2 Timothy - Commentaries by William Kelly

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 1:1-2

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

It could not be, however, in these circumstances, but that a tone of importunate earnestness should prevail. Therefore is the need urged more than ever of courage and endurance, as well as of high jealousy, for the will of God and detestation of the evil way of man—of man now alas! associating the Lord's name with the worst wickedness of Satan. The modest but apparently timid character of Timothy called forth the apostle's heart under the power of the Holy Ghost to prepare him for the arduous labor and conflict which lay before him on the speedy departure of his spiritual father. Even more thoroughly and with less exception do its exhortations apply to the faithful now, than those of the first Epistle, because there was more of the official element in the first, whereas what is moral predominates in the second. Be it ours therefore to profit fully from this consideration. For unquestionably the difficult times of the last days have long since come, and the darkness of the closing scenes of lawlessness are already casting their shadows before.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“To Timotheus, [my] beloved child.” In the first Epistle he was designated “true” () child. It might have seemed impossible to have missed the intended difference. For the words necessarily intimate in the latter case that Timothy was no spurious son but his genuine child, and this not merely in “the” faith as an objective possession but in “faith” as a real living principle in the soul. In the former case there is the express declaration of the apostle's positive and personal affection, which was apparently no formal or unmeaning phrase. Yet a German annotator of some repute asks, “Can it be accidental that instead of , as Timotheus is called in the first Epistle 1:2, and Titus 1:4, here we find ? Or may a reason for the change be found in this that it now behooved Timotheus to stir up afresh the faith and the grace in him, before he could again be worthy of the name in its full sense?” And this shallow remark, which misses the true inference from the use of the designation in Titus (who never draws out the strong feelings of the apostle as Timothy does in both Epistles, and yet is styled no less . .), has had the most deleterious influence on Dean Alford's general comparison of the two Epistles, and misled him on not a few details of importance. Bengel, Ellicott, and others are much more correct in this; so that the regret expressed for their misapprehension might have been well spared. The failure in discernment really belongs to those who affect to see loss of confidence in the Second Epistle; and it is only made conspicuous by allowing more love. “More of mere love!” is a strange phrase, and unworthy of a saint, who ought better to know its real and inestimable worth. “Grace, mercy, peace from God [the] Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here we have the same words precisely as in the First; and as to both so famous an expositor as Calvin dares to apologize for the apostle, if it be not to censure him. “He does not observe the exact order; for he places first what ought to have been last, namely, the grace which flows from mercy. For the reason why God at first receives us into favor and why He loves is, that He is merciful. But it is not unusual to mention the cause after the effect for the sake of explanation."1 Such is his comment, which is on the first occasion, repeated substantially on the second. It is plain that the scope of the blessed wish of the apostle has escaped him. For grace is the general term for that energy and outflow of divine goodness which rises above men's evil and ruin, and loves notwithstanding all; and so is most correctly, as it is uniformly, in the first place in the salutation, whether to assemblies or to individual saints. “Mercy” most appropriately finds its place in the desire of God's pitiful consideration for individual weakness, need, or danger, and so is found not only in 1 and 2 Timothy but also exceptionally in Jude, of special purpose, as it disappears from Philemon where the assembly in his house rightly modifies the formula. But mercy being thus subordinate, however sweet individually, with unquestionably good reason holds the second place. By none is it doubted that “peace,” as being an effect rather than a spring, is found where it should be, as indeed each and all have been shown to be. Yet how sorrowful and humiliating that such apparently unconscious but real disrespect to scripture should stand unchallenged in the final shape as well as in a modern translation of his writings, who is generally allowed to be in nothing behind the very chiefest Reformers! If reverence for God be attested by trembling at His word, may we be warned by such an example.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 1:3-7

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

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

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

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

This gift () was the special energy of the Holy Ghost imparted to Timothy. There is no reasonable doubt that it is the gift spoken of in 1 Tim. 4:14. Only there it is said to have been given through prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the elderhood; here, through the

laying on of Paul's hands. The presbyters were associated with Paul; but the power was solely in the apostle. He only was the divinely employed channel of so great a gift. And this is indicated by the difference of the prepositions “with” and “by.”

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

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

But there is a still deeper grace in the permanence of the Holy Ghost given to the Christian as also to the church. And the more so as we learn how every truth has been enfeebled, every principle corrupted, all the ways of God not only misunderstood, but misinterpreted, so that His testimony as a whole is wrecked in Christendom. Nevertheless, as the firm foundation of God stands, and as the Head of the church is exalted at His right hand infallibly to love, cherish, and nourish His body, so is His great gift to us unrevoked, and not a spirit of cowardice. To supplant it alas! might well seem to become us, when one realizes the present ruin of all that bears the name of the Lord here below. On the contrary, He is given to abide in and with us forever, and His gift is that of power and of love and of a sound mind. This was meant to cheer Timothy; and we have yet deeper need. So much the more therefore ought it to cheer us as nothing else can.

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

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

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 1:8-11

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

“Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but suffer hardship with the gospel, according to, the power of God, Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before everlasting1 ages, but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, Who abolished death brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel, whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher” (ver. 8-11).

It is only ignorance of self which makes it to many difficult to understand why Timothy Should be thus ashamed. When the tide of blessing is at the full there is little or no room for shame. It is far otherwise when the ingathering is small and when the love of the many waxes cold, when the world becomes more hardened and contemptuous and the saints cower under its reproaches. Faith alone keeps the eye upon Christ and the heart warmed with His love, in an atmosphere so chilling. His reproach (for it is Christ's assuredly) becomes then glorious in our eyes; and “in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” For the testimony though it may seem to fail is none the less the testimony of our Lord, and the suffering witness under the unjust hand of human authority is His prisoner. “Be not therefore ashamed” is the word. Grace identified the witness who may not be perfect, with His testimony which is absolutely so. Why should we ever stand for that which is less than divine? We are not called to suffer or bear shame for anything but Christ. He has still His objects, precious in His eyes here below. Be it ours to final our lot only there, and let us not be ashamed in a day of grievous departure.

But more; Timothy was called to “suffer evil along with the gospel” as an object assailed and involved in all possible trial here below. It is a grievous blank where a servant of God has only the gospel before his soul, lacks heart for the glory of Christ as Head of the church, fails in faith to enter into the mystery of Christ and His body and takes the scantiest interest in the joys and sorrows which those blessed relationships entail here below. It is wrong to be absorbed even with the gospel, so as to abnegate our part in these high and heavenly privileges, and consequent duties, so near to Christ and inseparable from God's counsels and Christ's love. But there is the opposite error, which though more rare is at least as dangerous and even more dishonoring to Christ because it is more pretentious and seductive—the danger of occupying the mind and life with the truth of the church and its wondrous associations to the depreciation of the gospel and the despising of those who faithfully addict themselves to that work. The apostle to whom we are indebted more than to any other inspired instrument for the revelation of the church not less strenuously insists on the all-importance of the gospel. Christ is most actively and supremely concerned with both, and so should His servants, though one might be neither a teacher on the one hand nor an evangelist on the other. Still more responsible, because of the grace given to him, was Timothy, being both an evangelist and a teacher. He is here enjoined to suffer evil with the gospel, but according to the power of God. Nothing can show more forcibly the deep interest in it to which he was called. When worldliness enters, suffering hardship disappears. When the church becomes worldly, one gains honor, ease, emolument, and so it is

with the gospel become popular. When the gospel and the church engage the heart and testimony according to Christ, suffering and rejection cannot but ensue. Timothy, therefore; was called to take Christ's part in the gospel; and God's power would not be lacking, however he might suffer.

The gospel is well worth the while, “for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes,” entirely above the distinction which the law or circumcision made. It is of the Spirit, not of the flesh, not national now but personal. God “saved us.” It is the fruit of His work in Christ; and that work was finished on earth, and accepted in heaven, and abides forever, complete and unchanging. Men may be moved away from the hope of the gospel by ordinances on the one hand or by philosophy on the other. Both are of the world, and almost equally worthless; both absolutely inefficacious to save, though one be a sign, the other purely human. But God “saved us and called us with a holy calling.” Here “holy” is emphatic and most suitable to the Epistle and the state of things contemplated. Always true, it was urgent now to press its “holy” character. It is a calling on high or upward as we read in Phil. 3:14, in contrast with the earthly things in which men find their glory to their shame. It is a heavenly calling, as we see in Heb. 3:1, which those needed especially to consider who were used to the external calling of Israel in the land. It is God's calling with its hope in and with Christ where the creature disappears from view and His eternal counsels for the glory of His Son are developed for the soul as in Eph. 1 and 4. But now in the growing declension of such as bore the name of the Lord the apostle binds together God's salvation with His holy calling. An evil time is not at all one for lowering the standard but for unveiling and pressing its importance.

Further, being divine, God's salvation and call are not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace. Even the saint was to pray, “enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” There are good works in every saint: “For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them;” they are not only fair morally but they ought to be such as suit those on earth who are united to Christ in heaven, responsible to reflect heavenly grace—no longer earthly righteousness merely. Such works alone are properly Christian. “Against such there is no law.” But they are quite distinct from those of legal obedience, were it ever so exact. Nevertheless God's salvation is according to Christ's work, not ours. Nor is it of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but, of God that showeth mercy, according to His own purpose and grace, Who would thus perfectly honor the Son as we do in our measure by our faith.

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

But the manifestation of this purposed grace to us came in with Him Who was manifested in flesh and justified in the Spirit. Even so, though all depended on the dignity of His person, and awaited the completion of His work, and His return as man into that glory whence He had come as God, the Son, that thus it might be the Son of man Who had glorified God in Himself, and this straightway. Manhood, now that the infinite work of suffering for sin was accomplished, was in His person at least raised from among the dead and glorified on high according to the fullest counsel of God. His purpose and grace was no longer a question of gift only as before the ages of time, but manifested now through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, having annulled death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel. This helps to the more distinct understanding of ver. 1; for it is the promise of life, that which is in Christ Jesus, fulfilled. Grace was thus distributing its incomparable stores. Death was brought to naught as Satan's empire over sinful man, and Jesus was manifestly Lord of all and Conqueror over all hostile power and Giver of infinite blessing in communion with God His Father, and this in all truth and righteousness. For sin had been borne and borne away, as the gospel declares to all men in itself and applies the good news to ourselves by faith individually.

Where is man's wisdom then? Forever put to shame in His cross of which it was ashamed. Where is the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us? Effaced forever and taken out of the way by Him who nailed it to the cross, as the resurrection cast its glorious light on the incorruption of the body pledged to us in Him risen. No wonder the apostle told the Roman saints long before that be was not ashamed of the gospel, destined to be imprisoned and slain and cast out in the person of its witnesses in that city more than in any other that professed it, not to speak of the loathsome imposture and harlotry which supplanted and still supplants it there. No wonder the apostle there imprisoned for its sake, and anticipating the speedy pouring out of his blood as a drink-offering (4: 6), adds with triumphant thankfulness, “unto which [gospel] I [emphatically] was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher [of Gentiles].” Some few high and varied authorities omit “of Gentiles,” which from the character of the Epistle seems to me probably right; and the rather as the copyists were profoundly insensible of snob a trait but disposed to assimilate the second letter to the first, where “of Gentiles” has its suited and certain place.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 1:12-14

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

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

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

perils in wilderness, in perils at sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and toil, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." And this is but the mere external part in what he calls his "folly," that is, speaking of himself instead of Christ, extorted from him as it was by the detractors at Corinth. But what a life of love such sufferings indicate, what devotedness to Him Who had appointed him a herald and apostle and teacher!

Was he "ashamed" then? Rather did he boast of what humanly speaking is a humiliation. If it is needful to boast, says he, "I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity," "most gladly therefore will I rather boast of my infirmities [not faults or sins assuredly], that the power of the Christ may dwell upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits, for Christ; for when I am weak, then am I strong." As that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God, so to the spiritual mind there is nothing so glorious for a saint here below as reproach, rejection, and suffering for Christ's sake and His testimony. This was the cause for which Paul was suffering then as all through his course, since the Lord said, "I will show him how much he must suffer for My name" (Acts 9:16). But it was also great grace that, instead of complaining like Jeremiah, he should abound in courage, joy, and triumph, NOT shame. Was he then a man of iron constitution, a heart of oak, which threw off all blows and wounds, as if unfelt? "Ye know," said he to some who should have known him well, "that in weakness of the flesh I preached the gospel to you at the first; and my temptation which was in my flesh ye did not slight nor reject with contempt; but ye received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus." His circumstances were as trying as his health was infirm; yet went he on for years, night and day, admonishing each with tears, coveting no one's silver or gold or clothing, but his hands ministering to the wants of others as well as his own. Truly in nothing was he ashamed; but with all boldness of grace, as always, so now also magnifying Christ in his body whether by life or by death.

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

Hence the apostle adds, "and I am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit—that which I have entrusted unto Him—against that day." By "my deposit" is to be understood all that I as a believer entrust to the safe-keeping of God, not only the security but the blessedness of the soul and the body, of the walk and the work, with every question conceivable to be raised in the past, present, or future. As responsibility is clearly in question, the reference is as usual to "that day," which will declare the measure of every saint's fidelity when each shall have his praise from God. The coming or "presence of the Lord," as is well-known, is the aspect of pure grace when all shall be caught up in the likeness of the Lord to be with Him forever.

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

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

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

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

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

The verse that follows appears to me to summarize that which its predecessor exhorts to in detail: "Keep the good deposit through the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us" (ver. 14), but this, not without a sort of antithetical reference to ver. 12. There it was the apostle resting with holy satisfaction on God's keeping what he had entrusted to Him. Here is the other side, in which Timothy is called to keep what he was entrusted with, for which God provides in the Holy Spirit that dwells in us. For the Spirit given abides with us forever. He may be grieved by our sins and folly; but He does not abandon the saint since redemption. He is there, when self-judgment corrects the hindrance, to act in His own gracious power to the glory of Christ Who sent Him down for this very purpose.

It will be noticed that it is not said "in thee," but "in us." So it is in scripture habitually, and incomparably better than if predicated of Timothy alone, On him had been conferred by apostolic prerogative a special gift; but he or any other saint shared the unspeakable boon, for which it was expedient that even Jesus should go away. This is the common and characteristic power of the Christian; and therefore it was fitting that, while Timothy should be reminded of One so competent to help our infirmity, he should have it clearly before his soul that the saints at large have the divine Spirit no less truly dwelling in them. It was well for both him and them to have the comfort and the stimulus of so blessed, yet solemn, a fact indelibly before them. We cannot too strongly urge that the precious privileges with which God's grace in Christ has invested believers are standing facts, and not mere ideas or transient feelings. They are indeed calculated to exercise the mind and fill the mind to the

full; and wretched is his state, who, possessing what so transcends human thought or affection, seems to estimate them less than the passing things of the day or the trifling objects on which man spends his care. But the life of Christ, His death and resurrection, redemption through His blood, union with Him on high, His intercession at God's right hand, are facts on which the soul can rest, no less than His Deity and His humanity in one person. Just so is it with the presence of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, and His varied operations in the assembly and the individual. The believer stands in living present relationship with them all, which are as certain and infinitely more important than the links of natural kin or country, which nobody in his senses disbelieves. What a reproof to the thoughtless saint! and what solid cheer to the trembling heart! We have only to reflect on what grace has made ours in Christ to run over with thanksgiving and praise.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 1:15-18

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

“Thou knowest this, that all that are in Asia turned away from me; of whom is Phygelus and Hermogenes” (ver. 15). Of these two we may be wholly ignorant. Not so Timothy any more than Paul, who singles out their names as the most painful examples of the abandonment which cat the apostle to the heart. Timothy knew well what made their heartlessness such a distress to the servant, such a dishonor to the Master. It is not Christian to treat such a thing with contempt any more than with resentment. We can afford to hear all, however humbling as well as grievous. For we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. It would prepare Timothy and countless others for that which might be similar in its kind and time. Scripture records nothing in vain. It is true that we are nerved and strengthened for the conflict by looking not to deserters but to the Captain of salvation. But it is well to be prepared for that which has been, for what might be, not to say for what from the same causes is sure to be, from time to time. And it was the more important to speak of it to Timothy at this time, because he was so soon to lose the cheering presence and burning exhortations of the one who was writing to him, at least from his voice as a living man, ever to be heard, ever to abide as the word of the living God.

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

But now, the apostle can assume that Timothy knew that desertion of himself which filled his heart, not with dismay but with grief. Such is the effect of divine love shed abroad in the heart and Paul would have Timothy to feel it according to Christ. This, undoubtedly, adds to the anguish but it delivers from selfishness as well as from acrimony. And Timothy needed to have it brought before him thus even though he knew the fact. The language supposes, it would seem, a definite act, rather than a general state, though no doubt there was an antecedent state which prepared the way for that act to affect them so unworthily. It is true that turning away from Paul is very different from forsaking the gospel or the church, from giving up this truth or that. But where the Lord was giving His most honored servant to suffer, not for any failure of his own, but for the divine deposit, for His testimony here below, that any should desert such a servant at such a time would be lamentable: how much more so that the desertion should be general and in a moral sense universal where the truth was best known and grace could be brought out in all its height and depth and breadth as nowhere else. I should judge from the context that the fact which brought out this most deplorable and guilty desertion was the apostle's imprisonment. The enemy took advantage of human shame put upon the greatest servant of the church and of the gospel. And those who had been the abundant fruit of his labors in divine power did in effect join the world in spirit, cowering under its shame where faith and love ought to have given them identification with the apostle's suffering as glory to the name of Jesus.

But the turning away from Paul was not absolutely complete even there. There was at least a bright, exception, as a time of general evil is ever used in the grace of God to bring out singular fidelity and devotedness. “The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus; for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; but being in Rome he sought me out diligently and found [me]; (the Lord grant him to find mercy from [the] Lord in that day). And in how many things he ministered at Ephesus thou knowest very well.” The contrast helps much and definitely to show us where the general defection lay; and the Lord repaid “the house of Onesiphorus” with compound interest the grace He had bestowed on its head. “He often refreshed me,” says the gracious apostle: how like the Master Who could say to the poor disciples, “Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even. as My Father appointed unto Me” &c.! But he also singles out the crucial fact, “and was not ashamed of my chain.” Love evinces its truth, character, and power in the hour of need. How was it with “all that were in Asia"? They were evidently ashamed of it. Fleshly prudence blamed the zeal for Christ which gave the occasion; and worldly spirit shrank from all solidarity with the imprisoned apostle. How did the Lord regard such selfish timorousness? The Holy Spirit marks its baseness indelibly on the everlasting page of scripture. But he singles out the blessed exception of one whose heart clave the more to the apostle, not merely in the province of Asia, but in the proud metropolis where the apostle was bound. “But being in Rome he sought me very diligently;"1 and not in vain. He found the deserted apostle: “the Lord grant him to find mercy from [the] Lord in that day”! This, it is true, we are all awaiting in faith (Jude 21); but none the less sweet or comforting the apostle's prayer, surely not less efficacious than that of an Abraham of old for the present government of God. Nor is this all that is said; but he appeals to Timothy as knowing very well how much service Onesiphorus rendered in Ephesus. The Apostle does not limit it, as the Authorized Version does with others, to ministering to himself: the general phrase leaves room for what was personal of course, but implies much more, as the apostle carefully states. None knew this “better"2 than Timothy who needed no further explanation.

Lectures on the Church of God, Lecture 6: The Resource of the Faithful in the Ruins of Christendom.

2 Tim. 2:11-22.

How many elements of solemnity are crowded into the subject now before us! It is solemn to look over Christendom and survey its ruin, now too palpable to be denied. It is solemn, on the other side, to think of the faithful goodness of God, who knew all beforehand, spread it out in the unerring word of His grace, and has shown us that, if He felt the evil that was about to cover the scene of the profession of Christ's name on earth, His loving wisdom descried a sure path—a path the vulture's eye does not see, which nevertheless He gives His people to discern, and by means of which they can have the happy certainty that they are pleasing God.

To those who for the sake of the Lord and the truth deplore and refuse to have fellowship with the current practice of Christendom, there may be a certain necessity to give as strong proofs as may be of those evils which now abound, and of which the word of God forewarned when they were but in the germ. Indeed there may be a kind of temptation to prove the evil, where we feel in anywise the need of a justification for the path of separation to God. But that tendency is corrected promptly, and the heart receives its due tone and its right attitude, when we think who after all is most concerned, and whose honor it is we have to justify. The Lord preserve us from thinking of ourselves! It is unworthy of those who belong to Christ. Be it our boast to justify Him alone.

It will be my business now to show, not that He needs aught from us, not that His words of light require the tapers of man to make them more distinct' but that divine charity seeks the blessing of every one, especially of those who are comparatively young and uninformed in the truth of God. I hope to give enough at least of the evidence to show most plainly what the will of the Lord is; how faithfully His word deals with us; how worthy of trust both He Himself is and that which He has put into our hands. This may encourage the most diffident of God's children to look up with confidence, seeing that the end was as plain to Him as the beginning, and that for us the only path is that of Christ, for there cannot be two. He is the way, and as there is but one Christ, so there can be therefore but one path that satisfies the heart and mind of Christ for those who love Him.

Am I going to produce strong reasons as if one needed to justify this? It will be enough to explain what He has pointed out. To those who know Him there will be the completest justification and the strongest reason in the fact that it is His path for us, though His goodness has given, alas! too sure and abundant proof how deeply it is needed.

Further I shall have the opportunity to-night of slightly reviewing the ground over which we have passed on previous occasions, and of showing how all that is most precious has been secured to the faithful. Not that the Lord has not been pleased to take away much. Not that we ought to be unfeeling about anything that concerns the Lord's power and glory in the church. But if we rightly claim a higher place for that which concerns God in His moral ways; if we ought to feel that what brings and keeps before us the grace of Christ must be of deeper value than any displays of power before men; yet on the other hand, beloved brethren, it would be a wrong to the Lord if we looked with cold indifference on the utter weakness of this our day, and the dishonor thus put upon the name of Jesus in Christendom itself. Alas! there is no place among the outside strangers to the Lord Jesus where there is more daring enormity done than in the very scene where men are baptized in His name. When we look back at times long past, at the early days of the church's pilgrimage on the earth, and the power of the Holy Ghost then displayed, I am persuaded we ought to feel for the wounds inflicted in the house of His friends; we ought to be grieved that the hearing of the church was such that the Lord could not outwardly pour honor upon her, but was obliged to strip her as it were, and shame her before the enemies of His name.

Let us own all this, as also the far deeper sorrow that men so little prize the truth, so tamely feel for the honor of the Lord's person in Christendom, not to speak of the well-nigh universal want of feeling even what the church is in its barest and simplest forms, and still more the total forgetfulness of its bright portion as one with the Saviour, and of that which the church hopes for in the day to come. Be assured that if we do not thus feel with the Lord in our little measure, we are not in a moral condition rightly to act upon His word in present things. It is a lesson of no small importance to see that the Lord has not given us in scripture that which admits of bare imitation. It does not suffice to take up the epistles of The apostle Paul for instance, and set to work as if we were competent to put in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders here or there. It is one thing to fall back upon the word God has given us, and quite another to assume that we can reinstate the church now that it has been broken up and ruined. It is right to feel its low estate, but that we should now build up again that which is thus fallen the very thought proves that the heart in this has no communion with Christ; that there is a lack of due holy distrust of self; that there is such insensibility to the true state of things now as unfits not merely Tor authoritatively restoring the church, but even for the humbleness of faith that confides in the actual resources of Christ. For it is an unvarying principle of God, that when there has been a departure from Himself, it matters not under what circumstances or time or place or people— whether before the flood or since—whether in Israel or in the church—God insists upon it that the first step in that which is morally good should be the sense of our real evil in His sight. When this is the case, the presumption will be far from us that we can make good that wonderful display of divine power, grace, and wisdom—the church of GOD! It was the greatest work, so to speak, that God ever wrought upon the earth (next to the Cross, whereby a lone such a work became possible).

God forbid that in thinking of what He has done, we should compare that which stands alone—alone throughout all eternity! But if we look at all that has ever been done upon the earth, or even the very making of heaven and earth, I say, that the work of God in His church—the church of God—was greater still. And now, we poor leaky vessels that could not keep the blessing, we that have been through our own weakness and unwatchfulness a prey to Satan's wiles, and let in the thieves and robbers that have spoiled the house of God, are we the men to set it up again? Is this the feeling of lowly faith? If it were bad for man to go away, if it were a grievous thing for Israel to dishonor the law of God, what must it be for the church to slight God the Holy Ghost? It is the epistle of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, the object of His most perfect love, accepted in the Beloved, even in Christ, made the righteousness of God in Him. What is it then for that church practically to forego the glory of God here below—to prefer the work of their own hands to His word and Spirit—once more to bow down to idols graven by art and man's device? Oh! it is more loathsome than that which scripture or even history records of days and men infinitely less privileged.

Think not that I am exaggerating what Christendom has done or does. Nor do I wish to dilate more than is absolutely needful upon the painful failure of that which bears the name of Christ here below. In truth it is not so. But let us hear what the word of God says upon the subject.

Who would allow the thought that He speaks too strongly of that which He saw from the first, and told us was coming as He looked into the future?

Let us begin with the Saviour Himself and see what He intimated to His disciples should be found when He returns again to the earth, when He summons man to give an account of himself. In Luke 17. He tells us not that the world should become gradually changed from a wilderness to a Paradise, nor that the heathen should lay aside their false gods and the Jews their enmity to the true Messiah. On the contrary He gives the disciples the needed warning, that it was to be as in the days of Noah, and in the days of Lot. These were times of ease and worldliness, when all mankind was rising up against God; and yet they furnished comparisons for the scenes which are to meet the Lord as He appears from heaven to judge the world. "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood carne and destroyed them all." The self-security and love of ease will be substantially the same when the Lord is revealed as just before the flood. Then as of old men will be engrossed in the ordinary matters of daily life. Spite of the law, spite of the gospel, again is seen and will be continued that state of corruption and violence which brought the Deluge upon the earth no less guilty than utterly unconcerned. And Christ looks onward to the day of His return: no previous millennium of holy bliss awaiting Him; no happy rejoicing hearts characterizing the world generally then; but on the contrary the same moral condition, the same indifference to God's will and glory which preceded the flood.

After the flood when nations and tongues began there was another scene more appalling and degrading, which the same book of Genesis brings before us; and this also furnishes its sad complement to the picture of the days just before the Son of man comes again. "Like also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom" (most ominous words!) "it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

If we take up now the Epistles, we shall find the light shed by the Holy Ghost in no way weakens but confirms in every respect the testimony of the Lord Jeans; only that now we have naturally the Holy Ghost looking rather at professing Christendom, whereas our Lord made the Jews His starting-point and center.

Thus in Rom. 11, without dwelling at length upon the chapter, the Spirit of God anticipates the end of Christendom. "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." Such is the warning given to the Gentile professor. The Jews are meant by the natural branches. They had been the depositaries of promise of old, and had therefore the responsible place of testimony for God upon the earth. Hence they were the original branches of the olive tree, the line of promise and testimony on the earth which began with Abraham. But the Jews broke the law, went after idols, refused and slew the Messiah. There was a resource in the gospel; but they refused the gospel from heaven, as well as the Lord their King on earth. The consequence is, that the natural branches of the olive tree were broken off, and the wild olive, or Gentile, grafted into the old stock of profession. And this is the warning that is given: "Thou wilt say then. The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in." Has not this exactly been the feeling of Christendom? Contempt for the Jews, astonishment at their wickedness, utter insensibility as to their own condition. “Well; because of unbelief, they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness.”

Let me ask any man that has the smallest fear of God, or even outward acquaintance with His word, Has Christianity continued in the goodness of God? Is there any Protestant, any Roman Catholic, who thinks so? Is there any person, no matter where, no matter who a single soul who dares to say that Christendom, the professing Gentile, has continued in the goodness of God? The Romanist cannot think the Protestant schism continues in the goodness of God. The Protestant is assured that the Romish body is the fruit of clean departure from God in superstition; and so we might run through all existing system& They may each plead for his own association; but who will say that even his own has continued faithful? They may believe that it mesas well, and would be admirable if carried out; but who would not acknowledge that it has not been carried out? that consequently no sect, no portion, no fragment even, has continued in the goodness of God? All agree that, as for the mass of profession outside themselves, it has failed to testify for the goodness of God. Consequently there rises up from men on every side the acknowledgment that the Gentile has not continued in it. Not that the failure is felt as it should be; not that there is adequate confession and renunciation of our common sin before God. Where sin is really spread out to God, it will not be persisted in. But at least there is an outward acknowledgment to a certain extent in the earth now, and quite enough to prove that Christianity has not continued in the goodness of God. What then says the word of the Lord? "Thou also shalt be cut off." The Gentile shall be cut off for his faithlessness, as surely as the Jew was.

This, remark, is not in some prophetic portion of God's word, which some might think ambiguous, though we do not allow the thought for a moment that any part of the word of God is so. But here in an epistle which every Christian allows to be one of the most fundamental and comprehensive, which takes up Christianity from its elements, and through which the Lord has established souls in peace, perhaps more than through any other portion of His word; it is in this epistle to the Romans that we have the solemn announcement of the sure cutting off of the Gentiles. Not merely one part or another but the Gentile profession is doomed of God, because it has not continued in His goodness; as truly as the Jew is now cast out from his heritage, a bye-word and a reproach to all the earth, evidently bearing his doom stamped upon his brow.

To examine many of the epistles would more than occupy my time. Suffice it to say, that as we travel down the stream from 2 Thessalonians, which was one of the earliest epistles written by Paul, to the latest, the Epistles of John and Jude, we have only an increasing testimony, growing more distinct and urgent and awful. As the evil grew, so the signs of judgment became more apparent. The Spirit of God sounds the trumpet with no uncertain note, and wakes up the faithful where there is an ear to hear. Christendom was gradually being undermined, and would become, in no long time, the engine of opposition to God—would be made the theater of the grossest evil, taking up the abominations not only of the Jews but of the heathen themselves, and consecrating a system of Idolatry under the name of Christ and His mother, saints and angels, even more frightful and guilty than anything ever before found here below. For the very fact of praying to Peter, Paul, or the Virgin, proves that the light of Christianity must in some measure have been known, before it ended in so distressing an apostasy. Does anyone think the expression "apostasy" over-strong? Allow me to tell them that the very phrase "the apostasy" is the expression of the Holy Ghost in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, where we are told "there is a mystery of iniquity which now worketh." Only there is now a hindering power. Consequently it would not burst out into its full development all at once; it was kept in check for a certain time by the good hand of the Lord for the purposes of His own grave. But the moment that this restraint was gone, then it would be no mystery any longer, but manifest lawlessness. It is called " a (or rather "the") falling away." or the apostasy. This must become ripe, and "the man of sin" must be

revealed. Thus we have too plainly an uninterrupted succession of evil. This is the vista described in the scripture; a succession of evil that goes on always swelling in intensity and volume till at last when the restraint is removed, it bursts out into a yet more fearful issue-not "the apostasy" only, but "the man of sin." What a contrast to the Man of righteousness, when man dares to take the place of God in the temple of God!

This then is what Christendom is to the Christian watchman. It has not of course been realized in all its force, though I do not deny that there have been various and also growing manifestations of evil. As the apostle John tells us, "Even now there are many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time." This is so much the more remarkable because he shows that the Antichrist was coming, the great token of which is that there were many antichrists then. They knew thereby it was the last time. The Spirit would not close the volume of the New Testament until the worst evil was actually there at least in its germ; and this being so and descried by inspiration, there was need of nothing further. The Spirit of God could, as it were, fold up the sacred roll. It was complete. The mystery of lawlessness is shown already at work, "the man of sin" is predicted; the mystery of Christ and the Church no longer hid but disclosed. Scripture had attained its full compass. There remains, not some fresh view of Christ, so to speak, but contrariwise the unfolding of that Christ whom they had already, the bringing out more intimately and appreciatively the light of the love of God that was in the Lord Jesus Christ from the beginning. This is the antidote of all Satan can bring-to the many antichrists, and at last to the Antichrist. I refer to it in order to give a kind of connection between the different states-the rise, progress, and final manifestation of lawlessness. Nay more the lawless one is to exalt himself against the Lord of glory. The last book of the New Testament shows the millennial reign over the earth, ushered in by the destruction of the beast and the false prophet with all their company, as Babylon had been previously destroyed.

