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Preface

An Exposition, With Practical Observations, of The Second Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy

This second epistle Paul wrote to Timothy from Rome, when he was a prisoner there and in danger of his life; this is evident from these words, *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand*, ch. 4:6. It appears that his removal out of this world, in his own apprehension, was not far off, especially considering the rage and malice of his persecutors; and that he had been brought before the emperor Nero, which he calls *his first answer, when no man stood with him, but all men forsook him*, ch. 4:16. And interpreters agree that this was the last epistle he wrote. Where Timothy now was is not certain. The scope of this epistle somewhat differs from that of the former, not so much relating to his office as an evangelist as to his personal conduct and behaviour.

Chapter 1

After the introduction (v. 1, 2) we have, I. Paul's sincere love to Timothy (v. 3-5). II. Divers exhortations given to him (v. 6-14). III. He speaks of Phygellus and Hermogenes, with others, and closes with Onesiphorus (v. 15 to the end).

Verses 1-5

Here is, I. The inscription of the epistle Paul calls himself *an apostle by the will of God*, merely by the good pleasure of God, and by his grace, which he professes himself unworthy of. *According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus*, or according to the gospel. The gospel is the promise of life in Christ Jesus; life is the end, and Christ the way, Jn. 14:6. The life is put into the promise, and both are sure in Christ Jesus the faithful witness; *for all the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yea, and all amen*, 2 Co. 1:20. He calls Timothy his *beloved son*. Paul felt the warmest affection for him both because he had been an instrument of his conversion and because as a son with his father he had served with him in the gospel. Observe, 1. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God; as he did not receive the gospel of man, nor was taught it, but had it by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12), so his commission to be an apostle was not by the will of man, but of God: in the former epistle he says it was *by the commandment of God our Saviour*, and here *by the will of God*. God called him to be an apostle. 2. We have the promise of life, blessed be God for it: *In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began*, Tit. 1:2. It is a promise to discover the freeness and certainty of it. 3. This, as well as all other promises, is in and through Jesus Christ; they all take their rise from the mercy of God in Christ, and they are sure, so that we may safely depend on them. 4. The grace, mercy, and peace, which even Paul's dearly beloved son Timothy wanted, comes from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord; and therefore the one as well as the other is the giver of these blessings, and ought to be applied to for them. 5. The best want these blessings, and they are the best we can ask for our dearly-beloved friends, that they may have grace to help them in the time of need, and mercy to pardon what is amiss, and so may have peace with God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

II. Paul's thanksgiving to God for Timothy's faith and holiness: he thanks God that he remembered Timothy in his prayers. Observe, Whatever good we do, and whatever good office we perform for our friends, God must have the glory of it, and we must give him thanks. It is he who puts it into our hearts to remember such and such in our prayers. Paul was much in prayer, he prayed night and day; in all his prayers he was mindful of his friends, he particularly prayed for good ministers, he prayed for Timothy, and *had remembrance of him in his prayers night and day*; he did this without ceasing; prayer was his constant business, and he never forgot his friends in his prayers, as we often do. Paul served God from his forefathers with a pure conscience. It was a comfort to him that he was born in God's house, and was of the seed of those that served God; as likewise that he had served him with a pure conscience, according to the best of his light; he had kept a conscience void of offence, and made it his daily exercise to do so, Acts 24:16. *He greatly desired to see Timothy*, out of the affection he had for him, that he might have some conversation with him, *being mindful of his tears* at their last parting. Timothy was sorry to part with Paul, he wept at parting, and therefore Paul desired to see him again, because he had perceived by that what a true affection he had for

him. He thanks God that Timothy kept up the religion of his ancestors, v. 5. Observe, The entail of religion descended upon Timothy by the mother's side; he had a good mother, and a good grandmother: they believed, though his father did not, Acts 16:1. It is a comfortable thing when children imitate the faith and holiness of their godly parents, and tread in their steps, 3 Jn. 4.—*Dwelt in thy grandmother and thy mother, and I am persuaded that in thee also*. Paul had a very charitable opinion of his friends, was very willing to hope the best concerning them; indeed he had a great deal of reason to believe well of Timothy, for he had *no man like-minded*, Phil. 2:20. Observe, 1. We are, according to St. Paul, to serve God with a pure conscience, so did his and our pious forefathers; this is to draw *near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience*, Heb. 10:22. 2. In our prayers we are to remember without ceasing our friends, especially the faithful ministers of Christ. Paul had remembrance of his dearly beloved son Timothy in his prayers night and day. 3. The faith that dwells in real believers is unfeigned; it is without hypocrisy, it is a faith that will stand the trial, and it dwells in them as a living principle. It was the matter of Paul's thanksgiving that Timothy inherited the faith of his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, and ought to be ours whenever we see the like; we should rejoice wherever we see the grace of God; so did Barnabas, Acts 11:23, 24. *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in the truth*, 2 Jn. 4.

Verses 6-14

Here is an exhortation and excitation of Timothy to his duty (v. 6): *I put thee in remembrance*. The best men need remembrancers; what we know we should be reminded of. 2 Pt. 3:1, *I write this, to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance*.

I. He exhorts him to stir up *the gift of God* that was in him. Stir it up as fire under the embers. It is meant of all the gifts and graces the God had given him, to qualify him for the work of an evangelist, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the extraordinary gifts that were conferred by the imposition of the apostle's hands. These he must stir up; he must exercise them and so increase them: use gifts and have gifts. *To him that hath shall be given*, Mt. 25:29. He must take all opportunities to use these gifts, and so stir them up, for that is the best way of increasing them. Whether the gift of God in Timothy was ordinary or extraordinary (though I incline to the latter), he must stir it up, otherwise it would decay. Further, you see that this gift was in him by the putting on of the apostle's hands, which I take to be distinct from his ordination, for that was performed by the hands of the presbytery, 1 Tim. 4:14. It is probable that Timothy had the Holy Ghost, in his extraordinary gifts and graces, conferred on him by the laying on of the apostle's hands (for I reckon that none but the apostles had the power of giving the Holy Ghost), and afterwards, being thus richly furnished for the work of the ministry, was ordained by the presbytery. Observe, 1. The great hindrance of usefulness in the increase of our gifts is slavish fear. Paul therefore warns Timothy against this: *God hath not given us the spirit of fear*, v. 7. It was through base fear that the evil servant buried his talent, and did not trade with it, Mt. 25:25. Now God hath therefore armed us against the spirit of fear, by often bidding us fear not. "Fear not the face of man; fear not the dangers you may meet with in the way of your duty." God hath delivered us from the spirit of fear, and hath given us the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. The spirit of power, or of courage and resolution to encounter difficulties and dangers;—the spirit of love to God, which will carry us through the opposition we may meet with, as Jacob made nothing

of the hard service he was to endure for Rachel: the spirit of love to God will set us above the fear of man, and all the hurt that a man can do us;—and the spirit of a sound mind, or quietness of mind, a peaceable enjoyment of ourselves, for we are oftentimes discouraged in our way and work by the creatures of our own fancy and imagination, which a sober, solid, thinking mind would obviate, and would easily answer. 2. The spirit God gives to his ministers is not a fearful, but a courageous spirit; it is a spirit of power, for they speak in his name who has all power, both in heaven and earth; and it is a spirit of love, for love to God and the souls of men must inflame ministers in all their service; and it is a spirit of a sound mind, for they speak the words of truth and soberness.

II. He exhorts him to count upon afflictions, and get ready for them: "*Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner.* Be not thou ashamed of the gospel, of the testimony thou hast borne to it." Observe,

1. The gospel of Christ is what we have none of us reason to be ashamed of. We must not be ashamed of those who are suffering for the gospel of Christ. Timothy must not be ashamed of good old Paul, though he was now in bonds. As he must not himself be afraid of suffering, so he must not be afraid of owning those who were sufferers for the cause of Christ. (1.) The gospel is the testimony of our Lord; in and by this he bears testimony of himself to us, and by professing our adherence to it we bear testimony of him and for him. (2.) Paul was the Lord's prisoner, his prisoner, Eph. 4:1. For his sake he was bound with a chain. (3.) We have no reason to be ashamed either of the testimony of our Lord or of his prisoners; if we are ashamed of either now, Christ will be ashamed of us hereafter. "*But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God,* that is, expect afflictions for the gospel's sake, prepare for them, count upon them, be willing to take thy lot with the suffering saints in this world. *Be partaker of the afflictions of the gospel;*" or, as it may be read, *Do thou suffer with the gospel;* "not only sympathize with those who suffer for it, but be ready to suffer with them and suffer like them." If at any time the gospel be in distress, he who hopes for life and salvation by it will be content to suffer with it. Observe, [1.] Then we are likely to bear afflictions as well, when we fetch strength and power from God to enable us to bear them: *Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God.* [2.] All Christians, but especially ministers, must expect afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the gospel. [3.] These shall be proportioned, according to the power of God (1 Co. 10:13) resting upon us.

