

TALKS TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

TIMOTHY

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I TIMOTHY.

I trust to write to the extent that the Lord may allow me on the epistles of Paul to Timothy. I write thus because I cannot do the active work that I did, and I fully expect to leave something undone. But I think the reader will agree with me that it will be a great privilege if the Lord will allow me to do this till the call home, or till He come. His service has been such a delight to me for over fifty-eight years that I, like every believer, trust that the Lord will not pension me off whilst He can use me. When we cannot be actively useful, whilst life and intelligence remain, we are comforted by the hymn which reminds us that "There is nothing left but prayer and heaven." Epaphras reminds us that prayer is a mighty work.

As usual, I turn to my Bible, in which I have put down many thoughts which come to me from reading, hearing, and meditation, and, I may also add, from speaking. With others I have found that

in seeking to open up the Word I have many times got off the platform with thoughts that I did not have when I got on. Like others, I have regarded these as my wages and have thanked the Lord for them. I do not claim these to be original thoughts, for I have found that the Lord gives the same thoughts to others.

I pray, Blessed God and Saviour, that I may be led to write the truth and to exalt Christ. I certainly will write the truth as I understand it, and may every reader accept only that which they see to be of Thy mind. Amen.

Chapter I.

Verse 1. "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Saviour, and Christ Jesus our hope."

Here we read that Paul was called to the Apostleship by the commandment of God our Saviour and Christ Jesus. In Acts ix. 15 we clearly see that the Lord said to Ananias that He had chosen Paul. In Acts xiii. 2 the Holy Ghost said, "Separate unto Me Barnabas and Saul."

I can only read into this that the triune God is our Saviour. We must

look at this frequently, as we have seen in John that there is the eternal Father, the eternal Son, and the eternal Spirit, yet we note that when it is the incarnate Christ it is the Triune God that He calls Father.

Yet perhaps all our lives we have regarded the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and, I think, rightly so. Zechariah xiii. 7 says, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts.' We must not get away from the balance of truth, otherwise we may want to bring in angels, Mary, and the Saints, as many do.

In chapter i. Luke tells us that He was Son of God. When the Lord claimed this the Jews were right when they said that He made Himself equal to God. Yet they were wrong when they accounted it blasphemy.

How true it is that Jesus Christ is our hope! This is the Christ, God incarnate, Very God, and He became Very man.

Verse 2. "Unto Timothy, my true child in Faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

I have a note in my Bible as to Jesus Christ our hope. It says : " The Christian's outlook is towards that which is to come, the fruition of our hope is yet future, yet God does not intend us to forget what He is to His people now. We have His precious sympathy, His true and tender love, His effectual intercession, His mighty support, His guardian care, His continual mercy, His daily, hourly guidance. All these things are great present realities."

We must not be so exclusively occupied with the future that we miss what is the Lord's mind for us to-day.

He is the hope of Israel ; He is also the hope of the Gentiles. Haggai ii. 7. Note that it is not the glorious events which are to happen, nor the crown, nor the throne, blessed as these will be, but Himself.

It has been said that we are selfish to look for His coming for us rather than His coming with us, for His glory and kingdom is then. We believe that we are more to Him than the throne or glory, and we should be able to say, " Lord, Thou art more to us than the crowning day that shall follow."

“Unto Timothy, my true child in Faith.”

The word used here for “true” means genuine, sincere. It is certain that the apostle’s love and admiration for Timothy was such that he treated him as a son. Some think that he was probably used of God in his conversion.

If this was so, I certainly think that his grandmother and his mother were also used of God, though here the word used suggests his character as a child of God.

However, if Paul was so used, that would not mean that he was Father Paul. If Timothy called him so, it would be a distinct act of disobedience to the command of the Lord. I have been told by some that I am their father in the faith, but they never meant more than that the Lord used me in bringing them to Christ. I cannot understand any Christian allowing himself to be so called.

“Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This has been mentioned in so many epistles, with the exception of “mercy.” We find it in Jude. Mercy can only be

needed when in danger, whether within or without.

Verse 3. "As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine."

We must look at this verse carefully, and take care that we do not give it a meaning more or less than the intended one.

Here we find the apostle Paul who was used of God to found these churches. He, returning to Ephesus with Timothy, finds that these churches have allowed men to introduce things contrary to the truth. As the apostle Paul knew that the churches of Macedonia needed his care, he leaves Timothy behind in the place of authority to put a stop to it.

We can readily see that such a course is necessary for any Assembly, but we must not come to any conclusion till we have prayerfully considered the whole of the charge. To me it is obvious that Timothy was not given any power beyond what is contained in the charge. To exceed it would mean lordship in the Assembly, which the apostle Peter condemns. See I Peter v. 3.

The apostle selected Timothy because he knew none like him. He tells Timothy to commit it to faithful men, and gives a full-size portrait of the sort of man wanted.

Verse 4. "Neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, the which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith ; so do I now."

The first thing Timothy is called upon to do is to advise them not to discuss "fables and endless genealogies, which minister questionings." This brings before us that which our Lord referred to in Matthew xv. 3-9, when He spake of influence of the tradition of the elders. I gather, by the books I have read, that there is good reason for such scriptures as this. I Tim. i. 4.

The early Church would readily understand the allusion, for there slowly developed that which was known as "the law of the lip" or oral law which was passed on by memory or by secret rolls till it became known as the Mishna ; I have read that the Mishna was said to be "wine," and the scriptures "water." This, in the second century, was committed to writing by Rabbi

Jehudi. Then there came a compliment to it, called the Gemara ; these combined became known as the Talmud.

Our Lord said that they made the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition.

We must not think that this is a thing of the past, for the Roman Church, and, I think, the Greek Church also, are full of fables. Such books as the Lives of the Saints, The Curé of Ars, etc., fully confirm this. I can only speak as I find. I have not known a Romanist who meditates upon the Word day and night, so the Word of God to them becomes of none effect.

If my reading has been correct, Philo, who had filled the Jewish schools with wild allegorical interpretations of the law, by judaising teachers introduced them into the church. I think we get the traces of a terrible conflict from each of the writers of the epistles.

Jude tells us that these men crept into the church. Peter tells us that they were introduced to bring in damnable heresies. Paul, in Galatians ii. 4, says that they were introduced privily to bring us into bondage.

I write thus because our only path of

safety is to meditate upon the Word of God day and night, relying on the Holy Ghost as the real teacher, the real Vicar of Christ.

Paul's epistle to the Galatians is a big conflict against Judaism ; so is John's letters to the seven churches. It constantly appears in mostly all the epistles. To take up this question would fill a volume. As I am writing to boys and girls of any age, it will be enough to point out that this serious danger is here, and for them to note the scriptures that deal with it. It is so serious that I have read that a writer says, " Judaism was the cradle of Christianity, and Judaism very nearly became its grave."

As we look at the worship in many of our so-called churches, we see there many things that are neither Christian nor Jewish, but pagan.

We have to be on the alert when we meet with those who love to talk about symbols. To use the language of the apostle Peter on another subject, I say, " This one thing remember," that all the symbols in the Bible were given by the Holy Ghost, through the men whom He used to write the books. He now dwells within each believer to

make known to each of us as quickly as we can receive it, God's mind about them. The red flag is when men introduce symbols that are not found therein.

If we are satisfied with the scriptures, why want more? The apostle gives us a safe test, when we come against such. We have but to ask if this will build us up in our faith. This will also keep us from wild interpretations of the scripture itself.

The word "So do I now," has been inserted, because it is thought the apostle must have forgotten to put it in, as it is necessary to complete the scripture.

This argument appears to me to be weak. Paul exhorts Timothy to do these things; I think that those who read the Word of God know it also. There is no hope for those who do not read their Bible. I must admit that I look very narrowly at any insertion.

Verse 5. "But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience and faith unfeigned."

Here we see that Timothy is reminded practically from the first that he was to keep the purpose of the charge, which is a godly assembly filled with love. We also must, in our own Assembly,

ever remember these things, chief of which is "love out of a pure heart." The word used here is "katharos" which I think should be translated "clean." Matthew v. 8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God"; the word there is "katharos." I look upon katharos as a basic thing. This I have come to think is obtained at the Cross of Christ, and it admits of no degree. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." I John i. It is this that is the foundation of all I value. A cleansed heart is Christ's work for us. When I meet with "agnos" I can only read it as "pure." This is essential, and is the moral growth of a cleansed heart. But this admits of degrees, and it is the work of the Holy Ghost in us.

Conscience is a faculty of the mind which is to enable us to see that which is evil. Whilst we are walking rightly it does not trouble us; when our conscience reproves us it is perilous to disregard it. It is a negative thing. Nothing can be more evident than that there is a difference between a savage and an English Christian man. It is subject to training. A good conscience

is one that is well-washed by the Word. It is only the cleansing by the Word that can cleanse the conscience. An unfeigned faith means one that is practical and fruitful in good works.

Verse 6. "From which things some having swerved (M. missed the mark) have turned aside unto vain talking."

This is very solemn, but yet very helpful. Paul is writing to Timothy, whom he held in the highest esteem, none more so. All the same, He reminds him that some having swerved have turned aside to vain talking. "Vain talking" I understand to mean that it has no useful result for the object we are after. The apostle did not want Timothy to be so occupied with his work that he overlooked the real purpose of the Assembly. This word used for "swerved" means to miss the mark. The reason is that when our eye is taken off the bull's eye our aim becomes wide, and so we miss the mark.

Verse 7. Desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say nor whereof they confidently affirm.

Here we get the reason why such folly exists in those who appear to have

ability and could do something clever. It is the same old trouble ; they want to be *somebody*. They desire to be accredited teachers of the law.

Dear reader, our prayer should ever be that we may walk humbly with our God. It is the only safe path.

The description of them is that they are positive. Yet the apostle says that they know not what they are talking about.

Verse 8. “ But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.”

The word used for “ know ” is not the knowledge that we get by experience, but that which is imparted, in this case from God’s word. To understand in what sense the law is good we must turn to the scriptures that deal with it. Romans vii. covers an important aspect of the law, but does not exhaust it. The following two verses shew us how the law is dealt with here.

Verse 9. “ As knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane.”

The righteous man is a man who has seen that the law is a negative thing. “ Thou shalt not ” is the essence of it,

and he has learnt that he cannot keep it. He has been taught by the Holy Ghost that his only prospect of safety and peace is to come to Christ and accept the salvation on the ground of sovereign grace without any merit of his own.

Having been under the control of the Holy Ghost, who fills his heart with love and constant desires to exalt Christ, he soon discovers that "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." He now finds his delight in denying himself, when he is sure that it pleases the Lord. So he finds that the thunders of the law cannot disturb him, for Christ has died.

But those who have not come to Christ are taught that to break one law is sufficient to condemn. Even in the affairs of man this is evident. These laws for those mentioned are dealt with in the first four commandments; the following are dealt with in the last six.

"For murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers. For fornicators, for abusers of themselves with men, for men-stealers, for liars, for false swearers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound (Gr. healthful) doctrine" (or teaching). *Verse 10.*

So that, dear reader, we learn this most important fact, that unless our doctrine leads on to holy living it is not sound.

Verse 11. “According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”

God’s highest glory displays itself in sovereign grace, therefore it is the gospel of His grace which is the gospel of His glory.

Verse 12. “I thank Him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that He counted me faithful, appointing me to His service.”

Here we find the apostle Paul full of gratitude because the Lord had appointed him to His service. The reason why He did so was because He counted Paul faithful. It does seem to me very wise for us who know so little, to ponder this over a little time, for I think it explains the reason why some of us are disappointed in the Lord’s service. We have to be very careful not to enter into the Master’s service unless we accept the commission from Him. Unless we do, I am afraid that there will be but little fidelity, and it will take but little to make us weary.

Verse 13. “ Though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious ; howbeit I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

This verse tells us what he was before he got to Damascus. He was bent on killing or injuring the Lord’s people. We well remember the incident when Paul was struck down. He heard a voice saying, “ Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me ? ” And he said, “ Who art thou. Lord ? ” And He said, “ I am Jesus whom thou persecutest ; but rise and enter into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” Acts ix. 5, 6.

Here Paul got his first vision, that Christ and His people are one. Touch one of His and He is there. It should be equally true that to dishonour Christ in any way should bring us there.

This coloured Paul’s ministry, for as far as I remember, none taught the truth of the body, apart from Paul.

In I Cor. xii. we see the manifestation of its members on earth. Ephesians gives us the privileges of the body. Colossians the glories of the Head of the body.

Verse 15. “ Faithful is the saying,

and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

We have had the servant chosen because he was found faithful. Here we have a message that we can account faithful, and therefore worthy of all acceptation. We can receive it in the warmest possible way, without the slightest suspicion, because it is true. Note the message, "Christ came into the world to save sinners." Seeing that we have all sinned, what news could be better? And Paul said that among sinners, he was chief. The word is "first." I do not think that Paul intended to say that he was THE chief.

Personally, I should think that among the sons of Adam, I should be inclined to put Judas Iscariot as the worst. The Lord said that it would be better for that man if he had not been born.

It is equivalent, I think, to what the Lord said about the fate of those who make any of the little ones to stumble. Matthew xviii. This latter is what Saul sought to do.

Verse 16. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief (first) might Jesus Christ shew forth

all His longsuffering, for an ensample of them which should hereafter believe on Him unto eternal life."

What a wonderful picture we have here of the longsuffering of God ! We have seen that the sin above all things that arouses God's anger is to injure God's little ones. And yet, if it is done ignorantly and in unbelief, if he repents, God will forgive him. So Paul says that he is a sample for the encouragement of the sinner to trust in God's grace, that the blood will wash away our sins. As we often sing, "The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day ; and there may I, though vile as he wash all my sins away."

Should there be one reading this book who has not accepted Christ, note what it says, "Unto eternal life." What a wonderful gift available to a lost sinner ! What remorse will be theirs, when they think that it was offered without money or without price, and they spurned it.

Verse 17. "Now unto the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever Amen."

He closes this section with this fine doxology, but note that it is singular, the

only God, though there is God the Father, God the Son God the Holy Ghost ; He is One God.

“ Unto the King.” God intended ever to be King. He told Samuel that the people in wanting a King had not rejected Samuel but Himself. With grace He let His people have their own way, and we have had to pay for it. We however must not think that He vacated the throne. If we read our Bibles it is clearly taught that He has not. Then as we read history, or our papers, we have plenty of evidence that God overrules.

There is a sense that we see with the apostle Paul, that we should forget the things that are behind, and stretch forward to the things that are before. Phil. iii. 13,14.

But in connection with God's kingship, I love from time to time to look back right through my life, and note the way the King has controlled events in my life. It is wonderful ! And if we do this, our lives will be like a fairy tale.

He is King of the ages. The word “ *aiōn* ” I have mentioned before. Its root means *ai* aye ever ; *ōn* is the present participle of the verb to be, and means

“ being,” so that it means “ ever-being.” But like most words, however large the meaning, it gets lesser meanings, because a word cannot be larger than its object. When “ aiōn ” means the full extent of meaning, we have the article in front ; when a lesser meaning, no article. Here we have the article.

He is called the *King of the Ages* (M. see Gr.) What stability this gives to our thinking ! *Incorruptible*. I think this means in any way we can think. And *Invisible*. Christ has always declared the Father, i.e. the Triune God ; as the Word ; To us, as the incarnate Christ. This means that we must give Him honour and glory. How long for ? Here we get a strong form of eternity. (Gr.) Unto the ages of the ages. Note that the article is used both times with the word “ ages.” I think, dear reader, we can join the apostle Paul, and say “ Amen.”

Verse 18. “ This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare.”

There is no “ my ” here.

Here Paul commits this charge to

Timothy. How many similar charges Paul gave I do not know. He certainly gave one to Titus. These were to pass it on to faithful men.

The purpose of the charge was that unsound doctrine was not to be allowed, and that all should be taught to live godly and holy lives. These men had great authority within the charge.

I used to be taught, when I was a young man, that only apostles or their delegates could do this. As I got older I learned that this reasoning was absurd. The object was to keep the Assembly right, and though these men have gone home, the Assemblies are still here, and the need is just as great. As our experience grows and we get an inner experience of these Assemblies, we see what a wise provision God has made. Only we have to see that we take every possible care that we wait carefully on the Holy Ghost to select the right men. The same is true, if things are to be well, in all phases of life. The men must be of good character and have experience and ability. In our Nation, Councils, Army, Navy, workshops and schools, there is need. The necessity is universal. When I was an employer I found that

if I had but two on a certain work, I had to make one responsible. Personally I am quite sure that it is so, even in our Assemblies, but we must be careful that we get the men God desires. We shall see later, that Timothy had the approval of the presbytery. This I understand to be the "oversight" as we call it.

The test of an Assembly is the quality of its doctrine and the godly works of its members, and the assurance that Christ is exalted. Alas ! more or less we find failure everywhere.

I should like to digress here, for I feel that much trouble arises from laxity. Till the Lord comes, we shall always get saints that have but a feeble apprehension of what their Assembly stands for. But when this is manifested by them seeking to introduce something that the Assembly does not stand for, I find that the wisest course is to point out to them where they can get their heart's desire, for often these people have gifts. I have found that to seek to change their views makes them worse.

Personally I came to the brethren, so called, because the churches had got into a state of confusion, brought about, in my judgement, principally by a college-

trained ministry. Christ's method was that they companied with Him three years. He then gave them the Holy Ghost to dwell in them. For years I have considered that the essentials to qualify for His service are to walk with Him in the light of the word, and to be filled with the Holy Ghost. The disciples of the Lord, whether fishermen or not, all qualified.

As I get about the country, in Great Britain and America, I am filled with concern for those known as the open brethren, because I see that they are getting mixed. Many I have met will attend conventions, etc. where practically all that minister are college-trained clerics. I do not say that these do not do a good work, but I do say that it is not what the brethren stand for. I think, in some measure this is brought about by such societies as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Wolf Cubs, Crusaders, Covenanters, Young Life Campaigners, and I know not what. These societies get a branch in any Christian place, also many brethren have them ; so all are getting mixed. It is these thoughts that led me to take this book, so we will now return to I Tim. i. 18.

This charge was given to Timothy, "according to the prophecies which went before on thee."

When these prophecies were given, or how, as far as I know, we are not told. We can conjecture. I however think a churchman's conjecture would be different from mine, and possibly most would vary a little. I am inclined to think that it would not be at any formal ceremony such as baptism, or the coming into the church. In the early state of the church, before the canon of Scripture was completed, there were men to whom the Holy Ghost unexpectedly gave a special prophecy. Take Agabus as an example. We however can afford to wait, if it is not revealed.

We are told that we all may prophesy. To me it is clear that this cannot mean to add to the canon of Scripture. I think I have explained this elsewhere, but repetition is essential, for we forget so soon. In comparing the difference in the various gifts in the Scripture, I think prophecy means in the present day, that when the exhorter, evangelist or teacher, is speaking, we may notice at times that the effect is startling. The first time I noticed it was when we had a prayer-

meeting after the service, and one got up and said, " O God, Thou hast spoken to me this night." The speaker was greatly disturbed.

This, as far as I can see, rarely happens again to the same speaker, but God uses the message with its original power, and it truly becomes a " Thus saith the Lord " to the hearer. I know of no greater honour as a servant than to be thus used.

Personally, I think that this prophecy concerning Timothy must have been after the Agabus order, and that the purpose of it was that he should war the good warfare. I naturally look at this text with affection. As a young man of eighteen, I accepted Christ as my Saviour at a Congregational church. When the Pastor received me in, he gave to me the right hand of fellowship, and said to me ; " War a good warfare." The following verse explains this.

Verse 19. " Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith."

" Holding faith." The word has no article in front of it, so that it includes the things that characterise faith. This

is a searching test, as we see, if we meditate upon it, because we must have a good conscience in connection therewith.

I understand this to mean that in our inner life in all things pertaining to our faith, our conscience must be clear. We must not think for instance, that we can live as we please, because we profess faith in Christ. I think this is akin to the faith James tells us of. ii. 19. We can be sure that faith issuing forth in a godly life, alone will suit our living Lord. We must be careful here, because we are warned that some having swerved here, have made shipwreck of the faith, i.e. the thing believed. This being a nautical term, we can liken faith to ballast in the ship.

Verse 20. "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander ; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme."

