

A Study of 1 Timothy

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Each of the six chapters includes *Darby's Synopsis* followed by *Coffman's Commentary*, both found at <http://www.searchgodsword.org/> . There are many other helpful aids at this site sponsored by some churches in Abilene and Abilene Christian University.

For the definitions of the original Greek, see <http://bible.worthwhile.com/bible.php?b=1tim&c=1&v=1&d=6&w=25>.

Lesson 1 Background, History, Greeting from Paul

1 Timothy 1

The Epistles to Timothy and Titus have naturally a peculiar bearing and character, being addressed to persons deputed by the apostle to act in his name, or to care for the churches during his absence. Their application to us is nonetheless direct on this account, because they not only instruct us with regard to the state of the church, and the pastoral care which the apostle bestowed on it, but the line of conduct in which Timothy is charged to lead the faithful is that which the faithful ought always themselves to follow. Nevertheless to confound the directions given to Timothy and Titus with the words addressed immediately to the faithful would be to cast confusion upon ministry in its best sense.

A great part of this First Epistle to Timothy requires but little development; not because it is without importance but because it contains directions - so plain and simple that explanation would be superfluous - and practical exhortations which would only be obscured and their force and point taken away by attempting to enlarge upon them.

On the other hand, some general principles of great importance for the position of the assembly in general are contained in this epistle.

God assumes here, in a peculiar way, the character of a Savior-God with regard to the world: a principle of great importance in all that concerns our conversation in the world and our intercourse with men. We represent in our religious character a God of love. This was not the case in Judaism. He was indeed the same God; but there He took the character of a Lawgiver. All were indeed to come to His temple according to the declaration of the prophets, and His temple was open to them; but He did not characterize Himself as a Savior-God for all. In Titus we find the same expression.

In these confidential communications to his dear children in the faith and companions in the work, we can understand that the apostle would clearly establish the great principles on which the administration committed to him rested. That all men were the objects of God's dealings in grace was the general basis on which this administration was founded-that the character of God towards the world was that of a Savior. (Compare 2 Cor. 5) The law has its place and it still has it, as the apostle shows-the conviction of unrighteous men. But the sovereign mercy of God was the starting-point of all that the apostle had to declare. This thought, this spirit, was to govern the worship even of believers. Details follow. Notwithstanding this love to the world, there was upon the earth an assembly of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth, and the witness to it on earth. The Person of Christ, and all that concerns Him, is the subject of its confession, the foundation of its existence, and the object of its faith. This faith would be assailed in the last days by the enemy, who, under the pretense of sanctity, would set himself up against God the Creator and Preserver of all men and of believers in particular. Directions for the walk of the assembly compose the remainder of the epistle. Conduct suitable to all is set before Timothy to make him, as well as ourselves, understand that which befits the assembly of God. We will now look more closely into the contents of this epistle.

From its commencement the apostle designates God as the Savior-God. Paul is the apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ is the confidence and the hope of the soul.

We observe also that the apostle's wish differs from that which he expresses when addressing an assembly; "Grace, mercy," he says, "and peace." He does not say "mercy" to the assemblies, which stand before God as such, in consequence of the mercy shown them, and which (however low their condition might be) are viewed as assemblies according to the nature in which they live by the Spirit, in which there is no question of mercy, because that nature is itself of God. Grace and peace are that

which they are to enjoy on the part of God. But when an individual is in question, whatever his piety or faithfulness may be, he is both flesh and spirit, his career has yet in part at least to be provided for, having always need of mercy. Therefore the apostle wishes it to Timothy as well as to Titus. In the case of Philemon he adds "the church in thy house," and his wish has therefore no longer the personal form. But with Timothy and Titus it is the apostle's intimacy with his beloved fellow-laborers. He knew how much they needed mercy. It was his own resource, that which he had experienced for the comfort of his own soul.

The special object for which Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus, when he went into Macedonia, was that he might watch over the doctrine which was taught; but being there, he gives him directions for the interior order of the assembly. The evil which the enemy sought to introduce, with regard to doctrine, had a twofold character; fables of human imagination, and the introduction of the law into Christianity. As to the former, it was pure evil and edified no one. The apostle does not here say much about it; he forewarned them of the evil; and the faith of the assembly at Ephesus was solid enough to allow him to treat the whole system as mere fables and genealogies. The Spirit gave warning, that in later times it would have more disastrous consequences; but at present there was only need to guard the faithful from it as that which was worthless. Timothy was charged by the apostle to attend to this.

But that which is committed to us in Christianity as service, is always, both in its object and its character, at the height of the eternal principles of God, and belongs to the foundation of our moral relations with Him.

The object of Paul's mandate is the love of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, and never the subtleties of argument or of human imagination. This is a sure token for souls that are sound in the faith and guided by the Spirit of God. Speculative questions do not act on the conscience, nor bring into the presence of God. Some had forsaken these great landmarks of Christianity, turning aside to vain discussions. And here we again find those same corrupters of Christianity, who, after having rejected the Savior, sowed the apostle's path with thorns—Judaizing teachers. They desired to inculcate the law. The human mind is adequate to this.

Now we see here the way in which one who is at the height of the truth of God can put everything in its true place. Paul treats the produce of human imagination as mere fables; but the law was of God and could be made useful if rightly employed. It was of great service to condemn, to judge evil, to slay—to show the judgment of God against every wrong thing forbidden by the gospel which revealed the glory of the blessed God—a glory which tolerated no evil and which had been committed to the apostle. It could be used to act upon the conscience in this way, but it did not build up the righteous; and, if any were under the law, they were under the curse. As a sword for the conscience, it may be used. But grace alone is the source of our preaching and the stay of our souls.

These two systems and their respective places are presented in verses 6-17, which form a kind of parenthesis, the apostle resuming his address to Timothy in verse 18. The use of the law is explained in verses 8-13. The apostle in a certain sense lowers it here, while acknowledging its utility in its place, as the weapon of righteousness for condemnation, and contrasts it with the gospel which is connected with the glory of God Himself which this gospel proclaims, as the law is connected with the wickedness which it condemns.

Having spoken of the gospel of the glory which had been committed to him, the apostle turns to the sovereign grace that brought him into the knowledge of this glory which is the testimony to the accomplishment of the work of grace.

"I give thanks," he says, "to Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer and persecutor and injurious". This indeed was grace.

The apostle speaks of two things in his conversion: the one, how God could have compassion on him in such a state-he was in ignorance; the other, the purpose of God that the apostle should be a pattern of grace to all. That he was in ignorance and unbelief although a condition which made mercy possible (for had he been an enemy, knowing and willing it, while acquainted with the grace of the gospel, it would have been impossible), yet that condition was no excuse for his sin; he puts pure and perfect grace forward, as having abounded in his case-he was the chief of sinners. This indeed was true. The high priests had resisted the Holy Ghost to the uttermost. Paul had joined them in it: but he was not satisfied with that. He desired to be the active enemy of the faith wherever it existed, and to destroy the name of Jesus. He had done much at Jerusalem, but he wished to satiate his hatred even in foreign cities. We know his history in the Acts. The living expression of Jewish resistance to grace, he was also among men the expression of the most active human enmity to Him whom God would glorify. Grace was greater than the sin, the patience of God more perfect than the perseverance of man's hostility. The latter was limited by man's importance, the former has no limit in the nature of God but that of His own sovereign will. Guilty as man may be, his sin cannot so reach God as to disturb the independent action of His nature or change His purposes. He was pleased to show forth in Paul a pattern of the sovereignty of that grace and perfect goodness-to the Jews hereafter, who as a nation will be in Saul's condition-to all men as the enemies of God and by nature children of wrath. The chief, the most active, the most inveterate of enemies was the best and most powerful of witnesses that the grace of God abounded over sin, and that the work of Christ was perfect to put it away. "Unto God" -being such in His nature, and having the development of all the ages in His counsels- "unto the only God, invisible, incorruptible," he ascribes all praise and all glory. Such was the foundation of Paul's ministry in contrast with the law. It was founded on the revelation of grace; but it was a revelation connected with the experience of its application to his own case. Peter, guilty of denying a living Savior, could speak to the Jews of grace that met their case, which was his own; Paul, formerly the enemy of a glorified Savior and the resister of the Holy Ghost, could proclaim grace that rose above even that state of sinfulness, above all that could flow from human nature-grace that opened the door to the Gentiles according to God's own counsels, when the Jews had rejected everything, substituting the heavenly assembly for them-grace that sufficed for the future admission of that guilty nation to better privileges than those which they had forfeited.

Such was the call of this apostle, such his ministry. Having shown the opposition between that which was committed to him and the law (while affirming the usefulness of the latter, not as a rule to the righteous or a guide to God's people, but as judging wrong), he resumes his address to Timothy in that which refers to the details of his mission among the Ephesians.

At the end of chapter 1 he commits the charge to him-sends him his mandate. The term he employs relates to verses 3 and 5. He had left Timothy at Ephesus in order to command some persons there not to teach other doctrines than the truths of the gospel. Now the end of the command, of this evangelical commission, was love flowing from a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned. For the gospel, while revealing the marvelous counsels of God, maintains the great eternal principles of His nature. It is this which distinguishes truth from the lofty pretensions of heretical imaginations; it requires that man should be in relationship with God really in heart and in truth according to those principles. And this commission the apostle now entrusted to Timothy, his own son in the faith. He was to maintain it with an authority that had its basis in divine testimony but which he held formally from the apostle who appointed him to it; not merely of his own accord, but according to prophecies which had pointed him out for this purpose, and which were a means of strength to him in the conflict he was thus brought into. The conditions of victory were in accordance with the nature of the commission. He was to keep the faith and a good conscience. Now faith here is the doctrine of Christianity; yet not merely as doctrine, but as that which the soul held between itself and God as coming from Him. He had to maintain the truth, the Christian doctrine, but to hold it as so revealed by God Himself to the soul that it should be the truth. The light should possess, with well-defined outlines, the authority of God.

It was the faith that which God had revealed, received with certainty as such-as the truth.

But, to be in communion with God, the conscience must be good, must be pure; and if we are not in communion with God, we cannot have the strength that would maintain us in the faith, that would enable us to persevere in the profession of the truth, as God gives it to us. Satan has then a hold upon us, and if the intellect of one in this state is active, he falls into heresy. The loss of a good conscience opens the door to Satan, because it deprives us of communion with God; and the active mind, under Satan's influence, invents ideas instead of confessing the truth of God. The apostle treats the fruit of this state as "blasphemies;" the will of man is at work, and the higher the subject, the more an unbridled will, possessed by the enemy, goes astray, and exalts itself against God, and against the subjection of the whole mind to the obedience of Christ, to the authority of the revelation of God.

The apostle had delivered up two persons of this character to Satan-that is to say, outwardly. Though already deceived by him, they were not under his dominion as having power to torment and make them suffer. For in the assembly (when in its normal state) Satan has no power of that kind. It is guarded from it, being the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost and protected by God and by the power of Christ. Satan can tempt us individually; but he has no right over the members of the assembly as such. They are within, and, weak as they may be, Satan cannot enter there. They may be delivered to him for their good. This may take place at all times-witness the history of Job. But the assembly ought to have the knowledge, and be the guardian and instrument, of the accomplishment of the dealings of God with His own. Within the assembly is the Holy Ghost; God dwells in it as His house by the Spirit. Without is the world of which Satan is the prince. The apostle (by the power bestowed on him, for it is an act of positive power) delivered these two men into the power of the enemy-deprived them of the shelter they had enjoyed. They had listened to the enemy- had been his instruments. It was not in the assembly, with members of Christ, that this should have taken place. They must be made to feel what he was to whom they had given ear. God thus made use of Satan himself as a rod for the good of His rebellious children. Satan should instruct them, through the pains he would make them suffer, of whatever kind it might be, whether anguish of soul or of body, and the latter is the immediate effect, in order that their will might be broken and brought into subjection to God. Solemn discipline! Marvelous power in the hands of man! But a proof that the love of God can order all things for the purpose of delivering a soul and bringing it to Himself.

Verses 1, 2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and Christ Jesus our hope; unto Timothy, my true child in faith: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

An apostle of Christ Jesus...

Of all the slanders ever directed against the word of God, none is more ridiculous and unfounded than this assertion of Gealy:

"Christ Jesus our Lord" in the genuine Pauline letters is always "our Lord Jesus Christ... In the pastorals, "Christ Jesus" is used twenty-three times, and "Jesus Christ" three times." In the other Pauline letters, "Jesus Christ" appears sixty-seven times, as against sixty-three times for "Christ Jesus." Thus the appearance of "Christ Jesus" three times in these three verses is not the Pauline proportion: it remains a mystery if it is assumed that Paul wrote these letters (the Pastorals).

What has been attempted by such a criticism as this is to make Paul's preference for the expression "Christ Jesus" as exhibited in the Pastorals an excuse for denying that he wrote them at all, despite the fact that he used the same expression exactly sixty-three times in his other letters, their denial being based upon the allegation that "this is not the Pauline proportion"! What kind of arrogance is this that affirms that a man scatters certain words in his vocabulary over his writings in any definite proportion, of so many to the page, or verse? Nothing any more unreasonable and erroneous than this was ever

advocated in the name of scholarship. What is really behind it? As Hendriksen suggested, there are some who do not like the Scriptural teaching of these letters, and who will seize upon the flimsiest of pretexts in order to rationalize their denials. The reader will not be troubled by many other such insinuations against these epistles; not one of them is entitled to any credence or respect whatever, as more fully explained in the introduction to the Pastorals, the above example of them standing as a fair representation of all of them.

An apostle...

By this, "Paul claims to have been as truly sent by Christ as were those who were apostles before him." The authority of Paul and the Twelve was plenary, nontransferable and perished from the earth in the death of those genuine apostles who, alone, held the office and exercised its authority. Why did Paul, at the outset of this letter, stress his apostolic office? As Hendriksen said:

Timothy needed to know that this letter was not just a friendly substitute for a confidential chat, a tête-à-tête; even though its tone is naturally cordial, for a friend is indeed writing a friend. The letter rises above the purely human level.

The so-called Pastorals are canonical Scripture binding upon the whole church of God on earth, and fittingly, they carry the apostolic seal.

Of Christ Jesus...

There is no difference in this expression from "Jesus Christ," Paul evidently using them synonymously and interchangeably. Such distinctions as making "Christ Jesus" to be indicative of Christian theology, and "Jesus Christ" to be an emphasis upon the historical Jesus, etc., have little or no value.

According to the commandment of God...

This has reference, not merely to the scene on Damascus road, but as Hervey believed, "to the command, Separate me Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2)."

God our Savior...

While unusual in Paul's letters, the idea is certainly found elsewhere, as in 2 Cor. 5:19; and, besides that, Paul's close personal friend Luke used the same expression in Luke 1:47.

Christ Jesus our hope...

The absolute unity between the Father and the Son, as in so many New Testament references, shines in this. As dark and evil crises gathered ominously over his head, and as Paul contemplated the threatening evils that would assail the beloved church, he loved to contemplate Jesus Christ as the one glorious hope that made all of the suffering and hardship, all of the trials and sorrows, both worthwhile and bearable.

Unto Timothy, my true child in faith...

TIMOTHY

The name of Paul's friend Timothy had often been joined to that of the apostle in the salutations of 2 Cor. 1:1; Philp. 1:1; Col. 1:1, and in Philemon 1:1, and also with Silvanus in the salutations of both the Thessalonians; but here he was accorded the high honor of having one of the New Testament books

addressed to him personally. As Wesley said, "Of all whom Paul ever converted, Timothy seems to have been to Paul the disciple who was most beloved and most trusted." From the scattered references to him in the New Testament, the following facts appear:

From Acts 14:6 and Acts 16:3, it is clear that Timothy was a native of Lystra, and that he was converted on Paul's first missionary tour. He, in all probability, saw Paul stoned and dragged out of Lystra for dead; and then, on the second missionary journey, in response to the promptings of prophetic utterances (1 Timothy 1:18), and upon the recommendation of the elders in Lystra and Iconium, Timothy was commissioned as the apostle's attendant and helper on the mission field. The letter before us testifies to the faithfulness of Timothy to that charge throughout the apostle's subsequent life.

Timothy's father was a Greek and his mother a devout Jewess, who, despite her marriage, had maintained her faith in the Scriptures. Due to the circumcision controversy, Paul circumcised Timothy, not as in any manner connected with salvation, but as an expedient foil of Jewish criticism (Acts 16:3). Titus who had no racial connection with Judaism, Paul absolutely refused to circumcise (Galatians 2:3).

Timothy was ordained by the eldership of Lystra and Derbe (1 Timothy 4:14) and by the laying on of the hands of the apostle himself.

Timothy followed and aided Paul extensively in all of the labors recorded in Acts; and once, when Paul was necessarily separated from him at Berea, he went on to Corinth alone, but did not rest until Timothy had rejoined him. There seems to have been a very beautiful and wholesome friendship between the two. From Ephesus, Paul sent Timothy on one, perhaps more, corrective missions to Corinth; and he seems to have acted as Paul's deputy whenever the occasion required it. Both during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome and afterward, Timothy continued his faithful attendance upon Paul. During the second imprisonment, including the time immediately prior to it, he once more appeared as the man Paul sent to Ephesus to bolster the Christians of Ephesus against the impending persecutions.

As for the tradition that Timothy became the first metropolitan bishop of Ephesus, there cannot possibly be any value to it. As Rutherford said, "The position which Timothy occupied at Ephesus cannot, without doing the greatest violence to history, be called that of a bishop (in the current sense of that word)." In the New Testament, such terms as elder, bishop, overseer, presbyter, etc., are absolutely synonymous. No competent scholar in these times denies this.

Timothy was, in all probability, at Paul's side when the end came. As the threatening clouds became more and more ominous, and when Paul knew that his execution was at hand, he desired more than ever the companionship of his beloved Timothy; so he sent the somber appeal, "Give diligence to come shortly unto me" (2 Timothy 4:9).

My true child in faith...

As Ward said, "The word TRUE means "born in lawful wedlock," thus being the most emphatic affirmation of the genuineness of Timothy's conversion.

In faith...

No less a scholar than White affirmed that, as is so frequently the case, the KJV is correct in rendering this "in the faith." In this entire series, the most vigorous protest has been raised against the perversion of "faith," which in the New Testament nearly always means "the faith," and the importation into the word the notion of "subjective trust." Even Hendriksen was diligent to assert, regarding this verse, that "It is best to take it here subjectively"; but as White said, "Titus 1:4 proves that FAITH here is THE FAITH as in KJV." Dummelow agreed to this; and many scholars have pointed out that the inclusion of

the article before FAITH and, in other cases, the omission of it, does not necessarily determine one meaning or another.

Grace, mercy and peace...

Paul usually concluded his letters with "Grace and peace"; but here the inclusion of "mercy" would seem to be best explained thus, "The nearness of death, the weakness of old age, the ever-increasing dangers which crowded around Paul, seem to have called forth from him deeper expressions of love and tender pity."

From God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord...

This bracketing of Christ Jesus with the Father twice in these opening verses is not without significance, especially in the light of subsequent teaching in the letter concerning Christ as mediator.

Lesson 2 The Problems at Ephesus

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.

It is not improbable that on his last trip to Rome, Paul covered as much ground as he could, warning and encouraging the many churches that he had planted concerning the looming persecutions in Rome. The thing that most concerned Paul was that the doctrine should be maintained absolutely in its purity and fidelity. The situation at Ephesus, where Paul had lately been, was compounded by the appearances of certain departures from the true faith, and this letter was Paul's charge to Timothy relative to making the necessary corrections. It appears that Paul was compelled, from whatever consideration we do not know, to proceed with all dispatch to Rome; hence the reason for his leaving Timothy behind at Ephesus.

Tarry at Ephesus...

In the Greek, this is "stay on," and, as Hendriksen said, this probably indicates that Paul and Timothy had gone to Ephesus together, Timothy being left behind when Paul could no longer stay.

Certain men...