Thus rapidly have we glanced without entering into all the proofs of the doom of Christendom. They are patent in the general epistles and in particular in the epistle of Jude where a most energetic sketch is given in the compass of a single verse (11). With that power which the Spirit of God only knows how to convoy the shadows of Cain are sketched, then of Balaam, and finally of the gainsaying Core. Is there nothing for Christendom there? Is there no sound of sure if slumbering judgment there? "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain" —that unnatural brother, that pretender to religion, who brought his offering to the Lord but slew the guiltless. Is there no presage in him who received the wages of unrighteousness—in the man who, spite of himself, prophesied glorious things of a people that he loved not but would have sold to destruction?

Is there no solemn lesson in the wages received for teaching, it may be, the glorious things of God, without heart for His people, still less any tare or jealousy for His word, for His will, for His glory? Finally, in the fearful rebellion of Korah, "the gainsaying of Core," in those who had the ministry of the sanctuary, in the proud Levites who coveted and arrogated to themselves the place of Moses and Aaron (the apostle and the high priest of the Jewish profession), is there no awful warning there? Have you never heard of men professing to be servants of Christ, and yet pretending to be priests strictly, officially, and exclusively-assuming to be authoritative channels of divine pardon empowered on earth to absolve from guilt before God? I do not speak only of such as claim in their heathenish darkness to offer a sacrifice for the dead as well as the living. Assuredly one thinks not with bitterness about such things as these, but we may all stand aghast as we survey the facts realized in Christendom. If it be a prophecy, it is a prophecy fulfilled.

All this may suffice to show how little Christendom has continued in the goodness of God. Details are needless. The godliest members of the various religious societies would be the first to confess the failure of their own. God's controversy is not with one only but with all, though doubtless the proudest will meet with a peculiar judgment. It is evident also that the word of God leaves it not to human experience or to spiritual judgment to infer His thoughts of Christendom; He has pronounced upon it Himself. Hence it is not presumptuous, but on the contrary the part of humble faith to believe God in this. How good He is thus to cut off the fear of forming a judgment so stern! For now he that does not pronounce after the Lord is ignorant of his Master's mind, or is false to His will. He that would defend or justify Christendom does not, in effect, fear to give the Lord the lie. From the scriptures enough has been given to show that the man who can look on Christendom and vindicate what is around us ignorantly or willfully slights all the instruction that the Holy Ghost has given on the subject. Undoubtedly this is strong; but it is the Lord's goodness which makes the owning of it now to be a matter of sympathy with Him, and not of a proud claim to superior light.

God's word is open to all. By it we are all bound to see as He sees. The Lord admits of no vain excuses that we cannot judge. The Spirit of God, who judges and discerns all things, dwells in every Christian. He that says he cannot judge Christendom virtually denies himself to be a spiritual man; but if we do judge that Christendom has fallen into these predicted evils one after another, and that what was then but budding is now bearing the most bitter and baneful fruit, 1 ask, are we to partake of it? Are we to be insensible to our own share of the common sin? If the Lord graciously imparts the strongest warning, are we to satisfy ourselves with that flimsiest and most profane of apologies, that when the Lord comes He will set it all right? Yes, but it will be too late to set right my conscious Christ-dishonoring unfaithfulness; it will be to my shame to live till then indifferent to His word, careless of His glory, regardless of the Holy Ghost, who is grieved by that which I have been allowing practically. Am I, or am I not, to refrain from that which insults Him? If I know these things, am I to content myself without doing them. He who does puta himself in the guiltiest place of all. Do I know and feel the despite Christendom does and I have done to the Spirit of grace? Then let me look up in dependence on the Lord, that I may do it no more, nor settle down in a pretext so lame and criminal as that the Lord will set all to rights again. Is He not coming to judge every evil way? No doubt He will bring in good, and this from above but He will judge all evil, and yet more than in times past. In vain then do I essay to shelter myself under the blessed truth, that the Lord is coming to display the kingdom of God upon earth. Assuredly, He will. From the heavens He will come, and fill the earth with the peace and blessing He brings with Himself, instead of finding it here below. A few poor broken hearts He will find in the world—a godly remnant, crying out, like the importunate widow in the guilty city where ruled the judge that feared neither God nor man. Such and worse will be the state of things, and in their midst shall He find faith on the earth? Yes, but crying out in alarm. And so He will clear the world with the avenging sword, before He establishes His throne of righteousness upon it. Of course I speak figuratively now; but the fact will be unsparing divine judgment; and therefore how blind for any to harden themselves in going on with sin under the plea that the Lord is coming to set the world and church to rights Allow me to say further, that the Lord has not left us to our own thoughts any more of the good than of the evil. He has given us His path, and this is what the heart desires to come to—the resources of the faithful in the ruins of Christendom. It were strange indeed if the word of God shed no sure light where it is so needed? Can we conceive such a thing as the Lord giving His view of the darkening future, and no provident tare for His beloved and feeble and trembling followers? We began with the Lord's testimony about man's evil; let us see how He ensures good for His people in the midst of it. For Matt. 18 we may bless the Lord. Although He is giving instruction as to the animating spring of the assembly, which is grace, (as law was the governing principle of the synagogue,) the Lord provides what would be deeply needed, if they were reduced to a

handful "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (ver. 20). Could one conceive more tender thought, or more evident wisdom than the Lord thus caring for His own in a dark day? To this the goodly flock might come—that assembly which once stood out so fair, with its thousands on whom great grace rested. How wise thus to prepare the hearts of His servants! How well He knew and guarded against the anxieties of His saints! We know what numbers are to the worldly spirit, and how apt we are to rest upon that which looks great in the earth. Yet nothing is more destructive of Christianity. He that has not a heart for the two or three must be only a dead weight if he were among ten thousand. It might be no doubt that he would be carried along the stream of happy multitudes; and that which was thus unfaithful to the mind of Christ might pass unnoticed in the strong current and new-born delight in the Saviour, transporting all around, as was no doubt the case on that bright day when the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to be the herald of the glory of the Lord, and to make believing men on earth the dwellingplace of God. We can understand that at Pentecost the tide of joy rose so high as to cover all such elements, sure as they were to appear later on.

And soon it came, too soon, when sounds of discontent were heard even in that blessed habitation of God. Alas! man was there; not God only in His goodness but man; and behind was the adversary ready to dishonor the one through the other.

The church, like man and Israel, has to be tried on earth. What is the declared issue? Never was there such blessing entrusted to man; but man is as faithless under the gospel as he was rebellious under the law. The Holy Ghost is slighted as the Son had been; and in the day when eternal realities are revealed man turns back to the shadows of Judaism, preferring them to the substantial truth of God. This is the history of Christendom. And the Lord, with it all spread out before His prescient eyes, comforts His followers, were they ever so few and weak, with the assurance of His presence where His name has its central place to their faith.

In the prospect of coming evil how gracious of the Lord to think, it may be, of some obscure village— of some solitary ship that travels across the ocean—of some comparatively desert island—yea, or of the vast and crowded city, where the very solitariness of discipleship is more realized sometimes than anywhere else! Wherever, however, whenever it might be, the Lord gives His own weight of authority to the two or three gathered unto His name. It is not merely His blessing—where could He not bless? Blessing He went on high, and never since—if I may so say—never has He laid down the hands which He then lifted up in blessing. It could not be otherwise till He come in judgment. His work was infinite. Who could limit the preciousness of His blood? Who could say that redemption, like the first covenant, was grown old, and ready to vanish away? Could any difficulty, danger, or need in Christendom turn that grave back, as it were, into its spring, or dry up those rivers of living waters which they that believe should receive? It could not be; but there is more than all that here. Not only is there blessing but there is also the weight of His authority guaranteed to the smallest real representative of His assembly. We know that men shrink back from church discipline; and he need not wonder at this who is aware how it was made under the fairest pretenses the most abominable scourge of tyranny the earth ever beheld. One cannot, therefore, be surprised that Christians who had escaped from the weight of that iron hand should somewhat shrink back at the bare sound. But we must beware of mistrusting Him to whom we owe our every blessing, because Babylon, the world church, has perverted His words. But if there were only two or three, there ought to be as much jealousy as if there were three thousand to maintain publicly and privately, collectively and individually, ways consistent with the character of Christ. This cannot be unless there be discipline. The obligation of an united pure walk is bond up with the very integrity and being of God's assembly. It ceases to be the church of God, unless there be the holy earnest solemn carrying out of that which the Lord has laid down. "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened." No ruin can touch this responsibility for a moment. On the other hand the Lord takes care in his grace that blessing shall flow spite of failure.

But there is more than the sovereign action of divine grace, where responsibility may have been little felt and the will of God misunderstood. The Lord watches over those gathered together to His name, and is there present in their midst were they but two or three. What unfailing and inestimable comfort! Conceive for a moment some Christian awakened to feel that the place of a believer is not to be a member merely of the ecclesiastical system of the country or of particular views, but on the contrary that the only thing which suits and is due to Christ is that we should renounce—we cannot be too lowly, but neither can we be too thorough in renouncing—every tie that is not connected with Christ. Where we can obey Christ in the midst of those that are His—where the Holy Ghost is allowed freedom to work according to the word of God—there is God's church, and nowhere else. The liberty of the Spirit is to exalt Christ and this only. This is a universal principle, true of an individual and true of the assembly. It would be a miserable thing if the assembly were not a scene of true and blessed liberty; but such it is that God may be glorified by Christ Jeans. There will be also the consciousness of that which is offensive just in proportion to the spiritual power that is in the assembly.

A great or a small company makes no essential difference. The Holy Ghost is sent down to tare for the interests of the name of Christ. The two or three weak and ignorant ones gathered to it at least know that they are His; that they ought not therefore to belong to man; that they ought not therefore to be under any other tie; that rules made by one or many or all—if they were the very best that were ever produced—are not entitled to bind Christians, seeing that God has already furnished the only perfect standard not only of faith but of church fellowship, and that to own another is to dishonor the word of God and the Holy Ghost who is here to make it good in power. The question is not whether we can do better than others: God forbid: that indeed were presumption. But this I ask, whoever you may be (and I trust that, if you are a Christian, you will agree with me), Which is best, your rules or God's word? If God, and not you, be the wiser, how carne you to invent these rules? You thought the word of God insufficient, and you must supply the deficiency! What is the result? Take what is going on at the present moment, and in any society you like. The very newspapers ring with the scandal of what is done under the name of Christ. What do your rules avail? Neither you nor the wisest of men can construct a standard for all time; and why should it be attempted? God has given His own, and His children used no other.

We have already the only sure and divine rule. The only want is the faith to value and act upon it. True, the consequences are serious. Faithfulness to Christ costa much now as ever. But is it not a solemn thought that now, in this boasted nineteenth century alter the Lord has accomplished redemption, we are only awakening, here and there, to feel that the word of God is better than the word of man? What a discovery! Yet it is great as it is humbling that it should be a new thing—a discovery which many of the children of God have not yet made. All admit that God's word is infinitely wise for the soul's salvation. Who, when it is a question of eternal issues, would trust his soul to the doctrines of men? Then is felt the value of that word which reveals the Saviour, and of the blessed Spirit who makes the word precious in the revelation of Him. But is it not daring to draw these distinctions in the word of God, and to put aside that which speaks of the church, ministry, worship, the breaking of bread, and prayer? How comes it that men should behave practically as if God's word had less decision and authority in these matters than the shifting thoughts of man? How comes it that men so seldom think of being guided only by the word of God? How

comes it that believers resort as a matter of course to human ecclesiastical roles? How comes it, for example, that dissenters, the best of them, when they want a minister in the word, proceed at once to elect him without a syllable of scripture for that course? Who gave them license to do so?

“It must be so; we have our own doctor and our own lawyer, and why not our own minister?" It is exactly this worldly principle that has done the mischief. Why is not God consulted in His word? How comes it that in scripture a church never elects a minister? Of course there must have been many who wanted ministerial help in those days as now; and God, who knew all that is good, must have known every want also. How comes it that there was never a man chosen by a Christian congregation to preach the gospel or teach the saints—not a solitary instance in the word of God? They cannot get rid of the difficulty. What are they to do? The fact is, the dissenting principle is broken at the very outset. They cannot step over the threshold. They cannot do without a minister, and they cannot elect a minister according to scripture. Let us look now, not at congregationalism, but at the two or three gathered to the name of Christ. They too want help, these feeble ones; and what are they to do? This is the word of their Lord, "Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them." God forbid that I should disparage the advantages of ministry; but to be simply subject to the Lord, whether or not He sends, is the best of all. The fact is, as we are not authorized, so we have no need to elect any; for all are ours already, "whether Paul, Apollos, or Cephas." It is for God to choose and give. He has bound up and made all His ministers part and parcel of the church. They are members of Christ's body. They are His gifts to the church. It is ignorant and evil meddling for the church to elect. Besides, the moment you elect one to be peculiarly your minister, by that very act you defraud yourselves of all the rest. You are going out of the path of God in order to enrich yourselves in this respect; but that very act of selfish haste, like every other departure from the path of faith, brings, as the necessary result, the surest impoverishment. Suppose then people get their minister; he may be but young, and they may want to be nourished and fed up in truth. Unless he have all the gifts centered in his single person, they are reduced to his individual measure. Another again may be a pastor, and love the saints; but the congregation for the most part consists of persons needing to be converted, while he is not an evangelist but a pastor and perhaps a teacher. How evident that, if tested thus practically, man's ways always ruin God's work. The parochial system in the established bodies works as much or more evil. It may seem natural and prudent, but human wisdom in divine things is as foolish as it is fatal. What else could be expected by those who know God and man from a departure from the rich provision the Lord has made?

Let us now look on the other side. The Lord is there. The "two or three" do not exactly see their way. They are in presence of a great difficulty. Perhaps they have heard the whisper of some dreadful doctrine, and they do not understand it, not being versed in these matters. What then? They wait upon the Lord—a wholesome thing for any of us—most wholesome to be obliged to feel that the Lord alone can avail. But He does love and care for His saints. He raises up and opportunely sends a servant of His. The latent evil is brought out plainly; and the moment the light of God by whatever means is cast upon it, the conscience of the saints’ answers to the call of the Lord, and they repudiate it heartily for themselves.

Again there is one fallen into what may seem little evil, yet enough to render him indifferent to the Lord, to His word, to His grace. He refuses to listen to the warning of one, then of more, and lastly of the assembly of God. “Let him be unto thee a heathen man." He is not a heathen, but supposed to be a brother; yet he is treated as if he were a heathen, because he despises Christ in the church. This in fact is the case here supposed. (Matt. 18) Such decision is trying to the heart, where will works among the saints. But it shows plainly that not their wisdom nor their experience guides aright, but the Lord in their midst; and He promises His presence if it were but two or three gathered to His name. Here then we have a clear and positive provision for the faithful in the worst of times. It is hardly possible to conceive of circumstances where there might not be "two or three.”

It is well however to add that the essential point is their gathering, to His name. It is not such a gathering unto Christ, where narrowness is allowed, or sectarianism, any more than in the grosser forms of letting in the world or tolerating evil. If any "two or three" were so happy together, as to look with suspicion on godly men outside them, they would forfeit their place of privilege, and be in a false position. Does the Lord so regard His disciples? Does He scrutinize them as if they were doubtful characters, or put them in quarantine as if the plague might be in them? I speak of saints where there is no suspicion of evil doctrine, direct or indirect, or of unholy walk. The Lord welcomes them, and so should we. His name has not its value where we are not large for His sake.

But there may be another case. A person comes of great repute in the world, who has been preaching and is universally respected; but alas! he betrays himself by a lack of heart and conscience where Christ is concerned. Him they refuse. Thus the same name of Christ, which is their warrant for welcoming the weakest that loves Him, is here exactly the same power for refusing the highest who does not love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption. What might is in that name to bring and keep together hearts otherwise alien, and yet withal what a delicate test for detecting and excluding what is not of God! If it be a question of truth, the name of the Lord is the only real touchstone; if it be a question of discipline, that name is strength to the feeblest heart; if it be a question between persons and principle, there only is found all needed wisdom and power both individually and as regards the assembly.

But let us look now at 2 Tim. 2 We have a picture drawn by the Holy Ghost of the professing body, the house of God. The first epistle duly cares for order and good government in the house of God. The second epistle anticipates the influx of evils to such an extent that the house is merely alluded to as a comparison. Still "the sure foundation of God standeth, having this seal"—on one side, "The Lord knoweth them that are His," and on the other, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." There are thus the sovereignty of the Lord on one side, and just responsibility on the other—two great principles which meet us everywhere. Then follows a more detailed application:—“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor and some to dishonor." Some would take the place of knowing the Lord whom He did not own, and who felt not the incongruity of His name with iniquity. Timothy must be prepared for the development of evil among those that confess Christ—not only "some to honor" but "some to dishonor." "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." Separation from evil is the invariable principle of God, modified as to the manner of course by the special character of the dispensation. So Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the prophets generally. Is Christianity less stringent? It is now on the contrary that it becomes more urgent and absolute. "If a man purge himself from these [the vessels to dishonor], he shall be a vessel to honor." Put away the wicked (1 Cor. 5); if this be no longer possible, purge yourself out from them. There is nothing man dreads and feels so deeply. You may protest, you may denounce, and it will be borne by the world as long as you walk with it in the main; but "he that departeth," now as ever, "maketh himself a prey." Act on your convictions, and the most honeyed courtesy turns sour; your desire to please God at all cost will be branded as pharisaical pride and exclusiveness. It matters not how gently and lovingly you purge yourself from the vessels to dishonor; the pain, the grievance, lies

there, and nothing can sweeten it, above all in the eyes of those it condemns. Indeed it is more felt, the more graciously it is done, provided it be done thoroughly; for then evidently your motive is not disappointed feeling but desire to be wholly subject to Christ, with a heart perfectly happy in what they know nothing of and could not enjoy.

All this is an unpardonable affront in the world's eyes. Add to this, that separation is claimed in 2 Tim. from the religious or Christian world. "The Christian world!" what a phrase I what a contradiction as if there could be the smallest possible alliance between Christianity, which is of heaven and Christ, and that outside world which crucified Him. No wonder that in this epistle we read of perilous times in the last days. What greater peril than, after they have known the truth, going back into substantially the same conditions of evil as were found in the heathen world before Christianity entered it. Compare 2 Tim. 3 with Rom. 1 How painful the resemblance! The difference is, that some of the grosser characteristics of heathenism have been re-placed by subtler evil. The comparison is most instructive. In this state of things the Christian profession is indeed a great house; and, as in such a house there is that which is destined to the basest uses, no less than what is for the best purposes, so in that great house which bears the name of Christ— if you please, "the Christian world."

If there, what ought you to do? It is a solemn question for the believer. He has no hesitation about the profane world; but the world bearing the name of Christ is a difficulty to him. Seeing that the Christian profession is there, am I not setting myself up and virtually condemning the excellent of the earth? But will you name any evil thing that has not had a good name attached to it? I do not speak now of such fatal poison as Socinianism or the like; but take Romanism, or the Greek church, or even sects known to be heretical, and yet by the malice of the enemy and the subtlety with which he has concealed his work some children of God have been entangled. It is too plain therefore that, whatever good men may do here or there, the only real inquiry is as to the will of the Lord. It is not a question of making others walk in your light, but you must not walk in their darkness. This is the great point, not occupying ourselves with others, prescribing what they must do, but feeling my own sin, as well as the common sin, yet by grace resolved at all costs to be where I can honor and obey the Lord. Is not this a true plain imperative duty, an undeniable principle of scripture, that commends itself to your conscience? It may be that you do not act accordingly; but you cannot deny that it is a right thing and what you ought to do.

But you are tied and have difficulties. Perhaps you have a family and friends you cannot bear to grieve; perhaps you have hopes for your children if not for yourself. Can a heart purified by faith thus set aside the Lord's word? Do you think He does not know your wants and does not feel for your family? You know the Lord loves yourself: cannot you trust Him for a bit of bread? You, who are trusting Him for eternal life and for heaven, cannot you trust Him to take care of you in the face of these trials and obstacles of every day? Perhaps you are too comfortable, too anxious about what is respectable for yourself and your children. Let the Lord deal with you; I am sure He will not harm you, but only do what is most loving and tender towards you and yours. Impossible for any heart to be beyond the Lord's love and wisdom and generous considerate care. If you really believe in Him, why not cleave to His word without compact or condition, and come forth at His bidding? You do not know what the next steps may be. It is enough that you know you are doing contrary to the word of God now. In vain we talk of loving, if we are not prepared to follow His word. Do you say you do not know what next to do? The Lord does not ask you: it is not His way to show all at once. Act on what you see from the word, and trust the Lord for what will follow; He is worthy of your confidence, and will give you more when you have taken the first step. But leave forever that which is condemned in God's word. "Remember Lot's wife," and look not back, but go forth at His word wherever it points, and you will find that "whosoever hath, to him shall be given." And as regards the way, to the Lord rough or smooth is alike, deep or shallow, great or small; it may make a great difference to you, but the greatest difficulties only become the means of proving what the God is that we have found.

But there is more in 2 Tim. 2 Not only are you to separate, or purge yourself, from these vessels of dishonor, but the word is, "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Thus there is no excuse for isolation. Turn your back upon what you know is opposed to scripture. Have I to demonstrate to any Christian that what is unscriptural is unholy? Have I to urge that "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin?" If then you abandon what has no warrant from scripture, but on the contrary is condemned by it, hear this word of God: "Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace." Follow them, not solitarily, but "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" What consolation, even if there were but two or three! Are you afraid because there are only two or three? God may act on hundreds or thousands: this is a matter for Him. You are to follow the Lord's path through His word, with chastened spirit yet not sadly, but full of joy and thankfulness, if you find ever so few who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. In other words, faith has a divine warrant to expect companions in its path, though it lie now through the ruin of the Christian profession. As it is imperative to turn away from all known evil, and there can be no valid excuse for refusing God's call, so there is enjoined companionship in following after righteousness, faith, charity, and peace, with such as call upon the Lord out of a pare heart. May no hindrances nor dangers alarm, but knowing that it is the Lord who has thus graciously thought of us, may you and I and every one that loves that blessed name have unbroken confidence in Him! He addresses Himself to hearts grieved in the midst of dishonor to His grace and truth, and He has taken tare to mark most distinctly the path not of separation only but of association—the path of departure from evil and of pursuing what is good.

How clearly the great moral principles of God remain in spite of disorder! How the operations of His grace survive all ruin! Thus the principle of the Assembly of God abides in, it may be, only two or three gathered to the name of the Lord. Thousands of Christians, in a national system or in a dissenting sect, could not redeem their fundamental error; members of Christ may be in them, but the principle of God's assembly is abandoned in their very constitution. Let "two or three" come out at the word of the Lord, making His name their center, and owning the Spirit of God as in and with them to guide them according to scripture; these, and these only, are carrying out His mind in the real intelligence of the Holy Ghost. It is no question of numbers, but of being gathered together, few or many, unto the name of the Lord.

All here know what the House of Commons is. A hundred members of that House might belong to the United Service Club or the Athenæum or anything else you please. These hundred members might discuss the measures actually before the House in their club; but this could never make the club to be the House; whereas in their true position with the Speaker in the midst a much less number would constitute a House. It is exactly the same principle here. What constitutes God's assembly "Two or three" gathered unto the Lord's name. He has been pleased to bring it down to the point described, with the fullest possible stamp of His approval and authority.

On the other hand suppose ten thousand Christians meeting simply as Christians—is that enough? I can conceive an assembly of professing, yea, real Christians; and yet there would be no more reason to call them God's assembly than to consider any number of members at their club the House of Commons. It is not the fact of being Christians that constitutes God's assembly, but their being gathered unto the name of the Lord. The practical point for us is whether we are gathered to the name of Christians merely, or to the name of Christ. If the former, you

must accept of any evil thing into which the enemy succeeds in dragging Christians. For if the man be a Christian, I must receive him, spite of evil he is doing or sanctioning. But no! the question is, Does he call upon the Lord out of a pure heart? The exclusion of this word of God has widely overrun Christendom to the incalculable injury of souls, and never more than now, when men practically put Christians in lieu of Christ, the consequence of which is confusion and every evil work.

Whereas if the Lord have His place and be the center to which I come, I have then in His name a ground and rallying point to which I can claim, with the most entice humility, every saint in the world-yea, I could not and ought not to rest in my spirit as long as one that belongs to Him is outside. What 1 even those under discipline, or avoided for grave causes? Yes, every one; not of course to receive them with known evil upon them, but yet to desire themselves, what is contrary to Christ being judged and removed.

The Lord make us steadfast and give us to feel that the lowliest spirit becomes us 1 How can we boast of ceasing to do evil we ourselves have done? May we look to Him increasingly! He who has brought us out has compelled us to prove by our own difficulties the true state of the church; but He has turned to profit our very mistakes, though in a humbling way. He has used the storm, as it were, to purge the hazy air, and displayed more clearly than ever the central place of His own name for our gathering together no less than our salvation.

Thus we may leave all fears and anxieties. If the Lord be our helper, why fear? What will man do? Then, as for charges of sectarianism or presumption or disorder, it were easy indeed to show that those are really guilty who are quick to raise and scatter them. We know that scripture condemns every church association that is not based on and governed by the name of Christ. It is not a mere question of wrongs here or there; but are they Christians gathered to the name of Christ? Neither is it a question of the amount of evil? for what did not slip in at Corinth through ignorance and unwatchfulness? The refusal to judge known evil is no doubt fatal. But supposing the absence of everything gross, the true question is, Are we where the Lord would have us be? Then happy are we, if but "two or three" thus: were we ten millions anywhere else, all must be wrong, because Christ is not the acknowledged and exclusive center ecclesiastically. He who is the only adequate and rightful object for all the saints on earth deigns to be the center of but "two or three," as He says, that are "gathered together unto his name.”

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 2:1-2

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

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

There only is the source of all real strengthening of the soul from God— “the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” The apostle's presence and teaching wrought invaluably for the blessing of saints; but he could tell the dear Philippians, “even as ye always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” At all events, whatever might disappear of the highest authorities or of the lower dependent on their appointment, God was there abidingly to work in the saints both to will and to work according to, or for, His good pleasure. And as the saints in Philippi give us the proof of the power of the grace in Christ to keep and strengthen to all obedience, so the turning away from him that called them in the grace of Christ, unto a different gospel which is not another found its sad but sure warning in the Galatians. They were equally as the Philippians the fruit of the apostle's labor, and in spite of the infirmity in which Paul at the first preached to them; no small trial to him or them, instead of slighting or spurning received him as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. Now so weakened were they by the legal zeal of those who desired to shut them out from the apostle that he needed to ask, if he, for whom they would have plucked out if possible their own eyes and given them to him—if he was become their enemy in speaking the truth to them. It is good, he adds gravely, to be zealously sought in a good thing at all times, and not only when I am present with you.

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

But there is more than encouraging ourselves in the Lord when distress abounds and difficulties press and dangers impend or affright. If the truth in Christ is needed to deal with and quicken dead souls, no less is it requisite and valid for the saints. Here it is a question of farming and furnishing those who are to instruct others. We must distinguish the uses of divine revelation. The word of God is the standard of truth: nothing else is or can be such a test, and in its wondrous fullness, not one word of which is in vain there is the special touchstone of Jesus Christ come in the flesh, Whom the Holy Spirit always leads a true witness to con fess, as the spirit of error ever shirks or denies. But in a general way we may say that the apostolic deposit puts faith or unbelief to the proof. A Jew now would own perhaps, sincerely all the ancient oracles called the O.T. Is he therefore a believer? Assuredly not, because he does not hear, he rejects, the apostles (1 John 4:6). Ye are of God, says the beloved disciple to the little children, the actual family of faith, and have overcome the many false prophets that are gone out into the world or the evil spirit animating each: because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they [as] of the world, and the world heareth them. But this does not finish what he lad to say and they to weigh and hold fast: We are of God; not “ye” only as born of Him, being begotten by the word of truth; but we as His inspired witnesses in communicating that truth which beyond all, tests souls since the rejection of Christ. He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Here however it is the means of communicating the truth rather than the word acting or employed as a standard. As it is a question of edifying, there is no call for such trenchant and solemn appeal. Scripture is no doubt the fullest, most exact, and absolutely reliable means of conveying the mind of God; but His grace uses many other things from the nursery to the dying bed. Among these sound, competent, gracious and intelligent ministry has a capital place. And the apostle's present charge to his beloved associate is really with the view of providing for efficient service in this kind. No man on earth, we may presume, had enjoyed so largely as Timothy, the privilege of hearing the greatest of the apostles. Here he is admonished to bear in mind that what he had received was not for himself only but for others, and in order that the best results should be attained by grace, through such as had capacity to teach faithfully. In ministry or service of the word it is only fanaticism, not, faith, to deny the importance of competency; as we hear the Lord (Matt. 25) in the parable of His own dealing with His servants, giving talents, sovereignly indeed (to one five, to another two, to another one), yet to each according to his several ability. It is not that ability is gift, or that the talents (His goods) are to be confounded, as in popular parlance and even in vain-glorious theology, with the several ability of each servant. Not only does every scripture that treats of the theme speak of “gifts” as wholly differing in source and character from any one's ability, but even in the parable, which learned ignorance regards as abounding in loose drapery, they are distinguished in the clearest way.

We have also to take note of another prevalent misconception of this verse. By many excellent and erudite persons the apostle is supposed here to lay on Timothy the responsibility of ordaining to ecclesiastical office. Now of this there is absolutely nothing said. 1 Tim. 3 does present the qualities requisite for an overseer, or bishop; and undoubtedly the bishop must be apt to teach (, though not necessarily a , or teacher). But ruling was characteristically their duty; and so it is said in 1 Tim. 5:17, Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those that labor in the word and teaching. The fallacy is that others might and did not teach who were not elders; which is at direct issue with the facts, words, and principles of the New Testament on this head. Not an expression in our ver. 2 enunciates eldership or implies it. The full meaning of the whole and of every part is satisfied by not going beyond faithful men instructed by Timothy as the apostle directs, so that they might be competent to teach others also.

Let us weigh a little the nice phraseology of the apostle that we may the better appreciate its wisdom as well as consistency with the truth revealed elsewhere. The apostle had kept back nothing that was profitable from so confidential a companion. He had nearly accomplished his course and the ministry which he received from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. He shrank not from declaring to others not so near nor honored as Timothy the whole counsel of God. So here the things which Timothy had heard from him among many witnesses, these he was to commit to faithful men. As the matter testified was not done in a corner, so the apostle had openly brought out the precious truth in the presence of many witnesses. The Lord had already pointed out that men do not put a light in secret, nor under the corn-measure, nor under the bed; the apostle was an unwearied and whole-hearted witness for Christ unto all men of what he had seen and heard, yea and of the things wherein the Lord was to appear to him. And the “many witnesses” among whom Timothy had heard these things from Paul would not only encourage to the greater spread of the truth but confirm the communications made. For here not inspiration is predicated of the many witnesses, but exact information in order to the confirmation and propagation of the truth. If Christ is the true Light, His own also are the light of the world. To be the salt of the earth is not enough, however good: activity in grace is called for, light diffusing itself and dispelling darkness. For this suited vessels are requisite; not learned, nor even educated, but “faithful men.” To them was Timothy to entrust what was revealed of God, in order to build souls up and give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. Nor is it assumed as a simple fact that faithful men are necessarily men who are able to teach. It is rather “such as” shall be competent to teach others also. All is as simple as beautifully precise.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 2:3-6

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

“Take thy share1 of suffering hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one on service entangleth himself with the businesses of life, that he may please him that enlisted [him]. But if one also contend [in the games], he is not crowned unless he have contended lawfully. The laboring husbandman must first partake of the fruits” (ver. 3-6).

