

THE AGES DIGITAL LIBRARY
COMMENTARY

**COMMENTARY
ON THE SECOND EPISTLE
TO TIMOTHY**

by John Calvin

Books For The Ages
AGES Software • Albany, OR USA
Version 1.0 © 1998

COMMENTARIES

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO
TIMOTHY

THE ARGUMENT

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

IT cannot be absolutely ascertained from Luke's history at what time the former Epistle was written. But I have no doubt that, after that time, Paul had personal communication with Timothy; and it is even possible (if the generally received opinion be believed) that Paul had him for a companion and assistant in many places. Yet it may readily be concluded that he was at Ephesus when this Epistle was written to him; because, towards the close of the Epistle, (^{<550419>} 2 Timothy 4:19,) Paul "salutes Priscilla, and Aquila, and Onesiphorus," the last of whom was an Ephesian, and Luke informs us that the other two remained at Ephesus when Paul sailed to Judea, (^{<442818>} Acts 28:18, 29.)

The chief point on which it turns is to confirm Timothy, both in the faith of the gospel, and in the pure and constant preaching of it. But yet these exhortations derive no small weight from the consideration of the time when he wrote them. Paul had before his eyes the death which he was prepared to endure for the testimony of the gospel. All that we read here, therefore, concerning the kingdom of Christ, the hope of eternal life, the Christian warfare, confidence in confessing Christ, and the certainty of doctrine, ought to be viewed by us as written not with ink but with Paul's own blood; for nothing is asserted by him for which he does not offer the pledge of his death; and therefore this Epistle may be regarded as a solemn subscription and ratification of Paul's doctrine.

It is of importance to remember, however, what we stated in the exposition of the former Epistle, that the Apostle did not write it merely for the sake of one man, but that he exhibited, under the person of one man, a general doctrine, which should afterwards be transmitted from one hand to another. And first, having praised the faith of Timothy, in which he had been educated from his childhood, he exhorts him to persevere faithfully in the doctrine which he had learned, and in the office intrusted

to him; and, at the same time, lest Timothy should be discouraged on account of Paul's imprisonment, or the apostasy of others, he boasts of his apostleship and of the reward laid up for him. He likewise praises Onesiphorus, in order to encourage others by his example; and because the condition of those who serve Christ is painful and difficult, he borrows comparisons both from husbandmen and from soldiers, the former of whom do not hesitate to bestow much labor on the cultivation of the soil before any fruit is seen, while the latter lay aside all cares and employments, in order to devote themselves entirely to the life of a soldier and to the command of their general.

Next, he gives a brief summary of his gospel, and commands Timothy to hand it down to others, and to take care that it shall be transmitted to posterity. Having taken occasion from this to mention again his own imprisonment, he rises to holy boldness, for the purpose of animating others by his noble courage; for he invites us all to contemplate, along with him, that crown which awaits him in heaven.

He bids him also abstain from contentious disputes and vain questions, recommending to him, on the contrary, to promote edification; and in order to shew more clearly how enormous an evil it is, he relates that some have been ruined by it, and particularly mentions two, Hymenaeus and Philetus who, having fallen into monstrous absurdity, so as to overturn the faith of the resurrection, suffered the horrible punishment of their vanity. But because falls of that kind, especially of distinguished men and those who enjoyed some reputation are usually attended by great scandal, he shews that believers ought not to be distressed on account of them, because they who possess the name of Christ do not all belong actually to Christ, and because the Church must be exposed to the misery of dwelling among wicked and ungodly persons in this world. Yet that this may not unduly terrify weak minds, he prudently softens it, by saying that the Lord will preserve till the end his own, whom he has elected.

He afterwards returns to exhort Timothy to persevere faithfully in the discharge of his ministry; and in order to make him more careful, he foretells what dangerous times await the good and the pious, and what destructive men shall afterwards arise; but, in opposition to all this, he confirms him by the hope of a good and successful result. More especially, he recommends to him to be constantly employed in teaching sound

doctrine, pointing out the proper use of Scripture, that he may know that he will find in it everything that is necessary for the solid edification of the Church.

Next, he mentions that his own death is at hand, but he does so in the manner of a conqueror hastening to a glorious triumph, which is a clear testimony of wonderful confidence. Lastly, after having besought Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, he points out the necessity arising from his present condition. This is the principal subject in the conclusion of the Epistle.

COMMENTARIES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

CHAPTER 1

<550101>2 TIMOTHY 1:1-2	
1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,	1. Paulus apostolus Iesu Christi per voluntatem Dei, secundum promissionem vitae, quae est in Christo Iesu,
2. To Timothy, my dearly-beloved son : Grace, mercy; and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord.	2. Timotheo dilecto filio gratia, misericordia, pax a Deo Patre, et Christo Iesu Domino nostro.

1. *Paul an Apostle.* From the very preface we already perceive that Paul had not in view Timothy alone; other wise he would not have employed such lofty titles in asserting his apostleship; for what purpose would it have served to employ these ornaments of language ill writing to one who was fully convinced of the fact? He, therefore, lays claim to that authority over all which belonged to his public character and he does this the more diligently, because, being near death, he wishes to secure the approbation of the whole course of his ministry, ^{f1} and to seal his doctrine which he had labored so hard to teach, that it may be held sacred by posterity, and to leave a true portrait of it in Timothy.

Of Jesus Christ by the will of God. First, according to his custom, he calls himself an “Apostle of Christ.” Hence it follows, that he does not speak as a private person, and must not be heard slightly, and for form’s sake, ^{f2} like a man, but as one who is a representative of Christ. But because the

dignity of the office is too great to belong to any man, except by the special gift and election of God, he at the same time pronounces a eulogy on his calling, by adding that he was ordained by *the will of God*. His apostleship, therefore, having God for its author and defender, is beyond all dispute.

