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Preface

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

This Epistle of Paul to Titus is much of the same nature with those to Timothy; both were converts of Paul, and his companions in labours and sufferings; both were in the office of evangelists, whose work was to water the churches planted by the apostles, and to set in order the things that were wanting in them: they were vice-apostles, as it were, *working the work of the Lord, as they did*, and mostly under their direction, though not despotic and arbitrary, but with the concurring exercise of their own prudence and judgment, 1 Co. 16:10, 12. We read much of this Titus, his titles, character, and active usefulness, in many places—he was a Greek, Gal. 2:3. Paul called him *his son* (Tit. 1:4), *his brother* (2 Co. 2:13), *his partner and fellow-helper* (2 Co. 8:23), *one that walked in the same spirit and in the same steps with himself*. He went up with the apostles to the church at Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1), was much conversant at Corinth, for which church he had *an earnest care*, 2 Co. 8:16. Paul's second epistle to them, and probably his first also, was sent by his hand, 2 Co. 8:16–18, 23; 9:2–4; 12:18. He was with the apostle at Rome, and thence went into Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10), after which no more occurs of him in the scriptures. So that by them he appears not to have been a fixed bishop; if such he were, and in those times, the church of Corinth, where he most laboured, had the best title to him. In Crete (now called *Candia*, formerly *Hecatompolis*, from the hundred cities that were in it), a large island at the mouth of the Aegean Sea, the gospel had got some footing; and here were Paul and Titus in one of their travels, cultivating this plantation; but the apostle of the Gentiles, having on him the care of all the churches, could not himself tarry long at this place. He therefore left Titus some time there, to carry on the work which had been begun, wherein, probably, meeting with more difficulty than ordinary, Paul wrote this epistle to him; and yet perhaps not so much for his own sake as for the people's, that the endeavours of Titus, strengthened with apostolic advice and authority, might be more significant and effectual among them. He was to see all the cities furnished with good pastors, to reject and keep out the unmeet and unworthy, to teach sound doctrine, and instruct all sorts in their duties, to set forth the free grace of God in man's salvation by Christ, and withal to show the necessity of maintaining good works by those who have believed in God and hope for eternal life from him.

Chapter 1

In this chapter we have, I. The preface or introduction to the epistle, showing from and to whom it was written, with the apostle's salutation and prayer for Titus, wishing all blessings to him (v. 1-4). II. Entrance into the matter, by signifying the end of Titus's being left at Crete (v. 5). III. And how the same should be pursued in reference both to good and bad ministers (v. 6 to the end).

Verses 1-4

Here is the preface to the epistle, showing,

I. The writer. *Paul*, a Gentile name taken by the apostle of the Gentiles, Acts 13:9, 46, 47. Ministers will accommodate even smaller matters, so that they may be any furthering of acceptance in their work. When the Jews rejected the gospel, and the Gentiles received it, we read no more of this apostle by his Jewish name *Saul*, but by his Roman one, *Paul*. *A servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ*. Here he is described by his relation and office: *A servant of God*, not in the general sense only, as a man and a Christian, but especially as a minister, *servant of God in the gospel of his Son*, Rom. 1:9. This is a high honour; it is the glory of angels that they are *ministering spirits, and sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation*, Heb. 1:14. Paul is described more especially as a chief minister, *an apostle of Jesus Christ*; one who had seen the Lord, and was immediately called and commissioned by him, and had his doctrine from him. Observe, The highest officers in the church are but servants. (Much divinity and devotion are comprehended in the inscriptions of the epistles.) The apostles of Jesus Christ, who were employed to spread and propagate his religion, were therein also the servants of God; they did not set up any thing inconsistent with the truths and duties of natural religion. Christianity, which they preached, was in order to clear and enforce those natural principles, as well as to advance them, and to superadd what was fit and necessary in man's degenerate and revolted state: therefore the apostles of Jesus Christ were the servants of God, *according to the faith of God's elect*. Their doctrine agreed with the faith of all the elect from the beginning of the world, and was for propagating and promoting the same. Observe, There are elect of God (1 Pt. 1:2), and in these the Holy Spirit works precious divine faith, proper to those who are chosen to eternal life (2 Th. 2:13, 14): *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel*. Faith is the first principle of sanctification. *And the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness*. The gospel is truth; the great, sure, and saving truth (Col. 1:5), *the word of the truth of the gospel*. Divine faith rests not on fallible reasonings and probable opinions, but on the infallible word, the truth itself, *which is after godliness*, of a godly nature and tendency, pure, and purifying the heart of the believer. By this mark judge of doctrines and of spirits-whether they be of God or not; what is impure, and prejudicial to true piety and practical religion, cannot be of divine original. All gospel truth is after godliness, teaching and nourishing reverence and fear of God, and obedience to him; it is truth not only to be known, but acknowledged; it must be held forth in word and practice, Phil. 2:15, 16. *With the heart man believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*, Rom. 10:10. Such as retain the truth in unrighteousness neither know nor believe as they ought. To bring to this knowledge and faith, and to the

acknowledging and professing of the truth which is after godliness, is the great end of the gospel ministry, even of the highest degree and order in it; their teachings should have this chief aim, to beget faith and confirm in it. *In (or for) hope of eternal life*, v. 2. This is the further intent of the gospel, to beget hope as well as faith; to take off the mind and heart from the world, and to raise them to heaven and the things above. The faith and godliness of Christians lead to eternal life, and give hope and well-grounded expectation of it; for *God, that cannot lie, hath promised it*. It is the honour of God that he cannot lie or deceive: and this is the comfort of believers, whose treasure is laid up in his faithful promises. But how is he said to promise before the world began? *Answer*, By promise some understand his decree: he purposed it in his eternal counsels, which were as it were his promise in *embryo*: or rather, say some, *προ χρονου αιωνιου* is *before ancient times*, or many years ago, referring to the promise darkly delivered, Gen. 3:15. Here is the stability and antiquity of the promise of eternal life to the saints. God, who cannot lie, hath promised before the world began, that is, many ages since. How excellent then is the gospel, which was the matter of divine promise so early! how much to be esteemed by us, and what thanks due for our privilege beyond those before us! *Blessed are your eyes, for they see*, etc. No wonder if the contempt of it be punished severely, since he has not only promised it of old, *but* (v. 3) *has in due times manifested his word through preaching*; that is, made that his promise, so darkly delivered of old, *in due time* (the proper season before appointed) more plain *by preaching*; that which some called *foolishness of preaching* has been thus honoured. *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*, by the word preached. *Which is committed unto me*. The ministry is a trust; none taketh this honour, but he who is thereunto appointed; and whoso is appointed and called must preach the word. 1 Co. 9:16, *Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel*. Nonpreaching ministers are none of the apostle's successors. *According to the commandment of God our Saviour*. Preaching is a work appointed by a God as a Saviour. See a proof here of Christ's deity, for by him was the gospel committed to Paul when he was converted (Acts 9:15, 17, and ch. 22:10, 14, 15), and again when Christ appeared to him, v. 17–21. He therefore is this Saviour; not but that the whole Timothy concur therein: the Father saves by the Son through the Spirit, and all concur in sending ministers. Let none rest therefore in men's calling, without God's; he furnishes, inclines, authorizes, and gives opportunity for the work.

II. The person written to, who is described, 1. By his name, *Titus*, a Gentile Greek, yet called both to the faith and ministry. Observe, the grace of God is free and powerful. What worthiness or preparation was there in one of heathen stock and education? 2. By his spiritual relation to the apostle: *My own* (or *my genuine*) *son*, not by natural generation, but by supernatural regeneration. *I have begotten you through the gospel*, said he to the Corinthians, 1 Co. 4:15. Ministers are spiritual fathers to those whom they are the means of converting, and will tenderly affect and care for them, and must be answerably regarded by them. *"My own son after the common faith*, that faith which is common to all the regenerate, and which thou hast in truth, and expressest to the life." This might be said to distinguish Titus from hypocrites and false teachers, and to recommend him to the regard of the Cretans, as being among them a lively image of the apostle himself, in faith, and life, and heavenly doctrine. To this Titus, deservedly so dear to the apostle, is,

III. The salutation and prayer, wishing all blessings to him: *Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour*. Here are, 1. The blessings wished: *Grace, mercy, and peace*. *Grace*, the free favour of God, and

acceptance with him. *Mercy*, the fruits of that favour, in pardon of sins, and freedom from all miseries by it, both here and hereafter. And *peace*, the positive effect and fruit of mercy. Peace with God through Christ who is our peace, and with the creatures and ourselves; outward and inward peace, comprehending all good whatsoever, that makes for our happiness in time and to eternity. Observe, Grace is the fountain of all blessings. Mercy, and peace, and all good, spring out of this. Get into God's favour, and all must be well; for, 2. These are the persons from whom blessings are wished: *From God the Father*, the fountain of all good. Every blessing, every comfort, comes to us from God as a Father; he is the Father of all by creation, but of the good by adoption and regeneration. *And the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour*, as the way and means of procurement and conveyance. All is from the Father by the Son, who is Lord by nature, heir of all things, and our Lord, Redeemer, and head, ordering and ruling his members. All are put under him; we hold of him, as *in capite*, and owe subjection and obedience to him, who is also Jesus and Christ, the anointed Saviour, and especially our Saviour, who believe in him, delivering us from sin and hell, and bringing us to heaven and happiness.

Thus far is the preface to the epistle; then follows the entrance into the matter, by signifying the end of Titus's being left in Crete.

Verse 5

Here is the end expressed,

I. More generally: *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting*. This was the business of evangelists (in which office Titus was), to water where the apostles had planted (1 Co. 3:6), furthering and finishing what they had begun; so much *epidiorthoun* imports, *to order after another*. Titus was to go on in settling what the apostle himself had not time for, in his short stay there. Observe, 1. The apostle's great diligence in the gospel; when he had set things on foot in one place, he hastened away to another. He was debtor to the Greeks and to the barbarians, and laboured to spread the gospel as far as he could among them all. And, 2. His faithfulness and prudence. He neglected not the places that he went from; but left some to cultivate the young plantation, and carry on what was begun. 3. His humility; he disdained not to be helped in his work, and that by such as were not of so high a rank in the ministry, nor of so great gifts and furniture, as himself; so that the gospel might be furthered and the good of souls promoted, he willingly used the hands of others in it: a fit example for exciting zeal and industry, and engaging to faithfulness and care of the flock, and present or absent, living and dying, for ministers, as much as in them lies, to provide for the spiritual edification and comfort of their people. We may here also observe, 4. That Titus, though inferior to an apostle, was yet above the ordinary fixed pastors or bishops, who were to tend particular churches as their peculiar stated charge; but Titus was in a higher sphere, to ordain such ordinary pastors where wanting, and settle things in their first state and form, and then to pass to other places for like service as there might be need. Titus was not only a minister of the catholic church (as all others also are), but a catholic minister. Others had power habitual, and in *actu primo*, to minister any where, upon call and opportunity; but evangelists, such as Titus was, had power in *actu secundo et exercito*, and could exercise their ministry wherever they came, and claim maintenance of the churches. They were every where actually in their diocese or province, and had a right to direct and preside among the ordinary pastors and

ministers. Where an apostle could act as an apostle an evangelist could act as an evangelist; for *they worked the work of the Lord as they did* (1 Co. 16:10), in a like unfixed and itinerant manner. Here at Crete Titus was but occasionally, and for a short time; Paul willed him to despatch the business he was left for, and come to him at Nicopolis, where he purposed to winter; after this he was sent to Corinth, was with the apostle at Rome, and was sent thence into Dalmatia, which is the last we read of him in scripture, so that from scripture no fixed episcopacy in him does appear; he left Crete, and we find not that he returned thither any more. But what power had either Paul or Titus here? Was not what they did an encroachment on the rights of civil rulers? In no sort; they came not to meddle with the civil rights of any. Lu. 12:14, *Who made me a judge or a divider over you?* Their work was spiritual, to be carried on by conviction and persuasion, no way interfering with, or prejudicing, or weakening, the power of magistrates, but rather securing and strengthening it; the *things wanting* were not such as civil magistrates are the fountains or authors of, but divine and spiritual ordinances, and appointments for spiritual ends, derived from Christ the king and head of the church: for settling these was Titus left. And observe, No easy thing is it to raise churches, and bring them to perfection. Paul had himself been here labouring, and yet were there things wanting; materials are out of square, need much hewing and fitting, to bring them into right form, and, when they are set therein, to hold and keep them so. The best are apt to decay and to go out of order. Ministers are to help against this, to get what is amiss rectified, and what is wanting supplied. This in general was Titus's work in Crete: and,