2. Mentioning God and the gospel, he takes notice what great things God has done for us by the gospel, v. 9, 10. To encourage him to suffer, he urges two considerations:—

(1.) The nature of that gospel which he was called to suffer for, and the glorious and gracious designs and purposes of it. It is usual with Paul, when he mentions Christ, and the gospel of Christ, to digress from his subject, and enlarge upon them; so full was he of that which is all our salvation, and ought to be all our desire. Observe, [1.] The gospel aims at our salvation: *He has saved us*, and we must not think much to suffer for that which we hope to be saved by. He has begun to save us, and will complete it in due time; for God calls those things that are not (that are not yet completed) as though they were (Rom. 4:17); therefore he says, who *has saved us*. [2.] It is designed for our sanctification: *And called us with a holy calling*, called us to holiness. Christianity is a calling, a holy calling; it is the calling wherewith we are called, the calling to which we are called, to

labour in it. Observe, All who shall be saved hereafter are sanctified now. Wherever the call of the gospel is an effectual call, it is found to be a holy call, making those holy who are effectually called. [3.] The origin of it is the free grace and eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus. If we had merited it, it had been hard to suffer for it; but our salvation by it is of free grace, and not according to our works, and therefore we must not think much to suffer for it. This grace is said to be given us *before the world began*, that is, in the purpose and designs of God from all eternity; *in Christ Jesus*, for all the gifts that come from God to sinful man come in and through Christ Jesus. [4.] The gospel is the manifestation of this purpose and grace: *By the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ*, who had lain in the bosom of the Father from eternity, and was perfectly apprised of all his gracious purposes. By his appearing this gracious purpose was made manifest to us. Did Jesus Christ suffer for it, and shall we think much to suffer for it? [5.] By the gospel of Christ death is abolished: *He has abolished death*, not only weakened it, but taken it out of the way, has broken the power of death over us; by taking away sin he has abolished death (for the sting of death is sin, 1 Co. 15:56), in altering the property of it, and breaking the power of it. Death now of an enemy has become a friend; it is the gate by which we pass out of a troublesome, vexatious, sinful world, into a world of perfect peace and purity; and the power thereof is broken, for death does not triumph over those who believe the gospel, but they triumph over it. *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?* 1 Co. 15:55. [6.] He has *brought life and immortality to light by the gospel*; he has shown us another world more clearly than it was before discovered under any former dispensation, and the happiness of that world, the certain recompence of our obedience by faith: we all with open face, as in a glass, behold the glory of God. He has brought it to light, not only set it before us, but offered it to us, by the gospel. Let us value the gospel more than ever, as it is that whereby life and immortality are brought to light, for herein it has the pre-eminence above all former discoveries; so that it is the gospel of life and immortality, as it discovers them to us, and directs us in the ready way that leads thereto, as well as proposes the most weighty motives to excite our endeavours in seeking after glory, honour, and immortality. (2.) Consider the example of blessed Paul, v. 11, 12. He was appointed to preach the gospel, and particularly appointed to teach the Gentiles. He thought it a cause worth suffering for, and why should not Timothy think so too? No man needs to be afraid nor ashamed to suffer for the cause of the gospel: *I am not ashamed*, says Paul, *for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*. Observe, [1.] Good men often suffer many things for the best cause in the world: *For which cause I suffer these things*; that is, "for my preaching, and adhering to the gospel." [2.] They need not be ashamed, the cause will bear them out; but those who oppose it shall be clothed with shame. [3.] Those who trust in Christ know whom they have trusted. The apostle speaks with a holy triumph and exultation, as much as to say, "I stand on firm ground. I know I have lodged the great trust in the hands of the best trustee." *And am persuaded*, etc. What must we commit to Christ? The salvation of our souls, and their preservation to the heavenly kingdom; and what we so commit to him he will keep. There is a day coming when our souls will be enquired after: "Man! Woman! thou hadst a soul committed to thee, what hast thou done with it? To whom it was offered, to God or Satan? How was it employed, in the service of sin or in the service of Christ?" There is a day coming, and it will be a very solemn and awful day, when we must give an account of our stewardship (Lu. 16:2), give an account of our souls: now, if by an active obedient faith we commit it to Jesus

Christ, we may be sure he is able to keep it, and it shall be forthcoming to our comfort in that day.

III. He exhorts him to *hold fast the form of sound words*, v. 13. 1. "Have a form of sound words" (so it may be read), "a short form, a catechism, an abstract of the first principles of religion, according to the scriptures, a scheme of sound words, a brief summary of the Christian faith, in a proper method, drawn out by thyself from the holy scriptures for thy own use;" or, rather, by the form of sound words I understand the holy scriptures themselves. 2. "Having it, *hold it fast*, remember it, retain it, adhere to it. Adhere to it in opposition to all heresies and false doctrine, which corrupt the Christian faith. Hold that fast *which thou hast heard of me.*" Paul was divinely inspired. It is good to adhere to those forms of sound words which we have in the scriptures; for these, we are sure, were divinely inspired. That is sound speech, which cannot be condemned, Tit. 2:8. But how must it be held fast? *In faith and love*; that is, we must assent to it as a *faithful saying*, and bid it welcome as *worthy of all acceptation*. Hold it fast in a good heart, this is the ark of the covenant, in which the tables both of law and gospel are most safely and profitably deposited, Ps. 119:11. Faith and love must go together; it is not enough to believe the sound words, and to give an assent to them, but we must love them, believe their truth and love their goodness, and we must propagate the form of sound words in love; speaking the truth in love, Eph. 4:15. *Faith and love which are in Christ Jesus*; it must be Christian faith and love, faith and love fastening upon Jesus Christ, in and by whom God speaks to us and we to him. Timothy, as a minister, must *hold fast the form of sound words*, for the benefit of others. *Of healing words*, so it may read; there is healing virtue in the word of God; *he sent his word, and healed them*. To the same purport is that (v. 14), *That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us*. That good thing was the form of sound words, the Christian doctrine, which was committed to Timothy in his baptism and education as he was a Christian, and in his ordination as he was a minister. Observe, (1.) The Christian doctrine is a trust committed to us. It is committed to Christians in general, but to ministers in particular. It is a good thing, of unspeakable value in itself, and which will be of unspeakable advantage to us; it is a good thing indeed, it is an inestimable jewel, for it discovers to us the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph. 3:8. It is committed to us to be preserved pure and entire, and to be transmitted to those who shall come after us, and we must keep it, and not contribute any thing to the corrupting of its purity, the weakening of its power, or the diminishing of its perfection: *Keep it by the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us*. Observe, Even those who are ever so well taught cannot keep what they have learned, any more than they could at first learn it, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. We must not think to keep it by our own strength, but keep it by the Holy Ghost. (2.) The Holy Ghost dwells in all good ministers and Christians; they are his temples, and he enables them to keep the gospel pure and uncorrupt; and yet they must use their best endeavours to keep this good thing, for the assistance and indwelling of the Holy Ghost do not exclude men's endeavours, but they very well consist together.

Verses 15-18

Having (v. 13, 14) exhorted Timothy to hold fast,

I. He mentions the apostasy of many from the doctrine of Christ, v. 15. It seems, in the best and purest ages of the church, there were those that had embraced the Christian faith, and yet afterwards revolted from it, nay, there were many such. He does not

say that they had turned away from the doctrine of Christ (though it should seem they had) but they had turned away from him, they had turned their backs upon him, and disowned him in the time of his distress. And should we wonder at it, when many turned their backs on a much better than Paul? I mean the Lord Jesus Christ, Jn. 6:66.

II. He mentions the constancy of one that adhered to him, namely, Onesiphorus: *For he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain*, v. 16. Observe, 1. What kindness Onesiphorus had shown to Paul: he refreshed him, he often refreshed him with his letters, and counsels, and comforts, and he was not ashamed of his chains. He was not ashamed of him, not withstanding the disgrace he was now under. He was kind to him not once or twice, but often; not only when he was at Ephesus among his own friends, but when Onesiphorus was at Rome; he took care to seek Paul *out very diligently, and found him*, v. 17. Observe, A good man will seek opportunities of doing good, and will not shun any that offer. At Ephesus he had ministered to him, and been very kind to him: Timothy knew it. 2. How Paul returns his kindness, v. 16–18. He that receives a prophet shall have a prophet's reward. He repays him with his prayers: *The Lord give mercy to Onesiphorus*. It is probable that Onesiphorus was now absent from home, and in company with Paul; Paul therefore prays that his house might be kept during his absence. Though the papists will have it that he was now dead; and, from Paul's praying for him that he might find mercy, they conclude the warrantableness of praying for the dead; but who told them that Onesiphorus was dead? And can it be safe to ground a doctrine and practice of such importance on a mere supposition and very great uncertainty?

III. He prays for Onesiphorus himself, as well as for his house: *That he may find mercy in that day*, in the day of death and of judgment, when Christ will account all the good offices done to his poor members as done to himself. Observe, 1. The day of death and judgment is an awful day, and may be emphatically called *that day*. 2. We need desire no more to make us happy than to find mercy of the Lord in that day, when those that have shown no mercy will have judgment without mercy. 3. The best Christians will want mercy in that day; *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Jude 21. 4. If you would have mercy then, you must seek for it now of the Lord. 5. It is of and from the Lord that we must have mercy; for, unless the Lord has mercy on us, in vain will be the pity and compassion of men or angels. 6. We are to seek and ask for mercy of the Lord, who is the giver and bestower of it; for the Lord Jesus Christ has satisfied justice, that mercy might be displayed. We are to come to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need. 7. The best thing we can seek, either for ourselves or our friends, is that the Lord will grant to them that they may find mercy of the Lord in that day, when they must pass our of time into eternity, and exchange this world for the other, and appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: the Lord then grant unto all of us that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day.

Chapter 2

In this chapter our apostle gives Timothy many exhortations and directions, which may be of great use to other, both ministers and Christians, for whom they were designed as well as for him. I. He encourages him in his work, showing him whence he must fetch help (v. 1). II. He must take care of a succession in the ministry, that the office might not die with him (v. 2). III. He exhorts him to constancy and perseverance in this work, as a soldier and as a husbandman, considering what would be the end of all his sufferings, etc. (v. 3–15). IV. He must shun profane and vain babblings (v. 16–18), for they will be pernicious and mischievous. V. He speaks of the foundation of God, which standeth sure (v. 19–21). VI. What he is to avoid—youthful lusts, and foolish and unlearned questions; and what to do (v. 22 to the end).