According to the promise of life. That his calling may be the more certain, he connects it with the promises of eternal life; as if he had said, “As from the beginning God promised eternal life in Christ, so now he has appointed me to be the minister for proclaiming that promise.” Thus also he points out the design of his apostleship, namely, to bring men to Christ, that in him they may find life.

Which is in Christ Jesus. He speaks with great accuracy, when he mentions that “the promise of life” was indeed given, in ancient times, to the fathers. (<442606> Acts 26:6.) But yet he declares that this life is in Christ, in order to inform us that the faith of those who lived under the Law must nevertheless have looked towards Christ; and that *life*, which was contained in promises, was, in some respects, suspended, till it was exhibited in Christ.

2. *My beloved son.* By this designation he not only testifies his love of Timothy, but procures respect and submission to him; because he wishes to be acknowledged in him, as one who may justly be called his son,^{f3} The reason of the appellation is, that he had begotten him in Christ; for, although this honor belongs to God alone, yet it is also transferred to ministers, whose agency he employs for regenerating us.

Grace, mercy. The word *mercy*, which he employs here, is commonly left out by him in his ordinary salutations. I think that he introduced it, when he poured out his feelings with more than ordinary vehemence. Moreover, he appears to have inverted the order; for, since “mercy” is the cause of “grace,” it ought to have come before it in this passage. But still it is not unsuitable that it should be put after “grace”, in order to express more clearly what is the nature of that grace, and whence it proceeds; as if he had added, in the form of a declaration, that the reason why we are loved by God is, that he is merciful. Yet this may also be explained as relating to God’s daily benefits, which are so many testimonies of his “mercy”; for, whenever he assists us, whenever he delivers us from evils, pardons our

sins, and bears with our weakness, he does so, because he has compassion on us.

<550103> 2 TIMOTHY 1:3-5	
3. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;	3. Gratias ago Deo, quem colo a progenitoribus in conscientia, ut assiduam tui mentionem facio in pecibus meis die et noctu,
4. Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;	4. Desiderans to videre, memor tuarum lacrymarum, ut gaudio implear,
5. When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, in which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.	5. Memoria repetens eam, quae in to est, sinceram fidem, quae et habitavit primum in avia tua Loide, et in matre tua Eunice; persuasum habeo quòd etiam in to.

3. *I give thanks.* The meaning usually assigned to these words is, that Paul “gives thanks to God,” and next assigns the cause or ground of thanksgiving; namely, that he is unceasingly mindful of Timothy. But let my readers consider whether the following sense do not suit equally well and even better: “Whenever I remember thee in my prayers, (and I do so continually,) I also give thanks concerning thee;” for the particle **ὥς** most frequently has that meaning;^{f4} and, indeed, any meaning that can be drawn from a different translation is exceedingly meager. According to this exposition, prayer will be a sign of carefulness, and thanksgiving a sign of joy; that is, he never thought of Timothy without calling to remembrance the eminent virtues with which he was adorned. Hence arises ground of thanksgiving; for the recollection of the gifts of God is always pleasant and delightful to believers. Both are proofs of real friendship. He calls the *mention* of him (**ἀδιάλειπτον**) *unceasing*, because he never forgets him when he prays.

Whom I worship from my ancestors. This declaration he made in opposition to those well — known calumnies with which the Jews everywhere loaded him, as if he had forsaken the religion of his country,

and apostatized from the law of Moses. On the contrary, he declares that he worships God, concerning whom he had been taught by his ancestors, that is, the God of Abraham, who revealed himself to the Jews, who delivered his law by the hand of Moses; and not some pretended God, whom he had lately made for himself.

But here it may be asked, “Since Paul glories in following the religion handed down from his ancestors, is this a sufficiently solid foundation? For hence it follows, that this will be a plausible presence for excusing all superstitions, and that it will be a crime, if any one depart, in the smallest degree, from the institutions of his ancestors, whatever these are.” The answer is easy. He does not here lay down a fixed rule, that every person who follows the religion that he received from his fathers is believed to worship God aright, and, on the other hand, that he who departs from the custom of his ancestors is at all to blame for it. For this circumstance must always be taken into account, that Paul was not descended from idolaters, but from the children of Abraham, who worshipped the true God. We know what Christ says, in disapproving of all the false worship of the Gentiles, that the Jews alone maintained the true method of worship. Paul, therefore, does not rest solely on the authority of the fathers, nor does he speak indiscriminately of all his ancestors; but he removes that false opinion, with which he knew that he was unjustly loaded, that he had forsaken the God of Israel, and framed for himself a strange god.

In a pure conscience. It is certain that Paul’s conscience was not always pure; for he acknowledges that he was deceived by hypocrisy, while he gave loose reins to sinful desire. ^{f5} (<450708> Romans 7:8.) The excuse which Chrysostom offers for what Paul did while he was a Pharisee, on the ground that he opposed the gospel, not through malice, but through ignorance, is not a satisfactory reply to the objection; for “a pure conscience” is no ordinary commendation, and cannot be separated from the sincere and hearty fear of God. I, therefore, limit it to the present time, in this manner, that he worships the same God as was worshipped by his ancestors, but that now he worships him with pure affection of the heart, since the time when he was enlightened by the gospel.

This statement has the same object with the numerous protestations of the apostles, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles:

“I serve the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the law and in the prophets.” (<442414> Acts 24:14.)

Again,

“And now I stand to be judged concerning the hope of the promise which was made to our fathers, to which hope our twelve tribes hope to come.” (<442606> Acts 26:6.)

Again,

“On account of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.” (<442820> Acts 28:20.)