II. In special: *To ordain elders in every city*, that is, ministers, who were mostly out of the elder and most understanding and experienced Christians; or, if younger in years, yet such as were grave and solid in their deportment and manners. These were to be set where there was any fit number of Christians, as in larger towns and cities was usually the case; though villages, too, might have them where there were Christians enough for it. These presbyters or elders were to have the ordinary and stated care and charge of the churches; to feed and govern them, and perform all pastoral work and duty in and towards them. The word is used sometimes more largely for any who bear ecclesiastical function in the church, and so the apostles were *presbyters* or *elders* (1 Pt. 5:1); but here it is meant of ordinary fixed pastors, who *laboured in the word and doctrine*, and were *over the churches in the Lord*; such as are described here throughout the chapter. This word *presbyter* some use in the same sense as *sacerdos*, and translate it *priest*, a term not given to gospel ministers, unless in a figurative or allusive way, as all God's people are said to be made *kings and priests unto God* (*hiereis*, not *presbyterous*), to offer up spiritual sacrifices of prayers, praises, and alms. But properly we have no priest under the gospel, except Christ alone, *the high priest of our profession* (Heb. 3:1), who offered up himself a sacrifice to God for us, and ever lives, in virtue thereof, to make intercession in our behalf. Presbyters here therefore are not proper priests, to offer sacrifices, either typical or real; but only gospel ministers, to dispense Christ's ordinances, and to *feed the church of God, over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers*. Observe, 1. A church without a fixed and standing ministry in it is imperfect and wanting. 2. Where a fit number of believers is, presbyters or elders must be set; their continuance in churches is as necessary as their first appointment, *for perfecting the saints, and edifying the body of Christ, till all come to a perfect man in Christ*, till the whole number of God's chosen be called and united to Christ in one body, and brought to their full stature and strength, and that measure of grace that is proper and

designed for them, Eph. 4:12, 13. This is work that must and will be doing to the world's end, to which therefore the necessary and appointed means for it must last. What praise is due to God for such an institution! What thankfulness from those that enjoy the benefits of it! What pity and prayer for such as want it! *Pray the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. Faith comes by hearing*, and is preserved, maintained, and made fruitful, through it also. Ignorance and corruption, decays of good and increase of all evil, come by want of a teaching and quickening ministry. On such accounts therefore was *Titus left in Crete, to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city*; but this he was to do, not *ad libitum*, or according to his own will or fancy, but according to apostolic direction.

III. The rule of his proceeding: *As I had appointed thee*, probably when he was going from him, and in the presence and hearing of others, to which he may now refer, not so much for Titus's own sake as for the people's, that they might the more readily yield obedience to Titus, knowing and observing that in what he did he was warranted and supported by apostolic injunction and authority. As under the law all things were to be made according to the pattern shown to Moses in the mount; so under the gospel all must be ordered and managed according to the direction of Christ, and of his chief ministers, who were infallibly guided by him. Human traditions and inventions may not be brought into the church of God. Prudent disposals for carrying on the ends of Christ's appointments, according to the general rules of the word, there may, yea, must be; but none may alter any thing in the substance of the faith or worship, or order and discipline, of the churches. If an evangelist might not do any thing but by appointment, much less may others. The church is the house of God, and to him it belongs to appoint the officers and orders of it, as he pleases: the *as* here refers to the qualifications and character of the elders that he was to ordain: "*Ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee*, such as I then described and shall now again more particularly point out to thee," which he does from the sixth verse to the ninth inclusive.

Verses 6-16

The apostle here gives Titus directions about ordination, showing whom he should ordain, and whom not.

I. Of those whom he should ordain. He points out their qualifications and virtues; such as respect their life and manners, and such as relate to their doctrine: the former in the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses, and the latter in the ninth.

1. Their qualifications respecting their life and manners are,

(1.) More general: *If any be blameless*; not absolutely without fault, so none are, for *there is none that liveth and sinneth not*; nor altogether unblamed, this is rare and difficult. Christ himself and his apostles were blamed, though not worthy of it. In Christ there was certainly nothing blamable; and his apostles were not such as their enemies charged them to be. But the meaning is, He must be one who lies not under an ill character; but rather must have good report, even *from those that are without*; not grossly or scandalously guilty, so as would bring reproach upon the holy function; he must not be such a one.

(2.) More particularly.

[1.] There is his relative character. In his own person, he must be of conjugal chastity: *The husband of one wife*. The church of Rome says the husband of *no* wife, but from the beginning it was not so; marriage is an ordinance from which no profession nor calling is a bar. 1 Co. 9:5, *Have I not power*, says Paul, *to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles? Forbidding*

to marry is one of the erroneous doctrines of the antichristian church, 1 Tim. 4:3. Not that ministers *must* be married; this is not meant; but *the husband of one wife* may be either not having divorced his wife and married another (as was too common among those of the circumcision, even for slight causes), or *the husband of one wife*, that is, at one and the same time, no bigamist; not that he might not be married to more than one wife successively, but, being married, he must have but one wife at once, not two or more, according to the too common sinful practice of those times, by a perverse imitation of the patriarchs, from which evil custom our Lord taught a reformation. Polygamy is scandalous in any, as also having a harlot or concubine with his lawful wife; such sin, or any wanton libidinous demeanour, must be very remote from such as would enter into so sacred a function. And, as to his children, *having faithful children*, obedient and good, brought up in the true Christian faith, and living according to it, at least as far as the endeavours of the parents can avail. It is for the honour of ministers that their children be faithful and pious, and such as become their religion. *Not accused of riot, nor unruly*, not justly so accused, as having given ground and occasion for it, for otherwise the most innocent may be falsely so charged; they must look to it therefore that there be no colour for such censure. Children so faithful, and obedient, and temperate, will be a good sign of faithfulness and diligence in the parent who has so educated and instructed them; and, from his faithfulness in the less, there may be encouragement to commit to him the greater, the rule and government of the church of God. The ground of this qualification is shown from the nature of his office (v. 7): *For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God*. Those before termed presbyters, or elders, are in this verse styled bishops; and such they were, having no ordinary fixed and standing officers above them. Titus's business here, it is plain, was but occasional, and his stay short, as was before noted. Having ordained elders, and settled in their due form, he went and left all (for aught that appears in scripture) in the hands of those elders whom the apostle here calls bishops and stewards of God. We read not in the sacred writings of any successor he had in Crete; but to those elders or bishops was committed the full charge of feeding, ruling, and watching over their flock; they wanted not any powers necessary for carrying on religion and the ministry of it among them, and committing it down to succeeding ages. Now, being such bishops and overseers of the flock, who were to be examples to them, and God's stewards to take care of the affairs of his house, to provide for and dispense to them things needful, there is great reason that their character should be clear and good, that they should be blameless. How else could it be but that religion must suffer, their work be hindered, and souls prejudiced and endangered, whom they were set to save? These are the relative qualifications with the ground of them.

[2.] The more absolute ones are expressed, *First*, Negatively, showing what an elder or bishop must not be: *Not self-willed*. The prohibition is of large extent, excluding self-opinion, or overweening conceit of parts and abilities, and abounding in one's own sense,—self-love, and self-seeking, making self the centre of all,—also self-confidence and trust, and self-pleasing, little regarding or setting by others,—being proud, stubborn, froward, inflexible, set on one's own will and way, or churlish as Nabal: such is the sense expositors have affixed to the term. A great honour it is to a minister not to be thus affected, to be ready to ask and to take advice, to be ready to defer as much as reasonably may be to the mind and will of others, becoming all things to all men, that they may gain some. *Not soon angry, μεμ orgilon, not one of a hasty angry temper*, soon and easily

provoked and inflamed. How unfit are those to govern a church who cannot govern themselves, or their own turbulent and unruly passions! The minister must be meek and gentle, and patient towards all men. *Not given to wine*; there is no greater reproach on a minister than to be a wine-bibber, one who loves it, and gives himself undue liberty this way who *continues at the wine or strong drink till it inflames him*. Seasonable and moderate use of this, as of the other good creatures of God, is not unlawful. *Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities*, said Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. 5:23. But excess therein is shameful in all, especially in a minister. *Wine takes away the heart*, turns the man into a brute: here most proper is that exhortation of the apostle (Eph. 5:18), *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit*. Here is no exceeding, but in the former too easily there may: take heed therefore of going too near the brink. *No striker*, in any quarrelsome or contentious manner, not injuriously nor out of revenge, with cruelty or unnecessary roughness. *Not given to filthy lucre*; not greedy of it (as 1 Tim. 3:3), whereby is not meant refusing a just return for their labours, in order to their necessary support and comfort; but not making gain their first or chief end, not entering into the ministry nor managing it with base worldly views. Nothing is more unbecoming a minister, who is to direct his own and others' eyes to another world, than to be too intent upon this. It is called *filthy lucre*, from its defiling the soul that inordinately affects or greedily looks after it, as if it were any otherwise desirable than for the good and lawful uses of it. Thus of the negative part of the bishop's character. But, *Secondly*, Positively: he must be (v. 8) *a lover of hospitality*, as an evidence that he is not given to filthy lucre, but is willing to use what he has to the best purposes, not laying up for himself, so as to hinder charitable laying out for the good of others; *receiving and entertaining strangers* (as the word imports), a great and necessary office of love, especially in those times of affliction and distress, when Christians were made to fly and wander for safety from persecution and enemies, or in travelling to and fro where there were not such public houses for reception as in our days, nor, it may be, had many poor saints sufficiency of their own for such uses—then to receive and entertain them was good and pleasing to God. And such a spirit and practice, according to ability and occasion, are very becoming such as should be examples of good works. *A lover of good men*, or of *good things*; ministers should be exemplary in both; this will evince their open piety, and likeness to God and their Master Jesus Christ: *Do good to all, but especially to those of the household of faith*, those who are the excellent of the earth, in whom should be all our delight. *Sober*, or *prudent*, as the word signifies; a needful grace in a minister both for his ministerial and personal carriage and management. He should be a wise steward, and one who is not rash, or foolish, or heady; but who can govern well his passions and affections. *Just* in things belonging to civil life, and moral righteousness, and equity in dealings, giving to all their due. *Holy*, in what concerns religion; one who reverences and worships God, and is of a spiritual and heavenly conversation. *Temperate*; it comes from a word that signifies *strength*, and denotes one who has power over his appetite and affections, or, in things lawful, can, for good ends, restrain and hold them in. Nothing is more becoming a minister than such things as these, *sobriety*, *temperance*, *justice*, and *holiness*—sober in respect of himself, just and righteous towards all men, and holy towards God. And thus of the qualifications respecting the minister's life and manners, relative and absolute, negative and positive, what he must not, and what he must, be and do.

2. As to doctrine,

(1.) Here is his duty: *Holding fast the faithful word, as he has been taught*, keeping close to the doctrine of Christ, *the word of his grace*, adhering thereto according to the instructions he has received—holding it fast in his own belief and profession, and in teaching others. Observe, [1.] The word of God, revealed in the scripture, is a true and infallible word; the word of him that *is the amen, the true and faithful witness*, and whose Spirit guided the penmen of it. *Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. [2.] Ministers must hold fast, and hold forth, the faithful word in their teaching and life. *I have kept the faith*, was Paul's comfort (2 Tim. 4:7), and *not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God*; there was his faithfulness, Acts 20:27.

(2.) Here is the end: *That he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers*, to persuade and draw others to the true faith, and to convince the contrary-minded. How should he do this if he himself were uncertain or unsteady, not holding fast that *faithful word and sound doctrine* which should be the matter of this teaching, and the means and ground of convincing those that oppose the truth? We see here summarily the great work of the ministry—to exhort those who are willing to know and do their duty, and to convince those that contradict, both which are to be done by *sound doctrine*, that is, in a rational instructive way, by scripture-arguments and testimonies, which are the infallible words of truth, what all may and should rest and be satisfied in and determined by. And thus of the qualifications of the elders whom Titus was to ordain.

II. The apostle's directory shows whom he should reject or avoid—men of another character, the mention of whom is brought in as a reason of the care he had recommended about the qualifications of ministers, why they should be such, and only such, as he had described. The reasons he takes both from bad teachers and hearers among them, v. 10, to the end.