Here Hymenaeus and Alexander are said to be among those whose faith did not produce a godly walk, but led them on to the extent that they made a shipwreck of the faith. It is probable that Hymenaeus is the same that we read of in the second epistle to Timothy. Alexander appears

to be a more common name, so that, personally, beyond thinking that he might be the coppersmith of the second epistle, I should not care to identify him.

We note the grave view the apostle took of their sin. For he said that he delivered them unto Satan. I think that this meant that he put them out of the church, for Satan is spoken of as the god of this world. God has called His church out of this sphere, so that a man is either in Satan's or God's kingdom. If a man is put out of the church, he is put back into the world, *i.e.*, Satan's province, the object being to teach him better.

In a country like England it has to be carefully done, or else they that do it may find themselves before a magistrate. We, however, must do it, but it is well to do it wisely.

Chapter II.

Verse 1. "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men."

The word here for "all" means "every man." It is not "all" collectively, (see Greek grammar). We note that there are three things to do; supplicate, pray, intercede, not forgetting

to be thankful for what is good in them. This makes good balance, and when we get home, thanksgiving will be the only one of the four left. I expect this is why we are told to abound in thanksgiving, for it is indeed good training for the future. By meditation each one of us seeks to get a clear notion as to where these three terms differ.

Verse 2. "For kings, and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity."

There must be a king in every country, and there must be men in places of authority, and all wise Christians will seek to uphold them in prayer. We may not call him King; it may be President, Dictator, or what you will. These may represent different forms of government, but they are in the highest place of authority.

Our welfare depends upon the moral character and ability of the men that rule, hence the wisdom of our prayers. Alas! it is often that we find it necessary to pray for deliverance from wicked and unreasonable men.

This appears to be stated in such a way that in the Assembly these prayers

should take the precedence, though I can see that to make them real we should give them a place in our private devotions. The purpose of all this is that we may live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.

As we read through the epistle, we shall see that there must be the personal conduct and the ordering of our affairs to accomplish this great purpose.

One very great advantage is that it stamps out amongst ourselves any desire for rebellion. I have read that Josephus wrote that the Jews refused to pray for Roman magistrates, hence their destruction. About five years after, Paul wrote this, yet the Christians had so obeyed this, that I have read that no Christian was implicated in the rebellion.

Verse 3. “ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.”

As those who wish to live that we may please our God and Saviour, *i.e.*, the Triune God, we are clearly taught that our life must be a prayerful one, and that to pray for those in authority must be an important feature in our prayers.

Verse 4. “ Who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth.”

We are distinctly told that this is God's will, therefore we should see to it that it is ours. Prayer for them is all we can do for them, followed by a life of kindness toward them.

Verse 5. "For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus."

We must ever remember that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, not only for others, but for the health of his own soul, also. Hence we see why God is pleased if we pray for all.

"There is one God," *i.e.*, the Triune God, "and one Mediator also between God and men," *i.e.*, the incarnate Christ.

Our health, as believers, is dependent upon our having sound doctrine. This verse is essential for this. It shews us that the Triune God has the will to save all men. This sweeps away the thought that we need Mary, Apostles or Saints to intercede for us. For they can do nothing for us in this direction. There is no need for their service as a mediator. If we look at this carefully, we shall see that He is sufficient, and that it must grieve Him to have either His will or ability doubted.

“Himself man, Christ Jesus.” To make English of it, “Himself” is inserted; it gives the Greek thought, I think. The A.V. has “the man, Christ Jesus”: “the” is inserted. To me, the Revised is the clearer, for it gives the reason why Christ is the one Mediator, because He is a man Himself.

It is essential for God to take upon Himself the nature and form of man, for many reasons that we can get by meditation strengthened by conversation. To be of value it must be a salvation by God, for we must be able to say with David “The Lord is my salvation.” He certainly needed His manhood to make it possible to die on the Cross. It sweeps away all errors as to His humanity, which appear to have been more prevalent in the early days of the Church. It clearly gives Christ His place, for no other religion, if I may use this word, uses Christ as a Mediator. This scripture says that He is the only one.

Verse 6. “Who gave Himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times.”

Here we see that the Lord Jesus gave Himself. In John x. 18 we remember that the Lord said, “I lay it down of

Myself; I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." We have also read, "God gave His only-begotten Son."

"Who gave Himself a ransom for all." He paid the ransom price when He died on the Tree. I Peter ii. 24 (R.V.) says, "Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the Tree." This text came to my mind, so I turned up the passage and noted that the margin has "or carried up . . . to the Tree." On account of its importance, I feel that I must state how I see it, as at my age I may not have the privilege to write on the epistles of Peter.

The effort to make Christ a bearer of sins during His life is incessant. The thought "carried up" appears to be based upon the preposition "an" in front of "anénegken," but with compound words, prepositions lose their prepositional value about half the times they are used, and become 'intensive.' As the word is in the first aorist, which denies a process, it must be complete in one act, so it would be intensive here. It is "*epi to zulon*"—on or upon the tree. To make it "carried up to the tree," I think it should be "*pros to*

zulon.” If Christ bore our sins during His life, I certainly think that would have prevented communion with His God. Hence, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, we get the bitter cry, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

It is certain, and Scripture is full of it, that the ransom-price was paid on the Cross, and that “without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin.”

“The testimony to be borne in its own times.” “To be borne” is inserted to make sense. I am not altogether clear that it does so to all, as I have heard some say that it means “in the future” so that there will be another chance. How they can twist it to mean that, I can never see. It is clear to me that the witness to be borne was given by the death of our Lord.

Verse 7. “Whereunto I was appointed a preacher (M. herald) and an apostle—I speak the truth, I lie not—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”

This makes the text clear. If any man preached the Cross it was the apostle Paul, and he clearly taught that the death on the Cross was for both Jew and

Gentile. To the Jew it must have been surprising that God had brought the Gentiles in, in equal privileges, and that he was to teach them in faith and truth.

Verse 8. "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing."

This reminds us of what the Lord told the woman of Samaria, that it would not be in this temple or that. What a privilege is ours! We can enter within the veil, which is our place of worship, wherever we are.

We can assemble. The context clearly shews it to be an Assembly, where the saints are gathered together, that was in the apostle's mind.

Our text points out three things. They are to pray lifting up holy hands. I cannot say that I do this, and neither do those I associate with. We have regarded this as an Eastern custom which fits in with flowing robes, etc. We can be sure that to please God our attitude must be reverent. We must avoid lolling about, with hands in the pocket, just as we should in the presence of an earthly king.

I think the main point is here, that our character must be holy. He must

have holy hands, *i.e.*, whatever he does must be honest. When I first went to America, I went twice to a very large town where there was but one meeting, and that a very small one, just a few in fellowship, with a congregation of about twenty to twenty-five. I went again to the same brother's house to stay about forty miles away. I asked if I was to go to the old place again this visit. They replied that the business character of the leading brother was such that they could not stay. I only wish I could say this was the only case I know. We shall be taught later how careful those that appoint such should be that they make a right choice. They are to be without wrath. A quick-tempered man should not be allowed to occupy a position that brings him in contact with others. He is a great divider. They are to be without disputing. This is a very great objection, as it makes a conversational Bible reading sometimes quite impossible, and this reading I have considered, next to the Breaking of Bread, the most important assembly a saint can attend.

It appears to me that a disputer is quite sure that he is right, and wants

to put the other right. It may be that he wants to score a victory. If there is no one in authority, it cannot be dealt with. Each can shew what his thought is, and then we can leave it to the Holy Ghost to put the wrong one right. I have found, more than once, that I have been the wrong one. The Holy Ghost is here to do this very thing. He can and does convince. I cannot say that I have seen it done by others successfully. If silenced, I find that they are of the same opinion still.

Verse 9. “In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety ; not with braided hair and gold or pearls, or costly raiment.”

Mr. Conybeare translates this, “ Likewise also ” which I think better, and all that “ *ōsautōs* ” requires. He quotes Chrysostom, who was a Greek and quotes, “ That women must pray ” or its equivalent. The context teaches me that men are to offer up the prayers publicly, but all are to pray, and that women should come adorned in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety ; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment ; “ but—which becometh women

professing godliness—through good works.”

In our modern times how often do some women dress or partly dress in anything but a modest manner. Women who profess godliness, to please God, must dress quietly and neatly. I think that even this would lose much of its value unless she is known to be kind. How dependent men and children are upon the kind hearts of the women.

Verse 11. “Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection.” The word translated in the R.V. “quietness” in A.V. is “silence.” I think R.V. is correct, “*ésuchia*.” The men in II Thess. ii. 13 are told to carry on their work in quietness. That cannot mean in silence.

The women are told here to learn in quietness, I do not think that this goes further than that in the Assembly they should be quiet and meek, and that their behaviour should be quite in accord with the judgement of the oversight. In I Cor. xiv. 15 the word “*sigao*” means silence. In the context it is clearly stated that they were not allowed to talk or ask questions, for “*laleo*” clearly means this. They were to ask

their questions at home, and not in the Assembly. We are told in verse 35. "It is shameful for a woman to speak in the Assembly." I think we have a sure guide, if led by the Holy Ghost, in the word "aischron" which is generally translated "filthy" and four times "shamefully," I do not know of a less meaning than this.

I understand by this that we are not to judge unless we think that their behaviour is "aischron," else we may do much harm.

Verse 12. "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness."

The word for "teach" here "did-askain" is the infinitive mood of "did-askalos," *i.e.*, the official teacher. The Lord, when called Master, was recognised as the Didaskalos, so that a woman was not allowed to officiate in the Assembly. For the sisters to take a woman's meeting, or to speak privately, I do not think was in the apostle's mind.

As to women preaching to the ungodly, I should not like to judge. I do not like a woman in a public position, but not having a scripture, I may have a bias.

Missionaries abroad make these questions difficult. However, if we are filled with the Holy Ghost, there will be no difficulty.

Verse 13. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve."

Here the apostle bases his argument on the beginning of things, *i.e.*, Adam and Eve. This reminds us that the Lord on the subject of marriage did the same, see Matthew xix. 4. "And He answered and said, 'Have ye not read that from the beginning, male and female, etc.'"

In this verse 13, we note that man's position is determined by priority. In I Cor. xi. 8, 9. "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man, for neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." Here the apostle reminds us of God's intention.

Whatever the question we may be considering, it is good, if we wish to get a good foundation, in order to understand it correctly, to turn to where it is first mentioned. This by learned Bible students is called the "law of first mention." If we ponder over this, we shall find that it makes a good general

principle, even on things outside of Scripture.

Verse 14. “ And Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression.”

Here we are reminded that in the fall it was the woman that was beguiled, but Adam was not, because he was not so easily deceived. He sinned because he wished to share her fate, whatever it may be. If we read carefully Genesis ii. we note the instructions God gave them. In Genesis iii. we note that Eve was carried away by her eyes and desires. The root of her trouble was that God's word was not ruling or controlling her life, for we see that she altered it, added to it, and left out what God had said, and so brought into the world all the sin and sorrow. I have seen for many years that this great trouble is maintained by those who do not allow the Word of God to rule and regulate their lives.

As I have observed the great difference in the lives of those who seek to do this and those who do not, I have been led to think that if all sought to do so, it would be much easier for all to do it. I am also assured that, in the absence of

Christ from this scene, the gospel is sufficient to protect us from all sorrows that can be prevented.

However, we believers can seek to do better, and are cheered by His great promise, "If I go away, I will come again." John xiv.

Verse 15. "But she shall be saved through the child-bearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety."

There are three ways I have come across in which this is read. The margin (R.V.) "her child-bearing" is taken by some to mean that if she continue in faith, love, holiness and sobriety, she shall be saved through her child bearing. I quite agree with those who think that the Greek does not admit of this construction. Neither is it true to fact, for many good Christian women die in giving birth to a child. It does admit of a doubt as to whether this is the intended meaning of those who inserted the marginal note.

I agree with those who believe that very great honour was intended to be placed upon women, and upon women only. Our salvation depends upon the Incarnation, the seed of the woman

promised in Genesis iii. 15, accomplished at Bethlehem more than nineteen hundred years ago.

We are shewn in Scripture that the incarnation is essential to the Christian faith, for a natural-born man could never have been fit to be the Lamb of God without spot or blemish.

There is a lesser sense in which this could be accepted. The woman is socially saved, not by seeking to occupy man's place in public positions, but by fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of motherhood. Good mothers are held in higher honour than anyone, and are loved by their families.

"If they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety." These are evidences of a true salvation.

Chapter III.

Verse 1. "Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

The A.V. has "true saying." There is no reason for making this a "true" saying ;; it would require a different word. This is the same as those rendered "faithful." The question has been raised :—Did Paul quote a well-known saying, or was it a word from God

through him? I think the latter, but it became a faithful saying, so that it became a well-known saying based upon authority. Some connect this with the end of the last chapter. It fits both. To do this, it would be better, I think, to translate it as "faithful is the word."

I feel sure that we all agree that each one of us should get to know to our own satisfaction how he gets the office. Is it an office?

We first take the apostleship. Remembering the law of first mention, we carefully read Acts i. 20-26. We read, "Let his office another take" (Greek overseership). They could not take his qualities, but they could take his position or office. Qualities are ruled out, for we cannot think either the apostles, or Matthias would want Matthias to take the qualities of Judas. The word is in the first aorist, passive voice, so that the volunteer is really ruled out by the passive. As the conditions were so restrictive, they saw that the apostleship was not permanent.

When it came to deacons, they were appointed when there was discord; the multitude of the disciples chose them,

in order that the apostles might appoint them, see Acts vi.

Here we have Timothy's appointment to the oversight. He was appointed by Paul, given great authority, which was confirmed by the presbytery or oversight. These terms are used indifferently, as we shall see as we proceed.

We look at the present day, and find that methods used are various. Perhaps they may all appear to answer at times, and there may be a fragment of truth in each, but alas ! we find every method fails at times.

When we look at this chapter before us, we get certain instructions which still leave points on which we are informed in other scriptures. All these instructions make us personally responsible for the decisions we make. This need not give us any fear as long as we know in this matter that we have honest and sincere hearts.

Personally, I cannot accept that these scriptures were for the apostles and their delegates. I feel quite sure that the apostle who wrote this quite knew the mind of the Lord. To me this scripture is for the instruction of the saints till the Lord come.

Though man may be occupied with the method, I cannot but feel that whilst walking honestly with the Lord in the light of His word, we shall be occupied with finding the man God requires. If we attend diligently to every feature of the instructions given here, and pray honestly for guidance, we shall get it, as far as possible.

That we have these instructions proves that these men were selected. No one would be accepted because he said that God had led him. I quite see by this text that if a man stretched out for the position, believing that God had laid it upon his heart to desire such a place, he would wait for the Lord to put him there.

Verse 2. "The bishop (overseer) therefore, must be without reproach."

Though the Greek has "*ton epi-skopon*"—the overseer, one of the uses of the article is that it points to the overseer as a class, so carries the thought of an overseer. Yet it retains the other uses of an article, because when a man is in the position, he is the overseer; he becomes the responsible man, responsible to the presbytery. The position of elder or presbyter points to his rank,

whereas "Overseer" points to his work or duty.

Therefore, the first thing that we have to see to is that he is without reproach, both as regards his rank and his duty. I do not think that here we are to understand its full extent of meaning, for the Lord only would then be suitable, but it must be one that man would find no fault with.

It appears to me, as I read the scripture, that the Lord is quite aware of this, and so retains His lordship over the overseer or presbytery, for there is only one Lord. The Word makes it clear that it is a serious offence for men to make themselves lords in God's heritage. Alas ! how sad it is for any man to seek to magnify himself, when his whole duty is to "magnify the Lord with me."

As I get older, the more important the Acts of the Apostles appears to me. We there see that all have to be filled with the Holy Ghost and must obey the Lord.

Alas ! in practical working, we find friction comes in, either as overseer over a position or as a member of the oversight, as we call the presbytery.

One feels one cannot walk with the Lord and go on with them. It appears to me that he should lay his position before them, and if they cannot agree he should quietly resign his position. When it is the oversight, this is more difficult, for to discharge him as a business man would with a foreman who did not suit him, cannot be done in an Assembly without running a grave risk of a division, which is one of the most serious things as far as their testimony without is concerned.

Alas ! many that have done well, change, and the work suffers, and trouble would arise if we were to dismiss him.

I, however, heard in a Christian boarding-house, a very interesting conversation between Wesleyans and Baptists, over their method of appointing their pastors. We do not have such in the sense that they mean, as "one-man-ministry" as it is termed by the brethren, is that which we cannot accept.

The Wesleyan is appointed for three years. If much liked, he can have another three years. If not liked, it is probably a year before it is found out, so that it is not worth troubling about. A little patience, and he is gone.

The Baptists, etc., admitted that that was a serious defect in their system, as if not satisfactory, it very often meant trouble. We brethren do not have that trouble, for if they did not preach that which we consider sound doctrine, or give cause for any other objection they are not invited again.

I have considered, after fifty-eight years experience in the wisdom of the oversight, that it would be better to ask an overseer of any part of the work to act only for a given period. At our place the most prominent overseer is asked for five years. He, however, has a certain work to see to. I think it would be wise to do so with each one, for experience has taught me that a place starts on orthodox lines, then, with a change, through death or removal, the place gets into a position that the promoters of the meeting would not have, and sometimes the one appointed changes.

Verse 2. “The husband of one wife.”

This instruction is one that can be read in different ways, and it will be well to look at each. However, as we proceed with the chapter, we shall see that it is clear that an overseer in the

church should be a married man. All the Jewish priests were to be married. Married life, where at all possible, is certainly God's intention. I have read that a celibate priesthood was introduced into the Roman Church about 1100 A.D. As I read the story with its result at the time, I was set against such power in a man. I could see that for those who have authority in any Assembly, marriage and family life put a very fine curb on the inordinate ambitions of the head of them. Personally, I cannot but feel that it was to remove this curb that they would not have a married priesthood.

This, I think, is the reason why we have convents where the vows are so stringent that the nuns are shut up in such seclusion that they are not allowed to have any communication with the outside world at all. I can see no reason for it but one, and though my own country allows it, I think it is a disgrace to any country that does not have them inspected by those who are not in connection with it, or who do not take such extreme vows. Honest people have nothing to fear from inspection. As I have come in con-

tact with missionaries from abroad, I can see why it should be one wife. A missionary told me that an African chief really was converted, but when he was told that he was to send all his wives adrift except one, he refused. A missionary with us now said that a chief agreed, but that two positively refused to leave him. They allowed him to be in the church, but to take no office. I asked what became of the others ; he said they had to do the best they could. Some were later married to others.

However, we can see what difficult problems missionaries are up against.

I have been told by other missionaries who were working where facilities for divorce were so easy that as there is little or no security they often dispense with the ceremony. When converted, they come to the church and find others there who have been wives or husbands as the case may be. They will not allow such to take office, nor, in some cases, to partake of the Lord's Supper.

All this comes about by disobeying God's word. Christ said that there was one reason that justified divorce ; namely, unfaithfulness to the contract. I under-

stand that the Roman church will not allow divorce at all. I can understand what trouble this would lead to, to quarrelling, even to murder. How necessary it is for the Lord to reign. I am sure that as a church, we should obey the scriptures, and it should not be difficult to do so, but when we remember the different views and methods of life lived by others, the divorce laws had better be left to the community, as long as they are not imposed on the church.

After fifty-eight years of church experience, I have no knowledge of this from experience, but I have heard of one or two, so that I can see that a wise oversight can practically avoid these troubles among its members. But when it has happened before conversion, it is awkward, though it can be dealt with. We ought to take in the worst of sinners, if the sin, whatever it is, is denounced at the time of conversion, or at the formal entry into the church.

Verse 2. "Temperate."

This is connected with wine. In English it would be the moderate or the middle course. I, however, question whether "nephalios" means this. The

lexicon (Bagsters) says "sober, temperate, abstinent in respect of wine." This is in accord with the balance of truth. We see in Scripture that there is a wine that cheers the heart of man. This is for temperate use, but there is a wine that we are not to touch or look at ; this we are to abstain from.

" Soberminded."

We must select one that is calm, who takes a sane view of things and guides his own affairs wisely. Many a good work is destroyed by a love of change. If success is granted, we should pursue it, and not try something else.

" Orderly."