In my prayers night and day. Hence we see how great was his constancy in prayer; and yet he affirms nothing about himself but what Christ recommends to all his followers. We ought, therefore, to be moved and inflamed by such examples to imitate them, so far, at least, that an exercise so necessary may be more frequent among us. If any one understand this to mean the daily and nightly prayers which Paul was wont to offer at stated hours, there will be no impropriety in that view; though I give a more simple interpretation, that there was no time when he was not employed in prayer.

5. *Calling to remembrance that unfeigned faith.* Not so much for the purpose of applauding as of exhorting Timothy, the Apostle commends both his own faith and that of his grandmother and mother; for, when one has begun well and valiantly, the progress he has made should encourage him to advance, and domestic examples are powerful excitements to urge him forward. Accordingly, he sets before him *his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice*, by whom he had been educated from his infancy in such a manner that he might have sucked godliness along with his milk. By this godly education, therefore, Timothy is admonished not to degenerate from himself and from his ancestors.

It is uncertain whether, on the one hand, these women were converted to Christ, and what Paul here applauds was the commencement of faith, or whether, on the other hand, faith is attributed to them apart from Christianity. The latter appears to me more probable; for, although at that time everything abounded with many superstitions and corruptions, yet God had always his own people, whom he did not suffer to be corrupted

with the multitude, but whom he sanctified and separated to himself, that there might always exist among the Jews a pledge of this grace, which he had promised to the seed of Abraham. There is, therefore, no absurdity in saying that they lived and died in the faith of the Mediator, although Christ had not yet been revealed to them. But I do not assert anything, and could not assert without rashness.

And I am persuaded that in thee also. This clause confirms me in the conjecture which I have just now stated; for, in my opinion, he does not here speak of the present faith of Timothy. It would lessen that sure confidence of the former eulogium, if he only said that he reckoned the faith of Timothy to resemble the faith of his grandmother and mother. But I understand the meaning to be, that Timothy, from his childhood, while he had not yet obtained a knowledge of the gospel, was imbued with the fear of God, and with such faith as proved to be a living seed, which afterwards manifested itself.

<550106> 2 TIMOTHY 1:6-12

6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.	6. Propterea commonefacio to, ut exsuscites donum Dei, quod in to est, per impositionem manuum mearum
7. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.	7. Non enim dedit nobis Deus spiritum timiditatis, sed pontenia et dilectionis et sobrietatis.
8. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God:	8. Non ergo to pudeat testimonii Domini nostri, neque mei, qui sum vinctus ipsius; sed esto particeps afflictionum Evangelii, secundum potentiam Dei,
9. Who hath saved us, and called us with an 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;	9. Qui nos servavit ac vocavit vocatione sancta; non secundum opera nostra, sed secundum propositum suum et gratiam, quae data fuit nobis in Christo Iesu ante tempora saecularia
10. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:	10. Revelata autem nunc fuit per apparitionem Servatoris nostri Iesu Christi, qui mortem quidem abolevit, illuminavit autem vitam et immortalitatem per Evangelium
11. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.	11. In quod positus sum ego praeco et apostolus et Doctor Gentium,
12. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.	12. Quam etiam ob causam haec patior, sed non pudefio; novi enim, cui crediderim, et persuasus sum quod ptens sit, depositum meum servare in diem illum.

6. *For which cause I advise thee.* The more abundantly that Timothy had received the grace of God, the more attentive (the Apostle intimates) he

ought to be in making progress from day to day. It deserves notice that the words “for which cause” introduce this advice as a conclusion from what has been already said.

To stir up the gift of God. This exhortation is highly necessary; for it usually happens, and may be said to be natural, that the excellence of gifts produces carelessness, which is also accompanied by sloth; and Satan continually labors to extinguish all that is of God in us. We ought, therefore, on the other hand, to strive to bring to perfection everything that is good in us, and to kindle what is languid; for the metaphor, which Paul employs, is taken from a fire which was feeble, or that was in course of being gradually extinguished, if strength and fame were not added, by blowing upon it and by supplying new fuel. Let us therefore remember that we ought to apply to use the gifts of God, lest, being unemployed and concealed, they gather rust. Let us also remember that we should diligently profit by them, lest they be extinguished by our slothfulness.

Which is in thee by the laying on of my hands. There can be no doubt that Timothy was invited by the general voice of the Church, and was not elected by the private wish of Paul alone; but there is no absurdity in saying, that Paul ascribes the election to himself personally, because he was the chief actor in it. Yet here he speaks of ordination, that is, of the solemn act of conferring the office of the ministry, and not of election. Besides, it is not perfectly clear whether it was the custom, when any minister was to be set apart, that all laid their hands on his head, or that one only did so, in the room and name of all. I am more inclined to the conjecture, that it was only one person who laid on his hands.

So far as relates to the ceremony, the apostles borrowed it from an ancient custom of their nation; or rather, ill consequence of its being in use, they retained it; for this is a part of that decent and orderly procedure which Paul elsewhere recommends. (<461440> 1 Corinthians 14:40.) Yet it may be doubted if that “laying on of hands” which is now mentioned refers to ordination; because, at that time, the graces of the Spirit, of which he speaks in the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans (Romans 12), and in the 13th of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 13), were bestowed on many others who were not appointed to be pastors. But, for my own part, I think that it may be easily inferred from the former

Epistle, that Paul here speaks of the office of a pastor, for this passage agrees with that,

“Do not neglect the grace which was given to thee with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” (<540414> 1 Timothy 4:14.)

That point being settled, it is asked, “Was grace given by the outward sign?” To this question I answer, whenever ministers were ordained, they were recommended to God by the prayers of the whole Church, and in this manner grace from God was obtained for them by prayer, and was not given to them by virtue of the sign, although the sign was not uselessly or unprofitably employed, but was a sure pledge of that grace which they received from God’s own hand. That ceremony was not a profane act, invented for the sole purpose of procuring credit in the eyes of men, but a lawful consecration before God, which is not performed but by the power of the Holy Spirit. Besides, Paul takes the sign for the whole matter or the whole transaction; for he declares that Timothy was endued with grace, when he was offered to God as a minister. Thus in this mode of expression there is a figure of speech, in which a part is taken for the whole.