1. From bad teachers. (1.) Those false teachers are described. They were *unruly*, headstrong and ambitious of power, refractory and untractable (as some render it), and such as would not bear nor submit themselves to the discipline and necessary order in the church, impatient of good government and of sound doctrine. *And vain talkers and deceivers*, conceiting themselves to be wise, but really foolish, and thence great talkers, falling into errors and mistakes, and fond of them, and studious and industrious to draw others into the same. Many such there were, *especially those of the circumcision*, converts as they pretended, at least, from the Jews, who yet were for mingling Judaism and Christianity together, and so making a corrupt medley. These were the false teachers. (2.) Here is the apostle's direction how to deal with them (v. 11): *Their mouths must be stopped*; not by outward force (Titus had no such power, nor was this the gospel method), but by confutation and conviction, showing them their error, *not giving place to them even for an hour*. In case of obstinacy indeed, breaking the peace of the church, and corrupting other churches, censures are to have place, the last means for recovering the faulty and preventing the hurt of many. Observe, Faithful ministers must oppose seducers in good time, *that, their folly being made manifest, they may proceed no further*. (3.) The reasons are given for this. [1.] From the pernicious effects of their errors: *They subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not* (namely, the necessity of circumcision, and of keeping the law of Moses, etc.), so subverting the gospel and the souls of men; not some few only, but whole families. It was unjustly charged on the apostles *that they turned the world upside down*; but justly on these false teachers that they drew many from the true faith to their ruin: the mouths of such should be stopped, especially considering, [2.] Their base end in what they do: *For filthy lucre's sake*, serving a

worldly interest under pretence of religion. *Love of money is the root of all evil.* Most fit it is that such should be resisted, confuted, and put to shame, by sound doctrine, and reasons from the scriptures. Thus of the grounds respecting the bad teachers.

II. In reference to their people or hearers, who are described from ancient testimony given of them.

1. Here is the witness (v. 12): *One of themselves, even a prophet of their own*, that is, one of the Cretans, not of the Jews, Epimenides a Greek poet, likely to know and unlikely to slander them. *A prophet of their own*; so their poets were accounted, writers of divine oracles; these often witnessed against the vices of the people: Aratus, Epimenides, and others among the Greeks; Horace, Juvenal, and Persius, among the Latins: much smartness did they use against divers vices.

2. Here is the matter of his testimony: *Kreptes aei pseustai, kaka theuria, gasteres argai*—*The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.* Even to a proverb, they were infamous for falsehood and lying; *kretizein*, to play the Cretan, or to lie, is the same; and they were compared to evil beasts for their sly hurtfulness and savage nature, and called slow bellies for their laziness and sensuality, more inclined to eat than to work and live by some honest employment. Observe, Such scandalous vices as were the reproach of heathens should be far from Christians: falsehood and lying, invidious craft and cruelty, all beastly and sensual practices, with idleness and sloth, are sins condemned by the light of nature. For these were the Cretans taxed by their own poets.

3. Here is the verification of this by the apostle himself: v. 13. This witness is true, The apostle saw too much ground for that character. The temper of some nations is more inclined to some vices than others. The Cretans were too generally such as here described, slothful and ill-natured, false and perfidious, as the apostle himself vouches. And thence,

4. He instructs Titus how to deal with them: *Wherefore rebuke them sharply.* When Paul wrote to Timothy he bade him instruct with meekness; but now, when he writes to Titus, he bids him rebuke them sharply. The reason of the difference may be taken from the different temper of Timothy and Titus; the former might have more keenness in his disposition, and be apt to be warm in reproof, whom therefore he bids to rebuke with meekness; and the latter might be one of more mildness, therefore he quickens him, and bids him rebuke sharply. Or rather it was from the difference of the case and people: Timothy had a more polite people to deal with, and therefore he must rebuke them with meekness; and Titus had to do with those who were more rough and uncultivated, and therefore he must rebuke them sharply; their corruptions were many and gross, and committed without shame or modesty, and therefore should be dealt with accordingly. There must in reproof be a distinguishing between sins and sins; some are more gross and heinous in their nature, or in the manner of their commission, with openness and boldness, to the greater dishonour of God and danger and hurt to men: and between sinners and sinners; some are of a more tender and tractable temper, apter to be wrought on by gentleness, and to be sunk and discouraged by too much roughness and severity; others are more hardy and stubborn, and need more cutting language to beget in them remorse and shame. Wisdom therefore is requisite to temper and manage reproofs aright, as may be most likely to do good. Jude 22, 23, *Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.* The Cretans' sins and corruptions were many, great, and habitual; therefore they must be rebuked sharply. But that such direction might not be

misconstrued,

5. Here is the end of it noted: *That they may be sound in the faith* (v. 14), *not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth*; that is, that they may be and show themselves truly and effectually changed from such evil tempers and manners as those Cretans in their natural state lived in, and may not adhere to nor regard (as some who were converted might be too ready to do) the Jewish traditions and the superstitions of the Pharisees, which would be apt to make them disrelish the gospel, and the sound and wholesome truths of it. Observe, (1.) The sharpest reproofs must aim at the good of the reproved: they must not be of malice, nor hatred, nor ill-will, but of love; not to gratify pride, passion, nor any evil affection in the reprover, but to reclaim and reform the erroneous and the guilty. (2.) Soundness in the faith is most desirable and necessary. This is the soul's health and vigour, pleasing to God, comfortable to the Christian, and what makes ready to be cheerful and constant in duty. (3.) A special means to soundness in the faith is to turn away the ear from fables and the fancies of men (1 Tim. 1:4): *Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, that minister questions rather than godly edifying, which is in faith*. So ch. 4:7, *Refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather to godliness*. Fancies and devices of men in the worship of God are contrary to truth and piety. Jewish ceremonies and rites, that were at first divine appointments, the substance having come and their season and use being over, are now but unwarranted commands of men, which not only stand not with, but turn from, the truth, the pure gospel truth and spiritual worship, set up by Christ instead of that bodily service under the law. (4.) A fearful judgment it is to be turned away from the truth, to leave Christ for Moses, the spiritual worship of the gospel for the carnal ordinances of the law, or the true divine institutions and precepts for human inventions and appointments. *Who hath bewitched you* (said Paul to the Galatians, ch. 3:1, 3) *that you should not obey the truth? Having begun in the Spirit, are you made perfect by the flesh?* Thus having shown the end of sharply reproving the corrupt and vicious Cretans, that they might be sound in the faith, and not heed Jewish fables and commands of men,

6. He gives the reasons of this, from the liberty we have by the gospel from legal observances, and the evil and mischief of a Jewish spirit under the Christian dispensation in the last two verses. To good Christians that are sound in the faith and thereby purified *all things are pure*. Meats and drinks, and such things as were forbidden under the law (the observances of which some still maintain), in these there is now no such distinction, *all are pure* (lawful and free in their use), *but to those that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure*; things lawful and good they abuse and turn to sin; they suck poison out of that from which others draw sweetness; their mind and conscience, those leading faculties, being defiled, a taint is communicated to all they do. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. 15:8. And ch. 21:4, *The ploughing of the wicked is sin*, not in itself, but as done by him; the carnality of the mind and heart mars all the labour of the hand.

Objection. But are not these judaizers (as you call them) men who profess religion, and speak well of God, and Christ, and righteousness of life, and should they be so severely taxed? *Answer*, *They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate*, v. 16. There are many who in word and tongue profess to know God, and yet in their lives and conversations deny and reject him; their practice is a contradiction to their profession. *They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they*

will not do them: with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness, Eze. 33:31. Being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. The apostle, instructing Titus to rebuke sharply, does himself rebuke sharply; he gives them very hard words, yet doubtless no harder than their case warranted and their need required. *Being abominable—bdelyktoi*, deserving that God and good men should turn away their eyes from them as nauseous and offensive. *And disobedient—apeitheis*, unpersuadable and unbelieving. They might do divers things; but it was not the obedience of faith, nor what was commanded, or short of the command. *To every good work reprobate*, without skill or judgment to do any thing aright. See the miserable condition of hypocrites, such as have a form of godliness, but without the power; yet let us not be so ready to fix this charge on others as careful that it agree not to ourselves, that there be not in us *an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God*; but that we be *sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God*, Phil. 1:10, 11.

Chapter 2

The apostle here directs Titus about the faithful discharge of his own office generally (v. 1), and particularly as to several sorts of persons (v. 2–10) and gives the grounds of these and of other following directions (v. 11–14), with a summary direction in the close (v. 15).

Verses 1-10

Here is the third thing in the matter of the epistle. In the chapter foregoing, the apostle had directed Titus about matters of government, and to set in order the things that were wanting in the churches. Now here he exhorts him,

I. Generally, to a faithful discharge of his own office. His ordaining others to preach would not excuse himself from preaching, nor might he take care of ministers and elders only, but he must instruct private Christians also in their duty. The adversative particle (*but*) here points back to the corrupt teachers, who vented *fables*, things vain and unprofitable: in opposition to them, says he, "*But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine*, what is agreeable to the word, which is pure and uncorrupt, healthful and nourishing to eternal life." Observe, (1.) The true doctrines of the gospel are *sound doctrines*, formally and effectively; they are in themselves good and holy, and make the believers so; they make them fit for, and vigorous in, the service of God. (2.) Ministers must be careful to teach only such truths. If the common talk of Christians must *be uncorrupt, to the use of edifying, such as may minister grace to the hearers* (Eph. 4:29), much more must ministers' preaching be such. Thus the apostle exhorts Titus generally: and then,

II. Specially and particularly, he instructs him to apply this sound doctrine to several sorts of persons, from v. 2–10. Ministers must not stay in generals, but must divide to every one his portion, what belongs to his age, or place, or condition of life; they must be particular as well as practical in their preaching; they must teach men their duty, and must teach all and each his duty. Here is an excellent Christian directory, accommodated to the old and to the young; to men and women; to the preacher himself and to servants.

1. To the aged men. By aged men some understand elders by office, including deacons, etc. But it is rather to be taken of the aged in point of years. Old disciples of Christ must conduct themselves in every thing agreeably to the Christian doctrine. *That the aged men be sober*, not thinking that the decays of nature, which they feel in old age, will justify them in any inordinacy or intemperance, whereby they conceit to repair them; they must keep measure in things, both for health and for fitness, for counsel and example to the younger. *Grave*: levity is unbecoming in any, but especially in the aged; they should be composed and stayed, grave in habit, speech, and behaviour; gaudiness in dress, levity and vanity in the behaviour, how unbecoming in their years! *Temperate*, moderate and prudent, one who governs well his passions and affections, so as not to be hurried away by them to any thing that is evil or indecent. *Sound in the faith*, sincere and stedfast, constantly adhering to the truth of the gospel, not fond of novelties, nor ready to run into corrupt opinions or parties, nor to be taken with Jewish fables or traditions, or the dotages of their rabbin. Those who are full of years should be full of grace and goodness, the inner man renewing more and more as the outer decays. *In charity*, or love; this is fitly joined with *faith*, which works by, and must be seen in, love, love

to God and men, and soundness therein. It must be sincere love, without dissimulation: love of God for himself, and of men for God's sake. The duties of the second table must be done in virtue of those of the first; love to men as men, and to the saints as the excellent of the earth, in whom must be special delight; and love at all times, in adversity as well as prosperity. Thus must there be soundness in charity or love. And *in patience*. Aged persons are apt to be peevish, fretful, and passionate; and therefore need to be on their guard against such infirmities and temptations. Faith, love, and patience, are three main Christian graces, and soundness in these is much of gospel perfection. There is *enduring patience* and *waiting patience*, both of which must be looked after; to *bear evils* becomingly, and contentedly to *want the good* till we are fit for it and it for us, being *followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises*. Thus as to the aged men.