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

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

But Timothy's share of suffering is defined. It was to be as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. The “fellow-soldier” of the Clermont M.S. goes too far, if it be not also irreverent. In an enemy's land who could wonder that Timothy was called to take his share in suffering?

This naturally leads to the more generally applied figure of verse 4. “No one when on campaign entangleth himself in the businesses of life that he may please him that enrolled him.” The force of the allusion is as evident as its universal truth. Who in the Roman empire was ignorant of the fact? No doubt furlough might allow of relaxation, and completed service, of perfect liberty; but to Christ's servant here below is no furlough and no discharge from his duty. Hence the apostle does not speak simply of a “man that warreth” as in the Authorized Version,

but of one on actual service, and therefore can stamp the truth with an absolute negative. “No one when serving entangleth himself with the affairs (or businesses) of life.” It is surprising that the Revised Version follows the Authorized alone of all the English versions in the needless qualification of “this life.” It is the more improper, because Scripture had already appropriated the demonstrative pronoun not to but to , in Acts 5:20. It would however be a gross error to think that this for the servant of Christ excludes occupation, if he judge under any circumstances that he is called to provide things honest with his hands or his head. The apostle himself is its best refutation. The workman whether in the gospel or in the church is worthy of his hire. But many a valued man may serve Christ either way or in both, who does not give up his so-called secular employment. He might be assured even that the measure of his gift did not create such a claim on the assembly as to warrant it. And even the greatest of laborers felt it his joy and would not have his boast made vain in declining to use his power in the gospel for himself: so penetrated and filled was he with the spirit of that grace in God which is the source of the gospel itself. To entangle oneself in the businesses of life means really to give up separation from the world by taking one's part in outward affairs as a bona-fide partner in it. The servant of Christ is bound whatever he does to do it unto the Lord and therefore in conformity with His word. In everything he serves the Lord Christ; nor is this bondage of the law but liberty in the Spirit, though he be the Lord's bondman. As the soldier on campaign has to please him that enrolled his name, so evermore has the Christian servant to please the Lord. He Himself has said, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

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

There is a third maxim which has been singularly misunderstood by truly spiritual minds. Yet the structure of the sentence is not really obscure.2 The difficulty is due rather to a certain prejudice as to the sense or its application. The figure is taken from agriculture, not from military service nor from the well-known games. The stress is on the “laboring husbandman.” The love of Christ must constrain and brotherly love must continue, in order that the servant of Christ persevere unintermittingly in his labors. Hence we find in the former epistle (chap. 5:17) that, while the elders that rule well were to be counted worthy of double honor, those are distinguished “especially” that labor in the word and in teaching. So here, where the general service of Christ is in question, the laboring husbandman ought first to partake of the fruits. Impossible that God could deign to be a debtor to any. “Each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor,” whether the planter or the waterer or any other (1 Corinthians For God is not unrighteous in any case to forget our work and the love shown to His name. But the labor of love has especial value in His sight. This may be in very young saints (1 Thess. 1), no less than the work of faith and the patience of hope. It is most blessed where the servant of Christ is sustained in such labor. “The laboring husbandman ought first (whatever others may, and before all) to partake of the fruits.” It is rather a truism that he must labor before partaking of the fruits, or “laboring first must be partaker of the fruits” as the margin of the Authorized Version says. But this is not the sense of the phrase in any grammatical construction of it possible, nor, if it were, could it afford so grave or so cheering a call to the laborer.

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

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 2:7-13

The bearing of that which the apostle had just inculcated was of deep meaning and great value, but by no means obvious. Hence it would appear he adds, “Apprehend what I say; for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things” (ver. 7). Such is the true text, not “the things which” (5) in detail, as the Text Rec., but “what” (5) as a whole. This makes all the more pertinent the assurance, not prayer merely, which follows, “And the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things,” as large in its range as minute in its ramifications. On this he can count who has an unction from the Holy One; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

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

The apostle in these verses recalls to the person of Christ, the touch-stone, and substance of the truth, but His person according to Paul's gospel bound up indissolubly with His work. “Remember Jesus Christ, of David's seed, raised out of the dead according to my gospel.” Christ is at once the object and the fulfillment of the promises; but He is incalculably more. He is raised from among the dead, the Beginning, the First-born of the new creation. He is as thus risen the head of an entirely new system. From first to last this is the teaching of Paul. He affirms of Jesus, the Son of God, that He was born of David's seed according to the flesh, but that He was marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of dead men, as in the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans.

But here is there not a practical rather than a dogmatic aim before the Spirit of God? Even as Messiah, the Lord Jesus must be risen from the dead. If any one was entitled to earthly honor and glory, it was the Son of David; but, according to Paul's gospel, He passes through death into resurrection. Such is the only mold of blessing, the world and man being as they are. No statement can be stronger. As Head of the church there would be no wonder; but for the Seed of David, it is surprising, yet most true. For the church itself has no existence, save on the ground of His being the Risen Head, and in heavenly places. In heaven only could the Head be, in order to give a heavenly character to those who are united to Him by the Holy Ghost on earth. But Paul's gospel insists on the great fact of resurrection from among the dead—even for the Messiah. And this alone is true of Him, in that character now He is risen, but not reigning. Much less is the Christian reigning as yet. On the contrary, after that gospel the apostle says, “I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor.” Things in the world are wholly out of course. Nothing is settled in order according to God, though His providence governs, and every soul is called to be subject to the powers that be. They may reign, and we are commanded to honor the king, habitually, as indeed to honor all men passingly; but we are called to forego all thought

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

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

So here the apostle solemnly anticipates the danger, for Christians generally, of settling down here below. This is incomparably more serious. Levity of thought and feeling, the power of nature, the activity of the flesh, may be sad in young saints; but immeasurably worse is it, when old saints depart from the high and heavenly standard they have learned. Such was the danger now, and the apostle is here awakening Timothy to his own anxiety about it. We see the evil in a gross form when the Christian body acquired power and honor, and earthly glory, in the days of Constantine and his successors; but the mischief was at work extensively, it would appear from this epistle, at the time the apostle was writing. The power of the resurrection from among the dead meets the evil for all that have ears to hear. It is wholly past as a living thing for those who accept earthly grandeur as a right estate for the Christian now. He who is most right before God, must be content to suffer most before men, as the apostle was seen doing unto bonds.

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

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain salvation, that [is] in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.” Here was a most dauntless heart, and the eye undimmed, by present sorrow, for it was single, and his whole body full of light. If Christ loved the elect—Christ who suffered for their sins, Paul could use language boldly, yet truly, for He shared His love, though it was Christ's alone to “bear our sins in His own body on the tree.” No man, no saint, no apostle, shares that atoning work; yet it is not presumption for the feeblest saint to suffer with Him, any more than to hope for glorification with Him. If we are children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together, But the apostle goes farther here; “I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain salvation that [is] in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.” How few would venture to say these words as their own souls' experience from that day to this! Nevertheless we may earnestly desire it in our measure; but it supposes in the believer not merely a good conscience, and a heart burning in love, but himself thoroughly self-judged, and Christ dwelling in his heart by faith. The apostle openly declares it to Timothy; and surely it was meant to act powerfully on his fellow-laborer's soul, as also on ours. It is not that the salvation of the elect is uncertain: the Lord Jesus will surely guard that according to all His gracious power, and the unfailing counsels of God. But as another apostle says, If the righteous is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and sinner appear? It is indeed with difficulty that the elect are saved, though saved they assuredly will be; but as it needs all the resources of divine grace, so it calls for all the love of Christ in laborious service, and, what is also most effective, it hails the endurance of all things for their sake.

Nor is this all that the apostle has to urge on this theme. “Faithful is the word; for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign together.” He does not add as to this word worthy of all acceptation “; for it is a saying for saints rather than for sinners as such; but the saying, beyond a doubt, is faithful; for “if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.” There is no Christian who died not with Christ: It is the very truth which every baptized soul confesses in his baptism, even were he dumb. And it is lack of faith, not lack of speech, which makes it untrue of any.

Accordingly the apostle is urging, not what is beyond almost any to say, lest it might be presumptuous and vain, but what all that are true must join as the confession of grace and truth from the starting point. It is the hypothetical clause, which is decisive, yet no Christians ought to shrink, or can truly shrink, from it; for Christ it was Who, having suffered all, gave all freely. And “if we died with Him,” which is indisputable for the believer now, “we shall also live with Him.” It is of the bright and blessed future he here assures us, though it is equally true that we live now because He lives, or, as it is vat elsewhere, Christ lives in us. But here the living with Him remains before us as a hope. Here, and now, we are to bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus; by and by it will be nothing but living with Him. So, “if we endure, we shall also reign together.” Here need be no question, it is suffering now, not yet reigning with Him. The reading in some ancient authorities of Rev. 5 or 20 (that the saints reign now) is unequivocal error. It is wrong morally as well as dogmatically. We shall reign with Christ; but even He sits on the Father's throne as yet. He waits to receive His own throne; and so do we much more. Were our hearts right, we should not wish to reign without Him; as we should have a sounder faith, if we held, that He is not reigning yet, but gone to receive a kingdom, and to return. He will come in His kingdom, which He has not yet received. Till then we are called to endure, not to reign; when He shall appear, we shall appear with Him; when He reigns, so shall we with Him. But there is solemn caution, as well as sure expectation of glory. “If we shall deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He Abideth faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.” There was danger in a day of declension particularly, of departure not only from this or that divine principle but from Himself, and this permanently. Nor does the apostle bolster up the saints in that most dangerous of delusions, that there is no danger. For dangers abound on all sides; and we ought to know that grievous times were to come in the last times. Denying the Lord, so far from being impossible for a servant of His, is exactly what scripture shows us to have been the fact in one most honored, who had thought that for him, of all men, it was impossible; yet was he on the eve of it. No doubt this was but a passing act, however shameful and deplorable, however repeated then, and with aggravation; yet the all-overcoming, all-forgiving, grace of Christ rose above and effaced it, turning it even to never-to-be-forgotten profit, and fruitful blessing. But where it is a course of life, as here, (“if we shall,” not merely if we should as an act), the consequence is, as it ought to be, the necessary vindication on God's part of His injured majesty: “He also will deny us.” God would cease to be God, if He acquiesced in the dishonor of His Son. The believer bows and believes, adores and serves. The unbeliever, and the denier if possible yet more, may insult now, but they must ere long honor Him in judgment, “that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father.” There is a closing sentence of great weight, “if we are unfaithful, He abideth faithful;” and this for the most convincing and glorious of reasons, “for He cannot deny Himself.” It may at first hearing seem to take from the ease and

flow of the sentence to read “for,” as we ought on good and ancient authority. But on reflection it really adds not a little, to its force because it is not a mere independent addition to confirm the foregoing: the ground or proof of His abiding fidelity lies in the blessed fact of His unchanging truth.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 2:14-18

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

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

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

But there is also a more positive call in ver. 15: “Be diligent to present thyself approved to God a workman not to be ashamed, cutting straightly the word of truth.” Example sways more than precept, and those who teach others have especial reason to dread failure or carelessness in themselves. Further every pious man knows that the first of all obligations is to stand right with God. Timothy therefore was to use diligence to present himself approved to God in the first instance. Where this is not true, his words might be right enough in themselves, but his work would lack blessing, and himself be ever liable to shame. In fact his course would be more or less hypocritical. There could be no courage before the enemy, where the conscience was not good before God. One must seek to be approved alike in conduct and service, approved to God if shame is to be avoided even now. Again, what confidence can there be in drawing out and applying the word of truth with an unwavering heart and hand? The scripture needed might otherwise condemn oneself. A man without conscience might sneak out boldly: he that feared God must tremble in blaming another for a wrong which he knew in himself. It is of all importance therefore, that the workman should present himself approved to God: otherwise his testimony cannot but be timid, feeble, and uncertain. But there may be a further duty as regards the profane babblings of pretentious men, never so self-satisfied as when they err most. This evil had already set in, as the article appears to show. They were not unknown but existing follies among those who bore the name, of the Lord. Timothy was not called to occupy himself, still less to controversy, with them. The apostle's word is “avoid” or shun. This again is an exhortation of divine wisdom. Some conscious of ability to dissect and oppose evil, are prone to meddle with these vain profanities. It is not wholesome for themselves; it may injure the saints, who valuing the laborers may saturate their minds with these dreary efforts, which as a general rule inflate instead of convincing the guilty parties. To Titus (3: 9) a very similar exhortation is given by our apostle for an analogous evil. Time is too precious save for that which edifies; and he who undertakes to contend with every evil dreamer may succeed in vanquishing them, but is in imminent danger of getting serious harm to himself. It is a good thing to be zealously affected in good always; it is not well to turn aside and deal with evil, unless it be the sternest duty.

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

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

It is of deep interest to weigh the character of this error. It was not ignorance of the truth so much as exaggeration. It was the exalting of present privilege to the denial of our hope at Christ's coming. No doubt they piqued themselves on higher truth than others taught, and on superior intelligence. This is an extreme danger for those who have a real thirst and value for the truth of God; if not watchful, they are the most liable to be ensnared.

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

But those by grace endowed with a more discerning eye are permitted to see more. That the resurrection is past already, though put forth as the expression of the highest present privilege, does in fact undermine the truth set forth pre-eminently for help and guidance throughout this Epistle. God saved us with a holy calling according to His own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before time began. Christ annulled death, and brought to light life and incorruption by the gospel. This we believe and know, not to speak of the mystery of Christ and of the assembly. But those true and blessed privileges are given us, so much the more to suffer with joy and endure in faith and patience now, and wait for Christ and His appearing to bring in His kingdom, where we shall also reign together. But the error of the resurrection already past is fatal to this endurance meanwhile. It would, if true, entitle us now to reign as kings, to take our ease, to enjoy present honor and glory; and thus it is directly framed and calculated by the enemy to thwart the will of our Lord, Who calls us to share His sufferings till we are glorified together. Hence it is false as a doctrine, it is ruinous for practice, and it destroys all communion with Christ, as sharing His affections in separation from the world. It would be hardly possible to discover any delusion more opposed to the truth in its character and consequences for the soul and the walk, as well as in counteraction of the moral glory of the Lord. Well can we understand therefore that its teachers "overthrow the faith of some." And if then it were so, how much more widely extended and settled do we find the mischief now, when Christ's coming is no longer before the saints as a constant living hope, and the resurrection of the body is practically nothing to them, satisfied that after death their souls go to heaven! The world becomes then a scene of present enjoyment. Association with a once dead and rejected Christ is unthought of. They flatter themselves that they have attained to a wisdom higher than was known by the apostles in these earlier days, now that they have learned to enjoy the best of both worlds.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 2:19-22

The truth cannot be undermined without the most withering consequences, both morally and ecclesiastically. It: is not only communion interrupted between Christ and His own, but divergence from and opposition to His mind, more or less distinctly. Those who undermine may be of course themselves deceived; they may flatter themselves as contributing a higher testimony. But truth is never at issue with truth: in Christ all is in harmony. To say that the resurrection is past already, is both the index of the grave heterodoxy at work destructive of our proper hope, while professing to give advance of privilege, and the ready instrument of deep and rapid progress in evil. For when the resurrection comes; no more need of watching unto prayer, no more endurance of affliction, no more the good fight of faith: all will be settled in power, glory, rest, and enjoyment. That we are dead and risen with Christ is true and holy, and cannot be too urgently pressed on the believer, from first to last of his career; but we, groaning within ourselves, as having the first-fruits of the Spirit, await the adoption, the redemption of our body. It will only be at Christ's coming, which the enemy would also conceal and rob us of, the most influential of all hopes for such as love Him and would know the fellowship of His sufferings. How crafty and pernicious then the device which, turning our hope into an expression of high privilege now, would thus annul our heavenly hope, destroy communion and walk, hide Christ from our heart's longing, and make rest in present things a wise and right thing!

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

"Nevertheless the firm1 foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth those that are His; and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord2 depart from unrighteousness. Now in a great house there are vessels not only of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earthenware, and some unto honor, and some unto dishonor. If one therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified,3 serviceable for the master, prepared unto every good work. But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with4 those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (ver. 19-22).

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

Nothing more simple or important if the firm foundation of God be taken, in the abstract; those who stand upon it are on the one side comforted, on the other solemnly admonished. The state of things was such that one could no longer suppose all who composed the church to be members of Christ's body. Carelessness had allowed a harvest of weakness and shame; the godly were compelled to fall back on the assurance that the Lord knoweth them that are His, but along with that they could not but press Christian responsibility— "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

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

There is, however, a great deal more, and of paramount importance, in that which the apostle adds, "'But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earthenware, and some unto honor, and some unto dishonor." There we have a living picture of what the church was becoming. How different from the view given in the First Epistle 3:15! There the house of God is said to be the church of the living God, the pillar and stay of the truth. It is the church on earth, God's habitation in the Spirit, as that which alone here below presents and maintains the truth before all men. The Jews had not the truth, but the law; the Gentiles had only vanities, and corruptions, and dreams of men. The assembly of the living God held forth the truth before all eyes. But now, in the Second Epistle, the influx, not only of ease, instead of suffering, and of timidity, instead of courage, and of false doctrines, even in fundamentals, gave occasion for the Spirit of God to represent a far different condition. It is not that the Spirit of God has abandoned His seat, but He no longer characterizes the house as that of

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

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

When the assembly is in its normal condition, and an evil-doer, however gross, is among the saints, the word is, “'Put away from among yourselves the wicked person.” But here it is the converse. Evil may prevail in an assembly, and the moral sensibility be so low that the mass refuse to purge out the old leaven: the vessels unto dishonor have influence enough to remain in spite of all efforts for their removal. What then? The apostle commands that the God-fearing man should purge himself from them. This meets the conscience if it were of only one; but the self-same principle, it is plain, applies to all who discern the evil, after patient waiting on the assembly and every scriptural means also employed in vain to rouse the conscience. At bottom it is evidently the same principle of separation from evil, which in 1 Cor. 5 is applied to put the evil-doer out. In 2 Tim. 2 it is a far more developed case where the well-doer, having striven without effect to correct the evils sustained within, is bound to purge himself out. Impossible that the Spirit of God would seal evil under the name of the Lord Jesus. We are unleavened as surely as Christ our passover was sanctified for us. “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” The assembly which professes to be of God cannot bind Christ and known evil together. If any therefore hear the Lord's name, who, under the plea of unity, in the love of ease, or through partiality for their friends, tolerate the evil which scripture shows to be hateful to God, a godly man has no option, but is bound to hear the divine word and to purge himself from these vessels to dishonor.

Doubtless this application of God's immutable holiness to guide the saint in these sad and difficult circumstances is a novel one. The apostle only gave it in the last Epistle he ever wrote. The reason is manifest: no occasion as yet had risen to call for so serious a word. Disorders had often been, and some of extreme character; but hitherto the saints, however faulty, had broken down, and obedience at last had prevailed. No need had ever existed for a just abandonment of those who had walked together in the assembly. But here the Spirit of God brings before the apostle's eyes a new and still more appalling result of the increasing power of evil. Whenever vessels to dishonor are forced on our acceptance, we have no choice: the honor of the Lord is above all other considerations; and, whether it be the most valiant, or the most timid, we are alike called to obey the apostle's command which applies to this state. Let us only be sure that the evil does really call for absolute separation; and, further, that patient and godly remonstrance are duly applied to get the evil judged, rather than to separate. But if it be sheltered and sustained to the dishonor of the Lord and His word, there is no alternative but to purge one's self out.

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

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

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

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

But the tendency is great to press this searching truth on others, and to claim, without saying so, an immunity for ourselves: so readily does the assembly slip away, from the faithfulness of the Lord when really leaned on, to set up a gradually growing plea of indefectibility. For faith degenerates into superstition the more rapidly as spirituality declines, love decays, knowledge becomes more self-complacent, and forms displace reality. A new and pettier Rome soon develops and is cried up as the only right thing. Yet the truth abides for the Spirit to use for Christ's glory, whenever the eye is, or is made, single. We are bound, if we would please Him, to sift ourselves by His word even more rigidly than others.

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

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

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

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 2:23-26

From instruction on a large scale so impressive and opportune from that time and ever after, the apostle returns to exhortations of a more personal kind which none the less abide in all their value.

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

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

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

snare divorced from truth, truth fails to win apart from grace; it may even repel and harden: how much more the foolish and ignorant questionings which beget contention! They promote Satan's aims, not the interests of Christ.

“But,” further, “a bondman of the Lord must not contend [or fight], but be gentle towards all.” So the Lord had taught and practiced; and the disciple is not above his teacher, but every one that is perfected shall be as his teacher, and must expect, not return, similar ways in word and deed. But are not some so trying as to deserve snubbing, at the least? He ought to be “gentle towards all;” for it is not a question of human disagreeables, but of presenting Christ duly. It is easy enough to wound or overthrow a man; but what if it grieves the Holy Spirit of God and dishonors Christ? Are we resolved to bear and to win in the irresistible might of, meekness?

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

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

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

This last phrase occurs in the First Epistle (2:4) as in the Second more than once (3:7), and always in this anarthrous form. The reason is not that the preposition (or any other) gives license to omit the article where otherwise it would be required, which is a most unreasonable and even a barbarous notion, though we all know laid down by Bp. Middleton in his able “Doctrine of the Greek article,” and endorsed by commentators so respectable as the late Dean Alford and Bp. Ellicott, to say nothing of one so loose on this as Winer. It is an error, notwithstanding, which every portion of the New Testament and Septuagint, and all Greek literature refute, as any scholar may discover by bringing a single chapter closely to the test. The omission of the article depends on a principle wholly independent of the preposition: only the absence of the Greek article in such a construction is more frequent than elsewhere, because prepositions are used very often where character is intended, rather than a definite object is set before the mind. Where the latter is meant with or without a preposition, the article must appear; where the aim is characteristic, it disappears; and such is the case in the phrase before us.

But it may be profitable to speak briefly of “repentance;” for it goes far more deeply than many think It is rather a moral question than a mental one, though no doubt there is a change of mind of the utmost gravity. But in repentance the soul is subject to God. His word judges, instead of being judged. There is therefore a moral revolution in the heart which takes God's side against itself, and condemns not only the acts of evil which rise before the conscience, but the entire ground, and state of being, which gave rise to them. Repentance, therefore, is as distinctly towards God, as faith is towards our Lord Jesus Christ, who is in fact exalted by God's right hand to give repentance as well as remission of sins. Acknowledgment of truth follows as the fruit of repentance, without which neither truth is divinely received, nor has its acknowledgment any value in God's sight. Life, eternal life, is from God, and in His Son.

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

This is a remarkably complicated sentence, and saints eminent in godliness and scholarship have understood it very differently. Thus the Authorized Version stands by no means alone in treating the words as referring only to the enemy; so the Syrr. and Vulgate, followed by Wiclif, Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Rhemish. The Revised Version on the other hand, with Wetstein, Bengel, Wakefield, and Mack, though slightly differing otherwise, supposes not one agent to be in question, but three, the devil, the Lord's servant, and God. Their version accordingly of ver. 26 is, “And they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him (the Lord's servant) unto the will of God.” In their margin they give that which appears to be the truer sense, “by the devil” (not the Lord's servant) unto the will of God; and so the Geneva V., Ellicott, Alford, Hammond, Wells, &c.1 The two pronouns in the Greek, being different, naturally, though not necessarily, point to two parties: but to bring in “the Lord's servant” here seems as forced as the reference to the enemy is simple and consistent, though Dr. Bloomfield, I see, thinks “so violent a construction is utterly inadmissible” So Beza prefers (in his note to the fourth edition, 1588), though he translated as others, lest he might seem somewhat bold in a matter so sacred, “ne videri possem in re tam sacra audaculus.” In his fifth edition, 1598, he corrects his translation thus, “et sanitate mentis recepta ex diaboli lupus:), ab eo captivi facti, convertantar ad Mins voluntatem.” All doubt henceforward disappears from his note.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 3:1

The word disputes the profane babblings, with greater impiety in the vista, the heterodoxy of some who said that the resurrection had taken place already, the great house becoming more and more characterized by vessels to dishonor, which made separation from them imperative, the foolish and uninstructed questionings which begat contentions, and whatever betrayed the snare of the devil, gave occasion to the solemn announcement with which our chapter iii, opens— “But this know, that in [the] last days grievous times shall be there” (ver. 1). Let us weigh a little at length its import and bearing, as well as the general testimony of the N. T.; for as, on the one hand, no statement, can well be more at issue with the prevalent judgment of mankind, and even with the cherished expectations of God's children in our days, so, on the other hand, next to fundamental truth individual and corporate, the just and true estimate of what is going on, and how it is to end—whether in progress toward triumphant blessing, or in course of the most humiliating and guilty declension from God to meet His unsparing judgment—is most momentous. Nor does scripture leave the least solid ground for doubt on the question. The difference morally is complete; for it affects the habitual aim of our labor and testimony, as well as the character of our intercourse with God, whether in or out of communion

with His mind. Faith in our Lord and His work is no doubt the essential thing; but a mistaken expectation damages the soul indefinitely in proportion to its influence. It is the hope of a man which mainly determines his practical life. He is what His heart is set on.

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

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

The phrase plainly covers the closing days of the Christian economy, however long God might be pleased to protract them; the time generally which precedes the coming of the Lord, when an end will be put to the present ways of God, and the kingdom will come in displayed power and glory. Waterland's suggestion of “at the end of the Jewish state” is as he puts it a mistake1; for it is at the approaching end of the Christian profession, as well as of the Jewish. If the Jews believe not yet, Christians ought to be expecting the return of the kingdom to Israel in God's due time, when our Lord appears to receive the homage and blessing of the godly remnant, about to become thenceforth a strong as well as holy notion, His first-born son elect here below. But as there were incipient workings of the evil already apparent to Him who inspired Paul to write thus to Timothy, we can the better feel how much more correct is the anarthrous construction employed, than if the insertion had fixed it exclusively to the days immediately preceding our Lord's future advent.

In the preceding epistle (4:1-3) a prophetic warning had been given, but of evil quite distinct in time, character, and extent, from what we have here. Instead of “last days,” the Spirit spoke expressly of later, or after, times, i.e., times subsequent to the apostle's writing. Instead of a widespread condition of “men” in Christendom, he spoke of “some” only. The language suits and supposes but few comparatively; which only controversial zeal could have overlooked or converted into a prediction of the vast if not worse inroad of Romanism. It is a description of certain ones to depart from the faith into fleshly asceticism, paying heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons, in the hypocrisy of liars branded in their own conscience, forbidding to marry, [bidding] to abstain from meats which God created, &c. This was a high-flown abuse of grace to deny the creature, and to dislocate the God of grace from the God of creation and law; but the followers are carefully discriminated from the more daring and corrupt misleaders. Gnosticism is the real evil aimed at, even then beginning to work as we may gather from ch. 6:20, in the same communication to Timothy. But limited as it stands in the word, and as it became in fact, it discloses how the Spirit of God guards us, if we heed scripture, from anticipating victory for the gospel, how he rather prepares us for defection to God's dishonor.

But in 2 Tim. 3:1 it is a larger field, not of course to the exclusion of faithful and godly souls, where the eye traverses a general state of decadence from the power of grace and truth, where, as we shall see when we come to the scrutiny of details, those that bear the name of the Lord, and are therefore responsible to walk as dead unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord, return as a general description to what the Gentiles were before they heard and professed to believe the gospel. It is the counterpart of the great house in ch. 2, wherein are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also wooden and earthenware, and some to honor, and some to dishonor. Here we have, not a symbolic figure, but a plain matter-of-fact account of a return to heathenism practically. Even the Corinthians, low as they had sunk, are reproached by the apostle with carnality and walking “as men, instead of as children of God in the power of the Spirit who dwelt in them. Here those spoken of are “men,” with the guilt of indifference to, and repudiation of, all the savor of Christianity, while still retaining its form. From such, however little developed then, Timothy was called to turn away: how much more, when all is out in the full display of evil, should a faithful man turn away now?

Yet 2 Thess. 2 gives us to descry very far worse at hand. We ought not to be deceived in any manner, whatever the success of false teachers with some of the Thessalonian saints so young in the faith as they were. We know that the Lord is coming Who will gather us together, sleeping or alive, unto Himself, and therefore need not be quickly shaken in mind, not, yet troubled by any power or means, to the effect that the day of the Lord is present. We know that it cannot be unless there have come “the apostasy” first—not a falling away, as substantially all the well-known English Versions as well as the Authorized. It is not “discencioun” (Wiclif), nor “a departynge” (Tyndale), as Cranmer's Bible repeats in 1539, and the Geneva in 1557, nor “a revolt,” as in the Rhemish of 1582. It is “the apostasy,” and nothing else: worse there cannot be, unless the person who is its final head in direct antagonism to God and His anointed, the man of sin, the son of perdition, whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the Spirit of His mouth and destroy with the manifestation of His presence. “The apostasy” is a general state, though one is far from denying that there will be even then godly ones, some to suffer unto death, and acquire a heavenly degree, and others to escape for ulterior purposes of divine blessing and glory here below. But the apostasy means Christianity abandoned, and witness for God put down all but universally, in the sphere of Christian profession. Now this is the state, issuing in the boldest claim, ever to be made on earth, of Messianic place and divine glory, which immediately precedes the shining forth of the Lord Jesus from heaven, allotting vengeance to those who know not God (Gentiles), and to those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus (Jews).

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

beyond example and imperatively calling for divine judgment; after which only is the knowledge of Jehovah to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

The Lord indeed had already decided the question both parabolically and prophetically. For what is the instruction as to this of the Wheat Field in Matt. 13? While men slept, the enemy of him who sowed good seed in his field sowed darnel there; and the mischief done from early days was irremediable by man: only divine judgment can deal with it aright. Now the field is the world, under the kingdom of the heavens, the Son of Man being exalted, and the devil his enemy, who insinuates fatal mischief, legality, ritualism, gnosticism, asceticism, heresy, antichrists, Romanism or Babylon, &c., through his sons; all which causes of stumbling or offense cannot be got rid of till the Son of Man shall send His angels in the completion of the age (not “the end of the world,” which altogether misleads, for “the age” closes more than 1000 years before “the world"). Hence it irresistibly follows, that the Lord predicts the continuance of hopelessly, prevalent evil within the sphere of Christian profession till He employ His angels, in the consummation of the age, to execute judgment on the quick, and diabolical and all other evils are thus cleared out of His kingdom, while the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father. For all things are to be headed or summed up in Christ the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth—in Him in Whom also we obtained an inheritance, being heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (not His mere inheritance like Israel here below). The notion of good reigning in the world at any time under the gospel or the church is as false as that righteousness shall not reign when He takes the kingdom in manifest glory over the earth, and the new age begins long before eternity in the full sense of a new heaven and a new earth. No wonder therefore that we read of grievous times in the last days which precede wrath from heaven.

And what again did the Lord intimate of the moral state before the Son of man comes in His day, to speak only of His prophecy in Luke 17:22-37? “And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed.” It is clear that the Lord compares the state of men (careless, selfish, godless, guilty, dead also to what He, the rejected Messiah, had suffered for their sake) to that which brought on the two most solemn judgments which Genesis records, at the deluge, and at the destruction of Sodom by fire. Will the revelation of the Son of man in His day be less righteously called for? No; the last days of the Christian era are to be times of excessive, abounding, and audacious lawlessness as well as impiety, when longer patience on God's part is impossible, and the time is arrived in His counsels for displacing the first man of sin, weakness, and shame, by the Second exalted over all creation in visible power and glory on His own throne, as He is now in heaven on the Father's throne.