But we are again met by another question; for if it was only at his ordination that Timothy obtained the grace necessary for discharging his office, of what nature was the election of a man not yet fit or qualified, but hitherto void and destitute of the gift of God? I answer, it was not then so given to him that he had it not before; for it is certain that he excelled both in doctrine and in other gifts before Paul ordained him to the ministry. But there is no inconsistency in saying, that, when God wished to make use of his services, and accordingly called him, he then fitted and enriched him still more with new gifts, or doubled those which he had previously bestowed. It does not therefore follow that Timothy had not formerly any gift, but it shone forth the more when the duty of teaching was laid upon him.

7. *For God hath not given to us a spirit of cowardice.* It is a confirmation of what he had said immediately before; and thus he continues to urge Timothy to display the power of the gifts which he had received. He makes use of this argument, that God governs his ministers by *the Spirit of power*, which is the opposite of *cowardice*. Hence it follows, that they ought not to lie down through slothfulness, but, sustained by great

confidence and cheerfulness, should exhibit and display, by visible effects, that power of the Spirit.

The following passage occurs in the Epistle to the Romans:

“For we have not received a spirit of bondage, to be again in terror; but we have received the spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father.”
(^{<450815>}Romans 8:15.)

That passage is, at first sight, nearly similar to this; but yet the context shews that the meaning is different. There he treats of the confidence of adoption which all believers have; but here he speaks particularly about ministers, and exhorts them, in the person of Timothy, to arouse themselves actively to deeds of valour; because God does not wish them to perform their office in a cold and lifeless manner, but to press forward powerfully, relying on the efficacy of the Spirit.

But of power, and of love, and of soberness. Hence we are taught, first, that not one of us possesses that firmness and unshaken constancy of the Spirit, which is requisite for fulfilling our ministry, until we are endued from heaven with a new power. And indeed the obstructions are so many and so great, that no courage of man will be able to overcome them. It is God, therefore, who endues us with “the spirit of power;” for they who, in other respects, give tokens of much strength, fall down in a moment, when they are not upheld by the power of the Divine Spirit.

Secondly, we gather from it, that they who have slavish meanness and cowardice, so that they do not venture to do anything in defense of the truth, when it is necessary, are not governed by that Spirit by whom the servants of Christ are guided. Hence it follows, that there are very few of those who bear the title of ministers, in the present day, who have the mark of sincerity impressed upon them; for, amongst a vast number, where do we find one who, relying on the power of the Spirit, boldly despises all the loftiness which exalts itself against Christ? Do not almost all seek their own interest and their leisure? Do they not sink down dumb as soon as any noise breaks out? The consequence is, that no majesty of God is seen in their ministry. The word *Spirit* is here employed figuratively, as in many other passages. ^{f6}

But why did he afterwards add *love* and *soberness*? In my opinion, it was for the purpose of distinguishing that power of the Spirit from the fury

and rage of fanatics, who while they rush forward with reckless impulse, fiercely boast of having the Spirit of God. For that reason he expressly states that this powerful energy is moderated by “sobriety and love,” that is, by a calm desire of edifying. Yet Paul does not deny that prophets and teachers were endued with the same Spirit before the publication of the gospel; but he declares that this grace ought now to be especially powerful and conspicuous under the reign of Christ.

8. *Be not ashamed, therefore.* He said this, because the confession of the gospel was accounted infamous; and therefore he forbids that either ambition or the fear of disgrace shall prevent or retard him from the liberty of preaching the gospel. And he infers this from what has been already said; for he who is armed with the power of God will not tremble at the noise raised by the world, but will reckon it honorable that wicked men mark them with disgrace.

And justly does he call the gospel *the testimony of our Lord*; because, although he has no need of our assistance, yet he lays upon us this duty, that we shall give “testimony” to him for maintaining his glory. It is a great and distinguished honor which he confers upon us, and, indeed, upon all, (for there is no Christian that ought not to reckon himself a witness of Christ,) but chiefly pastors and teachers, as Christ said to the apostles, —

“Ye shall be witnesses to me,” (^{<440108>} Acts 1:8.)

Accordingly, the more hateful the doctrine of the gospel is in the world, the more earnestly should they labor to confess it openly.

When he adds, *nor of me*; by this word he reminds Timothy not to refuse to be his companion, as in a cause common to both of them; for, when we begin to withdraw from the society of those who, for the name of Christ, suffer persecution, what else do we seek than that the gospel shall be free from all persecution? Now, though there were not wanting many wicked men who thus ridiculed Timothy, — “Do you not see what has befallen your master? Do you not know that the same reward awaits you also? Why do you press upon us a doctrine which you see is hissed at by the whole world?” — still he must have been cheered by this exhortation, — “You have no reason to be ashamed of me, in that which is not shameful, for I am *Christ’s prisoner*,” that is, “Not for any crime or evil deed, but for his name I am kept in prison.”

But be thou a partaker of the affections of the gospel. He lays down a method by which that which he enjoins may be done; that is, if Timothy shall prepare himself for enduring the afflictions which are connected, with the gospel. Whosoever shall revolt at and shrink from the cross will always be ashamed of the gospel. Not without good reason, *therefore*, does Paul, while he exhorts to boldness of confession, in order that he may not exhort in vain, speak to him also about bearing the cross.^{f7}

He adds, *according to the power of God*; because, but for this, and if he did not support us, we should immediately sink under the load. And this clause contains both admonition and consolation. The admonition is, to turn away his eyes from his present weakness, and, relying on the assistance of God, to venture and undertake what is beyond his strength. The consolation is, that, if we endure anything on account of the gospel, God will come forth as our deliverer, that by his power, we may obtain the victory.