2. To the aged women. These also must be instructed and warned. Some by these aged women understand the deaconesses, who were mostly employed in looking after the poor and attending the sick; but it is rather to be taken (as we render it) of all aged women professing religion. They must *be in behaviour as becometh holiness*: both men and women must accommodate their behaviour to their profession. Those virtues before mentioned (*sobriety, gravity, temperance, soundness in the faith, charity, and patience*), recommended to aged men, are not proper to them only, but applicable to both sexes, and to be looked to by aged women as well as men. Women are to hear and learn their duty from the word, as well as the men: there is not one way of salvation for one sex or sort, and another for another; but both must learn and practise the same things, both as aged and as Christians; the virtues and duties are common. *That the aged women likewise* (as well as the men) *be in behaviour as becometh holiness*; or as beseems and is proper for holy persons, such as they profess to be and should be, keeping a pious decency and decorum in clothing and gesture, in looks and speech, and all their deportment, and this from an inward principle and habit of holiness, influencing and ordering the outward conduct at all times. Observe, Though express scripture do not occur, or be not brought, for every word, or look, or fashion in particular, yet general rules there are according to which all must be ordered; as 1 Co. 10:31, *Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*. And Phil. 4:8, *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things*. And here, whatsoever things are beseeming or unbeseeming holiness form a measure and rule of conduct to be looked to. *Not false accusers—μεμ̄ diabolous*, no calumniators or sowers of discord, slandering and backbiting their neighbours, a great and too common fault; not only loving to speak, but to speak ill, of people, and to separate very friends. A slanderer is one *whose tongue is set on fire of hell*; so much, and so directly, do these do the devil's work, that for it the devil's name is given to such. This is a sin contrary to the great duties of love, justice, and equity between one another; it springs often from malice and hatred, or envy, and such like evil causes, to be shunned as well as the effect. *Not given to much wine*; the word denotes such addictedness thereto as to be under the power and mastery of it. This is unseemly and evil in any, but especially in this sex and age, and was too much to be found among the Greeks of that time and place. How immodest and shameful, corrupting and destroying purity both of body and mind! Of what evil example and tendency, unfitting for the thing, which is a positive duty of aged matrons, namely, to be *teachers of good things*! Not public preachers, that is forbidden (1 Co. 14:34, *I permit not a*

woman to speak in the church), but otherwise teach they may and should, that is, by example and good life. Hence observe, Those whose actions and behaviour become holiness are thereby teachers of good things; and, besides this, they may and should also teach by doctrinal instruction at home, and in a private way. *The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy his mother taught him.* Such a woman is praised, *She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness,* Prov. 31:1, 26. *Teachers of good things* are opposed to teachers of things corrupt, or to what is trifling and vain, of no good use or tendency, old wives' fables or superstitious sayings and observances; in opposition to these, their business is, and they may be called on to it, to be teachers of good things.

3. There are lessons for young women also, whom the aged women must teach, instructing and advising them in the duties of religion according to their years. For teaching such things aged women have often better access than the men, even than ministers have, which therefore they must improve in instructing the young women, especially the young wives; for he speaks of their duty to their husbands and children. These young women the more aged must teach, (1.) To bear a good personal character: *To be sober and discreet*, contrary to the vanity and rashness which younger years are subject to: *discreet* in their judgments and *sober* in their affections and behaviour. *Discreet* and *chaste* stand well together; many expose themselves to fatal temptations by that which at first might be but indiscretion. Prov. 2:11, *Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee from the evil way.* *Chaste*, and *keepers at home*, are well joined too. Dinah, when she went to see the daughters of the land, lost her chastity. Those whose home is their prison, it is to be feared, feel that their chastity is their fetters. Not but there are occasions, and will be, of going abroad; but a gadding temper for merriment and company sake, to the neglect of domestic affairs, or from uneasiness at being in her place, is the opposite evil intended, which is commonly accompanied with, or draws after it, other evils. 1 Tim. 5:13, 14, *They learn to be idle, wandering from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.* Their business is *to guide the house*, and they should give no occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully. *Good*, generally, in opposition to all vice; and specially, in her place, kind, helpful, and charitable; as Dorcas, *full of good works and almsdeeds*. It may also have, as some think, a more particular sense; one of a meek and yet cheerful spirit and temper, not sullen nor bitter; not taunting not fretting and galling any; not of a troublesome or jarring disposition, uneasy in herself and to those about her; but of a good nature and pleasing conversation, and likewise helpful by her advice and pains: thus *building her house, and doing her husband good, and not evil, all her days*. Thus in their personal character *sober, discreet, chaste, keepers at home, and good*: and, (2.) In their relative capacities: *To love their husbands, and to be obedient to them*; and where there is true love this will be no difficult command. God, in nature, and by his will, hath made this subordination: *I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over the man* (1 Tim. 2:12); and the reason is added: *For Adam was first formed, then Eve. Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression*, v. 13, 14. She fell first, and was the means of seducing the husband. She was given to be a helper, but proved a most grievous hinderer, even the instrument of his fall and ruin, on which the bond of subjection was confirmed, and tied faster on her (Gen. 3:16): *Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee*, with less easiness, it may be, than before. It is therefore doubly enjoined: *first in innocency*, when was settled a subordination of nature, Adam being first formed and then

Eve, and the woman being taken out of the man; *and then upon the fall*, the woman being first in the transgression, and seducing the man; here now began to be a subjection not so easy and comfortable, being a part of the penalty in her case; yet through Christ is this nevertheless a sanctified state. Eph. 5:22, 23, *Wives submit yourselves unto you own husbands, as unto the Lord*, as owning Christ's authority in them, whose image they bear; *for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body*. God would have a resemblance of Christ's authority over the church held forth in the husband's over the wife. Christ is the head of the church, to protect and save it, to supply it with all good, and secure or deliver it from evil; and so the husband over the wife, to keep her from injuries, and to provide comfortably for her, according to his ability. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the *wives be unto their own husbands, as is fit in the Lord* (Col. 3:18), as comports with the law of Christ, and is for his and the Father's glory. It is not then an absolute, or unlimited, nor a slavish subjection that is required; but a loving subordination, to prevent disorder or confusion, and to further all the ends of the relation. Thus, in reference to the husbands, wives must be instructed in their duties of love and subjection to them. *And to love their children*, not with a natural affection only, but a spiritual, a love springing from a holy sanctified heart and regulated by the word; not a fond foolish love, indulging them in evil, neglecting due reproof and correction where necessary, but a regular Christian love, showing itself in their pious education, forming their life and manners aright, taking care of their souls as well as of their bodies, of their spiritual welfare as well as of their temporal, of the former chiefly and in the first place. The reason is added: *That the word of God may not be blasphemed*. Failures in such relative duties would be greatly to the reproach of Christianity. "What are these the better for this their new religion?" would the infidels be ready to say. The word of God and the gospel of Christ are pure, excellent, and glorious, in themselves; and their excellency should be expressed and shown in the lives and conduct of their professors, especially in relative duties; failures here being disgrace. Rom. 2:24, *The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you*. "Judge what a God he is," would they be ready to say, "by these his servants; and what his word, and doctrine, and religion, are by these his followers." Thus would Christ *be wounded in the house of his friends*. Thus of the duties of the younger women.

4. Here is the duty of young men. They are apt to be eager and hot, thoughtless and precipitant; therefore they must be earnestly called upon and exhorted to be considerate, not rash; advisable and submissive, not wilful and head-strong; humble and mild, not haughty and proud; for there are more young people ruined by pride than by any other sin. The young should be grave and solid in their deportment and manners, joining the seriousness of age with the liveliness and vigour of youth. This will make even those younger years to pass to good purpose, and yield matter of comfortable reflection when the evil days come; it will be preventive of much sin and sorrow, and lay the foundation for doing and enjoying much good. Such shall not *mourn at the last*, but have peace and comfort in death, and after it a glorious crown of life.

5. With these instructions to Titus, respecting what he should teach others—the aged men and women, and the younger of both sexes (Titus himself probably at this time being a young man also), the apostle inserts some directions to himself. He could not expect so successfully to teach others, if he did not conduct himself well both in his conversation and preaching. (1.) Here is direction for his conversation: *In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works*, v. 7. Without this, he would pull down

with one hand what he built with the other. Observe, Preachers of good works must be patterns of them also; good doctrine and good life must go together. *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?* A defect here is a great blemish and a great hindrance. *In all things*; some read, *above all things*, or *above all men*. Instructing others in the particulars of their duty is necessary, and, above all things, example, especially that of the teacher himself, is needful; hereby both light and influence are more likely to go together. "Let them see a lively image of those virtues and graces in thy life which must be in theirs. Example may both teach and impress the things taught; when they see purity and gravity, sobriety and all good life, in thee, they may be more easily won and brought thereto themselves; they may become pious and holy, sober and righteous, as thou art." Ministers must be examples to the flock, and the people followers of them, as they are of Christ. And here is direction, (2.) For his teaching and doctrine, as well as for his life: *In doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned*, v. 7, 8. They must make it appear that the design of their preaching is purely to advance the honour of God, the interest of Christ and his kingdom, and the welfare and happiness of souls; that this office was not entered into nor used with secular views, not from ambition nor covetousness, but a pure aim at the spiritual ends of its institution. In their preaching, therefore, the display of wit or parts, or of human learning or oratory, is not to be affected; but sound speech must be used, which cannot be *condemned*; scripture-language, as far as well may be, in expressing scripture-truths. This is sound speech, that cannot be condemned. We have more than once these duties of a minister set together. 1 Tim. 4:16, *Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine*: and, v. 12. of the same chapter, "*Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of believers in word*—in thy speech, as a Christian, being grave, serious, and to the use of edifying; and in thy preaching, that it be the pure word of God, or what is agreeable to it and founded on it. Thus be an example *in word*: and *in conversation*, the life corresponding with the doctrine. In doing this *thou shalt both save thyself and those that hear thee.*" In 2 Tim. 3:10, *Thou hast fully known my doctrine and manner of life* (says the same apostle), how agreeable these have been. And so must it be with others; their teaching must be agreeable to the word, and their life with their teaching. This is the true and good minister. 1 Th. 2:9, 10. *Labouring night and day, we preached to you the gospel of God; and you are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably, we behaved ourselves among you.* This must be looked to, as the next words show, which are, (3.) The reason both for the strictness of the minister's life and the gravity and soundness of his preaching: *That he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.* Adversaries would be seeking occasion to reflect, and would do so could they find any thing amiss in doctrine or life; but, if both were right and good, such ministers might set calumny itself at defiance; they would have no evil thing to say justly, and so must be ashamed of their opposition. Observe, Faithful ministers will have enemies watching for their halting, such as will endeavour to find or pick holes in their teaching or behaviour; the more need therefore for them to look to themselves, that no just occasion be found against them. Opposition and calumny perhaps may not be escaped; men of corrupt minds will resist the truth, and often reproach the preachers and professors of it; but let them see that *with well-doing they put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; that, when they speak evil of them as evil-doers; those may be ashamed who falsely accuse their good conversation in Christ.* This is the direction to Titus himself, and so of the duties of free persons, male and female, old and young. Then follow,

6. The directions respecting servants. Servants must not think that their mean and low state puts them beneath God's notice or the obligations of his laws—that, because they are servants of men, they are thereby discharged from serving God. No; servants must know and do their duty to their earthly masters, but with an eye to their heavenly one: and Titus must not only instruct and warn earthly masters of their duties, but servants also of theirs, both in his public preaching and private admonitions. Servants must attend the ordinances of God for their instruction and comfort, as well as the masters themselves. In this direction to Titus there are the duties themselves, to which he must exhort servants, and a weighty consideration wherewith he was to enforce them.

(1.) The duties themselves are these:—

[1.] *To be obedient to their own masters*, v. 9. This is the prime duty, that by which they are characterized. Rom. 6:16, *His servants you are whom you obey*. There must be inward subjection and dutiful respect and reverence in the mind and thoughts. "If I be a master, where is my fear, the dutiful affection you show to me, together with the suitable outward significations and expressions of it, in doing what I command you?" This must be in servants; their will must be subject to their master's will, and their time and labour at their master's disposal and command. 1 Pt. 2:18, *Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*. The duty results from the will of God, and relation in which, by his providence, he has put such; not from the quality of the person. If he be a master, the duties of a servant are to be paid to him as such. Servants therefore are to be exhorted to be obedient to their own masters. And,

[2.] *To please them well in all things*, in all lawful things, and such as belong to them to command, or at least as are not contrary to the will of their great and superior Lord. We are not to understand it either of obeying or pleasing them absolutely, without any limitation; but always with a reserve of God's right, which may in no case be entrenched upon. If his command and the earthly master's come in competition, we are instructed to obey God rather than man; but then servants must be upon good grounds in this, that there is an inconsistency, else are they not held to be excused. And not only must the will of God be the measure of the servant's obedience, but the reason of it also. All must be done with a respect to him, in virtue of his authority, and for pleasing him primarily and chiefly, Col. 3:22–24. In serving the earthly master according to Christ's will, he is served; and such shall be rewarded by him accordingly. But how are servants to please their masters in all things, and yet not be men-pleasers? *Answer*, Men-pleasers, in the faulty sense, are such as eye men alone, or chiefly, in what they do, leaving God out, or subordinating him to man; when the will of man shall carry it, though against God's will, or man's pleasure is more regarded than his,—when this can content them, that the earthly master is pleased, though God be displeased,—or when more care, or more satisfaction, is taken in man's being pleased than in God's, this is sinful man-pleasing, of which all must take heed. Eph. 6:5-7, "*Servants, be obedient to those that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, with singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers (who look at nothing but the favour or displeasure of men, or at nothing so much as this), but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men;*" not to them chiefly, but to Christ, who requires, and who will reward, any good done, whether by bond or free. Observe therefore, Christian liberty comports well with civil servitude and subjection.

