety, not with braids and gold or pearls or costly apparel, [10]but, what becometh women professing godliness, by good works. [11]Let a woman in quietness learn in all subjection. [12]But to teach I permit not a woman, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness. [13]For Adam was first formed, then Eve; [14]and Adam was not deceived, but the woman quite deceived is become in transgression; [15]but she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety.

CHAPTER III

Faithful [is] the word: if anyone is eager for oversight,
he is desirous of a good work. 2The overseer [or bishop]
therefore must be irreproachable, husband of one wife,
temperate, sober, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach, 3not given
to wine, no striker, but gentle, not contentious, not fond of
money, 4one that ruleth well his own house, having
children in subjection, with all gravity, 5(but if one knoweth
not how to rule his own house, how shall he care for God's
assembly?) 6not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into
the devil's charge [or, judgment]. 7But he must also have
good testimony from those without, lest he fall into reproach
and a snare of the devil. 8Deacons likewise [must be] grave,
not doubled-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of
base gain, 9holding the mystery of the faith in a pure con-
science. 10And let these also be first proved, then let them
serve as deacons, being blameless. 11Women likewise [must
be] grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all
things. 12Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling
[their] children and their own houses well; 13for those that
have served well as deacons gain for themselves a good
degree, and great boldness in faith that is in Christ Jesus.
14These things write I to thee, hoping to come unto thee
rather quickly; 15But if I should tarry, that thou mayest
know how one ought to behave in God's house, seeing it is a
living God's assembly, pillar and ground-work of the truth.
16And confessedly great is the mystery of piety: He Who
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.

CHAPTER IV

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, [2]by hypocrisy of legend-mongers, branded in their own conscience, [3]forbidding to marry, [bidding] to abstain from meats which God created for reception with thanksgiving by those faithful and fully acquainted with the truth. [4]Because every creature of God [is] good, and nothing to be rejected when received with thanksgiving, [5]for it is sanctified through God's word and intercession. [6]Setting these things before the brethren, thou wilt be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith and the good teaching which thou hast followed up. [7]But the profane and old-womanish fables refuse, and exercise thyself unto piety; [8]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. [9]The word [is] faithful and worthy of all acceptance; [10]for unto this end we labour and suffer reproach, because we have our hope set on a living God Who is Saviour of all men, especially of faithful [men]. [11]These things charge and teach. [12]Let none despise thy youth, but be a pattern of the faithful in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. [13]Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. [14]Neglect not the gift [that is] in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with [the] laying on of the hands of the elderhood. [15]Bestow care on these things; be wholly in them; that thy progress may be manifest to all. [16]Take heed to thyself and the teaching; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt save thyself and those that hear thee.

CHAPTER V

Reprimand not an elder, but exhort [him] as father, younger men as brethren, [2]elder women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity. [3]Honour widows that are widows indeed; [4]but if any widow hath children or descendants, let them learn first to shew piety toward their own house and render requital to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. [5]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. [6]But she that devoteth herself to pleasure is dead while living. [7]And these things charge that they may be irreproachable. [8]But if one doth not provide for his own and especially his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. [9]Let a widow be enrolled not less than sixty years old, wife of one man, [10]witnessed of in good works, if she reared children, if she entertained strangers, if she washed saints' feet, if she relieved afflicted [persons], if she followed up every good work. [11]But younger widows refuse; for when they wax wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, [12]having as accusation that they slighted their first faith. [13]And withal they learn also [to be] idle, going about the houses; and not only idle but also tattlers and busybodies, speaking things that are not fitting. [14]I wish therefore that the younger marry, bear children, rule the house, give none occasion to the adversary for railing; [15]for already have some turned aside after Satan. [16]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. [17]Let the elders that preside well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour

in word and teaching. 18For the scripture saith, An ox when treading out corn thou shalt not muzzle, and, Worthy [is] the workman of his hire. 19Against an elder receive not an accusation except at [the mouth of] two or three witnesses. 20Those that sin, convict before all, that the rest also may have fear. 21I 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. 22Lay hands quickly on no one, neither be a partaker in others' sins; keep thyself pure. 23Be no longer a water-drinker, but use a little wine on account of thy stomach and thy frequent illnesses. 24Of some men the sins are openly manifest, going before unto judgment, and some also they follow after; 25and likewise also the good works are openly manifest, and those that are otherwise cannot be hid.