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

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

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

Jude, brother of James, depicts the evil in colors darker, if possible than Peter; for he in the Spirit fastens his eyes, not merely on the unrighteousness to prevail as the time of the world's judgment draws near, but on thankless apostasy from the highest privileges of divine goodness, “turning the grace of our God into dissoluteness, and denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.” Nothing can be more tremendous than this short Epistle as a whole; nothing plainer thane his identifying those before the eyes of the saints as just the class of whom Enoch prophesied as objects of the Lord's judgment. “But ye, beloved, remember the words spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they said to you, that at the end of the time there should be mockers walking according to their own lusts of, ungodliness.” Can anything be more certain than that this holy witness warns of grievous times in the last days? To be set with exultation blameless before the divine glory at Christ's coming is the hope, not the church or the gospel triumphing on the earth previously.

There remains but one more to cite; and “the disciple whom Jesus loved” writes with at least equal plainness of speech. “Little children, it is the last hour, and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have come many antichrists, whence we know that it is the last hour.” This is assuredly incontrovertible. The antichrist will be the chief object of the Lord's consuming and annulling judgment when He shines forth in His

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

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 3:2

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

“For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, uncontrolled, fierce, haters of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, pleasure-lovers rather than God-lovers, having a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof; and from these turn away” (ver. 2-5).

If the Holy Spirit has thus minutely qualified the evils which render the times grievous, to me it does not seem reverent to pass them over sicco pede, as if His designations were either intelligible on the surface, or unworthy of deep meditation for our better profit. Far more to be admired than this levity of the Genevese Reformer is the spirit of one in our own day who devoted an entire treatise to the laudable endeavor that we should learn what the apostle would have Timothy to know; and the rather, as the days in which we live display in a far more developed degree the dark features, which in the germ were even of old coming to view. The apostle had laid down other things of prime importance; but Timothy was “to know this also;” and assuredly we know imperfectly what we only apprehend in a dim and hazy light. He who writes to us with the utmost precision would have us read and study with attention. The practical duty can be but imperfectly discharged (“and from these turn away,") if we are not clear who and what the characters are whom one is thus called to have done with. We are bound so to discern, not in one case only, but in each and all, that there be no mistake. If charity may plead, holiness and obedience are imperative, and especially with snob as may fairly be charged, in measure like Timothy, with care for sound doctrine, and order, and godliness.

“For men shall be lovers of self.” Such is the opening characteristic, so grievous to the Lord and His own in those bearing His name. Justly does it hold the first place in this list of Christ-dishonoring professors; for it is a very mother of evils, as it directly contravenes the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning His children. Christ died for all indeed; but the moral end was that those who live (whatever do others who remain dead) “should henceforth not live unto themselves, but unto Him Who for them died and rose again.” “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34, 35). For “every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children. of God when we love God and keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:1-3). Thus loving God proves that we truly love His children; as obeying His commands proves that we truly love God. So the first condition of discipleship, if we hear our Lord (Matt. 16; Mark 8:34), is denying self, the clean contrary of loving it. Oh, what a pattern in Him who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich! Fully do I admit that such love as we are called to is not the original unfallen condition of Adam, still less of course the hateful and hating state of man now; it is what we see and know in the Second Man, the last Adam; it is to be imitators of God, as dear children, and to walk in love as the Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savor. As having put on the new man and sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, no other standard could be set before us; in awful contrast with which stand lovers of self, and so much the more sadly, if baptized to Christ's name and death.

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

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

Can any serious person deny the enormous impetus given to the love of money in our own days? and this, among those who profess the Lord's name as keenly and commonly as in the careless world? Doubtless, as has been remarked, the recent discoveries of fresh sources of wealth, and the remarkable inventions of men, and the habits of far-spread enterprise, not to speak of growing luxury; which have followed in the train, have helped on this eager quest of gain. But the fact is unquestionable, and the effect most mischievous; yet who lays it to heart, or judges it as a sin of the first magnitude? And has it not been accelerated and justified by that new and increasing peculiarity of the last century, those religious and philanthropic institutions, the offspring and the pride of ecclesiastical divisions, which avowedly depend on the collections, and subscriptions, and donations, of money? Certainly our Lord has ruled otherwise in the Sermon on the Mount, and His inspired servants have both acted and written for our admonition in terms meant to make the service of mammon intolerable, and to refuse a place in the church for the covetous.

“Boasters” follow; and who fails to hear its hollow voice to day? It follows as close on the track of money-loving, as this love on self-love. And the materials which furnished the means of gratifying the love of money have built up the pedestal from which the empty vaunts of the boasters are heard on all sides. If you doubt it of religions profession, your ears are assuredly dull of hearing, and your eyes, if seeing, see not.

For all is blazoned before the world, whether of religious contributions, or of charity to the poor, or of aught else that occupies men publicly. And then this enlightened age of ours! Who does not sing its achievements? Who does not praise its science physical if not metaphysical, its chemistry if not its learning? Say not again that these boasters are the mere devotees of natural philosophy. Alas! it is from professedly pious theologians that we hear the hasty and ignorant premises that Geology declares one thing, Genesis another; and the base conclusion is that Genesis must bow down and worship Geology at what time is heard the sound of cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music. For the spirit of vain glory has banished all sense of pain and shame when God's word is thus dishonored; and even those who preach it are not ashamed to swell the chorus of the “boasters.”

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

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

Further, it is the liberalism of the day which has given occasion to the unprecedented spread of blasphemy on the one hand, and of disobedience to parents on the other. For it is now more and more accepted, that authority—and above all divine authority—is nothing but the bugbear of unenlightened ages, and that there is no inflexible standard of truth and righteousness. Thus public opinion assumes to decide, and society becomes the supreme power on earth, with its ordinances (i.e. the laws and the commands of magistrates, who act in the name and for the welfare of the society!) binding on all its members, but not authorizing one national society to govern another, still less entitling its officers to rule contrary to the will of the society, or to exercise greater power than it pleases! I have purposely adopted the ideas and words of an able, learned, and pious advocate of this impious scheme, which contradicts all that the godly in the past have gathered from scripture, especially such passages as Rom. 13 and 1 Peter 2. On the texts there is the less reason to dwell as almost all who read these pages reject on principle that wretched fruit of French Revolution, or rather of the infidel philosophy which gave so deep and strong an impulse to it, not only immediately, but from our own land for a century, before. Blasphemers began to assert their lawless will, not without the reproof of public law and to the horror of believing ears. But gradually restraint gave way, and men have got to think that every form of blasphemous iniquity, which can count so many heads, is entitled to its representation in the high places of the earth. For after all what the Christian calls blasphemy is the religion or school of thought sincerely accepted by others, who are no less entitled to be heard as themselves, and to rule if they can command a majority! For, again says their pious oracle, what human power can pronounce authoritatively upon the truth of a religion, when every nation, or part of a nation, will with equal zeal maintain the truth of its own? Thus God is excluded, where He is most of all needed, and the creature, in all the aberrations of his guilty will, is worshipped rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever. Amen.

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

And surely the marked and growing lack of reverence to parents, the increasing self-will of the young, cannot have escaped the notice of any observing Christian. So it was to be according to the warning of inspiration. “Disobedient” follows “blasphemers"; and most suitably as to order; for parents stand in a position altogether unique toward their children. As it is written in the epistle to the Hebrews, Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they, verily for a few days chastened as seemed good to them; but He for profit in order to our partaking of His holiness. If not God but forms are in men's thoughts, real obedience of a parent is nowhere; submission is only where it is unavoidable; where then is the conscientious and loving heart to pay honor and obedience? And the most serious element in this general ruin of so primary a relationship is, that the parents are as much or more to blame than the children, the mothers no less than the fathers; and this confined and peculiar to no class, but pervading every grade of the race. The multitude of societies and devices, to care for the young in our day is not the least striking proof of the plague which has set in permanently for the appalling growth of the evil called out the efforts of pious men to stem it, however superficially, by the Sunday Schools, Homes, Reformatories, and such like. And now they would fain forget the frightful root of this evil in their own class and in every other, glorifying their benevolence in so partial a remedy. Relaxation of discipline, or even its abandonment, on the parents' part cannot but breed disobedience in the children; and in the face of such a prevalent snare, all other means of correction are but the feeblest reeds to avert a gathering storm.

Nor should we overlook the next pair of humiliating characters in these last days, “unthankful, unholy,” which appear to be as appropriately set together as their two predecessors were, and indeed all those described hitherto: not, that those who read them unconnectedly do not glean instruction from each and all, but that the observance of them jointly gives, order, and adds to the harvest. Now what an anomaly is a professing Christian who is thankless! He professes to have life in Christ, and the forgiveness of sins; he is baptized to Christ's death whereby he died with Him to sin; he is under grace, not under law, that sin should not have dominion over him; he is in Christ and so freed from condemnation, and has received the Spirit of adoption whereby to cry Abba, Father. For if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. All this individually belongs to the believer. Think next of the precious privileges he enjoys as of the body of Christ, in the worship, in the apostolic doctrine, in the fellowship, in the breaking of bread, in the prayers; not to speak of that holy and wholesome and most needful discipline which attaches inseparably to those But keep the feast on the sacrifice of Christ. But why need one set out these countless blessings which all saints share in His Name and by the Spirit of our God with which scripture teems? To be “unthankful” then, while bearing that Name which ensures all to the believer, is the extreme of ingratitude.

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

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

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

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 3:3-5

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

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

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

Very suitably next to this void of natural affection stands the quality “implacable,” which, springing from the same root of selfishness, flows into a far larger circle and indeed without limit. Some few authorities of all kinds invert their relative order; but this would seem strange disorder morally, compared with the true place of each as represented by the best witnesses, though the Sinaitic is not alone in omitting the first of the pair, nor the Peschito Syr. V. in dropping both: all these variations being plain errata. For as the lack of natural affection is a horrible result of spurious Christian profession, so the consequent but wider implacability is next pointed out as its companion, instead of that universal love which is loudest in theory when there is least exercise of it in practice. Nay, the fact is really worse; for goes beyond the breaking of trace attributed to the word in the A. V. and other translations, and expresses rather the lawless state which refuses to incur any such obligation. It is bad enough to fail in keeping faith; it is much worse as here when glen's hearts say, “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” In Rom. 1:31 we read that God gave up the heathen to be , as the Text. Rec. adds against ample authority of the highest character. There the apostle comes from the more external “covenant breakers” or (more generally) “faithless,” to the want of family affection () and the more personal “unmerciful,” or pitiless; here as predicting the departure of Christendom he goes from within outwards—only for “covenant-breakers” he gives “implacable” or defiant of, bond. And what spiritual eye can fail to see how this impatience of obligation permeates men, who once were rigidly faithful in the observance not of promise only but of all the implied ties of the Mallet now is? Nothing dissolves more than grace despised; whereas even law is feebleness itself compared with grace reigning through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus, Christ our Lord. Optima corruptio peasima.

Then in joint order comes the character of “slanderous” or “false accusers,” as in the A.V., the same designation as is appropriated to the archenemy, the devil. Is it not a solemn issue that the Holy Spirit should have thus to describe not more heathen, but men bearing the Lord's name in the last days? It is easy to dissipate and whittle away the awfulness of these charges by the plea so natural for ignorance to make and to receive, that these evil characteristics have always been. In a sense it is so. But the word of the Lord cannot be broken; and, though enough rose up while the apostle lived to make it a practical question then, it is certainly true that, as the departure from the word and Spirit of God went on, these evils grew and spread apace; and that our own days look on an enormous increase of this harvest of shame and sorrow,

which all the changes wrung on Eccles 7:10 are vain to get rid of. The universality of detraction and evil-speaking is as notorious in our day as is its virulence, and far worse in the religions than in the profane world, the endless divisions or acts giving it an incalculable impulse. Moral worth, Christian character, spiritual intelligence, known service, perhaps forever so long, wholly fail to disarm malicious criticism, if they do not rather furnish the incentive to activity for those moral levelers envious of all superior to themselves. It is the more base in those cases where the assailed would avail themselves of no natural resource, offensive or even defensive, following Him Who, when reviled, reviled not again when suffering, threatened not, but committed Himself to His care Who judges righteously.

“Uncontrolled” we have next, rather than “incontinent,” which usage limits to lack of self-restraint in uncleanliness, whereas the word really takes the fullest range in the indulgence of recklessness of action, as the preceding word in spirit and speech; so that the moral connection is evident.

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

None can wonder that this is followed by “without love for good,” which appears more exactly and completely to represent than “despisers of those that are good,” as in the A. V. It is indeed a very decisive advance in evil; for many, whose unbroken will carries them away passionately, are sincerely ashamed of their intemperance and deplore the excesses of these short fits of madness, as they value and admire those who in patient continuance of good work seek for glory and honor and incorruption, with eternal life—the end. A heathen could say, I see and approve of what is better, I follow the worse; and an apostle gives as the last degree of evil in such that they not only practice things deserving of death, but take pleasure in (or consent with) those who do them. Here in Christian professors it is the kindred enormity of a total disrelish for good. Just as among the Jews, impiety destroys the moral landmarks: “woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” Surely the Lord's name is blasphemed on their account who misrepresent His name.

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

“Heady,” or “headstrong,” again describes those who rush inconsiderately and determinedly in pursuit of their own will, whatever it may cost to gratify it, rather than the habit of abandoning even to destruction others who confide in them. We can easily understand that the gospel, in an unexampled way and measure, imparts knowledge to the, most unlettered; and that this acts as powerfully as injuriously on those who, really ignorant of themselves and of God, have no living sense of grace toward others, any more than they feel the need of it for themselves. From some such source as this appears to flow the “headstrong;” as these are hard by the “puffed-up,” or high-minded souls, besotted with self-conceit: no less cruel than contemptible evils in those who, as ostensible heirs of the kingdom, ought to know the blessedness of being poor in spirit, of mourning, of meekness, of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, of being merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers, as well as counting it all joy when persecuted for righteousness, and above all, for Christ's sake. Alas! headiness and high-mindedness leave no room for any one of those precious qualities which our Lord forms in all that are His. Do not both now prevail wherever you look in Christendom?

And who can deny the manifest and extraordinary development, not now for the first of course, but more than ever in our own day, of “pleasure-loving rather than God-loving,” among those who would be deeply offended if they were not owned as Christians? For when in this world's sad history was ever known such an incessant and wide-spread whirl of excitement, in change and travel, in sweet sounds, pleasant pictures, and sensational tales, to speak of nothing lower in sensuous enjoyment? No doubt, steam and telegraph have circumstantially helped on this eager and universal pursuit of pleasure, rather than care for God and doing His will, but in this closing indifference remarkably confirming His word. Time was when superstition allied to liking for adventure undertook pilgrimages, and organized crusades, neither of these in the least expressing the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, but either of them nobler naturally than pleasure-trips, private or common, to the most renowned, strange, or distant lands, perhaps round the world even, craving after some new and piquant fillip for minds jaded and listless: Need we add the love of gain and even sometimes of gambling brought into bazaars, &c., in aid of avowedly Christian objects, with every natural or worldly attraction, to swell the funds? What shall we say, if we may say anything, of the pleas for “muscular Christianity,” a phrase which to pious ears may seem a mere worldly, jest, but which others take in sober seriousness as a right thing and commendable, though only to be defended by the sheerest perversion of God's word?

For as the Holy Spirit here says of all these characters of evil, “having a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof.” In this lies the peculiar heinousness of it all. None can wonder that the unrighteous should do unrighteously still, or that the filthy should make himself filthy still. The horror is that those who under the name of the Lord put forth the highest claim should neither practice righteousness, nor be sanctified still. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, A dog turning back to his own vomit, and a washed sow to wallowing in mire. If you wish to find all these unchristian evils in a plain and concentrated form, without a blush, nowhere can they be so readily found as in that which arrogates to itself the name of “Christian.” Yet those who in our own land as well as over the world have the evidence of this before them habitually, can see nothing that defiles, but claim to be undefiled, because both their mind and conscience are defiled.

But God is not mocked, and the apostle exhorts to faithfulness. He had already called Timothy to know what the mass of Christians now refuse to learn. But this is not enough: “And from these turn away.” It was then the duty, when such persons appeared, to have nothing to do with them; now that the evil is incomparably more developed, that duty is still more imperious. Yet I am grieved to notice the strange error of one

who has written on the subject with surpassing ability. He will have it that the apostolic injunction, rightly translated, means that Timothy was to— “turn these away.” How any one with any real, however moderate, knowledge of the Greek tongue could so misunderstand a very simple phrase, it is hard to explain or conceive; but such is the fact. No version known to me sustains any such view. The A.V. is substantially, the R.V. quite, correct, unless it be in giving “also” for “and,” ver. 5, as is done here in connection with “know” in ver. 1. It is not authoritative action, still less ecclesiastical dealing, but apostolic direction for the conscience of Timothy (or in principle of any “man of God “.) who would not endorse what is hateful to the Lord and corrupting for souls.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 3:6-9

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

“For of these are they that enter into houses and I lead captive1 silly women, laden with sins, led by various lusts, always learning and never able to tome unto knowledge of truth. And in the manner that Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth, men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall not advance farther; for their folly2 shall be very manifest to all, as theirs also became” (ver. 6-9).

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

“For of these are they that enter into, houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led by various lusts” (ver. 6). The works of the Christian are not to be only, but , not only animated by kindness and benevolence, but characterized by rectitude and comeliness. Nothing can justify under, hand maneuvers: Christ does not ask such service at the hands of any; He repudiates it. “So let your light shine before men that they may see your good (i.e. honorable) works, and glorify your Father that is in heaven.” It was to be as the lamp on the stand shining for all who are in the house. The evil-doer naturally shuns and hates the light, and comes not to the light lest his works should be reproved or shown as they are. But he that does the truth comes to the light that his works may be made manifest that they have been wrought in God. How sad when those who profess Christ, the only true Light, are actuated by the spirit of darkness in creeping into the houses (of the saints, I presume) and leading captive silly women! The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, and its ways are well-pleasing to the Lord. But to condescend to the path of intrigue, in order to win the weakest ones of the weaker sex, is beneath the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. Even if those who sought thus to, advance the truth were ever so pure-minded, to get thus into houses is indefensible as being of ill appearance and report: still more if the aim there was to make personal devotees of those so exposed to the snare as those whom the apostle brands as “silly women, laden with sins, led by various lusts” even though not necessarily of a gross character. In all ages religious officials have found a ready ear in females, who become effective in their influence on families: not truth, but the leaven of doctrine thus spreads with the greatest rapidity till all become assimilated. The suited material for this subtle working is that which appeals strongly to nature, while it pretends to be peculiarly superior to it; and no rank and file are so pliant and persuasive as “silly women,” who thus seek zealously to make up for the sins with which they are laden, whilst they indulge in new lusts differing from those of the past. Thus have been accomplished disastrous changes in primitive times. Has the enemy left off these devices in our day? Some can remember a picture not unlike the original many years ago, when almost all distinctive truth was thus destroyed most extensively. Are we to flatter ourselves that the self-same way of error, so successful in the past, no matter what the circle, will not be reproduced again and again in the present while the Lord tarries?

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

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

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

imitations of truth, so close as to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect (as with the Jews by and by). The old bodies of Christendom contain the foundations of the faith in a great measure; those more showy deceptions hold out higher promise as to the hope of the saints, and the church, and Christian privilege, but they sink far below common orthodoxy or fail in ordinary righteousness. And no wonder, if their guides are “men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith.” Soaring far higher and alluring the sanguine and unstable far more in what is less known, they betray ruinously those blessed and vital truths to which all saints cleave, however ignorant or prejudiced they may be otherwise.

Hence God does not fail to raise up a standard against the foe, and His imperiled saints profit by the warning. So the apostle declares here, “But they shall not advance farther; for their folly shall be very manifest to all, as theirs also became” (ver. 9). The comparison tells no less in the dazzling counterfeit, which was calculated to perplex and mislead, than also in the exposure of the snare. This done, its efficacy for mischief is at an end, and the folly of its authors and advocates is too plain to injure more. Have we not known the enemy thus defeating himself under the mighty hand of God? Let us not forget how much we owe to the watchful grace of our Lord, who thus vindicates His word and Spirit after man's misuse of both. If Satan cites scripture evilly or falsely, the Lord does not leave scripture for argument, but answers in a way absolutely and at once convincing, “It is written again.''

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 3:10-13

From the unmasking of these various forms of evil, then germinating within the sphere of Christian profession, the apostle turns to the very different path and walk of his fellow-laborer.

“'But thou hast followed1 closely my teaching, course; purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings; what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that desire to live piously in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted. But wicked men and impostors shall advance for the worse, deceiving and being deceived” (ver. 10-13).

It was energy of unfeigned faith and love, acting by the Spirit in the life which is in Christ Jesus, which thus drew out Timothy. Unbelief stumbled and made not only difficulties but opposition to that which attracted and sustained the young fellow-laborer, because it was to his soul the living witness to a rejected but glorified Christ. He was not ashamed, as wore many, of the testimony of our Lord or of Paul his prisoner. Whatever might be the timidity of his character naturally, in faith he found strength, giving glory to God. The promise of life was an assured reality, and he too suffered evil along with the gospel according to the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before ages of time, but now manifested by the appearing of our Savior. Christ in short decided and drew him onward in a path otherwise impossible.

Now Paul's “teaching” has justly the first place in that which acted on Timothy: not truth only, but cast in the mold of the apostle's mind, heart, and moral force, where the person and heavenly glory of Christ governed with a power unequaled. And this in the main we have as God was pleased to give it permanence for our instruction, and cheer, and warning, and general blessing in his epistles, to speak of no more, though we cannot have what Timothy enjoyed so largely—speaking “mouth to mouth,” as another apostle expresses it who laid great store on such communications, as compared with paper and ink and pen. Yet each has its excellency, and all is surely ordered in its season; so that, while recognizing what Timothy had for the help and furnishing of his soul, we can own the wisdom of the Lord in our portion.

Then the “course” or “conduct” of the apostle had its great value as a practical expression of the truth which swayed his judgments and feelings habitually. There is no better comment on the inspired word than in the walk of those subject to it, whether individually or in the assembly. If this be true generally of all the spiritual and intelligent, so far as they are led in obedience, what a bright illumination of holy writ was there not in one privileged as Timothy was, perhaps beyond all others, with the intimacy of the great apostle so long and so variously!

“Purpose” shone in that life of ceaseless serving the Lord Christ with a splendor which none but the malignant could misinterpret, none but the dark and blind overlook. From the time that there fell from his eyes, as it were, scales, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared to both those of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judaea, and also the Gentiles, that they should repent and believe the gospel. He preached the kingdom boldly; he shrank not from declaring the whole counsel of God. And in the midst of these labors night and day, he could say, as perhaps no other with equal truth, “One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Practical, present, living “faith” it was that kept alive the holy fire in the heart of the apostle; and this accordingly is here pointed out for fixing its place on Timothy's memory, and stimulating him to perseverance in the like path. For indeed, as there is but one path, even Christ, for all that are His, so it is faith alone that finds and pursues it with patience: we walk by faith, not by sight, as by faith we stand. No other means suits the children of God, and none other glorifies God Himself, who world be owned immediately by them, as they thus derive fresh blessing in the enjoyment of His light and love. If “faith” be then the ever ready, ever needed, means of direction and power for all, how much more for those who have the added and most trying service of the Lord in the word! What did it not recall, to His genuine child in faith, of calm reckoning on God against all appearances? What of gracious answers even beyond expectation? For God will not be outdone even by the truest heart, and grace will ever flow beyond the faith which it creates and exercises.

“Long-suffering” too had Timothy seen in Paul as nowhere else. For in truth it is no fruit ripened in earthly soil but that which comes from Him who was and is its fullness, now on the throne of God. Least of all was it natural to Saul of Tarsus, who speaks of himself as once a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, that is, a man characterized by insolent overbearing. lint boundless mercy was shown, and wondrous “long-suffering” was the fruit.

“Love” wrought there, love seen and known and proved in Jesus our Lord, love reproduced by the Spirit as the energy of that nature which is light in its principle. For if all the godly become by grace partakers of divine nature, in him who was given to write 1 Cor. 13 love wrought mightily. Nor if knowledge spoke haughtily and to the stumbling of the weak, did any man deal so trenchantly with it as he who beyond all his

fellows knew all mysteries and all knowledge? Timothy had truly had a rich sample of “love” before his eyes.

“Patience” therefore did not fail, though put to the proof in the utmost variety of form and degree. As we read 2 Cor. 11, we think a little of what Timothy had beheld or known in so many details. The signs of the apostle were wrought among the saints in all patience, by both signs and wonders, and works of power.

This is followed by “persecutions,” and “sufferings,” as the trials in which the “patience” or endurance was manifested. And the same chapter accordingly furnishes in the most unobtrusive way such a roll as no hero of the world could match. Yet the apostle was pained to the quick to say a word about them. “I am become foolish,” he said: “ye have compelled me.” He took no pleasure in recounting what they should have otherwise learned or remembered, though he could add, “I take pleasure in weakness, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits, for Christ's sake.”

Timothy was thoroughly acquainted with what things happened to the apostle at Antioch (of Pisidia), and at Iconium, and at Lystra. It was in this order that persecution befell Paul; in the reverse that he and Barnabas made their return journey, establishing the souls of the disciples converted a little before. In all these sufferings and opposition Jews played the guilty part of inciting the Gentiles against the word of life, and those who preached it. Hence when they came to close quarters, stoning was the method employed. What occupation for the ancient people of God! What anguish for him who so loved them, even when not a blow fell on him! But if the apostle recalled the vivid recollections of Timothy, for he was of Lyeaonia, and brought to the knowledge of Christ through the apostle at this very time, he could say, “What persecutions I endured, and out of all the Lord delivered me.”

A twofold statement concludes this part of the Epistle, which those who look for progress in Christendom as a whole would do well to ponder. For the apostle speaks as generally as he lays down the truth positively. Not a hint does he give of a temporary interruption to be followed by blessing and triumph for the gospel. That the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea, is certain; that the nations shall seek unto the Messiah, and that His resting place shall be glorious, cannot be questioned by the believer; but none of these things shall be before He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips slay the wicked. Till then, however truly the gospel may save individuals here and there, or even affect communities, especially where it is mixed up with law and rendered earthly—till the Lord is revealed in judgment of the quick, those that are in heart godly must suffer, and evil men advance to greater impiety. Partial appearances deceive; the word of God abides forever.

Thus, on the one hand, the apostle declares, “Yea, and all that desire to live piously in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted.” It is wise, and even incumbent on saints to make up their minds thus to suffer for righteousness, and for Christ. They will then think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among them, which comes upon them to prove them, as though a strange thing happened unto them.

On the other hand, they will not be appalled that the world, yea, the professing mass, grows distinctly worse as a whole in the face of every testimony of God's grace and truth. On the contrary, they will cleave the more to the word which the prevalence of evil only confirms, while conversion goes on actively. “But evil men and impostors shall advance for the worse, deceiving and being deceived.” Can words more graphically, as well as accurately, set out the real character of the progress for him who bows to scripture? If we refuse this subjection, a blinding power is already on us, and we are led astray ourselves as we mislead others in the measure of the error and of our influence.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Timothy was not to be given to change. Truth remains immutable, though the most spiritual have to appropriate it increasingly: not the church, nor an apostle, but Christ is the Truth objectively, and the Spirit as inward power. That wicked men and the jugglers of imposture should shift is to be expected; for all have not faith, which lives and thrives and grows in subjection to the truth. Hence the charge that follows.

“But abide thou in those things which thou didst learn and wast persuaded of, knowing of whom1 thou didst learn [them]; and that from a babe thou knowest the2 sacred writings that are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture [is] God-inspired, and profitable for teaching, for conviction,3 for correction, for instruction that is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished thoroughly unto every good work” (ver. 14-17).

There is no surer indication of the Holy Spirit's energy than when an active mind (and the revealed truth does give holy freedom and unbounded exercise) abides in the things we are taught of God. Some beyond question are more than others prone to doubt because of difficulties, speculative or practical. Happy the heart which faces every word and fact, without a thought of abandoning those things which it was once persuaded of on divine authority, or, as the apostle puts it here, “Knowing of whom thou didst learn them!” If the plural form be preferred, which certainly rests on very good and ancient witnesses, it was Paul not alone but with the rest of those whom the Lord chose to bear testimony to the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. The inspired men of the N.T. presented an entirely new and deep and heavenly revelation, answering to His displayed person and work, and the relationships dependent on Christ, for which the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven gives energy. Thus the power is to obey. Timothy, like every other, was sanctified by the Spirit to obedience. He had a most honorable position, but no license to act without the word of the Lord, Who sent the Spirit to guide into all truth, what was coming, as well as what concerned more directly Christ and the church in actual testimony. He was thus glorifying Christ, reporting all, as only He could, to the saints, and this by chosen witnesses, so that our prime joy, not to say duty, is to believe and obey. Doubtless God has set in the church, as it has pleased Him: first, these; next, those; and so on, in no small variety of place according to His sovereign will and unerring wisdom; but obedience of faith runs through the life of each, if they walk and serve according to God. And this the apostle is here laying down for Timothy with the utmost care. Can we think that the exhortation was not deeply needed? and the more, because it is given in an Epistle intended for the perpetual remembrance, not only of such as might share Timothy's service, but of all who seek to please the Master.

Nor was it now only that Timothy had reverently listened to the words of God. To thousands of saints, and to many a minister of the word, from among the Gentiles, it was a new thing; and the gospel received into the heart opened the way for valuing and profiting by the ancient oracles of God. But with him it was a different order, though the result may be substantially similar. But, in fact, the apostle reminds him,”

That from a babe thou knowest the sacred writings that are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus" (ver. 15).

It is painful to observe the slight done to the scriptures in Christendom, save where Protestant feeling prevails. The importance of the Bible for the poor, many will allow who are far from availing themselves of it on their own account. Not only does Popery proscribe the simple and habitual reading of it (as if the book of God were rank poison for man because it is so sure to undermine and overthrow Romanist dogma and practice), but not a few who count themselves far removed from the Latin church discourage that heed to it from the earliest years, which is here, by the highest authority, commended in Timothy. It is in vain to decry it as "letter," or to discourage the young as unrenewed. He who was inspired to lay down the safeguards against the difficulties of the last days, does not hesitate unqualifiedly to express his satisfaction in that which their wisdom ventures to disparage. This should be enough for faith, if a Coleridge joins hands with sacerdotal pride on one hand, or with rationalistic indifference on the other, in attacking what they dislike as "bibliolatry." The true and humble-hearted have but to go me unmoved in the midst of these changing fashions of hostile opinion, cleaving to God and to the word of His grace, while eschewing every plausible plea of man. For the true ground is not man's right to the scriptures, or man's competency to interpret them, but God's title to deal in the Bible with every heart and conscience, which the Holy Spirit alone can guide into any and all truth. Those who interdict the free reading of scripture are blindly striving to hinder God from addressing Himself to man. Let them judge how great such a sin is against God as well as man. They may reason now, but what will they say another day for their rebellion against His rights? Yet the apostle was as far as possible from rationalism. He did not believe in the power of man to make divine truth his own. Even the sacred writings are only able to make wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. This however they are. Without faith in Christ salvation and wisdom from above are alike impossible.

But we are carried a great deal farther in ver. 16, 17: "Every scripture [is] God-inspired, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction that is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished thoroughly unto every good work." No more suited, valuable, and weighty sentence appears here or in any part of the word of God. There are kindred sentiments of exceeding moment, which do ever fit in most appropriately where they occur; but the one before us is clear, full, and impressive in the highest degree. It gives divine character to every part of the Bible, excluding of course such words or clauses as can be shown on adequate evidence to be interpolations.