As one gets experience of the meetings, what differences we find. A well-planned and arranged meeting is a pleasure to attend. The apostle taught this by practice. In I Cor. xi. 34, " And the rest will I set in order when I come." The word used here for " order " means " to make a precise arrangement." It is " diatasso." The preposition in front, " dia," by Bagster's lexicon, is taken in this way. He also taught by precept. I Cor. xiv. 40. " But let all things be done decently and in order."

The word for “decently” (eusché-monōs) is where we get our word “scheme” from, and “order” is arrangement, so that I agree with those who wish everything to be done in a decent and orderly way.

“Given to hospitality.”

This is a word used in two ways. He must be kind to strangers, and a lover of hospitality. I thank God that I have no need to explain this, for since I became one with the brethren, so-called, I have never had such an experience of true kindness and hospitality.

“Apt to teach.”

I remember, when converted at the age of eighteen, I came across someone who said that everyone has a gift. I searched myself, and could not discover one. I was then told that God would give me one if I asked for it. After weighing up the various gifts, I thought that I would like to be a teacher. I realised that I knew next to nothing, but the Lord came to my assistance. He said, “If thou teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?” So I applied to the Sunday School Superintendent. I soon found myself installed as a teacher, and with but little break

I kept to it till over seventy. I still keep in touch with it. I kept to it for such a long time because I soon found that very few of the best teachers are really understood by the boys or girls of any age, in the sense that John Bunyan meant in his long poem, "Advice to preachers."

We must be clear as to what we wish to be or do. I did not want to qualify myself to add to the knowledge of the learned. If one has a great gift, this must be a fine thing to be able to do. My main aim has been to interest all that I could in the Bible, in order that they would read it for themselves. I found that to do this I must speak simply. A great obstacle to me has been, alas, that I do not seem to be able to avoid altogether the use of long or unfamiliar words.

We must not think that we must get on a platform, or even take a class. One of the most useful teachers that I knew was one whose pupils were practically everyone he came in contact with. He avoided platforms or classes. Among his pupils were preachers, those that he met casually, and any boy or

girl. Wherever he was he looked out for a pupil. He became loved by all.

In verse two we have had but one negative statement; namely,

“The overseer must be without reproach.” In this verse we get several. It is very interesting to note the difference between the negative and the affirmative statements.

Verse 3. “No brawler.” The word here means as margin, “Not quarrelsome over wine.”

I have never personally met anyone quarrelsome over wine that maketh glad the heart of man. I cannot see how it could come about, though I would readily admit that unless temperate, any good thing would produce trouble of some kind. In my opinion it must mean the wine that we are told not to look at or touch. It goes down smooth enough, but at last stings like an adder.

“No striker.”

This means a brawler that takes the next step, and follows it up with a blow. I have many years ago met the brawler, but thankful I am that I have not met a striker among the saints. I have heard of it, but I think they must profess but not possess the grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ. As it is a negative it extends its predicate, so that it would include all sorts of blows. Sometimes the feelings can be so hurt that we might prefer a physical blow. This sort, alas, is often given through want of thought.

“ But gentle.”

This properly means “ suitable ” ; but this carries with it the meaning of fair, reasonable, gentle, mild, patient. If he did not have these qualities, I think we shall agree that he would not be suitable, for unless the oversight see as one, it means confusion. He is suitable because he has the esteem of all, and so generally carries his point.

“ Not contentious.”

These are the sort that if the oversight is not selected, are generally the ones that come to the front. They are firm believers that all should be led, which they feel sure that they are. These have a strong self-assertive side to their character. They will argue till all are weary, and will often adopt any measures to have their way. I can hardly tell of the number of meetings I have met ruined by such. I will tell you of one I heard about last week from America,

and another this week at home, in England.

At the first camp meeting I attended in America, I met a husband and wife who, the previous year had been put out of a very large Presbyterian church, or the sister had (his wife). She had a class of forty-five young ladies. When they came previously to this meeting, they heard of the coming of the Lord. They became firm believers in this, so she took it up in the class. She was told that she must leave; they could not have such teaching there, so she had to leave. Later, fifteen of these ladies asked her to have a class in her house. They lived in a very large town inland, and there was no Assembly. I had the privilege of being with them the first time they "broke Bread." I visited them several times, during six years. As the meeting grew I suggested that in addition to their offerings which they gave to the missionaries at home and abroad, they should set aside half their income to purchase a bit of ground. They got so full that they hired a good-sized place and began to develop. There came a letter to me last week which said that Diotrephes had got in, and

that they had got to leave. They wrote expressing a wish that some well-known brethren were there to advise them. The old ones were leaving, so I advised them to get back to their own house and not to ask anyone, for they were certain of the two and three. They were not to ask anyone but to wait for the Lord to send them. This week a number of brethren were going to build a large place from a brethren point of view ; we agreed to lend them the money allowed by law, from our trusts fund, I have heard that they will not want the money, as they cannot agree among themselves.

“ No lover of money.”

Note well this is distinctly a negative statement. This makes it searching, does it not ? The positive side is “ liberal,” so the dictionary says. It is not so searching on its positive side, is it ?

This has been dealt with before. That is because the word has so frequently dealt with it. Elsewhere it is dealt with at a different angle ; here it is that such a man should not be selected on the oversight.

It is a great honour to be entrusted with the welfare of the church. An

overseer, as he grows in experience, soon discovers the amount of time he can give to God in the faithful performance of his duty. Have we not all met some who have food and raiment and all reasonable comfort, yet who labour in their business to earn more. They get so occupied with their business, and it makes such demands upon their time, that the Lord's work is neglected.

We have to make more allowance for the man who is in the position of a servant. In all, we must be careful how we judge, but whether it is a servant who cannot attend, or whether it is because of his ambition to build up his own business that he is prevented, we are clearly taught here that the man is not to be selected.

Verse 4. "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity."

It is clear that verse two intended the overseer to be a married man. What better testimony can the church or the world have, than to see a well-ordered household! Further, this is a testimony that all have an opportunity of practising in our homes. Much depends upon the child-life of our homes.

We can see that the qualifications of an overseer are far more valuable than the office, and are open to all. There is no reason why we cannot all enter into the spirit of the office, but there is a very big reason why we should not assume its authority, till the oversight ask us to become one of them, for no sooner do you do so than it is clear that you would be a menace to the well-being of the Assembly.

So we see with pleasure that the sample of an overseer is an ideal father. A man who realised his responsibilities as a father would never willingly get so absorbed in business that he neglected his wife or family. The word used here means that he rules his own house, but its principal idea is "the one that is set before." The ideal father rules principally by example, and by the amiability of his character, and yet he is firm. I have thought for many years that when a nation, family or church feels that it is ruled, it is on the high road to trouble.

Verse 5. (But if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

This verse appeals to me as a reminder

to the oversight that when considering the appointment of an overseer the condition of his home-life must have due consideration. What can we expect of a man in office if his home-life is wrong?

Verse 6. "Not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

"Not a novice" (neophuton). One newly-planted,—recently converted—therefore without experience. This convert may be a rich man, or what is called an educated man. He cannot have had much experience in the way. Timothy was not an old man. He had, however, a big experience, and the apostle had a wonderful confidence in him which was well founded. It is a very fruitful experience when, like the apostle, we discover that we are not free from fault, and can say, "For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Romans vii. 18. As we get an experience of ourselves we soon discover that each of us has our faults, so that we realise that as a leader we must hide self, and so present Christ before them that they may increasingly get "to know the love of Christ which

passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." Eph. iii. 19.

As we read this scripture and meditate upon it, we see how essential it is for the oversight to be guided by the Holy Ghost in being able to select the right one. We can see how foolish it is to put anyone into such a position, if there is any evidence of his thinking that he is somebody, Satan sought to ascend up beyond the most high. Blessed God and Father, grant that each of Thine own, whether in office or not, may be enabled to hide self and exalt Christ.

Verse 7. "Moreover, he must have a good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

What we appear to have here is a position that the oversight may from time to time meet with. A man who has, in his unconverted days, made for himself an unenviable reputation, should not, on account of this, be placed in any position of authority till he has been proved. We can easily understand that this man may have been a brilliant man, or in a high position. This scripture would suggest to me that it is not a wise

risk to run, and that it is very unfair to place such a man in such a dangerous position.

Verse 8. “Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.”

I understand that a deacon is one who is in an official position but has not the oversight. I think the Sunday School illustrates this as well as anything. The superintendent is an overseer; the secretary, treasurer, and teachers, having an official position, are deacons. We have some to whom the oversight have given a special duty. These I regard as deacons. This is a simple and effective method of administration.

The oversight are to see that these are as doctrinally and morally sound as themselves.

They are not to be double-tongued. The dictionary says that properly this word means saying the same thing twice. This probably leads on to the intended meaning here, to say one thing and mean another. What can destroy any state or society more than to be careless of the truth? Unless we can depend on a man's word, nothing can be done. Speech

is one of the grandest gifts God has given us, and these worthless people destroy its value as far as they are concerned.

“ Not greedy of filthy lucre.”

I have read that this word translated here is not in the oldest or best manuscripts. What can the unlearned make of this? I have thought, as one that has no knowledge of manuscripts, that if any one would know about these things it would surely be the men who translated the Authorised and Revised versions, and that on such a question we could rest safely.

However, we can praise the Lord that when He left this scene, He sent the right Paraclete to our aid.

I feel sure that we shall all agree that we have the mind of the Lord if we fully believe that we should be free from being greedy of filthy lucre. I think a lover of money “ philarguron ” of verse 3, who may have got every penny of it honestly, delights in it for the selfish use of it, whereas “ aischrokerdies ” is one who gets its dishonestly, legally or morally. Judas is a good example of this.

Verse 9. "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

So we see that all these virtues must be seen in a stainless life as men view it. But beyond all this there must be the hidden life with Christ, as the power and motive of it all. The mystery of our faith is this secret life with Christ, and he is to hold this in a pure conscience. The word for "pure" here is not "agnos" as I should expect, but "katharos." I understand this to mean clean.

A cleansed conscience is a basic thing, due to the cleansing power of the Blood, see I John i. 7, whereas "agnos"—pure—is a progressive thing. Pure gold I understand to be gold with no alloy. None but Christ can answer to this. A believer is said to purify himself, if he is looking for the coming of the Lord. Personally, I cannot see that we can be absolutely pure till we lose our old nature, which we will do when we meet the Lord.

We can be sure that the believer who has a secret but a clear estimate of the atoning work of Christ will be as pure as it is possible to be, till he sees Him and becomes like Him.

Verse 10. "And let these also first be proved, then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless."

It is clear that there must be no undue haste in this matter. A deacon must be carefully proved.

Verse 11. "Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things."

The A.V. has "their wives"? Early expositors, such as Chrysostom, etc., regarded these as deaconesses. It is clear that there were deaconesses in the early church. If it alludes to these, it makes it clearer, for there were no lady overseers, whereas we find there were deaconesses. If it refers to wives, surely an overseer's wife should have these qualities. I think it would be a good thing, whether in office or not, if we all sought to have these qualities.

Verse 12. "Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well."

Here we see that the test for a good deacon is the same as for an overseer. He is to be a married man, and able to rule his own household.

Verse 13. "For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a

good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

When a work or position is taken up for God, if well and faithfully performed, it brings its own reward. We get a good standing. It gives us, in its performance, increased power for service and makes us bold in the faith.

Verse 14. "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly."

Verse 15. "But if I tarry long."

This word "tarry" by the context, seems here to have an extended meaning, which carries us far beyond Paul.

"That thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God."

It is very certain that one who has the oversight in an Assembly should have a clear notion as to what an Assembly should be in its meetings and private life, and it is equally clear that so should each member of the Assembly.

Before considering this text, I see that about twenty years ago I put this note in my Bible. "The Holy Ghost is more concerned about our behaviour than how to get to heaven."

I have no doubt that I meant the correct thing, but I did not express it

correctly. I now express it thus : My getting to heaven is an assured thing. The Holy Ghost, fifty-eight years ago, opened my eyes to see Christ dying on the Tree, bearing my sins in His own body. By His grace, I was led to accept Christ as my Saviour. I was born from above, so that as my salvation began with Christ, He is the author and, the Word adds, the finisher also. He Himself has told us that He is gone to prepare a place for us, so that where He is, there we may be also. John xiv. When talking a few years back about this point to a beloved brother in the Lord, he said to me, " You know, Knox, I never trouble about getting into heaven, for that is Christ's business to get me there, but I do trouble about my coming out. (Rev. xix.) For when we come out we are clothed with fine linen, which tells us of the righteous acts of the saints. If ever we are to glorify Christ before the world it will surely be then." Dear brother or sister, this is very important, is it not ? In a large measure it depends upon knowing how to behave ourselves in the church of God now. Shall we consider for a little this aspect of the truth ?

How ought we to behave in the Assembly? It is very important, for do we not read : " God is greatly to be feared in the Assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him." Psalm lxxxix. 7 (A.V.).

Perhaps the very first point is to be there. Never willingly stay away from the Meeting, because He knows the exact reason. The next point is to be punctual, for nothing can shew our respect for the appointment better than punctuality.

Did I hear some one say that I could not possibly go, if I had to be punctual? If this is true, it need not trouble you in the least, for the Lord knows the exact reason. In that event, get in quietly without disturbing others. Remember, better late than never, but better still, to be never late.

Alas, how sad it is in an Assembly of the saints to see any laughing and talking. They would not dream of doing it if it were an earthly king there.

This Assembly is said to be the Assembly or Church of the living God, *i.e.*, He that was dead, but who is now alive for evermore. This church is

viewed here in two ways, first, as a company of individuals, who are gathered together by the living God, also as a pillar and ground of the truth.

We must ever bear in mind the fact that the main aspect of the Church is that it is composed of those who are conscious in all their thinking that they belong to and have to do with the church of the living God. To no other view must we get away from this individual aspect. We must remember that before the flood, the dispensation clearly demonstrated this individual walk and subjection to the living God. Enoch was the best example given to us.

“pillar and ground of the truth.”

The pillar as column. Presently we are led on to see what this implies. In Galatians ii. 9 I think we may say that the apostles were regarded as pillars of the Church, but what charms me is the precious promise of the Lord in Rev. iii. 12. “He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple (Naos is the inner shrine) of my God, and he shall go out thence no more.” There is no likelihood of his sharing the fate of Jacinth and Boaz of the literal temple. *What an ambition to make our own!*

“ And ground (seat or basis) of the truth.” The margin has the word “ stay.” I do not personally see the idea of “ stay,” though I can see that this word is an ambiguous one, *i.e.*, with more than one meaning.

Without doubt, verse 16 clearly lays down the great truth that must be held if we are to consider ourselves a member of the true Church.

Verse 16. “ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.”

“ Without question.” The great fact of the church of God in this world, like a column or a firm foundation setting forth the glorious mystery pertaining to Christ which has never been revealed as it has been revealed since Pentecost. The more we meditate upon it, the more wonderful it is, and well repays the time we spend meditating upon it.

Some have considered that this verse is a quotation from a hymn sung in the early church. There are two or three other places where this is suggested. As we look at it in the Greek, it does seem as if it were so.

*He who was
Manifest in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit*

Seen of Angels
Preached among nations
Received up in glory.

“He who was.” The A.V. has “God.” “He” is a relative pronoun which, with the construction, suggests that it is a verse of a hymn. Its antecedent is the Living God, so that the Authorised is grammatically correct. I have read that the oldest manuscripts have it, as the R.V.

“Manifest in the flesh.” This clearly shows His pre-existence, and His incarnation.

“Justified in the Spirit.” By His resurrection.

“Seen of angels.” This, I think, refers to its general use. The incidents of the resurrection and of the ascension are sufficient for this, though the word is sometimes used for “messengers.”

“Preached among the nations.” Shewing the sphere of the message, not confined to the Jew.

“Received up in glory,” *i.e.*, the Ascension.

We see that the oversight of the church at Ephesus was committed to Timothy. Did this mean that the church was

infallible? See the letters to the seven churches. Ephesus was one of them.

Chapter IV.

Verse 1. “ But the Spirit saith expressly that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils ” (demons).

The apostle has been led in the main to set forth the character and manner of men that God has taught him were required for the oversight and for servants in His church.

As we read this chapter and the two following ones, we see how essential it is that we exercise ourselves to see that the instructions are carefully observed.

Blessed God and Father, we do pray Thee that the Holy Ghost may lay this upon our hearts, and that He may enable us by His grace to give heed to Thy word.

Here is a very strong statement. Notwithstanding the fact that it has been clearly laid down by the apostles, with full instructions, what men are desired for guides, yet there will be men that shall depart from the faith. The reason given is that instead of being led by the Holy Ghost to live according to

the word, these men would be led astray by evil spirits (demons). So the first great lesson that we are to learn from this is that the only path of safety for the believer is to keep himself, by the Holy Ghost, subject to the word.

Here we can see a clear indication that in the early church there were some led astray already by what were termed Judaising teachers; men led astray by evil spirits. Alas! in the church there are things that designing men can use to their own advantage; men that are hypocrites, men to whom the pure gospel of Christ is what they cannot endure.

Surely the gospel comes to men and women that are helpless and without strength. These realise that they are saved without merit of their own, by faith in the precious blood of Christ. These know that they must "cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils." Our hope is in God alone.

Verse 2. "Through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron."

These hypocrites cannot make much headway, till they can creep in or are introduced into the church to bring us

into bondage. They get into what is known as a position in the church, and give their authority to things that help them.

Verse 3. “ Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth.”

As we look back over the history of the Church, as it is called, we are in this verse introduced to two factors that these men have brought in with disastrous results. Forbidding to marry brings about the monastic system. How many men and women that generally have wealth have been induced to hand over their wealth to the Church (*i.e.*, to them) and shut themselves up?

As we have noted that marriage acted as an effective check in the case of overseers and deacons, so it does with an ordinary believer.

Apart from this, these get into houses and much wealth gets transferred from its natural and legitimate heirs, into the coffers of the church, so-called.

What can be clearer than the fact that God intended men and women to

marry and have children and bring them up in the fear of the Lord.

Verse 4. “For every creature of God is good; and nothing to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving.”

Here it is clear that there is to be no ecclesiastical prohibition of food. This does not mean that we can eat anything. We are guarded against such an idea as that by the condition on which we may eat, providing we are thankful for it. For an intelligent being to receive these providential blessings without giving thanks for them, appears to me base ingratitude, and I have an idea that if we really are thankful it helps to digest it. After a long life, I think that if a person eats to live and to keep fit, that shuts out feasting and fasting. I regard these as mutual; if we feast we have to fast or take purgatives; if we fast without feasting, we soon get run down. If our lives are really regulated by the word of God and in a prayerful spirit, *i.e.*, dependence on God, all must be well.

Verse 6. “If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister (deacon) of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith and

of good doctrine which thou hast followed until now."

Here is a clear statement as to what constitutes a good servant or deacon. Here are two unnatural things introduced by those of an ascetic mind into the Church. Though I use the word ascetic, I am afraid that at the back of the minds of the leaders it is to get people into their power, for more than one reason which will suggest itself if we note the direction they take. Ascetic, used as an adjective, applies to those who seclude themselves in various ways, and give themselves to devotions and the mortification of the body, etc.

Our Lord worked to instruct the common people. He sought to bless all He came into contact with, and saw that they understood Him. And so will all good servants ; they will follow their Lord.

However, we must be careful, for amongst men who would be considered as far from being ecclesiastics, we find they seek to control the Lord's Table and hedge it round, so that only a special few can attend it. What gives the right to the Table is birth, not education or light. If a man has

sufficient doctrine to be vitally connected to Christ by the Holy Ghost, he would be trusting in the work of Christ on the Tree for forgiveness of sins, guided by the word and indwelt by the Spirit. He is a child of God, and walking morally. I quite understand and appreciate any one refusing to break bread with those whom he believes are wrong in their method, but to refuse anyone who wishes to do it in the way he considers the right way, certainly does much harm. Even though they cannot enter into it intelligently, no parent worth the name would shut away from their table any of their own children who behaved themselves, however young, not even if they were mentally deficient.

The same spirit is seen in politics. A good citizen seeks to maintain law and liberty to all law-abiding citizens.

If a king, magistrate, dictator, or whatever name you will, wants his will or conception, and works it out by force or cunning, the nation becomes slaves, and the country is not worth living in, not if we had a palace. Better by far live as Diogenes in a tub, and be free.