CHAPTER VI

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. 2And they 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. 3If any one teach differently, and accede not to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is according to piety, 4he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but sick about questionings and word-disputes, out of which cometh envy, strife, revilings, evil suspicions, 5wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that piety is gain. 6But piety with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world; because neither can we carry anything out. 8But having food and covering we shall be therewith satisfied. 9But those that wish to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many unwise and hurtful

lusts, such as sink men into destruction and perdition. [10]For a root of all evils is the love of money, which some eagerly seeking were led astray from the faith and pierced themselves through with many pains. [11]But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, piety, faith, love, endurance, meekness of spirit. [12]Combat the good combat of faith; lay hold on the life eternal whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. [13]I charge [thee] in the sight of the God That keepeth all things alive, and Christ Jesus That witnessed before Pontius Pilate the good confession, [14]that thou keep the commandment spotless, irreproachable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; [15]which in its own times the blessed and only Potentate shall show, the King of those that reign and Lord of those that exercise lordship; [16]Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable, Whom none of men saw nor can see; to Whom [be] honour and might eternal. Amen. [17]Those rich in the present age charge not to be highminded, nor to set their hope on uncertainty of riches, but on the God That affordeth us all things richly for enjoyment; [18]to do good, to be rich in good works, to be liberal in distributing, ready to communicate, [19]laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, that they may lay hold on the real life. [20]O Timothy, keep the deposit, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the falsely-named knowledge, [21]in professing which some missed the mark concerning the faith. Grace [be] with you.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY



INTRODUCTION

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 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 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, 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 the Saviour's dishonour. For the gifts are distributed in the one body, and the elders or overseers 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 state?), He 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 no change has ever since passed over Him, nor can be, whilst the work of gathering the church is in hand.

But it is very and sadly different with the church, as His word warned that so it 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 and even Peter in a measure in the very earliest days.

And these Pastoral Epistles let us into the confidential communications that passed between the wise master-builder and his associates. For government supposes the evils and disorders which need to be checked or exposed, and shews 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.

CHAPTER I

"Paul, apostle of Christ * Jesus according to command † of God our Saviour and Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy genuine child in faith: grace, mercy, peace from ‡ God [the] Father and Christ Jesus our Lord" (vers. 1, 2).

The character of the Epistle accounts for the 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 it was 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 relation to all mankind. Without this, church government ever tends to

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

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

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

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, He 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 here employed 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 be saved.

Thus, if there be command flowing from divine authority (and what is there of good without it? See John xii. 50; xiv. 31), there is His character of love toward man which flows from the depths of divine grace, sovereign and full, and hence 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 there are far worse now) 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 dispensation* 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.

* 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, Colinæus, Beza, and Elzevir.

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 early did the love of the marvellous work 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 O.T., 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, occupation for the restless mind which knows not the truth—alas! which 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 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 "commandment" here 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 ver. 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 even "command" there is in relation with God, not as Judge according to law, but as our Saviour in mercy. It is well accordingly to adhere to the strict expression in ver. 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 connexion 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, &c.

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. iii. 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 xv. 9), in virtue of obeying the truth unto unfeigned brotherly kindness, that we may love one another out of a pure heart fervently; and so it is through the word of God, but it is the word that is evangelised, not the law, but the gospel contrasted with it.

Those whom the apostle characterises were Judaising 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. xiii. 10 identify the "charge" here with the "law" after all? The very reverse is proved by it; for the Christian, in the new nature which characterises 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 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 dogmatise. 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 useth 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, menstealers, liars, perjurers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine, 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, &c? 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. v. 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 godlily, in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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 confidence in His love day by day.

Entirely is it not only admitted but insisted on, 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. 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. This is 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. 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 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 writes in Gal. v., 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 apostle's 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, and evil man-ward; thirdly,

impiety and positive profanity; fourthly, insolent violence towards parents, without going so far as killing. Compare Exod. xxi. 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 shew 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 or 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 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. For it is the gospel of God's glory, not "the glorious gospel," as the Geneva Version led the way unhappily for the Authorised, 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 antagon-

istic 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.

Such is the gospel which the apostle (here and in Tit. i. 3) says "was" entrusted to him; as in Gal. ii. 7 he says it was and is, the abiding state, and not the fact only which now sufficed. The Authorised Version alone of English versions is accurate in this.

The gospel with which the apostle was entrusted gives occasion to the words that follow down to the end of ver. 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 the 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 thanksgiving, 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. 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.