First, it is important to observe that the subject of the opening sentence is anarthrous. The sense therefore is not "all," but "every," scripture. If the article had been inserted, the words which follow would have predicated that which is said of the known existing body of holy writ. The absence of it has the effect of so characterizing every part of the inspired word to come, as well as extant. Is it scripture? Then it is God-inspired and profitable, &c. This is affirmed of every atom.

Next, it is known that versions and critics of reputation differ somewhat where the unexpressed but necessarily implied copula should be inserted. It is not always seen that this is a comparatively slight difference. The substantial sense abides. The Revised Version, with several, prefers to render thus: "Every scripture inspired, of God is also profitable," &c. The Authorized Version with others has it thus: "All scripture i.e. given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," &c. I have no doubt it is more correctly translated above: "Every scripture [is] God-inspired and profitable," &c. What is common here to the A.V. and mine, is that the apostle asserts inspiration by God and profitableness about scripture; whereas, according to the Revisers, divine inspiration is assumed, and its profit seems rather awkwardly asserted, "is also," &c. After all the difference is practically small. In the Revised Version that is assumed for divine inspiration, which in the other is directly affirmed in the first place, with defined and varied profit following after.

Scripture then, everything which comes under the designation of scripture, is inspired of God; not merely holy men of God spoke, borne by—under the power of—the Holy Spirit; but everything written in the Spirit with a view to permanent guidance of the faithful is inspired of God. This simply believed must necessarily exclude error from holy writ; for who would say that God inspires mistakes, great or small? Those who so think cannot really believe that every scripture is inspired of God Time was when God's word was of course inspired but not yet written; now it is in infinite mercy written by His gracious power Who knew the end from the beginning, and would provide an adequate, and perfect, and permanent standard for every need spiritually on earth. Hence it is written, and, to be divinely authoritative, is inspired of God: not the sacred letters of the O. T. only, but the writings of the apostles and prophets of the N. T., the foundation on which the church is built (Ephesians 2).

Indeed it is the prophetic character of gift which especially is in exercise for writing scripture. The apostles as such governed as well as began the church. But some were prophets who were not apostles; and the church or assembly was built on the foundation of both. This explains the true source of the authority in the holy writings of Mark and Luke. To attribute it to Peter for the one, and to Paul for the other, betrays the worthless character of early tradition, such as appears in the speculations of Eusebius of Caesarea. For whatever may be the value of his history of his own times, or of those not long before, his account of the apostolic age has more value as a contrast with the inspired record, short as this is, than as a true reflection. It even abounds with plain ignorance and error, and never rises to the spiritual bearings of what he sets before us. The inspired account in what is called The Acts of the Apostles is impressed with the dignity, depth, power, and design of scripture, as decidedly as any other book of the Bible. A similar remark applies to Luke's Gospel, as well as to that of Mark. They are scripture, and inspired of God, each having an aim laid bare by the contents, wholly distinct from that of Matthew and of John, yet no less certainly divine; each therefore contributing its own elements of profit proper to each, and found in none other as in them, though others furnish what is not therein. This is characteristic of inspiration, and is found nowhere but in scripture.

It is full of interest to observe that the apostle quotes Luke as scripture in 1 Tim. 5:18. Some might hastily affirm that the last clause of the verse was drawn from the apostle Matthew, chap. 10:10. But a closer inspection proves that he cites from Luke 10:7, though he who disbelieves in verbal inspiration might cavil and evade its force. He, however, who is assured on God's authority that inspired men spoke, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy. Spirit teacheth, gladly owns that the apostle of the Gentiles cites literally from the Gospel of his own fellow-laborer. It is as if God meant to confirm the principle by Paul's not only quoting Luke, but quoting his Gospel no less than Deut. 25: 4 as "scripture." He knew and refuted beforehand the skeptical theories which blindly seek to deny the authority of both.

We all know that Peter in his Second Epistle (iii. 16) speaks of all Paul's Epistles as "scripture." This again is beautiful in that late communication of the great apostle of the circumcision. But it is not so generally seen, though it is no less certain, that in the preceding verse he renders testimony to Paul's having written to the believing Jews, who were the objects of both of his own Epistles. Thus we have it on

inspired authority that not Barnabas, nor Silas, nor Apollos, nor any other than Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. A few words of inspiration are decisive against endless argument.

Verses 10, 11 reminded Timothy of his special opportunities, and his personal knowledge of the apostle's teaching, course, and life, individual and ministerial, with a solemn supplement (12,13) as to the godly and the wicked, whether in resemblance or in contrast. Verse 14 is a grave exhortation to Timothy thereon to abide in those things which he thus learned and was assured of, based on his knowledge of their character and authority from whom he learned them, as well as on his familiarity from infancy with the ancient but living oracles of God, which, though of themselves incapable of quickening, or of imparting spiritual power, were able to render him wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus (15). Then comes a dogmatic conclusion of the subject, as plain as it is momentous, in the form of an apothegm in ver. 16, which most naturally conveys what the A.V. reflects, save the opening word which, better translated, enlarges its scope considerably. Every scripture [is] inspired of God, and profitable, &c. It thus covers all that might be added by inspiration of God, as well as what had been so given already. It expels from the field not only the bold cavilers at the divine word, but with no less peremptoriness the unworthy, though professedly orthodox, apologists, who surrender the holy scriptures, either in detail all over the Bible, or, sometimes, in whole books, through a compromise with the adversary.

For what is scripture useful or “profitable”? We must not regard the passage as an exception to the general principle which governs all the Bible.

It lays down only what is in harmony with the context. Nor is any other place to be put beyond this in wisdom as well as power and interest. We are thus compelled to eschew partial search, if we would seek really to understand the mind of God revealed in His written word; we must read and study the scriptures as a whole. With Christ before us we shall not peruse in vain. Beginning at Moses and all the prophets our risen Lord expounded in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself; and this said of the O. T. is yet more evidently true of the New. We err, therefore, when He, the constant object of the inspiring Spirit, is not our object; but the manner is as different as the books which compose the Bible; for each book has its own peculiar design, and all contribute to form a perfect whole. “Profitable,” accordingly, is limited by accordance with the character of this Epistle. Other uses are shown elsewhere.

First in order is the profit of every scripture “for teaching,” or doctrine. Of this there cannot be a finer or richer instance than the Epistle to the Hebrews, wherein the grand truths of the gospel are elicited in a way equally simple and profound from the words and figures of the O. T. Can any means be found so well suited to help the believer to its clearer understanding and application in other parts? One truth rightly apprehended prepares the way for another. For no new truth supersedes that which you have already, but rather confirms and help to more.

Next stands its use “for conviction.” The Epistle to the Galatians may be taken as a salient example. See how admirably the apostle employs “the blessing” and “the curse” in chap. 3 to illustrate the promise and the law, which these saints were confounding as millions have done yet more since. Take again the Seed, not many but one, in the same chapter; and the principle of a mediator in the law confronted with One God promising and sure to accomplish. Take the still, more evident application of the two sons of Abraham in chap. 4 from the law, with prophecy brought in to illustrate, and the final sentence from Gen. 21 to convince the Judaizers of their ruinous mistake.

Thirdly comes “far correction.” Here we may refer to the frequent and telling use of the O. T. in the Epistles to the Corinthians as a signal illustration. Almost every chapter of the First furnishes samples, of which chap. 10 is brimful.

Fourthly, who can mistake the Epistle to the Romans as the brightest and most palpable specimen of scripture used “for instruction in righteousness,” and this, as in the others, not only the O. T. so applied with divine skill, but its own supplies to the same end?

Thus is the aim distinctly and perfectly met, “that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted unto every good work.” So it was in Timothy's case, so for every other who follows a like path. It is the Holy Spirit's injunction, expressly in view of grievous times in the last days.

The Word of God, Word of God, The: Part 1

2 Timothy 3:14-17

When God made man, He did not make him as he is, any more than the world as it is. He made everything good, but He was not pleased to put forth His power to keep everything good. He was pleased to put the creature to the proof. He tried the creature in two great spheres—above and below. The angels fell before man; and the chief of those that fell above is the great tempter. No man can account for sin, for the ruin of the world, in any other way than Scripture reveals. Many a man has essayed to do so. The brightest wits and the greatest minds have attempted it; but they have never conceived anything that was not rubbish when they have not followed the word of God. Some have endeavored to account for sin by supposing that there are two Gods—a good one and a bad one; because there are evidences of goodness all around us, and there are too plainly the evidences of badness. This hypothesis, I need not stay to show, is sheer folly. There is but one who is Almighty; and man cannot get rid of the consciousness of One—not merely one thing but One Being—One who has power and will and purpose, One who has affections no less than mind, but who, nevertheless, subjects the creatures that He made to a moral probation. If He kept everything from falling, there could be no such trial at all. All would be mechanical or chemical; and the wonderful scene of the conflict of good and evil—of good wrought by His grace in the heart of man, and rising above Satan's power and wiles of evil—would be quite lost. What is still more important, the active display of love and righteousness on God's part, of moral qualities reproduced in repentant believing man, would be completely destroyed, if it were merely divine power so keeping the creature that there could be no failure.

But evil never came from God—only from the creature once innocent, now fallen, that kept not his first estate, but chose to do his own will and have his own way. An angel did this first. Man was misled by him who, straying and exalting himself, beguiled others both in heaven and on earth. That creature is called Satan—the Devil. All efforts to get rid of this fact have proved utterly vain, so much so that the boasted lights of antiquity fell consequently into one or other of these notions: either that God is everything, which denies sin; or, secondly, that there is no such being as God at all; while both cases led to worshipping ever so many false gods. Witness now the two greatest philosophers of Greece who have exercised perhaps the largest and most enduring influence over civilized men outside the Bible—the one the head of Pantheism, the other of Atheism. There is what man's thought ends in when it is logically carried out. Man in his fallen estate may reason God away; yet he

excludes God, not from his conscience, but in his reason; for at the bottom of the man's heart who does so there is the uneasy feeling that what he sees around him did not grow like a potato—least of all, he himself and his fellows. He feels that, though fallen, he is a moral being who will have to give an account of his action; and to whom but to God—the One who made him and all things?

The creature, having fallen from God, has lost the truth. No longer innocent, he has God as his Judge. Satan lost Him first, forever and his angels. Man and his race have lost Him; but O what mercy now shines on us! Yet you, dear friends, every one of you, like myself, once had Him not. Have you found Him? Do you know Him? Do not tell me you cannot. You cannot of yourselves: man cannot by searching find oat God. But God can reveal Himself. It is true, a keen infidel who is still living said the contrary—said it was impossible for God to make a revelation of Himself; but the book in which he, a Deist, said this proved the folly of it. If an infidel can make a revelation of his mind to do people mischief, I suppose God can make a revelation of His mind to do men good. Is not this reasoning a sound and sufficient answer? Can any man save an atheist deny the force or the reality of it? If a bad being can reveal his mind to ruin, cannot the All-wise and All-good reveal His mind to save? Of course He can. The notion, therefore, that God cannot reveal His mind is not only false but denies that He is light and love—a falsehood that is contradicted by the very effort to argue in its support. The writer makes a revelation of his mind, such as it is; and we reply, If man can make a revelation of his mind, surely God can of His: otherwise you are reduced to the absurdity, that what is possible to man is impossible to God. Is this reasonable, or is it folly? Can any man in this room maintain that, what a man can do in his feeble way, God cannot do in His blessed and almighty way?

Now the Bible lets us see from the first—and it is worthy of God—that no sooner had man turned against God through the instigation of a mightier rebel than himself, than a way of escape for man on God's part was opened up in hope. Man succumbed to Satan working upon the will of the woman. Ah! how natural it is, as most know quite well—how true to the heart of both. The woman's feelings get entangled, and she is deceived. A man, if God were not concerned, properly loves his wife, and can not bear to leave her alone. His affections engage him; everything as a man and a husband combines to make him go along with her, although here alas! it was rebellion against God. This is exactly what Scripture lets us see in Adam and Eve. The Devil knew what he was about. Eve was deceived—Adam was not. She was drawn into sin, and through her Satan misled Adam into sin boldly; and such has been the history of many a man and woman since then. This does not throw blame on the woman only. They must divide the sin between them; and he is a base man who would try, as Adam did afterward, to throw the whole on his wife. But it is the effect of sin. He, who ought to have been her shelter and protector, first followed the bad example and then betrayed her—as it were, an informer against her. How degrading is sin! So it was from the first, and is to the last.

Now, let us look at God. We have seen enough of Satan and enough of man for the moment; let us turn to Him who here comes on the scene, and close first word shows the havoc that the devil had made. “Adam, where art thou?” No readiness to meet God now—no candor, confidence, or truthfulness; man hides himself, in despair, behind the trees in the garden, with a bad conscience. “Adam, where art thou?” Man was gone from God. This is the state of man still, of all mankind, of every one of us naturally. I do not say that we all abide there now. Thanks be to God, He is a Savior God. But He judges sin. In Himself He is light and He is love. Our sins make Him a Judge: His grace made Him a Savior. We all naturally think of God as a Judge, because we all naturally more or less have a sense of sin; and guilt always dreads a moral account, the retribution, the judgment of God. Conscience erects a judgment-seat, even before man must rise from the grave to stand before the great white throne and give in his account. A man may try to get rid of it, and he may do so while pre-occupied. He may drag himself with ample material in this poor stupefying world, with its varied and intoxicating pleasures; but the moment of sobriety, the anguish of self-judgment, comes, and God is on the judgment-seat of conscience.

Scripture says that God did then deal with man—fallen man—to lay his sin upon his conscience, and to trace its root to the evil personage that had brought it in, and to announce the glorious truth of grace meeting the evil and rain, of grace providing a righteous way of escape. If ever there was a worthy purpose for revelation, this must be one. And this is exactly what Scripture reveals. It is not the dream of the gods coming down to indulge themselves in wickedness, as some of the greatest Wits in this world have believed. They had sunk low enough to receive that their deities were drunkards, fornicators, thieves and liars. Such were they whom the heathen adored, and amongst the heathen were some of the brightest men that ever lived. It was not for want of intellect or refined culture, nor for want of learning any more than logical power, that they fell into such gross deceits. No one can say this who knows the history of the world, and of the men upon it.

Apart from the Bible, there is sin, misery, ruin, and death. Scripture lets in the light of God, and that light assuredly is far from being the lurid menace of punishment merely. It reveals incomparably more and brighter things than the awful scene where sinners are judged for their sins. This there is and ought to be for those who defy and reject grace—for those who in the face of the Savior's cross deny God coming down to man, deeply pitying him, and fully providing for his salvation. The Bible accounts for sin but never justifies or slights it. Man, under Satan, wrought that evil thing. The Bible shows the way out of sin, and that the only way to the Father is by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, coming into this world, and that, too, given and sent by God, not implored by man. Not man devised the plan or even sought that God would of His mercy carry it out. Man never thought of it; for he with a bad conscience never expects good from God. For his soul to be saved, and his sins to be blotted out, for God to love him, and to put the best robe upon the poor ragged prodigal, for the father at the very start to embrace him, and then to bring him into such a place of joy as he never knew before—man never had so much as an inkling of grace like this.

Yet this the Bible shows is God's love to sinners, especially in the New Testament. But the man that does not believe the Old Testament is not to be trusted about the New. If a soul cavils about Genesis, I should not trust him about Romans. I know there are men who say that the New Testament is a grand book, and will confess that the first chapter of John is more sublime than anything Plato or Aristotle ever wrote. To be sure it is, infinitely so. But the man that pretends to exalt John and depreciate Moses I would not trust for a moment, because that which Moses was the instrument of revealing lays the foundation for all that John gives us. You cannot understand the blessing of the Second Man—the last Adam—unless you have seen the creation and fall of the first man, Adam. There is, therefore, between the Old and New Testaments an organic unity. Nothing more remarkable than this, however much one may differ from the other.

When you see a tree, you do not require a philosopher to tell you that, when it is complete, it has all its parts with striking appropriateness—that the deep root, which penetrates the soil and gathers the materials of nourishment for the trunk and its offshoots, is as necessary for its growth as the branches and the leaves—that what is unseen is as thoroughly ordered by One who perfectly knew, as that which is visible; and that from the tree man reaps benefit, and even the cattle, for God takes in everything. Not a little tiny insect, not the greatest of quadrupeds, not a human being, that does not in some way or another reap all suited good from God; and even those things that might seem to be obnoxious in themselves form part of a vast scheme of God's contrivance, of His forethought, of His abundant provision for the wants of men or beasts here below. There is no stinginess, if I may say so, about God. He does not merely give us the things we

absolutely need. This is not the way God treats man or any creature. You have only to look when the sun shines, you have but to think of the rich beauty of the earth around you—though it be a groaning creation—to see what pleasure God takes in goodness abounding. He did not make things to die, but to live in endless variety. He declares that He is not the God of the dead but of the living—this no doubt said in the highest sense is in every other way true. You see a blighted earth now; but even the blighted earth everywhere bears its testimony to the beneficent wisdom of its Maker.

But earth and sea and sky just as plainly afford traces of some dreadful evil that has passed over all—of an enemy's hand that has been there and sown evil. There is not a tempest that rages, there is not a volcano that pours out its destructive lava, there is not a blast of lightning, but tells that there is, above, below, around, disorder in this once untainted universe. And how much more, when you come down to the moral evil under which groans every town, and every hamlet; ay, perhaps every home, even the happiest hearth, has had its blight. And whence comes this? From God? Never. A being of perfect goodness and power, who would make the world and man as they are, is morally an impossible thought. But God never made the world as it now is; He did make it, but He made it good. God did not create anything unworthy of Himself.

And just here is where the value of the word of God comes in. The Bible bears witness of the grace of God meeting the ruin that man and Satan have wrought between them. It is not merely goodness in natural things, but in holy love, which, recognizing and judging the evil fully, nevertheless comes down to get rid of it, and this at His own expense, and, let me add, by suffering beyond all measure. What is all that the men who ever lived have had to endure compared to the sufferings of Christ? I do not speak of what man did against Christ, but above all of what God did in His cross. You do not believe it! Then you must settle this with Christ Himself. What was there so bitter or awful in the cup He had to drink as God's making Him sin for us, when He forsook Him? How do we know? He who is the Truth declares it—said so on the cross—said so with His dying lips, when even false men will sometimes speak the truth: how much more He who never said aught else but the truth, who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life!” Yet for our sins He died, and tasted death as none other ever did. He tasted not merely death upon the cross, but therein the judgment of God. And there is the ground on which God can be a God of all grace, the basis of grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. For He Who thus died is risen—risen to be the Savior, as He is if rejected the Judge.

Accordingly the foundation principle of this—the first germ of this weightiest of truths in the given in the same chapter which shows us man departing from God—man forsaking God, and not God forsaking man. God forsook His Son on the cross, that He might not forsake the poorest of sinners that looks to Him. In that chapter (Gen. 3) you have a Savior revealed to hope; and such is the allusion of the “everlasting gospel” in the Revelation. Does not this show you what a wonderful book the Bible is? It stretches over many centuries. It was written, parts of it, by kings, and by shepherd-boys, by priests, by soldiers, by civilians; by what one might call comprehensively men of every class, from the fishers of the Galilean Sea to the learned Jew of Tarsus, one of the most famous seats of philosophers at that time in the world, the rival of Athens. And yet in all the vast scope of its variety, Scripture stretching in its penmen from the days of Moses to those of the last apostle, in its themes from eternity to eternity, there is under all honest tests the most perfect harmony.

(To be continued, D. V.)

The Word of God, Word of God, The: Part 2

Beware, then, of those who would have you give up Moses. Listen not to the siren voices that would seek to charm you away from the truth of God, and more if they dare to tell you that they are not undermining the Bible, but only denying Moses. Alas! my good friends, to deny Moses is to undermine Christ; for Christ says that Moses wrote of Him. Christ had no question; and this is what satisfies a plain man that believes in Him. People may talk about evidences; and, of course, it is all very fine to do so with those who are not familiar with the subject, and have scanty knowledge of the original tongues. Of one thing let me remind all—whether knowing these languages or not—and it is this Many a one knows a little Greek and some less Hebrew; but what of that? You know English; but it does not follow that you have at all a mastery of the language. Remember then that most of the young men who learn Hebrew and Greek at college are very far from having a mastery of these languages. Most have a smattering, and this is all. They are then turned off to their parishes and pulpits, where they have no time to become real scholars, as they ought not to pretend to it. This is not said out of the slightest disrespect; but simply to show you the folly of supposing that merely running through a grammar and a few works in a foreign tongue makes it really known. Not at all. Most graduates (no matter what the degree, or where) would find it hard to translate unseen Hebrew or Greek. They do not know either of these languages in the least as you all know English; and yet for all that would any of you set up to be great English scholars? Even ordinarily fair and easy translation (to which few are equal without effort and preparation) is but a small step in learning. Enough however on that point.

But I press this upon you—that God has in Christ's testimony given the believer incomparably better proof than all evidences put together. Do you believe in Him the Son of God? I am now speaking to such. Some might appeal to persons who have no living faith but a mere creed, to those who talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, as others would of Socrates or Gautama Buddha, who are yet perfectly certain that the facts are true, and that His recorded words are substantially authentic. This is coming down low enough. Yet on the lowest of all grounds, on that of creed, men have still some respect for the authority of the Word made flesh—of Him who is perfect Man and true God. Now, not only is He spoken of in this word, but He speaks of God's word authoritatively and unmistakably.

There is no use to try and shirk the truth by mustering difficulties and saying, “Ah! we don't know that.” Here is a book unlike all other books, bearing the stamp of truth and holiness upon it as no other book ever written. Here you have testimony borne to the blessed One, by His apostles, whose lives and works, miraculous or not, were a bright evidence of His Divine truth, grace, and power. What totally different men they became, from what they were! They used to be prejudiced narrow-minded Jews, utterly indifferent to souls, wholly wrapt up in their own dry traditions. See how in a short time, amazingly short indeed, all was changed, and changed in virtue of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ applied to their souls by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. They gave it as their testimony—sealed not merely by blood but by a course of such lowly yet faithful devotedness as the world had never seen—that the Lord Jesus uniformly treated the Bible (that is, of course, the Old Testament) as beyond question the word of God; that Moses wrote the law; that it was not Moses' talk, which later authors wrote—not merely traditions and legends strung together partly by himself, partly by people who lived after him: the Pentateuch was written by himself. And thus in all sorts of questions you find not only His authority coming in, but the man Moses himself, as the inspired servant of

God, appealed to by the Lord. “He [Moses] wrote of me.”

How happy it is that a plain man or woman, or even a child, can feel the force of this testimony! Every one of you will stand before the Lord Jesus, who is the Judge both of the dead and of the living; and He has pronounced judgment upon this question. Ought it not to be fairly faced? Do you believe men—perhaps young daring men who have studied Hebrew, but with the most superficial knowledge of the Bible? or do you believe the Lord God in the person of Christ?

Look at the position of the world when the Son of God came down and gave this testimony. He stands between the two Testaments, as it were—at the end of the Old, at the beginning of the New. He pronounces upon the Old. He divides it into its parts—the three divisions, with which every Jew was acquainted—the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets: the Psalms taking in the poetical books, the Prophets comprehending more than we call prophetical, the Law embracing the books of Moses. There you have substantially the Scriptures called the Old Testament. The Lord, when risen from the dead bore testimony to the authority of these books (Luke 24). Surely you do not think that even an ordinary man carries his prejudices into the life beyond the grave!

In this world men may make mistakes, but not in the next: all illusion is then over. Just think of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. You find the rich man there waking up to the reality of things. Then he cries “Father Abraham!” Then he feels what sin is, and its immediate torment, although there be not the final sentence, but the separate state. That rich man then feels how blessed is the once wretched beggar—wretched in this world—but blessed in the next, where angels carried him to Abraham's bosom. Blessed picture of God's goodness at length to a long despised sufferer, who clung in faith to His truth. In vain the rich man prays for his five brethren, that some one would go and warn them lest they should have his portion in torment. What does scripture say? “They have Moses and the prophets.” Moses—not some prophet in the days of King Josiah who wrote a religious romance for the Bible in Moses' name. Do you ask, Who speaks so wickedly? Possibly the voice of a faithless Jew or a blaspheming Gentile? I grieve to say it is too common a voice in Christendom, echoed in Scotland.

Is it not a portentous thing that men should come to such a pass? To deny the genuineness of the books of Moses is a daring insult, not only to the Scriptures, but to the Son of God Himself It is giving the lie to the Savior, and the Judge of all. Yet men are to be found who deny to Moses the Books of the Law—most audaciously of all, the last one that professes to come most directly from his mouth. Nevertheless if there is the least trustworthiness in Deuteronomy, it is what Moses said himself. It is not merely what he collected, or what he caused to be written, but what he uttered also.

Of course by this nobody means—except Jews perhaps—that Moses wrote the last chapter about his death and burial. I do not say it is impossible, and that, God might not have revealed these things to him. But there is no need to assume any such anticipation. There is an evident break after the closing and crowning song of Moses; and the last chapter is clearly, in my judgment, added by an inspired person who took up and thus continued the record of the enlarging and developing purposes of God. No need therefore, for any bit of superstition—as I conceive it is—in supposing that Moses necessarily wrote the account of his own death. There are in Scripture evident traces of the hand of an inspired editor—of one raised up by God to put the books of the Bible together. You must remember they came out separately. Not only have they been combined since, but there are, here and there, what one may call inspired insertions. God can give an inspired editor as well as an inspired writer. Every Scripture is inspired, and so was the person who edited it and added these joints and bands when the time came to close the canon of Scripture. It is only unbelief that makes difficulties out of that which is plain enough.

But what shocks every spiritual and even moral sensibility is that any person bearing the name of a Christian—nay, of a Christian minister—should couple fiction with the books of Moses, as if they were only a religious novel founded on traditional facts and documents—on what it was conceived Moses might have said—put together ever so many hundreds of years after the legislator died. Divine wisdom has taken particular pains on this point. Christ says, Moses wrote so and so; it is not somebody else imputing it to him, but Himself vouching for Moses in a way that He does rarely for any other. “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. And so it has been. Those who hear not Christ in the Gospels, reject His resurrection.

We ought to feel thankful that Scripture is so written; because it is the fatality of unbelief to degrade man as well as God—not really to exalt either. Unbelief, too, is blind enough to attack the very thing that is strongest, requiring therefore no support by arguments drawn from some other passages. Take a quite different illustration. There are those that idolize the virgin Mary to the depression of the. Lord Jesus; yet how remarkably Scripture contradicts the notion, and protests against it by anticipation! It is left for our instruction in the Gospels that the virgin Mary never asked the Lord anything but what the Lord, instead of granting at once, modified at the least. Again see how God guards against unduly exalting Peter as the head (practically as a foundation-stone if you please) of the Christian church. In the very chapter from which men deduce the idea that he is the rock of the church, the Lord calls him Satan. Strange rock he to be sure! Peter was a very honored servant of God, but even such an one may at times say or do something utterly reprehensible. Therefore it is we cannot trust ourselves. The Christian is a fool who trusts himself; and therefore the Lord rebuked Peter for our profit, as well as for his own. The very God who was going to use and to honor Peter still proves what Peter was in himself. The moment he looked away from the Lord, he was as liable as any other to be turned aside into some evil snare of the devil. Apart from the Lord, you are nothing and can do nothing.

But again observe God from the very earliest bringing in what the book of Revelation calls the “everlasting gospel.” How remarkable a phrase is this! Many a man has read and cited these words in chap. 14 of the Revelation; many have thought of thorn; and not a few have explained the thought unwisely, no doubt. The phrase never occurs except in this one place. Why is it called the “everlasting gospel?” There is always a propriety and a force in every word of Scripture. Let me tell you, as far as the Lord enables me. In the last book of the New Testament the Spirit of God recalls the first revelation of Christ in the Old Testament. In the garden of Eden, in the paradise that was blighted and lost by sin, God did not fail to point to the Seed of the woman—the bruised Seed of the woman, remark—that was to bruise the serpent's head. Is not this gospel? Has it not been blessed gospel from the very first? Is it not also gospel to the very last— “everlasting gospel?” There is as yet no allusion to His being sacrificed for us. This could not be until offering or sacrifices distinctly came in. Nor was there yet a revelation of Him as Savior of His people from their sins. His people, of course, had to be called first, and their ruin shown first and last, salvation fitly being explained afterward. It is not the notion of priesthood. It is not the figure of a captain. Still less is it the truth of the head of the church. All these things were revealed in their due season. But the last book in the New Testament sends you back to the first book of the Old; and thus you hear the blessed voice of Christ, as it were, reverberating through all Scriptures an “everlasting gospel.” And why so? Because God ever takes pleasure in saving souls, and, in order to save sinners, there must ever be an “everlasting gospel.”

I speak at present of those that hear the truth—of those that listen to the word of God. Infants are not now in our view. Not that there is the least doubt that God's grace does save little children, but there is a somewhat different way of course. It is wholly unscriptural that God punishes babes if they are not christened. There is not the slightest ground for a thought so unworthy of God, so harsh to man in one way, so self-exalting to him in another. You may ask how one can know. Do you know it? How do you know anything? Through Jesus—the same One brought in to prove the Bible. Jesus the Lord shows us very clearly that the God who gave the law is greater than the law itself, and that God was showing Himself in Divine grace to be much greater than in judgment. The judgment of God is a solemn certainty; but the grace of God a still deeper truth. God manifest in the flesh, God present upon earth in the person of His own Son, shows us what God feels about little children. The disciples did not like to be troubled with them. They thought it was too bad to take up their great Master's time with mere children. How did the Lord answer it? He took them up in His arms and blessed them—a good lesson for the disciples. How often they want the Lord to correct their inadequate notions! If the Lord took up and blessed little children, does it not tell me what God feels about them. He does not bless little children on earth to send them dying to hell. But if they lived to rebel against His word and against His Son the Lord Jesus, if the children when grown up dare to despise Him that died on the cross, if they refuse to accept the Savior proclaimed in their ears, is there anything God resents more strongly? It is bad enough for one man to lift his hand against another; and we justly abhor the man that would lift his hand against his father or his mother. But when we think of what Father sent His Son to be a Savior how awful the wickedness of despising both, and therein of rejecting the gospel of salvation!

People pretend that they do not mean evil when they say man is but a developed monkey. But such ideas originate from the desire in man to get rid of responsibility and of God. None of that folly! You are moral beings; you have souls, you have consciences. You know very well that you are not brute beasts. You consciously have in your souls, in spite of all efforts, a dread of God, a fear of punishment for sins. A hare does not sin, nor a horse or cow; and you would be shocked at the philosopher who tried to prove that a horse, cow, or hare, had a sense of right or wrong, no less than a man. You might not be able to answer the sophistry, but you would feel that he was deceiving you.

Man is conscious of sin, and fears God; but God sent His only-begotten Son to save sinners. Hence all is changed for those that believe, and for more too. Look at the blessed change that has come over us in these very lands. Time was when our ancestors ran wild in woods, when our forefathers were stained blue, when they sacrificed their fellow-creatures, and when the most shocking immorality prevailed. Elsewhere a man might marry several wives; but in this very land several men lived with one woman; and in this very land children, and even men and women, were burned in honor of their gods who were not God. What has changed all that? The name of Jesus. Even those that are not won to the True, but try to prove there is no God at all, reap incalculable benefit from the purging away of all that detestable filth and cruelty. What swept it away? Was there no cause for it? Leave that irrationalism to the infidel. But one cause adequately accounts for such effects: only the name of Jesus—indisputably His name. Before His name was known these abominations flourished. Even the Romans, with all their power, only sinned after another manner—perhaps more decently; yet were they idolatrous and unclean. Is this the case where men really believe in Jesus? Nay, is this the case outwardly where men, even without living faith in the Lord Jesus, still respect the Bible?