Verses 1-7

Here Paul encourages Timothy to constancy and perseverance in his work: *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, v. 1. Observe, Those who have work to do for God must stir up themselves to do it, and strengthen themselves for it. Being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus may be understood in opposition to the weakness of grace. Where there is the truth of grace there must be a labouring after the strength of grace. As our trials increase, we have need to grow stronger and stronger in that which is good; our faith stronger, our resolution stronger, our love to God and Christ stronger. Or it may be understood in opposition to our being strong in our own strength: "Be strong, not confiding in thy own sufficiency, but in the grace that is in Jesus Christ." Compare Eph. 6:10, *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. When Peter promised rather to die for Christ than to deny him he was strong in his own strength; had he been strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, he would have kept his standing better. Observe, 1. There is grace in Christ Jesus; for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, Jn. 1:17. There is grace enough in him for all of us. 2. We must be strong in this grace; not in ourselves, in our own strength, or in the grace we have already received, but in the grace that is in him, and that is the way to be strong in grace. 3. As a father exhorts his son, so does Paul exhort Timothy, with great tenderness and affection: *Thou, therefore, my son, be strong*, etc. Observe,

I. Timothy must count upon sufferings, even unto blood, and therefore he must train up others to succeed him in the ministry of the gospel, v. 2. He must instruct others, and train them up for the ministry, and so commit to them the things which he had heard; and he must also ordain them to the ministry, lodge the gospel as a trust in their hands, and so commit to them the things which he had heard. Two things he must have an eye to in ordaining ministers:—Their fidelity or integrity ("Commit them to *faithful men*, who will sincerely aim at the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the welfare of souls, and the advancement of the kingdom of the Redeemer among men"), and also their ministerial ability. They must not only be knowing themselves, but be able to teach others also, and be apt to teach. Here we have, 1. The things Timothy was to commit to others—what he had heard of the apostle among many witnesses; he must not deliver any thing besides, and what Paul delivered to him and others he had received of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. He was to commit them as a trust, as a sacred deposit, which they were to keep, and to transmit pure and uncorrupt unto others. 3. Those to whom he was to commit these things must be faithful, that is, trusty men,

and who were skilful to teach others. 4. Though men were both faithful and able to teach others, yet these things must be committed to them by Timothy, a minister, a man in office; for none must intrude themselves into the ministry, but must have these things committed to them by those already in that office.

II. He must *endure hardness* (v. 3): *Thou therefore*, etc. 1. All Christians, but especially ministers, *are soldiers of Jesus Christ*; they fight under his banner, in his cause, and against his enemies, for he is the captain of our salvation, Heb. 2:10. 2. The soldiers of Jesus Christ must approve themselves good soldiers, faithful to their captain, resolute in his cause, and must not give over fighting till *they are made more than conquerors, through him that loved them*, Rom. 8:37. 3. Those who would approve themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ must endure hardness; that is, we must expect it and count upon it in this world, must endure and accustom ourselves to it, and bear it patiently when it comes, and not be moved by it from our integrity.

III. He must not entangle himself in the affairs of this world, v. 4. A soldier, when he has enlisted, leaves his calling, and all the business of it, that he may attend his captain's orders. If we have given up ourselves to be Christ's soldiers, we must sit loose to this world; and though there is no remedy, but we must employ ourselves in the affairs of this life while we are here (we have something to do here), we must not entangle ourselves with those affairs, so as by them to be diverted and drawn aside from our duty to God and the great concerns of our Christianity. Those who will war the good warfare must sit loose to this world. *That we may please him who hath chosen us to be soldiers*. Observe, 1. The great care of a soldier should be to please his general; so the great care of a Christian should be to please Christ, to approve ourselves to him. The way to please him who hath chosen us to be soldiers is not to entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life, but to be free from such entanglements as would hinder us in our holy warfare.

IV. He must see to it that in carrying on the spiritual warfare he went by rule, that he observed the laws of war (v. 5): *If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully*. We are striving for mastery, to get the mastery of our lusts and corruptions, to excel in that which is good, but we cannot expect the prize unless we observe the laws. In doing that which is good we must take care that we do it in a right manner, that our good may not be evil spoken of. Observe here, 1. A Christian is to strive for masteries; he must aim at mastering his own lusts and corruptions. 2. Yet he must strive according to the laws given to him; he must strive lawfully. 3. Those who do so shall be crowned at last, after a complete victory is obtained.

V. He must be willing to wait for a recompence (v. 6): *The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits*. Or, as it should be read, *The husbandman labouring first must partake of the fruits*, as appears by comparing it with Jam. 5:7. If we would be partakers of the fruits, we must labour; if we would gain the prize, we must run the race. And, further, we must first labour as the husbandman does, with diligence and patience, before we are partakers of the fruit; we must do the will of God, before we receive the promises, for which reason we have need of patience, Heb. 10:36.

The apostle further commends what he had said to the attention of Timothy, and expresses his desire and hope respecting him: *Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things*, v. 7. Here, 1. Paul exhorts Timothy to consider those

thing about which he admonished him. Timothy must be reminded to use his considering faculties about the things of God. Consideration is as necessary to a good conversation as to a sound conversion. 2. He prays for him: *The Lord give thee understanding in all things*. Observe, It is God who gives understanding. The most intelligent man needs more and more of this gift. If he who gave the revelation in the word does not give the understanding in the heart, we are nothing. Together with our prayers for others, that the Lord would give them understanding in all things, we must exhort and stir them up to consider what we say, for consideration is the way to understand, remember, and practise, what we hear or read.

Verses 8-13

I. To encourage Timothy in suffering, the apostle puts him in mind of the resurrection of Christ (v. 8): *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel*. This is the great proof of his divine mission, and therefore a great confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion; and the consideration of it should make us faithful to our Christian profession, and should particularly encourage us in suffering for it. Let suffering saints remember this. Observe, 1. We are to look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and has now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, Heb. 12:2. 2. The incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ, heartily believed and rightly considered, will support a Christian under all sufferings in the present life.

II. Another thing to encourage him in suffering was that he had Paul for an example. Observe,

1. How the apostle suffered (v. 9): *Wherein I suffer as an evil-doer*; and let not Timothy the son expect any better treatment than Paul the father. Paul was a man who did good, and yet suffered as an evil-doer: we must not think it strange if those who do well fare ill in this world, and if the best of men meet with the worst of treatment; but this was his comfort *that the word of God was not bound*. Persecuting powers may silence ministers and restrain them, but they cannot hinder the operation of the word of God upon men's hearts and consciences; that cannot be bound by any human force. This might encourage Timothy not to be afraid of bonds for the testimony of Jesus; for the word of Christ, which ought to be dearer to him than liberty, or life itself, should in the issue suffer nothing by those bonds. Here we see, (1.) The good apostle's treatment in the world: *I suffer trouble*; to this he was called and appointed. (2.) The pretence and colour under which he suffered: *I suffer as an evil-doer*; so the Jews said to Pilate concerning Christ, *If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee*, Jn. 18:30. (3.) The real and true cause of his suffering trouble as an evil-doer: *Wherein*; that is, in or for the sake of the gospel. The apostle suffered trouble unto bonds, and afterwards he resisted unto blood, striving against sin, Heb. 12:4. Though the preachers of the word are often bound, yet the word is never bound.

2. Why he suffered cheerfully: *I endure all things for the elects' sake*, v. 10. Observe, (1.) Good ministers may and should encourage themselves in the hardest services and the hardest sufferings, with this, that God will certainly bring good to his church, and benefit to his elect, out of them.—*That they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus*. Next to the salvation of our own souls we should be willing to do and suffer any thing to promote the salvation of the souls of others. (2.) The elect are designed to obtain salvation: *God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation*, 1 Th. 5:9. (3.) This

salvation is in Christ Jesus, in him as the fountain, the purchaser, and the giver of it; and it is accompanied with eternal glory: there is no salvation in Christ Jesus without it. (4.) The sufferings of our apostle were for the elects' sake, for their confirmation and encouragement.

III. Another thing with which he encourages Timothy is the prospect of a future state.

1. Those who faithfully adhere to Christ and to his truths and ways, whatever it cost them, will certainly have the advantage of it in another world: *If we be dead with him, we shall live with him*, v. 11. *If we be dead with him, we shall live with him*, v. 11. If, in conformity to Christ, we be dead to this world, its pleasures, profits, and honours, we shall go to live with him in a better world, to be for ever with him. Nay, though we be called out to suffer for him, we shall not lose by that. *Those who suffer for Christ* on earth shall reign with Christ in heaven, v. 12. Those who suffered with David in his humiliation were preferred with him in his exaltation: so it will be with those who suffer with the Son of David.

2. It is at our peril if we prove unfaithful to him: *If we deny him, he also will deny us*. If we deny him before man, he will deny us before his Father, Mt. 10:33. And that man must needs be for ever miserable whom Christ disowns at last. This will certainly be the issue, whether we believe it or no (v. 13): *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself*. He is faithful to his threatenings, faithful to his promises; neither one nor the other shall fall to the ground, no, not the least, jot nor tittle of them. If we be faithful to Christ, he will certainly be faithful to us. If we be false to him, he will be faithful to his threatenings: *he cannot deny himself*, cannot recede from any word that he hath spoken, for he is yea, and amen, the faithful witness. Observe, (1.) Our being dead with Christ precedes our living with him, and is connected with it: the one is in order to the other; so our suffering for him is the way to reign with him. *You that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel* Mt. 19:28. (2.) This is a faithful saying, and may be depended on and ought to be believed. But, (3.) If we deny him, out of fear, or shame, or for the sake of some temporal advantage, he will deny and disown us, and will not deny himself, but will continue faithful to his word when he threatens as well as when he promises.

Verses 14-18

Having thus encouraged Timothy to suffer, he comes in the next place to direct him in his work.