Verse 7. "But refuse profane and old wives' fables."

There are those who think this refers to what the Lord called the tradition of the elders obtained from the Rabbis. These, I have read, subjected the word to a keen and profitless investigation, so that the word was given an unnatural interpretation, not altogether true. We have met with some who are ever seeking to bring out something startling from some of the writers that they have read.

Paul regarded all these, whether they accept the teaching of the ascetics or the learned conceptions of the Rabbis, in the same way. He speaks of them as profane or old wives' fables.

The word "profane" means not religious, and we in this day have to be careful to see that the current phrases, proverbs or maxims do not lead us astray.

Verse 7. "And exercise thyself unto godliness." Here is a large and extensive domain to cultivate. "Godliness," I understand to be, Godlikeness, which is right thinking, speaking, and doing, and can be ours according to habits formed. This we will see needs much exercise.

Verse 8. “For bodily exercise is profitable for a little (R.V. Mar.), but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.”

This is true. In a very large sense the Christian life even for this world is the only one worth having.

The trouble with bodily exercises (Gr., gymnastics) is that they are generally overdone. As a young man I got very friendly with a circus owner, so that I had professional training on the horizontal bar. The man, though but little over forty, dare not attempt much, as over-exercise had made him what he described as muscle-bound. I found that all sorts of troubles come upon those who are thus muscle-bound. Godliness, on the other hand, is profitable for soul and body, and spirit, and helps us in every phase of our life.

Some think that the apostle is referring to the mortification of the body as practised by these ascetics. If this is so, I certainly think it would be more like the intention of our Creator that we should keep our body fit.

Verse 9. “Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance.”

We have looked at the first part of this verse. We note that it is worthy of all acceptation (apodosis) which means that it is welcome, that we can receive it without any restraint. To get the intended meaning we must, I think, refresh our minds by reading chapter ii., verse 4.

Verse 10. “For to this end we labour and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe.”

What an incentive it is when we get to know the living God! Toil and wrestling become a delight to us. The thought that we may please Him is our delight. No idol or image, such as were in the Ephesian temple, or any other, can attract us now, for we know Him to be the Saviour of all men. As we read the word, we clearly see that some still clung to the Hebrew thought that the Messiah's work was confined to the chosen race and the proselytes that became Jews, whereas the offer is to every man. For God willeth that not any should perish. Some were like the —gnostics who taught that salvation belonged to the enlightened few.

There is no doubt that some who do

not like to accept the plain teaching of the word of God seek to get universalism from texts like this. These have and perhaps do not want the balance of truth, for if really saved themselves, they would clearly see that universalism is not scriptural.

However, it is important that we should be clear as to the extent of the ground that is covered by the fact that God is the Saviour of all men. We can be sure that if we meditate upon this and talk to our fellow-believers about it, the Holy Ghost can and will come to our assistance. We must understand the reason why, for the “specially of them that believe.”

Verse 11. “These things command and teach.”

“These things,” namely, that we should make it the aim of our life to be godly in our every-day life, in our homes, business, social intercourse, etc.

“Command,” or enjoin, tells us that the overseer must strongly emphasise this. “And teach” is important. Commands, without giving the reason why and the desirability of them, are likely to become irksome and disloyal.

Verse 12. "Let no man despise thy youth."

As far as I can find out, I should judge that Timothy was between thirty and forty years of age. This was probably considered rather young for such an important office. How was he to do it?

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity."

This is most important, especially for overseers and for those in office. All such should seek to teach principally by example. How can the members be expected to be blessed if our lives do not reflect the truth that the Assembly is gathered out to learn.

Clearly, if God is the Saviour of each member, it must surely be our object so to labour that each should reflect Christ. As I am writing to the boys and girls, I should like to suggest that now is the time to start yourself, for, till the Lord come, we from time to time have to take the place of those that are called home. The first point is "in word." These points are all in the dative case, which relates to the sphere and not to

any particular phase, so that the sphere means on the platform, in the class, in general conversation, in the home life, in fact, wherever words are necessary, we must seek to be a sample.

“In manner of life,” for this is clearly the meaning of the word used here. What a wide sphere this is ! It includes dress, our homes, as to whether we are polite to each other ; our meals, our recreations, our studies, etc.

“In love.” Turn to I Corinthians xiii., where the same word is used. We see that this is the key, for whatever we may have, if we fail here, all we have is worthless.

“In faith.” Let us remember that without faith it is impossible to please God.

“In purity.” This is very solemn, and should make us very careful, because I have noted that a believer may be very high in the opinion of others, but one act of indiscretion will spoil all that has gone before. In the authorised version, after “in love” it has “in spirit.” It is said that the oldest manuscripts do not have this.

However, dear reader, as we look at these five points, and note how important

it is that they may be found in us, as much of the success and happiness of our lives depends upon our having these qualities, shall we look up for a minute? Blessed God and Saviour, we do long to be what Thou hast saved us for. Grant, we pray Thee, that we may not hinder the Holy Ghost in His work for us. Amen.

I heard Mr. Henry Varley say, after a Bible reading, that he said to Moody before he began his life's work: "God is waiting to shew what He can do with a man who is fully consecrated to Him." Moody determined to be that man.

Verse 13. "Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching."

"Till I come." Paul evidently, if possible, hoped to see them again, however long his absence. Timothy was to give himself to three things: Reading. The word used here means reading aloud to others, to one or any possible number. I do not think this is confined to overseers. It must be a pleasure to God to hear His children reading His word, as that is the ground on which we have to build. At this time it would mean the Old Testament, and as much of the New as was written.

“To exhortation.” This word means “persuasion.” It is to induce unbelievers to accept Christ, and for believers to walk more closely to Him.

“To doctrine.” This is to see that the hearers understand the part read, and to do this effectively. I think it must be by what we call “expositional” teaching.

Verse 14. “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”

A correct understanding of this, and obedience to it, would save an Assembly from many of the divisions that take place from time to time.

The gift is clearly the position of speakers that they are in fellowship with, for no body of men could give a gift of ability, though they can one of authority. In this case they laid their hands on him, which was an act of identification, or the right hand of fellowship.

In our times some in authority insert the idea of impartation to the laying on of hands, so to protect ourselves, many give the right hand of fellowship. I personally think this goes further than

appointing one to an office ; I think it applies to membership.

I certainly think that office makes the position stronger, but that does not excuse membership. We have no right to preach or teach that which is repugnant to the Assembly. It is no justification to say that I am the Lord's servant and shall preach or teach what I believe ; I cannot agree with the Mass as it is called, I have no right to enter the Roman church. I am with the Brethren. We stand for the coming of Christ to keep us out of the great tribulation. I have seen trouble because some insist that we go through it. We do not admit the right of sisters to minister in the Assembly. Trouble and division come about through this, etc. Our instructions are to mark them that make divisions. I can see that I am not responsible for what Assemblies stand for, but I can see that I have no authority to oppose them, or disturb them, for I might be the one that is wrong. There is only one Lord, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 15. “ Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy progress may be manifested unto all.”

The word used for “ diligent ”—*meleta*—means to study beforehand. To do this, Timothy is to give himself wholly to them. The reason for this being in the singular because this is his work, and the thought it gives me is that whatever God may call us to do, as Timothy was for this work, we must be wholly given to these things, because there are many things in connection with the work each one is called to do, and we must see that it may be manifest that we know our work. As a business man, it was a pleasure to find a man that knew his job.

Verse 16. “ Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching.”

We now see the reason why men should know how to behave in the church of God. Chapter iii. 15.

First, he must take heed to himself in view of what he teaches. He must be quite sure that to practice one thing and to teach another is to be worse than useless, it will be a danger to the flock. I am inclined to think that it goes further than this. It takes in all that “ thyself ” can mean : body, soul and spirit. Voice, mind, health must be studied to keep fit. We must be careful to see that we are

saved ourselves, for can there be anything worse than an unconverted Ministry. Further, this would include that as a believer we are enjoying the truth, for if we have but little taste for it neither will those have for whom we labour. We must see that our piety is evident, else the lack of it will soon be evident in our work.

The only church history we have is Acts of the Apostles. We do not get so much of their sermons ; the emphasis is upon what they did.

“And thy teaching.” As regards service, everything is of value or not, according to the quality and character of our teaching. It must be faithful to the word.

Verse 16. “Continue these things.”

How important is this. When the flock see the leader lose his zeal, and note that it does not need much to keep him away, the sooner the leader goes altogether the better. How many Assemblies have their work marred through this ! I must admit that this is not all on one side, for this spirit may get into the flock. I know very few things that discourage a leader more than to see any lose interest. Now

this should not be, for this verse goes on to say :

“ For in doing this, thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee.”

This makes it worth while, does it not dear reader, for us to continue in these things? Blessed God and Father, we do pray Thee that Thou wilt keep each of us faithful to the Meeting we belong to. Grant that we may ever seek to be a blessing by supporting it to the extent of our power. We think, Father, that this will be easy to do if the Holy Ghost will deepen our love for our Lord and Saviour, for if we lose our first (best) love, we may lose our candlestick. Amen and Amen.

Chapter V.

Verse 1. “ Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father : the younger men as brethren ; the elder women as mothers ; the younger as sisters in all purity.”

This is salutary advice to one and all, whatever our position may be, for it is clear that our position or gift in the church cannot affect any of the foundation truths, and this is one :- We are

all brothers and sisters in Christ, and we have but one Lord, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word for "elder" refers to the aged. We have to remember that we are all subject to human infirmity, which has to be dealt with. Here we get the method that is to be used by one in authority, namely, to exhort, not to rebuke, which comes so natural to some of us. To the aged, as a father or mother, to the younger as brothers or sisters. With the latter it must be in all purity. How many in position would have been saved from disgrace and the Assembly from scandal had this been attended to.

These two verses bring to us the value of common politeness to each other, which is our due. I have been told that politeness is not common. We can help to make it so.

Verse 3. "Honour widows that are widows indeed."

We must remember that there are differences in widows. Some are comfortably situated, have many friends and relatives, and find that it has not been all loss to lose their husband.

Verse 4. "But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn

first to shew piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents ; for this is acceptable in the sight of God."

Those who have parents or grandparents are made responsible for their well-being. This is considered just by the world as the poor-law acts on this principle, and we have to comply whether we like it or not. The poor only give in case of necessity.

Verse 5. " Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God, and continueth in supplication and prayers night and day."

Dear reader, if you are getting on in years, you will have met with such. I feel sure it has made you feel sad to see one in such a forlorn position. Possibly you have wondered why it is that God allows this. God is rich enough to make them comfortable in this world's goods. The fact is that God has sent enough for all, but many live in costly style or spend their substance in pleasure and sport, etc. We can be sure they will be made to answer for their conduct.

We next look to note how God acts toward these desolate people. We find with regard to those that are His, in their trouble and perhaps despair, that all

they can do is to live at the mercy seat. This gives a form of character that is very unlike that which we generally meet with. It is a pleasure to meet with any kind of Christian that manifests Christ, but these I have discovered to be the sweetest. We know that we cannot properly judge anything till the end, but when we get home and see what God does for them we shall find that if it were possible for envy to be in heaven, these would be the ones that are envied. However, we must not make this excuse for our callousness here.

Verse 6. "But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth."

It is clear that, as an Assembly, the first thing we must do is to attend to them that need it most. The first, we see, is "alive to God," whereas that one who is bent on having a pleasant time, or taking it easy, is described as dead, because she is not "alive unto God." God intends to give us all enjoyment, and we get it, if we walk with the Lord in the light of His word.

I remember when a young man, seeing in a museum George Cruikshank's pictures, called "The Pursuit of Pleasure." It impressed me, and I have

ever since seemed to notice how the bulk of mankind seems obsessed with the same pursuit. We who know something of being "alive to God" readily see that to give our life to pleasure is to be dead while we live. I think I have quoted this before, but many things are re-stated in the Word.

"Live while you live" the epicure cries, "and give to pleasure each moment ere it flies." "Live while you live," the sacred preacher replies, "and give to God each moment ere it dies."

George Herbert replies, "Oh Lord in me may both united be: I live to pleasure when I live to Thee."

Verse 7. "These things also command that they may be without reproach." This indeed is the command of authority. In Hebrews xiii. 17. we are told to "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them, for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give an account." Here it is that we may be without reproach. What the Lord requires is that we may adorn the truth, so that responsibility is placed upon the ruler and the ruled.

Verse 8. "But if any provideth not for his own, and especially his own

household, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

This is a very important subject to consider prayerfully, and above all, to act upon. The foes to this are certainly two, perhaps more: the one is self-indulgence, the other is the desire for a reputation.

The word for "provideth" is "to foresee." When a man and a woman marry, this ought to be carefully considered before the Lord. When I married I had a tiny income. My father-in-law said to me, "Harry whatever you do, do not have anything unless you can pay for it." I have kept the advice.

We must remember that we are told to be content with food and raiment. To want more, unless we can pay for it, is folly. I have always sought to live on little. I have sought to avoid habits that mean money to maintain. This helps us considerably to do our part in doing our duty in this respect. If we have discovered that it is more blessed to give than to receive, this is no hardship, but there is a necessity to learn to say "No," else we should speedily be reduced to absolute poverty.

Note the extent of it. It includes all

those in his own household. In that time it included those that belonged to him, such as bond-servants, etc. and as we shall see, it does not stop there. As a Christian we can see that, as the Word says, we shall be worse than an unbeliever, for without doubt many of the moralists, then and now, taught and practised a commendable morality.

I have been reprov'd for my views on provision, so be careful that you accept nothing unless with the approval of the Lord, for I have been told by others that they believed in having faith in God. Personally I am fully convinced that without faith it is impossible to please God. I cannot help distrusting the man who gives me to understand that he is out on faith, especially so, if with glee, he tells me how often he has seen the bottom of the barrel. I believe in a prompt payer, I once saw the bottom of the barrel. I did not like it, but it did me good. I was a very young married man, and my wife asked me if I wanted any dinner. Neither she nor I had one penny. We searched and found a little sago in a bottle which we just managed with. I looked at my books and I found that I owed four

pounds, and that was not due till the end of the month. I had quite a hundred pounds owing me, over-due. All ought to have been paid. I then clearly saw that "Evil is wrought through want of thought, as well as want of heart." I then turned to the Lord and found that He wanted all his people to be a blessing, and that a man who was not a prompt payer is a curse in the land. So I prayed the Lord that I might have the grace never to have money in the bank or my pocket if I had a debt due. I have frequently been caught, but never more than once with the same person. I have watched their career; disaster generally overtakes them. I have seen many young men ruined because they had not been paid what was due to them. On the other side, when for health's sake I became a builder, my partner said to me : "We have started more than we can finish; you must go to the bank and ask for a loan of £1,500." When the banker said "Yes," he asked me what had made me astonished. I said "I thought you would almost faint away." He smiled and said, "Mr. Knox, you have banked here for over twenty years, and never had a cheque back. If you had, you might

not have got it." Since, I have met many who think lightly of having a cheque back. Where I could, I have told them that they were financially putting nails in their coffin.

I could enlarge on the advantages of being prompt to pay, and fill the book.

I have written this, because I want to help to stop what I know has caused scandal in our Assemblies, and I feel I must "blow the trumpet." (Ezekiel.)

If a foreign or home missionary is invited by the Assembly, support the Assembly by giving what you may give through the Assembly, otherwise you will bring your Assembly into disgrace. Believe me, some will say, "That is all I was paid" for they will not credit the Assembly with personal gifts. I have found it a good rule, never, if one can possibly avoid it, to let them know from whom the help comes. The Lord knows, and that is all that matters.

Verse 9. "Let none be enrolled as a widow under three-score years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works."

This does look as if the church, in the earliest times, took the responsibility of widows upon themselves. Acts ii.

44, 45. Chapters v. and vi. confirm this. As we get a little beyond scriptural times, we see many beneficent institutions developed from this spirit, which fills us with pleasure as we read of them. As I have read on, they appear in a large measure to have been swept away by the terrific persecutions against the church, as these things cannot be maintained where flight is essential.

Personally, I think the scriptures lay down the foundation-principles which point out to us the directions in which we are to proceed with our work in seeking to relieve human need. Then, if we walk in these directions with the Lord, in the light of the Word, we cannot go wrong. But, alas, many of these things are worked in such a way that we cannot see how Christ is exalted.

As Christians became tolerated again, owing to the turbulent times, many would form brotherhoods and select unwanted lands, such as waste, swampy or dry lands, and settle down to work and to prayer. As far as I can gather, they certainly lived hard lives, but labour told, and they got rich, powerful, and arrogant till it is only a question of time before the various authorities had

to suppress them. This fate, I think, might have been avoided if the State had a wise system of inspection, by those not connected with them. But the need was not suppressed. So the nations have established systems of relief. This does a grand work, but it also demands big institutions, salaries, and I am afraid, waste, etc. Alas, many are run without the Christian spirit. If my experience is of any value, I can only say that very few like to get there but prefer a real Christian place.

As we read our papers, every day, year in and year out, we note that the sums left for charitable objects must total to an immense amount. I cannot but feel that it must be sufficient for all the need, given a foreseeing and providing habit.

Verse 10. "If she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath followed diligently every good work."

As I look at these principles for our guidance, the first thing I see is that great care must be exercised in selecting these widows, that they have proved

worthy to be enrolled, for I have no doubt that these widows were intended, if possible, to be a permanent charge. I should think that, generally speaking, means were limited.

Verse 11. "But younger widows refuse; for when they have waxed wanton against Christ, they desire to marry; having condemnation, because they have rejected their first faith."

The objection here is not to a woman getting married again, but, if of a marriageable age, to being enrolled. As we shall see, should one that is enrolled marry, she is said to lose her first faith. This, I think, makes it clear that an enrolled woman had an agreement or a tacit understanding that she should do some useful work allotted to her by the church, suitable to her age.

The early church had no idea of permitting idleness in anyone who could do useful work, and without doubt the older women can do a work that the younger can rarely do.

Verse 13. "And withal they learn also to be idle, going about from house to house, and not only idle but tatlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

Here we see the demoralising effect that idleness is likely to have, so let all of us see that our time is spent in right and industrious employment. The church finds that these sins are enough to wreck any Assembly. The world will tell us that the Devil finds work for idle hands to do.

No wonder the Apostle expressed the desire that the

Verse 14. “younger widows marry, bear children, rule the household, give none occasion to the adversary for reviling; for already some are turned aside after Satan.”

The purpose of marriage, as understood by the Christian Church, is that the children should be born under natural conditions, and brought up under Christian influence. We note that the woman is to rule the household in all its technical details. The man commands his household to walk after him.

“Turned aside after Satan.” What a terrible thing to say! It means leaving the Assembly and going back into the world, which is Satan’s kingdom.

Verse 16. “If any woman that believeth (The A.V. adds “man.” I certainly think “*ei tis*” implies man

and woman) hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened, that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."

It is clear that those that can bear the burden are not to seek to put their responsibility on the church, the reason being that the really needy may be attended to. Even the State cannot serve all. The poor-law compels those who can to keep their own children, wives, parents and grand-parents.

Verse 17. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the Word and in teaching."

There are two views at least as to how this is read. One is that the presiding elder has very large powers, and here is exhorted to reward and encourage properly any elder, by seeing that he has double honour, *i.e.*, by seeing that he is remunerated, if need be, if he rule well.

The other view is that the presiding elder is to be one of the elders, and for those who are not elders; the point of contact is to come through him.

I can only say that I agree with this latter view. As I read the Word, I

can see that the presbytery allotted to each oversee a department of the work. We cannot fail to note that even the apostle's appointment of Timothy was confirmed by the presbytery.

The apostle Peter distinctly taught that the elders were not to lord it over the charge allotted to them (I Peter v. 3). Yet this is what the heads of these ecclesiastical systems do. They get vast wealth, palaces, robes, positions, etc. The apostle John calls it Nicolaitanism, and tells us that the Lord said that he hated it. Rev. ii.

After the apostles had been taken home, the work had I think, now after years of practical experience, to be done by the presbytery, or, as we say, with the oversight.

The work of an elder, even the presiding elder, is for the benefit of the flock, and to his brothers and sisters in Christ his ambition should be to be a sample Christian, which means that he must be clothed with humility. Read carefully Acts xx. 32-35, though it would be wise to read the whole chapter.