9. *Who hath saved us.* From the greatness of the benefit he shews how much we owe to God; for the salvation which he has bestowed on us easily swallows up all the evils that must be endured in this world. The word *saved*, though it admit of a general signification, is here limited, by the context, to denote eternal salvation. So then he means that they who, having obtained through Christ not a fading or transitory, but an eternal salvation, shall spare their fleeting life or honor rather than acknowledge their Redeemer; are excessively ungrateful.

And hath called us with a holy calling. He places the sealing of salvation^{f8} in the *calling*; for, as the salvation of men was completed in the death of Christ, so God, by the gospel, makes us partakers of it. In order to place in a stronger light the value of this “calling,” he pronounces it to be *holy*. This ought to be carefully observed, because, as salvation must not be sought anywhere but in Christ so, on the other hand, he would have died and risen again without any practical advantage, unless so far as he calls us to a participation of this grace. Thus, after having procured salvation for us, this second blessing remains to be bestowed, that, ingrafting us into his body, he may communicate his benefits to be enjoyed by us.

Not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace. He describes the source both of our calling and of the whole of our salvation. We had not works by which we could anticipate God; but the whole

depends on his gracious purpose and election; for in the two words *purpose* and *grace* there is the figure of speech called Hypallage,^{f9} and the latter must have the force of an objection, as if he had said, — ”according to his gracious purpose.” Although Paul commonly employs the word “purpose” to denote the secret decree of God, the cause of which is in his own power, yet, for the sake of fuller explanation, he chose to add “grace,” that he might more clearly exclude all reference to works. And the very contrast proclaims loudly enough that there is no room for works where the grace of God reigns, especially when we are reminded of the election of God, by which he was beforehand with us, when we had not yet been born. On this subject I have spoken more fully in my exposition of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians (<490101> Ephesians 1); and at present I do nothing more than glance briefly at that which I have there treated more at large.^{f10}

Which was given to us. From the order of time he argues, that, by free grace, salvation was given to us which we did not at all deserve; for, if God chose us before the creation of the world, he could not have regard to works, of which we had none, seeing that we did not then exist. As to the cavil of the sophists, that God was moved by the works which he foresaw, it does not need a long refutation. What kind of works would those have been if God had passed us by, seeing that the election itself is the source and beginning of all good works?

This *giving* of grace, which he mentions, is nothing else than predestination, by which we were adopted to be the sons of God. On this subject I wished to remind my readers, because God is frequently said actually to “give” his grace to us when we receive the effect of it. But here Paul sets before us what God purposed with himself from the beginning. He, therefore, gave that which, not induced by any merit, he appointed to those who were not yet born, and kept laid up in his treasures, until he made known by the fact itself that he purposeth nothing in vain.

Before eternal ages. He employs this phrase in the same sense in which he elsewhere speaks of the uninterrupted succession of years from the foundation of the world. (<560102> Titus 1:2.) For that ingenious reasoning which Augustine conducts in many passages is totally different from Paul’s design. The meaning therefore is, — “Before times began to take their course from all past ages.” Besides, it is worthy of notice, that he

places the foundation of salvation in Christ; for, apart from him, there is neither adoption nor salvation; as was indeed said in expounding the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. (Ephesians 1)

10. *But hath now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ.* Observe how appropriately he connects the faith which we have from the gospel within God's secret election, and assigns to each of them its own place. God has now called us by the gospel, not because he has suddenly taken counsel about our salvation, but because he had so determined from all eternity. Christ hath now "appeared"^{f11} for our salvation, not because the power of saving has been recently bestowed on him, but because this grace was laid up in him for us before the creation of the world. The knowledge of those things is revealed to us by faith; and so the Apostle judiciously connects the gospel with the most ancient promises of God, that novelty may not render it contemptible.

But it is asked; "Were the fathers under the Law ignorant of this grace?" for if it was not revealed but by the coming of Christ, it follows that, before that time, it was concealed. I reply, Paul speaks of the full exhibition of the thing itself on which depended also the faith of the fathers, so that this takes nothing from them. The reason why Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and all believers, obtained the same faith with us, was, that they placed their confidence in this "appearance." Thus, when he says that "grace hath been revealed to us by the appearing of Christ," he does not exclude from communion with that grace the fathers who are made partakers with us of this appearing by the same faith. Christ (<581308>Hebrews 13:8) was yesterday as he is today; but he did not manifest himself to us, by his death and resurrection, before the time appointed by the Father. To this, as the only pledge and accomplishment of our salvation, both our faith and that of the fathers look with one accord.

Who hath indeed destroyed death. When he ascribes to the gospel the manifestation of life, he does not mean that we must begin with the word, leaving out of view the death and resurrection of Christ, (for the word, on the contrary, rests on the subject — matter,) but he only means that the fruit of this grace comes to men in no other way than by the gospel, in accordance with what is said,

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation.”

(^{<470519>} 2 Corinthians 5:19.)

And hath brought to light life and immortality by the gospel. It is a high and remarkable commendation of the gospel, that it “bringeth life to light.” To *life* he adds *immortality*; as if he had said, “a true and immortal life.” But, perhaps, it may be thought better, that by *life* we understand regeneration, that is followed by a blessed *immortality* which is also the object of hope. And, indeed, this is our “life,” not that which we have in common with brute beasts, but that which consists in partaking of the image of God. But because in this world

“it doth not appear” (^{<620302>} 1 John 3:2)

what is the nature, or what is the value of that “life,” for the sake of more full expression he has most properly added, “immortality,” which is the revelation of that life which is now concealed.