The indication from this is that not a great number were involved, but that some false teachings were being advocated. Their importance, by these admonitions, is not indicated as a very big thing; but all false teaching should be cut off at the beginning wherever possible.

Not to teach a different doctrine...

The false doctrine in evidence here "seems to have arisen mainly, if not entirely, from Jewish sources." Apparently, some new phases of Jewish error had surfaced at Ephesus, indicating the passage of some time, intervening between this and Paul's earlier letters; but there is absolutely no indication that some remote later period in the late first or early second centuries is in view. The only thing proved by this is that "Paul's forebodings for the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:29, 30) were at that time being fulfilled." Wesley's quaint interpretation here is, "Let them put nothing in the place of it (the gospel), and add nothing to it."

Verse 4

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

Of all historical peoples, the Jews, more than any other, were concerned with genealogies; and coupled with this, the sequential mention of the Ten Commandments, one at a time in order, a moment later, emphatically demands that the false teaching here be understood as Jewish improvisations upon the body of Christian truth. All efforts to make this passage a refutation of second-century philosophies should be rejected.

So do I now...

These four words were supplied by the translators, an addition which was made necessary by Paul's breaking off a sentence without finishing it. The particular type of grammatical structure here is called an anacoluthon. Most scholars believe that it would have been better to supply the words "so do," making them imperative for Timothy, rather than as in the ASV.

Verse 5

But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned:

End of the charge...

The meaning here, according to Wesley, is "the end of the whole Christian institution." Thus, as so often in the New Testament, "faith" means "Christianity," not "subjective trust/faith." Wallis also perceived this, saying, "Faith (in this passage) is used in the sense of the faith, sound doctrine."

Love...good conscience...faith...

As Hervey said:

These three phrases seem to rebuke by contrast the merely ceremonial cleanness and the defiled conscience and the merely nominal Christianity of those heretical Judaizers.

Verse 6

from which things some having swerved have turned aside unto vain talking;

Hendriksen's description of their teaching as evidenced by this verse is as follows:

It is like useless reasoning, argumentation that gets nowhere, dry as dust disputation, wrangling about fanciful tales anent pedigrees! It has finally landed them in the no-man's-land of ceremonial subtleties, in the dreary marsh of ridiculous hairsplitting. And the owner of that quagmire is Satan, who heads the welcoming committee.

It is much easier to talk, using religious phrases and words, than to teach the word of God to the end of converting souls and encouraging the life in Christ.

Verse 7

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

Teachers of the law...

This is nothing but the law of Moses affording further indubitable proof that Judaizing heresies are the false doctrine in view here. Their "teaching" had no substance whatever; it was all rant, cant and nonsense.

Verse 8

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully,

It is an error to make this verse some kind of license for binding the Mosaic law upon Christians. Nothing could be clearer in the Pauline writings than the fact of the law of Moses having been "taken out of the way," "fulfilled," "abrogated," "nailed to the cross," etc. Paul flatly declared that Christians are "dead to the law by the body of Christ" (Romans 7:4), this having reference, of course, to all requirements of the law in their totality. Not even the moral code of the Decalogue is the law of Christ, for in the Magna Charta of the Christian Religion (the Sermon on the Mount), our Lord took up, one by one, the great commandments of the Decalogue, replacing each one of them with "but I say

unto you," in each case imposing through his own supreme authority a higher and better standard than that of the Decalogue. For extensive discussion of this, see under Matthew 5-7 in my Commentary on Matthew.

However, Paul here said that "the law is good," indicating that there is a legitimate use of it. What are the legitimate uses, for Christians, of the law of Moses?

VALUE OF MOSES' LAW

1. Its great prophecies point to the coming of Christ, some 333 of these being the most convincing evidence on earth to the effect that Jesus our Lord is indeed the divine Messiah "whose goings forth are known from of old, even from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).
2. The old Israel is a type of the new; and the study of the history of the old Israel affords many glimpses of what is to be expected in the unfolding history of the new Israel which is the church of the living God. As there was an apostasy in the old Israel, so there is in the new; and there are doubtless many other similarities that shall in time be unfolded.
3. The love, mercy, forgiveness and patience of God in dealing with the saints of the Old Testament are valid and certain pledges of his same dealings with the children of God in the new dispensation. "The things which were written aforetime were written for our comfort" (Romans 15:4).
4. The only logical and intelligent account of the creation of all things is found in the books of Moses (the Pentateuch). Without the revelation of the Old Testament in this sector, people could not with confidence know the story of creation.
5. The course of hardening and rebellion among the pre-Christian Gentile nations is fully evident in the Old Testament, the same being a divinely inspired record, a test case, an authentic example of that which always happens when a nation turns away from God.
6. The psychology of both righteous and wicked minds is abundantly presented throughout the Old Testament, as seen in the compromises proposed by Pharaoh, the proposals to Nehemiah, etc.
7. The richest deposit of devotional material in existence is to be found in the Old Testament; and the things enumerated here are but samplings of the benefits to be derived from knowledge and study of the Old Testament.

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, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

Lawless and unruly...ungodly and sinners...unholy and profane...

Hendriksen was correct in seeing the persons in view in these phrases as "those who flout the first four commandments of the Decalogue." If there had been any doubt, the composition of the balance of this list would have revealed it unmistakably.

Murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers...

This relates to the fifth commandment, "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother"; but in the writing of the New Testament the more reprehensible nature of any dishonor of parents is plain in Paul's designation here.

For manslayers...

This is a clear reference to the sixth commandment; but here again there is a significant difference in the law of Moses and the law of Christ. Whereas the law of Moses forbids "murder," it is the lesser charge of manslaughter that surfaces here.

Verse 10

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 doctrine;

Fornicators, for abusers of themselves with men...

Whereas the seventh commandment condemns "adultery," all forms of sexual vice are equally condemned in the law of Christ.

For men-stealers...

"Thou shalt not steal," the eighth commandment, is in view here; but it is the most reprehensible kind of stealing involved in the crime of kidnapping. Paul evidently meant to stress that even Moses' law was opposed to all forms of wickedness. Now those false teachers at Ephesus against whom Paul here warned and instructed Timothy were not using the law for the purpose of teaching ethical morality at all, but for the purpose of fine-spun theorizing, hair-splitting nonsense and for empty and vain talking. God's law, whether of the Old Testament or the New Testament, is primarily concerned with human behavior.

Liars, for false swearers...

It is the ninth and possibly also the tenth commandment which prompted this. More than any other point that may be considered mandatory from the teaching in these verses is the fact that it was the Jewish law which was being abused by the false teachers. Philosophical absurdities of the second century are not in the passage at all.

Sound doctrine...

As Spence wrote:

This is an expression peculiar to this group of Epistles; a sharp contrast is suggested to the "sickly and unhealthy" teaching of the false teachers, with their foolish legends and allegories, teaching which suggested controversy and endless disputes, and had no practical influence upon life.

Wallis noted that Paul's catalogue of sins here "is not the same as lists given elsewhere"; but the probability is that it is related either to peculiar problems in Ephesus, or merely Paul's mentioning what immediately came to mind. Anyone could make out his own list of sins, but no list is exhaustive.

Verse 11

according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

Gospel of the glory of the blessed God...

Hervey called this an awkward rendition, suggesting among other possible meanings, "the gospel which tells of the glory of God." The words as rendered, however, are the truth; and the general idea comes through beautifully any way.

Blessed God...

"This with 1 Tim. 6:15 are the only passages in the New Testament where blessed is an epithet of God."

Lesson 3 Receiving God's Grace; Engaging in Battle

Verse 12

I thank him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service;

The thought here was paraphrased thus by Hendriksen: "SUCH mercy! for note well: this very great sinner was not only saved, but was even deemed worthy to be entrusted with the ministry of the apostleship!"

I thank him...

As Nute observed, this earnest word here "reaches its climax in the noble doxology of verse 17."

Verse 13

though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief;

Blasphemy...

means "speaking against" either God or man; but Paul here means the more serious offense; because, while he did not speak against the Father, he did speak against the Son who is one with the Father.

And a persecutor...

In context this is somewhat of an elaboration upon the preceding word, since it was as "a persecutor" that his speaking against God occurred. New Testament light on Paul's role as a savage persecutor of the church is given in Acts 8:3; 9:1 and Acts 22:19.

And injurious...

"This third word, although the English version obscures the fact, continues the ascending scale of self-condemnation." It indicates a person who takes a savage personal delight and a malicious enjoyment in the afflictions inflicted upon another. Surely no sinner should ever despair of receiving God's mercy if he repents.

Because I did it ignorantly in unbelief...

The fact of Paul's being able to commit so grievous sins against God demonstrates the "pitiable, guilty blindness of sin (Ephesians 4:18; 1 Peter 1:14)." Dummelow perceptively observed on this that "This is an instance of that form of ignorance which excuses acts done through it, i.e., ignorance of facts, not of moral principles."

Verse 14

and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Which is in Christ Jesus...

indicates the theater where the grace, love and faith (all three) are available for sinners. Paul did not receive grace outside of Christ, but inside; and the faith that saves is not a faith exercised independently of the body of Christ, but "in him." The tragedy of our day is that many speak glibly of their "faith in Christ," whereas, due to the fact of their never having been baptized "into Christ," their so-called faith is "out of Christ," not "in Christ."

"The words (abounded exceedingly) occur 158 times in the New Testament, 106 of these in the Pauline letters." Hendriksen classified this as another instance of Paul's "super" words, such as are in Rom. 5:20; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Cor. 7:4; 1 Thess. 3:10; Philp. 4:7; 2 Cor. 12:7, etc. "It is clear that this super vocabulary is characteristic of Paul."

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:

Faithful is the saying...

There are five of these expressions in this group of letters, the other four being: 1 Tim. 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11, and Titus 3:8. "These axiomatic truths of Christian faith would be easily memorized; and, being frequently repeated, they soon became almost proverbial in the early church."

Despite the above, however, it is precarious to identify these "faithful sayings" as any form of "proverb" in the early church. Only two of them, here and in 1 Tim. 2:11, have any definite saying in view. "In the other passages, the expression seems to be a short parenthetical formula, affirmative of the truth of the general doctrine with which the writer happens to be dealing."

That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...

is indeed worthy of being considered a proverb. The expression stands as an epitome of the whole Christian religion: (1) The deity of Christ is in it, for of no man could it be said that 'he came into the world.' (2) The redeeming, saving purpose of the visitation of the Dayspring from on high is in it. (3) The universal sinfulness of mankind is in it, for his condition was such that only God could save him, and that at awful cost to himself in the sending of the Beloved.

Of whom I am chief...

"The translation should be, 'of whom foremost am I.'" Hendriksen based this conclusion upon the emphatic position of the first person pronoun in the original. But the question is, HOW was Paul the chief of sinners?

(1) His sin was chief in the sense of the zeal and avid delight in which he pursued it. (2) It was greatest in the diabolical results that would have been achieved if he had continued in it, possibly that of the total destruction of Christianity; surely that was his purpose. (3) Paul was the chief of sinners because his sin was against Christ himself in the person of his spiritual body on earth. (4) He was the chief of sinners in the matter of his marvelous abilities, super intellectual powers, unswerving zeal and persistent determination which augmented the threat of his operations against God's purpose on earth in Christ. (5) He was the foremost among sinners because of the particular historical position which his persecutions held in the very beginning of Christianity. A million sinners today, operating against Christianity with Pauline zeal and power, would not pose a fraction of the threat inherent in the activities of Paul at that singular period in history.

For an ensample...

That the blessed apostle does not here overestimate the significance of his conversion is discernible throughout history. Paul's conversion, along with the resurrection of Christ, is part of the incontrovertible evidence of the integrity and authenticity of the Christian faith.

Believe on him unto eternal life...

This strongly suggests Rom. 10:10, 11; and significantly "believing on" Christ in both passages is "unto" eternal life, and salvation, as is ever the case in the New Testament. The sacred writers were diligent never to leave an impression that merely "believing on" the Lord Jesus Christ surely led to eternal life, but merely in the direction of it, "unto life." The apostle John gave the classical example of a case in which it did not bestow eternal life (John 12:42, 43); but in even that instance "believing on" the Lord led in the direction of it.

Eternal life...

Christianity is involved with the supernatural, a fact abundantly clear in such an expression as this. The grand scope and purpose of Christianity is to accomplish the forgiveness of people's sins (salvation), and in the upper and better world usher them into eternal and better life where they may have in utmost joy and tranquility, fellowship with the Creator forever.

Verse 16

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This grand doxology is not addressed to "the Father," but to God in his compound unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It has been called "a grand testimony to the monotheism of St. Paul...to this Eternal, Incorruptible One be glory and honor unto the ages of the ages."

For ever and ever...

This is "the ages of the ages" in the Greek; but all superstitions to the effect that Gnosticism of the second century is implied in these words are unfounded. As White said, "Bengel's suggestion that there is a polemical reference to the aeons of Gnosticism is fanciful and unnecessary."

This marvelous doxology was Paul's response to the glorious fact of his joyous salvation in Christ to which he had just referred.

Verses 17, 18

This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare;

According to the prophecies...

does not refer, as Nute thought, "to a premonition granted to Paul as he approached Lystra," but to factual prophetic declarations uttered by some of the New Testament prophets mentioned repeatedly in Acts, of whom was Agabus, and also Barnabas, the latter probably being the one who gave the prophecies mentioned here.

My child Timothy...

It was to Timothy, the beloved young man, whom Paul had converted and whose faithfulness never wavered, that Paul turned as he contemplated the dreadful historical situation then closing in upon the Christians. "The charge" to him was the total precious treasure of Christian truth which together they had done so much to advance. Those awful dangers which Paul saw in the future would soon be closing around the beloved Christians in Asia; there would be many who could not stand the test; the blessed apostle sensed that he would not survive to be of any help; and therefore his whole hope was rested in the fidelity of that glorious companion, Timothy, who had so long suffered and toiled with the apostle. It would appear also that, prophetically, Timothy had been designated as a man who would persevere to the end; and thus the prophecies corroborated Paul's own personal evaluation of Timothy as one capable of being left in charge of the fortunes of God's church on earth.

War the good warfare...

These were appropriate words for Christians living in the age of the great persecution under Nero, soon to break upon the defenseless church. The metaphor of a man at war was employed again and again by Paul.

Verse 19

holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith:

Faith and a good conscience...

The obedience of faith is meant by this as in this quotation from Wallis:

The whole gospel message embraces both doctrine and obedience. The faith is what we believe about Christ; good conscience is not allowing the conscience to be defiled by sinful practices contrary to the doctrine.

Made shipwreck...

Scholars are very tender with regard to interpretations of this, as in the following:

We are not justified in interpreting "suffered shipwreck" as though it meant they were lost beyond hope of recovery. St. Paul himself had suffered shipwreck at least four times when he wrote this, and had on each occasion lost everything except himself.

While true enough that Paul did survive four shipwrecks, the fact is that shipwrecks are usually fatal to some and frequently to all who may be aboard; and there is certainly nothing in the passage that denies shipwrecks as equivalent to "spiritual death" in a passage like this. To be sure, this does not deny hope to any who might DESIRE to recover themselves out of the snare of the evil one. See under 2 Tim. 2:24f.

Verse 20

of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I delivered to Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.

Hymenaeus...

Many scholars, along with Spence, agree that "Hymenaeus is probably identical with the heretic of this name, charged in the second Epistle as teaching that the resurrection was passed already!"

Alexander...

Although some have done so, it would appear to be precarious to identify this character with "Alexander the coppersmith" (2 Timothy 4:14), or with another Alexander mentioned in Acts 19:33.

Whom I delivered to Satan...

Another glimpse of this same apostolic power is found in the case of the incestuous person (1 Corinthians 5:5), and this is a power no longer on earth. From this and other passages it is clear that the apostles had such power; but it came to an end with the cessation of miracles. Hendriksen also was of the opinion that the exercise of it meant excommunication from the church, but that it also included "even more than this, bodily suffering or disease."

This may strike us as unbelievable, but is it after all so strange that added to the charismatic gift of bodily healing was the power to inflict bodily suffering? If we deny the latter, should we not also deny the former?

The wisdom of the venerable Adam Clarke supplied the following observation upon this apostolic gift:

No such power as this remains in the church of God, and none should be assumed; and the pretensions to it are as wicked as they are vain. It was the same power by which Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead, and Elymas the sorcerer struck blind. Apostles alone were entrusted with it.

That such views as those of Clarke are correct would appear to be implicit in the fact of the stated purpose of the infliction, namely, that these two heretics may "be taught not to blaspheme."

Not to blaspheme...

Such evil teaching as that of denying the resurrection was equivalent in every way to "speaking against God." It is absurd to suppose that St. Paul here refers to a railing disparagement of his own apostolic claims." We are not told here of the exact nature of their "blasphemy," but something far more serious than opposition to Paul is indicated. The two sinners singled out in this verse were gross offenders whom Paul punished for the sake of checking the damage which their example might otherwise have wrought in the church. If the denial of any future resurrection was involved in their behavior, along with the teaching that "the resurrection was passed already," this would have led to the exercise of all kinds of sins in the church. "That suggests that they were antinomians, teaching that believers should continue in sin that grace may abound.

Lesson 4 The What and Why of Prayer

1 Timothy 2

The apostle proceeds to give instructions founded on the great principles which he had established on grace. The Jewish spirit might look on Gentile kings as enemies, and on Gentiles in general as unworthy of divine favor. The persecution of which Christians were the object gave the flesh occasion to nourish these dispositions and to enter into the spirit of the law. Grace rises above all these thoughts - all these feelings of the heart. It teaches us to think of all men with love. We belong to a Savior-God, who acts in the gospel towards all men with love. Especially were they to pray for kings and those who had places in the world that God would dispose their hearts to allow us to live in peace and quietness in all honesty. This was well-pleasing to a Savior-God, who was willing that all men should be saved and be brought to know the truth. The subject here is not the counsels of God, but His dealings with men under the gospel. He acts in grace. It is the acceptable time-the day of salvation. He opens the door through the blood of Christ, and proclaims peace and a sure reception to all who come. The work is done; His character fully glorified with regard to sin. If they refuse to come, that is the will of man. That God will fulfill His counsels after all makes no change in His dealings, nor in the responsibility of men. We have love to proclaim to all - in the spirit of love in our ways towards them. The distinction between Jew and Gentile totally disappears here. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, a Man, Christ Jesus. These are the two great truths which form the basis of all true religion. Judaism had already been the revelation and testimony in the world of the first: there was one only God. This remains eternally true, but did not suffice to bring men into relationship with God. With regard to men He abode within the veil in the darkness which shrouded His majesty. Christianity, while fully revealing the one God, presents the second truth: there is one mediator between God and men. There is one, and there is but one. It is as true that there is but one Mediator as that there is but one God. This is the great and distinctive truth of Christianity.

Two things here characterize the Mediator. He is a man; He gave Himself a ransom for all. The time for this testimony was ordered of God.

Precious truth! We are in weakness, we are guilty, we could not bring ourselves near to God. We needed a Mediator, who, while maintaining the glory of God, should put us into such a position that He could present us to God in righteousness according to that glory. Christ gave Himself as a ransom. But He must be a man in order to suffer for men, and to represent men. And this He was. But this is not all. We are weak-here, where we are to receive the revelation of God; and weak, with regard to the use of our resources in God and our communion with Him -even when our guilt is blotted out. And, in our weakness to receive the revelation of God, Christ has revealed God, and all that He is in His own Person, in all the circumstances wherein man could have need either in body or in soul. He came down into the lowest depths in order that there should be none, even of the most wretched, who could not feel that God in His goodness was near him and was entirely accessible to him-come down to Him-His love finding its occasion in misery; and that there was no need to which He was not present, which He could not meet.