Verse 18. For the scripture saith, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he

treadeth out the corn, and the labourer is worthy of his hire."

We clearly see that the labourer may be paid for work done, if it is necessary. I cannot read scripture and think that the service of God is to be put on a commercial basis, and that those that have a sufficiency are to be paid.

Verse 19. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses."

Care must be exercised to protect those elected to the office of elder. Because, alas, the little-minded are often provoked to jealousy, while others are carried away by insufficient evidence.

Verse 20. "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear."

When such cases come up before the oversight, and one or more of their number is seen to be unjustly charged, the offenders are to be openly rebuked, in order that all may learn that this sort of thing may not be lightly done.

It seems to me that this scripture would also include a less formal sort of sin. I remember being at a wedding where people came in, not known to the Assembly, and they behaved as though

the wedding was just a form of entertainment. A man of God stood up and quoted this verse, and rebuked them. They did not like it. Many approved. I certainly did. Even if a wedding was a civil contract only, it is a very solemn one, but when it is contracted before God and His blessing invoked to make it effective, to introduce levity is very unbecoming. What a difference it makes in the atmosphere when the ceremony is free from levity !

Verse 21. " I charge thee in the sight of God and the Lord Jesus Christ (A.V.) and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality."

Here is a most solemn charge ; first, to Timothy, then to all who are in a position of responsibility. The charge is before God, *i.e.*, the Triune God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. (A.V.) We are told that the word " Lord " must be omitted here, because it is not contained in the older manuscripts. I am not qualified to talk about manuscripts. The scene pictured to us is, I think, Phil. ii. 11. " And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," on

whose Throne He is. It is true that it is as the Incarnate Christ.

“*The elect angels.*” Some think that these are the angels chosen to serve us, such as Gabriel, Michael, etc. I venture to think that so will all, included in Eph. iii. 10 and Hebrews xii. 1. I have often pictured the tremendous crowds of men gathered at some of the sports meeting. These crowds are calculated to bring the best out of competitors, but they are nothing to this. If we entered fully into this, how it would affect our lives ! We certainly would do nothing out of preference or partiality. That would be the last thing we should think of.

Verse 22. “Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins : keep thyself pure.”

Here is a practical rule to all that are resolved to do what is right, namely, to avoid partiality. They must appoint no one hastily, in order that proper care and time will be given, so that the right person may be selected. Note, our scripture tells us that if done through partiality, we are held responsible for the wrong or blunders he may do. This is a serious warning, and one that

we do well to heed. In connection with this, we do well to read Malachi, chapter ii., also James ii. 1.

It is true that the apostle had the Assembly in view primarily, but the things that follow shew us that these principles are for general use also.

As we come into contact with the evil flowing out of partiality, we pray Thee to give us much grace that we may be kept pure or free from this evil.

Verse 23. "Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."

This may have been inserted here in order that the injunction to keep himself pure may not be pressed by the Essenes. I have read that they were powerful at Ephesus. It would prevent him from accepting their teaching and so weaken his body which appears to have been none too robust. It does seem sound advice to Timothy, to advise him to use a little of the wine that maketh glad the heart of man. But do not mix it up with the sort that we are not to taste or touch, for what is meant by strong drink is indeed a curse. Conybeare translates it, "Be no longer a drinker

of water 'only.' " I think this must be inserted into the apostle's meaning, otherwise there is no meaning to the advice, for it appears to me impossible to do without it. However, in these days of the moderate use of tea, coffee, etc., we can get a little comfort. When a doctor, for stomach trouble, gave me up, I went to one of our leading surgeons (London). He advised me to take fourteen glasses of water per day ; six were to be taken fasting, the others about half an hour before meals. It soon put me right. The first six I never miss if I can avoid it, and I get back to the full amount if I feel it necessary, and always, where convenient. I think horses, lions, elephants, etc., do very well on water. I have thought, had I my time over again, that I should seriously consider about being a water-drinker only.

However, we must seriously consider the idiosyncrasies of the body, for I know that many think that Paul in his advice to Timothy was probably doing so here.

I used this big word " idiosyncrasy " because it was the word the doctor used. However, a good dictionary removes

all fear from boys and girls. "Idios" is the Greek word for "One's own," and we all know what "crazy" means.

We express this thought in a proverbial way when we say "What is one man's meat is another man's poison," and there is much truth in the saying.

Verse 24. "Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgement; and some men also they follow after."

The apostle now returns to his subject and closes this portion, shewing clearly that verse 23 is parenthetic.

He closes with a word of comfort to any that hold a responsible position in the church (equally applicable if in any responsible post). There is no occasion to be filled with fear. He is to deal first with the more evident sins or troubles, and in dealing with them, experience will give him wisdom to enable him to deal with those that become manifest with their development.

Verse 25. "In like manner also there are good works that are evident; and such as are otherwise cannot be hid."

The same is true where rewards or appointments are to be given. All becomes manifest. I have noted frequently how that the Lord Himself

waited till things became manifest before dealing with them.

Chapter VI.

Verse 1. “ Let as many as are servants under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed.”

Verse 2. “ And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but let them serve them the rather, because they that partake of the benefit are believing and beloved. These things teach and exhort.”

The believers, whether master or servant, are under the yoke of Christ. This should not in the eyes of a servant tend to lower the position of a master in their esteem, but it should produce just the reverse effect.

In this world we find all sorts of unjust things, and God adopts a sure method of destroying them. His method appears to be to produce such an enlightened opinion that it is altered as the state of things is ripe for the change.

The apostle says in I Cor. vii. 21, 22.

“Wast thou called, being a bond-servant? Care not for it; but if thou canst become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord being a bond-servant, is the Lord’s freedman: Likewise, he that was called, being free, is Christ’s bond-servant.”

Man may be brought into a very undesirable state by means of man’s greed, cruelty, etc., but if he be found faithful, God can and will make him a blessing (*viz.*, Joseph) so that his happiness is bound up in faithful service, for a faithful slave is valued.

And if God has in His mercy given them believing masters, they are to be thankful, and make this an incentive to be a blessing to them. A dear relative of mine who possessed a small house in which she and her husband lived happily for years made it a sample of cleanliness, neatness and taste. When alone they preferred to have their meals in the kitchen, which indeed, though small, was all one could desire. She became an invalid and procured a char-woman, who came in daily to help. When I went round to see how they were going on, she said, “Harry, what shall I do? Mrs.—will not stop; she

says that she ought to have her meals in the dining-room with us ; she is good enough to sit down together with us at the Lord's Table, etc." This sort of conduct enters into the business world, and the result has been much the same. Note these words : " These things teach and exhort."

The Church at its earliest period had very much to contend with. I have thought from the earliest period of my Christian life, that the invitation that " Whosoever will may come " aroused a world-wide hatred. To the Jew it included the Gentile ; to the Greek the barbarian ; to the Roman, the slave.

Whatever form our desire to be among the somebodies may take, to be put on a level like this, as the invitation of the gospel does, is enough to turn the proud from it.

We can easily see what this would mean to men whose method was revolution. I have read that at Ephesus there was a school that taught the equality of man. This and the letter to Ephesus, etc., confirm this.

It certainly accounts for the fear and hatred of all Christians that appears to have been universal. There is one

real sense in which we appear to be all equal. From our birth till our death we are all dependent on the kindness of others, and we all need it. No class is free from it. This is for the Christian to supply. As to any other equality, it does not exist. We are all different sizes and shapes ; some are strong and others are weak ; some are wise, others foolish, etc.

Thus we see the necessity of teaching and exhorting the believers to a sound conception of how things really are, which is the only method of seeking to promote love and goodwill toward men.

Verse 3. "If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness."

We must go on step by step. Here we see the apostle is dealing with the professing Christians who are teaching falsely. A terrible fight it is, and it goes on to-day in varying forms. The basis of sound doctrine is the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. These words, understood, are to form our views on every subject. To all that are born from above He has given the other

Paraclete to dwell within us to teach and to guide us in doctrine that makes for godliness, for it is God's intention to make each one of His to be in the position of a giver. God opens His hand and all creatures are fed ; He opens His mouth and all men are taught. I must admit that animals, birds, fish, and even insects manage to get hold of much useful knowledge from their Creator.

If he teacheth another doctrine, it is said, *Verses 4 & 5.* "He is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and dispute of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain."

We are told in I Cor. xiii. that "knowledge puffeth up," *i.e.*, blinds with pride. All knowledge may have that tendency, certainly, I think this is peculiarly so, of book or school knowledge. It should not be, but it frequently is.

"Knowing nothing." The thought here is, as regards the real truth that the Lord Jesus taught. They have become side-tracked by their false conceptions of truth.

“Doting about questions.” We soon find as we enter on the Christian path that there are many questions, such as the infinities, that are too big for our minds to handle, at any rate, whilst down here. If we have sense, we soon leave such questions till the time comes when we may be able to deal with them. They love to dispute every inch of ground, and all to no purpose. What they will probably get is envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings, because they have corrupt minds bereft of the truth. Their root error is that they think that godliness is a way of gain, whereas I think that we have seen that it is a way to be able to give.

Verse 6. “But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

This scripture is a key-scripture. It opens up a whole aspect of things. It will repay a long-continued meditation. There is without doubt no limit to the advantages of godliness. Whatever we may be thinking about, directly we bring God in, He brightens everything. Let me explain what I mean. I was once talking to a surgeon to whom I mentioned contentment. He replied that his wife thought that it was bad, as it

made men lazy. He was so surprised that I agreed with him, and he said, "I should never have thought that you would say that." But having only half the text, even contentment may lose its value. The scripture has "Godliness with contentment is great gain." A godly man cannot be a lazy man, for God is ever at work.

Let us look at what it says about it here.

Verse 7 & 8. "For we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content."

This is indeed a great thought to get a firm grip of in connection with our provision. It begins at our birth, though whilst our need was met, we did not concern ourselves about it then. It ends with our death. We brought in nothing with us, and we can take nothing out with us; so that it comes to this; it is a provision for earth-conditions, a provision till we die.

It certainly is clear that the whole of our business, with its spending, giving, etc., must be in close contact with the Lord. I think it folly to keep it till we die. That means, as far as I can see, that others dispose of it and do not

get the pleasure that we should if wisely and judiciously spent. As far as my experience goes, I cannot remember that inherited money has proved a blessing. Very often it has had the reverse effect. The method I advise is to give, or leave to some people a certain amount per week paid quarterly till their death; then it goes to the Lord's work that you are interested in. Leave it in such a way that a lawyer can always arrange it, so that if they attempt to borrow on it, they lose it. That prevents that, I consider. As to one's own children, do the same, but leave a proportion to be left to their children, as it cannot be extended by law or by sense. Personally, I find, as a business man, that it was a keen pleasure to earn it, and a keen pleasure to share it.

If the country can keep free from Revolution, I certainly think the country will, by experience, be able to adopt pension schemes and give assistance in a wise way that will be a real help, but the main point is that they will have to give freedom to allow those they wish to bless to select their own place, for there are all sorts of people, and none can be happy unless with their own sort.

Verse 9. "But they that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition."

Alas! some of God's people desire to be rich; they think it fine to live in a large house with several servants, etc. All I can manage to see is that they get worried, from within and from without, in ways that they never contemplated. They soon find out that the last half of this verse is very true, and that they are so entangled that they are in a net.

Verse 10. "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (m. evils) which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

We are given to understand that the love of money can produce evil of any kind. This we can verify at any time we open our eyes to see what is going on. If our desire for money is to use it unselfishly, this is not in the apostle's mind here. The love of money is another name for covetousness, which is idolatry, as we have seen. However, idolatry leads to trouble, I think, from my own

personal observation, that this love of money when it finds a home in a Christian's breast, is the result of a delusion. They imagine they become a person of consequence. I think it may appear so by the manner of those who are hoping in some way to get some sort of advantage from you. To those who are not, by what I hear, I think a wealthy person is an object of jealousy, and all sorts of unkind and frequently unjust remarks are made as to how the money has been obtained. Our text tells us that some have been led astray from the faith. How frequently do we see some become pleasure-loving and get lax in their zeal for God. Some apparently depart from the faith altogether. Certainly they do not realise that the fruit of their action is many sorrows.

Verse 11. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

What we have seen shows us clearly that amongst the earliest saints there were those who were really false to the faith that they professed to believe, and the testimony they gave was a sad one. As we read through history we

meet with them continually, and man is just the same to-day.

So we see how necessary for us is the command to flee these things, to get away from them as far as possible, and to follow after the qualities that are stated in this verse. The word used here points not only to the direction but to the manner of our going, *i.e.*, to hunt, to pursue, etc.

We have no choice. If we are to enjoy the companionship of the Lord, we must be real, and according to the measure of our success, that will be the measure of our usefulness and our joy in Christ.

We have looked at these qualities many times, but let us note that right doing or justice is the basis. God himself is said to be a just God and a Saviour. Isaiah xlv. 21. So we to companion with such surely must be a just man and a saint, and godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness, all are essential and desirable qualities in the make-up of a saint. What a purpose in life to have ! This sort of hunting will hurt no creature. We have the Almighty help of the Holy Ghost to help us to achieve our object.

Verse 12. " Fight the good fight of

the faith, lay hold on life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses.”

Here is another allusion by the apostle Paul to the games of contest that the people of the world with deep-seated unrest in their hearts are so occupied with. If we have seen any of these contests, we may have noted that they put in the last ounce of effort to obtain the prize. If I personally raise the question, Is it worth it? I cannot see that it is, only I have realised for many years that unless we have Christ, nothing is worth while. Christ is God's great gift to us. We have the faith to believe that God's purpose is to conform us to the image of Christ, in order that He may be the firstborn of many brethren. We are, I think, here exhorted to attain to this now, as far as possible. At any rate, I think the reader will agree with me that this is worth while. It is worth putting into it the last ounce of effort, so let us see to it that we do “Lay hold on life eternal.” The word used means, not only to receive it, but to grasp it.

It is clear that we could not grasp the

life eternal unless it is there to lay hold of. This makes the life eternal a present thing. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." But we must remember that it is, as we often sing, "perfect, yet it groweth fuller every day."

Eternal life is an estate we come into. We enter into the life of the Lord which is eternal, "from everlasting to everlasting." This word "everlasting" is certainly necessary to the meaning of the Greek, that is, it has a beginning but no end. As the word carries both meanings "eternal and everlasting," the English versions use both forms of the word.

Our Lord told us in John x. 10. "I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly." It is this abundant life that we are called to grasp.

The man of God is called for this purpose to enter into all that eternal life can mean to us, past, present and future.

A little thought, and we can readily see that we cannot grasp all it means till we get home.

We get a similar thought as to Salvation. We are saved, we are being saved, and we shall be saved.

What a grand object in life to have !

It really aims at entering into all the fulness of God.

What is this good confession that Timothy made? Some think that it was when Paul appointed him overseer at Ephesus. As this was at a solemn ordination service, he was confirmed by the Presbyters. This was the good confession. The first point is, I think, that if this happened, all that they may say about it must be conjecture. I cannot see any record of it. The word here has the article. I cannot but think the good confession is Romans x. 9, 10, for it was then that he could be said to lay hold on eternal life, and confessed with his mouth that God raised Christ from the dead.

Verse 13. “ I charge thee in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession.”

Here Timothy is charged before God who creates and preserves all things, and of Jesus Christ who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate. The Lord's testimony before Pontius Pilate included all that the Messiah stood for, also that He was a King, which involved His resurrection, etc. If this

was a wholesome reminder to such a man as Timothy, how salutary it is to most of us, for if we have thought of it or not, it is a fact that all the work and duties entrusted to us are done in His sight. We live no unseen life. See Hebrews iv. 13. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

Verse 14. "That thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is a reasonable charge to make, for the appointment is made for the purpose of making our work effective. What can bring our work into higher repute than that the character of the one in charge adorns the position that he holds. This of necessity includes us, for neither Paul nor Timothy lived till the coming of the Lord. Though knowing like ourselves that there is no event recorded before that that is to happen, we naturally look for what we hope for. As we look around, the trend of events quickens our appetites.

Verse 15 & 16. "Which in His (M.) own

times, He shall shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords ; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable ; whom no man hath seen, nor can see ; to whom be honour and power eternal. Amen."

When He, in His own times, doth appear, He will shew who is the blessed and only Potentate. He has taught us in the grand wind-up of this epistle that He Himself is the blessed and only Potentate, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. At His ascension He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, so that by faith we can enter into this now. What can help us to faithfulness more than this ! We do not actually see that which follows, at the present. We are told here that this will be done in His own times and seasons. This great event does not, as some teach, take place all at one last day. I am with those who see that the next thing that happens is when Christ comes for His saints (I Thess. iv.) when the dead in Christ and those that are alive and remain are caught up to be forever with the Lord. The dead in Christ I can only understand to be not only the

Church, from Pentecost to this event, but every saint of every previous dispensation. Each reader can only lawfully accept what I say when sure that he can see that that which is taught is of the Holy Ghost. I think, for the sake of some, it is better not to hurry but to let these things grow, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Be careful to abide by the Scripture. I think that which is called the balance of truth will help us. When we read of the martyred remnant in Rev. vi. and vii. we find that when the Lord comes with His saints, the spared remnant is shewn. It is clear that there are other events. When He comes with His saints we see the judgement of those wicked ones that are alive at His coming. We know this as the vintage judgement, from the white cloud. Then comes the judgement of the wicked dead at the great white throne. Finally, when heaven and earth pass, all is shaken that can be shaken, so that when we enter into that which we speak of as eternity, there will be nothing to shake, so that, praise the Lord, there can be no lurking doubt or misgiving.

“The King of kings and Lord of lords.”

In Rev. xvii. 14 we read, "These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings." The Lord coming out of heaven with His saints is described in Rev. xix. 16. "And He hath on His garment and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." So that it is clear in our text that this one who is king of those that reign as kings, and Lord of those that rule as lords, is none other than the Lamb. Our text reminds us that there is but one Potentate; there are not three Potentates. It is said of Him, "Who only hath immortality." The meaning here is that it is of Himself. None gave Him immortality, *i.e.*, He is not liable to death. On account of the confusion of this word "immortal," I trust all the boys and girls will quietly consider this word, as and where we get it in the Word, else some will seek to trip you up.

I have been asked many times, "Do you believe in the immortality of the soul?" As I write, one of the many times comes before me. I replied, In Genesis ii.. God breathed into the nostrils of Adam, and he became a living soul,

This did not make him immortal, for he is told that he that sinneth shall surely die. It did give him God-consciousness, which animals have not, though we find in Genesis vii. that animals and man are said to have in their nostrils the breath of the spirit of life, and that all that was in the dry land died, which is not the same thing as Genesis ii.

Returning to Genesis ii. we find that the day they sinned, when they heard the Lord's voice in the garden, they ran away to hide themselves. This shows immediately that they were separated from God, which is the fundamental idea of death in Scripture, confirmed by such texts as "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." We do get the thought of death, as the undertaker thinks of it. I believe that immortality relates to the body in II Cor. v. 1 (R.V.), "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This house, *i.e.*, body, is clearly immortal, because it is eternal in the heavens. I expect angels and any other created creatures in the heavens, are similar in

this respect. It is interesting to note that this house is said to swallow up that which is mortal (see verse 4) which I understand is that which is in the grave.

I must be careful, else I shall not know when and where to stop. I must leave you to consider it in His presence, and pray that the Holy Ghost may lead your meditations to the fact that He only hath immortality, and that yet He could lay His life down to accomplish our salvation, and then take it up. Strictly, we can do neither. Our bodies are mortal whether we will or not, and both saved or unsaved are raised whether we will or not. But our blessed Lord did as He pleased. He told John in Rev. i. 17, 18, "And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one, and I was (Gr. became) dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades." No other being could say this, and we make sense of it.

"Dwelling in light unapproachable." One of the three definitions of God that we have is "God is light." In Psalm civ. 2 He is said to put on light as a garment. In Daniel ii. 22, Light is

said to dwell with Him. Here God is said to dwell in light that no man can approach unto. As we consider these wonderful texts we can account for the thrill we get as we hear the Psalmist say, "God is my light and my salvation." Psalm xxvii. 1. Also what a joy it is to read Isaiah as by faith he looked forward. Isaiah lx. 1. "Arise, shine; shine, for thy light is come" and to read the opening chapters of the gospel of John is enough to make us "shine." In John i. 18 the original word is "No one"—"oudies." I think with those that say that this includes every creature. Hence we read here, "Whom no man hath seen, nor can see." As John puts it in i. 18. "No one hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

"To whom be honour and power eternal. Amen."