*"I thank him that strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that he counted me faithful, appointing me unto ministry, though † 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, Jesus 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, only ‡ 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

* Most copies, none first-class, add "And" as in Text. Rec.

† The article in the best MSS. goes with πρότερον which forbids the rendering "him who" or "me who" as with the common text.

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

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 no 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 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 sufferings for Christ. The Lord did indeed account him faithful, and this from the day of his conversion, an elect vessel (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, but 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.

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 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. i. 23-25). Who but "Christ Jesus our Lord" would have felt, thought, acted thus toward either? 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-centered 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 life-long errand of His own matchless mercy. No doubt he was ignorant, and unbelief was the root of it; and it 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 only knew the law. And so he can commend to others with the deepest feeling his own compressed summary of the gospel: "Faithful is the word amd 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. The 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 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 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 Authorised Version is here inaccurate; and so is any commentator that carps at Bp. Middleton's just and necessary correction. The article really goes with θεός "God," binding together all between as descriptive. If ἀφθάρτῳ κ.τ.λ. were in immediate concord with τῷ βασιλεῖ, they could not be anarthrous.

The "charge" here clearly connects itself with vers. 3 and 5, which refer to the same thing, not to 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 Hymenæus 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), 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 chap. iv. 14, compared with 2 Tim. i. 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 emphasise unduly the force of the preposition. The English Authorised 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 to 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 Hymenæus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may be taught not to blaspheme."

This is not ecclesiastical disciple, 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. v. 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. 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 high or heavenly principle brought down to low and earthly practice. "For also Christ, our passover, was sacrificed for us; wherefore 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 con-

demned 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. v., 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 there 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 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 nerve speaks of apart from an apostle's power. Those who have Christ, That 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. v. it is no less obvious than momentous, if indeed we are Christ's.

CHAPTER II

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. *For 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 the ground on which the apostle insists upon a spirit of peace on the one hand and 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

* The authority for omitting γάρ "for" is small but ancient—ℵA17 67corr. Sah. Memph. Cyr. All others accept it.

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 the 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 to-day 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 here is the latter. Let us seek to walk in both.

The Authorised Version wrongly connects "first of all" with the making supplications, &c., as both the Syriac, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Estius, Bengel, &c. 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 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 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 (cxlix. 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 or 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 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 to 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." 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. v.). 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; and 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 a broad and weighty statement of divine truth.

"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. xliii.).

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." 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

baptised of John in the Jordan. There, as the Holy Spirit decended 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-begotton 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 need 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. 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, 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 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 Christ Jesus is Mediator, but there it is "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, as also 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 not true 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 true 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, &c.? The Protestant bodies are doubtless less gross in their standards of doctrine; but the present state of Anglicanism shews 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 it 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 assume a fresh honour to the race.

Thoroughly in keeping with the large character of the Epistle, it is said that He "gave Himself a ransom for all." It is not special counsels, which cannot fail of accomplishment, as in Ephesians v., where Christ, it is said, loved the church, or assembly, and gave Himself up for it; and so the apostle 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 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, 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, 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 the 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 emphasises 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.

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, gracious interest about men with God, guided by competent wisdom, power, and authority from Him Who appointed him to the testimony.

"I will then that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting; in like manner also that * women 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 gracious acquiescence but active wish or will. It is positive apostolic

* 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 predicted of them, but they (persons of that sex) are called on ndividually to please the Lord by heeding His servant's word.

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 1 Cor. xiv. Only there the assembly is prominent which had been shown in chapter xii. to be formed by the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. Here the ruling of the apostle is more general, as marked by

"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 Lord * 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. xviii. 20 shews: 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. But Christianity, while it supposes 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,

* 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.

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. 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 that "it is far-fetched and irrelevant to the context to find in the 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, until the habits which sprang up at a later 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, 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 form is apt to destroy, especially when the form is based on tradition opposed to scripture.

"In like manner that women also 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, δι' ἔργων ἀγαθῶν "by means of good works," not here καλῶν (honourable, right, fair) as in Matt. v. 16; Gal. vi. 9; 1 Thess. v. 21; but ἀγαθός as in Gal. vi. 10; 1 Thess. v. 15, of which we have an instance in Dorcas (Acts ix. 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, to find its intelligence all wrong in the end. 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 teach *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 quite† 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. xi., whence he had deduced that the man is woman's head, and that

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

† The best MSS. sustain ἐξαπατηθεῖσα for ἀπατηθεῖσα in Text. Rec.