I. He must make it his business to edify those who were under his charge, *to put them in remembrance* of those things which they did already know; for this is the work of ministers; not to tell people that which they never knew before, but to put them in mind of that which they do know, *charging them that they strive not about words*. Observe, Those that are disposed to strive commonly strive about matters of very small moment. Strifes of words are very destructive to the things of God. That they strive not about words *to no profit*. If people did but consider of what little use most of the controversies in religion are, they would not be so zealous in their strifes of words, *to the subverting of the hearers*, to the drawing of them away from the great things of God, and occasioning unchristian heats and animosities, by which truth is often in danger of being lost. Observe, People are very prone to strive about words, and such strifes never answer any other ends than to shake some and subvert others; they are not only useless, but they are very hurtful, and therefore ministers are to charge the people that they do not

strive about words, and they are most likely to be regarded when they charge them before the Lord, that is, in his name and from his word; when they produce their warrant for what they say.—*Study to show thyself approved unto God*, v. 15. Observe, The care of ministers must be to approve themselves unto God, to be accepted of him, and to show that they are so approved unto God. In order thereunto, there must be constant care and industry: *Study to show thyself* such a one, *a workman that needs not be ashamed*. Ministers must be workmen; they have work to do, and they must take pains in it. Workmen that are unskilful, or unfaithful, or lazy, have need to be ashamed; but those who mind their business, and keep to their work, are workmen that need not be ashamed. And what is their work? It is *rightly to divide the word of truth*. Not to invent a new gospel, but rightly to divide the gospel that is committed to their trust. To speak terror to those to whom terror belongs, comfort to whom comfort; to give every one *his portion in due season*, Mt. 24:45. Observe here, 1. The word which ministers preach is the word of truth, for the author of it is the God of truth. 2. It requires great wisdom, study, and care, to divide this word of truth rightly; Timothy must study in order to do this well.

II. He must take heed of that which would be a hindrance to him in his work, v. 16. He must take heed of error: *Shun profane and vain babblings*. The heretics, who boasted of their notions and their arguments, thought their performances such as might recommend them; but the apostle calls them *profane and vain babblings*: when once men become fond of those *they will increase unto more ungodliness*. The way of error is down-hill; one absurdity being granted or contended for, a thousand follow: *Their word will eat as doth a canker, or gangrene*; when errors or heresies come into the church, the infecting of one often proves the infecting of many, or the infecting of the same person with one error often proves the infecting of him with many errors. Upon this occasion the apostle mentions some who had lately advanced erroneous doctrines: *Hymeneus and Philetus*. He names these corrupt teachers, by which he sets a brand upon them, to their perpetual infamy, and warns all people against hearkening to them. They have *erred concerning the truth*, or concerning one of the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, which is truth. The resurrection of the dead is one of the great doctrines of Christ. Now see the subtlety of the serpent and the serpent's seed. They did not deny the resurrection (for that had been boldly and avowedly to confront the word of Christ), but they put a corrupt interpretation upon that true doctrine, saying that the resurrection was past already, that what Christ spoke concerning the resurrection was *to be understood mystically* and by way of allegory, that it must be meant of a spiritual resurrection only. It is true, there is a spiritual resurrection, but to infer thence that there will not be a true and real resurrection of the body at the last day is to dash one truth of Christ in pieces against another. By this they *overthrew the faith of some*, took them off from the belief of the resurrection of the dead; and if there be no resurrection of the dead, nor future state, no recompence of our services and sufferings in another world, we are of men the most miserable, 1 Co. 15:19. Whatever takes away the doctrine of a future state overthrows the faith of Christians. The apostle had largely disproved this error (1 Co. 15), and therefore does not here enter into the arguments against it. Observe, 1. The babblings Timothy was to shun were profane and vain; they were empty shadows, and led to profaneness: *For they will increase unto more ungodliness*. 2. Error is very productive, and on that account the more dangerous: *it will eat like a gangrene*. 3. When men err concerning the truth, they always endeavour to have some plausible pretence for it. Hymeneus and Philetus did not deny a resurrection, but

pretended it was already past. 4. Error, especially that which affects the foundation, will overthrow the faith of some.

Verses 19-21

Here we see what we may comfort ourselves with, in reference to this, and the little errors and heresies that both infect and infest the church, and do mischief.

I. It may be a great comfort to us that the unbelief of men cannot make the promise of God of no effect. Though the faith of some particular persons be overthrown, yet *the foundation of God standeth sure* (v. 19); it is not possible that they should deceive the elect. Or it may be meant of the truth itself, which they impugn. All the attacks which the powers of darkness have made upon the doctrine of Christ cannot shake it; it stands firm, and weathers all the storms which have been raised against it. The prophets and apostles, that is, the doctrines of the Old and New Testament, are still firm; and they have a seal with two mottoes upon it, one on the one side, and the other on the other, as is usual in a broad seal. 1. One expresses our comfort—that *the Lord knows those that are his*, and those that are not; knows them, that is, he owns them, so knows them that he will never lose them. Though the faith of some be overthrown, yet the Lord is said to know the ways of the righteous, Ps. 1:6. None can overthrow the faith of any whom God hath chosen. 2. Another declares our duty—that every one who names the name of Christ must depart from iniquity. Those who would have the comfort of the privilege must make conscience of the duty. If the name of Christ be called upon us, we must depart from iniquity, else he will not own us; he will say in the great day (Mt. 7:23), *Depart from me, I never knew you, you workers of iniquity*. Observe, (1.) Whatever errors are introduced into the church, the foundation of God standeth sure, his purpose can never be defeated. (2.) God hath some in the church who are his and whom he knows to be his. (3.) Professing Christians name the name of Christ, are called by his name, and therefore are bound to depart from iniquity; for Christ *gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, Tit. 2:14.

II. Another thing that may comfort us is that though there are some whose faith is overthrown, yet there are others who keep their integrity, and hold it fast (v. 20): *In a great house there are not only vessels of gold*, etc. The church of Christ is a great house, a well-furnished house: now some of the furniture of this house is of great value, as the plate in a house; some of small value, and put to mean uses, as the vessels of wood and earth; so it is in the church of God. There are some professors of religion that are like the vessels of wood and earth, they are vessels of dishonour. But at the same time all are not vessels of dishonour; there are *vessels of gold and silver*, vessels of honour, *that are sanctified and meet for the Master's use*. When we are discouraged by the badness of some, we must encourage ourselves by the consideration of the goodness of others. Now we should see to it that we be vessels of honour: we must *purge ourselves from these corrupt opinions*, that we may be sanctified for our Master's use. Observe, 1. In the church there are some vessels of honour and some of dishonour; there are some vessels of mercy and other vessels of wrath, Rom. 9:22, 23. Some dishonour the church by their corrupt opinions and wicked lives; and others honour and credit it by their exemplary conversation. 2. A man must purge himself from these before he can be a vessel of honour, or meet for his Master's use. 3. Every vessel must be fit for its Master's use; every one in the church whom God approves must be devoted to his Master's service and meet for his use. 4. Sanctification in the heart is our preparation for every good work. The tree must be made good, and then the fruit will be good.

Verses 22-26

I. Paul here exhorts Timothy to beware of *youthful lusts*, v. 22. Though he was a holy good man, very much mortified to the world, yet Paul thought it necessary to caution him against youthful lusts: "*Flee* them, take all possible care and pains to keep thyself pure from them." The lusts of the flesh are youthful lusts, which young people must carefully watch against, and the best must not be secure. He prescribes an excellent remedy against youthful lusts: *Follow righteousness, faith, charity peace*, etc. Observe, 1. Youthful lusts are very dangerous, for which reason even hopeful young people should be warned of them, for they war against the soul, 1 Pt. 2:11. 2. The exciting of our graces will be the extinguishing of our corruptions; the more we follow that which is good the faster and the further we shall flee from that which is evil. Righteousness, and faith, and love, will be excellent antidotes against youthful lusts. Holy love will cure impure lust.—*Follow peace with those that call on the Lord*. The keeping up of the communion of saints will take us off from all fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness. See the character of Christians: they are such as *call on the Lord Jesus Christ, out of a pure heart*. Observe, Christ is to be prayed to. It is the character of all Christians that they call upon him; but our prayers to God and Christ are not acceptable nor successful except they come out of a pure heart.

II. He cautions him against contention, and, to prevent this (v. 23), cautions him against *foolish and unlearned questions*, that tend to no benefit, strifes of words. Those who advanced them, and doted upon them, thought themselves wise and learned; but Paul calls them foolish and unlearned. The mischief of these is that they *gender strifes*, that they breed debates and quarrels among Christians and ministers. It is very remarkable how often, and with what seriousness, the apostle cautions Timothy against disputes in religion, which surely was not without some such design as this, to show that religion consists more in believing and practising what God requires than in subtle disputes.—*The servant of the Lord must not strive*, v. 24. Nothing worse becomes the servant of the Lord Jesus, who himself did not strive nor cry (Mt. 12:19), but was a pattern of meekness, and mildness, and gentleness to all, than strife and contention. The servant of the Lord must be *gentle to all men*, and thereby show that he is himself subject to the commanding power of that holy religion which he is employed in preaching and propagating.—*Apt to teach*. Those are unapt to teach who are apt to strive, and are fierce and froward. Ministers must be patient, bearing with evil, and *in meekness instructing* (v. 25) not only those who subject themselves, but those who oppose themselves. Observe, 1. Those who oppose themselves to the truth are to be instructed; for instruction is the scripture-method of dealing with the erroneous, which is more likely to convince them of their errors than fire and faggot: he does not bid us kill their bodies, under pretence of saving their souls. 2. Such as oppose themselves are to be instructed in meekness, for our Lord is meek and lowly (Mt. 11:29), and this agrees well with the character of the servant of the Lord (v. 24): *He must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient*. This is the way to convey truth in its light and power, and to overcome evil with good, Rom. 12:21. 3. That which ministers must have in their eyes, in instructing those who oppose themselves, must be their recovery: *If God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*. Observe, (1.) Repentance is God's gift. (2.) It is a gift with a *peradventure* in the case of those who oppose themselves; and therefore, though we are not to despair of the grace of God, yet we must take heed of presuming upon it. *To the acknowledging of the truth*. (3.) The same God

who gives us the discovery of the truth does by his grace bring us to the acknowledging of it, otherwise our hearts would continue in rebellion against it, for we are to confess with our mouths as well as to believe with our hearts, Rom. 10:9, 10. And thus sinners recover themselves out of the snare of the devil; see here, [1.] The misery of sinners: they are in the *snare of the devil, and are led captive by him at his will*, v. 26. They are slaves to the worst of task-masters; he is the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, Eph. 2:2. They are taken in a snare, and in the worst snare, because it is the devil's; they are as fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare. Further, They are under Ham's curse (*a servant of servants shall he be*, Gen. 9:25), they are slaves to him who is but a slave and vassal. [2.] The happiness of those who repent: they recover themselves out of this snare, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken and they have escaped; and the greater the danger the greater the deliverance. When sinners repent, those who before were led captive by the devil at his will come to be led into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and have their wills melted into the will of the Lord Jesus. The good Lord recover us all out of the snare.