Dear reader, we can with joy say our "Amen" to this, for it is glory for Him.

Verse 17. The word here for "charge" is in the imperative mood.

"Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the

uncertainty of riches, but on God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

All that have a similar charge in this world are taught that we must do this with tact and yet be faithful, for I have met very bad results due to a wrong presentation of this. As we look at this carefully, we note the first point is that it may make us high-minded. It is the humble man God loves. I am glad to say that I know some very rich people that are as humble as any, but not all, for I have met those that are known as "purse-proud." Now this is very foolish, for the ability to get, and the opportunities, are all given by God. We have nothing but what we have received. The next point is that they are not to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches. One thing that is certain is that we cannot take any with us. Our departure may be uncertain, but not this. We frequently see that those that have been unable to acquire it, when they inherit it, find how short-lived it is. The power to acquire does help us to hold it. Change of laws, national and private, calamity, etc., tend to make riches uncertain. We can praise God that we can set our hope upon Him,

And we know that if properly used, riches are given us so that we can enjoy them. I like the "us" here; there can rightly be no selfish use.

Verse 18. "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

Though the principal feature here appears to be the sharing of material blessing, we must not, however, think that this has no other phase, for I am sure that some of the best-loved ones have been those large-hearted ones without wealth that have given themselves continuously to make themselves a blessing to others.

"Ready to distribute; willing to communicate."

The first suggests the hand, the second the heart. It is a grand thing to be a giver, but if the sympathy of the heart goes not with it, even rich gifts wax poor.

Verse 19. "Laying up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed."

We desire to keep our minds quite clear if we are to have what is truly

here. We know that we are saved unto eternal life through faith in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, given to us in sovereign grace. To seek to obtain these through works would not make them good works ; they would be dead works, for it is clear that if a person seeks to obtain life by works, they are the works of a dead man. But when we are brought into life and fellowship with the Son, the evidence that this has taken place are our good works, and our good works make a good foundation at the judgement-seat of Christ, when the Lord gives us our reward.

We are reminded that to lay hold of the life is life indeed, for a practical Christian life is, as only believers must know, the only life worth having here.

Verse 20. " O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so-called, which some professing have erred (M. missed the mark) concerning the faith."

Grace be with you.

Guard the deposit, whatever it may mean to others. Surely, to Timothy it would mean the position of overseer entrusted to him. To us it means :

Avoid all disputing on any subject, especially those that have nothing to do with the Faith, as taught by the Word. Some of these people, as we know, make a great pretence of learning, but it leads them to miss the mark concerning the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with you.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

Chapter I.

Verse 1. “ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy.”

In the first chapter the Apostle says that “ all that are in Asia turned away from me.” Only one man was not ashamed of his chain.

The promise here is presented as something outside the course of nature or human responsibility.

It is an engagement by God to bring about a certain state of blessing, decreed before the foundation of the world.

This sphere which the promise brings

us into cannot be interfered with by the forces of evil.

The promise is life in the above sphere, *i.e.*, in a risen Christ.

Paul viewed his life as hid in Christ.

John, in writing the biography of Christ, viewed this life as expressed in the Son of God down here.

Dear reader, as we pass through this epistle, it makes us look around, and we see that there is much to sadden us, but it is not all sadness. This is our time of conflict, so that we get the trial and the support. However, what a joy to look back and watch our beloved passing through this scene. What an inspiration it is ! But when, like Paul, we look forward to the resurrection sphere, and know that, like Paul, our life is also hid in Him, what a delight it gives us now, and what joyful anticipation we get as we think of our future experience !

Verse 2. " My beloved child : Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

The word " my " is not in the manuscript. The spirit of it appears to read into it as much as in the first epistle where the word is.

We get the word "mercy" in the two epistles of Paul to Timothy, also in the epistle of Jude. As we have seen, "grace and peace" are the everyday requirements for believers, whereas "mercy" is required in trouble or danger.

Verse 3. "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications."

"I thank my God." Whatever Paul had, he ever realised that it came from God, whom he served from his forefathers. I know what has been said about this; I think Paul's meaning was that they all had their faith from God as he had, and all on the same principle of faith from God.

Whom he served with a pure conscience: I cannot accept this translation of "pure" here. What we must have is a purged or cleansed conscience, which is due to cleansing through the blood. I am satisfied that the word used here means this.

I think the word "conscience" is one on which so much depends. We first meet with "conscience" in Genesis iii. It will well repay us for much meditation in each use of it.

I can assure you, provided you get it, grammatically, that a little knowledge of the original is very valuable, because this will be so manifest that you will seek to go on with it. I know it is common with some people to make some sarcastic allusion to its use. I think the probable reason is, judging by those I have met, that what they say loses weight to those that know even a little. I feel sure that God will bless every one that, trusting in the Holy Ghost, sincerely uses diligence to get the truth.

Verse 4. "Night and day longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy."

What a picture! This grand old warrior, knowing that his departure was at hand, finds his comfort in his prayers and in remembering that in Timothy he was leaving one likeminded man behind him, who would genuinely care for the flock.

I think it is very important that we take heed to this, for the reason that till the Lord come, we must ever remember that we have not got a permanent situation, so that we must ever be praying and seeking for faithful ones that have the same outlook. This

is not true for the leading brother only, but for any that has a work entrusted to him. I have seen a prosperous work where the worker is called home or away, and this has never been brought before the Lord, so that in the emergency they have to elect one to take the position, and, alas, there are those who feel that having the job they will stick to it, and the complacency with which they find a reason for the decline in the work is sometimes astonishing.

Verse 5. "Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded, in thee also."

The apostle evidently knew the family. See Acts xvi. 1-6. His grandmother and mother had this unfeigned faith, and he is persuaded that it is in Timothy also. I do not think that faith is hereditary, though it looks like it here. I think the reason for it is that their faith was the real thing. The young eyes of Timothy would be the last to be deceived by his grandmother and mother.

It is important that we remember that the apostle James tells us to shew our faith by our works.

I have known some step out in faith as they call it, both in home and foreign service, and to hear them on the platform is fine ! But those that know them well do not care to talk about them. I think, for the sake of the work, both at home and abroad, that every care should be taken that the faith be unfeigned.

Verse 6. “ For the which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, through the laying on of my hands.”

We saw in the first epistle that the Apostle appointed Timothy to the charge of the church at Ephesus i. 18, which appointment was confirmed by the Presbytery iv. 14.

We have pointed out that the law of first mention teaches us that it stands for identification, and not impartation, which the ecclesiastics love to teach.

Here we get a text that, till we really look closely at it, we should certainly have to say that it does look like it. The first thing that occurs to me is that the Apostle has just been dwelling on the fact that our faith must be real. I remember reading that Thomas Aquinas went to Rome to see the Pope. When he got to Rome he was so astonished

to see the wealth and display, that it was evident in his face. The Pope said to him, "Thou seest, Thomas, we cannot say with Peter of old, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "No," replied Thomas, "neither canst thou say, 'Take up thy bed and walk.'" "

As we read the scripture, we know that when the Lord ascended up on high He gave gifts unto men, and He certainly is not dead, and we have but one Lord.

We must be careful to get a clear idea as to what "gift," i.e., "*charisma*" means. Whatever answer we give, it must be a fact.

However, I think the context will make the meaning clear.

Verse 7. "For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power, love and discipline."

The Word abounds in such expressions as these, which lead me to think that most of the ordinary saints may have been as guilty as I have been, so that I have carefully meditated during the night, and I can see how foolish I have been.

I looked at this spirit of fearfulness, and as I looked backward I have seen what a big experience I have had of it,

and that generally what I feared never happened. Our text makes it as clear as a sunbeam, that I had got something that God had never given me to carry. Could folly go further? Our instructions are to "be anxious for nothing." Blessed God and Father, we want to have all that Thou canst give to us, to enable us to escape fully from this folly. For Christ's sake we ask it. Amen.

We now turn our attention to three things that the Lord has given us. "But of power, love and discipline" with the prayer that we may fully avail ourselves of these. "Power." There are two words translated "power." It is clear that there are two kinds of power, *i.e.*, authority. People are said to be in the place of power, such as kings, governors, etc., *i.e.*, strength or ability. This word is where our word dynamite comes from. I, however, think "dynamo" is nearer its meaning, for I do not think of violent explosions as I read the word. In fact, I think a strong person would be well under control. What method does God usually adopt to give us this power? It is practice. Alas! how many things have we desired the power to do! After spending much

time and acquiring a fair measure of proficiency, then we abandon it. We have to be careful what we start, and then go on to perfection. God has given us this power, but He surely expects it to be wisely directed.

The next is "love." I Cor. xiii. gives to us the value God places upon love. How essential it is, therefore, that we practise it on to perfection. The other is "discipline." I think this is a good translation. The A.V. gives us "a sound mind," which I think the word means, but discipline is practising to obtain it. May the Lord bless all our efforts to develop these gifts.

Verse 8. "Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, His prisoner; but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God."

Here we see that the Apostle, one of the bravest of men, can understand that a man of the natural timidity that some think Timothy had, requires a word of exhortation. It appears strange that we should ever be ashamed of the gospel, for to us it is indeed the joyful sound. Though strange as it may seem to us, yet it is hated by man.

The testimony of the Lord is our hope, and further, we know that for everybody, it is theirs also if they but knew it.

At this time Paul was in prison, and it was evident that he was about to be killed. His one concern was to look out faithful men to be brave and true. It is clear that he felt the need of the loving sympathy of his friends. He exhorted Timothy to endure hardness according to the power of God. Personally, I think that this is very suggestive, for there is a bravery common to a certain type that makes their hardness practically foolhardiness.

It is nice to trace this in the lives of the Prophets and Apostles, especially so in that of the Lord Himself. He is our example. In writing on the Gospel of John I have sought to make this clear. The Lord was as brave as could be, but He took no unnecessary risk. His prudence was such that at night His enemies could not find Him. Till His hour had come.

Verse 9. "Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal."

We clearly see here that He whom we think of as the triune God saved us by His power, and called us. It is described as a holy calling. I read this to be that it was wholly of God. Times even had not begun, certainly no creature. I cannot see that Christ could have been known, even as the Word, till there were some creatures to manifest God to. As I look back I cannot see but that God alone we have to begin with : God the Father Son, and Holy Ghost, one God.

I also see that no creature could be absolutely holy. We read that He chargeth the angels with folly. But we are called saints, i.e. holy ones. How can this be? I can at present only understand this to be that God knows His intentions concerning us, and so speaks of us as holy. We have been promised it. "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." I. Peter i. 16. God can only spend eternity with holy ones.

In revelation we note that the predominant thought is that God our Creator and Redeemer is holy, beginning at Rev. iv. the song is Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, and as every class of creature is introduced, so they go on to swell the

song till all join in the grand Hallelujah chorus of chapter xix.

Here we are reminded that calling was not because of our works ; we did not exist ; but according to His own purpose and grace. This can only mean sovereign grace. This is indeed a grand gospel, and the only one that can suit sinners. As I have often reminded myself, even the Lord God Almighty can not find a reason for taking away what He has given in sovereign grace.

“ Which was given in Christ Jesus.” This word ‘ given ’ is the aorist mood, which means that it is not a process, all is included in the gift. It is in the passive voice, which shews that it is a gift bestowed not earned. All this is for every believer, however humble or unlettered, that is in Christ Jesus.

“ Before times eternal.” I can only make this mean that in a past eternity it was not always divided into times. This appears to have come about in consequence of creation. I have often thought of what to me is nonsense, that is what some people say who see the creation story in Genesis chapter i. after verse 1.

Verse 10. “ But hath now been mani-

fested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel."

This has been manifested through the work the Lord Jesus has done in His incarnation, and includes all from His birth to His resurrection. "Who abolished death." This cannot mean here physical death. The undertakers know that all die. I have no doubt ultimately it will include physical death also.

The use of the word in Scripture is varied, but all pointing in the same direction.

To the Christian death has lost its sting; "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The sting of death is sin, because it separates from God. This is the true meaning of death in Scripture, as we have tried to show elsewhere.

The believer now has eternal life, which is the reverse of the death which God has in mind. To God and the believer death is gain. Phil. I.

"And brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel."

This was clearly done through the

resurrection of Christ, which clearly brought life and incorruption to light. This was well attested by as many as five hundred at one time, and many of these were alive at the time Paul wrote.

Verse 11. "Whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher."

Here we get a good insight into the moral outlook of the Apostle Paul. At this time things have come to a climax. For the second time he has been before Nero. This time he is condemned to death. He knows that he has but little time to live. His condemnation is that he is a ringleader of this hated sect. He does not seek to escape by denial however slight the degree, but declares in his letter, careless as to who reads it, that he is appointed to be a herald. This is to the public, an apostle, one sent for the purpose; and a teacher, to instruct those who belong to Christ more perfectly in the way. Among the things he would teach these was that an apostle was a foundation builder of the Church. Christ being the foundation. And by this very letter, he is appointing another to take his place with such messages that he hoped would stir up

many others. Life or death were incidents in Paul's life. His business here to do his Master's bidding.

Blessed Lord, we bow the knee before Thee, and pray that we, all Thy people may by the power of the Holy Ghost, be helped to take full advantage of the Apostle's courage.

Verse 12. "For which cause I suffer also these things ; yet I am not ashamed ; for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

As we have seen, it is on account of his prominent position in connection with the church that he suffered these things ; yet he can exhort his beloved Timothy to accept the same perilous position. To encourage him he states that he is not ashamed of the position he occupies. We need not fear if there is no need for shame. What helped him was that he knew Him in whom he believed or trusted. This is the grand secret of the Apostle. He had a big experimental knowledge of his Saviour's reliability ! This is the grandest knowledge that a believer can attain to, and it is the privilege of all to have a

personal knowledge of what a faithful Saviour we have. It gave the Apostle such confidence, even in the position he was in, that he could say, "And I am persuaded that He is able to guard (A.V. 'keep' which I think is more correct) that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

The margin has "That which He hath committed unto me." I quite believe in both readings. What is this deposit? Some think it was his soul; others his position in the Church that he was used to establish; others that it was the gospel, etc. I have looked carefully, and can quite think that the Apostle may have had all three in his mind. If my reader prefers one, we should not object to it. However, I think that the Holy Ghost has so worded it that I think whatever deposit the Lord may have entrusted us with, we knowing our own insufficiency and knowing His sufficiency, will gladly entrust Him with it.

Verse 13. "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

He was put into his position by the Apostle Paul, and was instructed in the

faith principally by Paul. This pattern he was to follow, for Paul knew that they were sound in a church like Ephesus at that time. With men seeking to bring in various kinds of heresy, the only path of safety was to keep to the Apostolic teaching. These things are with us to-day, and our pattern is the Word of God, and we can praise God that His word suits the simple as much as the learned, and if either want more we get into peril. We not only have the written word to follow, but the faith and love of the incarnate Word. As we often sing, "Following Jesus we cannot go wrong." He alone is the object of our faith and the one with whom we have to do.

Verse 14. "That good thing which was committed unto thee, guard through the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

Here I think the good thing, (deposit) to fit in with the context, would mean the word of God, which the Holy Ghost moved holy men to write; the Holy Ghost whom the Lord sent to dwell within us, to teach us all things, to be the other Paraclete in His place; the real vicar of Christ.

Verse 15. "This thou knowest, that all

that are in Asia turned away from me ; of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.”

I have read that some of the early fathers, Chrysostom, etc. understood this to mean that, hearing of Paul's arrest the churches of Asia, probably being near rallied to his assistance. When they saw the awful persecution Nero was directing against them, they were dismayed and forsook him. If this had any truth in it, it could be so written, meaning those of Asia that came over to him. I have read that Nero fiddled while Rome burned. He however blamed the Christians for it. It became fairly usual for the political leaders to blame the Christians for their mismanagement, till Christians came to be regarded much as the Nihilists. The context demands something of this sort. Only one, we read, stood by him.

Personally, I have given a more general application than this for the sentence “all that are in Asia turned away from me, of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.” They were the most prominent to Paul. With this in mind, it is with great satisfaction I read the seven letters to the churches which are in Asia. These were written by John about thirty

years later. This suggests to me that if there was a great scattering there certainly must have been a great re-assembling again.

Verse 16. "The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain ;

Verse 17. But when he was in Rome he sought me diligently, and found me,

Verse 18. (The Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day) and in how many things he ministered at Ephesus, thou knowest very well."

The Apostle prays that God would grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus because he oft refreshed him, and was not ashamed of his chain. There are those who seek to bring in prayers for the dead. They seek to bring them in here, but it is clearly a conjecture, apparently based on the assumption that Onesiphorus was dead. I have read that Theodoret and Chrysostom wrote as though he was still alive at this time, and there is no evidence at that time or any thought that he was dead. I certainly can see no suggestion that he was dead. As far as present days are concerned, it is common to hear

prayers for a man and extend them to those that are his, even in his presence.

Of this praying for the dead, the Lord Himself said that unless you believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins, and whither I go ye cannot come. Read carefully John viii. 21-24. It can be nothing but unbelief that leads anyone on in opposition to the words of Christ. As they cannot come to where He is, how useless to pray for it.

If a man dies, trusting in Christ and His finished work, he can be absolutely sure that the Saviour's obedience and blood hath hid all his transgressions from view. But this gives all to Christ and leaves nothing to the ambitious men who for the sake of power and wealth exploit their fellow-men and introduce a false priesthood and a system of purification by fire to make good the incompleteness of Christ's work, and make it very clear that our advantage will best be secured by securing an interest in their prayers.

Coming back to Onesiphorus, we can see how welcome his ministry must have been to Paul, whose condition was very much worse during this second imprisonment. He had to be sought out

diligently before he could be found, which suggests to me that he was probably hidden away in some dungeon. The fact that those of Asia forsook him, but that Onesiphorus was not ashamed of his chain, implies that it was very dangerous to be identified with Paul.

Paul reminds Timothy of the work Onesiphorus did at Ephesus, i.e. when he was at home. This is worth thinking about.

Chapter II.

Verse 1. “Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

Paul now exhorts Timothy to be strengthened in Christ Jesus. The way this is expressed clearly shews that the grace is in Christ Jesus, and it is a sovereign grace. Yet to develop it in our lives is our responsibility. Paul brings before him the conduct of those in Asia that had turned away from him, and that of Onesiphorus who was loyal and true. Here Paul evidently wanted Timothy to keep this as his first purpose in life.

Verse 2. “And the things which thou

hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also."

The next purpose he mentions as a leader is that he must remember that till the Lord comes we are all passing on so that arrangements must be made to carry the message on. Paul's instructions were that what truth had been committed to him, he was to commit to men who had given evidence that they were faithful men, to whom God had given the ability to teach others. It is good teaching that the saint requires.

I have found it is a wise plan to direct their minds to a book of Scripture and seek to concentrate their attention on it. The result has been so satisfactory that they soon tackle another.

Verse 3. "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." Here Timothy's mind is directed to that which he might expect. In every department of life we come across disappointed men and women. Speaking generally, I think that there are two reasons for this, and roughly I divide these into fifty and fifty. Probably if one is bigger than the other, it is because our expectations are

not sound. What a lot we should miss if we saw to it that we only allowed ourselves to entertain only those that are reasonable and probable ! The other factor is the sort of things we desire. When we look at these two factors, we find that they are closely related. To suffer hardship is about the last thing we want, especially as the weakness of our body becomes more manifest.

I used to be astonished to see men eagerly sought after, gifted men, and then to find sometimes that they are suddenly dropped. I found with some that it nearly broke their hearts ; it made others bitter at first. I have found that God knows how to deal with them, for I find later that they rejoice in the fact that it has been a wonderful privilege to be used at all.

I have rarely met with a man who appears to have had little experience of disappointment. I think the reason for it with some of us is that we are not satisfied with the Lord Jesus only. If we are not careful, we may find that unsuspectingly we have wanted Christ and a plus. It is this plus, whatever it may be, which will probably be the trouble, and we must give our prayerful attention to it.