Persons may serve men, and yet be the servants of Christ; these are not contrary, but subordinate, so far as serving men is according to Christ's will and for his sake. Christ came not to destroy or prejudice civil order and differences. *"Art thou called, being a servant? Care not for it, 1 Co. 7:21.* Let not this trouble thee, as if it were a condition unworthy of a Christian, or wherein the person so called is less pleasing unto God; *for he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman,* not free from that service, but free in it; free spiritually, though not in a civil sense. *Likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant;* he is bound to him, though he be not under civil subjection to any; so that, *bond or free, all are one in Christ."* Servants therefore should not regret nor be troubled at their condition, but be faithful and cheerful in the station wherein God hath set them, striving to please their masters in all things. Hard it may be under some churlish Nabals, but it must be aimed at as much as possible.

[3.] *Not answering again;* not contradicting them, nor disputing it with them; not giving them any disrespectful or provoking language. Job complained of his servants, that he *called them, and they gave him no answer;* that was faulty another way: *Non respondere pro convitio est-Such silence is contempt:* but here it is respect, rather to take a check or reproof with humble silence, not making any confident nor bold replies. When conscious of a fault, to palliate or stand in justification of it doubles it. Yet this not answering again excludes not turning away wrath with a soft answer, when season and circumstances admit.

Good and wise masters will be ready to hear and do right; but answering unseasonably, or in an unseemly manner, or, where the case admits not excuse, to be pert or confident, shows a want of the humility and meekness which such relation requires.

[4.] *Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity.* This is another great essential of good servants, to be *honest,* never converting that to their own use which is their master's, nor wasting the goods they are entrusted with; that is, *purloining.* They must be just and true, and do for their masters as they would or should for themselves. Prov. 28:24, *Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer;* he will be ready to join with him. Thus having such light thoughts of taking beyond what is right, though it be from a parent or master, is likely to harden conscience to go further; it is both wicked in itself, and it tends to more. Be it so that the master is hard and strait, scarcely making sufficient provision for servants; yet they must not be their own carvers, nor go about by theft to right themselves; they must bear their lot, committing their cause to God for righting and providing for them. I speak not of cases of extremity, for preserving life, the necessaries for which the servant has a right to. *Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity;* he must not only not steal nor waste, but must improve his master's goods, and promote his prosperity and thriving, to his utmost. He that increased not his master's talent is accused of unfaithfulness, though he had not embezzled nor lost it. Faithfulness in a servant lies in the ready, punctual, and thorough execution of his master's orders; keeping his secrets and counsels, despatching his affairs, and managing with frugality, and to as much just advantage for his master as he is able; looking well to his trusts, and preventing, as far as he can, all spoil, or loss, or damage. This is a way to bring a blessing upon himself, as the contrary often brings utter ruin. *If you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?* Lu. 16:12. Thus of the duties themselves, to which servants are to be exhorted. Then,

(2.) Here is the consideration with which Titus was to enforce them: *That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in*

all things; that is, that they may recommend the gospel and Christ's holy religion to the good opinion of those that are without, by their meek, humble, obedient, and faithful conduct in all things. Even servants, though they may think that such as they, in so low and inferior a condition, can do little to bring repute to Christianity, or adorn the doctrine of Christ, and set forth the excellences of his truth and ways, yet, if they be careful to do their duty, it will redound to the glory of God and the credit of religion. The unbelieving masters would think the better of that despised way, which was every where spoken against, when they found that those of their servants who were Christians were better than their other servants—more obedient and submissive, more just and faithful, and more diligent in their places. True religion is an honour to the professors of it; and they should see that they do not any dishonour to it, but adorn it rather in all that they are able. Our light must shine among men, so that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father who is in heaven. And thus of the apostle's directions to Titus, about the discharge of his office, in reference to several sorts of persons.

Verses 11-14

Here we have the grounds or considerations upon which all the foregoing directions are urged, taken from the nature and design of the gospel, and the end of Christ's death.

I. From the nature and design of the gospel. Let young and old, men and women, masters and servants, and Titus himself, let all sorts do their respective duties, for this is the very aim and business of Christianity, to instruct, and help, and form persons, under all distinctions and relations, to a right frame and conduct. For this,

1. They are put under the dispensation of *the grace of God*, so the gospel is called, Eph. 3:2. It is grace in respect of the spring of it—the free favour and good-will of God, not any merit or desert in the creature; as manifesting and declaring this good-will in an eminent and signal manner; and as it is the means of conveying and working grace in the hearts of believers. Now grace is obliging and constraining to goodness: *Let not sin reign, but yield yourselves unto God; for you are not under the law, but under grace*, Rom. 6:12–14. *The love of Christ constrains us* not to live to self, but to him (2 Co. 5:14, 15); without this effect, grace is received in vain.

2. This gospel grace *brings salvation* (reveals and offers it to sinners and ensures it to believers)—salvation from sin and wrath, from death and hell. Hence it is called *the word of life*; it brings to faith, and so to life, the life of holiness now and of happiness hereafter. The law is the ministration of death, but the gospel the ministration of life and peace. This therefore must be received as salvation (its rules minded, its commands obeyed), that the end of it may be obtained, *the salvation of the soul*. And more inexcusable will the neglecters of this grace of God bringing salvation now be, since,

3. *It hath appeared*, or shone out more clearly and illustriously than ever before. The old dispensation was comparatively dark and shadowy; this is a clear and shining light; and, as it is now more bright, so more diffused and extensive also. For,

4. It hath appeared *to all men*; not to the Jews only, as the glory of God appeared at mount Sinai to that particular people, and out of the view of all others; but gospel grace is open to all, and all are invited to come and partake of the benefit of it, Gentiles as well as Jews. The publication of it is free and general: *Disciple all nations: Preach the gospel to every creature*. The pale is broken down; there is no such enclosure now as formerly. *The preaching of Jesus Christ, which was kept secret since the*

world began, now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Rom. 16:25, 26. The doctrine of grace and salvation by the gospel is for all ranks and conditions of men (slaves and servants, as well as masters), therefore engaging and encouraging all to receive and believe it, and walk suitably to it, adorning it in all things.

5. This gospel revelation is to *teach*, and not by way of information and instruction only, as a schoolmaster does his scholars, but by way of precept and command, as a sovereign who gives laws to his subjects. It directs what to shun and what to follow, what to avoid and what to do. The gospel is not for speculation only or chiefly, but for practice and right ordering of life; for it teaches us,

(1.) To abandon sin: *Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*; to renounce and have no more to do with these, as we have had: *Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt*; that is, the whole body of sins, here distributed into *ungodliness and worldly lusts*. "Put away ungodliness and irreligion, all unbelief, neglect or disesteem of the divine Being, not loving, nor fearing, nor trusting in him, nor obeying him as we should, neglecting his ordinances, slighting his worship, profaning his name or day. Thus deny ungodliness (hate and put it away); *and worldly lusts*, all corrupt and vicious desires and affections that prevail in worldly men, and carry out to worldly things *the lust of the flesh also, and of the eye, and the pride of life*, all sensuality and filthiness, covetous desires and ambition, seeking and valuing more the praise of men than of God; put away all these." An earthly sensual conversation suits not a heavenly calling. *Those that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*. They have done it by covenant-engagement and promise, and have initially and prevailingly done it in act; they are going on in the work, cleansing themselves more and more from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. Thus the gospel first unteaches that which is evil, to abandon sin; and then,

(2.) To make conscience of that which is good: *To live soberly, righteously, and godly*, etc. Religion is not made up of negatives only; there must be doing good as well as eschewing evil; in these conjunctly is sincerity proved and the gospel adorned. We should live soberly with respect to ourselves, in the due government of our appetites and passions, keeping the limits of moderation and temperance, avoiding all inordinate excesses; and righteously towards all men, rendering to all their due, and injuring none, but rather doing good to others, according to our ability and their need: this seems a part of justice and righteousness, for we are not born for ourselves alone, and therefore may not live to ourselves only. *We are members one of another, and must seek every man another's wealth*, 1 Co. 10:24; 12:25. The public, especially, which includes the interests of all, must have the regards of all. Selfishness is a sort of unrighteousness; it robs others of that share in us which is their due. How amiable then will a just and righteous conduct be! It secures and promotes all interests, not particular only, but general and public, and so contributes to the peace and happiness of the world. Live righteously therefore as well as soberly. And godly towards God, in the duties of his worship and service. Regards to him indeed should run through all. *Whether you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God*, 1 Co. 10:31. Personal and relative duties must be done in obedience to his commands, with due aim at pleasing and honouring him, from principles of holy love and fear of him. But there is an express and direct duty also that we owe to God, namely, belief and acknowledgment of his being and perfections, paying him

internal and external worship and homage,—loving, fearing, and trusting in him,—depending on him, and devoting ourselves to him,—observing all those religious duties and ordinances that he has appointed,—praying to him, praising him, and meditating on his word and works. This is godliness, looking and coming to God, as our state now is, not immediately, but as he has manifested himself in Christ; so does the gospel direct and require. To go to God in any other way, namely, by saints or angels, is unsuitable, yea, contrary to the gospel rule and warrant. All communications from God to us are through his Son, and our returns must also be by him. God in Christ we must look at as the object of our hope and worship. Thus must we exercise ourselves to godliness, without which there can be no adorning of that gospel which is according to it, which teaches and requires such a deportment. A gospel conversation must needs be a godly conversation, expressing our love and fear and reverence of God, our hope and trust and confidence in him, as manifested in his Son. *We are the circumcision* (who have in truth what was signified by that sacrament) *who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* See in how small a compass our duty is comprised; it is put into few words, *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.* The gospel teaches us not only how to believe and hope well, but also to live well, as becomes that faith and hope in this present world, and as expectants of another and better. There is the world that now is, and that which is to come; the present is the time and place of our trial, and the gospel teaches us to live well here, not, however, as our final state, but with an eye chiefly to a future: for it teaches us in all,

(3.) To look for the glories of another world, to which a sober, righteous, and godly life in this is preparative: *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* Hope, by a metonymy, is put for the thing hoped for, namely, heaven and the felicities thereof, called emphatically *that hope*, because it is the great thing we look and long and wait for; and a *blessed hope*, because, when attained, we shall be completely happy for ever. *And the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* This denotes both the time of the accomplishing of our hope and the sureness and greatness of it: it will be at the second appearing of Christ, when he shall come *in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels*, Lu. 9:26. His own glory which he had before the world was; and his Father's, being *the express image of his person*, and as God—man, his delegated ruler and Judge; and of the holy angels, as his ministers and glorious attendants. His first coming was in meanness, to satisfy justice and purchase happiness; his second will be in majesty, to bestow and instate his people in it. *Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto those that look for him will he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation*, Heb. 9:28. *The great God and our Saviour* (or even our Saviour) *Jesus Christ*; for they are not two subjects, but one only, as appears by the single article, *του megalou Theou kai Soutepros*, not *kai tou Soutepros*, and so is *kai* rendered 1 Co. 15:24, *When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; του Theou kai Patri*. Christ then is the *great God*, not figuratively, as magistrates and others are sometimes called gods, or as appearing and acting in the name of God, but properly and absolutely, *the true God* (1 Jn. 5:20), *the mighty God* (Isa. 9:6), *who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. 2:6. In his second coming he will reward his servants, and bring them to glory with him. Observe, [1.] There is a common and blessed hope for all true Christians in the other world. If in this life only they had hope in Christ, they were of all men the most miserable, 1 Co. 15:19. By hope is meant

the thing hoped for, namely, Christ himself, who is called *our hope* (1 Tim. 1:1), and blessedness in and through him, even riches of glory (Eph. 1:18), hence fitly termed here *that blessed hope*. [2.] The design of the gospel is to stir up all to a good life by this blessed hope. *Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*, 1 Pt. 1:13. To the same purport here, *Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for the blessed hope*; not as mercenaries, but as dutiful and thankful Christian. *What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God!* 2 Pt. 3:11, 12. Looking and hastening, that is, expecting and diligently preparing for it. [3.] At, and in, the glorious appearing of Christ will the blessed hope of Christians be attained; for their felicity will be this, *To be where he is, and to behold his glory*, Jn. 17:24. The glory of the great God and our Saviour will then break out as the sun. Though in the exercise of his judiciary power he will appear as the Son of man, yet will he be mightily declared to be the Son of God too. The divinity, which on earth was much veiled, will shine out then as the sun in its strength. Hence the work and design of the gospel are to raise the heart to wait for this second appearing of Christ. *We are begotten again to a lively hope of it* (1 Pt. 1:3), turned to *serve the living God, and wait for his Son from heaven*, 1 Th. 1:9, 10. Christians are marked by this, expecting their Master's coming (Lu. 12:36), *loving his appearance*, 2 Tim. 4:8. Let us then look to this hope; let our loins be girt, and our lights burning, and ourselves like those who wait for their Lord; the day or hour we know not, but *he that shall come will come, and will not tarry*, Heb. 10:37. [4.] The comfort and joy of Christians are that their Saviour is the great God, and will gloriously manifest himself at his second coming. Power and love, majesty and mercy, will then appear together in the highest lustre, to the terror and confusion of the wicked, but to the everlasting triumph and rejoicing of the godly. Were he not thus the great God, and not a mere creature, he could not be their Saviour, nor their hope. Thus of the considerations to enforce the directions of all sorts to their respective duties from the nature and design of the gospel. And herewith is connected another ground, namely,