Chapter 3

I. The apostle forewarns Timothy what the last days would be, with the reasons thereof (v. 1-9). II. Prescribes various remedies against them (v. 10 to the end), particularly his own example ("But thou hast fully known my doctrine," etc.) and the knowledge of the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation, and will be the best antidote against the corruptions of the times we live in. In this chapter Paul tells Timothy how bad others would be, and therefore how good he should be; and this use we should make of the badness of others, thereby to engage us to hold our own integrity so much the firmer.

Verses 1-9

Timothy must not think it strange if there were in the church bad men; for the net of the gospel was to enclose both good fish and bad, Mt. 22:47, 48. Jesus Christ had foretold (Mt. 24) that there would come seducers, and therefore we must not be offended at it, nor think the worse of religion or the church for it. Even in gold ore there will be dross, and a great deal of chaff among the wheat when it lies on the floor.

I. Timothy must know that in the *last days* (v. 1), in gospel times, there would *come perilous times*. Though gospel times were times of reformation in many respects, let him know that even in gospel times there would be perilous times; not so much on account of persecution from without as on account of corruptions within. These would be difficult times, wherein it would be difficult for a man to keep a good conscience. He does not say, "Perilous times shall come, for both Jews and Gentiles shall be combined to root out Christianity;" but "perilous times shall come, for such as have *the form of godliness* (v. 5) shall be corrupt and wicked, and do a great deal of damage to the church." Two traitors within the garrison may do more hurt to it than two thousand besiegers without. Perilous times shall come, for men shall be wicked. Note, 1. Sin makes the times perilous. When there is a general corruption of manners, and of the tempers of men, this makes the times dangerous to live in; for it is hard to keep our integrity in the midst of general corruption. 2. The coming of perilous times is an evidence of the truth of scripture-predictions; if the event in this respect did not answer to the prophecy, we might be tempted to question the divinity of the Bible. 3. We are all concerned to know this, to believe and consider it, that we may not be surprised when we see the times perilous: *This know also*.

II. Paul tells Timothy what would be the occasion of making these times perilous, or what shall be the marks and signs whereby these times may be known, v. 2, etc. 1. Self-love will make the times perilous. Who is there who does not love himself? But this is meant of an irregular sinful self-love. Men love their carnal selves better than their spiritual selves. Men love to gratify their own lusts, and make provision for them, more than to please God and do their duty. Instead of Christian charity, which takes care for the good of others, they will mind themselves only, and prefer their own gratification before the church's edification. 2. Covetousness. Observe, Self-love brings in a long train of sins and mischiefs. When men are lovers of themselves, no good can be expected from them, as all good may be expected from those who love God with all their hearts. When covetousness generally prevails, when every man is for what he can get and for keeping what he has, this makes men

dangerous to one another, and obliges every man to stand on his guard against his neighbour. 3. Pride and vain-glory. The times are perilous when men, being proud of themselves, are *boasters and blasphemers*, boasters before men whom they despise and look upon with scorn, and blasphemers of God and of his name. When men do not fear God they will not regard man, and so *vice versâ*. 4. When children are disobedient to their parents, and break through the obligations which they lie under to them both in duty and gratitude, and frequently in interest, having their dependence upon them and their expectation from them, they make the times perilous; for what wickedness will those stick at who will be abusive to their own parents and rebel against them? 5. Unthankfulness and unholiness make the times perilous, and these two commonly go together. What is the reason that men are unholy and without the fear of God, but that they are unthankful for the mercies of God? Ingratitude and impiety go together; for call a man ungrateful, and you can call him by no worse name. Unthankful, and impure, defiled with fleshly lusts, which is an instance of great ingratitude to that God who has provided so well for the support of the body; we abuse his gifts, if we make them the food and fuel of our lusts. 6. The times are perilous when men will not be held by the bonds either of nature or common honesty, when they are *without natural affection*, and *truce-breakers*, v. 3. There is a natural affection due to all. Wherever there is the human nature, there should be humanity towards those of the same nature, but especially between relations. Times are perilous when children are disobedient to their parents (v. 2) and when parents are without natural affection to their children, v. 3. See what a corruption of nature sin is, how it deprives men even of that which nature has implanted in them for the support of their own kind; for the natural affection of parents to their children is that which contributes very much to the keeping up of mankind upon the earth. And those who will not be bound by natural affection, no marvel that they will not be bound by the most solemn leagues and covenants. *They are truce-breakers*, that make no conscience of the engagements they have laid themselves under. 7. The times are perilous when men are *false accusers* one of another, *diaboloï—devils* one to another, having no regard to the good name of others, or to the religious obligations of an oath, but thinking themselves at liberty to say and do what they please, Ps. 12:4. 8. When men have no government of themselves and their own appetites: not of their own appetites, for they are *incontinent*; not of their own passions, for they are *fierce*; when they have no rule over their own spirits, and therefore are like a city that is broken down, and has no walls; they are soon fired, upon the least provocation. 9. When that which is good and ought to be honoured is generally despised and looked upon with contempt. It is the pride of persecutors that they look with contempt upon good people, though they are more excellent than their neighbours. 10. When men are generally treacherous, wilful, and haughty, the times are perilous (v. 4)—when men are *traitors, heady, high-minded*. Our Saviour has foretold that the brother shall betray the brother to death and the father the child (Mt. 10:21), and those are the worst sort of traitors: those who delivered up their Bibles to persecutors were called *traditores*, for they betrayed the trust committed to them. When men are petulant and puffed up, behaving scornfully to all about them, and when this temper generally prevails, then the times are perilous. 11. When men are generally *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*. When there are more epicures than true Christians, then the times are bad indeed. God is to be loved above all. That is a carnal mind, and is full of enmity against him, which prefers any thing before him, especially such a sordid thing as carnal pleasure is. 12. When, notwithstanding all this, they *have the form of godliness* (v. 5), are called by the

Christian name, baptized into the Christian faith, and make a show of religion; but, how plausible soever their form of godliness is, they deny the power of it. When they take upon them the form which should and would bring along with it the power thereof, they will put asunder what God hath joined together: they will assume the form of godliness, to take away their reproach; but they will not submit to the power of it, to take away their sin. Observe here, (1.) Men may be very bad and wicked under a profession of religion; they may be lovers of themselves, etc., yet have a form of godliness. (2.) A form of godliness is a very different thing from the power of it; men may have the one and be wholly destitute of the other; yea, they deny it, at least practically in their lives. (3.) From such good Christians must withdraw themselves.

III. Here Paul warns Timothy to take heed of certain seducers, not only that he might not be drawn away by them himself, but that he might arm those who were under his charge against their seduction. 1. He shows how industrious they were to make proselytes (v. 6): they applied themselves to particular persons, visited them in their houses, not daring to appear openly; for those that do evil hate the light, Jn. 3:20. They were not forced into houses, as good Christians often were by persecution; but they of choice crept into houses, to insinuate themselves into the affections and good opinion of people, and so to draw them over to their party. And see what sort of people those were that they gained, and made proselytes of; they were such as were weak, *silly women*; and such as were wicked, *laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts*. A foolish head and a filthy heart make persons, especially women, an easy prey to seducers. 2. He shows how far they were from coming to the knowledge of the truth, though they pretended to be *ever learning*, v. 7. In one sense we must all be ever learning, that is, growing in knowledge, following on to know the Lord, pressing forward; but these were sceptics, giddy and unstable, who were forward to imbibe every new notion, under pretence of advancement in knowledge, but never came to a right understanding of the truth as it is in Jesus. 3. He foretels the certain stop that should be put to their progress (v. 8, 9), comparing them to the Egyptian magicians who withstood Moses, and who are here named, *Jannes and Jambres*; though the names are not to be met with in the story of the Old Testament, yet they are found in some old Jewish writers. When Moses came with a divine command to fetch Israel out of Egypt, these magicians opposed him. Thus those heretics *resisted the truth* and like them were men of *corrupt minds*, men who had their understandings perverted, biassed and prejudiced against the truth, and *reprobate concerning the faith*, or very far from being true Christians; *but they shall proceed no further*, or not much further, as some read it. Observe, (1.) Seducers seek for corners, and love obscurity; for they are afraid to appear in public, and therefore creep into houses. Further, They attack those who are the least able to defend themselves, silly and wicked women. (2.) Seducers in all ages are much alike. Their characters are the same-namely, *Men of corrupt minds*, etc.; their conduct is much the same-they resist the truth, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses; and they will be alike in their disappointment. (3.) Those who resist the truth are guilty of folly, yea, of egregious folly; for *magna est veritas, et praevalabit-Great is the truth, and shall prevail*. (4.) Though the spirit of error may be let loose for a time, God has it in a chain. Satan can deceive the nations and the churches no further and no longer than God will permit him: *Their folly shall be manifest*, it shall appear that they are imposters, and every man shall abandon them.