It is thus that He made himself known on earth; and, now that He is on high, He is still the same. He does not forget His human experiences: they are perpetuated by His divine power in the sympathizing feelings of His humanity, according to the energy of that divine love which was their source and their motive power. He is still a man in glory, and in divine perfection. His divinity imparts the strength of its love to His humanity, but does not set aside the latter. Nothing could resemble such a Mediator as this; nothing could equal the tenderness, the knowledge of the human heart, the sympathy, the experience of need. In the measure which divinity could give to what He did, and in the strength of its love, He came down, took part in all the sorrows of humanity, and entered into all the circumstances in which the human heart could be, and was wounded, oppressed, and discouraged, bowing down under the evil. No tenderness, no power of sympathy, no humanity like His; no human heart that can so

understand, so feel with us, whatever the burden may be that oppresses the heart of man. It is the Man, the Christ Jesus, who is our Mediator; none so near, none who has come down so low, and entered with divine power into the need, and all the need, of man. The conscience is purified by His work, the heart relieved by that which He was, and which He is for ever.

There is but One: to think of another would be to snatch from Him His glory and from us our perfect consolation. His coming from on high, His divine nature, His death, His life as man in heaven, all point Him out as the one and only Mediator.

But there is another aspect of this truth, and of the fact that He is a Man. It is, that He is not merely a mediator as a Priest upon His throne, between Israel and the Lord; not simply the Messiah, in order to place Israel in relationship with their God, but a Man between God and men. It is according to the eternal nature of God Himself and to the need of men in His presence. It was of these truths, eternal and of universal bearing, that Paul was the herald and the apostle.

Possessing a character that belongs to all ages and that goes beyond them, all these facts had their time to be revealed.

All means dependent on man's use of them had been tried with men-and in vain, as to recalling him to God; and now the necessary foundations of their relationship with God had to be set forth, laid by God Himself, and the Gentiles were to hear the testimony of grace. And such was the apostle's testimony, "a teacher of the Gentiles in the faith and in the truth."

Paul has plainly now laid the foundations, and he proceeds therefore to details. Men were to pray everywhere, lifting up pure hands, without wrath, and without vain human reasonings. Women were to walk in modesty, adorned with good works, and to learn in silence. A woman was forbidden to teach or to exercise authority over men; she was to abide in quietness and silence. The reason given for this is remarkable, and shows how, in our relations with God, everything depends on the original starting-point. In innocence Adam had the first place; in sin, Eve It was she who, being deceived, brought in transgression. Adam was not deceived, guilty as he was of disobeying God. United to his wife, he followed her, not deceived by the enemy but weak through his affection. Without the weakness, it was this which the second Adam did in grace; He followed His deceived and guilty bride, but in order to redeem and deliver her by taking her faults upon Himself. Eve suffered on earth the penalty of her fault in a way which is a mark of the judgment of God; but walking in modesty, with faith and love and holiness, she shall be delivered in the hour of her trial; and that which bears the stamp of judgment shall be an occasion of the mercy and succor of God.

Verse 1, 2

I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, may be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.

I exhort therefore...

This form of the apostolic command does not alter the force of it, which has the meaning of "I command." Paul is not revealing here that which would please him, but that which is the will of God.

First of all...

This indicates the primary importance of the public prayers of the church, and not necessarily that public prayers should be first in the order of worship. Paul's use of "first" throughout all of his writings generally has the meaning of "the first thing I wish to write." However, by this initial stress of the

prayers, the primary importance of them is surely indicated. "Prayer in all its forms should occupy a central place in the church's service of worship."

Supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings...

The general meaning of this is "all kinds of prayers"; and, as Lenski put it, "Here are four words for prayers." And, as Spence said:

Many attempts, some of them not very happy ones, have been made by grammarians and commentators to distinguish between these terms, each of which denotes prayer.

The supplications are petitions addressed to God; prayers include petitions but also thanksgivings, adorations, etc.; intercessions are usually thought of as pleas upon behalf of others; and the thanksgivings are expressions of gratitude and appreciation for blessings God has already bestowed, no prayer, in any sense, being complete without thanksgivings.

For kings and all that are in high place...

Here is only a glimpse of the Christian philosophy with regard to civil government, a teaching which Paul spelled out in detail in Rom. 13:1ff. The true Christian stands for law and order, any government being far better than none at all. Nero was at the time of Paul's writing the emperor; and, as Dummelow put it, "The apostle's instruction shows that the prayers of the church are to be offered for bad rulers as well as for good."

All that are in high place...

This includes all who are in authority regardless of rank, taking in the administrative assistants in government as well as heads of state. The intense missionary thrust of this whole passage is inherent in the repetition of "all" throughout the passage, as well as in the missionary reference in 1 Tim. 2:7.

That we may lead a tranquil and quiet life...

Christians are not to be revolutionaries in the sense of that word today, although the influence of the gospel, properly advocated, can and does have a therapeutic effect upon the entire society. Tranquility and quietness are inherent traits of the true followers of Jesus Christ.

In all godliness and gravity...

The first noun here has reference to the discharge of religious duties; and, according to Lenski, gravity refers to "dignified and worthy conduct toward our fellow men." There is also evident in these verses the reason for offering prayers upon behalf of governmental authorities. Such rulers as kings can, by their mistakes, bring untold sorrow upon all their subjects, as well as rich blessings through righteous rule. Therefore, the church should never forget to pray for such leaders.

Nebuchadnezzar was compelled to eat grass with the beasts of the field for seven years in order to learn the lesson that "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Daniel 4:25); and it is feared that many today are in need of learning the same lesson. Christian prayers are therefore a means of putting into God's hands an instrument for overruling the affairs of human kingdoms for the benefit of God's children.

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior;

God himself is the Savior of all people; and "This passage emphasizes the universality of the sufficiency, applicability and offer of the gospel to all men." "This" in this verse applies first of all to the prayers commanded to be offered, and also includes the contemplated results in the quiet and peaceable life granted to Christians as a consequence.

Verse 4

who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Who would have all men to be saved...

It is the will of God that all men should inherit eternal life; but it is also the will of God that people should do so through acceptance of Jesus Christ, and persons refusing to do that must forfeit the inheritance. Another factor that enters into the consideration is the will of man, God having granted to all people the freedom of their will; and, where man's will is unresponsive and rebellious against God's will, there can be no salvation. God DESIRES the salvation of all, but the RESPONSIBILITY for accepting that salvation rests squarely upon every man. As Nute said, "This verse must not be stressed to support a numerical universalism."

Verse 5

For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus,

As David Lipscomb noted, the reference to Jesus Christ as a man is in the present tense, despite the fact of this having been written after the ascension of Christ, indicating that our Lord did not cease being a man when he rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God. In like manner, he did not cease being God when he descended for the purpose of the Incarnation.

One God...

With great difficulty, the Hebrew people were finally taught the truth of monotheism; but, in spite of many lapses, they came in time, following the Babylonian captivity, to accept the principle completely. However, they failed, even then, to appreciate the truth that God is the God of all people, not of Israel alone; and there is always the tendency for people to think of God as THEIRS and not the God of all. This paragraph is charged with the truth that God is God of all. Lenski rejected the American Standard Version translation of this verse, affirming the meaning actually to be:

One (is) God, not two or more. One also (is) Mediator for God and men, not several. Nor should these two facts be separated, for they have been joined in 1 Tim. 2:3 where "our Savior God" joins them; and they are again joined here. This Mediator is Mediator "for this one," namely, for God and men.

One mediator...

There are exactly as many mediators as there are God, namely, only one; and here is the end of any alleged legitimacy for invoking saints, or even the Virgin Mary, in one's petitions to God.

Verse 6

who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times;

The actual meaning of this somewhat obscure passage has been often disputed, but it would appear that the timeliness of the testimony is what Paul emphasized, calling to mind the words of Titus 1:2. It was in the mind of God "before the world was" to redeem humanity; and as Paul said in another place, "When the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Thus, "the testimony" of Christ to the fact of God's willingness to save all people was borne by the coming of Christ "in the fullness of time." The "fullness of time" also marked the testimony of the apostles themselves, as indicated in verse 7.

Who gave himself a ransom for all...

This ranks with Matt. 20:28 and Mark 10:45 among the great "ransom" passages of the New Testament. Our Lord literally gave himself, in that no one took his life away from him, but he laid it down of his own accord (John 10:17,18). There are no less than seven centers of initiative which are discernible in the crucifixion of Christ; and thus it is proper to say that: (1) God crucified Christ; (2) Christ crucified himself (gave himself willingly); (3) the Jews crucified him; (4) the Romans crucified him; (5) all mankind crucified him; (6) Satan crucified him; and (7) every man crucified him. A study of these is very rewarding. See in my Commentary on Romans, pp. 137ff.

The inestimable worth of our Lord Jesus Christ is apparent in that a ransom must have equivalent value to that which is ransomed or redeemed; and that Christ's death was a sacrifice equivalent to the value of the entire race of mankind is inherent in the comparison.

Verse 7

whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth, I lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

The definite and emphatic missionary outreach of these first seven verses is supported by 1 Tim. 2:5-7, the "all men" of 1 Tim. 2:4 being inclusive of the Gentiles specifically mentioned here. The reason that "all men" were to be publicly prayed for by the church (including the Gentiles, of course) was stated in the Christology of 1 Tim. 2:5 and 1 Tim. 2:6. Since there is but one God, the God of all people; and since there is but one mediator between God and all mankind, the church should diligently pray for all people, especially in view of God's willingness and desire that none should perish but that all should come "to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

Come to the knowledge of the truth...

Some deductions of the most far-reaching nature come to view in a passage like this. People do not already have "the knowledge of the truth," absolutely demanding that those who are to be saved must first be taught the truth. This whole paragraph is keyed to Paul's command that prayers be offered in all congregations for all people.

Verse 8

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

Paul here restricted the offering of public prayers in Christian assemblies to men, as distinguished from women; and this is fully in keeping with the teachings of the New Testament elsewhere, and with the general practice of the church throughout many centuries. The fact that present social attitudes may be opposed to what is taught here cannot possibly be of any permanent importance. In the current era, society has degenerated into a very permissive attitude toward every kind of immorality, violence and crime; and, in such a social climate, there may very well be more and more individuals and even

churches that will reject the teachings of the apostles and proceed to do as they please. These studies are not directed to the task of accommodating the rampant unchristian philosophies and behavior encountered on all sides today.

As Lenski said:

In 1 Tim. 2:8, "the men" are in contrast with all who are women (1 Tim. 2:9). This difference is not felt in English; but in the Greek this is plain. The men only, and no women whatever, are to do the praying in the public worship of the congregation.

I desire therefore that men pray...

This is improperly translated, despite the fact that it CAN mean this. "The Greek word is [boulomai], which in Hellenistic Judaism conveys a note of authoritative command." A better rendition would be, "I demand that the men do the praying everywhere, etc." In this light, it is futile to suggest that Paul's words in this place are merely expressing a preference.

The men...

Not only does this contrast with "women" (1 Timothy 2:9), but it also contrasts with "church officials, elders, ministers, deacons, etc." Although these are not mentioned, it is clear that the right of offering public prayer did not pertain exclusively to ministers, priests or others of any special class. "All male members of the church had an equal right to offer prayer and were expected to use that right."

Lifting up holy hands...

This is not a prescription demanding any posture in prayer, but:

It is merely an allusion to the ancient practice of presenting the uplifted hands in respectful petition to God, as in Neh. 8:6; Psa. 141:2 and Lam. 3:41.

Without wrath and disputing...

Hervey speaks of a number of instances cited by Chrysostom in which angry and vindictive prayers were offered to God against personal enemies with such expressions as "so do to him...smite him...recompense him, etc." As Chrysostom said of such prayers, "Do you pray against your brother? Your prayer is not against him, but against yourself." Certainly, all who approach God in prayer should do so with humble and contrite hearts, conscious of such sins and shortcomings as mar every soul in the sight of God.

Every place...

This applies to the universality of Paul's apostolic instructions in this letter. Wherever any church pretends to follow Christ and the teachings of the apostles, these instructions are to be received and honored. Chrysostom pointed out that there is also here a denial that worship is to be confined to any certain place, as in the temple, for example, under Judaism.

Lesson 5 Instructions to Women

Verses 9, 10

In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works.

Adorn...in modest apparel...

Every year, there are publications of the list of "best dressed women." Best dressed for what? They are misguided indeed who think that the most expensive, or the latest, or the most fashionable attire is in any sense "best"; and there have been many instances in which it was worst." As Barackman said:

Note that Paul did not say "careless" or "shabby." There is no virtue in offensive untidiness. What he meant was the kind of apparel that becomes a woman whose first concern is to be a credit to Christ.

"Neither is Paul insisting on drab dress. Even this may be worn with vanity; the very drabness may be made a display."

Perhaps the best comment on this passage is the writing of the apostle Peter who gave instructions along the same line, thus:

Your beauty should not be dependent upon an elaborate coiffure, or on the wearing of jewelry or fine clothes, but on the inner personality - the unfading loveliness of a calm and gentle spirit, a thing very precious in the eyes of God (1 Pet. 3:3,4; Phillips).

The inherent good sense of the church in all ages has permitted and approved the wearing of some ornaments, as for example, gold wedding rings; and there can, in fact, be no authority whatever in these passages for the imposition of a church-administered dress code. Even the gold, pearls, etc., mentioned are not prohibited, but downgraded. The true ornament is not such things, but the spiritual loveliness and beauty of genuine Christianity. As Kelly observed:

We are true to the spirit of these passages when we say that the dress of Christians at public worship should be marked by simplicity and taste, but it does not follow that the church should attempt by specific rules to regulate the dress of her members.

Through good works...

The nature of the good works mentioned here is elaborated in this epistle a little later (1 Timothy 5:9).

Verse 11

Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection.

This is far superior to the translation "learn in silence" in the King James Version; because no requirement whatever of silence is imposed in the worship of God. The quietness in view here is that of due acceptance of authority, respect for God's rule of prohibiting women from taking over the public worship, and the quiet acceptance of their womanly role as childbearers and mothers of the human race. Certainly, in the asking of questions in dialogue teaching situations, and in such things as the singing or responsive readings, women do not violate this passage by their participation in such things.

Verse 12

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

To teach...

refers to public teaching in the worship. As Nute said:

This prohibition in no way contradicts Titus 2:2, 3; it relates to teaching in the church in the presence of men and to the fact that authority in matters concerning the church is not committed to women.

It is upon this verse that the office, either of elder, deacon, or evangelist, must, in the light of New Testament teaching, be denied to women. The wisdom of this is inherent in human nature. Satan, in many instances, has succeeded in creating the impression that Christianity is something merely for the women and children, and not for men at all; and, where such a prohibition as this is denied, the tendency would be to make Satan's lie the truth.

Nor to have dominion over a man...

This rule is not unreasonable nor capricious. Every entity must have a head, and the headship of man over the family and in the church is by divine appointment. Evil men who do not believe in God, thus rejecting any thought that there even is such a thing as "divine appointment," find it difficult to accept this; but those who believe in God and his word receive it joyfully. In the next two verses, Paul spelled out the reason for God's investiture of family headship and church authority upon men, and not upon women.

Verse 13

For Adam was first formed, then Eve;

Paul's endorsement of the Genesis account of creation is inherent in this argument. Adam and Eve were not merely mythical figures of the remote past, but the progenitors of the human race. Moreover, they did not "evolve" from lower creation together, but Adam was made first; then Eve was formed of a rib taken out of his side.

Adam's being the first formed, and having an existence before Eve was created, gave him priority in creation. Furthermore, Eve was created as his assistant and helper, one suitable for him; and, if both Adam and Eve had respected this God-given arrangement, the human family might still have resided in the Garden of Eden. The disaster came when Eve became the leader instead of the helper and led her husband into the tragic fall of the entire race. But this is not all. Eve proved to be incapable of leadership, as outlined in the next verse.

Verse 14

and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression:

The argument here is that Adam was not deceived, whereas Eve was deceived, thus exhibiting a serious flaw that disqualified her from being the head, or leader. That quality of women being easily deceived is alone sufficient to justify the appointment of men as elders and evangelists, and as heads of the family. As Lenski observed on this verse, "This fact is not complimentary to women." We are living in an age that exhibits a widespread rejection of God's teaching on this question, but the teaching remains clear enough. As Loy said (quoted by Lenski):

There are effeminate, long-haired men who claim the rights of women, and masculine, short-haired women who claim the rights of men; and, in virtue of the good sense with which the Creator has endowed humanity, they become the laughingstock of the sober-minded in both sexes.

Verse 15

but she shall be saved through her childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety.

All kinds of fanciful interpretations of this verse have been advocated; but, in all probability, "child-bearing" is a synecdoche for "the entire status of women in their relationship to God and men." Dummelow was correct in seeing the meaning thus: "The woman shall be saved by keeping simply and faithfully to her allotted sphere as wife and mother." There is no reference to the birth of Christ, nor to any promise of salvation based solely upon the biological function of child-bearing.

ON THE DECEIVABLENESS OF WOMEN

It is a gross mistake to view the natural capacity of women for being deceived as in any manner whatever a reflection upon womankind. It is positively her most adorable characteristic. Fully half the marriages on earth would never have been contracted, except for this utterly feminine and absolutely delightful quality of being easily deceived.

There is no use for anyone to deny this, because women see it clearly enough in their sisters, if not in themselves; and every woman who has ever tried to dissuade a love-struck daughter from marrying "the son of Ahab" is painfully and tragically aware of it. But the human race would be bankrupt without such a trait in women, an absence that would take all the romance out of life!

But are there not historical examples of strong-willed, powerful women, impossible to deceive, who now and again have held the rod of empire or the affairs of state with great ability? Yes indeed! But exceptions do not make the rule. Wherever such leadership exists in women, it is still a masculine trait; and wherever the opposite of it appears in men, it remains a feminine trait. Nature produces a two-headed calf now and then, but that is not the rule.

And, are there NEVER any occasions where women should, through circumstances, take the lead! Indeed there are. In 1918, before this writer became a Christian, he attended a country church made up, in the forced absence of all the men, entirely of women; and Miss Anna Lou Estes Black, the local school teacher, presided at the Lord's table, led the singing, dismissed the congregation and brought the Sunday lesson, usually by reading from the Bible.

The glory of women is to achieve their ends without being charged with leadership and authority; and those precious angels called women who are willing to trade their natural, God-given status for one of authority and leadership are inevitably short-changed in the transaction. Apostolic wisdom is behind the admonition of this chapter, and it should be earnestly heeded by all.

Lesson 6 Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 Timothy 3

The apostle next points out to Timothy the qualities necessary for a bishop or a deacon, as well as for the wife of the latter. He supposes here that there were some who desired to undertake this work. It was a good work. To care for souls and have a vigilant eye upon the walk of believers; to watch over them in order that the members of Christ should answer to His love and lose no Christian privilege; to do this by maintaining that happy order and that precious unity which were realized at that time, and to protect the flock of the Lord against the ravaging wolves that were seeking to invade it: this indeed was valuable work, and he on whose heart the Lord had thus laid the souls of His people might well desire to undertake it. The apostle felt this: it was a true and faithful saying; but certain qualities were needed to make any one fit for such a charge. Gifts are not included among them, unless the being "apt to teach" might be so considered; but even this is presented as a quality-the man must have 'aptness' for it-not as a gift. Power to use such truth with others was very useful in fulfilling his charge, without saying at all that he taught publicly in the assembly. The essential thing was that which gave moral weight.

Timothy was not left at Ephesus to appoint elders; but these were the qualities necessary to a bishop, and Paul exhorts him to be watchful on this point.

It is not needful to enter into the details of these qualities; they are plain enough, as well as those required for a deacon.

We see what was the subject of "the condemnation of the devil:" he exalted himself at the thought of his own importance. (Compare Ezek. 28) "The snare of the devil" is another thing. If a man is not of good report, he will yield somewhere to the enemy, because he will not dare to withstand him boldly.

It will be noticed that the apostle speaks of the wives of deacons, not those of bishops (except to say that these must be the husbands of one wife only). Bishops had a charge, in which they were occupied with souls and exercised authority in the church, in which women were not to act. Deacons were necessarily occupied with family details and circumstances. In these women might well be concerned and often very useful. In the spiritual cares of elders they had nothing to do. It was requisite therefore that the wives of deacons should possess qualities which would cause their husbands to be respected, and at the same time guard themselves from becoming busybodies and tale-bearers.