II. From the end of Christ's death: *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, v. 14. To bring us to holiness and happiness was the end of Christ's death, as well as the scope of his doctrine. Here we have,

1. The purchaser of salvation—Jesus Christ, *that great God and our Saviour*, who saves not simply as God, much less as man alone; but as God—man, two natures in one person: man, that he might obey, and suffer, and die, for man, and be meet to deal with him and for him; and God, that he might support the manhood, and give worth and efficacy to his undertakings, and have due regard to the rights and honour of the deity, as well as the good of his creature, and bring about the latter to the glory of the former. Such a one became us; and this was,

2. The price of our redemption: *He gave himself*. The Father gave him, but he gave himself too; and, in the freeness and voluntariness, as well as the greatness of the offering, lay the acceptableness and merit of it. *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself*, Jn. 10:17, 18. So Jn. 17:19, *For their sakes I sanctify myself*, or separate and devote myself to this work, to be both a priest and a sacrifice to

God for the sins of men." The human nature was the offering, and the divine the altar, sanctifying the gift, and the whole the act of the person. *He gave himself a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. 2:6. *Once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. He was the priest and sacrifice too. *We are redeemed, not with silver and gold, but the precious blood of Christ* (1 Pt. 1:18, 19), called *the blood of God* (Acts 20:28), that is, of him who is God.

3. The persons for whom: *For us*, us poor perishing sinners, gone off from God, and turned rebels against him. He gave himself *for us*, not only for our good, but in our stead. Messiah was cut off, not for himself, but for us. *He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*, 1 Pt. 3:18. *He was made sin for us* (an offering and sacrifice for sin), *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Co. 5:21. Wonderful condescension and grace! *He loved us, and gave himself for us*; what can we do less than love and give up ourselves to him? Especially considering,

4. The ends of his giving himself for us, (1.) *That he might redeem us from all iniquity*. This is fitted to the first lesson, *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*. Christ gave himself to redeem us from these, therefore put them away. To love and live in sin is to trample under foot redeeming blood, to despise and reject one of the greatest benefits of it, and to act counter to its design. But how could the short sufferings of Christ redeem us from all iniquity? *Answer*, Through the infinite dignity of his person. He who was God suffered, though not as God. The acts and properties of either nature are attributed to the person. God purchased his church *with his own blood*, Acts 20:28. Could payment be made at once, no need of suffering for ever. A mere creature could not do this, from the finiteness of his nature; but God—man could. *The great God and our Saviour gave himself for us*: this accounts for it. *By one offering he hath for ever perfected those that are sanctified*, Heb. 9:25, 26; 10:14. He needed not to offer himself often, nor could he be holden of death, when he had once undergone it. Happy end and fruit of Christ's death, redemption from all iniquity! Christ died for this: and, (2.) *To purify to himself a peculiar people*. This enforces the second lesson: *To live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*. Christ died to purify as well as to pardon—to obtain grace, to heal the nature, as well as to free from guilt and condemnation. He gave himself for his church, *to cleanse it*. Thus does he make *to himself a peculiar people*, by purifying them. Thus are they distinguished from the world that lies in wickedness; they are born of God, and assimilated to him, bear his image, are holy as their heavenly Father is holy. Observe, Redemption from sin and sanctification of the nature go together, and both make a peculiar people unto God: freedom from guilt and condemnation, freedom from the power of lusts, and purification of soul by the Spirit. These are *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation*, and so *a peculiar people*. And, (3.) *Zealous of good works*. This peculiar people, as they are made so by grace purifying them, so must they be seen to be so by doing good, and a zeal therein. Observe, The gospel is not a doctrine of licentiousness, but of holiness and good life. We are redeemed from our vain conversation, to serve God *in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life*. Let us see then that we do good, and have zeal in it; only looking that zeal be guided by knowledge and spirited with love, directed to the glory of God, and always in some good thing. And thus of the motive to the duties directed, from the end of Christ's death.

Verse 15

The apostle closes the chapter (as he began it) with a summary direction to Titus upon the whole, in which we have the matter

and manner of ministers' teaching, and a special instruction to Titus in reference to himself.

I. The matter of ministers' teaching: *These thing*, namely, those before mentioned: not Jewish fables and traditions, but the truths and duties of the gospel, of avoiding sin, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Observe, Ministers in their preaching must keep close to the word of God. *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God*, 1 Pt. 4:11, and not the figments and inventions of his own brain.

II. The manner; by doctrine, and exhortation, and reproof with all authority. 2 Tim. 3:16, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness*; that is, to teach sound doctrine, to convince of sin and refute error, to reform the life, and to carry forward in what is just and good; *that the man of God* (the Christian or minister) *may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works* that are to be practised by himself or to be taught to others. Here is what will furnish for all parts of his duty, and the right discharge of them. *"These things speak, or teach; shun not to declare the whole counsel of God."* The great and necessary truths and duties of the gospel, especially, these *speak and exhort, parakalei, press with much earnestness*. Ministers must not be cold and lifeless in delivering heavenly doctrine and precepts, as if they were indifferent things or of little concern; but they must urge them with earnestness suitable to their nature and importance; they must call upon persons to mind and heed, and not be *hearers only, deceiving themselves; but doers of the word, that they may be blessed therein. And rebuke*; convince and reprove such as contradict or gainsay, or neglect and do not receive the truth as they should, or retain it in unrighteousness—those who hear it not with such a believing and obedient mind and heart as they ought, but, instead of this (it may be) live in contrary practices, showing themselves stubborn and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. *Rebuke with all authority*, as coming in the name of God, and armed with his threatenings and discipline, whoever make light of which will do it at their peril. Ministers are reprovers in the gate.

III. Here is a special instruction to Titus in reference to himself: *"Let no man despise thee*; that is, give no occasion to do so, nor suffer it without reproof, considering that *he who despiseth despiseth not man, but God."* Or thus, *"Speak and exhort these things*, press them upon all, as they may respectively be concerned; with boldness and faithfulness reprove sin, and carefully look to thyself and thy own conduct, and then none will despise thee." The most effectual way for ministers to secure themselves from contempt is to keep close to the doctrine of Christ, and imitate his example—to preach and live well, and do their duty with prudence and courage; this will best preserve both their reputation and their comfort.

Perhaps too an admonition might be here intended to the people—that Titus, though young, and but a substitute of the apostle, yet should not be condemned by them, but considered and respected as a faithful minister of Christ, and encouraged and supported in his work and office. *"Know those that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake*, 1 Th. 5:12, 13. Mind their teaching, respect their persons, support them in their function, and, what in you lies, further their endeavours for the honour of God and the salvation of souls."

Chapter 3

Of duties which concern Christians more in common, and the reasons of them (v. 1-8). What Titus in teaching should avoid, and how he should deal with a heretic, with some other directions (v. 9-14), and salutations in the close (v. 15).

Verses 1-8

Here is the fourth thing in the matter of the epistle. The apostle had directed Titus in reference to the particular and special duties of several sorts of persons; now he bids him exhort to what concerned them more in common, namely, to quietness and submission to rulers, and readiness to do good, and to equitable and gentle behaviour towards all men—things comely and ornamental of religion; he must therefore put them in mind of such things. Ministers are people's remembrancers of their duty. As they are remembrancers for the people to God in prayers (Isa. 62:6), so are they from God to them in preaching: *I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance*, 2 Pt. 1:12. Forgetfulness of duty is a common frailty; there is need therefore of reminding and quickening them thereto. Here are the duties themselves, and the reasons of them.

I. The duties themselves, which they were to be reminded of. 1. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates*. Magistracy is God's ordinance for the good of all, and therefore must be regarded and submitted to by all; not for wrath and by force only, but willingly and for conscience' sake. *Principalities*, and *powers*, and *magistrates*, that is, all civil rulers, whether supreme and chief or subordinate, in the government under which they live, of whatever form it be; that they be subject to them and obey them in things lawful and honest, and which it belongs to their office to require. The Christian religion was misrepresented by its adversaries as prejudicial to the rights of princes and civil powers, and tending to faction and sedition, and to rebellion against lawful authority; therefore *to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*, and stop the mouths of malicious enemies, Christians must be reminded to show themselves examples rather of all due subjection and obedience to the government that is over them. Natural desire of liberty must be guided and bounded by reason and scripture. Spiritual privileges do not make void or weaken, but confirm and strengthen, their obligations to civil duties: "Remind them therefore *to be subject to principalities and powers and to obey magistrates*." And, 2. *To be ready to every good work*. Some refer this to such good works as are required by magistrates and within their sphere: "Whatever tends to good order, and to promote and secure public tranquility and peace, be not backward, but ready, to promote such things." But, though this be included, if not first intended, yet is it not to be hereto restrained. The precept regards doing good in all kinds, and on every occasion that may offer, whether respecting God, ourselves, or our neighbour—what may bring credit to religion in the world. *Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report: if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things* (Phil. 4:8), to do and follow and further them. Mere harmlessness, or good words and good meanings only, are not enough without good works. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless, and the widow in their affliction, and keep unspotted from the world*. "Not only take, but seek, occasion for doing good, keep fitness and readiness that way; put it not off to others, but embrace and lay hold on it thyself, delight and rejoice therein, put all in mind of this." And, 3. *To speak evil of no man: μεμδενα βλασφημειν, to revile, or curse, or blaspheme none*: or (as our

translation more generally) *to speak evil of none*, unjustly and falsely, or unnecessarily, without call, and when it may do hurt but no good to the person himself or any other. If no good can be spoken, rather than speak evil unnecessarily, say nothing. We must never take pleasure in speaking ill of others, nor make the worst of any thing, but the best we can. We must not go up and down as tale-bearers, carrying ill-natured stories, to the prejudice of our neighbour's good name and the destruction of brotherly love. Misrepresentations, or insinuations of bad intentions, or of hypocrisy in what is done, things out of our reach or cognizance, these come within the reach of this prohibition. As this evil is too common, so it is of great malignity. *If any man seemeth to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain*, Jam. 1:26. Such loose uncharitable talk is displeasing to God, and hurtful among men. Prov. 17:9, *He that covereth a transgression seeketh love* (that is, to himself by this tenderness and charity, or rather to the transgressor); *but he that repeateth a matter* (that blazes and tells the faults of another abroad) *separateth very friends*; he raises dissensions and alienates his friend from himself, and perhaps from others. This is among the sins to be put off (Eph. 4:31); for, if indulged, it unfits for Christians communion here and the society of the blessed in heaven, 1 Co. 6:10. Remind them therefore to avoid this. And, 4. *To be no brawlers; amachous einai—no fighters*, either with hand or tongue, no quarrelsome contentious persons, apt to give or return ill and provoking language. A holy contending there is for matters good and important, and in a manner suitable and becoming, not with wrath nor injurious violence. Christian must follow the things that are conducive to peace, and that in a peaceful, not a rough and boisterous and hurtful way, but as becomes the servants of the God of peace and love (Rom. 12:19), *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath*; this is the Christian's wisdom and duty. *The glory of a man is to pass over a transgression*; it is the duty of a reasonable, and therefore certainly of a Christian man, whose reason is improved and advanced by religion; such may not, and will not, presently fall foul on one who has offended him, but, like God, will be *slow to anger, and ready to forgive*. Contention and strife arise from men's lusts, and exorbitant unruly passions, which must be curbed and moderated, not indulged; and Christians need to be reminded of these things, that they do not by a wrathful contentious spirit and behaviour displease and dishonour God and discredit religion, promoting feuds in the places where they live. *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty*, and *he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city*. Wherefore it follows, 5. *But gentle; epieikeis, equitable and just*, or candid and fair in constructions of things, not taking words or actions in the worst sense; and for peace sometimes yielding somewhat of strict right. And, 6. *Showing all meekness to all men*. We must be of a mild disposition, and not only have meekness in our hearts, but show it in our speech and conduct. *All meekness*—meekness in all instances and occasions, not towards friends only, but *to all men*, though still with wisdom, as James admonishes, Jam. 3:13. "Distinguish the person and the sin; pity the one and hate the other. Distinguish between sin and sin; look not on all alike, there are *motes and beams*. Distinguish also between sinner and sinner: *of some have compassion, others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, thus making a difference*, Jude 22, 23. Mind these things; *the wisdom that is from above is pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated*." Meekness of spirit and demeanour renders religion amiable; it is a commanded imitation of Christ the grand exemplar, and what brings it own reward with it, in the ease and comfort of the disposition itself and the blessings accompanying it. These shall be glad and rejoice, shall be taught and guided in their way, and satisfied with bread, and

beautified with salvation. Thus of the duties themselves, which Titus was to put people in mind of: for which,