Verses 10-17

Here the apostle, to confirm Timothy in that way wherein he walked,

I. Sets before him his own example, which Timothy had been an eye-witness of, having long attended Paul (v. 10): *Thou hast fully known my doctrine*. The more fully we know the doctrine of Christ and the apostles, the more closely we shall cleave to it; the reason why many sit loose to it is because they do not fully know it. Christ's apostles had no enemies but those who did not know them, or not know them fully; those who knew them best loved and honoured them the most. Now what is it that Timothy had so fully known in Paul? 1. The doctrine that he preached. Paul kept back nothing from his hearers, but declared to them the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), so that if it were not their own fault they might fully know it. Timothy had a great advantage in being trained up under such a tutor, and being apprised of the doctrine he preached. 2. He had fully known his conversation: *Thou hast fully know my doctrine, and manner of life*; his manner of life was of a piece with his doctrine, and did not contradict it. He did not pull down by his living what he built up by his preaching. Those ministers are likely to do good, and leave lasting fruits of their labours, whose manner of life agrees with their doctrine; as, on the contrary, those cannot expect to profit the people at all that preach well and live ill. 3. Timothy fully knew what was the great thing that Paul had in view, both in his preaching and in his conversation: "Thou hast known *my purpose*, what I drive at, how far it is from any worldly, carnal, secular design, and how sincerely I aim at the glory of God and the good of the souls of men." 4. Timothy fully knew Paul's good character, which he might gather from his doctrine, manner of life, and purpose; for he gave proofs of his *faith* (that is, of his integrity and fidelity, or his faith in Christ, his faith concerning another world, by which Paul lived), his *long-suffering* towards the churches to which he preached and over which he presided, his *charity* towards all men, and his *patience*. These were graces that Paul was eminent for, and Timothy knew it. 5. He knew that he had suffered ill for doing well (v. 11): "Thou hast fully known the *persecutions and afflictions that came unto me*" (he mentions those only which happened to him while Timothy was with him, *at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra*); "and therefore let it be no surprise to thee if thou suffer hard things, it is no more than I have endured before." 6. He knew what care God had taken of him: *Notwithstanding out of them all the Lord delivered me*; as he never failed his cause, so his God never failed him. Thou hast fully known my *afflictions*. When we know the afflictions of good people but in part, they are a temptation to us to decline that cause which they suffer for; when we know only the hardships they undergo for Christ, we may be ready to say, "We will renounce that cause that is likely to cost us so dear in the owning of it;" but when we *fully* know the afflictions, not only how they suffer, but how they are supported and comforted under their sufferings, then, instead of being discouraged, we shall be animated by them, especially considering that we are told before that we must count upon such things (v. 12): *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*: not always alike; at that time those who professed the faith of Christ were more exposed to persecution than at other times; but at all times, more or less, those who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. They must expect to be despised, and that their religion will stand in the way of their preferment; those who will live godly must expect it, especially those who will live godly *in Christ Jesus*, that is, according to the strict rules of the Christian religion, those who will wear the livery and bear the name of the crucified Redeemer. All who will show their religion in their conversation, who will not only be godly, but live godly, let them expect persecution, especially when they are resolute in it. Observe, (1.) The

apostle's life was very exemplary for three things: for his *doctrine*, which was according to the will of God; for his *life*, which was agreeable to his doctrine; and for his *persecutions and sufferings*. (2.) Though his life was a life of great usefulness, yet it was a life of great sufferings; and none, I believe, came nearer to their great Master for eminent services and great sufferings than Paul: he suffered almost in every place; the Holy Ghost witnessed that bonds and afflictions did abide him, Acts 20:23. Here he mentions his persecutions and afflictions at *Antioch*, at *Iconium*, at *Lystra*, besides what he suffered elsewhere. (3.) The apostle mentions the Lord's delivering him out of them all, for Timothy's and our encouragement under sufferings. (4.) We have the practice and treatment of true Christians: they live godly in Jesus Christ—this is their practice; and they shall suffer persecution—this is the usage they must expect in this world.

II. He warns Timothy of the fatal end of seducers, as a reason why he should stick closely to the truth as it is in Jesus: *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse*, etc., v. 13. Observe, As good men, by the grace of God, grow better and better, so bad men, through the subtlety of Satan and the power of their own corruptions, grow worse and worse. The way of sin is down-hill; for such proceed from bad to worse, *deceiving and being deceived*. Those who deceive others do but deceive themselves; those who draw others into error run themselves into more and more mistakes, and they will find it so at last, to their cost.

III. He directs him to keep close to a good education, and particularly to what he had learned out of the holy scriptures (v. 14, 15): *Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned*. Note, It is not enough to learn that which is good, but we must continue in it, and persevere in it unto the end. Then are we Christ's disciples indeed, Jn. 8:31. We should not be any more *children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, Eph. 4:14. *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace*, Heb. 13:9. And for this reason we should continue in the things we have learned from the holy scriptures; not that we ought to continue in any errors and mistakes which we may have been led into, in the time of our childhood and youth (for these, upon an impartial enquiry and full conviction, we should forsake); but this makes nothing against our continuing in those things which the holy scriptures plainly assert, and which he that runs may read. If Timothy would adhere to the truth as he had been taught it, this would arm him against the snares and insinuations of seducers. Observe, Timothy must *continue in the things which he had learned and had been assured of*.

1. It is a great happiness to know the certainty of the things wherein we have been instructed (Lu. 1:4); not only to know what the truths are, but to know that they are of undoubted certainty. What we have learned we must labour to be more and more assured of, that, being grounded in the truth, we may be guarded against error, for certainty in religion is of great importance and advantage: *Knowing*, (1.) "That thou hast had good teachers. Consider of *whom thou hast learned them*; not of evil men and seducers, but good men, who had themselves experienced the power of the truths they taught thee, and been ready to suffer for them, and thereby would give the fullest evidence of their belief of these truths." (2.) "Knowing especially the firm foundation upon which thou hast built, namely, that of the scripture (v. 15): *That from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures*."

2. Those who would acquaint themselves with the things of God, and be assured of them, must know the holy scriptures, for these are the summary of divine revelation.

3. It is a great happiness to know the holy scriptures from our childhood; and children should betimes get the knowledge of the scriptures. The age of children is the learning age; and those who would get true learning must get it out of the scriptures.

4. The scriptures we are to know are the holy scriptures; they come from the holy God, were delivered by holy men, contain holy precepts, treat of holy things, and were designed to make us holy and to lead us in the way of holiness to happiness; being called the *holy scriptures*, they are by this distinguished from profane writings of all sorts, and from those that only treat morality, and common justice and honesty, but do not meddle with holiness. If we would know the holy scriptures, we must read and search them daily, as the noble Bereans did, Acts 17:11. They must not lie by us neglected, and seldom or never looked into. Now here observe,

(1.) What is the excellency of the scripture. It is *given by inspiration of God* (v. 16), and therefore is his word. It is a divine revelation, which we may depend upon as infallibly true. The same Spirit that breathed reason into us breathes revelation among us: *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men spoke as they were moved or carried forth by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pt. 1:21. The prophets and apostles did not speak from themselves, but what they received of the Lord that they delivered unto us. That the scripture was given by inspiration of God appears from the majesty of its style,—from the truth, purity, and sublimity, of the doctrines contained in it,—from the harmony of its several parts,—from its power and efficacy on the minds of multitudes that converse with it,—from the accomplishment of many prophecies relating to things beyond all human foresight,—and from the uncontrollable miracles that were wrought in proof of its divine original: *God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will*, Heb. 2:4.

(2.) What use it will be of to us. [1.] *It is able to make us wise to salvation*; that is, it is a sure guide in our way to eternal life. Note, Those are wise indeed who are wise to salvation. The scriptures are able to make us truly wise, wise for our souls and another world. "To make thee wise to salvation *through faith*." Observe, The scriptures will make us wise to salvation, if they be mixed with faith, and not otherwise, Heb. 4:2. For, if we do not believe their truth and goodness, they will do us no good. [2.] It is *profitable* to us for all the purposes of the Christian life, *for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*. It answers all the ends of divine revelation. It instructs us in that which is true, reproves us for that which is amiss, directs us in that which is good. It is of use to all, for we all need to be instructed, corrected, and reproofed: it is of special use to ministers, who are to give instruction, correction, and reproof; and whence can they fetch it better than from the scripture? [3.] *That the man of God may be perfect*, v. 17. The Christian, the minister, is the man of God. That which finishes a man of God in this world is the scripture. By it we are *thoroughly furnished for every good work*. There is that in the scripture which suits every case. Whatever duty we have to do, whatever service is required from us, we may find enough in the scriptures to furnish us for it.

(3.) On the whole we here see, [1.] That the scripture has various uses, and answers divers ends and purposes: *It is profitable*

for doctrine, for reproof, for correction of all errors in judgment and practice, and *for instruction in righteousness*. [2.] The scripture is a perfect rule of faith and practice, and was designed for the man of God, the minister as well as the Christian who is devoted to God, for it is *profitable for doctrine*, etc. [3.] If we consult the scripture, which was given by inspiration of God, and follow its directions, we shall be made men of God, *perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good work*. [4.] There is no occasion for the writings of the philosopher, nor for rabbinical fables, nor popish legends, nor unwritten traditions, to make us perfect men of God, since the scripture answers all these ends and purposes. O that we may love our Bibles more, and keep closer to them than ever! and then shall we find the benefit and advantage designed thereby, and shall at last attain the happiness therein promised and assured to us.

Chapter 4

In this chapter, I. Paul with great solemnity and earnestness presses Timothy to the diligent and conscientious discharge of his work and office as an evangelist; and the charge given to him all gospel ministers are to take to themselves (v. 1-5). II. The reason of his concern in this case, Why must Timothy now be instant in season, etc., in a particular manner? Because the church was likely to be deprived of the apostle's labours, for his departure was at hand (v. 6-8). III. Divers particular matters, with a hint and caution, about Alexander the coppersmith (v. 9-15). IV. He informs him of what befel him at his first answer; though men forsook him, the Lord stood by him, and this encouraged him to hope for future deliverance (v. 16-18). And then he concludes with salutations and a benediction (v. 19 to the end).