I was speaking to a particularly wicked skeptic the other day in London, when he said to me deliberately, “I do not believe the Bible; but if I had the power, I should have the Bible read by every one.” How strange such homage to the Bible! He acknowledged the moral power of the word, and that there was nothing like it. Frankly however I do not believe he he would thus use power if he possessed it: you can never trust men of this stamp; yet is his remark an unmistakable and unwilling testimony to the power of Christ and His word.

On the other hand, people who hold the Bible only in the intellect are in danger of letting it slip altogether, and of becoming downright infidels. A tendency of that kind is at work among young men now. They begin more than ever to talk disrespectfully of those who are ministers. Now, it is not my business in any way to uphold the clergy; but still I have a horror of pulling down religion that is a reality, and I have the greatest love for many clergymen. Everything that is real, righteous or good—whether it be in what people call a state-church, or in a non-established Christian society—whatever is of God I would honor and love. And every one who is of God—every man who is a minister of Christ, not merely in word but in deed and in truth—is surely to be honored and loved. I may not agree with him; and of course he may not agree with me. You cannot expect one to uphold another if they differ rather seriously. But, then, you must remember that all other things are small compared with the word and Spirit of God, with Christ Himself and with Christ's redemption. What ecclesiastical difference is to be compared with the revelation in Christ, or of God in the Bible? Of course those differences have their due importance: and let me say that I felt them important enough to leave all that was dear to me in this way on earth. Still, we surely ought to rank the Christ's person and God's word unhesitatingly above ecclesiastical questions.

And see how simple it is. The only possible means for men to know God is through His making Himself known to men. I admit that for a long time the word of God was not written. For more than two thousand years the word of God was not yet written. Men had no more than the word of God spoken, and that little word uttered in the garden of Eden—supplemented by the promises that came afterward, as well as by manifestations that God gave from time to time—was quite enough, when God had not added more, for men to live and die and go to heaven upon.

Nor is it absolutely necessary that a man should read. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” How many had only “heard” that word, and truly looked for the coming Savior! A man's whole life is affected by this, not by deep study, but whether he rests entirely on Christ or he is trying to save himself. What a change faith in Christ effects! Receiving Him as the Son of God with my heart, and my conscience bowing to the truth which convicts me, I love Him because He first loved me. Is not this the gospel? And there in germ at least it was in Eden— “the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.” It is the everlasting gospel.

Long afterward—and there was wisdom in the arrangement—when man's age began to be shortened to its present limit, God made a written revelation. Some make merry at the idea; but the time will come when they must weep. Faith sees Divine wisdom where incredulity mocks. Do you not see that when man's age is expressly said to be shortened to threescore years and ten (Psa. 90), Moses, the man of God, was first used to write down this word? Scripture, therefore, is more than the word. It was the word before Scripture, but now Scripture is God's word written by inspired men. So all Scripture teaches. Any one who is familiar with the New Testament will admit this. “Every scripture [is] given by inspiration of God.” This is an important statement, because it shows that the Holy Spirit was providing for what was not yet written—for the Gospel and the Revelation of John, as examples, not yet written. Every scripture—whether what was written or what was going to be written—every scripture is given by inspiration of God.

I am perfectly aware that some learned persons translate it thus— “Every scripture, being inspired of God, [is] profitable.” What difference is there? A shade in the form—nothing in the substance. The difference is that the one rendering is the assertion that it is inspired of God; the other admits or assumes that it is inspired of God. Whether it be an admission or an assertion makes no difference for anything at present before us. The point is that it is inspired of God, if you believe the apostle Paul.

The entire subject is opened out remarkably in the second chapter of 1 Corinthians where is she wn the part the Holy Ghost takes in three ways. It is by the Holy Ghost that the things are given (ver. 12); and the Holy Ghost it is by whom we receive, what is by Him revealed and communicated (ver. 4-16). Supposing you had a revelation of the mind of God, if it be not communicated in fit words, others would not be able to apprehend it. The truth would be seen but dimly; just as light passing through a colored medium seems to alter the color of the thing it falls upon. But the Spirit of God cares for duly communicating in words the truth of God. Then, again, your minds are not capable of taking in the truth: but the Spirit of God deigns to work in man. In what believers? The apostles or the early disciples only? God forbid we should be so unbelieving! The very thing that has preserved the church of God all through the ages has been the possession of the Spirit. This is a cardinal truth of Scripture. Every godly Presbyterian or Independent or Wesleyan Methodist or Anglican has the Holy Ghost, just as much as the people whom they call—I do not call them—Plymouth Brethren.

It is not at all a question of setting up any one class, of course one's own: to my mind a low, bad, and perilous conceit. Were a man to rise with the cry, “You cannot get the Holy Ghost unless you join us,” I might well reply, “My friend, has the Lord not shown you that it is never a mark of the truth for people to draw others into their ranks by promising the Holy Ghost to such as join themselves?” Such pretensions ought rather to warn off. The Spirit is received by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2), by believing the gospel; and, thank God, the gospel of salvation, if preached fully by but few, is confined to none. It is no doubt an excellent thing to have the gospel preached; not alone simply and freely but fully; and I have a judgment where it is simply, freely, and fully preached, though it might be unbecoming to say where. Of this it is for other people to judge in their consciences, examining the word of God. But this I do say—every real child of God who is resting faith on the work of Christ has the Holy Ghost. Consequently he has the Spirit of power, and not life only. The new nature or life is not the same thing as the Spirit of God, because the new birth is called a new creation, and the Holy Ghost is not a creature, but a divine person. How few know they have the Spirit of God!

I remember being much struck with an instance of this some years ago. A poor Christian friend had been a bad man in his early days, a smuggler; so that, as you may suppose, he was a very rough sort of man before God brought him to a knowledge of himself; but he was a genuine saint of God in the after-part of his life. A physician, who was also a friend of mine and a Christian, attended him when very ill, and ordered certain things. The man looked up simply, and said, “Well, Sir, I must be careful what I do and what I take; for you know, my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.” The physician thought the man utterly deranged; so little are people used to such language in daily walk. It is all very well, they think, to have all that in the Bible; but they never think of hearing it in common things. Yet the aim of faith is to bring the things that are in the Bible into every-day work; and it is from want of this that so many Christians do not know, walk, and worship, better than we see. They think the Bible is something, to be kept quite apart from ordinary life. On the contrary, scripture is given to be in-woven and to interpenetrate with every duty and joy and sorrow of every day. Would to God that we lived, and so reflected, it better! Would to God that our worship, wherever we might be, and all our conversation, were more simply a savor of Christ to God!

People sometimes give religious conversation a bad name, because they know that, when a rogue wants to get money, he is apt to come with a grave face and talks “Dear brother,” and all that kind of thing, in order to accomplish covetous ends. But can this justify others who are afraid that it is downright hypocrisy to be brimfull of the Savior and the things of God? There can be no question, indeed, that the Savior meant, and the apostles also, as inspired by the Holy Ghost, that we should really be every day waiting for Christ—that we should be in all things great or small serving the Lord Jesus—bearing shame and trial, insult and injury, with patience, yet joy, as pleasing the Savior. Take for instance, a Christian with a capricious master. If the servant does not think of Christ, he may be always murmuring and complaining at his lot; whereas if he does or bears all to Christ, he accepts each burden gladly in His name. Faith in Christ changes the whole race of things where it is a present living reality. How is this made good? In the power of the Spirit who directs the eyes to Christ.

The Spirit of God is, however, given to every man—not in the world, but in the church, to the believer only (1 Cor. 12). There is no such thing as the Holy Ghost sealing an unbeliever. The Society of Friends consists largely of morally respectable persons; but herein their doctrine is fundamentally wrong, in that they hold that the Spirit of God is given to every one absolutely. This is a total mistake. For the grand difference between the church and the world is that the world has not the Spirit—seeing not nor knowing Him; but the church possesses the Spirit, and, what is more, the Christian also. That gift is true both individually and collectively; and the consequence is that both the church and the individual are bound to walk and worship in the Spirit. A solemn responsibility indeed! And the way it works is this; the Holy Spirit does not glorify Himself Still less will He glorify man in his natural state. Nay, He does not even glorify the church. He is here to glorify Jesus. This is the test, the chief and best— “He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:13-15).

I have not gone into any great detail. I would rejoice to enter into all the books of the Bible, as I have been doing, indeed, of late in more than one place; and therefore the subject is fresh in my mind. But I have endeavored to speak to you in the plainest simplest manner as to that which is most important for your souls; and I do entreat of the Lord that He may awaken in your heart more firmness of faith in these days when so many are departing from the truth.

A short time ago, a certain dignitary in the land that border this on the south published a sermon to the Jews, urging them to abandon their faith and to accept the Messiah. To this a Jew replied that he thought it would be imprudent and unreasonable for him to give up a religion which even his lordship admitted to be of divine authority, for a further revelation of which he was not sure; more particularly as so many bearing the name of Christians were now abandoning Christianity. It was a humbling rejoinder; and all too true: not that it will avail him for a moment when he stands before the Lord Jesus Christ for judgment.

Still it is a solemn fact that men are becoming skeptical: and the reason partly is this—the unreality of much profession, not to say of many who are really Christians. We ought all to take it to heart. I believe that, just so far as we do not walk according to Christ, we are hardening the hearts of unbelievers. What profanity to use the gospel to make people decent men and women without being Christians at all!! For, if it is merely a creed—faith, men think there is not very much to choose between a Christian and an infidel. Though I have referred to the putting down of open immorality and downright wickedness of all kinds as the effect of Christianity even outwardly received, still the one thing for the Christian is this, that at all times he should be able to say, “For me to live is Christ” —not merely to belong to Him, but, “For me to live is

Christ.” How is this done? By the Holy Ghost giving the word power in the soul, with self so judged that Christ may be all. God grant that He may work so in us all! Amen.

The Word of God, Word of God, The: Part 1

When God made man, He did not make him as he is, any more than the world as it is. He made everything good, but He was not pleased to put forth His power to keep everything good. He was pleased to put the creature to the proof. He tried the creature in two great spheres above and below. The angels fell before man; and the chief of those that fell above is the great tempter. No man can account for sin, for the ruin of the world, in any other way than Scripture reveals. Many a man has essayed to do so. The brightest wits and the greatest minds have attempted it; but they have never conceived anything that was not rubbish when they have not followed the word of God. Some have endeavored to account for sin by supposing that there are two Gods—a good one and a bad one; because there are evidences of goodness all around us, and there are too plainly the evidences of badness. This hypothesis, I need not stay to show, is sheer folly. There is but one who is Almighty; and man cannot get rid of the consciousness of One—not merely one thing but One Being—One who has power and will and purpose, One who has affections no less than mind, but who, nevertheless, subjects the creatures that He made to a moral probation. If He kept everything from falling, there could be no such trial at all. All would be mechanical or chemical; and the wonderful scene of the conflict of good and evil—of good wrought by His grace in the heart of man, and rising above Satan's power and wiles of evil—would be quite lost. What is still more important, the active display of love and righteousness on God's part, of moral qualities reproduced in repentant believing man, would be completely destroyed, if it were merely divine power so keeping the creature that there could be no failure.

But evil never came from God—only from the creature once innocent, now fallen, that kept not his first estate, but chose to do his own will and have his own way. An angel did this first. Man was misled by him who, straying and exalting himself, beguiled others both in heaven and on earth. That creature is called Satan—the Devil. All efforts to get rid of this fact have proved utterly vain, so much so that the boasted lights of antiquity fell consequently into one or other of these notions: either that God is everything, which denies sin; or, secondly, that there is no such being as God at all; while both cases led to worshipping ever so many false gods. Witness now the two greatest philosophers of Greece who have exercised perhaps the largest and most enduring influence over civilized men outside the Bible—the one the head of Pantheism, the other of Atheism. There is what man's thought ends in when it is logically carried out. Man in his fallen estate may reason God away; yet he excludes God, not from his conscience, but in his reason; for at the bottom of the man's heart who does so there is the uneasy feeling that what he sees around him did not grow like a potato—least of all, he himself and his fellows. He feels that, though fallen, he is a moral being who will have to give an account of his action; and to whom but to God— the One who made him and all things?

The creature, having fallen from God, has lost the truth. No longer innocent, he has God as his Judge. Satan lost Him first, forever and his angels. Man and his race have lost Him; but oh what mercy now shines on us! Yet you, dear friends, every one of you, like myself, once had Him not. Have you found Him? Do you know Him? Do not tell me you cannot. You cannot of yourselves: man cannot by searching find out God. But God can reveal Himself. It is true, a keen infidel who is still living [?] said the contrary—said it was impossible for God to make a revelation of Himself; but the book in which he, a Deist, said this proved the folly of it. If an infidel can make a revelation of his mind to do people mischief, I suppose God can make a revelation of His mind to do men good. Is not this reasoning a sound and sufficient answer? Can any man, save an atheist, deny the force or the reality of it? If a had being can reveal his mind to ruin, cannot the All-wise and All-good reveal His mind to save? Of course He can. The notion, therefore, that God cannot reveal His mind is not only false but denies that He is light and love—a falsehood that is contradicted by the very effort to argue in its support. The writer makes a revelation of his mind, such as it is; and we reply, If man can make a revelation of his mind, surely God can of His: otherwise you are reduced to the absurdity, that what is possible to man is impossible to God. Is this reasonable, or is it folly? Can any man in this room maintain that, what a man can do in his feeble way, God cannot do in His blessed and almighty way

Now the Bible lets us see from the first—and it is worthy of God—that no sooner had man turned against God through the instigation of a mightier rebel than himself, than a way of escape for man on God's part was opened up in hope. Man succumbed to Satan working upon the will of the woman. Ah! how natural it is, as most know quite well—how true to the heart of both. The woman's feelings get entangled, and she is deceived. A man, if God were not concerned, properly loves his wife, and can not bear to leave her alone. His affections engage him; everything as a man and a husband combines to make him go along with her, although here alas! it was rebellion against God. This is exactly what Scripture lets us see in Adam and Eve. The devil knew what he was about. Eve was deceived—Adam was not. She was drawn into sin, and through her Satan misled Adam into sin boldly; and such has been the history of many a man and woman since then.

This does not throw blame on the woman only. They must divide the sin between them; and he is a base man who would try, as Adam did afterward, to throw the whole on his wife. But it is the effect of sin. He, who ought to have been her shelter and protector, first followed the bad example and then betrayed her—as it were, an informer against her. How degrading is sin! So it was from the first, and is to the last.

Now, let us look at God. We have seen enough of Satan and enough of man for the moment; let us turn to Him who here comes on the scene, and whose first word shows the havoc that the devil had made. “Adam, where art thou?” No readiness to meet God now—no candor, confidence, or truthfulness; man hides himself, in despair, behind the trees in the garden, with a bad conscience. “Adam, where art thou?” Man was gone from God. This is the state of man still, of all mankind, of every one of us naturally. I do not say that we all abide there now. Thanks be to God, He is a Savior God. But He judges sin. In Himself He is light and He is love. Our sins make Him a Judge: His grace made Him a Savior. We all naturally think of God as a Judge, because we all naturally more or less have a sense of sin; and guilt always dreads a moral account, the retribution, the judgment of God. Conscience erects a judgment-seat, even before man must rise from the grave to stand before the great white throne and give in his account. A man may try to get rid of it, and he may do so while pre-occupied. He may drug himself with ample material in this poor stupefying world, with its varied and intoxicating pleasures; but the moment of sobriety, the anguish of self-judgment, comes, and God is on the judgment-seat of conscience.

Scripture says that God did then deal with man —fallen man—to lay his sin upon his conscience, and to trace its root to the evil personage that had brought it in, and to announce the glorious truth of grace meeting the evil and ruin, of grace providing a righteous way of escape. If ever there was a worthy purpose for revelation, this must be one. And this is exactly what Scripture reveals. It is not the dream of the gods

coming down to indulge themselves in wickedness, as some of the greatest wits in this world have believed. They had sunk low enough to receive that their deities were drunkards, fornicators, thieves and liars. Such were they whom the heathen adored, and amongst the heathen were some of the brightest men that ever lived. It was not for want of intellect or refined culture, nor for want of learning any more than logical power, that they fell into such gross deceits. No one can say this who knows the history of the world, and of the men upon it.

Apart from the Bible, there is sin, misery, ruin, and death. Scripture lets in the light of God, and that light assuredly is far from being the lurid menace of punishment merely. It reveals incomparably more and brighter things than the awful scene where sinners are judged for their sins. This there is and ought to be for those who defy and reject grace—for those who in the face of the Savior's cross deny God coming down to man, deeply pitying him, and fully providing for his salvation. The Bible accounts for sin but never justifies or slights it. Man, under Satan, wrought that evil thing. The Bible shows the way out of sin, and that the only way to the Father is by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, coming into this world, and that, too, given and sent by God, not implored by man. Not man devised the plan or even sought that God would of His mercy carry it out. Man never thought of it; for he with a bad conscience never expects good from God. For his soul to be saved, and his sins to be blotted out, for God to love him, and to put the best robe upon the poor ragged prodigal, for the father at the very start to embrace him, and then to bring him into such a place of joy as he never knew before—man never had so much as an inkling of grace like this.

(To be continued)

[W. K.]

The Word of God, Word of God, The: Part 2

Yet this the Bible shows is God's love to sinners, especially in the New Testament. But the man that does not believe the Old Testament is not to be trustee about the New. If a soul cavils about Genesis, I should not trust him about Romans. I know there are men who say that the New Testament is a grand book, and will confess that the first chapter of John is more sublime than anything Plato or Aristotle ever wrote. To be sure it is, infinitely so. But the man that pretends to exalt John and depreciate Moses I would not trust for a moment, because that which Moses was the instrument of revealing lays the foundation for all that John gives us. You cannot understand the blessing of the Second man—the last Adam—unless you have seen the creation and fall of the first man, Adam. There is, therefore, between the Old and New Testaments an organic unity. Nothing more remarkable than this, however much one may differ from the other.

When you see a tree, you do not require a philosopher to tell you that, when it is complete, it has all its parts with striking appropriateness—that the deep root, which penetrates the soil and gathers the materials of nourishment for the trunk and its offshoots, is as necessary for its growth as the branches and the leaves—that what is unseen is as thoroughly ordered by One who perfectly knew, as that which is visible; and that from the tree man reaps benefit, and even the cattle, for God takes in everything. Not a little tiny insect, not the greatest of quadrupeds, not a human being, that does not in some way or another reap all suited good from God; and even those things that might seem to be obnoxious in themselves form part of a vast scheme of God's contrivance, of His forethought, of His abundant provision for the wants of men or beasts here below. There is no stinginess, if I may say so, about God. He does not merely give us the things we absolutely need. This is not the way God treats man or any creature. You have only to look when the sun shines, you have but to think of the rich beauty of the earth around you—though it be a groaning creation—to see what pleasure God takes in goodness abounding. He did not make things to die, but to live in endless variety. He declares that He is not the God of the dead but of the living—this no doubt said in the highest sense is in every other way true. You see a blighted earth now; but even the blighted earth everywhere bears its testimony to the beneficent wisdom of its Maker.

But earth and sea and sky just as plainly afford traces of some dreadful evil that has passed over all —of an enemy's hand that has been there and sown evil. There is not a tempest that rages, there is not a volcano that pours out its destructive lava, there is not a blast of lightning, but tells that there is, above, below, around, disorder in this once untainted universe. And how much more, when you come down to the moral evil under which groans every town, and every hamlet; ay, perhaps every home, even the happiest hearth, has had its blight. And whence comes this? From God? Never. A being of perfect goodness and power, who would make the world and man as they are, is morally an impossible thought. But God never made the world as it now is; He did make it, but He made it good. God did not create anything unworthy of Himself.

And just here is where the value of the word of God comes in. The Bible hears witness of the grace of God meeting the ruin that man and Satan have wrought between them. It is not merely goodness in natural things, but in holy love, which, recognizing and judging the evil fully, nevertheless comes down to get rid of it, and this at His own expense, and, let me add, by suffering beyond all measure. What is all that the men who ever lived have had to endure compared to the sufferings of Christ? I do not speak of what man did against Christ, but above all of what God did in His cross. You do not believe it! Then you must settle this with Christ Himself. What was there so bitter or awful in the cup He had to drink as God's making Him sin for us, when He forsook Him? How do we know? He who is “the truth” declares it—said so on the cross—said so with His dying lips, when even false men will sometimes speak the truth: how much more He who never said aught else but the truth, who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life!” Yet for our sins He died, and tasted death as none other ever did. He tasted not merely death upon the cross, but therein the judgment of God. And there is the ground on which God can be a God of all grace, the basis of grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. For He who thus died is risen—risen to be the Savior, as He is if rejected the Judge.

Accordingly the foundation principle of this—the first germ of this weightiest of truths in the Bible—is given in the same chapter which shows us man departing from God—man forsaking God, and not God forsaking man. God forsook His Son on the cross, that He might not forsake the poorest of sinners that looks to Him. In that chapter (Gen. 3) you have a Savior revealed to hope; and such is the allusion of the “everlasting gospel” in the Revelation. Does not this show you what a wonderful book the Bible is? It stretches over many centuries. It was written, parts of it, by kings, and by shepherd-boys, by priests, by soldiers, by civilians; by what one might call comprehensively men of every class, from the fishers of the Galilaean Sea to the learned Jew of Tarsus, one of the most famous seats of philosophers at that time in the world, the rival of Athens. And yet in all the vast scope of its variety, Scripture stretching in its penmen from the days of Moses to those of the last apostle, in its themes from eternity to eternity, there is under all honest tests the most perfect harmony.

Beware, then, of those who would have you give up Moses. Listen not to the siren voices that would seek to charm you away from the truth of God, and more if they dare to tell you that they are not undermining the Bible, but only denying Moses. Alas! my good friends, to deny Moses is to undermine Christ; for Christ says that Moses wrote of Him. Christ had no question; and this is what satisfies a plain man that believes in Him. People may talk about evidences; and, of course, it is all very fine to do so with those who are not familiar with the subject, and have scanty knowledge of the original tongues. Of one thing let me remind all whether knowing these languages or not—and it is this. Many a one knows a little Greek and some less Hebrew; but what of that? You know English; but it does not follow that you have at all a mastery of the language. Remember then that most of the young men who learn Hebrew and Greek at college are very far from having a mastery of these languages. Most have a smattering, and this is all. They are then turned off to their parishes and pulpits, where they have no time to become real scholars, as they ought not to pretend to it. This is not said out of the slightest disrespect; but simply to show you the folly of supposing that merely cunning through a grammar and a few works in a foreign tongue makes it really known. Not at all. Most graduates (no matter what the degree or where) would find it hard to translate unseen Hebrew or Greek. They do not know either of these languages in the least as you all know English; and yet for all that would any of you set up to be great English scholars? Even ordinarily fair and easy translation (to which few are equal without effort and preparation) is but a small step in learning. Enough however on that point.

But I press this upon you—that God has in Christ's testimony given the believer incomparably better proof than all evidences put together. Do you believe in Him the Son of God? I am now speaking to such. Some might appeal to persons who have no living faith but a mere creed, to those who talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, as others would of Socrates or Gautama Buddha, who are yet perfectly certain that the facts are true, and that His recorded words are substantially authentic. This is coming down low enough. Yet on the lowest of all grounds, on that of creed, men have still some respect for the authority of the Word made flesh of Him who is perfect Man and true God. Now, not only is He spoken of in this word, but He speaks of God's word authoritatively and unmistakably.

There is no use to try and shirk the truth by mustering difficulties and saying, “Ah! we don't know that.” Here is a book unlike all other books, bearing the stamp of truth and holiness upon it as no other book ever written. Here you have testimony borne to the blessed One, by His apostles, whose lives and works, miraculous or not, were a bright evidence of His divine truth, grace, and power. What totally different men they became, from what they were! They used to be prejudiced, narrow-minded Jews, utterly indifferent to souls, wholly wrapt up in their own dry traditions. See how in a short time, amazingly short indeed, all was changed, and changed in virtue of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ applied to their souls by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. They gave it as their testimony—sealed not merely by blood but by a course of such lowly yet faithful devotedness as the world had never seen—that the Lord Jesus uniformly treated the Bible (that is, of course, the Old Testament) as beyond question the word of God; that Moses wrote the law; that it was not Moses' talk, which later authors wrote—not merely traditions and legends strung together partly by himself, partly by people who lived after him: the Pentateuch was written by himself. And thus in all sorts of questions you find not only His authority coming in, but the man Moses himself, as the inspired servant. of God, appealed to by the Lord. “He [Moses] wrote of me.”

How happy it is that a plain man or woman, or even a child, can feel the force of this testimony Every one of you will stand before the Lord Jesus, who is the Judge both of the dead and of the living; and He has pronounced judgment upon this question. Ought it not to be fairly faced? Do you believe men—perhaps young daring men who have studied Hebrew, but with the most superficial knowledge of the Bible? or do you believe the Lord God in the person of Christ?

Look at the position of the world when the Son of God came down and gave this testimony. He stands between the two Testaments, as it were—at the end of the Old, at the beginning of the New. He pronounces upon the Old. He divides it into its parts—the three divisions with which every Jew was acquainted—the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets: the Psalms taking in the poetical books, the Prophets comprehending more than we call prophetical, the Law embracing the books of Moses. There you have substantially the Scriptures called the Old Testament. The Lord, when risen from the dead, bore testimony to the authority of these books (Luke 24). Surely you do not think that even an ordinary man carries his prejudices into the life beyond the grave!

In this world men may make mistakes, but not in the next: all illusion is then over. Just think of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. You find the rich man there waking up to the reality of things. Then he cries “Father Abraham!” Then he feels what sin is, and its immediate torment, although there be not the final sentence, but the separate state. That rich man then feels how blessed is the once wretched beggar—wretched in this world—but blessed in the next, where angels carried him to Abraham's bosom. Blessed picture of God's goodness at length to a long despised sufferer, who clung in faith to His truth. In vain the rich man prays for his five brethren, that some one would go and warn them lest they should have his portion in torment. What does Scripture say? “They have Moses and the prophets.” Moses—not some prophet in the days of King Josiah who wrote a religious romance for the Bible in Moses' name. Do you ask, Who speaks so wickedly? Possibly the voice of a faithless Jew or a blaspheming Gentile? I grieve to say it is too common a voice in Christendom, echoed in Scotland.

Is it not a portentous thing that men should come to such a pass? To deny the genuineness of the books of Moses is a daring insult, not only to the Scriptures, but to the Son of God Himself. It is giving the lie to the Savior, and the Judge of all. Yet men are to be found who deny to Moses the Books of the Law—most audaciously of all, the last one that professes to come most directly from his mouth. Nevertheless if there is the least trustworthiness in Deuteronomy, it is what Moses said himself. It is not merely what he collected, or what he caused to be written, but what he uttered also.

Of course by this nobody means—except Jews perhaps—that Moses wrote the last chapter about his death and burial. I do not say it is impossible, and that God might not have revealed these things to him. But there is no need to assume any such anticipation. There is an evident break after the closing and crowning song of Moses; and the last chapter is clearly, in my judgment, added by an inspired person who took up and thus continued the record of the enlarging and developing purposes of God. No need therefore, for any bit of superstition—as I conceive it is—in supposing that Moses necessarily wrote the account of his own death. There are in Scripture evident traces of the hand of an inspired editor—of one raised up by God to put the books of the Bible together. You must remember they came out separately. Not only have they been combined —since, but there are, here and there, what one may call inspired insertions. God can give an inspired editor as well as an inspired writer. Every Scripture is inspired, and so was the person who edited it and added these joints and hands when the time came to close the canon of Scripture. It is only unbelief that makes difficulties out of that which is plain enough.

But what shocks every spiritual and even moral sensibility is that any person bearing the name of a Christian—nay, of a Christian minister—should couple fiction with the books of Moses, as if they were only a religious novel founded on traditional facts and documents—on

what it was conceived Moses might have said—put together ever so many hundreds of years after the legislator died. Divine wisdom has taken particular pains on this point. Christ says, Moses wrote so and so; it is not somebody else imputing it to him, but Himself vouching for Moses in a way that He does rarely for any other. “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” And so it has been. Those who hear not Christ in the Gospels, reject His resurrection.

We ought to feel thankful that Scripture is so written; because it is the fatality of unbelief to degrade man as well as God—not really to exalt either. Unbelief, too, is blind enough to attack the very thing that is strongest, requiring therefore no support by arguments drawn from other passages. Take a quite different illustration. There are those that idolize the virgin Mary to the depression of the Lord Jesus; yet how remarkably Scripture contradicts the notion, and protests against it by anticipation! It is left for our instruction in the Gospels that the virgin Mary never asked the Lord anything but what the Lord, instead of granting at once, modified at the least. Again see how God guards against unduly exalting Peter as the head (practically as a foundation-stone if you please) of the Christian church. In the very chapter from which men deduce the idea that he is the rock of the church, the Lord calls him Satan. Strange rock he to be sure! Peter was a very honored servant of God, but even such an one may at times say or do something utterly reprehensible. Therefore it is we cannot trust ourselves. The Christian is a fool who trusts himself; and therefore the Lord rebuked Peter for our profit, as well as for his own. The very God who was going to use and to honor Peter still proves what Peter was in himself. The moment he looked away from the Lord, he was as liable as any other to be turned aside into some evil snare of the devil.

Apart from the Lord, you are nothing and can do nothing.

(Continued from page 19)

(To be continued)

The Word of God, Word of God, The: Part 3

(Continued from page 36)

But again observe God from the very earliest bringing in what the book of Revelation calls the “everlasting gospel.” How remarkable a phrase is this! Many a man has read and cited these words in chap. 14 of the Revelation; many have thought of them; and not a few have explained the thought unwisely, no doubt. The phrase never occurs except in this one place. Why is it called the “everlasting gospel"? There is always a propriety and a force in every word of Scripture. Let me tell you, as far as the Lord enables me. In the last book of the New Testament the Spirit of God recalls the first revelation of Christ in the Old Testament. In the garden of Eden, in the paradise that was blighted and lost by sin, God did not fail to point to the Seed of the woman—the bruised Seed of the woman, remark—that was to bruise the serpent's head. Is not this gospel? Has it not been blessed gospel from the very first? Is it not also the gospel to the very last— “everlasting gospel"? There is as yet no allusion to His being sacrificed for us. This could not be until offering or sacrifices distinctly came in. Nor was there yet a revelation of Him as Savior of His people from their sins. His people, of course, had to be called first, and their ruin shown first and last, salvation being fitly explained afterward. It is not the notion of priesthood. It is not the figure of a captain. Still less is it the truth of the head of the church. All these things were revealed in their due season. But the last book in the New Testament sends you back to the first book of the Old; and thus you hear the blessed voice of Christ, as it were, reverberating through all Scripture an “everlasting gospel.” And why so? Because God ever takes pleasure in saving souls, and, in order to save sinners, there must ever be an “everlasting gospel.”

I speak at present of those that hear the truth—of those that listen to the word of God. Infants are not now in our view. Not that there is the least doubt that God's grace does save little children, but there is a somewhat different way of course. It is wholly unscriptural that God punishes babes if they are not christened. There is not the slightest ground for a thought so unworthy of God, so harsh to man in one way, so self-exalting to him in another. You may ask how one can know. Do you know it? How do you know anything? Through Jesus—the same One brought in to prove the Bible. Jesus the Lord shows us very clearly that the God who gave the law is greater than the law itself, and that God was showing Himself in divine grace to be much greater than in judgment. The judgment of God is a solemn certainty; but the grace of God a still deeper truth. God manifest in the flesh, God present upon earth in the person of His own Son, shows us what God feels about little children. The disciples did not like to be troubled with them. They thought it was too bad to take up their great Master's time with mere children. How did the Lord answer it? He took them up in His arms and blessed them—a good lesson for the disciples. How often they need the Lord to correct their inadequate notions! If the Lord took up and blessed little children, does it not tell me what God feels about them. He does not bless little children on earth to send them dying to hell. But if they lived to rebel against His word and against His Son the Lord Jesus, if the children when grown up dare to despise Him that died on the cross, if they refuse to accept the Savior proclaimed in their ears, is there anything God resents more strongly? It is bad enough for one man to lift his hand against another; and we justly abhor the man that would lift his hand against his father or his mother. But when we think of what Father sent His Son to be a Savior how awful the wickedness of despising both, and therein of rejecting the gospel of salvation!