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. xiv. 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 loop-hole. The word "speak," say they, means only to talk familiarly or chatter. This is wholly untrue. It is the regular word for giving utterance, as may be seen in 1 Pet. iv. 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 anyone 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 somtimes 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 viii.), 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 simpleheartedness 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 xvi. pays no passing honour to many a sister, from Phœbe who served the church at

Cenchreæ, 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 opened their house, wherever they went, 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. 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. v. 14.)

The next words have suffered not a little through speculation. Some have yielded to Wells, Hammond, Kidder, Doddridge, Macknight, &c., and endeavoured to invest them with a direct reference to the Incarnation. But there is no sufficient reason for any such thought. The Authorised 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

characteristic a 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 σωθήσεται here, 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 σωθήσεται purposely for its higher meaning, and the construction of the sentence is precisely as ref. 1 Cor. [iii. 15]." Now we may well agree with him that Chrysostom's interpreting τεκνογονία 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 (iv. 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, 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 widespreading 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.

CHAPTER III

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 is here instructed in that which was desirable for each. 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 gift 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. iv. 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. xii; *δόματα*, Eph. iv.); 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 authorised 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 in scripture; but, whatever else may or must go, scripture cannot be broken.

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. x.; 1 Pet. ii.; 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. iv.), 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. 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," &c. (Rom. xii.).

The Protestant mistake is the confusion of gifts with offices or charges. * 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,

* Some try to eke the error out by the argument that "presbyter" is priest writ large. Very likely the English word is etymologically due to that Anglicised 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.

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 the 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 shews 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 any one 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,* 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

* 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 Tit. i. 7.

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 Authorised Version of Acts xx. 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 two latter 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 xiv. 23; xv; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. v. 17; Tit. i. might be readily 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."

The formula 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 (i. 15) and third (iv. 9) occasion, 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 (ii. 11), or in that to Titus (iii. 8).

It is a question of government; and faithful

the saying: whoever is eager for oversight desires a good or honourable work. Moral qualities, not gifts, are the requisite; and 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, κρίμα). "Condemnation" is too strong an expression and not the sense intended. The allusion appears to be to the remarkable passage in Ezekiel xxviii. 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 has nothing of course to do with creature vanity or pride, occupied with its 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 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 vi., xxi.) 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 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 stedfastly 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, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be husbands of one wife, conducting their children and their

own 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" (1 Cor. iv. 1), 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 only at most 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, 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 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 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 Wyclif to the Authorised 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, 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 now 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 their 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 i.—xi., xl.—xlviii.

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 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. 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. iii. 9-16. Compare also 2 Cor. vi. 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. vi. 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. ii. 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, and in direct contrast with 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. What 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 them never forget it.

Further, it is characterised as "pillar" and "groundwork," or support, of the truth. Christ is the truth, and so is the written word, as well as the Spirit. They 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. iii. 2, 3), if they could not read a letter of the scriptures. Alas! how great the ruin, 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 all before God 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 judge oneself as well as the departure, 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 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 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 its responsible witness, and 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 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. xi., 2 Thess. ii., and of many other warnings) that the ancient people were broken-off branches, that the now favoured Gentile might be graffed 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 the practice of every day.

"And confessedly great is the mystery of godliness: He Who* 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. 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

* 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 ℵ C F G &c. and almost all the ancient Vv.), rather than Θεος, "God," as in most copies followed by the Text. Rec.

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 Authorised Version which follows editions formed on the more modern copies. But weigh well the better attested reading, and you may soon 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 i. it is written, "The Word became flesh," where it had been carefully laid down before that "the Word was God," as well as "with God," in the beginning before He made anything in the universe created by Him.

1. Not only is it 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 to 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 sent 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." * He was as truly man as any; but His state was, as that of no other, characterised absolutely by the Spirit of God, from the beginning right through life and death, in uninterrupted energy of holiness and

* It is well known that some have thought that ἐν πνεύματι (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, any one 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. v. 3, xxvi. 41, xxvii. 50, Mark ii. 8, viii. 12, xiv. 38, Luke x. 21 (in the true text), John xi. 33, xiii. 21, xix. 30, Acts (xviii. 5,) xix. 21, xx. 22, &c. 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 πνεῦμα with or without

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. Compare Rom. i. 4, 1 Pet. iii. 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 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.

such prepositions as, ἐκ, ἐν, διά, κατά, does express as regularly the state or power of the Holy Spirit characterising men, in contrast with mere nature, often of course with ἅγιον which I do not cite, but also without; as Matt. xii. 28, xxii. 43, John iii. 5, iv. 23, 24, Rom. viii. 4, 9, 13, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 13, vii. 40, xii. 13, 2 Cor. iii. 18, Gal. iii. 3, iv. 29, v. 5, 16, 18, 25 (twice), &c. 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. iv. 1, xii. 31, Mark i, 10, 12, Luke ii. 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.