Verses 1-8

Observe, I. How awfully this charge is introduced (v. 1): *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.* Observe, The best of men have need to be awed into the discharge of their duty. The work of a minister is not an indifferent thing, but absolutely necessary. Woe be to him if he preach not the gospel, 1 Co. 9:16. To induce him to faithfulness, he must consider, 1. That the eye of God and Jesus Christ was upon him: *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ;* that is, "as thou tenderest the favour of God and Jesus Christ; as thou wilt approve thyself to God and Jesus Christ, by the obligations both of natural and revealed religion; as thou wilt make due returns to the God who made thee and the Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed thee." 2. He charges him as he will answer it at the great day, reminding him of the judgment to come, which is committed to the Lord Jesus. He shall judge the quick and the dead *at his appearing and his kingdom*, that is, when he appears in his kingdom. It concerns all, both ministers and people, seriously to consider the account that they must shortly give to Jesus Christ of all the trusts reposed in them. Christ shall *judge the quick and the dead*, that is, those that at the last day shall be found alive, and those who shall be raised to life out of the grave. Note, (1.) The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead. *God hath committed all judgment unto the Son*, and hath appointed him the Judge of quick and dead, Acts 10:42. (2.) He will appear; he will come the second time, and it will be a glorious appearance, as the word *epiphaneia* signifies. (3.) Then his kingdom shall appear in its glory: *At his appearing and kingdom;* for he will then appear in his kingdom, sitting on a throne, to judge the world.

II. What is the matter of the charge, v. 2-5. He is charged,

1. To *preach the word*. This is ministers' business; a dispensation is committed to them. It is not their own notions and fancies that they are to preach, but the pure plain word of God; and they must not corrupt it, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, they speak in Christ, 2 Co. 2:17.

2. To urge what he preached, and to press it with all earnestness upon his hearers: *"Be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort;* do this work with all fervency of spirit. Call upon those under thy charge to take heed of sin, to do their duty: call upon them to repent, and believe, and live a holy life, and this both in season and out of season. *In season*, when they are at leisure to hear thee, when some special opportunity offers itself of speaking to them with advantage. Nay, do it *out*

of season, even when there is not that apparent probability of fastening something upon them, because thou dost not know but the Spirit of God may fasten upon them; for the wind bloweth where it listeth; and *in the morning we must sow our seed, and in the evening not withhold our hand*," Eccl. 11:6. We must do it in season, that is, let slip no opportunity; and do it out of season, that is, not shift off the duty, under pretence that it is out of season.

3. He must tell people of their faults: "*Reprove them, rebuke them*. Convince wicked people of the evil and danger of their wicked courses. Endeavour, by dealing plainly with them, to bring them to repentance. Rebuke them with gravity and authority, in Christ's name, that they may take thy displeasure against them as an indication of God's displeasure."

4. He must direct, encourage, and quicken those who began well. "*Exhort them* (persuade them to hold on, and endure to the end) and this *with all long-suffering and doctrine*." (1.) He must do it very patiently: *With all long-suffering*. "If thou do not see the effect of thy labours presently, yet do not therefore give up the cause; be not weary of speaking to them." While God shows to them all long-suffering, let ministers exhort with all long-suffering. (2.) He must do it rationally, not with passion, but *with doctrine*, that is, "In order to the reducing of them to good practices, instil into them good principles. Teach them the truth as it is in Jesus, reduce them to a firm belief of it, and this will be a means both to reclaim them from evil and to bring them to good." Observe, [1.] A minister's work has various parts: he is to *preach the word*, to *reprove*, *rebuke*, and *exhort*. [2.] He is to be very diligent and careful; he must be *instant in season and out of season*; he must spare no pains nor labour, but must be urgent with them to take care of their souls and their eternal concerns.

5. He must *watch in all things*. "Seek an opportunity of doing them a kindness; let no fair occasion slip, through thy negligence. Watch to thy work; watch against the temptations of Satan, by which thou mayest be diverted from it; watch over the souls of those who are committed to thy charge."

6. He must count upon afflictions, and endure them, make the best of them. *Kakopatheuson*, endure *patiently*. "Be not discouraged by the difficulties thou meetest with, but bear them with an evenness of spirit. Inure thyself to hardships."

7. He must remember his office, and discharge its duties: *Do the work of an evangelist*. The office of the evangelist was, as the apostles' deputies, to water the churches that they planted. They were not settled pastors, but for some time resided in, and presided over, the churches that the apostles had planted, till they were settled under a standing ministry. This was Timothy's work.

8. He must fulfil his ministry: *Make full proof of it*. It was a great trust that was reposed in him, and therefore he must answer it, and perform all the parts of his office with diligence and care. Observe, (1.) A minister must expect afflictions in the faithful discharge of his duty. (2.) He must endure them patiently, like a Christian hero. (3.) These must not discourage him in his work, for he must do his work, and fulfil his ministry. (4.) The best way to make full proof of our ministry is to fulfil it, to fill it up in all its parts with proper work.

III. The reasons to enforce the charge.

1. Because errors and heresies were likely to creep into the church, by which the minds of many professing Christians would be corrupted (v. 3, 4): "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine*. Therefore improve the present time,

when they will endure it. Be busy now, for it is seedtime; when the fields are white unto the harvest, put in the sickle, for the present gale of opportunity will be soon over. *They will not endure sound doctrine.* There will be those who will *heap to themselves corrupt teachers, and will turn away their ears from the truth;* and therefore secure as many as thou canst, that, when these storms and tempests do arise, they may be well fixed, and their apostasy may be prevented." People must hear, and ministers must preach, for the time to come, and guard against the mischiefs that are likely to arise hereafter, though they do not yet arise. They will *turn away their ears from the truth;* they will grow weary of the old plain gospel of Christ, and then they will be greedy of fables, and take pleasure in them, and God will give them up to those strong delusions, because they received not the truth in the love of it, 2 Th. 2:11, 12. Observe, (1.) These teachers were of their own heaping up, and not of God's sending; but they chose them, to gratify their lusts, and to please their itching ears. (2.) People do so when they will not endure sound doctrine, that preaching which is searching, plain, and to the purpose; then they will have teachers of their own. (3.) There is a wide difference between the word of God and the word of such teachers; the one is sound doctrine, the word of truth, the other is only fables. (4.) Those that are turned unto fables first turn away their ears from the truth, for they cannot hear and mind both, any more than they can serve two masters. Nay, further, it is said, *They shall be turned unto fables.* God justly suffers those to turn to fables who grow weary of the truth, and gives them up to be led aside from the truth by fables.

2. Because Paul for his part had almost done his work: *Do thou make full proof of thy ministry, for I am now ready to be offered,* v. 6. And,

(1.) "Therefore there will be the more occasion for thee." When labourers are removed out of the vineyard, it is no time for those to loiter that are left behind, but to double their diligence. The fewer hands there are to work the more industrious those hands must be that are at work.

(2.) "I have done the work of my day and generation; do thou in like manner do the work of thy day and generation."

(3.) The comfort and cheerfulness of Paul, in the prospect of his approaching departure, might encourage Timothy to the utmost industry, and diligence, and seriousness in his work. Paul was an old soldier of Jesus Christ, Timothy was but newly enlisted. "Come," says Paul, "I have found our Master kind and the cause good; I can look back upon my warfare with a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction; and therefore be not afraid of the difficulties thou must meet with. The crown of life is as sure to thee as if it were already upon thy head; and therefore endure afflictions, and make full proof of thy ministry." The courage and comfort of dying saints and ministers, and especially dying martyrs, are a great confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion, and a great encouragement to living saints and ministers in their work. Here the apostle looks forward, upon his death approaching: *I am now ready to be offered.* The Holy Ghost witnessed in every city that bonds and afflictions did abide him, Acts 20:23. He was now at Rome, and it is probable that he had particular intimations from the Spirit that there he should seal the truth with his blood; and he looks upon it now as near at hand: I am *already poured out;* so it is in the original, *εμδευ σπενδομαι;* that is, I am already a martyr in affection. It alludes to the pouring out of the drink-offerings; for the blood of the martyrs, though it was not a sacrifice of atonement, was a sacrifice of acknowledgment to the honour of the grace of God and his truths. Observe,

[1.] With what pleasure he speaks of dying. He calls it his departure; though it is probable that he foresaw he must die a violent bloody death, yet he calls it his departure, or his release. Death to a good man is his release from the imprisonment of this world and his departure to the enjoyments of another world; he does not cease to be, but is only removed from one world to another.

[2.] With what pleasure he looks back upon the life he had lived (v. 7): *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course*, etc. He did not fear death, because he had the testimony of his conscience that by the grace of God he had in some measure answered the ends of living. As a Christian, as a minister, he had fought a good fight. He had done the service, gone through the difficulties of his warfare, and had been instrumental in carrying on the glorious victories of the exalted Redeemer over the powers of darkness. His life was a course, and he had now finished it; as his warfare was accomplished, so his race was run. "*I have kept the faith*. I have kept the doctrines of the gospel, and never betrayed any of them." Note, *First*, The life of a Christian, but especially of a minister, is a warfare and a race, sometimes compared to the one in the scripture, and sometimes to the other. *Secondly*, It is a good fight, a good warfare; the cause is good, and the victory is sure, if we continue faithful and courageous. *Thirdly*, We must fight this good fight; we must fight it out, and finish our course; we must not give over till we are made more than conquerors through him who hath loved us, Rom. 8:37. *Fourthly*, It is a great comfort to a dying saint, when he can look back upon his past life and say with our apostle, "*I have fought*, etc. I have kept the faith, the doctrine of faith and the grace of faith." Towards the end of our days to be able to speak in this manner, what comfort, unspeakable comfort, will it afford! Let it then be our constant endeavour, by the grace of God, that we may finish our course with joy, Acts 20:24.