11. *To which I have been appointed.* Not without good reason does he so highly commend the gospel along with his apostleship. Satan labors, beyond all things else, to banish from our hearts, by every possible method, the faith of sound doctrine; and as it is not always easy for him to do this if he attack us in open war, he steals upon us by secret and indirect methods; for, in order to destroy the credibility of doctrine, he holds up to suspicion the calling of godly teachers.^{f12} Paul, therefore, having death before his eyes, and knowing well the ancient and ordinary snares of Satan, determined to assert not only the doctrine of the gospel in general, but his own calling. Both were necessary; for, although there be uttered long discourses concerning the: dignity of the gospel, they will not be of much avail to us, unless we understand what is the gospel. Many will agree as to the general principle of the undoubted authority of the gospel, who afterwards will have nothing certain that they can follow. This is the reason why Paul expressly wishes to be acknowledged to be a faithful and lawful minister of that life — giving doctrine which he had mentioned.

A herald, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the reasons now stated, he adorns himself with various titles, for expressing one and the same thing. He calls himself a *herald*, whose duty it is, to publish the commands of princes and magistrates. The word *apostle* is here used in its

ordinary and restricted meaning. Moreover, because there is a natural relation between a *teacher* and his disciples, he takes to himself also this third name, that they who learn from him may know that they have a master who has been appointed to them by God. And to whom does he declare that he was appointed? To the *Gentiles*; for the main hinge of the controversy was about them, because the Jews denied that the promises of life belonged to any others than to the fleshly children of Abraham. In order, therefore, that the salvation of the Gentiles may not be called in question, he affirms that to them he has been especially sent by God.

12. *For which cause also I suffer these things.* It is well known that the rage of the Jews was kindled against Paul, for this reason more than any other, that he made the gospel common to the Gentiles. Yet the phrase *for which cause* relates to the whole verse, and therefore must not be limited to the last clause about “the Gentiles.”

But I am not ashamed. That the prison in which he was bound might not in any degree lessen his authority, he contends, on the contrary, by two arguments. First, he shows that the cause, far from being disgraceful, was even honorable to him; for he was a prisoner, not on account of any evil deed, but because he obeyed God who called him. It is an inconceivable consolation, when we are able to bring a good conscience in opposition to the unjust judgments of men. Secondly, from the hope of a prosperous issue he argues that there is nothing disgraceful in his imprisonment. He who shall avail himself of this defense will be able to overcome any temptations, however great they may be. And when he says, that he “is not ashamed,” he stimulates others, by his example, to have the same courage.

For I know whom I have believed. This is the only place of refuge, to which all believers ought to resort, whenever the world reckons them to be condemned and ruined men; namely, to reckon it enough that God approves of them; for what would be the result, if they depended on men? And hence we ought to infer how widely faith differs from opinion; because, when Paul says, “I know whom I have believed,” he means that it is not enough if you believe, unless you have the testimony of God, and unless you have full certainty of it. Faith, therefore, neither leans on the authority of men, nor rests on God, in such a manner as to hesitate, but must be joined with knowledge; otherwise it would not be sufficiently

strong against the innumerable assaults of Satan. He who with Paul enjoys this knowledge, will know, by experience, that, on good grounds, our faith is called

“the victory that overcometh the world,” (<620504> 1 John 5:4)

and that on good grounds, it was said by Christ,

“The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
(<401618> Matthew 16:18.)

Amidst every storm and tempest, that man will enjoy undisturbed repose, who has a settled conviction that God,

“who cannot lie,” (<560102> Titus 1:2)

or deceive, hath spoken, and will undoubtedly perform what he hath promised. On the other hand, he who has not this truth sealed on his heart, will be continually shaken hither and thither like a reed.

This passage is highly worthy of attention; because it expresses admirably the power of faith, when it shows that, even in desperate affairs, we ought to give to God such glory as not to doubt that he will be true and faithful; and when it likewise shows that we ought to rely on the word as fully as if God had manifested himself to us from heaven; for he who has not this conviction understands nothing. Let us always remember that Paul does not pursue philosophical speculations in the shade, but, having the reality before his eyes, solemnly declares, how highly valuable is a confident hope of eternal life.

And am persuaded that he is able. Because the power and greatness of dangers often fill us with dismay, or at least tempt our hearts to distrust, for this reason we must defend ourselves with this shield, that there is sufficient protection in the power of God. In like manner Christ, when he bids us cherish confident hope, employs this argument,

“The Father, who gave you to me, is greater than all,”
(<431029> John 10:29)

by which he means, that we are out of danger, seeing that the Lord, who hath taken us under his protection, is abundantly powerful to put down all opposition. True, Satan does not venture to suggest this thought in a direct form, that God cannot fulfill, or is prevented from fulfilling, what he has

promised, (for our senses are shocked by so gross a blasphemy against God,) but, by preoccupying our eyes and understandings, he takes away from us all sense of the power of God. The heart must therefore be well purified, in order that it may not only taste that power, but may retain the taste of it amidst temptations of every kind.

Now, whenever Paul speaks of the power of God, understand by it what may be called his actual or (ἐνεργουμένον) “effectual” power, as he calls it elsewhere. (<510129> Colossians 1:29) Faith always connects the power of God with the word, which it does not imagine to be at a distance, but, having inwardly conceived it, possesses and retains it. Thus it is said of Abraham:

“He did not hesitate or dispute, but gave glory to God, being fully convinced that what he had promised he was able also to perform,”
(<450420> Romans 4:20,21.)

What I have intrusted to him. Observe that he employs this phrase to denote eternal life; for hence we conclude, that our salvation is in the hand of God, in the same manner as there are in the hand of a depository those things which we deliver to him to keep, relying on his fidelity. If our salvation depended on ourselves,^{f13} to how many dangers would it be continually exposed? But now it is well that, having been committed to such a guardian, it is out of all danger.