When quite a young Christian, and never having ventured in service beyond the taking of a class of very little boys, a trouble came into my life. One of the elder teachers wrote me and said, "Disappointments are always coming along but we must remember that 'there are thorns.'" He found the best way to take them out was to take the first letter D and put H in its place. I have found this to be very good. Try it, dear reader. It is about fifty-three years since I received the letter, and about fifty years since I have seen or heard of the writer. What I have written is what I remember of it.

I have also found it useful to remember that there are two sides to every thing. Though, when taking up the case of others, of course we would never take up, I trust, a personal question. I have found that there has been no intended unkindness. Circumstances have so changed that their usefulness to them is not the same, and one could see that the Lord desired them in a different work.

Verse 4. "No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him that enrolled him as a soldier."

This may probably be the reason for celibate priests ; that they may give themselves wholly to the interest of their church. But we must remember that there is a difference between being engaged and being entangled. The army has its book of general orders to which all have to conform. Our book of general orders is the Bible. The one object of a soldier is to please Him that enrolled him as a soldier, whatever dispensation he may be in. This must ever come first. In the present dispensation God has no earthly priesthood, hence it is a soldier that is brought before us.

Verse 5. “ And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned except he hath contended lawfully.”

It is well that we see for what it is that a Christian soldier contends. It is not for ETERNAL LIFE. This is God's free gift. It is not for SALVATION ; we are saved before we begin to fight. It is to make good and maintain and carry out our heavenly position and character, as Israel's was the earthly position and character. Their opponents were the nations ; ours the principalities, powers, World-rulers, etc.

What is it to contend lawfully ? In

sport, should a man win the prize, and it was discovered that he had broken or not observed the laws of the game, he would be disqualified. So, in the Christian service, it cannot be accepted unless we follow our instructions. To do this we need the whole armour of God. Eph. vi.

Verse 6. "The husbandman that laboureth must be the first to partake of the fruits."

This is the principle generally recognised, but we can learn some difficult problems as we note the manner of its being carried out.

Verse 7. "Consider what I say ; for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things."

We can never make a mistake in considering prayerfully the difficulties of our path, especially if done with a view to being kept from errors and mistakes, for here we are definitely promised that the Lord will give us understanding. Surely this is enough for us, is it not ?

Verse 8. "Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, of the seed of David according to my gospel."

If we ponder over this verse we shall see in many ways that to remember Christ

who was flesh and blood, that He is risen from the dead but is now alive from the dead, is indeed the very root of understanding the ways of God.

We gladly own that Christ was crucified and believe that on the Cross He met all that could possibly be against us.

However, we, for our present purpose think that nothing can help us more than the first words the Lord said : (Rev. i. 17,18.) “ Fear not, I am the first and the last and the living one ; I was dead and behold I am alive for evermore and I have the keys of death and Hades.”

We soon discover that it is the fact that Christ is risen and is alive for evermore that removes our fears and gives us strength.

I cannot but think that it is forgetting this that accounts for their absence so often when, as our custom is, we meet together on the first day of the week to remember Him in the breaking of bread. Seeing that this was a special request or command, such indifference must grieve Him.

Verse 9. “ Wherein I suffer hardship unto bonds as a malefactor ; but the word of God is not bound.”

This verse is worth pondering over.

We are inclined to think that if we are faithful to Christ and diligently do His work we shall be rewarded, thinking that it means now at the present time. We have been seeing that false expectations may lead us astray.

A soldier, when going out to war, does not expect the comforts and ease of life though he may get a taste now and then. He expects hardship, but looks to be blessed in the victory.

Here is Paul, an old man. When we look forward to rest, he finds himself in a dungeon, in chains, daily expecting to be killed. He finds his comfort in the fact that though he is bound, his message is not.

When we reflect that all we value is contained in the message, what a thrill this should give us ! This is confirmed by the history of the word. Paul, like the soldier, knew of the glory on his return home.

Verse 10. " Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

We see this brave old warrior still following on his course. He had given up all things for the sake of the chosen of

God ; and the grace of God enabled him to persevere to the end. What an example is this aged warrior ! His fortitude has been an inspiration to all the ages sustained by the eternal glory.

Verse 11. “ Faithful is the saying : For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.”

This old warrior, face to face with death by execution, is triumphant. We must bear in mind that to us all death is never far away especially as we get older, so that the apostle can exhort his beloved follower to follow his steps, even though it may lead to execution. Till the Lord comes, death is certain. It is however but an incident, and as he has previously said, to die is gain. If we have been crucified with Christ. When we have accepted Him as our Saviour, we see that He has borne our sins in His own body on the Tree.

No doubt Paul knew of His promise “ Because I live ye shall live also.” Paul had seen the Lord. He knew of several who had seen also, even of five hundred at one time, so that we can remember that to be with Him is our permanent ultimate destiny.

Verse 12. “ If we endure we shall

also reign with Him : if we shall deny Him, He also will deny us."

What an incentive for us, when called upon to suffer ! The one that does so will know that he will not only " live with Him " but will " Reign with Him."

" If we deny Him, He will deny us."

This is indeed a very solemn thing for for us to keep in mind. We get the same truth elsewhere in similar language. " If we deny Him, He will deny us." Yet we remember that Peter denied His Lord, so we shall have to be careful to get the balance of this ; else we may have a sense of terror that we should not. We can be sure however, that where the denial is a real one, so will His be. I think that we must know the state of our hearts before Him. Our private life, known only to ourselves and to Him, will assure us of this.

Verse 13. " If we are faithless, He abideth faithful ; for He cannot deny Himself."

We need to consider this carefully as I find it is possible to understand this in two ways ; I have understood it to mean that we should take comfort from this, for if we are not sure of ourselves we can be sure of Him. However, a

more careful reading leads me think that though this is true, I do not think it is intended here. I think the meaning is that we must never persuade ourselves that the Lord is too good and kind to punish us, but will forgive us or give us another chance, etc., etc. It warns against this. But He will be true to His own nature and will never treat and judge us contrary to that which is true.

Verse 14. "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them in the sight of the Lord that they strive not about words, to no profit, to the subverting of them that hear."

We now get a few rules which must regulate and also warn every workman in Christ ! "In the sight of the Lord." Any employer will know the immense difference it makes if the work is done under the master's eye. A true workman will rejoice in it, as it makes a true bond of sympathy with the employer. But to the Christian it is indispensable, not only for service but for fellowship, in fact, for all that we wish for.

Blessed God and Father, we do pray Thee that Thou wilt ever give to us the consciousness of Thy presence, for we are always happy then and safe. "That

they strive not about words." In our own private study we cannot take too much care to get the exact thought. What I think is meant here is the giving it out. Some do not accept. Instead of arguing about it, leave it with them for their consideration. Further, it is not reasonable to think that thoughts can be profitably changed without meditation.

"To the subverting of them that hear." To those who listen, very few things can provoke so much as a jangle of words.

Verse 15. "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."

Our main object here is to handle aright (or rightly divide. A.V.) the word of truth. It will be noted by the marginal readings that the word used has a very full meaning ; personally I can see that the word of truth may be viewed from more than one angle, and at times each of the marginal notes may be required.

We must divide rightly, or cut straight nothing may be done with it except that which God approves of. Hence, the the main thing is to consider the word

whilst consciously in His presence. We then see that the Word is so vast that it means much diligence, else we may find ourselves ashamed. The Word has made it very clear that we should meditate upon it day and night.

Verse 16. “But shun profane babblings ; for they will proceed further in ungodliness.”

Any of the young people who have attained sufficient power to search out original meanings of these three words, “Shun profane and vain babblings” will be well repaid. To shun means that you will take a circuit and go out of the way to avoid it. “Vain babblings” is just empty talk. Profane means open to all, i.e. not what we call religious or sacred. It really means to talk of them to those who have not been born from above. We are not to discuss the matter with them, because what can the natural man know of these things ; or the blind of colour, the deaf of sound, or the dead of life, however well taught they may be.

Is it wise to ignore our instructions ? If we seek to discuss with them, we with them will only proceed further in ungodliness.

Verse 17. “And their word will eat

as doth a gangrene ; of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus."

The word is gangrene, not cancer. I agree with those who think that Paul is alluding to the individual that holds the doctrine ; so deadly and swift is a gangrene that unless it can be cut away, death ensues in a few hours, whereas a cancer is of slower growth.

The consummation of the Christian faith is the redemption of the body (Romans viii. 23.) Note also Romans viii. 11. What can destroy this quicker than to believe it is past ?

"Of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus." We know nothing of Philetus. Of Hymenaeus we only know that he had been put out of church, and by this we see that he yet persists in his errors.

Verse 18. "Men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some."

We note that one of their notable errors was that the resurrection is past. This is an absurd position to take up amongst Christians, and yet it had a measure of success from their point of view, for it overthrew the faith of some.

Possibly their faith, such as it was,

would lead them to say " If the resurrection is past, I am not saved, for the scriptures teach a complete salvation ; body, soul and spirit."

All through history, even among those that were called Christian churches, it has been a ground of contention. I think that we would all admit that to the natural man there can be few things more incredible than the resurrection of the body. By faith we readily accept it, for we cannot place any limitation on God's power.

We may remind ourselves that we have a ground of approach. We should get a clear notion as to what we mean by the term body. We know by the teaching of physiology, confirmed in a measure by our own experience, that we have not exactly the same body five minutes together. Each time we breathe or move there is a loss, and we eat to make good this loss, so that our real body is not so much the elements of the body, but a power that we have within us which takes the daily renewals and builds up the same body. I have for many years thought that whatever it is that comes up out of the grave is due to this power.

To meditate upon this and bring it to its logical conclusion will give us a delightful time. If you think so, link it up with II Cor. v. 1-10.

Verse 19. "Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His; and let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."

This verse gives us assurance and comfort as to what the firm foundation of the Lord is. It still standeth, *i.e.*, it is still true.

"The Lord knoweth them that are His." We know that each believer has the Holy Ghost who is the seal. We are indwelt by Him. When the Holy Ghost makes this known to us, what can give us greater joy than to know that "He is mine and I am His." I cannot want more. Having arrived at this point, we are reminded as to the character we should bear. "And let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."

This word "let" in English, is a very ambiguous word. In fact, I cannot recall a word that is used in such a variety of ways as "let." Here in the

original it is a very definite word. There is no choice for the man that nameth the name of the Lord. Being in the imperative mood, we are commanded to depart from all unrighteousness, and as it is in the second aorist tense, it must be done at once and completely.

What a testimony the world would have if we obeyed the command ! We can have a considerable influence over self, and it is our privilege to call upon the Lord and say, " Lord, help me to do so." He now proceeds to give us a strong incentive to do so.

Verse 20. " Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth ; and some unto honour and some unto dishonour."

To get the real use of this verse, we must connect it with the two following verses.

The Church is likened to a great house which contains various kinds of vessels ; those that are of metal last, being gold and silver ; they are precious. Figuratively they point to divine things and things that pertain to redemption, so they are for the Master's use. Those that are of wood and clay serve a tempor-

any purpose. The Master is not said to use them. They do not point to such a high figurative purpose. So that our minds are directed to be a vessel that the Master uses.

Verse 21. “ If a man therefore purge himself from these he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master’s use, prepared unto every good work.”

The word for “ purge ” is a strong word ; it means to cleanse thoroughly. Note, that he is to cleanse himself. I cannot think anyone can delight in sovereign grace more than I do, but here is a sphere that teaches us that, as believers, it depends on our own effort. Only those that are born from above can enter the list for such wonderful honours. Surely our own experience fully confirms this. We shall have more instructions yet, but the one that comes to my mind is this, and let me ask it of every reader of this book.

Does God put any premiums on laziness? We cannot say yes. Can we hope to advance in God’s service unless we give a reasonable time each day to the study of the Word? We may say our business must be attended to. Of

course it must, but if it means that you cannot give a definite reasonable time to the Word, you will be paying a big price for your business. We do not want to pay too much for the whistle, as Benjamin Franklin used to say. I have always considered that I owed my success in business to my love of conversational Bible readings. When possible, I have attended as many as four per week, generally two. There is no study that requires a greater nicety of thought than the scriptures, so one gets well trained in discrimination, also in being able to speak or write one's thoughts. Above all, it is essential if we desire God to use us for His good work.

Verse 22. "But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart."

The word for "lusts" simply meant an ardent desire for anything. It may have been for things that in moderation there could be no objection to, only then it could not be said to be an ardent desire; or it may have been for wicked things, that even moderately could not be allowed. I think, in English, this

word lately has veered in its use in this direction.

A youthful lust to-day would suggest to me an ardent love for sport or pleasure. As one gets older its form or object may change to covetousness, etc.

But, young or old, the Lord's people are here commanded to pursue, hunt, or as translated, to follow after, righteousness, faith, love, peace. What could be better?

But note that this quest must be in association with those that call upon the Lord out of a cleansed heart. The more I considered, the more I objected to translating "*Katharos*" as pure. I believe the Lord Jesus alone can be said to be "pure." Having our hearts cleansed, the Holy Ghost seeks to purify them, not otherwise. We must begin and maintain our basic position of being cleansed through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I write this because I have come across all sorts of cults. Most claim an elevated walk, and take on some sort of slogan, such as "The highest when I see it." I have associated these with those that cling to merit. I am very thankful that when attending a series of lectures at a

University centre, I went up to the Professor and said I was not clear as to what he meant. I said, "Do you believe that Christ was crucified for our sins?" His reply, as near as I can state it, was, "Have you been crucified . . . ?"

The morality, as far as I could see, was very fine, but a sinner must have a Saviour, and we can trust the Holy Ghost to conform us to His image. I can only interpret this verse to mean that I must call upon the Lord with those who rejoice that their sins are cleansed with His precious blood.

Verse 23. "But foolish and ignorant questionings refuse, knowing that they gender strifes. And the Lord's servant must not strive."

As a worker this is a command that will stand us in good stead if carefully attended to. Our first introduction to our Lord (except for His birth and childhood) is when we find Him as a lad asking and answering questions. As we read His life we see that He continued this method, and we find it to be a very valuable one, but, like many other good things, it has dangers. There are certain questions that lead to a war of words, or to unmeaning phrases. Let us look

at the first. We are told a bond-servant must not strive. Our demeanour or behaviour is more effective generally than what we say, so that care has to be exercised that we do not be led into a jangle, or we may find that it may lead on to the use of such phrases that the listeners have no idea what we are talking about. This may be due to several causes. We will look at one or two, and our minds will suggest others. We may use words that they are unaccustomed to, especially long words, or we may let the subject get on to any of the infinities, and we can be sure that no finite creature can really grasp them. We must therefore drop it, and use will enable us to do this in a pleasant way.

Verse 24. "But be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing in meekness, correcting (M. instructing) them that oppose themselves."

This verse tells us that when we find an opponent we are first to see to ourselves. We must be gentle; see that we are apt to teach, and if we have no success in our efforts in this direction, we are probably in the wrong place. We shall be wise to let others judge this. We must have "forbearance." This

word really means being patient under trial. In meekness we must seek to instruct them. What is it that I hear? How can you expect boys and girls to be able to fill a position like that?

I thought that I had not made myself clear.

Remember this is a message to the Lord's bond-servants. This includes all that belong to the Lord, boys and girls right up to the oldest saints. The Lord can use all whom He chooses to send. If you are happy with the Lord about your position, stay where you are and read carefully your instructions. He will help you. Keep in mind the Lord's purpose, which is now brought before us.

Verse 25. "If peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth."

Note the behaviour we are to have towards them. We are to instruct them in such a way that it may be that God will cause them to repent and return to the knowledge of the truth.

Verse 26. "And they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by the Lord's servant unto the will of God."

This verse is a much disputed verse, on account of its construction. I used to understand this as the Authorised Version. As I have to write it down, and cannot recall it, I have carefully re-examined it, and now much prefer the Revised Version. But being only an ordinary reader, I may not have perhaps caught what the revisers intended. This word "recover" really means to return to soberness. It suggests, alas, what we frequently meet, those we quite thought to be Christians being intoxicated by some false teaching. The inducement here is that by the message given us, God may restore them to soberness. It is profitable to compare this with Eph. v. 14. Then, afterwards compare the two pronouns "*auton*" and "*ekeinon*," remembering that the word "captive" really means taken alive captive, and that both meanings are in the word. Also get the suggestions from the Revised Version margin. I prefer to bracket it as follows ("And they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken alive captive by him) unto the will of God."

Note that they are to recover them-

selves. This is the old story. They must want it. Whether it is the sinner, or the saint, that God invites, it is the thirsty.

We know that if we resist the devil he will flee from us. We know that his power was broken at the Cross, but, alas, we do get painful experiences of his traps, gins, or snares.

It is well to ponder over this unpleasant prospect of being ensnared. Various ways will suggest themselves to us. I personally think we are carefully examined by him, to discover our inclinations. It may be we overdo our pleasures, our business, or ambition to make a name. These things may cause us to neglect private prayer and the reading of the word and the meetings, etc.

Chapter III.

Verse 1. "But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come."

"But know this." This is in the imperative, hence a command. The knowledge here is the knowledge of experience. This keeps us from getting upset by having false expectations. I had an example of this in my early

Christian experience. I felt the gospel was going to improve the world, but my experience and meditations in no way confirmed this. Then I saw that God's object is to take out of them a people for His name.

What an incentive has this been to me !

“ That in the last days grievous times shall come.” We must fix the dispensation and then the term would apply to that dispensation. As Timothy was to get a personal experience, it must allude to this church dispensation. As I read the scripture I think the prospect is against a general improvement in the world spiritually.

There is no article before “ the last days ” so that it does not point to a specific time. (I John ii. 18.) As we look back we can see in Paul's time that things were so bad that they thought that the day of the Lord was present. History shews us that these bad times come from time to time, and have been very severe. This has led some to think that these last days are from the Cross till I Thess. iv. It is worth considering.

Verse 2. “ For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful,

haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.

Verse 3. without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control,

Verse 4. fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

The general thought is that these things creep into the Christian church. It may be that we, who know our own weakness, realise that most of us feel like this sometimes. Some eminent Christians have said on seeing a criminal passing by in custody, "There but for the grace of God goes (his own name)." We who sometimes take our eyes off Christ and look inside know how true that is.

I think that the apostle had in mind that amongst those who profess Christ these things become manifest. Many of these no doubt are strangers to the grace of God. Paul, however, shews us in I Cor. iii. 3 that believers may become carnal. This is dealt with again and again in Scripture, and we know that what we need is more grace. Let us, when at the throne, pray that we

may really be a lover of God rather than a lover of pleasure.

Verse 5. "Holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof : from these turn away."

It is clear that the apostle had professing Christians in mind. But note that these are said to have denied the power thereof. It will be useful if we consider how they deny the power thereof. We may vary in detail, but we really must get a clear notion, for we are commanded, "From these turn away." We can only do this with discrimination.

I note that those from whom we are to turn are, I think, those who advocate unity among all who profess to be Christians, and who seek to do this by amalgamation. The larger the scale the more dangerous it is. All Christians would like to be united to all. I only know of one way. The psalmist said, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee." If we do this our one object will be to please Him.

It sometimes gives considerable help to look at the opposite. If we find those that are content to behold His face, and of whom their all is to His pleasure

resigned, we shall find that such will not be proud, and look down on those that have not a high social position, or wealth, or natural gifts. We shall soon find out if they are satisfied with Christ or not.

Verse 6. "For of these are they that creep into houses and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts."

The apostle points out that these early corrupters of the truth made a special effort among the women. This is thought by some to be the result of the liberating influences of that time on the lives of women. Much of it is due to the Christian church. Whereas righteousness should have been taught, these lulled their souls in a false peace by shewing them that they might still be Christians though not living as the scriptures taught.

These men are deliberate. They intend to capture the women. Heretics all through the ages find many captives from among women. These are said to be laden with sins, and led away by divers lusts. This word "lust" is not necessarily the objectional word used in modern English. With what

follows, I should take them to be fond of novelty and anything that pointed to the occult. Things that are dark and mysterious would gratify their weak minds.

Verse 7. “ Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” I wish that I could confine this to one sex alone. The root reason is that they are not able to learn what truth is. They have never been born from above, though it is clear that a believer who gets occupied with self instead of Christ will probably find that his vision is greatly impaired.

Blessed God and Father, keep us, we pray, from any such defect in our character that will be likely to prevent us from coming to a settled decision as to the truth.