Faithfulness in the charge of a deacon-the exercise of which in fact is a matter of the greatest delicacy, and requires much Christian love and patience-was a means of acquiring strength in the work of God. Stephen and Philip are examples of this: their spiritual powers soon carried them beyond their services as deacons.

What was the assembly in those happy days? That which surely it always is in the sight of God, but then in fact, when love displayed itself in an order maintained by the energy of the Holy Ghost, and when the oneness of the entire body developed itself in the action of all its members, it was the house of God. Thank God, it is so always; yet what a difference since then in its practical condition!

But let us here examine the character which the apostle gives to the assembly on earth. He wrote hoping soon to come, but in order that, in case he might tarry long, Timothy should know how to conduct himself. He then tells us what the assembly is.

In the first place it is the 'house of God'. God dwells in it upon the earth. (Compare Ephesians 2:22) We understand that it is here viewed as on the earth, because the apostle is speaking of how to behave in it. But this truth is important. It gives a character to the assembly of the highest importance for us with regard to our responsibility. It is not a vague thing, composed of the dead, of the living-a thing which we know not where to find, because one part of it is alive on the earth and another part consists of souls in heaven. It is the house of God here below, in which we have to behave (whatever other position we may hold) in a manner that becomes the house of God. God dwells in the assembly upon earth. We cannot too earnestly remember this fact. Whatever would bring confusion into the presentation of the truth, through the idea that some are dead and that the whole assembly is not here, comes from the enemy and is in opposition to the word. The assembly viewed as subsisting on earth, is the house of God.

In the second place it is the assembly of the living God. God, in whom is the power of life, in contrast with men and with dead idols, has an assembly not of the world, having set it apart for Himself. It is not a nation like Israel. That people were the assembly of God in the wilderness. The assembly is now the assembly of the living God.

In the third place it is the pillar and support of the truth. Christ on earth was the Truth. (He is so always, but He was so on the earth.) He is now hidden in God. The assembly is not the truth: the word of God is the truth. His word is truth. Truth exists before the assembly; it is faith in the truth which gathers the assembly together. But the assembly is that which maintains the truth on earth. When the assembly is gone, men will be given up to a strong delusion. It may be that there is only a little remnant of those that call themselves Christians who maintain the word of truth; but it is not the less true that the assembly-as long as it remains here below-is the only witness for the truth upon the earth. It is God's witness to present the truth before men. At the end that which God owns as such will be the feeble flock at Philadelphia; and then that which is in the responsible position of being the assembly (Laodicea) will be spewed out of the mouth of Christ, who Himself takes the character of Amen, the faithful and true Witness. But the assembly as planted by God on the earth is the pillar and support of the truth. Authority is not the question here, but the maintenance and presentation of the truth. That which does not maintain and present the truth is not the assembly as God understands it.

The presence, then, of the living God, and the profession of the truth, are the characteristics of the house of God. Wherever this assembly of the living God is, wherever the truth is, there is His house.

The mystery of piety, which lies at the very centre of what the assembly maintains before the world, is great, and relates essentially to the Person of Christ. The apostle naturally does not here develop all the different parts of the truth, but that which is the living centre of the whole-that which is essential to the relations between God and men.

God had been manifested in the flesh; marvelous truth in fact! There, where all is confusion and sin, in the nature of him in whom all this sin and all this confusion are introduced, the Centre of all blessing, He who is Light itself, He who as the light puts every thing morally in its place, and who by the fact of His presence shows that love is above everything, God who is love, has been manifest in the flesh. Where sin was, there was love above the sin. Man, who is the slave of evil, sees here in his own nature the source and the power of all good. In the centre of evil and of weakness, in human nature, God Himself has been manifested. Was there then evil in Him who was such? Did He undergo the lot of the common bondage? By no means. Truly in the same circumstances, in the same nature, He proved superior to all evil, perfect in all respects. The absence of all sin was made evident by the power of the Holy Ghost during His whole life (if men had been able to discern it; and, in fact, it was manifest to the conscience of every man, for He was pure light shining upon all), and with power by the resurrection. (Compare Romans 1:4)

Thus God was made visible to the angels, was preached to the Gentiles (not merely the God of the Jews), became the object of faith in the world (it was not the manifestation of visible power, claiming

His rights and His glory), and at last took a place on high in the glory whence He had descended. It is thus that God is known in the assembly according to the truth. There is no truth outside the maintenance of this revelation of the Person of Christ.

It is worthy of notice that in this epistle, and even in the second, the apostle speaks nowhere of the relationship of Christians with God as His children, of the privileges of children, or of that which is known within in the intimacy of the family. He speaks of truths that are essential as testimony before the world; that which the assembly is externally, that which it is as the witness of God towards men. It is the house of God, the assembly of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth: that which it is as responsible in the world, and in order that all should learn what God is. The mystery of piety, of which the assembly is the vessel for testimony, answers to this. It is the grand essential truth on which all relation between God and men is founded, by means of which God has to do with men. Therefore also he says previously, "There is but one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."

We have not here the privileges of children, nor the heavenly bride of Christ, but the foundation of God's relations with all men. Thus the Father is not named, nor even the Spirit, except here in connection with the Lord's Person, as the justification of His testimony. It is God the Mediator, and man, and the assembly as the vessel and depositary of this truth of the testimony of God; or else evil spirits turning men away from the faith. This deserves all attention.

Not only, as we have seen elsewhere, the testimony of the grace of the gospel maintains the great eternal principles of the nature and glory of God, and His relations according to that glory with men; but even in the pains the apostle takes that the assembly may be cared for and guarded, during his absence, from the assaults of the enemy and from disorder and improprieties within; it is not of its internal privileges that he speaks. God is set before us, and the Lord Jesus Christ. God, in the majesty of His immutable truth in His relations with men as such, and in the revelation of Himself in the flesh-God was in Christ, reconciling the world; dwelling in the assembly, in order that it should present and maintain the truth before the world-the truth (as we have seen) with regard to Christ, of the revelation of God in Him. God desires to be in relation with men: it is thus that He accomplishes it. The assembly maintains the rights of the Creator and Savior-God on the earth. The assembly itself must be maintained in moral order that it may confront the enemy who is in the world and be able to sustain this testimony.

Verse 1

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

Faithful is the saying...

Despite the fact of some scholars applying this remark to the conclusion of the previous chapter it would be more appropriately understood as Paul's emphasis upon the importance of the eldership in church organization. Full agreement is felt with Stibbs who construed this expression as the mark of Paul's "concern to encourage a proper regard for the task of oversight" of the churches. This is the second of five times that Paul used this rather peculiar expression; and it seems to have been applied to particularly important or timely truths which had come to be something like proverbs among the earliest Christians.

If a man seeketh the office of bishop...

It is erroneous to see in this anything resembling the monarchical, metropolitan or diocesan bishop, an office that developed during the historical progress of Christianity, but which is not found anywhere in the New Testament, Bishops were elders, presbyters, overseers, pastors, shepherds and stewards; but all of these titles are descriptive of one office only, that of an elder of a local congregation. Paul used these titles synonymously (Acts 20:17, 28, etc.). Furthermore, it is wrong to see this chapter as Paul's

commissioning Timothy to set up any organization or to initiate and define the duties of those whom he was expected to appoint. As Lenski put it:

Paul is not telling Timothy to arrange for these offices and to define their functions and their scope; such offices were already established and in use. Timothy is merely to see to it that only properly qualified persons fill them.

He desireth a good work...

Some of the supermoralists are critical of Paul's encouraging the ambition of men to be elders; but such a self-righteous attitude is due to a failure to understand that "In the early history of the church, willingness to serve as an overseer meant sacrifice." "Paul calls the office a "good work," which shows that an elder has something on his shoulders besides holding down an office." "We read of elders visiting the sick (James 1:27; 5:12, 14), feeding the flock on the word of God and protecting it from enemies (Acts 20:29-31)." As regards the definition of "bishop," "Thayer defined the word: an overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent." This definition, of course, along with Paul's using the singular number, "bishop," has been made the excuse for attempted justification of the monarchical conception which in later times was fastened upon this office; but as White assures us:

No argument can be made on the singular "bishop" either here or in Titus 1:7, in favor either of the monarchical episcopate or as indications of the late date of the epistle. It (the term) is used generically.

Verse 2

The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Of the fifteen qualifications mentioned in this chapter, seven are listed in this verse.

Without reproach...

This is the great and all-inclusive qualification. Wuest pointed out that the Greek word from which this comes means "one who cannot be laid hold upon," that is, a man without a handle, one who has given evil men no occasion whatever to blame or censure him. The late Grover Cleveland Brewer denominated this as really the only qualification for elder, the other qualifications mentioned here and in Titus being merely the checkpoints for determining blamelessness. As Zerr said, of course, "This word has been distorted out of its true meaning, by saying it requires a bishop to be without sin." Sinless perfection is not required of Christians, nor of elders; and those are profoundly in error who make the high standard in evidence here the excuse for appointing none at all. The very fact of Paul's appointing elders in every church immediately after the first missionary journey (Acts 14:23) proves that such officers are absolutely necessary in every congregation; and the fact that one or more of a given group of elders might be declared deficient in given qualifications is not a valid reason for countermanding God's order to ordain elders "in every church."

The husband of one wife...

Dummelow gives the four major interpretations of this that have come down historically, thus:

(1) The presbyter is not to be a Christianized Jew who, under Moses' law, had taken more than one wife. (2) He is not to take a second wife after the death of the first. (3) He is not to marry again while his divorced wife lives. (4) He is to be a man faithful to his wife.

Literally all kinds of interpretations of this requirement are to be found in commentaries. White, for example, said, "This does not mean that the bishop must be or have been married." However, this is exactly what it does mean; and even if such a requirement is not in the Greek from which this is translated, it is perfectly obvious that Timothy was here under strict orders to look only in the married community for church officers. Moreover, this requirement refutes the long horror of celibate rulers of the historical church. Under (2), mentioned by Dummelow, it may be observed that the oldest historical interpretations are deeply colored by this very view; but we reject it on the grounds that Paul himself said, "marriage is honorable in all" (Hebrews 13:4). The ancient views to the contrary were influenced by the ascetic views that eventually led to the flowering of celibacy. As Hervey said, "There is nothing in Paul's writings to suggest the notion of there being anything dishonorable in a second marriage," provided, of course, such second marriages were due to the death of a previous partner or divorce for Scriptural reason. What is prohibited, absolutely, is polygamy; and there are some who read into this requirement the possibility that some of the Christians from the pagan culture either were, or had been, involved in polygamous marriages; and it is regrettable that, if such was the case, no Scriptural precedents have come down to us throwing light upon the proper handling of such a problem. Gerald Fruzia recently explained how missionaries in Africa confront exactly this situation, requiring that polygamy be abandoned. If the problem exists today, it probably existed in Paul's day also.

De Welt declared this means "one wife at a time"; Alford, Wordsworth and Ellicott concur in thinking that what is forbidden is "second marriages for church officers." However, the Greek simply has this, "a man of one woman." As Ward noted, "Above reproach dominates the whole list." Thus, ANYTHING reprehensible in the marital relations of a prospective elder would certainly disqualify him. In this first great requirement is seen the absolute sanctity of the home and that sacred respect and honor of it which dominate the whole Christian doctrine. Significantly, "All of the qualifications listed except aptness to teach and that pertaining to a novice are requirements that apply to all Christians." There are not two standards for so-called clergy and laity, but one standard for all.

Temperate, sober-minded, orderly...

It has often been remarked that the preconditions of leadership in the church are not such things as unusual talent, wealth, power or ability, but sound moral and ethical conduct.

Temperate...

"The literal Greek here is 'one who sits long at his wine,'" leading to the rendition, "not given to much wine." That wine was freely used even by Christians in apostolic times is evident in a statement like this; but it should always be remembered that the so-called wines of our times have ten times the alcoholic percentage of wines in that day; and that, even in those times, the people who wanted to set the proper example abstained from wine altogether (see 1 Timothy 5:23).

Such qualifications as temperate, sober-minded and orderly in church elders are absolutely mandatory. The church today is beset with every conceivable fad, fancy, fiction and nostrum that the devil himself can invent; and, for dealing with such things, the church of all ages needs stable, sober, orderly, right-minded men who have the courage and ability to protect and nourish the flock of God.

Given to hospitality...

In the times during which Paul was writing, there were not many inns of the type available today; and many Christians were required to travel, some being displaced from their homes by persecutions, and others traveling in the spread of the gospel or the service of the church. Elders were to be chosen from that class of Christians who opened their doors to fellow-saints in need or distress. Little reference is made here, if any, to the type of hospitality that says, "Come over to my house and have a good time; and later we can go over to yours for the same purpose." White is probably correct in supposing that

"The duty of the elders was closely connected with the maintenance of external relations, which was their principal function."

Apt to teach...

The Christian life is a life of study and learning. Ill-informed elders are a contradiction in terms. Every elder should be able to shut the mouths of the gainsayers, shield the church from false teaching, and see to it that truth and truth alone is fed to their charges. The inroads of so-called "higher" or "source" criticism of the New Testament, the current development of the most notorious and amoral philosophies, the advocacy of such things as homosexuality, abortion, etc., place an additional burden upon elders to be well taught and able men. As Lenski said, "Aptness to teach means not merely a natural aptitude, but the qualification of having been taught, as well." It is regrettable that this qualification is sometimes overlooked.

Verse 3

no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money;

The best comment on these terms is perhaps the basic definitions of the Greek words from which they have been translated, although the meaning comes through clearly enough in their English derivatives. The following definitions are from Wuest:

Brawler: a fighter, a contentious person, one who goes about with a chip on his shoulder.

Striker: this noun speaks of a bruiser, one who is ready with a blow, a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person.

Gentle: means one who is kind, considerate and sensitive to the feelings of others, not harsh, rude or blunt in his behavior.

Not covetous, no lover of money: the word AVARICIOUS may be used to translate the thought here.

Striker...

The current application of this word to participants in labor disputes should not cloud the meaning here. Even as late as the times of Sir Walter Scott, a striker was one who went around thumping people on the head with a quarterstaff. "Skull-breakers" is a synonym.

Verse 4

one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

The emphasis in this verse is not upon procreative ability, but upon the ability to rule, a well-disciplined family being the surest evidence of such a trait in one considered for the eldership. Some, discerning this, have gone so far as to declare that:

The requirement is not that an overseer must have children, that a childless man could not be chosen, but that when he has a family, as most men have, any children, should be in subjection.

Even if such a viewpoint is true, which this author doubts, it would be far better to choose able family men with children; and something else should be done, if at all, with the greatest reluctance and with the absolute necessity of doing so if any elders at all were to be appointed. This view is included here because of the usual dependability of its advocate, and not through any agreement with it, but also for the purpose of strengthening the argument for allowing fathers of only one child to be appointed. The overstressing of the "children" requirement has reduced the process of choosing elders in some churches to a mere census of the children!

Regarding the question of whether a man with only one child could be appointed, Zerr has this illuminating comment:

The captain of a sinking ship orders that women with children should enter lifeboats first. This does not mean that women with only one child would be denied entrance. Sarah remarked (Genesis 21:7), "Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have borne him a son."

Thus, the Scriptural use of the plural "children" to include also the meaning of a single child is fully established from the Old Testament.

Not the number of the children, but their behavior is in view here. Paul would state in the very next verse that a man unable to control his own household should not be entrusted with the government of a church.

With all gravity...

This is not a grace of childhood, but should be applied to the dignity and decorum of the father.

Verse 5

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

See comment under preceding verse.

DeWelt asked:

If one be incapable of governing so small a society as his own family, but suffers his children to be disobedient and vicious, how shall he govern in a proper manner that greater and far more important society, the church of God?

Verse 6

not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

The elevation of a recent convert to the eldership might easily issue in an inordinate pride upon his part; and, therefore, wherever possible, men of settled experience in living the Christian life should be chosen. Young churches might at times find it difficult to find men of this qualification; indeed, it has been suggested that when Paul himself appointed elders on the first missionary tour (Acts 14:23), they might not have been totally free of question on this count. From this, we conclude that the overall order to "ordain elders in every church" should not be set aside on the pretext that no one, in the strictest sense, measures up to all of the qualifications in any perfect manner.

Being puffed up...

These words are from [Greek: tuphoo], meaning literally "to raise a smoke, emit smoke, or smolder," hence metaphorically, "to blind with pride or conceit."

Into condemnation of the devil...

This refers not to any condemnation that may be exercised by Satan, because the prerogative of condemnation is not one that pertains to Satan at all; therefore, it means the condemnation into which Satan and the fallen angels fell when God condemned them. The strict meaning of the Greek word

makes possible an opposite interpretation with the meaning that "the snare of the devil" is intended by this. Lenski, however, giving an extensive analysis, said of this alternative rendition that "it is untenable." Consonant with this view is also the fact of pride having been the occasion of the fall of Satan, exactly the temptation of a novice prematurely elevated to the eldership. Wuest also connected these things as follows: "The condemnation of the devil refers to the fact that Satan is under the condemnatory sentence of God, since sin was motivated by pride."

Verses 7, 8

Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

These same qualities are required of elders, and sufficient comment on them was made above. A synonym for GRAVE is "honorable". Double-tongued, found only here in the New Testament, means DECEITFUL, lacking in integrity.

Not greedy of filthy lucre...

indicates a man who is not inordinately fond of making money.

Verse 9

holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

The mystery of the faith...

Here is the same as "the great mystery" mentioned a few moments later (1 Timothy 3:16). The doctrine of mystery as unfolded in the New Testament is rather extensive, as fully elaborated in The Mystery of Redemption. See more on this under 1 Tim. 3:16.

Pure conscience...

Paul made a great deal of the conscience; and, while a clear conscience does not prove one is right, an impure conscience most certainly proves one to be wrong.

Verse 10

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

And let these also first be proved...

This requirement of having first to be tested was also mandatory in the case of the elders. As Lenski expressed it:

The fact that such a testing was to be applied also to overseers is so self-evident from the conditions laid down in 1 Tim. 3:2-8, that "also" now refers to it. Paul states that the testing is likewise quite necessary in the case of the deacons.

This is a very important point to be noted, because in it lies the certainty that the women to be mentioned in the same breath are the wives of both elders and deacons, the same requirements in

their wives being mandatory for both. The testing mentioned here applies to both elders and deacons; and the qualification of their wives also applies to the wives of both classes of officers.

Verse 11

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

Hervey summarized the three possible meanings of this verse, making it applicable to: (1) the wives of the deacons; (2) the wives of the elders and deacons; or (3) the women deacons. Hervey, like so many present-day commentators opted for the third meaning, but this commentator is certain that the third meaning is wrong.

If the women in view here had been deacons, Paul would have called them deacons, which he certainly did not do; and furthermore, in the very next verse Paul said that deacons "must be husbands of one wife," leaving women out of sight altogether as possible holders of this office.

Both the KJV and Nestle Greek-English New Testament translate the word "wives" instead of "women" in this verse, and that is doubtless the correct rendition. It is alleged that the word "women" is ambiguous in the Greek, and well it may be; but in context the word has to mean wives. To make it read "female deacons" is a gross transgression of the word of God. This verse says absolutely nothing about any female deacons; and the supposition that it does would mean that no qualifications whatever are laid down for the wives of elders and deacons, a fault that no man has the right to charge against the apostle Paul. This verse on the qualities of officers' wives is absolutely mandatory to be observed. The wrong kind of wife can ruin any elder or any deacon; and to make the qualifications in sight here applicable to a whole new class of church officials would be to make Paul guilty of a very glaring omission.