II. He adds the reasons, which are derived

1. From their own past condition. Consideration of men's natural condition is a great means and ground of equity and gentleness, and all meekness, towards those who are yet in such a state. This has a tendency to abate pride and work pity and hope in reference to those who are yet unconverted: "We ourselves also were so and so, corrupt and sinful, therefore we should not be impatient and bitter, hard and severe, towards those who are but as ourselves once were. Should we then have been willing to be contemned, and proudly and rigorously dealt with? No, but treated with gentleness and humanity; and therefore we should now so treat those who are unconverted, according to that rule of equity: *Quod tibi non vis fieri, alteri ne feceris—What you would not have done to you that do not you to another.*" Their past natural condition is set forth in divers particulars. *We ourselves also were sometimes*, (1.) *Foolish*; without true spiritual understanding and knowledge, ignorant of heavenly things. Observe, Those should be most disposed to bear with others' follies who may remember many of their own; those should be meek and gentle, and patient towards others, who once needed and doubtless then expected the same. *We ourselves also were sometimes foolish*. And, (2.) *Disobedient*; heady and unpersuadable, resisting the word, and rebellious even against the natural laws of God, and those which human society requires. Well are these set together, *foolish* and *obedient*. For what folly like this, to disobey God and his laws, natural or revealed? This is contrary to right reason, and men's true and greatest interests; and what so foolish as to violate and go counter to these? (3.) *Deceived*, or wandering; namely, out of the ways of truth and holiness. Man in this his degenerate state is of a straying nature, thence compared to a lost sheep; this must be sought and brought back, and guided in the right way, Ps. 119:176. He is weak, and ready to be imposed upon by the wiles and subtleties of Satan, and of men lying in wait to seduce and mislead. (4.) *Serving divers lusts and pleasures*; namely, as vassals and slaves under them. Observe, Men deceived are easily entangled and ensnared; they would not serve divers lusts and pleasures as they do, were they not blinded and beguiled into them. See here too what a different notion the word gives of a sensual and fleshly life from what the world generally has of it. Carnal people think they enjoy their pleasures; the word calls it servitude and vassalage: they are very drudges and bond slaves under them; so far are they from freedom and felicity in them that they are captivated by them, and serve them as taskmasters and tyrants. Observe further, It is the misery of the servants of sin that they have many masters, one lust hurrying them one way, and another; pride commands one thing, covetousness another, and often a contrary. What vile slaves are sinners, while they conceit themselves free! the lusts that tempt them promise them liberty, but in yielding they become the servants of corruption; for *of whom a man is overcome of the same is he brought into bondage*. (5.) *Living in malice*, one of those lusts that bear rule in them. Malice desires hurt to another and rejoices in it. (6.) *And envy*, which grudges and repines at another's good, frets at his prosperity and success in any thing: both are roots of bitterness, whence many evils spring: evil thoughts and speeches, tongues *set on fire of hell*, detracting from and impairing the just and due praises of others. *Their words are swords*, wherewith they slay the good name and honour of their neighbour. This was the sin of Satan, and of Cain who was of that evil one, and slew his brother; for wherefore slew he him, but of this envy and malice, *because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous?* These were some of the sins in

which we lived in our natural state. And, (7.), *Hateful*, or odious—deserving to be hated. (8.) *And hating one another*. Observe, Those that are sinful, living and allowing themselves in sin, are hateful to God and all good men. Their temper and ways are so, though not simply their persons. It is the misery of sinners that they hate one another, as it is the duty and happiness of saints to love one another. What contentions and quarrels flow from men's corruptions, such as were in the nature of those who by conversion are now good, but in their unconverted state made them ready to run like furious wild beasts one upon another! The consideration of its having been thus with us should moderate our spirits, and dispose us to be more equal and gentle, meek and tenderhearted, towards those who are such. This is the argument from their own past condition here described. And he reasons,

2. From their present state. "We are delivered out of that our miserable condition by no merit nor strength of our own; but only by the mercy and free grace of God, and merit of Christ, and operation of his Spirit. Therefore we have no ground, in respect of ourselves, to condemn those who are yet unconverted, but rather to pity them, and cherish hope concerning them, that they, though in themselves as unworthy and unmeet as we were, yet may obtain mercy, as we have:" and so upon this occasion the apostle again opens the causes of our salvation, v. 4-7.

(1.) We have here the prime author of our salvation—God the Father, therefore termed here *God our Saviour*. *All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*, 2 Co. 5:18. All things belonging to the new creation, and recovery of fallen man to life and happiness, of which the apostle is there speaking, all these things are of God the Father, as contriver and beginner of this work. There is an order in acting, as in subsisting. The Father begins, the Son manages, and the Holy Spirit works and perfects all. God (namely, *the Father*) is a Saviour by Christ, through the Spirit. Jn. 3:16, *God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him might not perish, but have everlasting life*. He is the Father of Christ, and through him the Father of mercies; all spiritual blessings are by Christ from him, Eph. 1:3. *We joy in God through Jesus Christ*, Rom. 5:11. *And with one mind, and one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Rom. 15:5.

(2.) The spring and rise of it—the divine *philanthropy*, or *kindness and love of God to man*. By grace we are saved from First to last. This is the ground and motive. God's pity and mercy to man in misery were the first wheel, or rather the Spirit in the wheels, that sets and keeps them all in motion. God is not, cannot be, moved by any thing out of himself. The occasion is in man, namely, his misery and wretchedness. Sin bringing that misery, wrath might have issued out rather than compassion; but God, knowing how to adjust all with his own honour and perfections, would pity and save rather than destroy. He delights in mercy. *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*. We read of *riches of goodness and mercy*, Rom. 2:4; Eph. 2:7. Let us acknowledge this, and give him the glory of it, not turning it to wantonness, but to thankfulness and obedience.

(3.) Here is the means, or instrumental cause—the shining out of this love and grace of God in the gospel, *after it appeared*, that is, in the word. The appearing of love and grace has, through the Spirit, great virtue to soften and change and turn to God, and so is *the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth*. Thus having asserted God to be the author, his free grace the spring, and the manifestation of this in the gospel the means of salvation, that the honour of all still may be the better

secured to him,

(4.) False grounds and motives are here removed: *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us*; not for foreseen works of ours, but his own free grace and mercy alone. Works must be in the saved (where there is room for it), but not among the causes of his salvation; they are the way to the kingdom, not the meriting price of it; all is upon the principle of undeserved favour and mercy from first to last. Election is of grace: we are chosen *to be* holy, not because it was antecedently seen that we should be so, Eph. 1:4. It is the fruit, not the cause, of election: *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*, 2 Th. 2:13. So effectual calling, in which election breaks out, and is first seen: *He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*, 2 Tim. 1:9. We are *justified freely by grace* (Rom. 3:24), and sanctified and saved by grace: *By grace you are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*, Eph. 2:8. Faith and all saving graces are God's free gift and his work; the beginning, increase, and perfection of them in glory, all are from him. In building men up to be a holy temple unto God, from the foundation to the top-stone, we must cry nothing but *Grace, grace* unto it. It is *not of works, lest any man should boast; but of grace, that he who glorieth should glory only in the Lord*. Thus the true cause is shown, and the false removed.

(5.) Here is the formal cause of salvation, or that wherein it lies, the beginnings of it at least-in regeneration or spiritual renewing, as it is here called. *Old things pass away, and all things become new*, in a moral and spiritual, not in a physical and natural, sense. It is the same man, but with other dispositions and habits; evil ones are done away, as to the prevalency of them at present; and all remains of them in due time will be so, when the work shall be perfected in heaven. A new prevailing principle of grace and holiness is wrought, which inclines, and sways, and governs, and makes the man a new man, a new creature, having new thoughts, desires, and affections, a new and holy turn of life and actions; the life of God in man, not only from God in a special manner, but conformed and tending to him. Here is salvation begun, and which will be growing and increasing to perfection; therefore it is said, *He saved us*. What is so begun, as sure to be perfected in time, is expressed as if it already were so. Let us look to this therefore without delay; we must be initially saved now, by regeneration, if on good ground we would expect complete salvation in heaven. The change then will be but in degree, not in kind. Grace is glory begun, as glory is but grace in its perfection. How few mind this! Most act as if they were afraid to be happy before the time; they would have heaven, they pretend, at last, yet care not for holiness now; that is, they would have the end without the beginning; so absurd are sinners. But without regeneration, that is, the first resurrection, there is no attaining the second glorious one, the resurrection of the just. Here then is formal salvation, in the new divine life wrought by the gospel.

(6.) Here is the outward sign and seal thereof in baptism, called therefore *the washing of regeneration*. The work itself is inward and spiritual; but it is outwardly signified and sealed in this ordinance. Water is of a cleansing and purifying nature, does away the filth of the flesh, and so was apt to signify the doing away of the guilt and defilement of sin by the blood and Spirit of Christ, though that aptness alone, without Christ's institution, would not have been sufficient. This it is that makes it of this signification on God's part, a seal of righteousness by faith, as circumcision was, in the place of which it succeeds; and

on ours an engagement to be the Lord's. Thus baptism saves figuratively and sacramentally, where it is rightly used. *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord*, Acts 22:16. So Eph. 5:26, *That he might sanctify and cleanse us by the washing of water by the word*. Slight not this outward sign and seal, where it may be had according to Christ's appointment; yet rest not in the outward washing, but look to the *answer of a good conscience*, without which the external washing will avail nothing. The covenant sealed in baptism binds to duties, as well as exhibits and conveys benefits and privileges; if the former be not minded, in vain are the latter expected. Sever not what God has joined; in both the outer and inner part is baptism complete; as he that was circumcised became debtor to the whole law (Gal. 5:3), so is he that is baptized to the gospel, to observe all the commands and ordinances thereof, as Christ appointed. *Disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*, Mt. 28:19, 20. This is the outward sign and seal of salvation, baptism, called here *the washing of regeneration*.

(7.) Here is the principal efficient, namely, the Spirit of God; it is the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*; not excluding the Father and the Son, who in all works without themselves are concurring; nor the use of means, the word and sacraments, by which the Spirit works; through his operation it is that they have their saving effect. In the economy of our salvation, the applying and effecting part is especially attributed to the Holy Spirit. We are said to be born of the Spirit, to be quickened and sanctified by the Spirit, to be led and guided, strengthened and helped, by the Spirit. Through him we mortify sin, perform duty, walk in God's ways; all the acts and operations of the divine life in us, the works and fruits of righteousness without us, all are through this blessed and Holy Spirit, who is therefore called the Spirit of life, and of grace and holiness; all grace is from him. Earnestly therefore is he to be sought, and greatly to be heeded by us, that we quench not his holy motions, nor resist and oppose him in his workings. *Res delicatula est Spiritus—The Spirit is a tender thing*. As we act towards him, so may we expect he will to us; if we slight, and resist, and oppose his workings, he will slacken them; if we continue to vex him, he will retire. *Grieve not therefore the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption*, Eph. 4:30. The Spirit seals by his renewing and sanctifying, his witnessing and assuring work; he distinguishes and marks out for salvation, and fits for it; it is his work: we could not turn to God by any strength of our own, any more than we can be justified by any righteousness of our own.