<550113> 2 TIMOTHY 1:13-18

13. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.	13. Formam habe sanorum sermonum, quos a me audisti in fide et caritate, in Christo Iesu.
14. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.	14. Eregium depositum custodi per Spiritum Sanctum, qui inhabitat in nobis.
15. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.	15. Nosti hoc, quod aversati me fuerint omnes, qui sunt in Asia, quorum sunt Phygelus et Hermogenes.
16. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:	16. Det misericordiam Dominus Onesiphori familiae; quoniam saepe me refocillait, et de catena mea non erubuit:
17. But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.	17. Sed quum esset Romae, studiosus quaesivit me, et invenit.
18. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.	18. Det ei Dominus invenire misericordiam a Domino in illa die et quanta Ephesi ministravit melius tu nosti.

13. *Hold the form of sound words.* Some explain it thus: “Let thy doctrine be, as it were, a pattern which others may imitate.” I do not approve *of* that view. Equally removed from Paul’s meaning is Chrysostom’s exposition, that Timothy should have at hand the image of virtues engraven on his heart by Paul’s doctrine. I rather think that Paul commands Timothy to hold fast the doctrine which he had learned, not only as to substance, but as to the very form of expression; for **ὑποτύπωσις** — the word which Paul employs on this occasion — denotes a lively picture of objects, as if they were actually placed before the eyes. Paul knew how ready men are to depart or fall off from pure doctrine. For this reason he earnestly cautions Timothy not to turn aside

from that form of teaching which he had received, and to regulate his manner of teaching by the rule which had been laid down; not that we ought to be very scrupulous about words, but because to misrepresent doctrine, even in the smallest degree, is exceedingly injurious.^{f14}

Hence we see what kind of theology there is in Popery, which has degenerated so far from the pattern which Paul recommends, that it resembles the riddles of diviners or soothsayers rather than a doctrine taken from the word of God. What taste of Paul's writings, I ask, is there in all the books of the schoolmen? This licentiousness in corrupting doctrine shews that there are great reasons why Paul invites Timothy to hold fast the original and natural form. And he contrasts *sound words* not only with doctrines manifestly wicked, but within useless questions, which, instead of health, bring nothing but disease.

In faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. I am aware that the preposition *ἐν*, agreeably to the idiom of the Hebrew language, *ב* is often taken for *with*; but here, I think, the meaning is different Paul has added this as a mark of sound doctrine, in order that we may know what it contains, and what is the summary of it, the whole of which, according to his custom, he includes under "faith and love." He places both of them *in Christ*; as, indeed, the knowledge of Christ consists chiefly of these two parts; for, although the words, *which is*, are in the singular number, agreeing with the word *love*, yet it must also be understood as applying to *faith*.

Those who translate it, "*with* faith and love," make the meaning to be, that Timothy should add to sound doctrine the affections of piety and love. I do acknowledge that no man can persevere faithfully in sound doctrine unless he is endued with true faith and unfeigned love. But the former exposition, in my opinion, is more appropriate, namely, that Paul employs these terms for describing more fully what is the nature of "sound words" and what is the subject of them. Now he says that the summary consists in "faith and love" of which the knowledge of Christ is the source and beginning.

14. *Keep the excellent thing committed to thee.* This exhortation is more extensive than the preceding. He exhorts Timothy to consider what God has given to him, and to bestow care and application in proportion to the high value of that which has been committed; for, when the thing is of little value, we are not wont to call any one to so strict an account.

By “that which hath been committed,” I understand him to mean both the honor of the ministry and all the gifts with which Timothy was endued. Some limit it to the ministry alone; but I think that it denotes chiefly the qualifications for the ministry, that is, all the gifts of the Spirit, in which he excelled. The word “committed” is employed also for another reason, to remind Timothy that he must, one day, render an account; for we ought to administer faithfully what God has committed to us.

Τὸ Καλόν^{f15} denotes that which is of high or singular value; and, therefore, Erasmus has happily translated it (*egregium*) “excellent,” for the sake of denoting its rare worth. I have followed that version. But what is the method of keeping it? It is this. We must beware lest we lose by our indolence what God has bestowed upon us, or lest it be taken away, because we have been ungrateful or have abused it; for there are many who reject the grace of God, and many who, after having received it, deprive themselves of it altogether. Yet because the difficulty of keeping it is beyond our strength, he therefore adds, —

By the Holy Spirit. As if he had said, “I do ask from thee more than thou canst, for what thou hast not from thyself the Spirit of God will supply to thee.” Hence it follows, that we must not judge of the strength of men from the commandments of God; because, as he commands by words, so he likewise engraves his words on our hearts, and, by communicating strength, causes that his command shall not be in vain.

Who dwelleth in us.^{f16} By this he means, that the assistance of the Holy Spirit is present to believers, provided that they do not reject it when it is offered to them.

15. *Thou knowest that all that are in Asia have forsaken me.* Those apostasies which he mentions might have shaken the hearts of many, and given rise, at the same time, to many suspicions; as we commonly look at everything in the worst light. Paul meets scandals of this kind with courage and heroism, that all good men may learn to abhor the treachery of those who had thus deserted the servant of Christ, when he alone, at the peril of his life, was upholding the common cause; and that they may not on that account give way, when they learn that Paul is not left destitute of divine assistance.

Of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. He names two of them, who were probably more celebrated than the rest, that he may shut the door against their slanders; for it is customary with revolters and deserters from the Christian warfare, ^{f17} in order to excuse their own baseness, to forge as many accusations as they can against the good and faithful ministers of the gospel. “Phygellus and Hermogenes,” knowing that their cowardice was justly reckoned infamous by believers, and that they were even condemned as guilty of base treachery, would not have hesitated to load Paul with false accusations, and impudently to attack his innocence. Paul, therefore, in order to take away all credit from their tries, brands them with the mark which they deserve.