But isn't Phoebe called a deaconess (Romans 16:1)? Yes, indeed; but policemen are also called deacons of God (Romans 13:4), the Greek word being the same in both cases (except for the gender). See exegesis on this in my Commentary on Romans under those verses. In this connection, it is proper to note that if Paul had meant these women to be installed as "deaconesses" he certainly knew the word and would have referred to them in this passage by their proper title. The New Testament word "apostle" is used in its both official and limited sense and also in a secondary and more general sense when applied to men like Barnabas and Silas, who were not, strictly speaking, "apostles." The view here is that "deaconess" as applied to Phoebe, in the same manner, does not mean that she was officially a deacon in the church of the Lord. It should always be remembered that deaconess translates the Greek word for "servant," and that, for centuries, the translators have rendered the word "deacon" only when the official church office was meant. But in the case of Rom. 13:4 and Rom. 16:1, they usually rendered it "servant." That is the way the KJV renders both places; and the gratuitous injection of the official title DEACON into Romans 16:1 in some subsequent versions is absolutely incorrect and misleading.

If churches were commanded to appoint women deacons, where is the record of it, either in the New Testament or in the custom of the historical church? When women deacons are appointed, they are appointed without divine authority and with no adequate list of qualifications to serve as guidelines for their appointment. If 1 Tim. 3:11 is to be construed as the standard for appointing women deacons, why, it may be inquired, did Paul list fifteen qualifications for elders, and four for so-called deaconesses? Such a view simply does not make sense.

Verse 12

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

Let deacons be husbands of one wife...

This disqualifies any woman from serving as an official deacon. The notion that Paul laid down hard and fast regulations regarding the marital status of both elders and (male) deacons, and he then authorized a whole new echelon of (female) deacons without specifying any marital qualifications whatever, is too unreasonable to believe. No! The people who are determined to appoint female deacons will have to find their authority and their guidelines somewhere else than in the New Testament. See comment on this clause under 1 Tim. 1:2.

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.

As Lipscomb remarked, "Through service of the deaconship a man grows into the qualifications and fitness for the work of an elder."

ELDERS AND DEACONS

Probably the greatest class of men on earth today are the elders and deacons of churches of our Lord throughout the world. Their work is that of constant service and study, not in some ivory tower, but in the boiling crucible of daily life, where the word of God and its application to pressing human problems are their constant daily concern. The hours of toil, unrequited by any human emoluments, the ceaseless care of the churches, the countless meetings, the unending solicitation on their part of cooperation from the membership, with no means of enforcing it except by the sheer weight of their spiritual and moral authority - these qualities of their service, together with the marvelous success which crowns their efforts, give evidence of the genuine greatness which marks the character and conduct of elders and deacons of the Lord's church.

This commentator has had the honor of knowing literally hundreds of elderships and deaconships throughout the United States, and the quality of character and ability exhibited by all of them is the most truly amazing phenomenon ever observed by this writer. Surely such men are the servants of the Most High.

This verse concludes the Pauline instructions for the appointment of elders and deacons.

Verse 14

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly;

This verse is slightly apologetic. As White said:

It expresses an excuse for the brevity and incompleteness (from one point of view) of the instructions, and also an expectation that they are sufficient to serve their temporary purpose.

Did Paul return to Timothy in Ephesus?

We have no means of knowing. He wrote to Titus about the same time and told Titus to come to Nicopolis for the coming winter, which was probably a few months hence, so that before going to Nicopolis Paul hoped to visit Timothy in Ephesus.

Verse 15

but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

How men ought to behave...

This may well be translated "how thou oughtest to behave..."; but as White said, "It is a matter of indifference" which rendition is followed, the meaning being the same either way.

As Hervey pointed out, "Here again is a somewhat remarkable resemblance in the phraseology of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 12:22, 23)." It has long been the conviction of this student that the resemblances between the Pauline literature and the book of Hebrews is impossible to explain, except on the thesis that Paul also wrote Hebrews.

The house of God...

"House is correct here, not household; believers are God's house because God dwells in them."

The church of the living God...

Inherent in this is a comparison with paganism, or rather a contrast, thus: "Church of the living God, not the temple of the dead idols!" "Pillar and ground of the truth..." Paul had seen the marvelous colonnade of pillars which was the principal feature of the great temple of Diana at Ephesus; and something of the meaning of such pillars is inherent in this. A pillar supports and upholds, exactly what the church does for the truth of God. The word "ground" in this connection has the same meaning.

Verse 16

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness;

He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

The widely held opinion that this is from some earlier hymn in current use among the earliest Christians is totally without foundation. The supposition is based upon the rather indefinite word which is here rendered "he," but which is also sometimes rendered "which" or "who." Any way it is translated the meaning is exactly the same, namely, that of the KJV which rendered the passage "God was manifested in the flesh," which is exactly what the passage SAYS. "He who" refers to "God" mentioned twice in the preceding verse, and "which" or "who" would also have the same reference to "God." And, of course, it is fully consonant with everything else in the New Testament. God was manifested in the flesh in the person of Christ. In support of the hymn theory, it is frequently pointed out that there are rhythm and balance, etc.; but many of Paul's statements have the same qualities, notably in the salutation of Rom. 1:1-7, which see in my Commentary on Romans. This writer accepted the hymn theory regarding this passage in "The Mystery of Redemption," written several years ago, but more mature studies have raised serious misgivings about the various "hymns" said to have been quoted by Paul. Anyway, even if it is a hymn, the odds are overwhelmingly in favor of the proposition that Paul himself was the author of it.

Great is the mystery of godliness...

The New Testament refers to these mysteries:

The mystery of Christ and his church (Ephesians 5:32).

The mystery of lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

The mystery of the seven stars and the seven candlesticks (Revelation 1:20).

The mystery of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:51).

The mystery of the hardening of Israel (Romans 11:25).

The mystery of the harlot church (Revelation 17:7).

The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13:11).

The mystery in view in this clause, however, is the "great" mystery, much more comprehensive than those mentioned above, and in a sense containing all of them. Frequent references to it in the New Testament designate it as:

The mystery (Romans 16:25).
The mystery of his will (Ephesians 1:9).
The mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3:4).
The mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19).
The mystery of God (Colossians 2:2).
The mystery of the faith (1 Timothy 3:9).
The mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3:16).

There is nothing simplistic about this mystery. It has many facets and complexities; and for an extended treatise on the theology of mystery unfolded in the New Testament, reference is again made to The Mystery of Redemption.

Christ himself is the mystery as revealed by this verse, but the close relation of Christ to all phases of the mystery is at once evident.

God was manifested in the flesh...

This is a statement of the Incarnation, however translated, referring to the visitation of the Dayspring from on high. Only of Almighty God, or of the second Person in the godhead, might it be properly said that he "was manifested in the flesh."

Justified in the Spirit...

Christ was justified in the Spirit, because God's Spirit, "without measure," dwelt in him, testified to his deity upon the occasion of his baptism, and was sent by Christ upon the day of Pentecost. In the most superlative degree, all the fruits of the Holy Spirit were exhibited in the life of Christ. He was justified in the Spirit.

Seen of angels...

The implication here is that angels were extremely solicitous for our Lord's welfare, ever ready to do his will, and importantly identified with his earthly ministry. Angels announced his birth, warned Joseph to flee into Egypt, ministered to him in the wilderness, strengthened him in Gethsemane, rolled away the stone from his grave, announced his resurrection, escorted him to glory and prophesied his return in the Second Advent. Twelve legions of angels stood ready to rescue him during the Passion, and ten thousand of his holy angels will accompany him in the Second Coming. Yes, he was seen of angels.

Preached among the nations...

The alternate reading of this is "Preached among the Gentiles," which in context is far better (see the American Standard Version margin). Paul mentioned again and again the fact that the inclusion of Gentiles was an essential part of the mystery (Romans 16:26; Ephesians 3:6), and thus it would be better to understand this as "preached among the Gentiles." In this also is the fact of the preaching itself, not merely those receiving the preaching, being a vital element of the mystery. "It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). The great need of this age is preaching the word of God. Evil forces have battered down the outer doors and are

assaulting the inner citadel of faith itself. No such crisis in a millennium has confronted the church; the hour of her mortal decision is upon her. She must forsake the evil philosophies of men and return to the faithful proclamation of what the word of God declares, if she is either to be saved herself or have the power to save others. Let the church ring out the message "preached among the nations."

Believed on in the world...

This is a continuing mystery. Contrary to every evil, in spite of what appears to be every good reason against it, the word of God still falls in honest and good hearts; and God continues to reap his precious harvest of souls from the earth. In spite of a roaring tornado of wickedness on every side, God's faithful continue to love him rather than darkness. Countless thousands, or millions, no one knows how many, Continue to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; and every passing decade sees more buildings erected in the name of Christ and dedicated to his service than were ever built and dedicated to any earthly ruler in all history. Yes, our Lord is believed on in the world!

Received up in glory...

This has been construed as "received up into glory," and so it may be understood; but as the text stands, it appears rather as a reference to the glorious nature of his ascension. Three great [Greek: parabola] passages of the New Testament deal with this, namely, Philp. 2:5-9; Eph. 4:8, 9 and 2 Cor. 8:9. The doctrine of the ascension of Christ is in view here, as well as in the other passages cited. The Scriptural accounts of the ascension, or of the "going up" of Christ, seem to have been preliminary to the actual ascension into the spiritual realm above, leading to the unfortunate view that such accounts are contradictory, which, of course, they are not. Christ apparently "went up" from his disciples more than once; and it may be doubted if the actual ascension itself was witnessed by mortal eyes. Like the resurrection, it was announced by angels; and their testimony verified the fact; but the actual ascent was probably too glorious for mortal eyes to have endured the sight of it. The ascension is very properly included among the elements of the great mystery, for there are certainly corollaries of it that shall never be known by men until the saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

Lesson 7 Demonic Influence and Faithful Servanthood

1 Timothy 4

But there would be some who departed from the faith, from this knowledge of the one Creator and Savior-God-Him who was manifested in the flesh. They would attack precisely these points which we have named. It might be that they would pretend to carry the idea of Christian privileges farther than all others had done, as well as that of profound knowledge of God; but they would sin against first principles, against the faith which connected the Savior God revealed in Christianity with the one only Creator-God. According to Christianity, the eternal God had not only created the world but had revealed Himself in Christ. These apostates, bringing in doctrines of demons, would seek to deny that it was this one and only God of nature who had manifested Himself in grace. Seduced by demons, and their conscience being seared, they forbade that which God had established in creation, that which He had given to man in full right after the flood: as though the superior holiness which they preached, and relationship with a more exalted God, were not consistent with such customs. Forsaking the real and practical holiness of communion with God, and of His commandments by Christ, they created a false sanctity for themselves, which denied that which God had ordained from the beginning and thus exalted themselves against the authority of Him who had ordained it, as though He was an imperfect or perhaps evil being.

Thus the restraint of the fear of God was lost, and the door opened to license and dissoluteness. The Spirit of God warned the assembly of this, and the faithful apostle communicates it to Timothy and through him puts the faithful on their guard. He does not therefore speak of privilege. Faithful to the glory of God, he returns to the first principles of His glory, and maintains the incontestable rights of the one and only God; faithful to God, not making boast of his knowledge, but seeking in love to guard the assembly from all departure from God.

We must not confound the few here who forsake the faith with the general apostasy of 2 Thessalonians. Here a few depart from the truth, seduced by demons; and the assembly still subsists to be guarded from the invasion of these hurtful principles. Quite another thing is the general apostasy, and the manifestation of the man of sin, which is not mentioned here at all. Here we have the faithfulness which repels error by truth, reminding the brethren of the latter, in order that they may not be seduced. There it is the manifestation of the one who sits in the temple of God, and who is destroyed by the brightness of the Lord's presence. Here all that had to be done was to recall in simplicity the goodness of the Creator, and that His gifts, received with thanksgiving, were always good, and not to be refused: assuredly not that they were to use them for the gratification of their lusts, but as sanctified by the word of God, which brought them to us as God's gifts, and by prayer, which connects us with God in using them. They were to be received as from Him, as the gift of His hand; and they were sanctified, as is the case with everything that comes from Him and bears the stamp of His will and His goodness. Man had forfeited everything in forsaking God: what he had he had not now with God, would eat merely as an animal, and worse as having left God. The word of God replaced the relationship in grace, and prayer used it on this footing. Here (although in other circumstances it has gone much farther) the monastic principle, in the heart and in form, is fully judged; however sincere any individual may be who seeks to follow it in order to honor God. God does not withdraw the gifts on which man, so to speak, has seized by his will; but his use of them, instead of being the gratification of his will and lusts, is now as received from God by His will in thankfulness, and owning Him.

This in fact the apostle shows in that which follows. By teaching thus Timothy would be a good servant of Jesus Christ, nourished in the truth: bodily exercise profited little, but godliness much-both here below and for eternity; warning him again against the idle and profitless speculation of the human mind, to the danger of which he continually recurs. It is for this doctrine of God-true and worthy of all acceptance-that the apostle labored and suffered reproach; because he had faith in the living God,

who, by His providence and by His supreme power, governed, preserved, and took care of all men, and especially of those that believed. It was this same only God, Creator and Savior, in whom he trusted while laboring for the Lord. Timothy was to teach this and enforce it with authority.

Afterwards, in connection with this authoritative instruction, the apostle speaks of the person and position of Timothy himself. He was young, but he was to maintain his place, and gain by his conduct that weight which years did not yet give him. He was to be an example to the believers, and occupy himself, till Paul came, with reading, exhortation, and instruction. Moreover, in his case God had given a special preparation for his work; he was not to forget or neglect it. A gift had been imparted to him: God had pointed him out to this end by prophecy; and this immediate testimony from God, to which the operation of His power was united, had been accompanied by the seal of testimony from man, that is, that of the elders among the Christians. (Compare Acts 13:1-3.)

Thus all things concurred to strengthen Timothy in his service, and in the authority that he exercised at that moment in place of the apostle. He should always present the weight of an irreproachable conduct, which would have its influence over hearts and consciences; but he was inwardly strengthened by the consciousness of having been formally set apart by God for the work; the gift of God had been imparted to him, and the sanction of all that had weight in the assembly had been laid, as a seal, upon him. Thus strengthened, he was to devote himself to the things of the Lord in such a manner, that his progress should be evident to all men—a demonstration of his communion with the Lord. At the same time he was to take heed to himself and to the doctrine, and that continually, which should be the means of salvation both to himself and to those who heard him.

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 demons,

The Spirit saith expressly...

"This means that there was neither doubt nor vagueness about it." The connection of this section with the preceding chapter is seen in the contrast with the triumphant Christ depicted in the final six poetical lines of chapter 3. "Over against the future triumph of the church, assured by the finished work of Christ, we must set the opposition."

That in later times...

This is not limited to any immediate period after Paul's letter. "From the time at which he was writing and forward in all periods of the church, men have apostatized from the faith."

Some shall fall away from the faith...

Paul did not use the same word here for "fall away" which he used in 2 Thess. 2:3-11; but as Carl Spain said:

The APOSTASY of 2 Thess. 2:3 is the same as the DEPARTURE here in 1 Tim. 4:1. Both words are from [Greek: ahistemi], meaning to abandon, to rebel, to desert. It is translated FORSAKE (Acts 21:21), and "fall away from" (Hebrews 3:12).

The obvious connection with other New Testament references to the apostasy requires the deduction mentioned by Ward, "The `later times' foreshadow the gathering eschatological storm." The Second Coming is also connected with the final and complete manifestation of this apostasy in 2 Thess. 2:1-12. Lenski made it "the whole time between the two Advents."

From the faith...

simply means "the Christian faith," giving further emphasis to the Christian roots of the apostasy in view.

Giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons...

It is not taught here that evil spirits actually teach, but that they "through men" (mentioned a moment later) deceived multitudes and are, in fact, themselves instigators of the false teaching. In the Old Testament, the evil spirit who stood before the Lord said, "I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets" (1 Kings 22:22); and the same evil power would be able also to corrupt Christian elders, change them into hardened hypocrites, speaking the most glaring falsehood, with no reproach whatever from their dead consciences. Of course, not elders alone, but ministers, church prelates, and the whole echelon of religious hierarchies are included in this.

Most scholars accept "doctrines of demons" in this passage subjectively, that is, doctrines taught by demons (through men); but there is a very possible interpretation which construes this as meaning "doctrines regarding demons"; and, as every Roman emperor upon his death became a demon to be prayed to, the historical church herself finally began offering prayers "to" its dead saints, which most certainly fulfills the definition of "doctrines of demons" understood objectively.

Verse 2

through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron;

Reference is again made to the passages outlined at the head of this chapter. The very worst mistake that any sincere student of the word of God can make is to assume that teachers of false doctrine are either telling the truth, or that they are unaware of the false doctrines they are teaching. The Scriptures leave no doubt at all on this.

Branded in their conscience as with a hot iron...

This is a description of the "hardened," "blinded," deadened soul in whom the truth principle has utterly perished. It begins by rejecting what is known to be true, but in its progression it leaves the "deluded" totally without moral or spiritual guidelines. The Scriptures contain a great deal of material on the judicial hardening of willful sinners; and those interested in further pursuit of the subject will find a discussion of it in my Commentary on Romans, pp. 392-395.

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.

Forbidding to marry...

This heads the list of characteristics of the great apostasy that shall seduce and mislead the church of God; and one may only be astounded at the fanciful interpretations of this that one finds in commentaries. Note some of these:

False teachers were to arise in Timothy's day, and shortly thereafter who would teach that God did not create matter because matter is evil...The command to abstain from meats and marriage is based upon the supposed evil of matter.

(This is an indication) of the impious doctrine of some of the great Gnostic schools...probably in those early days creeping into the churches. The Jewish sects of the Essenes and the Therapeutae had already taught abstinence from marriage was meritorious.

A hundred other instances could be cited in which there seems to be a total blindness to the one overwhelming, universal fulfillment of this very prophecy, namely, that found in the apostate church herself, which there is no need to name, because every child on five continents already knows it.

To mention the Therapeutae (as in Spence, above), offers little that is tangible...We may safely say that no sect that bore this name ever existed.

It is only among the more recent commentators that the phenomenal blindness to the historical fulfillment of the apostasy is observed; and therefore we are doubly thankful for comments like the following:

The whole monastic system that developed, together with all the lying teachings from which it arose, appeared soon enough. It still flourishes in Rome and in all the rest of the false asceticism.

T. Croskery gave the following historical progression of the development of the heresy of forbidding Christians to marry:

This notion may already have influenced opinion in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 7); it developed in less than a century into Gnostic contempt for marriage; it entered patristic theology in the form of an exaggerated veneration for virginity; it developed in the Latin and Greek churches into the celibacy of the clergy and of religious orders; it was a tendency wholly opposed to Scripture teaching which allows "marriage is honorable in all" (Hebrews 13:2); it forbade marriage to church rulers and ministers, despite the fact of Old Testament priests and New Testament elders having been required to be "husbands of one wife." Apostles were permitted to take their wives with them on mission tours (1 Corinthians 9:5).

Wesley explained the meaning here thus:

Forbidding priests, monks and nuns to marry, and commanding all men to abstain from such and such meats on such and such days.

There is also the universal prohibition against marriage during Lent, a ban that denies marriage during a specified period to hundreds of millions throughout the earth. Yes, Paul's prophecy was fulfilled in the most comprehensive and extensive dimensions imaginable.

Commanding to abstain from meats...

This is partially treated under the preceding verse. Paul's condemnation of such doctrine has in view the fact that Jesus Christ made "all meats clean" (Mark 7:19; Acts 10:13-16).

Them that believe and know the truth...

Once again the order of trust, then knowledge, appears in the New Testament, as in "We have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God" (John 6:69). The knowledge that amounts to an absolute certainty is experiential in that it follows, but does not precede, belief.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving:

Every creature of God is good...

This is attested by the fact that even those creatures held to be unsuitable for food in some countries are yet considered delicacies in others, as any international market demonstrates.

If it be received with thanksgiving...

Thanksgiving at meals is a basic Christian duty, and the same is in view here.

Verse 5

for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer.

Sanctified...

or "consecrated..." Ward pointed out the value of this verse in another connection:

Paul says the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife (1 Corinthians 7:14). It cannot mean that the husband is saved because he has a Christian wife. But what does it mean?...He is not to be regarded as unclean, and therefore divorced; he can continue to be the husband of a Christian.