(8.) Here is the manner of God's communicating this Spirit in the gifts and graces of it; not with a scanty and niggardly hand, but most freely and plentifully: *Which he shed on us abundantly*. More of the Spirit in its gifts and graces is poured out under the gospel than was under the law, whence it is eminently styled *the ministration of the Spirit*, 2 Co. 3:8. A measure of the Spirit the church has had in all ages, but more in gospel times, since the coming of Christ, than before. *The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ*; that is, a more plentiful effusion of grace, fulfilling the promises and prophecies of old. Isa. 44:3, *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring*: this greatest and best of blessings, an effusion of grace, and of the sanctifying gifts of the Spirit. Joel 2:28, *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh*; not on Jews only, but Gentiles also. This was to be in gospel times;

and accordingly (Acts 2:17, 18, 33), speaking of Christ risen and ascended, *having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth* (says Peter) *this that you now see and hear*: and ch. 10:44, 45, *The Holy Ghost fell on all those that heard the word*, Gentiles as well as Jews. This indeed was, in a great measure, in the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, but not without his sanctifying graces also accompanying many if not all of them. There was then great abundance of common gifts of illumination, outward calling and profession, and general faith, and of more special gifts of sanctification too, such as faith, and hope, and love, and other graces of the Spirit. Let us get a share in these. What will it signify if much be shed forth and we remain dry? Our condemnation will but be aggravated the more if under such a dispensation of grace we remain void of grace. *Be filled with the Spirit*, says the apostle; it is duty as well as privilege, because of the means which God in the gospel is ready to bless and make effectual; this is the manner of God's communicating grace and all spiritual blessings under the gospel—*plentifully*; he is not straitened towards us, but we towards him and in ourselves.

(9.) Here is the procuring cause of all, namely, Christ: *Through Jesus Christ our Saviour*. He it is who purchased the Spirit and his saving gifts and graces. All come through him, and through him as a Saviour, whose undertaking and work it is to bring to grace and glory; he is our righteousness and peace, and our head, from whom we have all spiritual life and influences. *He is made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. Let us praise God for him above all; let us go to the Father by him, and improve him to all sanctifying and saving purposes. Have we grace? Let us thank him with the Father and Spirit for it: *account all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of him*, and grow and increase therein more and more.

(10.) Here are the ends why we are brought into this new spiritual condition, namely, justification, and heirship, and hope of eternal life: *That, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*. Justification in the gospel sense is the free remission of a sinner, and accepting him as righteous through the righteousness of Christ received by faith. In it there is the removing of guilt that bound to punishment, and the accepting and dealing with the person as one that now is righteous in God's sight. This God does freely as to us, yet through the intervention of Christ's sacrifice and righteousness, laid hold on by faith (Rom. 3:20, etc.): *By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified*; but through *the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all those that believe*, whence (v. 24) we are said to be *justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*. God, in justifying a sinner in the way of the gospel, is gracious to him, and yet just to himself and his law, forgiveness being through a perfect righteousness, and satisfaction made to justice by Christ, who is the propitiation for sin, and not merited by the sinner himself. So it is here: *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*. It is by grace, as the spring and rise (as was said), though *through the redemption that is in Christ* as making the way, God's law and justice being thereby satisfied, and by faith applying that redemption. *By him* (by Christ) *all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses*, Acts 13:39. Hence the apostle desires *to be found in him, not*

having his own righteousness, which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Let us not trust therefore in our own righteousness or merit of good works, but in Christ's righteousness alone, received by faith for justification and acceptance with God. Inherent righteousness we must have, and the fruits of it in works of obedience; not however as our justifying righteousness before God, but as fruits of our justification, and evidences of our interest in Christ and qualification for life and happiness, and the very beginning and part of it; but the procuring of all this is by Christ, that, *being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs.* Observe, Our justification is *by the grace of God*, and our justification by that grace is necessary in order to our being made *heirs of eternal life*; without such justification there can be no adoption and sonship, and so no right of inheritance. Jn. 1:12, *Whoever received him* (namely, Christ), *to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to those that believed on his name.* Eternal life is set before us in the promise, the Spirit works faith in us and hope of that life, and so are we made heirs of it and have a kind of possession of it even now; faith and hope bring it near, and fill with joy in the well-grounded expectation of it. The meanest believer is a great heir. Though he has not his portion in hand, he has good hope through grace, and may bear up under all difficulties. There is a better state in view. He is waiting for *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him.* How well may such comfort themselves with these words! And now all this gives good reason why we should *show all meekness to all men*, because we have experienced so much benefit by the kindness and love of God to us, and may hope that they, in God's time, may be partakers of the like grace as we are. And thus of the reasons of equal and gentle, meek and tender behaviour to wards others, from their own bad condition in time past, and the present more happy state into which they are brought, without any merit or deservings of their own, and whereinto by the same grace others may be brought also.

III. The apostle, having opened the duties of Christians in common, with the reasons respecting themselves, adds another from their goodness and usefulness to men. Observe, When he has opened the grace of God towards us, he immediately presses the necessity of good works; for we must not expect the benefit of God's mercy, unless we make conscience of our duty (v. 8): *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly* (this is a true Christian doctrine of highest importance, and which ministers must most earnestly and constantly press and inculcate), *that those who have believed in God do not think that a bare naked faith will save them; but it must be an operative working faith, bringing forth the fruit of righteousness; they must make it their care to maintain good works, not to do them occasionally only, and when opportunities come in their way, but to seek opportunities for doing them. These things are good and profitable unto men: these good works, say some, or the teaching of these things, rather than idle questions, as follows. These things are good in themselves and the teaching of them useful to mankind, making persons a common good in their places. Note, Ministers, in teaching, must see that they deliver what is sound and good in itself, and profitable to those that hear: all must be to the use of edifying both of persons and societies.*

Verses 9-15

Here is the fifth and last thing in the matter of the epistle: what Titus should avoid in teaching; how he should deal with a heretic; with some other directions. Observe,

I. That the apostle's meaning might be more clear and full, and especially fitted to the time and state of things in Crete, and the many judaizers among them, he tells Titus what, in teaching, he should shun, v. 9. There are needful questions to be discussed and cleared, such as make for improvement in useful knowledge; but idle and foolish enquiries, tending neither to God's glory nor the edification of men, must be shunned. Some may have a show of wisdom, but are vain, as many among the Jewish doctors, as well as of later schoolmen, who abound with questions of no moment or use to faith or practice; avoid these.—*And genealogies* (of the gods, say some, that the heathen poets made such noise about; or rather those that the Jews were so curious in): some lawful and useful enquiries might be made into these things, to see the fulfilling of the scriptures in some cases, and especially in the descent of Christ the Messiah; but all that served to pomp only, and to feed vanity, in boasting of a long pedigree, and much more such as the Jewish teachers were ready to busy themselves in and trouble their hearers with, even since Christ had come, and that distinction of families and tribes had been taken away, as if they would build again that policy which now is abolished, these Titus must withstand as foolish and vain.—*And contentious, and strivings about the law*. There were those who were for the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, and would have them continued in the church, though by the gospel and the coming of Christ they were superseded and done away. Titus must give no countenance to these, but avoid and oppose them; *for they are unprofitable and vain*: this is to be referred to all those *foolish questions and genealogies*, as well as those *strivings about the law*. They are so far from instructing and building up in godliness, that they are hindrances of it rather: the Christian religion, and good works, which are to be maintained, will hereby be weakened and prejudiced, the peace of the church disturbed, and the progress of the gospel hindered. Observe, Ministers must not only teach things good and useful, but shun and oppose the contrary, what would corrupt the faith, and hinder godliness and good works; nor should people have itching ears, but love and embrace sound doctrine, which tends most to the use of edifying.

II. But because, after all, there will be *heresies* and *heretics* in the church, the apostle next directs Titus what to do in such a case, and how to deal with such, v. 10. He who forsakes the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, who broaches false doctrines and propagates them to the corrupting of the faith in weighty and momentous points, and breaks the peace of the church about them, after due means used to reclaim him, must be rejected. "Admonish him once and again, that, if possible, he may be brought back, and thou mayest gain thy brother; but, if this will not reduce him, that others be not hurt, cast him out of the communion, and warn all Christians to avoid him."—*Knowing that he that is such is subverted* (turned off from the foundation) *and sinneth* grievously, being *self-condemned*. Those who will not be reclaimed by admonitions, but are obstinate in their sins and errors, *are subverted and self-condemned*; they inflict that punishment upon themselves which the governors of the church should inflict upon them: they throw themselves out of the church, and throw off its communion, and so are self-condemned. Observe, 1. How great an evil real heresy is, not lightly therefore to be charged upon any, though greatly to be taken heed of by all. Such a one is *subverted* or perverted—a metaphor from a building so ruined as to render it difficult if not impossible to repair and raise it up again. Real heretics have seldom been recovered to the true faith: not so much defect of judgment, as perverseness of the will, being in the case, through pride, or ambition, or self-willedness, or covetousness, or such like corruption, which therefore must be taken heed of: "Be humble, love the truth and practise it, and damning heresy will be

escaped." 2. Pains and patience must be used about those that err most grievously. They are not easily and soon to be given up and cast off, but competent time and means must be tried for their recovery. 3. The church's means even with heretics are persuasive and rational. They must be admonished, instructed, and warned; so much *nouthesia* imports. 4. Upon continued obstinacy and irreclaimableness, the church has power, and is obliged, to preserve its own purity, by severing such a corrupt member which discipline may by God's blessing become effectual to reform the offender, or if not it will leave him the more inexcusable in his condemnation.

III. The apostle subjoins some further directions, v. 12, 13. Here are two personal things enjoined:—

1. That Titus should hold himself ready to come to Paul at *Nicopolis* (a city of Thrace, as is reckoned, on the borders of Macedonia), as soon as *Artemas* or *Tychicus* should be sent to Crete, to supply his place, and take care of the churches there when he should leave them. The apostle would not have them in their young and weak state be without one or other of chief sufficiency, to guide and help them. Titus, it seems, was not their ordinary fixed bishop or pastor, but an evangelist, otherwise Paul would not have called him so much from his charge. Of *Artemas* we read little, but *Tychicus* is mentioned on many occasions with respect. Paul calls him *a beloved brother, and faithful minister, and fellow-servant in the Lord*: one fit therefore for the service intimated. When Paul says to Titus, *Be diligent to come to me to Nicopolis, for I have determined there to winter*, it is plain that the epistle was not written from *Nicopolis*, as the postscript would have it, for then he would have said, I determined *here*, not *there*, to winter.

2. The other personal charge to Titus is that he would bring two of his friends on their journey diligently, and see them furnished, so that nothing should be wanting to them. This was to be done, not as a piece of common civility only, but of Christian piety, out of respect both to them and the work they were sent about, which probably was to preach the gospel, or to be in some way serviceable to the churches. *Zenas* is styled *the lawyer*, whether in reference to the Roman or the Mosaic law, as having some time been his profession, is doubtful. *Apollos* was an eminent and faithful minister. Accompanying such persons part of their way, and accommodating them for their work and journeys, was a pious and needful service; and to further this, and lay in for it, what the apostle had before exhorted Titus to teach (v. 8) he repeats here: *Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful*, v. 14. Let Christians, those who have believed in God, learn to *maintain good works*, especially such as these, supporting ministers in their work of preaching and spreading the gospel, hereby becoming *fellow-helpers to the truth*, 3 Jn. 5-8. *That they be not unfruitful*. Christianity is not a fruitless profession; the professors of it must be *filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God*. It is not enough that they be harmless, but they must be profitable, doing good, as well as eschewing evil.—*"Let ours set up and maintain some honest labour and employment, to provide for themselves and their families, that they be not unprofitable burdens on the earth;"* so some understand it. Let them not think that Christianity gives them a writ of ease; no, it lays an obligation upon them to seek some honest work and calling, and therein *to abide with God*. This is of good report, will credit religion and be good to mankind; they will not be unprofitable members of the body, not burdensome and chargeable to others, but enabled to be helpful to those in want. *To maintain good works for necessary uses*; not living like drones on the

labours of others, but themselves fruitful to the common benefit.

IV. The apostle concludes with salutations and benedictions, v. 5. Though perhaps not personally known (some of them at least), yet all by Paul testify their love and good wishes to Titus, owning him thereby in his work, and stimulating him to go on therein. Great comfort and encouragement it is to have the heart and prayers of other Christians with and for us. *Greet those that love us in the faith, or for the faith*, who are our loving fellow-christians. Holiness, or the image of God in any, is the great endearing thing that gives strength to all other bonds, and is itself the best. *Grace be with you all. Amen.* This is the closing benediction, not to Titus alone, but to all the faithful with him, which shows that though the epistle bears the single name of Titus in the inscription, yet it was for the use of the churches there, and they were in the eye, and upon the heart, of the apostle, in the writing of it. "*Grace be with you all*, the love and favour of God, with the fruits and effects thereof, according to need, spiritual ones especially, and the increase and feeling of them more and more in your souls." This is the apostle's wish and prayer, showing his affection to them, his desire of their good, and a means of obtaining for them, and bringing down upon them, the thing requested. Observe, Grace is the chief thing to be wished and begged for, with respect to ourselves or others; it is, summarily, all good. *Amen* shuts up the prayer, expressing desire and hope, that so it may, and so it shall be.