People pretend that they do not mean evil when they say man is but a developed monkey. But such ideas originate from the desire in man to get rid of responsibility and of God. None of that folly! You are moral beings; you have souls, you have consciences. You know very well that you are not brute beasts. You consciously have in your souls, in spite of all efforts, a dread of God, a fear of punishment for sins. A hare does not sin, nor a horse or cow; and you would be shocked at the philosopher who tried to prove that a horse, cow, or hare, had a sense of right or wrong, no less than a man. You might not be able to answer the sophistry, but you would feel that he was deceiving you.

Man is conscious of sin, and fears God; but God sent His only-begotten Son to save sinners. Hence all is changed for those that believe, and for more too. Look at the blessed change that has come over us in these very lands. Time was when our ancestors ran wild in woods, when our forefathers were stained blue, when they sacrificed their fellow creatures, and when the most shocking immorality prevailed. Elsewhere a man might marry several wives; but in this very land several men lived with one woman; and in this very land children, and even men and women, were burned in honor of their gods who were not God. What has changed all that? The name of Jesus. Even those that are not won to the True, but try to prove there is no God at all, reap incalculable benefit from the purging away of all that detestable filth and cruelty. What swept it away? Was there no cause for it? Leave that irrationalism to the infidel. But one cause adequately accounts for such effects: only the

name of Jesus—indisputably His name. Before His name was known these abominations flourished. Even the Romans, with all their power, only sinned after another manner —perhaps more decently; yet were they idolatrous and unclean. Is this the case where men really believe in Jesus? Nay, is this the case outwardly where men, even without living faith in the Lord Jesus, still respect the Bible?

I was speaking to a particularly wicked skeptic the other day in London, when he said to me deliberately, “I do not believe the Bible; but if I had the power, I should have the Bible read by everyone.” How strange such homage to the Bible! He acknowledged the moral power of the word, and that there was nothing like it. Frankly, however, I do not believe he would thus use power if he possessed it: you can never trust men of this stamp; yet is his remark an unmistakeable and unwilling testimony to the power of Christ and His word.

On the other hand, people who hold the Bible only in the intellect are in danger of letting it slip altogether, and of becoming downright infidels. A tendency of that kind is at work among young men now. They begin more than ever to talk disrespectfully of those who are ministers. Now, it is not my business in any way to uphold the clergy; but still I have a horror of pulling down religion that is a reality, and I have the greatest love for many clergymen. Everything that is real, righteous or good—whether it be in what people call a state-church, or in a non-established Christian society—whatever is of God I would honor and love. And every one who is of God—every man who is a minister of Christ, not merely in word but in deed and in truth—is surely to be honored and loved. I may not agree with him; and of course he may not agree with me. You cannot expect one to uphold another if they differ rather seriously. But, then, you must remember that all other things are small compared with the word and Spirit of God, with Christ Himself and with Christ's redemption. What ecclesiastical difference is to be compared with the revelation in Christ, or of God in the Bible? Of course those differences have their due importance: and let me say that I felt them important enough to leave all that was dear to me in this way on earth. Still, we surely ought to rank Christ's person and God's word unhesitatingly above ecclesiastical questions.

And see how simple it is. The only possible means for men to know God is through His making Himself known to men. I admit that for a long time the word of God was not written. For more than two thousand years the word of God was not yet written. Men had no more than the word of God spoken, and that little word uttered in the garden of Eden—supplemented by the promises that came afterward, as well as by manifestations that God gave from time to time—was quite enough, when God had not added more, for men to live and die and go to heaven upon. Nor is it absolutely necessary that a man should read. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” How many had only “heard” that word, and truly looked for the coming Savior! A man's whole life is affected by this, not by deep study, but whether he rests entirely on Christ or he is trying to save himself. What a change faith in Christ effects! Receiving Him as the Son of God with my heart, and my conscience bowing to the truth which convicts me, I love Him because He first loved me. Is not this the gospel? And there in germ at least it was in Eden— “the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.” It is the everlasting gospel.

[W. K.]

(To be continued)

The Word of God, Word of God, The: Part 4

Long afterward—and there was wisdom in the arrangement—when man's age began to be shortened to its present limit, God made a written revelation. Some make merry at the idea; but the time will come when they must weep. Faith sees divine wisdom where incredulity mocks. Do you not see that when man's age is expressly said to be shortened to threescore years and ten (Psa. 90), Moses, the man of God, was first used to write down this word? Scripture, therefore, is more than the word. It was the word before Scripture, but now Scripture is God's word written by inspired men. So all Scripture teaches. Any one who is familiar with the New Testament will admit this. “Every scripture [is] given by inspiration of God.” This is an important statement, because it shows that the Holy Spirit was providing for what was not yet written—for the Gospel and the Revelation of John, as examples, not yet written.

Every scripture—whether what was written or what was going to be written—every scripture is given by inspiration of God.

I am perfectly aware that some learned persons translate it thus “Every scripture, being inspired of God, [is] profitable.” What difference is there? A shade in the form—nothing in the substance. The difference is that the one rendering is the assertion that it is inspired of God; the other admits or assumes that it is inspired of God. Whether it be an admission or an assertion makes no difference for anything at present before us. The point is that it is inspired of God, if you believe the apostle Paul.

The entire subject is opened out remarkably in the second chapter of 1 Corinthians where is shown the part the Holy Ghost takes in three ways. It is by the Holy Ghost that the things are given (ver. 12); and the Holy Ghost it is by whom we receive what is by Him revealed and communicated (vers. 4-16). Supposing you had a revelation of the mind of God, if it be not communicated in fit words, others would not be able to apprehend it. The truth would be seen but dimly; just as light passing through a colored medium seems to alter the color of the thing it falls upon. But the Spirit of God cares for duly communicating in words the truth of God. Then, again, your minds are not capable of taking in the truth: but the Spirit of God deigns to work in man. In what believers? The apostles or the early disciples only? God forbid we should be so unbelieving! The very thing that has preserved the church of God all through the ages has been the possession of the Spirit. This is a cardinal truth of Scripture. Every godly Presbyterian or Independent or Wesleyan Methodist or Anglican has the Holy Ghost, just as much as the people whom they call —I do not call them—Plymouth Brethren.

It is not at all a question of setting up any one class, of course one's own; to my mind a low, bad and perilous conceit. Were a man to rise with the cry, “You cannot get the Holy Ghost unless you join us,” I might well reply, “My friend, has the Lord not shown you that it is never a mark of the truth for people to draw others into their ranks by promising the Holy Ghost to such as join themselves?” Such pretensions ought rather to warn off. The Spirit is received by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2), by believing the gospel; and, thank God, the gospel of salvation, if preached by but few, is confined to none. It is no doubt an excellent thing to have the gospel preached, not alone simply and freely, but fully; and I have a judgment where it is simply, freely, and fully preached, thought it might be unbecoming to say where. Of this it is for other people to judge in their consciences, examining the word of God. But this I do say—every real child of God who is resting by faith on the work of Christ has the Holy Ghost. Consequently he has the Spirit of power, and not life only. The new nature or life is not the same thing as the

Spirit of God, because the new birth is called a new creation, and the Holy Ghost is not a creature, but a divine person. How few know they have the Spirit of God!

I remember being much struck with an instance of this some years ago. A poor Christian friend had been a bad man in his early days, a smuggler; so that, as you may suppose, he was a very rough sort of man before God brought him to a knowledge of himself; but he was a genuine saint of God in the after-part of his life. A physician, who was also a friend of mine and a Christian, attended him when very ill, and ordered certain things. The man looked up simply, and said, “Well, sir, I must be careful what I do and what I take; for you know, my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.” The physician thought the man utterly deranged; so little are people used to such language in daily walk. It is all very well, they think, to have all that in the Bible; but they never think of hearing it in common things. Yet the aim of faith is to bring the things that are in the Bible into every-day work; and it is from want of this that so many Christians do not know, walk, and worship, better than we see. They think the Bible is something to be kept quite apart from ordinary life. On the contrary, scripture is given to be inwoven and to interpenetrate with every duty and joy and sorrow of every day. Would to God that we lived, and so reflected, it better! Would to God that our worship, wherever we might be, and all our conversation, were more simply a savor of Christ to God!

People sometimes give religious conversation a bad name, because they know that, when a rogue wants to get money, he is apt to come with a grave face and talks “Dear brother,” and all that kind of thing, in order to accomplish covetous ends. But can this justify others who are afraid that it is downright hypocrisy to be brimful of the Savior and the things of God? There can be no question, indeed, that the Savior meant, and the apostles also, as inspired by the Holy Ghost, that we should really he every day waiting for Christ —that we should be in all things great or small serving the Lord Jesus—bearing shame and trial, insult and injury, with patience, yet joy, as pleasing the Savior. Take, for instance, a Christian with a capricious master. If the servant does not think of Christ, he may be always murmuring and complaining of his lot; whereas if he does or bears all to Christ, he accepts each burden gladly in His name. Faith in Christ changes the whole face of things where it is a present living reality. How is this made good? In the power of the Spirit who directs the eyes to Christ.

The Spirit of God is, however, given to every man—not in the world, but in the church, to the believer only (1 Cor. 12). There is no such thing as the Holy Ghost sealing an unbeliever. The Society of Friends consists largely of morally respectable persons; but herein their doctrine is fundamentally wrong, in that they hold that the Spirit of God is given to every one absolutely. This is a total mistake. For the grand difference between the church and the world is that the world has not the Spirit—seeing not nor knowing Him; but the church possesses the Spirit, and, what is more, the Christian also. That gift is true both individually and collectively; and the consequence is that both the church and the individual are bound to walk and worship in the Spirit. A solemn responsibility indeed! And the way it works is this; the Holy Spirit does not glorify Himself. Still less will He glorify man in his natural state. Nay, He does not even glorify the church. He is here to glorify Jesus. This is the test, the chief and best— “He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:13-15).

I have not gone into any great detail. I would rejoice to enter into all the books of the Bible, as I have been doing, indeed, of late in more than one place; and therefore the subject is fresh in my mind. But I have endeavored to speak to you in the plainest simplest manner as to, that which is most important for your souls; and I do entreat of the Lord that He may awaken in your heart more firmness of faith in these days when so many are departing from the truth.

A short time ago, a certain dignitary in the land that borders this on the south published a sermon to the Jews, urging them to abandon their faith and to accept the Messiah. To this a Jew replied that he thought it would be imprudent and unreasonable for him to give up a religion which even his lordship admitted to be of divine authority, for a further revelation of which he was not sure; more particularly as so many bearing the name of Christians were now abandoning Christianity. It was a humbling rejoinder; and all, too true; not that it will avail him for a moment when he stands before the Lord Jesus Christ for judgment.

Still it is a solemn fact that men are becoming skeptical: and the reason partly is this—the unreality of much profession, not to say of many who are really Christians. We ought all to take it to heart. I believe that, just so far as we do not walk according to Christ, we are hardening the hearts of unbelievers. What profanity to use the gospel to make people decent men and women without being Christians at all! For, if it is merely a creed-faith, men think there is not very much to choose between a Christian and an infidel. Though I have referred to the putting down of open immorality and downright wickedness of all kinds as the effect of Christianity even outwardly received, still the one thing for the Christian is this, that at all times he should be able to say, “For me to live is Christ” —not merely to belong to Him, but, “For me to live is Christ.” How is this done? By the Holy Ghost giving the word power in the soul, with self so judged that Christ may be all. God grant that He may work so in us all! Amen.

W. K.

(Concluded from page 51)

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The Christian Shepherd: 2003, Difficult Days

“In the last days perilous [difficult] times shall come” (2 Tim. 3:1).

It is clear that the Lord compares the state of men (careless, selfish, godless, guilty, dead also to what He, the rejected Messiah, had suffered for their sake) to that which brought on the two most solemn judgments which Genesis records the deluge and the destruction of Sodom by fire.

Will the revelation of the Son of Man in His day be less righteously called for? No! The last days of the Christian era will be times of excessive, abounding and audacious lawlessness as well as impiety.

It is then, when longer patience on God’s part is impossible and the time is arrived in His counsels for displacing the first man of sin [Adam’s race], his weakness, and shame by the second [Christ], that the Lord Jesus will be exalted over all creation in visible power and glory on His own throne, even as He is now in heaven on the Father’s throne ({vi 29987;30215}Heb. 2:9; 12:2).

W. Kelly

Bible Treasury: Volume N6, Man of God, A

2 Tim. 3:17

In the New Testament “the man of God” supposes one faithful in the service of souls; but the term is by no means confined to Christianity, being rather in itself a familiar Old Testament expression.

By it we may understand a believer who has the moral courage and the spiritual power to identify himself with the Lord's interests, and to maintain the good fight of faith in the midst of perils and obstacles of every sort. Such a testimony is incompatible with yielding to human principles and the spirit of the age.

We must not suppose however that fidelity in such a day as ours wears an imposing garb. An appearance of strength is out of course when declension has come in and judgment is approaching. God will have a state of ruin felt, and His testimony must be in keeping. When He calls to sackcloth and ashes, He does not give such a character of power as has price in the world's eyes. Thus one of the truest signs of practical communion with the Lord is that at such a moment one is heartily content to be little. This is reality, but it is only a little strength. It is according to the mind of God. But that which attracts the world must please and pander to the self-importance of man. The world itself is a vain show, and likes its own. Consequently there is nothing which so carries the mass of men along with it as that which flatters the vanity of the human mind. It may assume the lowliest air, but sinful man seeks his own honor and present exaltation. But when a servant of God is thus drawn into the spirit of men, he naturally shrinks back from fairly facing the solemn call of God addressed to His own, loses his bright confidence, and gets either hardened or stands in dread of the judgment of God. When Christians lose the power and reproach of the cross, philanthropy has been taken up, which gives influence among men, and general activity in what men call doing good replaces the life of faith with the vain hope of staving off the evil day in their time at any rate. One need not deny zeal and earnest pursuit of what is good morally; self-denial too one sees in spending for purposes religious or benevolent; but the man of God, now that ruin has entered the field of Christ's confession, is more urgently than ever called to be true to a crucified Christ. And as surely as He is soon coming to take us on high, He will in due time appear for the judgment of every high thought and the fairest looking enterprises of men which will all be swallowed up in the yawning gulf of the apostasy.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Having thus laid down the sacred deposit, new as well as old, in its divine authority and edifying fullness, the apostle proceeds in the beginning of this chapter to urge the earnest ministration of it with all solemnity.

“I1 testify earnestly [or, charge] before God and Christ2 Jesus that is about to judge living and dead, and3 by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; convict, rebuke,4 encourage, with all long-suffering and doctrine” (ver. 1-2).

Here there is no small discrepancy, not only as to the right reading among the ancient witnesses, but also as to the just reflection of the original text. That which has been vulgarly received accredited a connecting particle with the preceding chapter, or at least its closing topic. This, a more careful examination, or certainly a more spiritual judgment, would have shown to be uncalled for and out of place; as well as the personal emphasis of the subject. Paul on the contrary, desired evidently rather to put forward God Himself and the risen Man, Who is to deal with mankind supremely in the coming day. The order of His name, and the omission of “the Lord,” or, “ours,” here, yet worse (otherwise due and ordinarily given), are sustained by the best authorities of every kind, and fall in admirably with the context. It would seem also that the conjunction before . was not understood, and got supplanted by the preposition in order to ease the construction; which really had for effect to alter the connection of the sentence by severing “His appearing and His kingdom” from the verb at the beginning, and attaching them to the judging of the quick and dead as a date. So it stands in the Authorized and other Versions; but if we connect “His appearing and His kingdom” with the verb, a choice of version lies open to us. For we may regard the accusatives as the complement of . and translate as in Deut. 4:26, which some prefer, in the sense of calling Christ's appearing and His kingdom to witness against Christendom. But this seems far from a just analogy. Heaven and earth we can easily apprehend as thus invoked; but how about summoning Christ's appearing and His kingdom? It would be harsh indeed. How could Paul call Christ's future appearance and His kingdom to witness then, as Moses invoked heaven and earth that day to witness against Israel? The construction is therefore not really the same. Christ's appearance and His kingdom are therefore suited and most impressive grounds of appeal by which he was solemnly charging Timothy, or others like-minded and responsible, to preach, &c. The aeons. objecti appears thus quite untenable. Hence most prefer, with the Revisers, to understand the apostle to testify earnestly, without specifying Timothy, before God and Christ Jesus, and by His appearing and His kingdom, as that which gave the charge incalculable weight and awe. If be read, it is hard to see how it can be connected with the verb; for where is the sense of “I charge [thee] at His appearing and His kingdom?” The preposition compels us to make these words dependent on the participle.

Turning from this brief but dry discussion of text and translation, which nevertheless is a duty owing to the proper clearance of scripture, obscured as it has been by defective knowledge and insight, we may now the more intelligently admire the apostolic appeal. That solemn testimony is before God and Christ Jesus, Who is about to judge living and dead. It is looked at as ever imminent; or, as another apostle puts it, Christ “is ready to judge living and dead” (1 Peter 4:5). Only our text speaks of the judgment as a continuous process, the other sums it up in its conclusion. The continuous character of our Lord's judging is made if possible more evident in Acts 17:31, where the object is defined clearly as the habitable earth, not the dead (which judgment will follow in its season) but the quick: a truth, which, though owned in the ordinary symbols of Christendom, has practically dropped out of mind even for earnest and sober Christians, who are apt to fasten their eyes

exclusively on the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15).

In this solemn matter they, and the Jews, fall into opposite faults. For the Jews were full of the earthly judgment which the Messiah is assuredly to execute over all the earth, when no nation can escape; whilst they in effect thought little or nothing of the everlasting, judgment of the dead. But the Lord Jesus, as Peter solemnly testified to Cornelius, is the One ordained by God as Judge of living and dead (Acts 10:42).

As we know the generality of Christians slur over the judgment of living men on the earth, it is the more important to unfold it somewhat more. Nothing demonstrates the need of this more than the citation of Cor. 15:51, 52, and 1 Thess. 4:16, 17, as bearing on the judgment of living and dead. “We, the living that remain,” we that without having fallen asleep shall be changed, are hot in the least included in the living, and of course not in the dead, of the text before us. “We” are Christian believers, who consequently do not come into judgment as our Lord ruled in John 5:24, but shall be changed without death any more than judgment, and brought up with the dead but risen saints to meet the Lord Jesus at His coming.

There is no such thought in scripture as a future judgment of the spiritually alive, though all must be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ. This to “the spiritually dead” will of course be nothing short of coming into judgment; but the saints will be none the less manifested there, that they may know even as they are known, and each may receive the things done in the body, according to those he has done., whether good or bad. Having Christ as their life and His redemption, they were saved even here by grace through faith; they are not to be put on their trial there, as if the salvation of God were a doubtful thing. For such it will simply be manifestation in this solemn but blessed way, and this with special view to the place of each in the kingdom; for there is the revealed certainty among the saved of each receiving his own reward according to his own labor. But judgment by-and-by, for him that has eternal life and is saved, is not only flat contradiction of the express word of Christ, but irreconcilable with all that eternal blessing which the gospel attests as due to Him and His work for the believer.

The passage then does not speak of the heavenly saints, still less of those privileges of grace which are theirs in Christ, but of the judgment to come which awaits quick and dead when He is revealed to this end according to the scriptures. Other passages of holy writ show that the quick are to be judged, not only when Christ appears in glory, but all through. His kingdom, which is said to be “forever,” because it closes only with the dissolution of the heaven and the earth that now are, and the subsequent judgment of the dead, the wicked dead, who small and great stand before the throne. Their manifestation is judgment in the fullest and eternal sense; because, having rejected Christ, or at the least failed to profit by any and every testimony God gave them, it remains only that they be judged each according to his works. And their works were evil on the one hand, and on the other not one was found written in the book of life; so that all were cast into the lake of fire. Theirs is therefore a resurrection of judgment: so the Savior calls it in John 5; as that of believers is a resurrection of life—life for the bodies of all who through faith had here below received life in Christ for their souls. The apostle however is here treating of judgment, first of the quick on earth at and during the kingdom of Christ, and lastly of the dead before it is given up to Him who is God and Father, that God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) may be all in all, in the eternal state.

It will be observed that the contextual language of the apostle is most precise and explicit. When he thus testifies before God and Christ That is about to judge quick and dead, he adds “and by His appearing and His kingdom.” “His coming,” or presence, would not at all have suited; for unless it be specially qualified (as by the term “of the Son of man,” &c.), it has no proper relation to the divine dealings in judgment, but rather to God's counsels of grace. Hence the presence or coming of Christ is connected with the translation of the saints on high. When it is a question of judicial action, “His appearing” is the exactly right expression as here, and either this, or His revelation, or His day, will ever be found in this connection.

Accordingly here “His appearing” is followed by “and His kingdom,” with no less accuracy; for “His appearing” alone would not have sufficed for more than the earlier judgments to fall on the guilty living generation of that day. To cover His judging the world throughout His long reign, and particularly the dead which remain to be raised for judgment at the close, we need and have “His kingdom” also. Every word is written wisely, all is required to complete the full picture of His judging. Hence we see the mistake of those who speak of the “modificated eternity” of His mediatorial kingdom (regnum gratiae) to be succeeded by the kingdom of glory to commence at His ., or appearing. Not so; the reign for a thousand years (Rev. 20) does begin, to speak generally, when Christ is manifested in glory (as the preceding chap. 19 clearly points out). And it may be described as a modificated eternity, because it introduces His kingdom, a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all previous kingdoms, and it shall stand forever, i.e., as long as the earth endures. It is absurd to apply this to the church (or the gospel) now; for the church, if true to its principles, is ever called to suffer, not to reign till He appears in glory. The bride is to bear herself in holy separation from the world, cast out like her crucified Master, till glorified with Him at His coming. The eternal scene which knows neither end nor modification is after the kingdom is given up, the kingdom given Him as man, and shared by Him with the risen saints, reigning together as they suffered together, but given up at the end, when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For Christ must reign till then; throughout eternity God as such, not the exalted Man, will be all in all.

With this in view then, the apostle gives the charge, “Preach the word; be instant in season out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all long-suffering and doctrine.” The structure of each verb implies Prompt action. This of course is quite consistent with persevering continuance; but continuance might be, and often is, without such intensity of devotedness as is here insinuated by the rapid succession of pressures on Timothy, which did not pat even a particle to connect one with another. Proclaiming the word has the first place; urgent heed to the work in season,, out of season, follows up the preaching; convicting in the sense of proving home or reproving is enjoined as a wholesome duty, even though irksome to a tender spirit; rebuke comes afterward as necessary where fault was plain or out, as on the other hand encouragement or exhortation, where this rather was called for. In every case there was to be all long-suffering and doctrine. Who was sufficient for these things? Timothy's sufficiency, as the apostle's, was from God. So may ours be in our little measure.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 4:3-4

There is a fresh, reason which the apostle now puts forward for urgent and assiduous seal in every possible way, another grievous feature of the grievous times of the last days.

“For the time will be when they will not endure sound teaching; but according to their own lusts they will heap up to themselves teachers, having an itching ear; and from the truth they will turn away their ear, and will be turned aside unto fables”(ver. 3, 4).

It is not here the leaders whose fault is in the foreground, but the people. Elsewhere we see false teachers, and self-willed chiefs, misleading such as put their trust in them. Here, though the time was not yet come for so widespread evil, the Spirit of God speaks of it as imminent. For the time will be when they will not endure the sound teaching.” This is clearly descriptive of the prevalent state to overspread Christendom, not among Jews or heathens. It supposes those who were used to hear the truth. But now the truth becomes unpalatable, and “the sound teaching” of it cannot be endured: a truly frightful time for men bearing the name of the Lord. For it is evident that out of an impure heart they must call on Him. Sound teaching is ever welcome to those whose desire is to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and this that all may issue in a life of increasing obedience and devotedness.

How deep and bold then the enmity of heart when those who have every motive to love the truth, far beyond those of old, will not endure it! “Oh, how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day.” “How sweet are Thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth.” “It is time for the LORD to work: they have made void Thy law. Therefore I love Thy commandments like gold, yea above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right: I hate every false way.” “Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The opening of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. I opened wide my mouth and panted, for I longed for Thy commandments.” “Thy word is very pure; therefore Thy servant loveth it. I am small and despised, yet do I not forget Thy precepts. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is truth. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me; yet Thy commandments are my delight. Thy testimonies are righteous forever: give me understanding, and I shall live.” These are but a few extracts from a psalm devoted as a whole to setting forth the characteristic virtues of divine revelation as possessed by the house of Israel before Christ, and therefore very short of the later and yet more profound communications since redemption, and Christ's ascension, and the personal presence of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, all of which incalculably blessed facts enhance what God has revealed since. Yet we can see, and especially as in a composition which by the Spirit expresses the feelings of the heart, how deeply the sound teaching of that early day was valued; as it will be as much or more when God in the latter day stirs the godly remnant to say in heart, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah.” The full Christian testimony comes between the advents of the Lord, and so yet more after the early days of Jewish enjoyment before the children relish the word beyond what their fathers did. In that interval comes Christianity, as well as the corruption of it in Christendom, one of the direct symptoms of which is the disgust at, and intolerance of, “the sound teaching” here announced.

But there is positive evil, as well as the dislike of what is divine. And whilst both evils have long verified the solemn warning of the apostle, it is easy to understand that the dark sketch of a time then at hand becomes more and more dismal as the Lord tarries and lawlessness acquires audacity and force. The prevalence of education in modern times leads to a great deal of reading even in the humblest class; so that the desire to hear what pleases the mind, the taste, and the natural aspirations of man, modified as all is by the governing spirit of the age, becomes even more active and pretentious. “According to their own lusts they will heap up to themselves teachers, having an itching ear.” Can there be a more graphic anticipation of what is found everywhere in our day, at least where the Bible is universally circulated? Even this is sometimes openly left out by men calling themselves Christians. But Satan can, and does, sadly neutralize it where it is nominally in use as a mere suggester of themes for the adventuresome and profane wit of man Indeed no other book is so fertile in raising and satisfying the most profound inquiries as to God and man and all things. And the intellect can readily cast aside its authority while it enters on its flight of universal discussion, as doubtful of the divine as credulous of the human. Christ, the center and expression of grace and truth; is practically lost, and the more guiltily because it is in the sphere where He once was all.

What becomes of those who, having once known, turn their back on His glory? First, as we have seen, according to their own lusts they heap up to themselves teachers, having an itching ear. The full revelation of God, though no longer held in faith, leaves a craving to bear something new; and for this end heaps of teachers are resorted to in profound unbelief of the word of God, and the power of the Spirit to guide into all the truth. The efficacy of neither can be enjoyed, where redemption does not purge the conscience, and where Christ Himself is not the object and rest of the heart. God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; because he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life eternal. If openly unrighteous man give himself up to pleasure, religiously unrighteous man occupies himself zealously with teachers, both in default of having Christ. In Him alone can God or man find life, objects, and satisfaction; in Him faith finds all fully. Without this all is a waste for one's own lusts to heap up what can never satisfy; and the less if there be departure in heart from Him known ever so slightly: an itching ear can aggravate but never remedy.

“Heaping up teachers” is but the excessive carrying out of an evil principle which prevails in evangelicals of all sorts, established as well as dissenting. It passes as a maxim among them that one is as free to choose one's teacher, or minister, as one's doctor, lawyer, or any other professional help; and this, on the ground that they are paid for their services. No wonder that superstition revolted from ideas so gross in spiritual things and clothed ministry with mystic rites in order to elevate it above matters of every-day life, and retain it within a strictly clerical enclosure; as others fell back on patronage to redeem it from the vulgar and keep it as much as possible within more refined hands directly or indirectly.

But scripture rises far above these earthly and contending schemes of men, and shows us that Christ is the source of ministry, not merely at the starting-point, when He chose the twelve and the seventy, sending them forth on their respective missions, but as the risen, glorified, and ever living Head, Who gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.

It is in vain to argue that this mode of working could only be when He was here upon earth. The remarkable fact is, that the grand revelation just referred to in Eph. 4 ignores all action of this kind on the earth, and speaks only of ministerial gifts conferred on the church by our Lord, since He ascended up on high. Now this is to set them on a ground which cannot change till our Lord comes again. Till then He never ceases to be the unfailing spring of supply; and, as if to make this certain and clear even to reluctant ears, it is added, “till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” &c. Scripture allows of no other source, and assures of this one for every need of saints now on earth. But we must always bear in mind, what the same Epistle distinguishes, that the apostles and prophets constitute the foundation on which we are built; the evangelists, pastors, and teachers, are those gifts which carry on the work. As this is the unforced and unequivocal intimation of God's word, faith reckons on Christ's faithfulness to the wants of souls and love to the church which is His body.

Hence there is no room for men's own lasts in choosing, any more than in rejecting, those whom Christ has given to do ministerial work. The gift is proved by the energy of the Spirit in effecting what it is given for: the evangelist by winning the unconverted to God; the pastor and teacher (not always, though often, united) by leading on and instructing the saints. It is on the same principle as a believer is recognized by his good confession of Christ, not in word only, but in deed and truth. Neither crown nor congregation, neither bishop nor patron, have anything to do with the choice.1 All such human gifts or calls are wholly irregular, not unscriptural only, but anti-scriptural, whatever pleas good men may have set up for each of them. Those whom Christ gives for spiritual service the Christian is bound to own, as he has to beware of all whom Christ did not so give. The sheep know His voice in His servants; and they know not the voice of strangers. Assuredly the sheep may err in this case or in that; for they are in no sense infallible, and they have to act responsibly by grace. But the Lord's eye is on all, and He honors His own word, as He loves His own sheep. The sad and shameful fact is that for centuries they have let slip looking to Him in this matter, and have accepted one or other of those human ways which ignore His giving the needed supply spiritually. And as some have sinned by the unwarrantable system of one man concentrating all gifts in his person or authority, so others by heaping up to themselves teachers after their own lusts.

The only remedy is looking in faith to Him, and to the word of His grace, which furnishes the true key to the facts, that the gifts still abide, rarely indeed concentrated, as the rule distributed in no small variety and measure of spiritual power. In the present state of God's church they are, like the saints, painfully scattered as well as shrouded and hindered. But no change of circumstances alters the vital constitution of the church, any more than the principle of those members of it, so important for its extension and well-being, the gifts before us. What the faithful ought to do is to judge themselves by God's word; how far they have departed, and in order to submit themselves to His will, knowing that he who does it abides forever. None but Christ's gifts have His title and competency in the Spirit; and no saint can justify himself in refusing such or in accepting other men whom He has not so given; for either way is to deny His rights and to prefer man's will against Him. But heaping up to themselves teachers (and is it conceivable that these could be His gifts consenting to His dishonor?) is fielding to men's own lusts, the excess of self-will in despite of Christ.

But there is more still. “And from the truth they will turn away their ear, and will be turned aside unto fables.” Here is the fatal result. Who can measure the dishonor thus done to God and His word? who tell the loss to their own souls, not only by their alienation from the truth, but by their actual appetite for imaginative falsehood? So Satan would have it, who likes no one thing so much as a direct affront put on Christ, which all this implies. Thereby evil ensues in every way. The conscience is no longer governed by the sense of God's presence. Grace is unfelt, and thus the constraining power of Christ's love no longer operates. The holy fear of displeasing God vanishes. There is no consciousness of being set apart by the Spirit to the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. As He is altogether a nullity to such, so the god of this world blinds their thoughts that the radiancy of the gospel of Christ should not shine forth. There is no treasure consequently in the earthen vessels, any more than ever bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in the body, still less is there exposure to death on account of Jesus, that His life also might be manifested in their mortal flesh, so that death should work in them but life in the objects of divine love.