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 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 it 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, 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—"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 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 describing the essential difference in this sphere from that which prophecy held out and God will make good in the age to come, when every eye shall see the Son of man, and a dominion be given Him, and glory, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; and this dominion an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away (as the old empires did), and His kingdom that which 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. xi. 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 another has admirably remarked, He went up in righteousness. The work given Him to do He had 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; that 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 xiii.). 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 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. He that emptied Himself to become a servant was in Himself God and Lord. The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand.

CHAPTER IV

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, 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 legend-mongers, branded in their own conscience, forbidding to marry, [bidding]* 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. iii., 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

* This is a case of what the grammarians call Zeugma, where another verb is implied by the context, as in chap. ii. 12 of this Epistle.

(compare end of Rom. i.), though with the semblance and the responsibility of God's final revelation of grace and truth in Christ. Still less is it the frightful apostasy of 2 Thess. ii., 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 characterises 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 characterised by light; the evil with the body and characterised 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 principle 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 are 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 legend-mongers who were the medium. This shews 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 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 shewed 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 chap. vii. of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. 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 a little 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 any wise forsake thee."

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 ἔντευξις is here translated "intercession," in order to keep up its speciality in accordance with its sense elsewhere as in chap. ii. 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 the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. And all things are of God Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ.

Thence the apostle turns to a more precise application and, at the close, to what is yet more strictly personal.

"Setting these things before the brethren, thou wilt be a good servant of Christ Jesus,* 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

* 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.

of all acceptance; for unto this end we * labour and * suffer 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;

* "Both" is not represented in the oldest copies, nor in any ancient versions, contrary to text. Rec.—But ἀγωνιζόμεθα "we strive," or "combat," is supported by ℵpm ACFgrGgrK and eight cursives against the rest which have ὀνειδιζόμεθα as in Text. Rec.

—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 he had 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 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 characterises 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 an attraction for the heart and mind of man, 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, 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 Gos-

pels! 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 "exercise thyself unto piety." Service of Christ is admirable; but no greater danger if piety be neglected personally. This is of prime moment to 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. The apostle had therefore transferred the exhortation and applied it to himself for their sakes, 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. ix. the figure 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 for a little, but piety is useful for all things, having promise of life that now is 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, as training for the games called for habitual abstinence from every relaxing habit and daily practice toward the end in view. How little the latter! 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, can allow no reserve though all be grace, 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 practical scope of godliness is pre-eminent in these pastoral Epistles; not so much heavenly privilege or dispensational peculiarity, 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 repeated 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 men, specially 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, of Whom the apostle speaks, in His character of preserver of men, as Job speaks (chap. vii. 20). His 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 the Lord's dishonour overlook the constant daily and special care

of God in the ordinary matters of this life. Against such an error, verse 10 as well as the previous context would guard the soul. The highest privileges do not supersede or 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.

"These things charge and teach. Let none despise thy youth, but be a pattern of the faithful in word, in conduct, in love,* in faith, in purity. Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Neglect not the gift [that is] in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the elderhood.† Bestow care on these things; be wholly in them; that thy progress may be manifest to ‡ all. Take heed to thyself and the teaching; continue in them; for in doing

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

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

‡ The Text. Rec. adds "in" as in the margin of the Authorised Version. But "to" is the true reading. Did the Authorised Version owe it to the Vulgate?

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 as he was young, though he who despised 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, for 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. i. 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 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 xiii. 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 xv. 40, as perhaps often. In Timothy's case* through the apostle was given a gift, which he must not neglect. Use of means is of moment that the gift be turned to the best account; 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 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 con-

* Bengel is utterly wrong in construing "prophecy" with the elderhood, and in including Paul in that elderhood.

sistent; 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 safe-guarding all through.