Spence noted that quotations, or allusions, founded upon the Bible often made up a portion of thanksgiving at meals in the Christian community, citing a very old form of the practice from the Apostolic Constitutions, thus:

Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who nourishes men from their youth up, and who givest meat to all flesh; fill our hearts with joy and gladness, so that we, always enjoying a sufficiency, may abound unto every good work in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be ascribed the glory, honor and power unto the ages. Amen.

In this connection, Gould also pointed out the "table thanks" common among Wesley and his preachers thus:

Be present at this table Lord;
Be here and everywhere adored;
These creatures bless, and grant that we
May Feast in Paradise with Thee."

Verse 6

If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed until now:

This is one of the passages which the source critics have bitterly complained about, Faith in the Pauline epistles is a subjective experience, but in the Pastorals it is more objective in character." Of course, this is their excuse for denying Paul wrote the Pastorals. However, as pointed out extensively in this series, it is simply a conceit on the part of scholars that "faith" is usually subjective in Paul's other writings. "Faith" in this place is undeniably objective, being related not so much to "trusting" as it is to piety and good works; and Paul's letters do not contradict each other. See extensive exegesis on this in my Commentary on Galatians, pp. 69, 70.

In his book on Romans, Sanday tells us that we must distinguish between at least seven different senses given the word "faith" in that one epistle, and he says that Paul has all of these meanings before him.

The most widespread theological error of this age is that of misunderstanding the use of "faith" by Paul in his letters, and the unlawful, ridiculous interpretation of it as meaning, invariably, "trust/faith." That it does occasionally have that meaning is certain; but as Dr. Howard of the University of Georgia declared, "The usual meaning of the word in the New Testament is fidelity."

Paul's emphasis in this place on sound doctrine is also offensive to some who boast that they do not "preach doctrine"; and such a boast separates one emphatically from the New Testament tradition. "A good minister," in the Pauline definition, is one who is both nourished by and a teacher of the sound Scriptural doctrine upon which the New Testament church is founded.

Verse 7

but refuse profane and old wives' fables. And exercise thyself unto godliness:

"Invented stories and untrue fables have no place in Christian proclamation. The faith is rooted in history."

How much of the lore regarding the so-called canonization of the "saints" of the church is pure fable? For example, take the tale regarding St. Patrick who was said to have died in Ireland; but he was so beloved that his friends would not bury him; and on the fourth day his body swelled up, burst, and emitted profusely the most marvelous perfume men had ever smelled! This yarn was told by a clergyman of the historical church in this writer's community, when he was a small boy.

Exercise thyself unto godliness...

A moment later Paul would cite the reason for this admonition. Exercise unto godliness leads to eternal rewards; the other type of exercise provides only temporal benefits.

Verse 8

for bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.

This is denominated a "faithful saying" in the next verse. The contrast between the mere care of the body and the far more important care of the soul is the thing in view. It is incredible how much time, effort, expense and concern men lavish upon exercise and care of their bodies; and, while Paul allows this to be profitable "for a little," that is, "for a little time, only," the far more important requirements of the religious life of the soul should be stressed more than the other.

Verse 9

Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance.

Commentators are sharply divided on whether this applies to the preceding 1 Tim. 4:8, or to the following 1 Tim. 4:10. The view preferred here sees it as applicable to the preceding verse, above. As Lenski expressed it:

This saying is identical with the dictum in 1 Tim. 1:15, and does not seal what follows, but what precedes... (It carries the idea) Trust it or not; it is and remains worthy of all acceptance.

Verse 10

For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe.

Of the living God...

The Christian hope contrasted starkly with the hope of the pagan world which was set upon dead idols.

Who is the Savior of all men...

"This is not universalism. The key is in the words, `specially of them that believe.'" It is a fact, of course, that God is able and willing to save all men, and that all who are ever saved will be saved by him; and it is in this sense that "he is the Savior of all men." As Lenski said, "We know why so many are not saved (Matthew 23:37)."

Lesson 8 Instructions for Ministry

Verse 11

These things command and teach.

Every word Paul addressed to Timothy is Christian doctrine. The order to command and teach those things extends to all times and to all congregations seeking to do the will of the Lord. Paul's instructions in this letter were not merely personal advice to Timothy, but solid doctrinal guidelines for the church of all ages.

Verse 12

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.

White's paraphrase of the meaning here is as follows:

Assert the dignity of your office even though men may think you young to hold it. Let no one push you aside as a boy.

It should not be inferred from this, however, that Timothy was young by present-day methods of reckoning youth. Youth is a relative term, as pointed out by White: "Forty is reckoned old for a captain in the army, young for a bishop, and very young for a prime minister."

Gould pointed out that:

It is age, rather than youth, that is in danger of being despised today. When a church seeking a minister automatically disqualifies every man on its list who is fifty years old, or older, it has come dangerously near to despising maturity.

Despite the validity of what Gould says, there is also a widespread tendency to ignore and bypass men in their twenties when settled churches start looking for a minister. This also is extremely reprehensible.

In word...life...love...

The conduct of any minister is regulated by this. He must be one whose life measures up to the holy ideals which he preaches.

Verse 13

Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching.

Till I come...

As previously pointed out, we do not know if Paul ever was permitted to go to Ephesus again, as he planned here to do.

Give heed to reading...

Despite the obvious application of this admonition to the simple necessity of study on the part of every minister, Lenski was sure that something else was meant. He wrote:

Timothy is directed to pay close attention to the reading of the churches, that is, to WHAT is being read, not that SOMETHING should be read, still less that Timothy do the reading but to what is being read."

Full agreement is felt with this; and the point is one worthy of consideration by churches everywhere. Some of the "modern" translations being read publicly are near blasphemy in their contradiction of sacred truth; and one finds reason to rejoice that the Hillsboro church in Nashville, Tennessee, laid down the dictum that only certain versions of the Holy Bible were ever to be read publicly from their pulpit. It was a similar concern which Paul enjoined upon Timothy here.

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.

What was this gift, and where did Timothy get it? Lenski answers thus:

God gave (it) not by a miraculous gift from heaven, but "by means of prophecy," by a communication of the word to him, and did that under the tutelage of one of the most capable prophets this word ever had, namely, Paul himself.

The gift may also be identified with Timothy's ability, as Paul's assistant, to found and establish churches in the truth. From 2 Timothy 1:6, it is clear that Paul himself was present and participated in the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, the same being the occasion when Timothy was set aside unto the attainment of this gift, an attainment which was prophesied at the time. As to what prophet may have spoken it, Silas, who was also a prophet, was Paul's companion at the time; and either he or Paul could have made the prophecy which was so gloriously fulfilled in Timothy. If on the first tour, Barnabas could have uttered it.

Verse 15

Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be made manifest unto all.

The utmost diligence and application to the task in hand are indicated by this; and such diligence and perseverance will surely issue in favorable results. It is regrettable that some ministers seem to believe that they can benefit mankind more by who they are and what they imagine themselves to be, than by any diligent application to the work of saving souls. It was a task, arduous, demanding, and constant to which Paul here assigned Timothy.

Verse 16

Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee.

Paul never thought of salvation as a "once procured, final feat, settled and done forever!" No, salvation was a matter of fidelity and perseverance to the end of life. From this, it is also clear that there is a sense in which men must save themselves, not in the sense of either meriting or earning salvation, but in the sense of diligent continuity in the Christian way. There is no occasion in the Christian life when the follower of the Lord may feel free to rest upon his laurels, assume that he "has it made," or cease the fidelity that should mark the entirety of his whole life. Wallis pointed out that "continuing" is one of the basic words "used to describe the steadfast walk of a Christian (Galatians 3:10; Hebrews 8:9;

James 1:25; Acts 14:22; 14:22 and Colossians 1:23). It is basically the same as ABIDE in John 15 and 1 John."

Lesson 9 Widows and Elders

1 Timothy 5

Having thus considered the laborer, the apostle returns to the details of the work, in which Timothy was to display his diligence and watchful care. Everywhere here the subject is that which is suitable outwardly to an upright walk, that which is seemly, whether with regard to the position of individuals, or with respect to the world. The apostle speaks of elders; of widows, of that which is becoming for younger widows; of the honor due to faithful elders those among them especially who were teachers also. There is nothing inward, nothing of the soul's relationships to God; but everything refers to the public testimony which suited the position of men in this world before God. It is important to remark this that although our joy lies in our heavenly privileges in our communion, yet we can never with impunity neglect ordinary duties or moral proprieties; we must take knowledge of the practical dangers that would beset us, owing to that which the flesh is.

We may notice that provision was made for all widows who had no relatives able to maintain them; and also that there were elders who did not teach.

Against an elder, Timothy was not to receive an accusation, unless there were two or three witnesses.

All this bears testimony to the fact, that the apostle gives these directions with a view to outward order; for the maintenance of that which is respectable in the eyes of all, and of respect for all that ought to be respected. At the same time, Timothy was to be careful not to give by the laying on of hands his sanction to any one who did not offer moral guarantees that, in the position he had taken, he deserved this mark of respect from others. It would be, on Timothy's part, to become a partaker in the sins of which such a one might be guilty. He was not to lay hands hastily on any one.

Some men's sins were open, and proclaimed before hand the judgment that awaited them. The sins of others were hidden: they would find them again at the great day. But this was a reason why he should do nothing in his charge with precipitation; he was also to keep himself pure.

Timothy's habitual temperance is here seen: weak in body, the apostle recommends him to use his liberty by taking a little wine—a pleasing instance of grace. We have here a proof of the habits of this faithful servant. The Spirit shows us how carefully he kept himself from exciting or satisfying his passions in the least thing (at the same time that there is perfect liberty to use everything that is good when there is a true reason for it) and also the apostle's tender interest in his fellow-laborer in the gospel. It is a little parenthesis attached to the expression, "be not a partaker of other men's sins," but it has great beauty. This affectionate watchfulness became the apostle; he desired holiness in his representative, but he well knew how to respect Timothy, and to maintain the decorum which he had enjoined, and to exhibit his heartfelt tenderness. The 24th verse is connected with the 22nd.

Verse 1

Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father; the younger men as brethren:

Rebuke not an elder...

It is apparent that the church office of "elder" is not meant here, but merely older men, a fact apparent from the inclusion of "younger men" in the same verse. "The context shows that the meaning is not a presbyter, but an old man." Honor and respect of the aged is a Christian principle; but the tragedy is that this ethic is more honored in the non-Christian nations of Asia than in the "Christianized"

West. The meaning here is not that an elder must never be accused, because Paul, a little later, made provision for that. The proper sensitivity, respect and regard for the elderly are in view here.

The younger men as brethren...

A glimpse of the apostolic conception of the Christian community shines in these verses. Various Christians are as fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers, as determined by their age and sex. In fact the church itself has been described as a divine extension of the family, the family being, in every way, just as sacred and divine as the church. In fact, the family antedates either the church or any state; but in the prevalence of sin and corruption, it often happens that the church family preserves more of the genuine family love and mutual concern than may be found in some families. Although the fact does not seem to be in Paul's thought here, this correct evaluation of all church members as brothers, sisters, etc., is a great deterrent to immorality and other sinful practices.

Verse 2

the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, in all purity.

In all purity

Lenski observed that "in all purity" is commonly understood to mean that Timothy is to watch his sexual nature when he is admonishing younger women"; but despite the fact of his denying that this is the correct understanding of the phrase, the meaning should nevertheless be allowed. Hervey had this conclusion, "See how jealously the apostle guards against any possibility of abuse of the familiar intercourse of a clergyman with the women of his flock."

Verse 3

Honor widows that are widows indeed.

Honor...

"That is, maintain out of the common stock." Spence affirmed the same thing, "The widow is not merely to be honored, but she is also to be assisted out of the alms of the faithful." This construction of the word "honor" goes back to our Lord's command that "honor thy father and mother" forbade use of the device of Corban to avoid their financial assistance" (Matthew 15:4-6). The same word occurs again in 1 Tim. 5:17, below, where likewise the meaning includes financial remuneration.

Despite the duty of helping needy widows, however, Paul moved quickly to countermand any intention of the church's assuming financial obligations that properly belonged to children or other next of kin to those in need. See next verse.

Verse 4

But if any widow have children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God.

Their own family...

This is not to be restricted to parents only, or even to grandparents. Lenski's comment on the Greek words so translated has the following, "They are used with reference to dutifulness toward God, and toward one's country, or one's family, including parents, grandparents, and other relatives."

For this is acceptable in the sight of God...

Despite the fact of this being stated positively, as an example of what pleases God, the negative is also true, namely, that failure to heed this injunction is not acceptable in the sight of God.

Verses 5, 6

Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth.

Two classes of widows are pointed out by this, only the first class being entitled to the support of the church. As a practical fact, there are widows indeed who have no relative who can support them; and in these verses Paul indeed allowed and commanded that the truly faithful and God-fearing should be maintained by the congregations.

Continueth in supplications and prayers night and day...

cannot mean continuous engagement in the actual offering of prayers, but it speaks of a rule of life and conduct. As Wallis put it, "The whole discussion should be considered in the light of Old Testament teaching where care for the widow is emphasized (see James 1:27)." It is a high tribute which Paul here paid to the widows supported from the public purse. He does not command them to set their hope upon God, etc., but describes them as already doing so.

Verses 7, 8

She that liveth in pleasure,

describes the other type of widow. Although the words are not too specific, a profligate, unwholesome and unspiritual life are indicated.

Is dead while she liveth...

This is one of seven passages in the New Testament which speak of "an eternal sin," "the sin unto death," and that state of spiritual hardness which "it is impossible to renew." How sad is the thought that some are already spiritually dead. They may yet live many years before their funerals are held; but as regards the precious hope in Christ, they are dead already. For longer discussion of "An Eternal Sin," see in my Commentary on Hebrews, pp. 125-128.

Verse 7

These things also command, that they may be without reproach.

This verse has the effect of binding the laws enunciated in this chapter upon all generations of Christians; it is Paul's way of emphasizing that his words in this letter are not merely good advice for a young preacher, but they are the law of God for the church of all ages.

Verse 8

But if any man provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.

Spence has the following comment on this verse:

The circle of those whose support and sustenance were the responsibility of the Christian is here enlarged. Not merely parents and grandparents, but "he must assist those of his own house." Even dependents connected with the family who may have fallen into poverty and neglect are included.

Charity begins at home, and so do all other obligations of the Christian life. As White said:

One of the most subtle temptations of the devil is his suggestion that we can best comply with the demands of duty in some place far away from home. Jesus always said, "Do the next thing; begin at Jerusalem, etc." The path of duty begins from within our own house, and we must walk it on our own street.

Verses 9, 10

Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; 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 diligently followed every good work.

Let none be enrolled...

This means, let none be enrolled upon the list to receive church support except those with the qualifications outlined in these verses. As Lipscomb said:

This did not necessarily preclude aid to widows who were younger and in need; but these were the ones who were to be enrolled in the class whom the church maintained in comfort and in honor.

There are some who fancy that they find here the beginnings of monastic orders, but full agreement is felt with Wallis, who said:

Here are details about the qualifications of widows to be supported by the church. (1) It was proper that they should have already reached old age. (2) There was a mutual obligation between the church and those widows, who were to consecrate themselves to the service of the church, which would have been altogether intolerable, if there was still a likelihood of their being married.

There are many questions about this list of widows which we are not able to answer. As Lenski said, "Everybody would like to know more about this listing, but this one sentence is all we have."

Certainly, the excuse for monastic orders of women, which is imputed to these lines, is totally wrong. The women in this list were mothers with children, past the age of sixty, already known and honored in the church for their good works. Whatever service they may have given to the church in such things as teaching, visitation of the sick, etc., was evidently undertaken by them upon a voluntary basis, which was quite natural in view of their being supported by the church. This was a far different thing from the exploitation of young women in monasticism.

Having been the wife of one man...

This is the same word used in 1 Tim. 3:2, that the

husband of one wife

could be an elder; and the meaning would appear to be the same. The past perfect is used here because the husband (by the definition of widow) would already have been dead. The similarity of the qualification, however has led some to assert that these were the "female presbyters"! But as Lenski said, "These women were not congregational officers, such as elders or deacons."

1 Tim. 5:10 both begins and ends with "good works," which, like a pair of book ends, encloses the list of services mentioned; and this was very fortunate. Otherwise, it might have been alleged that "foot washing" was a church ordinance. White was impressed with the fact that:

It is characteristic of the sanity of Christianity that as typical examples of good works, St. Paul cites the discharge of commonplace duties, "the daily round, the common task."

Verse 11

But younger widows refuse: for when they have waxed wanton against Christ, they desire to marry;

Our interpretation of this is: Do not take any young widows into this list of those to be supported by the church; because, as time goes on, they will wish to marry; and, due to their youth and lack of experience, they will become idle, gad around from house to house, tattle and carry tales. This cannot mean that any young widows in need would be refused all assistance; because there is evidently a certain class of widows involved in these instructions.

Verse 12

having condemnation, because they have rejected their first pledge.

Some find a "vow of celibacy" in "pledge"; but nothing like that is in the word. It simply refers to their pledge of loyalty to Christ at the time of their conversion. In the pagan culture of that time, a Christian widow's marrying again was altogether likely to mean marrying a pagan, marrying out of the church, a thing Paul denounced in the Corinthian letter. These instructions were not merely theoretical postulates; they were grounded in the solid experience and inspiration of the holy apostle. To have had young widows or marriageable age on the list of those supported by the church would have led to all kinds of preposterous and ridiculous situations, all of which would be avoided by the proper respect for Paul's words here.

Verse 13

And withal they learn also to be idle going about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

See under preceding verse for comment regarding this, also a paraphrase of what is thought to be the meaning of it.

Verse 14

I desire therefore that the younger widows marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling:

The proper life-style for young widows is that of remarriage, to a Christian husband, of course, and the rearing of a family, not that of a paid retainer of the church.

The younger widows...

"We do not attribute to Paul the statement that all widows up to the age of sixty should marry. 'Younger' here refers to the youthful widows."

Rule the household...

"The Bible does not contradict itself; and it teaches that the husband is to have the rulership over his wife and household." The meaning, therefore, is that she shall rule her household subject to the authority of her husband.

Give no occasion to the adversary for reviling...

Spence's comment on this is:

The adversary here is not the devil, but the sneering worldly man, jealous of a faith he will not receive, envious of a life he will not share, and always on the lookout for flaws of followers of a religion which he hates.

The particular slander Paul was guarding against was discerned by Lenski in this:

The charge, or danger, was not that those young widows would become strumpets. But many of them were ready to enter into a pagan marriage without Christ, without their first faith; they became pagans again in order to suit a pagan husband. Plenty of such cases occur to this day.

Verse 15

for already some are turned aside after Satan.

It was no theoretical danger Paul guarded against. Only God can know what shame and loss had already come to the church in Ephesus from the very situation Paul was dealing with in this passage.

Verse 16

If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

This merely applies all that was said of a man having widows in his household, earlier in this chapter, with equal force to affluent or wealthy widows, who are here made responsible in the same manner as were the men.

And let not the church be burdened...

The thought is not that the church would not step in," where those responsible were not doing their duty, but that they should not be called upon to do so.

Relieve them...

No definite method is suggested, but there are many instances in which one widow can provide a home for another.

Verse 17

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in the teaching.

All of the elders were "apt to teach" by definition, and all were associated together in the rulership of the church; and therefore there is no distinction here between so-called classes of "elders," a conceit that finally issued in the development of the monarchical bishop of later ages. Timothy had just been instructed to show the proper regard and respect to all elderly persons; and here is the admonition to

let that honor be even more conspicuous in his dealings with the elders of the church. It is true enough that financial remuneration seems to have been a part of the honor owed, as evidenced in the next verse; but this writer agrees with Gould, who has this:

It is difficult to believe that this means simply "a double stipend" as the New English Bible (1961) renders it...The day had not yet arrived when the church's ministers would receive full support. It was still customary for the church's leaders to support themselves, just as the apostle himself did.