Verse 8. “ And like as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these men also withstand the truth ; men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith.”

I used to believe that the Holy Ghost revealed their names to the Apostle, because I could not find their names in Scripture. I have since read that their names came down in the traditions of

the elders, and are to be found in the Targums of Jonathan. The word Targum means interpretation.

The way this is written is an evidence to me, as far as their names are concerned, that we can accept them as true. This is very instructive to us, because it gives us the nature of the resistance in the last days, namely, imitation. As we keep our eyes open we see how increasingly this is going on. As we read the story we find that when they were brought in to confront Moses, the first three miracles that Moses did, they did the same in like manner with their enchantments. But when it came to the lice, they admitted that they could not do this. "It was the finger of God." When it came to the boils and blains, they had to have them likewise. In a word, they sought to bring about the same results with other methods.

The greater number to-day do not want the grace and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek to obtain satisfaction by what they may think gives better results, such as education, science, governments, etc. But these things, however desirable or even necessary, are poor substitutes for the grace which

Christ gives, as we shall see when we read Titus.

Verse 9. “ But they shall proceed no further : for their folly shall be evident unto all men, as theirs also came to be.”

What a comfort this is to those that love the Lord and rest upon the Word ! These know that this is the essential source of the faith, and so cling to it. Alas ! we meet with those who merely profess that they love the Lord. We soon discover that it is not the Christ of God that they have in their minds.

Here we are told that they shall proceed no further, that is, they get to a certain point when other forces, very often equally dangerous, sometimes from God, overthrow them.

We look back through the ages, and note the various attacks on the Christian faith. It grows sometimes very much, and then is brought to a standstill by new foes. These frequently turn out to be old foes with new faces.

The Lord has been reduced to an ordinary man, or else it is declared that He never existed. The Bible has been overthrown over and over again from all points of view.

The incarnate Christ and the written Word are still with us. I think, after reviewing what I know, that Christ actually is loved by more than ever. I am not speaking of profession, for if some dictator ordered it there would be plenty of that. Certainly the Bible is still the best seller, and more abundant than ever.

I have pondered over this and, like others, I expect, have asked myself why God allows this. For some reason or for many, the Lord has raised some men and women who love a fight. I have read of some of the terrific battles that some of the early fathers had to fight. Similar warriors are ever with us. Some books and periodicals are ever at it. I know that those that have been born from above have been strengthened and that their faith has been made more clear. We are all glad the Lord keeps us busy, and I would remind my readers that have a combative nature, that the sword of the Spirit will enable you to defend and protect the saints that have a quiet and peaceable nature. They dislike anything like conflict, and love to revel in the sweetness

that is to be found in Christ. Some of these warriors do this also.

“ Their folly became manifest.” I have pondered over their exposure of the men who came to the aid of the king against Moses. Their main object was to discredit the message of God. When covered with the blains and boils, how ridiculous would they appear to all ! They were like the man that had no wedding garment. Whatever he may have said previously, he was speechless when spoken to by the master of the house. When one hears men blaspheme against the Almighty, thinking how they are crushing the Christian faith, and filled with a sense of their importance, we know that a like fate is surely before them unless they repent.

Verse 10. “ But thou didst follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings.”

The apostle gives Timothy a personal recommendation, and then places before him the special graces which should characterise a believer. “ But thou didst follow my teaching, etc.” The practical outcome of the faith was taught by the apostle as clearly as the doctrinal, and

by the common consent of all believers. We believe that the apostles, through the personal training of the Lord and the indwelling of the other Paraclete, *i.e.*, the Holy Ghost, and obedience to the word, attained to a high degree, as we all should. We know, by careful reading, that none attained that degree of perfection, in the English meaning of the word, that our beloved Lord possessed. However, the apostle John says, "We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

We can readily see how important it is for the writer and for each reader to carefully and prayerfully meditate upon these graces, in order that they may become subjects of conversation among them, instead of the unprofitable conversation that some of us indulge in.

Verse 11. "What things that befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; and out of them all the Lord delivered me."

We ask ourselves why the apostle selected Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, for his life was filled with like adventure.

It appears to me, when desiring

Timothy to come into the work, that he reminded him of the incidents that first happened when God called Barnabas and him. (See Acts xiii. and xiv.)

Paul knew that nothing would be more calculated to disturb our minds, and probably Timothy's, than serious trouble arising that was unexpected.

It comes to this, boys and girls, that if we really love the Lord and want to enter into His service, we must carefully read the Word and get clear ideas as to what we may expect. If we do this, whilst walking closely with the Lord, we shall discover that whatever experience we may be called to pass through, the light He gives will surely make our path clear.

Such epistles as this to Timothy will help us in this very much indeed. The apostle, with his experience in view, said, "Out of them all the Lord delivered me." We know that he expected bonds and imprisonment, and he certainly got them. He was imprisoned, beaten, stoned, flogged, and ultimately executed in prison. What could the apostle mean when he said the Lord delivered him? The answer is in chapter iv. 7, which, D.V., we shall come to. In a word,

I think he would say that he was delivered from these things, for none affected his course.

Verse 12. “ Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

Here is what we must expect whilst in a world that contains such men and women as described in verses 2 to 4 of this chapter. It was so with our Lord, and is so with all that seek to walk with Him. We would naturally expect that a man who walked with God would be popular. Our instructions, however, are very clear. “ If a man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.” Matthew xvi. 24. This denying oneself is just what makes them unpopular, as that is what men frequently have no inclination for, and further, jealousies are almost habitual with some.

Verse 13. “ But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

Christians, through their new nature and the Holy Ghost indwelling and guiding them, are not only saved but are being saved, and go on to a perfect salvation. So do evil men and impostors

wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. How solemn is this !

Verse 14. " But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

" But abide thou." This is in the imperative, and so comes to us with the full force of a command. How trying it is to meet with those that lack stability of character. In my early days, I had a fellow Sunday School teacher. As we walked together I would say, " What do you believe this week, John ? " Every new book, or perhaps a new companion, made him wobble. It is a wise plan, when new thoughts are presented to us, not to accept them till we have searched the Word quietly so that we are in no hurry to reach a hasty conclusion. Then we should get alone with the Lord and talk to Him about it.

Verse 15. " And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

This verse helps us to understand verse 16. The sacred writings were undoubtedly the Old Testament scrip-

tures. The apostle may have included as much of the New already written. The Lord meant the Old Testament writings when He said, "Search the scriptures." To make this mean *any* writings, would render the rest of John v. 39 absurd. This clearly shews that the sacred writings were in the apostle's mind ; writings which are able to make us wise unto salvation.

Verse 16. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." (A.V. All scripture is inspired of God and is profitable, etc.)

I know some very dear brethren who prefer the R.V. and think there is nothing to fear. As my experience does not confirm this, I have had to look closely at what it says in the Greek, and though I do not pretend to be a Greek scholar, I find that those who are credited with being so, disagree, so that whichever way we read it, we should be able to claim that we are in good company.

My first objection to this is that one of the principal rules is broken, *i.e.*, when the article (which is an adjective) is in front of the substantive only the adjective

becomes a predicate and the copula "is" or "are" must frequently be supplied. I am not aware of any other place where the rule is broken. In Tim. iv. 4 also Hebrews iii. 4 the rule is observed, and to break the rule leaves them without meaning, as I think it does here. For example, what can I say when I hear one say, "I believe that every scripture is inspired of God, but we must ascertain which scripture is inspired of God." I am familiar with some of the replies to this, but they do not give me any confidence.

The reason for this translation has been thought by some to be due to the higher critics. The construction again appears to be faulty, as *θεοληνεντος* and *ωφελιπος* are both adjectives and nominatives. "Is" is supplied in one and not the other.

I have had for many years a note in my Bible as follows: Dr. Nathaniel West says if anybody knows how to read Greek it is men who were born Greeks, to whom Greek was their native tongue, who spoke, preached, and wrote their mighty works in Greek. Chrysostom, Origen, Basil, the two Gregories, Athanas-

ius, supply the copula as R.V. margin and the Authorised Version.

With fifty-nine years' experience as a believer I am satisfied that the scriptures are profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. If it were not so, the following verse would be without meaning.

Verse 17. "That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

What more can we want? Whatever man may suggest, we cannot be more than complete, nor can we be more than furnished completely, and this includes every good work. There can be no reason for us to want to be in different circumstances or envious of any. This clearly indicates the path we must pursue in order to be well-pleasing to God. An archangel wants no more than this.

We thank Thee, blessed God and Father, for this Thy great grace to us all that have accepted Thy beloved Son."

Chapter IV.

Verse 1. "I charge thee, in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus who shall

judge the quick and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom ; preach the Word."

We must be careful here, for some connect this with I Thess. iv. I understand that scripture to be ; When the Lord comes for His saints He comes in the air ; the dead in Christ are caught up. These I believe to be the dead in Christ of every dispensation, the Church included. The Christians that are alive are caught up with them, for the express purpose of ever being with Him. The first thing that happens is the judgement-seat of Christ for rewards. This is before the great tribulation, for we see them enthroned, crowned and robed. This is confirmed in Rev. iv. The account of the great tribulation begins at chapter vi. Whereas here, I think is when the Lord comes with His saints to those (wicked) that are alive. Chapter xiv. 14. " And on the cloud I saw one sitting like unto a son of man, having on His head a golden crown." Here we see the harvest and the vintage judgements. In chapter xx. 14, 15 we see the judgement of the dead (wicked), the Lord being on a white throne.

I have met with some saints who

appear to have but little confidence in the Lord when these judgments are spoken about. As we are living in an age in which the patience and long-suffering of the Lord are running their course, the comparison is not pleasant reading.

We must bear in mind that sin, cruelty, etc., will never be put to an end till the judgements are on the earth; not till then. Isaiah, about three thousand years ago, has told us this, and all the time this has proved to be true. It is only when His judgements are on the earth that the inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness.

There are two or three outstanding thoughts that comfort me, and I can wait till the time comes to be able to fit in the detail accurately. All these scriptures will stand out clearly then, as the others have done.

First, it is a real comfort to me to know that it is God's mind to bring all sin, sorrow and cruelty to an end.

Secondly, I note that the judgements come from a white cloud and a white throne. I cannot but feel that if a single act of injustice came from either it would leave a dirty stain on them,

so sure I am that the Judge will do that which is right.

Thirdly, I can be sure of this, for I see that from Rev. iv. to xx. in every song right through to the Hallelujah Chorus, the outstanding impression made upon every living creature is the holiness of God. In each song is "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, and Worthy is the Lamb." Because of this we shall all be glad and rejoice for evermore.

Because we have learnt what David told us in Psalm xix, we know that the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. But what we learn in 2. Tim. iv. 1. is that, keeping the judgements in view, we see how important is this charge, that all who are engaged in the work of salvation should "preach the Word." It is the only effective instrument God blesses that counts for salvation.

Verse 2. "Be instant in season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching."

How fitting is this word ! To the sinner the charge is a matter of life or death. To the saint it is for a full and abundant entrance. I think this word

used for 'instant' carries with it the thought of ever being on the alert. We know for most things that there is a time for it, but this work frequently comes unexpectedly. Think of the runaway slave, in Philemon, saved in the prison; the jailer at Philippi, all in circumstances of varying kinds. As we read the biographies of Christian workers, or in some measure in our own lives, whilst travelling, visiting, unexpected meetings, we may think of these as out of season. Not only does the charge apply to seasons, but to all kinds of ministry. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering. All can prove effective at the right season. Note how well balanced a worker is exhorted to be. Rebuke is indeed a stern word; exhort is to encourage and comfort; long-suffering is for self-discipline in the work.

Verse 3. "For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts."

This word for "sound" is M. 'healthful.' The test of doctrine is whether it tends to form Christ in us. God is intensely practical, and all plans must

have a beneficial result ; anything else could not come from Him. Alas ! some like to have their ears tickled and are captured by that which appeals to what they like. Note the popular man. It is frequently with his anecdotes and tales that he amuses the people, but this creates a disgust for the truth, if it comes in a sterner way.

As far as I can gather, this spirit has ever been with us, but this must mean in an increased measure. The love for pleasure, as far as I can see, has increased in the world, and as it does there may be the reflection of it in the Church.

Verse 4. “ And will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.”

How prayerful we should be, and constantly on the alert as to what we lay before the people, of any kind, lest we do them a serious injury.

Verse 5. “ Be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.”

But be thou *népre*, not intoxicated. This is not very flattering, but it implies that if we are led astray by a false glamour, by the improvements of the

world, or by that which amuses, then that is our condition. He was an Evangelist. Let all such find their work ; that is what they are here for. Do it. Let us fulfil our ministry, and not leave it half done ; we cannot afford to curtail our labours. The preacher here sees the people getting away to popular preachers. What shall this man do ? Seek to be one of them ? The instructions are plain : suffer hardship.

Verse 6. “ For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come.”

The apostle's thought apparently is that he is now being offered up. Having been released once, the Romans were not the sort of people to forgive again if any persisted in their conduct. Probably circumstances made it clear, or the warders may have told him that the end was not far off. He now leaves it to Timothy to carry on the work, and he tells him that he, in his turn, must commit it to faithful men. 2. Tim. ii. 2.

Verses 7, and 8. “ I have fought the good fight ; I have finished the course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge

shall give to me that day ; not only to me but also to all them that have loved his appearing.”

There is nothing more calculated to keep us right so much as to settle *every* question in view of the Lord’s appearing.

Here the apostle likens himself to a warrior, and also to a runner. He claims to have done three things.

As we look back over our lives, we can, like the apostle, use his metaphors, and see that our life has been made up of a series of conflicts. He then changes his metaphor to that of a runner. With some of us it has been a long run, but the goal is in view. What a solid satisfaction it must have been to the apostle that, through grace, he is able to say, “ I have kept the faith.” Yet it is sad to think that all cannot say this. Blessed God and Father, please grant that to writer and to reader this grace may be given. May our love to Thee never wane ; then will our joy in Thee, in our home and our duties, be full.

What a grand assurance the apostle had ! All his labour of love and the suffering that he had to bear is to be rewarded by a righteous judge. He can leave all to Him, and though it is called

the crown of righteousness, the latter clause of this verse shews that it is not so much due to merit but to a love for Christ's appearing.

It has been said that the apostle did not include even those that are called Christian, if the thought of His appearing gives terror.

How solemn and salutary are the words in the song we sing : " Have I a hope, however dear, which would defer Thy coming, Lord ! "

Verse 9. " Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me."

What a surprising thing to read after reading verse 6. Here is a man who believes his end may come any day or at any moment. He knows that the Lord may defer it, so he gives instructions to proceed as usual. It is evident that till the time actually came, however near he thought it, he intended to put in the last stroke of work.

Verse 10. " For Demas forsook me, having loved this present world, and went to Thessalonica ; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me."

As to Demas, see my note on the third epistle of John.

Crescens went to Galatia, a province in Asia Minor, named from the Gauls who settled there. I can get no positive information about Crescens, so we must wait till we see him. Titus went to Dalmatia, which was north-west of the Adriatic Sea.

Luke, the beloved physician (Col. iv. 14.) appears to have been a constant companion of Paul, thought by some to be due to the weak state of health of that dying body which Paul ever bore about with him. When Luke wrote his gospel (i. ii. iii.) he tells us his method. There can be no doubt that he was helped by Paul, for whom would they talk about but the beloved Lord. There would be something wrong then, as now, if they did not.

Verse 11. "Take Mark and bring him with thee ; for he is useful to me for ministering."

This is a pleasant reading, for it is full of encouragement to a believer and worker that has failed. We saw how at Pamphylia Mark had failed them and returned to Jerusalem. Acts xiii. 13. When planning for fresh work, Barnabas was minded to take Mark with them. Paul however would not hear of it, so

that a rupture occurred between these men who loved each other, and they parted. Acts xv. 36. Here we find Paul making request for his services. What a joy I think this must have been to Mark ! His behaviour had won the confidence of Peter and maintained that of Barnabas.

Verse 12. " But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus." This Tychicus we find mentioned in Acts xx. 4. Eph. iv. 21,22. Col. iv. 7, 8. He was evidently much loved and trusted by Paul.

Verse 13. " The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments."

We can quite understand that an aged man like Paul would value a warm cloak in a damp or cold prison. All who knew Paul at all would know that he would not shrink from any necessary suffering for the Church, but evidently he does not think that to suffer without a good reason for it, is any sign of sanctity. He can think of these things as of those things " given us to enjoy." The writings or the books and parchments are for his use or pleasure, which to him would mean further service.

Verse 14. "Alexander the copper-smith did me much evil ; the Lord will render him according to his works."

This Alexander is probably the same as 1. Tim. i. 20. Some connect him with the Alexander of Acts xix. 33. This however is certainly stated, that he did the apostle much evil, and the apostle is sure of this, that the punishment rendered to him will be "according to his works." For God is a just God, and to all that refuse His mercy this is sure, that every creature will receive just their due, neither more nor less. This word "according" comes very familiar to me, for those that have fled for refuge to Christ are filled with delight as they read Paul's epistle to the Ephesian church and note the word "according." It is an assurance that we are blessed and forgiven "according to the riches of His grace." When we meditate upon the fourteen times we get this wonderful word in the epistle, it seems too good to be true, but we can accept it without reservation, because it is written, and we know that we are the objects of His love.

Verse 15. "Of whom be thou ware also ; for he greatly withstood our words."

This is a very necessary quality to possess whilst in a world like this. Elsewhere we are told to be as wise as serpents but as harmless as doves. The reason given is that he withstood the apostle's words. I have for years seen that whoever withstands the gospel has generally a moral defect.

Verse 16. "At my first defence, no one took my part, but all forsook me ; may it not be laid to their account."

This to me disposes of the presence of the apostle Peter at Rome. He certainly would not have forsaken the apostle Paul, neither could the apostle Paul have said that all forsook him, if they were companions in suffering.

Verse 17. "But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me ; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and that all the Gentiles might hear ; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."

It must have been a real encouragement to Timothy to have the apostle's testimony as to the faithfulness of the Lord to His servants. The Lord stood by him and strengthened him. It must have been a real trial to the apostle to see those on whom he felt he could rely

deserting him through fear or, as they may have thought, discretion. What comfort it must have given the apostle to have the consciousness of the Lord's presence and help. What appears to have helped the apostle most was that the Lord so directed the trial that he was enabled to set forth in full the gospel which was so dear to his heart, because the Gentiles were able to hear. It has ever been so, that when the Lord gets such workers the work should advance as it has done.

It must have confirmed the apostle's faith to realise that he had been "delivered out of the mouth of the lion." This, with I. Cor. xv. 32., also is taken by some to be figurative, whilst others, seeing that many Christians were thrown to the lions, take it literally.

I make it my rule to take everything literally that I can with sense. I also know how absurd we can make the Bible by taking everything either literally or figuratively. Here both seem probable, as the Emperor could be figured as the lion.

Verse 18. "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto His heavenly kingdom ; to

Whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen."

This after all is the thing that really matters, even though the path to it may be trying and difficult. As we read Revelation, we note that the martyred remnant had the better reward over the spared remnant, for they entered into the first resurrection.

Verse 19. " Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus.

Verse 20. " Erastus abode at Corinth (of which he was treasurer, see Acts. xix. 22. Romans xvi. 20., and he returned to Corinth, Acts xx.) But Trophimus I left at Miletus sick."

The apostles apparently lost much of their testimony in healing after the church was established.

Verse 21. " Do thy diligence to come before winter."

It is clear that Paul would welcome a visit from Timothy. It is also clear that he left Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus. How long did he intend Timothy to remain there? It might be till he found the faithful men that he could leave in charge.

" Eubulus saluteth thee, and Pudens,

and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren."

I can understand Paul leaving this till the last, and I cannot see that he could leave off at a better place. It is true they all forsook him (verse 16.) With this before us it looks to me as if they could see that they could serve him better by doing so, but they kept in touch with him and comforted him. Certainly with these scriptures it does seem as if it was in some measure effective. As far as I can see, the only knowledge we have that he was actually slain is through tradition. I must admit that I cannot accept much that comes from Rome. He tells us that he was delivered from the lion. This word 'delivered' "*errusthēn*" is the first aorist ind. passive, which I can only read as that without his own effort he was completely delivered.

Verse 22. "The Lord be with thy spirit, grace be with you."

We heartily add Amen to this, as some manuscripts do.

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