CHAPTER V

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 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 characterise his bearing toward younger men also. As brethren would he 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 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 more opposed to Christ than an official position without the need of the full flow of love; so that speech as well as conduct 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." Never did the apostle exact so much as, if we may so say, from himself. *He* is the best example in dealing with Timothy, 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 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 loneliness and 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 the meaning of the real widow plain. She had no immediate relations to take care of her, and therefore was to be the more 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 meaning.

"But if any widow has children or descendants, let them learn first to shew piety to their own house and render requital to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God." 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 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 ony widowe hath children of sones, lerne sche first to gouerne hir hous," &c. Tyndale translated ἔκγονα "neves"; and so it is in the Protestant versions that followed down to the Authorised; 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 therefore, but only an antiquated usage in the common translation, which seems best replaced by "descendants." The Rhemish Version, as usual, cleaves to the error of the Vulgate: "let her learne first to rule her owne house" &c. 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 χήρα or widow who is to be cared for, but οἱ πρόγονοι, the progenitors.

Only the Geneva Version among the English 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 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." 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." 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 realise 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 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 good* works, if she reared children, if she entertained strangers, if she washed saints' feet, if she relieved afflicted [persons], if she followed up every good* 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

* These words are not the same. The first (καλός) means good in the sense of comely, fair, honourable; the second (ἀγαθός) answers to good in the shape of benevolent acts.

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 organised, still less, ordained, class of widows, known as it is to have existed afterwards. There is first an age sufficiently advanced for the list, irrespective of any dis-

abling 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 ii. 36, 37, though it has no bearing on 1 Tim iii. 2, nor consequently derives any 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 xiii.—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. 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 or of 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 inferior motives 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 busy-bodies, 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 is to be warned and kept by grace.

Just as in 1 Cor. vii. while the apostle tells us what his judgment is, he lays not down all in the way of commandment. 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."

It seems singular that the English Versions since Tyndale should 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. xix. 11, 12, and in 1 Cor. vii. 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 of Christendom's folly. Presuming to do better, they have fallen notoriously 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 (ℵACFGP &c. with some ancient versions and Fathers), is so decided as to sway the chief modern critics, the Revisers, &c.; 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 scripture? That a believing man *or* woman should be appealed to on the behalf of such a needy connexion is very intelligible; and the text which exhibits this is given by DKL 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 a 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, &c. Men's notions got cleared of gross superstition, but church truth was the less learnt, 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 chap. 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. xii.; 1 Cor. xii.; Eph. iv., 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.

The two might be united, doubtless, in the same person. But eldership was a local charge, which needed the authority of an apostle, or adequate person acting definitely under apostolic commission, to make the desired choice of fitting men. This is clearly shown in Acts xiv. 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 vi. of "the seven," whom the saints at large did select and the apostles appointed over the business of the tables. The reason of this 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. 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 xv. 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 as 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 the 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 beyond our power and title. There were many assemblies of old which had not enjoyed the intervention of an apostle to this end, and 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.

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 sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Rom. xii. 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, &c., in their midst. Neither order nor doctrine therefore need fail for want of elders. Base is the spirit that despised an elder. It 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 to-day, and for ever!

Similar is the lesson of 1 Cor. xvi. 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, 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 to-day.

Gal. vi. 6 proves that the duty of the saints

toward one "that teacheth" is not dependent on elders. Of Eph. iv. 11, 12 enough has been said for our present purpose; and Phil. i. 1 compared with 14—17 suffices to shew that the fullest order consists with the freest preaching, and the apostle's joy triumphant even where motives were sadly mixed. Col. ii. 19 is not silent on the joints and bands that knit together the body and so contribute to growth. It is in 1 Thess. v. 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" * 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 inter-

* There are cases where τιμή means price (as Matt. xxvii. 6, 9: Acts iv. 34; v. 2, 3; vii. 16; xix. 19; 1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23); but these are all in the New Testament. Extend it to "maintenance," in 1 Tim. vi. 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.

pretation begets and fosters pseudo-criticism. Thus even so ripe a scholar and able a reasoner as Bp. Bilson, * under the influence of a foregone conclusion, would resolve the participles with the article in ver. 17, like the participle without it in ver. 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 Authorised 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