Verse 18

For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire.

Thou shalt not muzzle the ox...

This is a quotation from Deut. 25:4, one of Paul's favorite passages, which he also quoted in his advocacy of support for gospel preachers in 1 Cor. 9:9. From both this and the second quotation he was about to give, it is certain that 1 Tim. 5:17 has reference to financial remuneration.

And, The laborer is worthy of his hire...

There is absolutely no doubt that Paul here classified this second quotation as "Scripture," to which he attributed both this remark and the one from Deuteronomy. But, where is this Scripture? It is certainly not in the Old Testament. It is in the New Testament:

Matt. 10:10 has this: "The laborer is worthy of his food?" Luke has the words verbatim, "even to the omission of the verb (in the Greek)." "For the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7).

Thus Paul here quoted from the Christian gospels, extending to them the full authority and status of Scripture. As 1 Timothy was written during that period shortly before Paul's second imprisonment, the bearing of this on the date of Luke's gospel, which he here quoted, should not be overlooked. Here is an insurmountable denial of the late dating of Luke. "The conclusion is inevitable that the writer of this epistle was acquainted with and quoted from the gospel of Luke."

Of course, some of the critics are "perplexed" by Paul's equating a word of Christ (quoted from the gospels) with the Law of Moses, charging that he evidently "forgot what he was doing"! Such are the writhings of a wounded serpent. As White said, given the respect and honor and adoration in which Paul held Jesus Christ, "It would have been surprising were he not to have esteemed his words at least as authoritative as the Law which he superseded."

Verse 19

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

The instruction here is that no charge is to be received unless it is substantiated by two or three witnesses, not merely that two or three are to be called to hear the accusation presented, as some have alleged. The case in view here is that of a ruler of the church who is indeed guilty of sinful conduct; and, in order to keep trivial, untruthful and irresponsible charges from being made, the apostle instructed that two or three witnesses were to be ready to testify against an elder before any charge would even be considered. Hervey said this means: "Suffer no man to accuse a presbyter unless he is accompanied by two or three witnesses able to back up the accusation."

Verse 20

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

This is a special instance and does not nullify the instructions of Christ in Matt. 18:15ff (see discussion of this in my Commentary on Matthew, pp. 279-282). In the case of an elder, or other church leader, who is fairly convicted of gross wrongdoing, he should be rebuked and denounced publicly. The wise words of Lipscomb on this are:

When we cover up sins in the church, we corrupt the morality and virtue of the church and destroy its efficacy to honor God or to save men. Evil teachers and evil men must be exposed and purged out of the church, or the church becomes corrupt and becomes a synagogue of Satan instead of a church of Jesus Christ.

Verse 21

I charge thee in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality.

The elect angels...

are here represented as witnessing the work of Christians on earth, as in Hebrews 1:14. The word "elect" in this place has the meaning of the faithful angels, the ones not carried away by the rebellion of Satan. "The epithet elect probably has the same force as HOLY in our common phrase, the holy angels."

Without prejudice...

Absolute fairness on the part of any person charged with the solemn duties of hearing complaints and solving difficulties in a church is a basic requirement if there is to be either peace or justice in a church. Hervey pointed out that this word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament and suggests that our English word does not do full justice to the term in the Greek, which also carries with it the meaning of "preference."

Doing nothing by partiality...

An elder, or a minister, must not be partial as regards his activity among the members. Many a ministry has been wrecked on this shoal. There is a kind of partiality that develops a little "clique" of the preacher's special friends, or gives undue attention and publicity to the work of a few, instead of to the many, which is critical of conduct in some which is allowed in others, etc., etc. All such partiality is self-destructive of the minister's effectiveness and unproductive as far as the church is concerned.

Verse 22

Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partakers of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

Lay hands hastily on no man...

means, "Do not get in a hurry to name any man as an elder." The imagery is that of the laying on of the hands of the presbytery which accompanied the ceremony in the earliest times.

Neither be partakers of other men's sins...

This warns that the person responsible for appointing elders who prove unfaithful is, in a sense, partaker of their sins, unless due deliberation, investigation and testing preceded such unfortunate appointment. However, the share of the sins of others is not borne by the minister who properly

observes these restrictions, restraints and precautions. The same applies to the presbytery itself in the normal situation where they name additional elders to aid in the guidance of the church.

Keep thyself pure...

This has primary reference to the matter of irresponsible appointment of church elders, just mentioned.

Before leaving this verse, it may be inquired, "Why has the laying on of hands largely disappeared from the ceremonial in churches?" Lenski's answer is as good as any:

It is only symbolical, confers no divine power or gift of the church of God that would bless a person; but it accompanied the prayers of the church that God would bless the person with all that he needs for his Christian life, or in the case of the minister, for his holy office and work.

Although the laying on of hands has ceased, in large degree, it is fervently to be hoped that the prayers for those charged with solemn responsibility have not!

Verse 23

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

This little verse is a jewel. It reveals Timothy as a total abstainer from alcohol; but it is amazing what the commentators make of this. One asserts that since the drinking water was bad in those times, Paul is here admonishing Timothy to use wine instead of water. The restriction "little wine," of course refutes that notion. Others have thought that Paul here advised Timothy to "liquor himself up a bit" in order to improve his courage and ability to carry out Paul's orders!

It was the illness of Timothy that led to this instruction; and one cannot help wondering if perhaps the good physician Luke had a hand in this prescription.

Of extremely great value is the bearing this verse has on the authenticity of 1 Timothy. Spence said:

Those who argue that this Epistle is an artificial composition of an age subsequent to that of Paul's...have no little difficulty in accounting for such a command as this. It can in fact be explained only upon the supposition that the letter was, in truth, written by St. Paul to Timothy...No ecclesiastical forger of the second or third century would have dreamed, or had he dreamed, would have dared to have included a verse like this.

If, despite the hardship and the universal custom of wine-drinking, Timothy refrained from the use of it in order to be a good example, consenting to use it only upon a doctor's prescription, is there not in this sufficient motivation for "teetotalers" today? Indeed there is!

Verse 24

Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgment; and some men also they follow after.

This is merely a comment to the effect that, in spite of all proper investigations, it is impossible, always, to know whether or not a given candidate is fitted for holy office in the church. The next verse would assure Timothy that his best judgment would be sufficient.

Verse 25

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

This means that "the truth will out" eventually, as it regards any man, however discreet, secretive or hidden may be his actions from the public scrutiny. The effect of both of these last two verses is to stress the importance of not being hasty in the ordination of elders.

This verse (1 Timothy 5:25) is to warn Timothy against hasty condemnation, as the former (24) had been to warn against hasty approval.

Lesson 10 Slaves and Masters; False Doctrine and Greed

1 Timothy 6

The apostle then goes equally into detail with regard to servants, that is, slaves. They were to respect their masters, in order that the doctrine of the Lord should not be blasphemed. When the masters were believers, there was naturally more familiarity, for they were one in Christ, and thence the danger (for the flesh is crafty) that the servants might not treat their masters with the respect due to them. The apostle guards against this abuse of Christian love, and of the just intimacy and confidence which ought to exist between brethren; but which, on the contrary, was a motive for the servant to render all honor to his master, by treating him with more love and with the same respect.

It was necessary that the apostle should be firm. All other instruction—all refusal to receive the wholesome words of Christian doctrine, the words of Christ and the doctrine which is according to practical godliness—proceeded from the flesh, from human pride in those who wished to take advantage of godliness, and make it a means of gain. From such persons Timothy was to turn away. Godliness was indeed gain, if they were contented with what they had; and the Christian, who does not belong to this world, if he has food and raiment, ought to be content therewith. He brought nothing into this world, and will certainly carry nothing out of it. And the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil. Seduced by this covetousness, some had wandered away from Christian faith and had pierced their hearts with sorrow. The desire to be rich was the path of snares and temptation, of foolish and hurtful lusts. Timothy was to flee these things, as a man of God. This is always the thought here: he was in the world on the part of God; he represented Him for his part in the work. He was therefore to follow after other things than earthly riches—the character of a man of God—righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness: these were the things which, in man, presented God to the world and glorified Him.

Meanwhile there was conflict: he must fight the good fight of faith. If any one represents God in the world, there must be warfare, because the enemy is there. The energy of faith was also necessary, in order to lay hold of eternal life in the midst of the seduction and difficulties which the "things that are seen" presented. God, moreover, had called Timothy to this, and he had made a good confession before many witnesses.

Finally, the apostle charges him most solemnly in the presence of God, the Source of life for all things and of Christ Jesus who had Himself borne witness without wavering before the powers of this world, placing him under the responsibility of keeping the commandment without spot, unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It will be noticed here that, as Paul had not spoken in the epistle of the privileges of the assembly, but of its responsibility, so neither does he here speak of its being caught up but of its manifestation, when the fruits of faithfulness (or of failure in it) will be gathered, and every one be in his place in the visible glory according to his work. All are like Christ, all enter into His joy; but to sit at His right and left hand in His kingdom is the portion of those for whom it is prepared by His Father, who bestows it according to the work which He has granted each to perform, giving him power to accomplish it, although in grace He reckons it as our own.

Christ Himself is here viewed as the faithful man (ver. 13), whom God will manifest in glory before all creatures at the time ordained in His counsels.

All here is responsibility before the world, or glory as the result of that responsibility. The supreme, invisible God is maintained in His majesty; and He presents the Lord Jesus Christ in the creation as its

centre, and repository of His glory - He who dwells in light inaccessible, whom, in His divine essence, man has not seen and cannot see.

This character of the epistle is very remarkable. Nowhere else is the inaccessible majesty of God, as God, thus presented. His character is often the subject of instruction and manifestation. Here He alone has essential immortality. He dwells in inaccessible light. He is ever invisible to the eyes of men. He alone has power. He has dominion over all who reign. It is God in the abstraction of His essence, in the proper immutability of His being, in the rights of His majesty, veiled to all men.

Now Christ will be the centre of the visible glory. Having part in the divine glory before the world was, He displays, in the human nature in which He took part, this glory, which is rendered visible in Him, causing His own to participate in His joy and in all that He has in this character; but here, He is manifested by God, and in order that all should acknowledge Him. And it is our responsibility, faithfulness to which will be manifested in that day, which is here set before us. However small may be our share of responsibility, it is of such a God as this that we are the representatives on earth. Such is the God before whom we are to walk, and whose majesty we are to respect immediately in our conduct, and also in our relations to all that He has made.

The apostle concludes his exhortation to Timothy by engaging him to warn the rich not to rest on the uncertainty of riches, but on the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy. It is still the supreme and Creator-God who is before our eyes. Moreover, they were to be rich in good works, and ready to give; to be rich in those dispositions which would be of value, which would lay up a store (this is but a figure) against the time to come; and to lay hold of that which really is life. The apostle repeats his urgent exhortation to Timothy to keep that which had been committed to him, to avoid profane and vain babblings, holding fast the sound and sanctifying truth, and to have nothing to do with oppositions of human science, which pretended to penetrate into divine things as though they were subject to its knowledge. This was the origin of the fall of many with regard to Christian faith.

I do not doubt that, in the manner in which the apostle here sets God before us, he refers to the foolish imaginations to which, under the influence of the enemy, men were abandoning themselves. Thus he speaks of these with relation to the majesty of His Being as the one only God in whom is all fullness, and with regard to the sobriety of practical morality, which keeps the heart under the influence of that truth, and apart from the false and vain speculations in which the pride of man indulged itself. He maintained souls by the majesty of the only God in the practical sobriety in which peace dwells.

Soon will the veil be drawn aside by the appearing of Jesus, whom the Almighty God will display to the world.

Verse 1a

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

Let as many as are under the yoke...

How many were these?

It is estimated that there were sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire at the time of the writing of this letter; and it is hardly necessary to detail the facts concerning their miserable lot.

The ancient empire was built upon slavery, at that time a world-wide institution, recognized and practiced in every nation under heaven. That slaves formed a considerable portion of all the

congregations of Paul's day may be inferred from the extensive teachings on the subject in 1 Cor. 7:21-24; 12:13; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:11, 22; 1 Pet. 2:18 and also in 1 Cor. 1:27-29.

The holy gospel must have been especially welcomed and appreciated by slaves who, despite being at the bottom of the social and economic ladder, were nevertheless qualified to receive the glorious promises of Christian truth. "It must have been an unspeakable comfort to the poor slave." In addition to large numbers of slaves being Christians, there is also the likelihood that some of them were even elders. "C. K. Barrett suggested that Paul may have had in mind elders who were slaves."

Under the yoke...

There are two words in this little paragraph that carry inherent criticism of the institution of slavery. "Yoke" is one of them, and the other is "master," coming from a particular Greek word "[despotes] (from which our "despot" is derived), meaning one who has dominion." Nevertheless, there is no militant condemnation of slavery in the New Testament; and, of course, modern critics have been very unfair and unperceptive in commenting on this. See below:

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY

For the apostles to have attempted to eradicate slavery "by preaching it as hateful to God and degrading to men would have produced rebellion and revolution in its darkest and most violent form; and Christ did not propose to break up such relations by violence." There was also another side to the problem. If becoming a Christian had been equated with emancipation, the churches would have been overwhelmed with a flood tide of unregenerated men, seeking not Christ or holiness, but freedom from their chains, creating circumstances which would immediately have destroyed Christianity from the earth. "It would have been impossible for the Christian church to strike overtly in any effective way at the institution of slavery; but indirectly the church sounded the death knell of the institution." This was done by teaching the dignity of man, the supreme value of the individual, and those very Christian graces admonished in this chapter.

In any kind of a revolution attempted by Christians, the entire movement would not only have been crushed; but horrible and extensive bloodshed, famine, death and pestilence would have prevailed. The great principle of Christianity looking to the reform of existing social evils is that of working "as leaven," and not as "dynamite."

Count their own masters as worthy of all honor...

This was the basic requirement for all slaves, upon penalty of death for violation; so the sanity of such instruction is apparent; but the new-found liberty in Christ would have tempted some, due to human nature, to despise their masters. Thus, the thought here is to the effect that Christianity makes anyone a better person, therefore a better employee, a better master, or even a better slave. And those slaves fortunate enough to have Christian masters were to be willing to extend even more and higher honor to them. Of course, the master, if a real Christian, would respond in kind, which would benefit his slaves, some of whom, no doubt, received their freedom as a result. The principle behind this was thus stated by White:

The Christian slave is to remember that the fact of his master being a Christian, believing and beloved, entitles him to better service, if possible, than that due to a heathen master...If the spiritual status of the master be raised, the quality of the service rendered is not to be lowered, but rather idealized.

Men may despise this ethic if they choose to do so, but it was this very thing that broke the back of the institution and lifted the yoke of slavery from the back of humanity.

Verse 1b

That the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed...

The name of God...

is here placed upon a coordinate basis with "the doctrine," showing the highest esteem in which the apostles held the sacred doctrine of the faith. The current downgrading of doctrine is hurtful, sinful and contrary to divine law.

Be not blasphemed...

The word "blaspheme" here has its general meaning of "spoken against." As Spence pointed out:

Any action on the part of professed servants of God which gives the enemies of the Lord an excuse to blaspheme, is ever reckoned in the Scripture as a sin of the deepest dye. Compare Nathan's words to King David (2 Samuel 12:14) and Paul's reproach to the Jews (Romans 2:24).

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.

Believing masters...

By spelling out slave duties to both kinds of masters, Paul left no room to be misunderstood. See under preceding verse.

Let them not despise...

Lipscomb concluded from this and the following verses that "We may justly conclude that evil-disposed persons had been teaching differently and arousing discontent and a rebellious spirit." It is a strange paradox of human nature that the more mild and tolerant any authority may be the less respect it is likely to command. This is not to be the attitude of Christian slaves.

Let them serve them rather...

means let them serve them, if possible, with even better service.

They that partake of the benefit...

as rendered here indicates the masters, who, because they are believing and beloved, should receive of this better service. Some commentators render the words differently, applying them to the slaves, who by better service may receive more considerate treatment. As a matter of fact, both interpretations are true. The principle is also applicable to all human relations and all human institutions, regardless of their desirability. Christianity pours in the oil that lubricates and improves even the most unsavory situations.

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;

The character in view here would be denounced in the most vehement language in the next verse; but this description of the one to be denounced should be carefully noted.

Different doctrine...

The very fact of a doctrine's being new to the New Testament is enough to condemn it. Paul's opinion of "new ideas" in the realm of theology was simply to the effect that their advocates were both evil and "sick." As Stibbs put it:

There is a contrast here between teaching which is "healthful" and teachers who are "sick" (see the English Revised Version margin (1885)). Teaching is continued as "sound" or "wholesome": (1) by having Christ as its author and (2) by the God-fearing conduct of the teacher.

Lenski denied that this verse has primary application to the false teaching leading to the insubordination of slaves; but Spence felt that this may be allowed:

There is little doubt that some influential teaching, contrary to St. Paul's, on the subject of the behavior and disposition of slaves was in the apostle's mind when he wrote 1 Tim. 6:3 and 1 Tim. 6:4.

Verse 4

he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

This is a rather salty speech! A glance at the way various translations have rendered this is interesting:

He is blinded with conceit and really knows nothing, but is crazy with discussions and controversies about words, - Richard Francis Weymouth.

He is a conceited idiot! His mind is a morbid jungle of disputation and argument. - J. B. Phillips.

He is a conceited, ignorant person, with a morbid craving for speculations and arguments - Edgar J. Goodspeed.

He is a conceited, ignorant creature, with a morbid passion for controversy and argument - James Moffatt.

As Gould remarked, "This is about as close to invective as the apostle ever came!" Of course, as we have already seen, any overt assault upon the established institution of slavery in ancient society would have been an unqualified disaster for the world; and the sheer insanity of any who might have advocated it shines in this passage. Of course, other forms of senseless argument and disputation were also likewise condemned.

Verses 5, 6

wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain:

Bereft of the truth...

"Bereft implies that they once had had possession of the truth, but had lost it by their own fault." Thus, these were not outside agitators who were disturbing churches, but were good apples gone bad.

Supposing that godliness is a way of gain...

This applies to all who misuse sacred work for secular profit or personal benefit; but the implication is also inescapable that this relates to the slave problem. If the false teachers were advocating

emancipation as a corollary of salvation, then indeed godliness would have been great gain; and there is the strongest possibility that there are echoes of that position here. Turning quickly to the counterpart of his truth, namely, that in one sense godliness is indeed great gain, he wrote the next line (1 Timothy 6:6).

Verse 7

for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out;

"There are no pockets in shrouds" is one of the oldest proverbs; and Paul, by these stern words, warns against the temptation to make any kind of worldly gain the sum and all of one's life. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he hath," said the Savior (Luke 12:15).

Verse 8

but having food and covering we shall be therewith content.

Food, clothing and shelter are the three basic needs of mankind; and all three are included here. "The use of the word COVERING here seems designed to favor this double application." Whoever, therefore, has food to eat, clothes to wear and shelter from the elements, with something left over for the aid of others is RICH! As Gould said, "This is a rigorous standard," and by it, there are a great many rich people.

Verse 9

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

Paul used two metaphors in this verse to describe the people whose minds are set upon becoming rich. They are caught in a "snare," in the sense of a trapped animal, which once captured is unable to recover itself. The other is that of an exhausted swimmer who is drowned in the flood.

They that are minded...

is also translated "they that desire to be." The people here condemned are not merely the rich, specifically, but those whose desire and intention are focused upon that one thing. This does not decry lawful ambition and application in one's work. White said:

What is here condemned is not ambition to excel in some lawful department of human activity, which indeed may bring an increase in riches...but the having of a single eye to the accumulation of money by any means.

Destruction and perdition...

"The two words taken together imply the utter ruin and destruction of body and soul," being the double disaster brought on by the foolish and hurtful lusts by which the seekers of riches destroy themselves.