Hence present things fail not to rush in and fill the void according to Satan's pleasure. The age asserts its influence, and the world is loved and the things that are in it. On the one hand, the poor saints seem vulgar and forward; and the trials of the assembly become odious and contemptible. On the other, how much there is in the world that begins to look fair and pleasant! Then excuses sound plausible for the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. How narrow-minded and weak appear the once decided grounds to stand aloof! Thus as the word of truth is the means of practical sanctification, so the fabrications of the enemy undermine and supplant till there is nothing that the Holy Spirit can use to warn the soul or deliver from this corrupting and malignant power.

The “fables” here are not qualified as “Jewish,” as in Titus 1:14, nor are they connected with “genealogies” as in 1 Tim. 1:4, which points in the same direction. It seems a sound deduction therefore to regard them as of a larger character, and open to the workings of Gentile fancy no less than Jewish. But it is vain to speculate on what was then impending. Suffice it for us to know that they are here unlimited and the sure accompaniment of turning away from the truth. One of admirable judgment infers from the structure of the phrase that their being already turned aside to fables leads them to turn away their ear from the truth.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 4:5-8

Very different from that melancholy and humiliating picture of the course of Christendom is the stand to which the apostle proceeds to exhort Timothy.

“But be thou sober in all things, suffer evils, do an evangelist's work, fully perform thy ministry. For r am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is all but come. The good combat I have combated, the course I have finished, the faith I have kept: henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me in that day; and not to me only, but also to all those that love His appearing” (ver. 5-8).

Here therefore, as in chap. 2:1, the charge is emphatically personal. To be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus has its own weighty place. But more is needed for a workman and leader in a day of general and dangerous declension, when intoxicating influences were as rife as they were various. “But thou, be sober in all things.” Vigilance () is not the thought as in the A.V., nor yet a sound mind (), however nearly allied, but sobriety of judgment. The Greek answers fully to the English usage, and, from the primary sense of drinking no wine, comes to the ready metaphor of being sober, or wary, in all things. Timothy was to stand clear of that which might excite or stupefy, in contrast with those drifting into a mass carried away from the truth into fables.

Further, he is called to “suffer evils,"1 or hardships, and this in the most general way. In chap. 1:8, it was to suffer evil “with the gospel,” a favorite personification of the apostle, who was not ashamed of it, and would have the faithful servant identified with its afflictions here below. Chap 2:3 presents the different thought of Timothy's taking his part in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, without expressing or understanding any special comrade. Here all idea of “sharing” is left out. Readiness to endure ills in his place and service is what the apostle claims. Paul did not lay a burden on his young colleague which he had not long and fully borne. It is but fellowship with the Master's sufferings here below: only these, without of course speaking of the unique sorrows of atonement, went far deeper than those of His servants; which

such as have experienced most would most freely own.

The next call appears to be often strangely misunderstood, as if the apostle meant Timothy to do an evangelist's work, when he had not that gift, and consequently was not really an evangelist! For such a construction there is not the shadow of a sound reason. The danger rather was that the increasing difficulties and troubles of the assembly might distract the young and sensitive laborer, calling him to forego the exercise of that which was truly his gift without, though not his only one, because of the demands from within. Work so blessed to which the Lord had called him must not be intermitted. The evangelist is not a preacher only: work of faith and labor of love in quest of souls characterize him who presses the glad tidings on souls individually as well as publicly.

But it is a mistake not to be passed over, that the evangelists did not form a special and separate class. It is more correct so to designate them than even the teachers, for Eph. 4:11 couples the pastor with the teacher in a way in which he joins the evangelist with no other class; yet is the teacher elsewhere viewed, as a distinct gift, though here, as often in fact, combined with pastorship. All gifts were certainly subordinate to apostles; yet neither evangelists nor any others were missionaries of the apostles, but of the Lord. He it is Who sends laborers into His harvest, as He is the Lord of it. The apostles were servants, though set by God first in the church. They could not send: still less the church in this sense. Nor is it well founded to say that this was the work to which Timothy was called when he journeyed with the apostles. In all probability Timothy evangelized when privileged with that companionship; but the gift in itself had no connection with such a journey. On the contrary, Timothy would properly he intent on learning all he could in such circumstances, as it would be his joy to serve in every way personally and ministerially, if one may so say, to give the greater effect to the beloved and honored chief, as is implied in Acts 16:3; 19:22.

That this is no question of working as subordinates and missionaries of the apostles is made still clearer by the case of the only one whose course as an evangelist is traced in the Acts. Philip officially was one “of the seven” (chap. vi.), but as a gift was an evangelist, and is so designated in chap. 21:8. When his office lapsed through the dispersion of all who composed the assembly in Jerusalem, he is seen (chap. 8.) in the active exercise of his gift as an “evangelist,” and with signal blessing both to a whole city and to an individual. In no case is he even journeying with an apostle, but rather as one of a special and separate class. The apostles on bearing that Samaria had received the word of God, sent Peter and John who put, the seal of the Spirit on Philip's work; for indeed lowly love wrought, and rivalry was as far from the evangelist as lording it from the apostles. But the characteristic of what is described is the free and sovereign action of the Lord; and as the two apostles did not think it beneath their exalted place to evangelize “many villages” of the Samaritans during their return to Jerusalem, so Philip went on his unfettered way under the Lord's direction, evangelizing “all the cities” till he came to Caesarea. There was no question of a sphere circumscribed by the presence or the absence of an apostle. The world is in principle the evangelist's province: journeying or abiding is a question of subjection to the Lord.

Lastly, Timothy is told “fully to perform () his ministry” (ver. 5). It seems more than (Acts 12:25, Col. 4:17), judging by the emphatic usage of the word where it occurs as verb or noun elsewhere. To translate with Beta, to “give full assurance of thy ministry,” may sound more literal but hardly suits the subject before us, which wholly differs from faith, hope, or understanding. For these mean subjective enjoyment, the other would be objective proof; neither of which can rightly apply here, but filling to the full the measure of his service. Evangelizing, however incumbent on him who has the gift was not the whole of the ministry which Timothy had received in the Lord: to fulfill all he is here engaged.

A weighty and affecting enforcement follows in the approaching departure of the apostle. “For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is all but come” (ver. 6). The A. V. by no means conveys correctly the form: “now ready to be offered” is in several respects different from “am already being poured out,” which exactly reproduces the original. It is not the first time that the apostle employs the same figure of a drink offering. To his beloved Philippian brethren (H. 17) he had written a little before, “But if also I am poured out on the sacrifice and service of your. faith,” &AL Now he drops all condition, as his release is before his eyes. He speaks as though the libation were being made. Again, -is hardly the same as -, though the difference be the merest shade, which is sought to be expressed in “is all but come,” as compared with “is present,” or “come.” “Is at hand,” as in the A.V., is the true rendering of neither, but of or .

Few even of the apostles could say as Paul does at this solemn moment, “The good combat I have Combated, the course I have finished, the faith I have kept” (ver. 7). The imputation of vain glory to the apostle, with death (and such a death!) before his eyes, is unworthy of anyone but a rationalist. It was of the utmost moment, not only for Timothy but for all who might follow, to know what grace can, and does, accomplish amidst the general wreck. Neither 1 Cor. 4:3, 4, nor Phil. 3:12, &c., is inconsistent; whereas Phil. 4:13 affords direct ground for its realization.

How are we to account for such inability to conceive the power of grace by faith Is it not that so many excellent men, through a false system, are still groveling in the fleshy combats of Rom. 7, ignorant of that deliverance which Rom. 8 proclaims in virtue of a dead and risen Savior, that is, of our death with Him, and the power of the Spirit of life in Him. Under law they look for failure, and failure is theirs according to their unbelief, however grace may interfere sovereignly spite of the error. But that of which the apostle speaks is the honorable combat which befits the soul set free, who has Christ before him, and has to face in his measure what Christ faced in the days of His flesh. It is the holy struggle for God's glory in a hostile world, and not merely struggling against self in the despairing strife of Rom. 7. This we learn experimentally to teach as what we are even as converted, and that the law aggravates the distress instead of giving us practical victory; which comes solely from giving ourselves up as good for nothing to find all in Christ dead and risen. Thenceforth begins the proper and good combat of us Christians, now not converted only but delivered, in whom the Holy Spirit works in power with Christ before our eyes, whose grace is sufficient for us. Paul had triumphed day by day, and so are we called to defeat the enemy here below.

Next, “the course I have finished.” There is the general idea of the games narrowed to the race; and on this he looks back as “finished.” At an earlier day in writing to the Corinthians, familiar as they were with the Isthmian Games in their neighborhood, he had applied the theme to the life and service of the saints in general, introducing himself as an example of one running not uncertainly, not beating the air but buffeting, or bruising, his body, and bringing it into bondage, instead of surrendering it to relaxation, and indulgence, and luxury. In Phil. 3 we hear him expressing the utmost ardor of devotedness in that race for the prize. The general reference recurs in 2 Tim. 2:5, in just the same spirit in which it was first urged in 1 Cor. 9:25. Now he applies it to his own case, not for self-applause, as a bad conscience and an envious heart might think, but transferring these things in application to himself for Timothy's sake, and all after who in faith read these words. Boasting was far indeed from one who had one foot in the grave and all his heart with Christ in heaven.

Finally, he adds, “The faith I have kept.” This Christendom sought to make easy and sure by the regular profession of the three creeds. But alas! all who look below the surface know how pitiable is the failure, when the most heterodox leap over all bounds in the solemn and habitual repetition of every word; while godly, but weak souls, are too often stumbled at that in them which they fail to comprehend; and thus on both sides endless mischief ensues. The faith was really kept when creeds did not exist. The word and the Spirit of God are all-sufficient for him whose eye is on Christ by faith. And then keeping the faith, as Paul did, to the end, was a blessed test of fidelity to the Master. How many have turned aside following their own minds and lusts, without creeds at first and now with them! They are but puny and human barriers and of necessity powerless, the inventions of men when the word and Spirit of God were losing power through unbelief.

The sense of all being closed here below is what gives force to his looking onward to the kingdom, and this most appropriately. For responsibility and service are bound up, not with the Son's coming to take us to the Father's home, but to the Lord's appearing, when fidelity to His name here below, or the lack of it, will be made manifest. It will be observed that it is the epiphany of the Lord which is presented in these pastoral Epistles, rather than His presence or coming; because it is a question throughout of work done in and for the Lord, with its specific reward “in that day” from His hand. It is not heavenly grace with the blessed issues of Christ's love in heaven before the day shines. Here the necessary principles of righteousness and of order, ecclesiastical or moral, are laid down, and the work on that foundation is insisted on, with its reward to the faithful. Both aspects are true and important, each in its place, and never to be confounded without loss. Which of the two is before us here is beyond controversy in ver. 8: “Henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall award to me in that day; and not only to me but to all those that love (have loved and do love) His appearing.” Is not this precious? The promise is sure to the apostle, but he is careful to ensure it to all that love the Lord's appearing, which will put all evil down, judge the indifferent as well as the rebellious, and establish peace and righteousness over the earth, with the display of all the saints in whom He is glorified.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 4:9-13

The apostle now turns to his companions in service with varied expression of feeling; and to Timothy first as one specially near to his heart.

“Use diligence to come onto me quickly; for Demas forsook me, having loved the present age, and went onto Thessalonica; Crescens unto Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia: Luke alone is with me. Take up and bring Mark with thee, for he is useful to me for ministry. But Tychicus I sent unto Ephesus. The cloak which I left behind in Troas with Carpus bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments” (ver. 9-13).

Without doubt, deep solemnity pervaded the apostle's spirit in the thought of his speedy departure and especially of the Lord's appearing; and no wonder: it is the goal of responsibility, the moment when all shall be brought to light, and the mind of the Lord pronounced accordingly. Early in the Epistle he had expressed his great desire to see Timothy, whom he regarded with especial affection. Now he urges upon him to be zealous in coming quickly to him, and assigns the reason. He was deserted by a fellow-laborer. This affected his heart deeply. He felt, therefore, the greater wish to have Timothy with him. It would be the last opportunity, and as his mind—we saw in the first chapter, called to remembrance the past, so here he could not but look onward to the future, as he thought of those who were to continue the work of the Lord here below, when he himself was gone.

Not long before, in writing to the Colossians, the apostle conveyed to them the greetings of Luke and Demas, with those of Epaphras and his own, and in writing to Philemon, probably about the same time, he conveys the salutation of Demas once more to his dearly-beloved Philemon, distinguishing him with others as his fellow-laborer. Now he has the sorrow to write, as one reason more for Timothy's presence, “For Demas deserted me, through love of the present age, and proceeded unto Thessalonica” (ver. 10). This is sorrowfully explicit. To say that Demas left the apostle to go on an evangelistic tour, is to slight the word, blot out the revealed motive, and to confound his case with that of the others who follow. It has been conjectured that the departure of Demas for Thessalonica was due to love for his birth-place. Others have guessed that it was for trading. We are not at liberty thus to speak; and the less because the Holy Ghost stamps the motive as love for the present age. The first was rather the fault of Mark and Barnabas in earlier days; but it had no deep root, and grace had long given self-judgment. The failure of Demas was far more serious, not merely because it was late in the day, but because love of the present age utterly opposes the moral purpose of Him who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age. It is not said that Demos forsook Christ, still less, that Christ forsook him; but the sin was a grievous one, as is the endeavor to put the stigma of it on evangelizing. This was an insult reserved for folly and bitterness. Preaching the gospel is certainly not everything, but it is the foundation of all, as the evangelist is the gift of Christ. It is more than probable that the fellow-laborers took their share in gospel work, as we know the apostle Paul always did with the utmost zeal and devotedness; but here it is not expressly said of anyone. To drag it in and connect it with the only one who is named as sinning against the Lord, is a very great affront to Him, unless it were said as an idle jest; but a jest that manifests a heartless feeling against the gospel or its heralds.

Of Crescens, we are only told that he went to Galatia. This is the sole mention of him in scripture. For what purpose we are not told, but it can scarcely be doubted it was in the Lord's service. Tradition, and this the earliest, tells us that he went there to evangelize; but a later one speaks of him as laboring in Gaul. And it is well to note here that two of the earliest uncials (the Sinitic and the Re-script of Paris) read here Gaul for Galatia, as do several cursive manuscripts, the Ethiopic Version of Rome, and other authorities. So early did ignorance or evil intent tamper with the copies of scripture.

Of Titus we are told that he went to Dalmatia. We may gather from this that he had finished his work in Crete, had joined the apostle, and was now gone in another direction, the last notice of him which scripture affords. There is not the smallest ground, therefore, for the tradition that he was diocesan of Crete. A singular fatality of error appears to pervade these extra-scriptural notices, which seem to be mere legends of imagination, grafted upon a most superficial use of scripture. It is altogether ad exception to find a single one of the old traditions containing an atom of truth. How deeply then should we feel the blessing of God's perfect word!

“Only Luke is with me. Mark take up and bring with thyself, for he is to me profitable for ministry” (ver. 11). It is interesting to observe that the verse brings before us these two inspired writers of Gospels. They were not apostles, but, are none the less authoritative. They were doubtless prophets, which gift was in exercise indeed for Matthew and John also, in so writing the prophetic writings, or scriptures, as the

apostle designates the books of the New Testament in Rom. 16:26. The context is decisive, not to speak of the absence of the article, that the Authorized and the Revised versions are wrong in giving “the scriptures of the prophets.” For the apostle is speaking of the “revelation of the mystery which had been kept in silence through times everlasting, but now is manifested.” In Old Testament times the silence was kept; now is the time for its manifestation by New Testament prophets, who, instead of testifying to Israel only, make known that mystery, according to the commandment of the Eternal God, unto all the nations for obedience of faith. It is the gospel in short, and here specifically Paul's gospel in contrast with the law. And it is only confusion to mix this up with what God had promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures at the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, where accordingly is no allusion to “the mystery,” which is fittingly introduced only at the close.

Luke, then, was the only companion of the apostle. He had been his fellow-laborer during much of his ministry; he abides with him before his death. But, not content with this, the apostle desires Timothy to take up Mark on his way and bring him with himself, for he adds with exceeding grace, “he is to me useful for ministry.” We know how greatly grieved Paul had been with Mark's desertion in early days, and how it had led even to a breach with Barnabas. But this was long blotted out by the healing goodness of God. And already the apostle had joined Mark with himself as one of the few fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God which had been a comfort to him; as in the same Epistle to the Colossians he alludes to charges they had received to welcome him if he came to them. But now he goes farther and reinstates him in personal nearness of service to himself, the very thing in which he had originally failed. In nature a breakdown is irreparable, not so where grace prevails; “We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

“But Tychicus I sent unto Ephesus.” The Revised version is right, the Authorized version wrong; for the apostle draws a slight distinction here, which is expressed by “but,” rather than “and.” The others had proceeded on their own responsibility. Tychicus was sent by the apostle to Ephesus. Here, again, it is in vain for us to conjecture the special object of his mission. We may assure ourselves that faith in the Lord and love to the saints were the motives. But it is, well to take notice of an authority to which none can now lay claim.

Here follows, at verse 13, a new command of exceeding interest in the midst of these interesting notices of his fellow-laborers. “The cloak that I left at Trees with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments.”

Some pious men have allowed themselves the narrow and unseemly thought that inspiration is confined only to matters of spiritual truth. This is to lose a great deal of the grace of the gospel, and to shut out from our souls the interest which the Lord takes in what concerns the body, as well as the mind The truth is, that the grace of our God occupies itself with everything that concerns us, and our wisdom is to take up nothing in which we cannot look for the favor, guidance, and blessing of the Lord. Such is wondrous fruit, not only of the incarnation of the Son, but of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. He makes the body the temple of God. If it were not so, the ordinary matters of this life would be left outside and clothed with nothing but a human connection. We wrong the Lord and defraud ourselves of much where we do not bring Him into the least things that perish. “Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

Hence the cloak, that the apostle left with Carpus at Troas, is not left for an uninspired note. It forms a direct part of this solemn Epistle, written for all times. God led His servant to direct Timothy to bring it, when he came. Winter was approaching, and the cloak would be needed. It is good for our souls to believe that God takes a personal interest even in so small a matter. Where God is left out, even saints become a prey to personal vanity or worldly fashion.

But Timothy was to bring the “books” also, “especially the parchments.” The latter were probably not yet written on: as being valuable material and suited to transmit more permanently, we cannot doubt that the apostle destined:” the parchments” for the edification of the saints and the glory of the Lord in an especial manner. “The books” may not have been inspired writings, and the indefinite language here used would rather imply the contrary. But they were not therefore devoid of interest to the apostle, even with death and the appearing of the Lord before his soul.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 4:14-18

From fellow-laborers gone or sent away, and the desire to have Timothy with him, the apostle turns to an open adversary and to those who forsook him in his recent hour of need.

“Alexander, the coppersmith, did (lit. showed) many evil things against me: the Lord will render to him according to his works; of whom be thou ware also, for he exceedingly withstood our words. At my first defense no one took my part but all deserted me: may it not be laid to their account. But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, that through me the proclamation might be fully made, and all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of a lion's mouth. 1The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve for His heavenly kingdom; to Whom [be] the glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen.” (ver. 14-18).

We may profitably notice the different form which evil takes in the adversaries of the apostle. Phygellus and Hermogenes were prominent in personal disaffection. Among those who, in Asia, turned away from Paul, Hymeneal and Philetus have a far darker character, for in their case profane folly wrought, and this, advancing to greater impiety. They were teachers, it would appear, but not of God. “Their words,” said the apostle, “will spread as a gangrene.” The character of their error was the destructive fable that the resurrection has taken place already, which, as it overthrew the faith of some, could not but falsify the walk and testimony of all led astray by it. But even as to these, he does not deal with. the same solemnity as John applies in his second Epistle to those who denied the person of Christ; for this demands the strongest reprobation of the Christian heart, as nothing else ought. Of Demos, we have seen enough already. The smith, Alexander, appears rather in the character of an active personal enemy of the apostle; and the more, because he seems to have been once in fellowship, which would give him no small advantage in mischief as in opportunities. The many evil things may not all have come to effect, but he did them and showed what he was in doing them. Yet one cannot but feel that the critical text, which follows on the highest authority, is a great relief to the spirit: “the Lord will render to him according to his works.” That this should be turned into the optative, as in the common text, with a few uncials, most cursives, and many of the ecclesiastical writers, etc., one can understand; for man readily falls in with Jewish feeling. On the other hand, that the Lord will render him according to his works, is a certain truth which every Christian conscience must feel; and a truth in special accordance with these pastoral Epistles, which bring into distinctness the Lord's appearing.

Against Alexander, Timothy also was to stand on his guard. It is clear, therefore, that he was an adversary still bent on evil to the saints and on opposition to the work. The gentleness of Timothy's character might expose him to a mistaken kindness, where caution was imperatively required: “for he exceedingly withstood,” says the apostle, “our words.” More than the apostle had warned or entreated, and it may be Timothy himself among the rest.

The apostle now turns to his own great and recent trial at Rome, and the experience, bitter in many respects, but not without deep thanksgiving to the only One Who never fails, and gives us to know, that all things work together for good to those who love God—to those that are called according to purpose. “At my first defense no one stood with me, but all deserted me: may it not be laid to their account.” How keenly painful and humiliating thin was to the apostle few can estimate, because so few make the least approach to him either in faith or in love. Not a soul on earth could feet as he felt what such failure was to the Lord Himself; which gave, therefore, immense emphasis to his prayer, “May it not be imputed to them.” Psalm 105 makes evident what the Lord felt of old when His chosen ones went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people. “He suffered no man to do them wrong, yea, he reproved kings for their sake, saying, ‘Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm.'“ Now, He may let any or all men de them wrong, and for the present reprove neither kings, nor subjects, nor serfs, when they scorn His anointed, and do His servants all the harm they can. Another day He will render to each according to his works. But what does He feel now? What, by and by, where His own betray and desert those He honors, who, for His sake, served them best in the hour of deepest need? May it not be laid to their charge.

Christ, however, never fails. So the apostle here says, “But the Lord stood with me and gave me power.” This was more than strengthening him personally— “gave me power, that through me the proclamation might be fully made, and all the Gentiles might hear.” Thus; to Christ's glory, and in suffering for His sake, did the apostle bear witness of the truth, and the gospel, and the Lord, before the highest authorities that govern the world. There was no fawning on great men, no patronage on the world's part. “And I was delivered out of a lion's mouth.” Whether this alludes to the Emperor in particular, or to his representative in a more general way, men say they are not able to determine. The phrase clearly means rescued from most imminent or overwhelming danger.

But the apostle enlarges as he looks onward. “The Lord will deliver me from every evil work” —not necessarily out of a lion's mouth another day, but from all real evil, and “will preserve for His heavenly kingdom.” Earth might yield still more of sorrow and of human persecution, to the uttermost. For the apostle it was no question of flesh being saved, but of preservation for the Lord's heavenly kingdom, to Whom be the glory for the ages of the ages. His and our every psalm may well end in a continual Hallelujah.

On 2 Timothy, On 2 Timothy 4:19-22

The apostle now turns to salute some that were dear to him, whose names are familiar to us throughout the inspired history.

“Salute Prima and Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left at Miletus sick. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus saluteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. The Lord [Jesus Christ be] with thy spirit. Grace he with you” (ver. 19-22).

“Salute Prizes and Aquila and the house of Onesiphorus.” The two former were early associates, who remained faithful to the last. With them he associates the household of Onesiphorus, the same of whom he made mention at the close of the first chapter of this Epistle. The apostle deeply felt the identification of Onesiphorus with his own circumstances as a prisoner. “He often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.” He was no longer in Rome, though perhaps not then at Ephesus, his usual dwelling place. When he was in Rome, he zealously sought, out the apostle and found him. God prospers earnest love for Christ's sake. It was indeed no other love than the apostle had proved at Ephesus, and nobody knew what service had been rendered there better than Timothy. These dear saints now receive together the last salutation of the apostle, once more the prisoner of Christ.

“Erastus abode in Corinth; and Trophimus I left at Miletus sick."1 There was no compulsion in regulating the labors of his fellow-ministers, even for an apostle. They were servants of the Lord, and ammo would have pressed this more, solemnly than Paul, none have more shrunk from setting up a directive authority between the Lord and His servants. There were urgent calls elsewhere, no doubt; but Erectus abode at Corinth. It was he probably who was once treasurer of the city. Very different were the circumstances of Trophimus. Him the apostle left at Miletus sick. Miraculous power was never used by the apostle either for the relief of a brother or even for the progress of the work. Here, again, the Lord only was looked to, and His glory was the sole motive either for working miracles or for abstaining. So we find in the former Epistle the apostle prescribing to Timothy that he should be no longer a water-drinker, but use a little wine for his stomach's sake, and his often infirmities—just as any Christian friend might do at this present time, but without having the Spirit's inspiration. This abides now in the written word. Certainly there was no miracle in his case, any more than in that of Trophimus. Miracles as a rule were signs for unbelievers, not a means of cure for the household of faith.

In the twentieth verse of the fourth chapter [of 2 Timothy], the Apostle Paul informs Timothy that Erastus abode at Corinth. The form of expression implies that Erastus had staid behind at Corinth when the Paul left it. But this could not be meant of any journey from Corinth which Paul took prior to his first imprisonment at Rome; for when Paul departed from Corinth, as related in the twentieth chapter of the Acts, Timothy was with him. And this was the last time the apostle left Corinth before his coming to Rome; because he left it to proceed on his way, to Jerusalem, soon after his arrival at which place he was taken into custody, and continued in that custody till he was carried to Caesar’s tribunal. There could be no need therefore to inform Timothy that Erastus staid behind at Corinth upon this occasion, because, if the fact was so, it must have been known to Timothy, who was present, as well as to Paul.

In the same verse our Epistle also states the following article ‘Trophimus have I left at Miletus sick.' When Paul passed through Miletus on his way to Jerusalem, as related in Acts 20, Trophimus was not left behind, but accompanied him to that city. He was indeed the occasion of the uproar at Jerusalem, in consequence of which Paul was apprehended; for 'they had seen,' says the historian, 'before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.' This was evidently the last time of Paul's being at Miletus before his first imprisonment; for, as hath been said, after his apprehension at Jerusalem, he remained in custody till he was taken to Rome,

In these two articles we have a journey referred to, which must have taken place subsequent to the conclusion of Luke's history, and of course after Paul's liberation from his first imprisonment. The Epistle, therefore, which contains this reference, since it appears from other parts of it to have been written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome, proves that he had returned to that city again, and undergone there a second imprisonment.")

“Do thy diligence to come before winter.” In verse 9 he had said, “do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.” The repetition with the defining words, “before winter,” is surely not in vain. He had told Timothy in verse 13 to bring the cloak left at Trees with Carpus. But he also no doubt would warn Timothy to start before wintry weather would expose him to such a voyage as he himself had known; and he would give him the opportunity of helping Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also. The Spirit of God deigns to think of the most ordinary things of this life. The body is for the Lord, not merely the soul; and the Lord is for the body. It is, therefore, not only moral debasement which should be far from the saint, but vanity and worldliness. On the other hand, the Lord condescends to think of that which might be a physical comfort. He has no pleasure in His servant shivering with cold; still less does true devotedness show itself in objects lees plain, any more than in enduring vermin. Superstition revels in these wretched ways; scripture is no less sober than holy. Tradition is the pride of man and the sport of Satan.

“Eubulus saluteth thee, and Pudens, and Linos, and Claudia, and all the brethren.”

The apostle was careful to promote love, and sends the salutations of several by name, not of men only; but of a woman, as well as of the brethren generally. If a woman was put first, and with good reason, in ver. 19, a woman is, with no less wisdom, put last of those personally named in ver. 21. The fabulists have spared the first-named. The second has been sought to be identified with the. vile friend of the vile epigrammatist Martial; in order to build up the romance of his subsequent conversion to Christianity, and marriage with Claudia, a supposed royal maiden of Britain, here assumed to be the Christian companion of the apostle! One admits the ingenuity of the mosaic formed out of small pieces of Martial 1:32; 4:13; 5:48; 6:58,; 11:53; and of Tac. Agric. 14. Ann. 12:32, as well as of the dubious but possible inscription found at Chichester in 1723 (Horsley's Brit. Romans p. 192, No. 76). But it will be noticed that in our verse they are not classed together as a pair: Linus separates them; and there is a Linus in the Spaniard's epigrams, as well as a Pudens, and a Claudia, and a Claudia Rufina whether identical or not. That Romanists should seize on the Linus here mentioned as bishop of Rome in apostolic times is natural. But it is certain that the earliest extant record of this is a sentence of Irenaeus which is palpably unfounded on a point far more important than the identity of Linus. Speaking of Peter and Paul, he says, . . Now it is demonstrable from scripture that the church in Rome cannot boast like Corinth of an apostolic foundation. There were converts thence from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10). The apostle Paul wrote to them an elaborate Epistle, wholly ignoring Peter's ministry there, much more his episcopate there for 25 years! according to the Chron. of Eusebius. Paul is only known as a prisoner there himself, though he may have edified them after his discharge, before he was a second time in bonds, and his martyrdom that followed. As for Peter, the apostolate of the circumcision was his allotted province (Galatians and though we do hear of his unhappy visit to Antioch, not a word is said of Rome. We only know of his labors outside Judaea in the east (1 Peter 5), not the west. His Epistles are both addressed to the Christian Jews far east of Rome; where, if he went at all, it was to die for Christ, not to found the church there, still less to join Paul in ordaining Linus to its episcopate. Even the Benedictine editors confess and do not pretend to solve “diffioultates quibus primornm Petri (I), successorum turn chronologia, tum suceessio,” etc. Ensebius and Theodoret make Linus to succeed after Peter's death; and so Baronius and deTillemont. The Apost. Coast. (7:48), and Ruffians (Praef. Clem. Reeog.) hold that Linus was appointed bishop at an earlier date, while the apostles lived and moved elsewhere to the regions beyond; with which the words of Irenaeus are quite consistent; and so Bp. Pearson and Flenry the historian. Epiphanies adds to the confusion by the assertion that it was Clement who was ordained by Peter (I) for the Roman see, while he and Paul pursued their apostolic labors, as Tertullian had affirmed before him. All the differences of the ancients are far from being here stated. The only thing certain, when we leave scripture, is the uncertainty of tradition.

As to those whose salutations appear in ver. 21, their names were too common then to build on personally. One thing is sure, that they were Christians, those of whom Martial writes, heathen, who never, as far as we know, submitted to the righteousness of God. Martial came a young man to Rome only about two years before the apostle's death, and did not at first take up letters. His epigrams, as far as is known, were after, most of them long after, when his Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, were still heathen.

“All the brethren” are added by the apostle who would not forget the least, dear to Timothy as to himself. How strange, not to say unaccountable, that the great apostle Peter, if here then as tradition boldly declares, should have no place, even where persons so little known have their names indelibly inscribed by grace! Can it be believed that he was at Home with “our beloved brother Paul,” at his first defense, when no one took his part, but all forsook him? or that Paul could have written, “only Luke is with me?” It is too plain that tradition is untrustworthy, and fails wholly in those moral elements which ever accompany the inspiration of God.

There is good and ancient evidence for “the Lord Jesus Christ” in the last ver. (22), the Alexandrian and two cursives adding “Jesus” only. Though one or two cursives may omit the clause as a whole, there is no doubt of the “Lord,” which, it may be noticed, is the prevailing designation throughout, save where special reasons have “Christ Jesus.” But the prayer is that He be “with thy spirit.” Such was the last inspired desire of the apostle for Timothy, with “grace be with you” for those in general with Timothy, which is marred in the Posh. Syr.'s, making Timothy the only abject in the second wish as in the first. It is the expression of a heart that could feel fervently for all, yet knew how to make a difference.

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