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

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 it 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 elder-ship is wholly distinct. "Honour" is the right version and sense, not "maintenance" or "price" though it often means so, as we have seen, 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 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. But it was important here 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. ix.) though the latter may labour without, the former within. Indeed the same scripture (Deut. xxv. 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. There is a difference in the order, as well as in the word for "muzzle," of the two, κημόω [BDFG] in 1 Cor. being the more technical, φιμόω in 1 Tim. 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. Possibly from its cast. The workman [is] worthy of his "hire," or "wages," may be proverbial; but the apostle quotes it expressly as "the *scripture*." Whence did he draw it? From the Gospel of Luke, chap. x. 7; for so

it stands there to the letter, not in Matt. x. 10 where the Lord declares the workman worthy "of his food."* 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 (iii. 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

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

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 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 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] * two or three witnesses" (ver. 19). The principle of the law for

* 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 Authorised 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 it literally, which would be ἐνώπιον, ἔμπροσθεν, or ἀπέναντι according to the shade or

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, &c., 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 recognised 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

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. x. 28, it is the dative (not genitive as here), and hence with a slight increase of force, 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. vi. 1), ἐπί might well bear the sense of "in presence of," but hardly with "witnesses." "To" Titus well gives the sense in 2 Cor. vii. 14.

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.

* "Those 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 *τοὺς ἁμαρτάνοντας*

* Lachmann and Alford in brackets insert *δέ*, "But," with AD, some Latin copies, Gothic, &c. : but all other MSS. and Vv. reject.

(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 Authorised 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 (iv. 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, 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. xi. 10. Reference to any angels save those that kept their own first or original estate would be here altogether incongruous.

It may be well also to notice that the Authorised 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 Authorised Version, not "preference" as in the Revised Version's margin) is the true counterpart.

We now come to an exhortation which has been pressed improperly, I doubt not, into the interpretation of ver. 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 ver. 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 ver. 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 connexion, 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 vi.) 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 ii.) was not encouraged, and that Peter's word to our Lord (Matt. xvi. 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 it?

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 them. 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 xiii.). 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 recognised as most honoured servants of the Lord. Compare Acts ix., xi., Gal. i., 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 if it 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 he then 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 V. 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 ver. 23: "Be no longer a water-drinker, but use a little wine on account of thy stomach and thy frequent illnesses." * This appears to be a parenthetic statement of touching consideration for the

* 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.

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 similiarly 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 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 dispised 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 vii. 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 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 vers. 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 tradition however prevalent; and Christ is the only way.

CHAPTER VI

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 license, 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, 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. 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. xxiii.). It was not however in this regard to his social position merely, but still more religiously, that the law 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 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 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 it can only be truly in 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 it may through adhering to the Vulgate. All the older English seem to me to have failed, as well as the Authorised 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 the general duty of such follows. 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, &c., 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 impli-

cation 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 Griesbach, Scholz, Ellicott and the Revised Version. It is better with Alford, Bloomfield, &c., 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 accede* 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

* 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.

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 the Truth.

Here too there is no excuse on the score of abstruse thought or 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 vaulting 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 as 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 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 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 it 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 cometh envy, strife, revilings (or blasphemies), wicked suspicions, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness 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; for Christ is the object, not self veiled under deceptive appearances only the more loathsome to God, which therefore break out ere long into confusion and every evil work.

The last clause of ver. 5 in the common text and the Authorised Version is rejected by all critics as destitute of adequate authority, though the Syrr. &c. favour the insertion. It seems like an answer to the last clause of 2 Tim. iii. 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 the First Epistle interrupts that connexion 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 exposed. It is really to turn Christ's name to the account of present and worldly interests; an abuse of grace, an abandonment of truth, save in profession, and

a taking forethought for the flesh in order to its lusts: 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 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. iv. 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 by the apostle in 1 Cor. vii. 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 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 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 One Who does not and cannot fail in His gracious consideration of every need, difficulty, and danger, all naked and laid bare to His eyes with Whom we have to do. With piety "contentment" * is the fruit of knowing His love and assurance

* 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. ix. 8 legitimate, but here inconsistent with the scope.

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 me?" 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 only men of faith act on. "For nothing brought we 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 which prevailed in the West, "[it is]

true" appears; and so it substantially stands in the Vulgate, Gothic, &c.

Among the Greek early writers as in several late uncials and the mass of cursives, "[it is] manifest" is the word ("known" in the Syrr. being perhaps fairly equivalent). The oldest authorities do not allow καί or ἀλλά for ὅτι, but give what is here translated, as the text; 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 i. 21; an anciently expressed, sentiment, and as simple as sure; but piety with "contentment," alone makes its weight felt, or forms a walk in accordance with the truth.