Verse 10

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The thought of this verse is parallel with 1 Tim. 6:9; and again, it is not the possession of money, but the love of it and the pursuit of it, which are condemned. The old King James Version, of course, rendered this "root of all evil"; but the American Standard Version (1901) has hardly improved it. As White said of this rendition, "It is hardly satisfactory." True, making money the root of "all evil" seems a little extravagant to some; but, again from White: "When one is dealing with a degrading vice of any kind, the interests of virtue are not served by qualified assertions." The old rendition that "the love of money is the root of all evil" appears to be exactly what the Greek says; and, if going beyond the truth a little in the allowance that there are SOME "evils" not attributed to the love of money, the expression stands anyway as hyperbole, a metaphor used by all of the sacred writers.

Pierced themselves through with many sorrows...

This is the same thought of being drowned in destruction and perdition, mentioned in 1 Tim. 6:9.

Lesson 11 Run Away ...and Fight

Verse 11

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

Barakman has an interesting homily based upon the following outline of the next two verses, thus:

The fact that a man has been called of God and is equipped for service by the gift of the Holy Spirit does not eliminate the necessity for strenuous effort. He must:

"Flee..." (1 Timothy 6:11). One of the best influences is a pair of heels.

"Follow..." To flee is not enough, being only negative; the positive counterpart of flight is following the Lord.

"Fight..." (1 Timothy 6:12). Whatever metaphor Paul had in mind, whether athletic or military, one phase of Christian living is certainly that of...active resistance to evil.

"Lay hold..." (1 Timothy 6:12). Salvation is freely offered, but it must be grasped. This is a term which means "take hold once for all."

"Keep..." Excavations at Pompeii found the body of a soldier buried alive because no one came to relieve him at his post of duty. A similar faithful endurance to death is indicated by this.

White observed that the six virtues enumerated in this verse contrast with the six vices in 1 Tim. 6:4, 5, but that "we cannot arrange them in pairs of opposites."

O man of God...

The force of this is very great. The word "man" is not that distinguishing the male from the female, but the word which encompasses all. It means the person worshiping and serving God, as contrasted with the money-lovers just denounced.

Flee...

That is, flee from the pursuit of money; turn away from it; put it out of sight. As White well said, "the love of money in ministers of religion does more to discredit it in the eyes of ordinary people than would indulgence in many grosser sins."

Verse 12

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

The military metaphor was a favorite of Paul's; putting on the whole armor of God, enduring hardness as a good soldier, and many other references are made to it in his epistles.

Lay hold on the life eternal...

But was not Timothy already saved? Indeed he was, but the New Testament makes it starkly clear that fidelity on the part of Christians is also required of them if they really hope to enter heaven at last.

Whereunto thou wast also called...

All men are called in the sense of being objects of God's invitation to receive eternal life; but, as so frequently in the New Testament, "a call" means one answered and responded to; and so it was with

Timothy. The time of his conversion is clearly in mind here, as the immediate reference to "the good confession" proves.

And didst confess the good confession...

White properly discerned this obvious reference to Timothy's baptism, thus:

In the primitive church, the baptism of an individual was a matter in which the church generally took an interest and part...This explains the "many witnesses" of Timothy's good confession.

Harvey also agreed that "this seems to point clearly to his baptism," adding that "The good confession in view here is that of Christ himself confessing himself the Son of God (Mark 14:62), which is analogous to the baptismal confession of Acts 8:37 (KJV and ASV margin)."

THE GOOD CONFESSION

Why is this called the good confession twice in a single short paragraph?

1. It is the good confession because Christ made it, under oath (Mark 14:62), the same being the legal charge upon which our Lord was condemned to be crucified (John 19:7). Christ made it and died for making it, in order that men might make it and live.
2. It is the good confession because God himself made it three times, speaking out of heaven in broad open daylight, namely, (1) at the baptism of Christ (Matthew 3:17), (2) at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:5), and (3) when the Greeks came to see Jesus (John 12:28).
3. It is the good confession because all men, evil and righteous alike, shall at last make the good confession (Philippians 2:11). Since all must make it EVENTUALLY, why not make it in this life and be saved?
4. It is "unto salvation," as also clearly appears in this verse (Romans 10:10). It is a vital part of the plan of salvation.
5. Christ himself will confess those who make it, that occasion being, in all probability, the time when the redeemed have their names written in the book of life. See full exegesis on this in my Commentary on Matthew, pp. 142, 245.
6. It has been made by the saints of all ages. Nathaniel made it (John 1:49), Peter made it (Matthew 16:16), Timothy made it (1 Timothy 6:12), Nicodemus made it (John 3:2), Thomas made it (John 20:28), Judas who betrayed him made it (Matthew 27:4), the judge who tried him made it (Matthew 27:24), Pilate's wife made it (Matthew 27:19), the centurion in charge of his execution made it (Matthew 27:54), and the greater thief on the cross confessed him (Luke 23:42).
7. The same is true of the angels, and of demons. The night he was born, the angels of heaven said, "Behold there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11); and the demons said, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God?" (Mark 5:7). Heaven, earth and hell all have one word of Jesus Christ, "He is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, the Son of God Most High."
8. The good confession is "good" because it is a summary of all Christian doctrine. Everything depends upon this, the rock of our salvation. It is the profoundest fact revealed in Scripture, and yet, paradoxically, it is easily understood. Like the mighty ocean, it has shallows where a child may play, and great deeps that have never been fathomed.

Verse 13

I charge thee in the sight of God, who giveth life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession;

I charge thee in the sight of God...

This is the way Paul began a number of his numerous "charges" to Timothy. The word "charge" carries with it the meaning of an official order, one to be carried out at any cost.

Who before Pilate witnessed the good confession...

Some of the critical writers made a big to-do over what they call contradictions in the gospel records of the "confession" Jesus made, some recording it in one form, others in another. It should be remembered that that was an "all night" trial. The questioning went on for hours, during most of which Jesus remained silent. Now and again he gave answer, but only when the question was so stated that his answer would be in full harmony with his divine will. When the question propounded came in one form, he replied, "Thou sayest"; but when finally, presumably about daybreak, the high priest himself put the question in such a manner as to allow one of his great "I AM" answers, Jesus did not hesitate to answer it. See Mark 14:61, 62. See homily above on "The Good Confession."

Verse 14

that thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The commandment...

As Lenski said:

Some think the word is called "commandment" because the gospel commands men to repent; but the New Testament shows clearly that the gospel itself is called the commandment because its preaching, teaching and inculcation were enjoined upon the apostles (Matthew 28:20ff).

Without spot, without reproach...

Hervey noted that some commentators are uncertain whether these terms should be applied to Timothy's conduct or to the gospel; but they are true either way. The view here is that they are a reference to the kind of life Timothy was enjoined to live in his preaching of the gospel.

The appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ...

This is a reference to the Second Advent of our Lord, all Christian endeavor being carried forward with constant respect to this eventual Coming. There is nothing here to the effect that Paul expected it to occur in his lifetime.

Verse 15

which in its own times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

All of the commentaries consulted by this writer unanimously refer these words to God; but despite the reluctance to disagree with those of great learning, it must in conscience be done here. The expression "King of kings and Lord of lords" occurs nowhere else in the Bible, but one so nearly like it as to be held identical is found in Rev. 19:16; and the belief here is that the word of God is always the best comment on the word of God. The passage in Revelation leaves no doubt whatever that Jesus Christ, wearing "the garment dipped in blood," is the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS in that passage; and thus there is no impediment to holding the same as true here. After all, in the Greek New Testament, Christ

is called "God" no less than ten times, not including this passage. See comment on this in my Commentary on Hebrews, p. 31. See also Rev. 17:14.

THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

In this survey, we shall classify some of the Scriptures relating to the kingship of Jesus Christ, inquire as to his credentials for such authority, explore the extent and duration of his kingdom and examine some of the symbols under which that kingship is presented in the Bible.

1. Classification of Scriptures regarding the kingship of Jesus. From the moment of our Lord's birth when he was acclaimed by the wise men until he was nailed up to die under an inscription that cited him as King, Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry was everywhere and always a KING. The Bible is absolutely filled with this conception. Isaiah foretold the COMING king; John the Baptist preached the APPROACHING king; Paul proclaimed the CRUCIFIED king; and the apostle John extolled the ENTHRONED king. There are four definite groups of Scriptures which set forth the kingship of Christ.

- A. There are those that speak of him as the king of the Jews:

Wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? (Matthew 2:1, 2).

On the cross, "They set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matthew 27:37).

The soldiers who mocked him taunted him by saying, "If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself" (Luke 23:37).

Nathaniel hailed him thus, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49).

- B. Another class of Scriptures proclaims the universal, world-wide dominion of Christ, claiming for his kingdom all the nations of the earth and the uttermost parts of it.

The second Psalm has this:

I have set my king Upon my holy hill of Zion. I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son; This day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, And the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession (Psalms 2:6-8).

The prophecy of Zechariah likewise emphasized the universality of the reign of Christ, thus:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy king cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth (Zechariah 9:9, 10).

- C. A third class of Scriptures mentions Jesus as the possessor of a kingdom. Thus, in Matthew's judgment scene, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come

ye blessed, etc." (Matthew 25:31-34), the King in this passage being clearly "the Son of man." Others of this class are:

I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom (Luke 22:29,30).

Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom (Luke 23:42).

- D. The fourth class stands apart, because they extol the kingship of Christ in language overwhelmingly superlative, making it seem that the very capacity of language as a vehicle of thought is strained in order to carry the significant conception of Jesus Christ as King. Some of these are:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6, 7).

2. In addition to this are the passages here in 1 Tim. 6:15, and the passage in Rev. 19:16.
3. The vision of Christ in Revelation portrays him as a mighty King, indeed the mightiest of all ages, followed by the armies of heaven, crowned with many diadems, arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood, and with the sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth. "And he has on his garment and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16). Previously, John had seen a vision of the bitter forces of evil hurling their full strength against the Lord; but, he said, "The Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and faithful and chosen" (Revelation 17:14).
4. Corroborating this exalted view of the kingship of Christ are the words of our Lord himself, who declared that "All authority in heaven and upon earth hath been given unto me" (Matthew 28:18).
5. What are the credentials of such a King as this? As a matter of obvious fact, Jesus Christ is King by every possible right. Hebrews 1:2,3 lists no less than seven basic credentials of King Jesus:

He is King by right of inheritance (Hebrews 1:2).

He is King by right of creation (Hebrews 1:2).

He is King by right of personal excellence (Hebrews 1:3).

He is King by virtue of identity with deity (Hebrews 1:3).

He is King by right of maintenance (Hebrews 1:3).

He is King by right of purchase (redeemed us from sin) (Hebrews 1:3).

He is King by right of office (Hebrews 1:3).

Christ has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. His kingship is a fait accompli; he is no mere candidate for the throne. He is now ruling and shall continue to do so until all enemies are put under foot. Even this is not all. Christ is King by right of conquest. Through

death he defeated Satan (Hebrews 2:14). He conquered death, hell and the grave. Yes, Christ is King by every conceivable right which men have recognized as the basis of such authority.

Thus, we may exhaust the considerations that enter into the right of a king to rule, and in all of them, and in a thousand others unknown to us, there must be seen, invariably, the right of the King of kings and Lord of lords to rule over all men and all nations and over all things visible and invisible throughout the entirety of God's total creation.

6. Christ is therefore King in every department of life, every department of the material creation, and in every department of the spiritual universe, and in all these things throughout all time to eternity, or until Christ shall render back the kingdom to God (1 Corinthians 15:28).
 - A. Christ is King of the universe. "All things" were made by him (John 1:1f). "He is before all things, and in him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17). This great King lifted up the continents from the ocean floor, hurled the suns in space, spread out the heavens above; and yet his care extends even to the smallest of his creatures, not even a sparrow falling to ground without his concern (Matthew 10:29).
 - B. He rules in the kingdoms of men. Nebuchadnezzar was sentenced to eat grass with the beasts of the field for seven years in order to teach him the lesson that this King exalts over the nations of men whom he will (Daniel 4:25). The dominion of this King is therefore without any limitation whatever.
7. We shall now view briefly some of the symbols by which the kingship of Jesus is emphasized in the Scriptures. These are thrones, crowns, swords and scepters.
 - A. Thrones. These are said to be the ancestors of all chairs. In ancient societies, only the king sat. The throne of Solomon is described in Scripture as a magnificent elevation, ascended by six steps, with a lion on each side, and also a lion on each side of the six steps, fourteen lions in all, for "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." Michael Feodorovich, grandfather of Peter the Great, had a great throne, ornamented with 8,000 turquoises, 1,500 rubies, and many other gems. The throne of England is a gothic chair occupied by the queen upon the occasion of the opening of Parliament. The throne of Christ, of course, is no material device of ivory or gold. He reigns upon the throne "of his father David." It is exalted forever in the heavens, and the enthronement is spoken of by an apostle as his resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:30, 31). The throne of Christ is established as a spiritual reality in statements like these: "He has prepared his throne for judgment" (Psalms 9:7), and "And his throne is upheld by mercy" (Proverbs 20:18). The New Testament has this: "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).
 - B. Crowns. Some of the most glamorous baubles on earth are such historic crowns as those of James I at Edinburgh, the iron crown of the Lombards at Monza, the crown of Victoria in the Tower of London, and the crown of St. Stephen at Vienna; but Jesus also has a crown. True, he wore the thorn crown in his Passion, but even that is more precious than all the crowns ever fashioned from gold and jewels. The crown of Christ is that of eternal life, the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory, the crown of omnipotence, the crown of victory over every enemy, even death, and the crown of eternal and universal authority. These are the "many diadems" (Revelation 19:12). No earthly crown may be compared to the diadems of Christ.
 - C. Swords. In Revelation, the great King is portrayed with a sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth (Revelation 19:15), the sword being the word of God. During his earthly ministry, Jesus once asked for a sword, but never carried one. His true sword is spiritual, namely, his word. This is the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). Christ needs only to speak, and it is done. By his word, he created the worlds; he came from heaven to bring the word of salvation to men; his word shall raise the dead and assemble the men of all ages to the assize of the Great Day; his word shall enter the righteous into glory and banish the wicked forever. Wherever was there a sword to be compared to the sword of Christ?

- D. Scepters. The scepter is another royal symbol ascribed to the Christ. "The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of his kingdom" (Hebrews 1:8). One may still see, here and there on earth, the scepter of some ancient monarch, and a few modern ones; and there are vestiges of this device in such things as the mace carried by the serjeant-of-arms at the opening of Parliament, and in the batons of the marshals of France. In the book of Esther, it is the scepter of King Ahasuerus which figures prominently in the mercy extended to Esther. He extended the scepter, which had to be touched by the supplicant, before mercy could be given. In a similar manner, God, through Christ, extends the scepter of Christ, which is his righteousness; and as many as touch shall be made whole.
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Verse 16

who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power eternal. Amen.

These words, as applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, are obviously spoken of his eternal and glorified state; because, as regards his earthly ministry, of course, men could and did see him. That it is impossible for men to see him at the present time is a fact of wide theological implications. What of all the saints of the historical church, to whom prayers are even offered, especially of the blessed Mary? Can she deliver any petition to the King? Indeed, no! The word for "man" here means "no human being"; and, therefore, no departed saint can either approach or see the King.

Lesson 12 Instructions to the Rich; Guarding the Heritage

Verse 17

Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hopes set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

This paragraph indicates that the church had affected society more widely in Ephesus than it had at Corinth, of which Paul wrote "not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Corinthians 1:26).

There were evidently a number of rich Christians in Ephesus, a fact also suggested by the fact of some of the Asiarchs being solicitous for Paul's welfare at the time of the riot in that city (Acts 19:31). Such indeed would have been the source of strong temptation to a young man like Timothy. Paul, however, knew his man, being very sure that Timothy would live up to the trust committed to him. His attitude must have been similar to the following poetical description of it:

TRUSTING

I cling to faith and honor still

As flying years recede, Assured that within the Father's will That I shall live indeed
When life with joy and sorrow ends,
Probation done at last. I thus accept whate'er he sends Of sun or stormy blast.
Despite temptation strong and wild,
And nagging doubts inside, I know I am the Father's child, For whom the Savior died.
Nor fears, nor doubts, nor taint of sin
Shall shake my confidence Or kill the certainty within That trusts God's providence.
Some infinite design was his
When every life began; And though such boundless mysteries, No human eye can scan,
The mind of faith may comprehend
What only angels know, And always on the Lord depend For guidance here below.
The sun, the moon, the stars, the sea
The Father's will obey; Then why should man suppose that he Alone may choose his way?
Then let the way of God be mine
Forever and a day; And let his will and purpose shine Within my life away!
- James Burton Coffman

The uncertainty of riches...

Paul's disparagement of wealth in this passage is fully consonant with the teachings of Jesus who called it "the unrighteous Mammon," that is, a false God which people worship. For a list of reasons why wealth is dishonest, or unrighteous, see my Commentary on Luke, p. 349. It is not that the rich must be presupposed to have acquired wealth by dishonorable means, because this is by no means true; rather the thought is that money itself is wicked, and one of the wicked things about it is that it tempts people to trust in it, the very vice which Timothy was here cautioned against.

God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy...

All wealth and all possessions are of the Lord. Those who are blessed with such things should thank and honor the Lord for their blessings. Paul next laid down some rules for the wealthy, showing how they may use their wealth for their own eternal welfare, as well as for the blessing of others.

Verse 18

that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

The wealthy have many opportunities to do good, but how often such opportunities are allowed to go unnoticed or neglected. Especially if the fruits of wealth are consumed upon lustful and idle pleasures, it sometimes follows that the good men might have done is simply not done.

Again, there is a remarkable suggestion in this verse of the book of Hebrews, which has this: "Do good, and to communicate forget not" (Hebrews 13:16).

The contrast between the two instructions seems to be this: "distribution" refers to the distribution of funds that the rich might make personally to men in his presence, or community; whereas "communicate" refers to monies supplied to philanthropies or distant recipients, such as missionaries, with whom communication would be involved. Both terms undeniably apply to the giving of one's money to support worthwhile Christian endeavor of all kinds.

Verse 19

laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed.

Laying up in store...

This is exactly what we should have expected the author of 1 Cor. 16:2 to have written; and here is the obvious meaning of "both" references. The one doing the "laying" is the Christian, from "lay by HIM in store." The words "for themselves" identify both Scriptures as being related to the words of Christ, "Lay up FOR YOURSELVES treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20).

A good foundation against the time come...

The eternal benefit accruing to the giver was likewise stressed by Christ himself in Luke 16:9, which furnishes elaboration to what Paul said here. The foundation is vital, fundamental and necessary for whatever is contemplated.

Verse 20, 21

O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge that is falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with you.

Guard that...

is one of the needless revisions in the American Standard Version. As Hervey said, "GUARD for KEEP is hardly an improvement. The meaning for keep is to guard, keep watch over and PRESERVE."

Profane babblings...

This does not refer to teaching that was poorly spoken, outright blasphemous or nonsense. No, this is the apostolic evaluation of the most sophisticated heathen teaching of that generation, as indicated by "knowledge that is falsely so called," which balances and explains it. These entire two verses, according to White, may be considered "a summary of the whole epistle." Hardly any passage in the New Testament has any more relevance for our own generation than does this one. This is the time of the utmost arrogance, pride and conceit of haughty boasters who are shouting in deafening tones from

every cultural center on earth that they "KNOW." This is the Neo-Gnosticism of the 20th century. What they profess to know is a lie. Man did not evolve from lower life forms. It does not lie within man to direct his steps; and before the phenomenon has disappeared, the proof of the Scriptures will again be profoundly demonstrated.

Have erred concerning the faith...

As Lenski said:

This warning is not directed to Timothy as though he might lose the faith but is a warning that Timothy is to address to the membership of the churches. (This applies also) to other warnings found in this letter.

Grace be with you...

This very brief benediction is quite similar to the one which concludes the book of Hebrews.

You...

here is plural in the Greek, indicating that the meaning of it here is identical with that in Hebrews where it is rendered "you all." As Gould said, "It is evident that he has the entire church at Ephesus in mind when he pens his parting benediction."