[3.] With what pleasure he looks forward to the life he was to live hereafter (v. 8): *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness*, etc. He had lost for Christ, but he was sure he should not lose by him, Phil. 3:8. Let this encourage Timothy to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ that there is a crown of life before us, the glory and joy of which will abundantly recompense all the hardships and toils of our present warfare. Observe, It is called *a crown of righteousness*, because it will be the recompence of our services, which *God is not unrighteous to forget*; and because our holiness and righteousness will there be perfected, and will be our crown. God will give it as *a righteous Judge*, who will let none love by him. And yet this crown of righteousness was not peculiar to Paul, as if it belonged only to apostles and eminent ministers and martyrs, but *to all those also that love his appearing*. Observe, It is the character of all the saints that they love the appearing of Jesus Christ: they loved his first appearing, when he appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 9:26); they love to think of it; they love his second appearing at the great day; love it, and long for it: and, with respect to those who love the appearing of Jesus Christ, he shall appear to their joy; there is a crown of righteousness reserved for them, which shall then be given them, Heb. 9:28. We learn hence, *First*, The Lord is the righteous Judge, for his judgment is according to truth. *Secondly*, The crown of believers is a crown of righteousness, purchased by the righteousness of Christ, and bestowed as the reward of the saints' righteousness. *Thirdly*, This crown, which believers shall wear, is laid up for them; they have it not at present, for here they are but heirs; they have it not in possession, and yet it is sure, for it is laid up for them. *Fourthly*, The

righteous Judge will give it to all who love, prepare, and long for his appearing. *Surely I come quickly. Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus.*

Verses 9-15

Here are divers particular matters which Paul mentions to Timothy, now at the closing of the epistle. 1. He bids him hasten to him, if possible (v. 9): *So thy diligence to come shortly to me.* For Timothy was an evangelist, one who was not a fixed pastor of any one place, but attended the motions of the apostles, to build upon their foundation. Paul wanted Timothy's company and help; and the reason he gives is because several had left him (v. 10); one from an ill principle, namely, *Demas*, who abides under an ill name for it: *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.* He quitted Paul and his interest, either for fear of suffering (because Paul was now a prisoner, and he was afraid of coming into trouble upon his account) or being called off from his ministry by secular affairs, in which he entangled himself; his first love to Christ and his gospel was forsaken and forgotten, and he fell in love with the world. Note, Love to this present world is often the cause of apostasy from the truths and ways of Jesus Christ. He has gone off, has *departed to Thessalonica*, called thither perhaps by trade, or by some other worldly business. *Crescens* had gone one way and *Titus* another way. *Luke* however remained with Paul (v. 11, 12), and was not this enough? Paul did not think it so; he loved the company of his friends. 2. He speaks respectfully concerning *Mark*: *He is profitable to me for the ministry.* It is supposed that this *Mark* was he about whom Paul and Barnabas had contended, Acts 15:39. Paul would not take him with him to the work, because he had once flinched and drawn back: but now, says he, *Take Mark, and bring him with thee.* By this it appears that Paul was now reconciled to *Mark*, and had a better opinion of him than he had had formerly. This teaches us to be of a forgiving spirit; we must not therefore disclaim for ever making use of those that are profitable and useful, though they may have done amiss. 3. Paul orders Timothy to come to him, bids him as he came through Troas to bring with him thence those things which he had left behind him there (v. 13), the cloak he had left there, which, it may be, Paul had the more occasion for in a cold prison. It is probable that it was the habit Paul usually wore, a plain dress. Some read it, the *roll of parchment I left at Troas*; others, the *desk* that I left. Paul was guided by divine inspiration, and yet he would have his books with him. Whereas he had exhorted Timothy to give attendance to reading, so he did himself, though he was now ready to be offered. As long as we live, we must be still learning. *But especially the parchments*, which some think were the originals of his epistles; others think they were the skins of which he made his tents, whereby he obtained a livelihood, working with his own hands. 4. He mentions *Alexander*, and the mischief that he had done him, v. 14, 15. This is he who is spoken of Acts 19:33. It should seem, he had been a professor of the Christian religion, a forward professor, for he was there particularly maligned by the worshippers of Diana, and yet he did Paul much evil. Paul was in as much danger from false brethren (2 Co. 11:26) as from open enemies. Paul foretels that God would reckon with him. It is a prophetic denunciation of the just judgment of God that would befall him: The Lord *will reward him according to his works.* He cautions Timothy to take heed of him: *"Of whom be thou aware also, that he do not, under pretence of friendship, betray thee to mischief."* It is dangerous having any thing to do with those who would be enemies to such a man as Paul. Observe, (1.) Some who were once Paul's hearers and admirers did not give him reason to remember them with much pleasure; for one forsook

him, and another did him much evil, and greatly withstood his words. Yet, (2.) At the same time he mentions some with pleasure; the badness of some did not make him forget the goodness of others; such as *Timothy, Titus, Mark, and Luke*. (3.) The apostle has left a brand on the names and memory of two persons; the one is *Demas*, who forsook him, having loved the present world, and the other is *Alexander*, who greatly withstood his words. (4.) God will reward evil-doers, particularly apostates, according to their works. (5.) Of such as are of Alexander's spirit and temper we should beware; for they will do us no good, but all the mischief that is in their power.

Verses 16-22

Here, I. He gives Timothy an account of his own present circumstances.

1. He had lately been called to appear before the emperor, upon his appeal to Caesar; and then *no man stood with him* (v. 16), to plead his cause, to bear testimony for him, or so much as to keep him in countenance, but *all men forsook him*. This was strange, that so good a man as Paul should have nobody to own him, even at Rome, where there were many Christians, whose faith was spoken of throughout the world, Rom. 1:8. But men are but men. The Christians at Rome were forward to go and meet him (Acts 28); but when it came to the pinch, and they would be in danger of suffering with him, then they all forsook him. He prays that God would not lay it to their charge, intimating that it was a great fault, and God might justly be angry with them, but he prays God to forgive them. See what a distinction is put between sins of presumption and sins of infirmity.

Alexander the coppersmith, who maliciously withstood Paul, he prays against: *The Lord reward him according to his works*; but respecting these Christians, who through weakness shrunk from Paul in time of trial, he says, *The Lord lay it not to their charge*. Observe, (1.) Paul had his trials in his friends' forsaking him in a time of danger as well as in the opposition made by enemies: all forsook him. (2.) It was their sin not to appear for the good apostle, especially at his first answer; but it was a sin of weakness, and therefore the more excusable. Yet, (3.) God might lay it to their charge, but Paul endeavours to prevent it by his earnest prayers: *Let it not be laid to their charge*.

2. *Notwithstanding this God stood by him* (v. 17), gave him extraordinary wisdom and courage, to enable him to speak so much the better himself. When he had nobody to keep him in countenance, God made his face to shine.—*That by me the preaching might be fully known*, that is, "God brought me out from that difficulty that I might preach the gospel, which is my business." Nay, it should seem, that he might preach the gospel at that time; for Paul knew how to preach at the bar as well as in the pulpit. *And that all the Gentiles might hear*; the emperor himself and the great men who would never have heard Paul preach if he had not been brought before them. *And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion*, that is, of Nero (as some think) or some other judge. Some understand it only as a proverbial form of speech, to signify that he was in imminent danger. *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work*. See how Paul improved his experiences: "He that delivered doth deliver, and we trust he will yet deliver, will deliver me from every evil work, from any ill done to me by others. *And shall preserve me to his heavenly kingdom*." And for this he gives glory to God, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Observe, (1.) If the Lord stand by us, he will strengthen us, in a time of difficulty and danger, and his presence will more than supply every one's absence. (2.) When the Lord preserves his servants from great and imminent danger, it is for eminent work and service. Paul

was preserved that by him the preaching might be fully known, etc. (3.) Former deliverances should encourage future hopes. (4.) There is a heavenly kingdom, to which the Lord will preserve his faithful witnessing or suffering servants. (5.) We ought to give God the glory of all past, present, and future deliverances: *To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

II. He sends salutations to *Aquila, and Priscilla, and the household of Onesiphorus*, v. 19. He mentions his leaving *Trophimus sick at Miletum* (v. 20), by which it appears that though the apostles healed all manner of diseases miraculously, for the confirmation of their doctrine, yet they did not exert that power upon their own friends, lest it should have looked like a collusion.

III. He hastens Timothy to *come to him before winter* (v. 21), because he longed to see him, and because in the winter the journey or voyage would be more dangerous.

IV. He sends commendations to him from *Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia*, and all the *brethren*. One of the heathen writers at this time mentions one Pudens and his wife Claudia, and says the Claudia was a Briton, whence some have gathered that it was this Pudens, and that Claudia here was his wife, and that they were eminent Christians at Rome.

V. He concludes with a prayer, that the *Lord Jesus would be with his spirit*. We need no more to make us happy than to have the Lord Jesus Christ with our spirits; for in him all spiritual blessings are summed up. And it is the best prayer we can put up for our friends, that the Lord Jesus Christ may be with their spirits, to sanctify and save them, and at last to receive them to himself; as Stephen the proto-martyr prayed, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*, Acts 7:59. "Lord Jesus, receive that spirit which thou hast been with while it was united to the body; do not now leave it in its separate state." *Grace be with you. Amen.* This was our apostle's token in every epistle; so he wrote. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen*, 2 Th. 3:17, 18. And if grace be with us here to convert and change us, to make us holy, to keep us humble, and to enable us to persevere to the end, glory will crown us hereafter: *for the Lord is a sun, and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from those that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee*, Ps. 84:11, 12. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God our Saviour, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*