"But having food and covering we shall be therewith content" (ver. 8). The words translated food and covering are both in the plural which may indicate the variety in either 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. vi. 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 allowed 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 with difficulty enter 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 the Gentiles seek after. 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." 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 will be also 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 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!" 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 which are the worst danger, though thereby the path is made more difficult; but the faith that counts them the Lord's, not our own, and therefore seeks only to be faithful as a steward, is according to His mind and blessed in doing it. It is the will or purpose that is so wrong and to be dreaded most.

To fall into temptation is quite different from being tempted. It 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, as we have within. 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"* goes yet farther 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 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 recognised among the confessors of Christ. The more we may know and possess,

* Not a few MSS. (three of them uncials), versions, &c., add "of the devil:" but this is superfluous if not narrow, no doubt due to chap. iii. 7.

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 hypocrite. 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 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 the poor from day to day, what is over and above godly use, 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.

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. 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. v. 5 where a covetous person is styled an idolater, as in Col. iii. 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 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, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, meekness of spirit.* Combat the good combat of faith; lay hold on the life eternal whereunto thou wast † called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. I charge [thee] ‡ in the sight of God that preserveth § all things, 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 shew, 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

* The older reading πραϋπάθειαν seems stronger than the ordinary πραοτήτα, meekness.

† καί "also" only in some inferior witnesses.

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

§ Authorities are divided between two words that are like, the Sinaitic with the less weighty witnesses supporting the Text. Rec., but ADFGP the critical text.

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 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 only seek 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. xv. 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 Authorised 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 connexion, as he does towards the close of his second letter. "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, and needs to, reckon.

Besides, there is One no longer seen Whom faith looks to with assurance for, not consolation only but, 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 demoralisation of compromise, that dire and corrupting pest for the mouth and heart when evils thicken 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 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." 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 came out the overwhelming fact 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 Cæsar'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 here no doubt "the 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 license every now and then of apologising 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, and 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 in ver. 14, never

confounded with His "presence" (παρουσία) or "coming": the one 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 modified* otherwise) presenting our hope in all the fulness of divine grace. It will greatly help the Christian student to search the words and contrast their connexions 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

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

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 connexion here, not only as introducing His "appearing" but as following it; "which in its own times He shall shew, 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. iv. 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. But here again we see how responsibility brings in the "day," &c., 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 there kept invariably distinct, though occasionally, but rarely, both may be stated together.

We may notice that even our Lord Himself is brought forward here 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 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." But it will be in the appearing of our Lord that God will shew 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 shew our Lord's appearing in its own due times, not merely to 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 highminded nor to set their hope on uncertainty of riches, but on a * God That

* "Living" is here added by inferior authorities (and so Text. Rec.), which favour ἐν also, rather than ἐπί.

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 the real * life" (vers. 17—19).

As our Lord designated wealth "the mammon of unrighteousness," in the same spirit are the wealthy here characterised 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 is there 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. i. 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"

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

(2 Pet. iii). Certainly riches toward God consist neither in lavishing on oneself nor 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 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 might 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 He would have them sacrifice the present in view of the future, counting that not their own but His, and therefore with all freedom and cheerfulness as 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"; what do they feel at the walk of one who can truly say, "To me to live is Christ?"

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 moralised in vain, not that his words did not sound wise and grand, but that the 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-aggrandising 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. iv.). The ungrudging and bountiful Giver of all loves a heart that responds to His grace, as far from legality as from license.

But He looks also for activity in good on the part of the godly rich, as He is unwearied in good Himself (Acts xiv. 17). Hence follows the call "to do good, to be rich in good works." There is an important shade between the two although it is not easy to express the difference but 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) abounding in fair, upright works, comely in themselves: relatively, and 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. 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 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 xvi. 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 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. So the apostle bids us in nothing be anxious; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known unto God.

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 so 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 specu-

lations 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 deposit" here, as in 2 Tim. i. 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 ministered to; for grace would vouchsafe to all an unerring standard. This the church, the assembly, is not, nor in the nature of things

* 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 ἡ χάρις μεθ' ὑμῶν without question of σοῦ. Those with him if not all the saints at large are in view.

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—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." All must be false where the true state of man is unfelt, and consequently the real character and intervention of God because of that state 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 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 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, righteous-

ness, and hence 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 every-day 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 of that word which, our Lord declares, shall judge him at the last day. Thus, in criticising 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.



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