Thus also, in the present day, there are many who, because they are not here admitted into the ministry, or are stripped of the honor on account of their wickedness, ^{f18} or because we do not choose to support them while they do nothing, or because they have committed theft or fornication, are compelled to fly, and forthwith wander through France and other countries, and, by throwing upon us all the accusations ^{f19} that they can, borrow from them an attestation of their innocence. And some brethren are so silly as to accuse us of cruelty, if any of us paints such persons in their true colors. But it were to be wished that all of them had their forehead marked with a hot iron, that they might be recognized at first sight.

16. *May the Lord grant mercy.* From this prayer we infer, that the good offices done to the saints are not thrown away, even though they cannot recompense them; for, when he prays to God to reward them, this carries in it the force of a promise. At the same time, Paul testifies his gratitude, by desiring that God will grant the remuneration, because he is unable to pay. What if he had possessed abundant means of remuneration? Undoubtedly he would have manifested that he was not ungrateful.

To the family of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me. It is worthy of attention, that although he praises the kindness of *Onesiphorus* alone, yet, on his account, he prays for mercy to the whole *family*. Hence we infer, that “the blessing of God rests, not only on the head of the righteous man,” but on all his house. So great is the love of God toward his people, that it diffuses itself over all who are connected with them.

And was not ashamed of my chain. This is a proof, not only of his liberality, but likewise of his zeal; seeing that he cheerfully exposed himself to danger and to the reproach of men, in order to assist Paul.

18. *May the Lord grant to him.* Some explain it thus: — “May God grant to him that he may find mercy with Christ the Judge.” And, indeed, this is somewhat more tolerable than to interpret that passage in the writings of Moses:

“The Lord rained fire from the Lord,” (<012924> Genesis 29:24,)

as meaning, — “The Father rained from the Son.”^{f20} Yet it is possible that strong feeling may have prompted Paul, as often happens, to make a superfluous repetition.

That he may find mercy with the Lord on that day.^{f21} This prayer shews us how much richer a recompense awaits those who, without the expectation of an earthly reward, perform kind offices to the saints, than if they received it immediately from the hand of men. And what does he pray for? “That he may find mercy;” for he who hath been merciful to his neighbors will receive such mercy from God to himself. And if this promise does not powerfully animate and encourage us to the exercise of kindness, we are worse than stupid. Hence it follows, also, that when God rewards us, it is not on account of our merits or of any excellence that is in us; but that the best and most valuable reward which he bestows upon us is, when he pardons us, and shews himself to be, not a stern judge, but a kind and indulgent Father.

CHAPTER 2

<550201> 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

1. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus	1. Tu ergo, fili mi, fortis esto in gratia, quae est in Christo Iesu.
2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.	2. Et quae a me audisti per multos testes, haec commenda fidelibus hominibus, qui idonei erunt ad alios etiam docendos.
3. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.	3. Tu igitur feras afflictions, ut bonus miles Iesu Christi.
4. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.	4. Nemo, qui militat, implicator vitae negotiis, ut imperatori placeat.
5. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.	5. Quodsi quis etiam certaverit, non coronatur, nisi legitime certaverit.
6. The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.	6. Laborare prius agricolam oportet, quam fructus percipiat.
7. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.	7. Intellege quae dico; det enim tibi Dominus intellectum in omnibus.

1. *Be strong in the grace.* As he had formerly commanded him to keep, by time Spirit, that which was committed to him, so now he likewise enjoins him “to be strengthened in grace.” By this expression he intends to shake off sloth and indifference; for the flesh is so sluggish, that even those who are endued with eminent gifts are found to slacken in the midst of their course, if they be not frequently aroused.

Some will say: “Of what use is it to exhort a man to ‘be strong in grace,’ unless free-will have something to do in cooperation?” I reply, what God demands from us by his word he likewise bestows by his Spirit, so that we are strengthened in the grace which he has given to us. And yet the exhortations are not superfluous, because the Spirit of God, teaching us

inwardly, causes that they shall not sound in our ears fruitlessly and to no purpose. Whoever, therefore, shall acknowledge that the present exhortation could not have been fruitful without the secret power of the Spirit, will never support free — will by means of it.

Which is in Christ Jesus. This is added for two reasons; to shew that the grace comes from Christ alone, and from no other, and that no Christian will be destitute of it; for, since there is one Christ common to all, it follows that all are partakers of his grace, which is said to be in Christ, because all who belong to Christ must have it.

My son. This kind appellation, which he employs, tends much to gain the affections, that the doctrine may more effectually obtain admission into the heart.

2. *And which thou hast heard from me.* He again shews how earnestly desirous he is to transmit sound doctrine to posterity; and he exhorts Timothy, not only to preserve its shape and features, (as he formerly did,) but likewise to hand it down to godly teachers, that, being widely spread, it may take root in the hearts of many; for he saw that it would quickly perish if it were not soon scattered by the ministry of many persons. And, indeed, we see what Satan did, not long after the death of the Apostles; for, just as if preaching had been buried for some centuries, he brought in innumerable reveries, which, by their monstrous absurdity, surpassed the superstitions of all the heathens. We need not wonder, therefore, if Paul, in order to guard against an evil of such a nature and of such magnitude, earnestly desires that his doctrines shall be committed to all godly ministers, who shall be qualified to teach it. As if he had said, — “See that after my death there may remain a sure attestation of my doctrine; and this will be, if thou not only teach faithfully what thou hast learned from me, but take care that it be more widely published by others; therefore, whomsoever thou shalt see fitted for that work, commit to their trust this treasure.”

Commit to believing men. He calls them *believing men*, not on account of their faith, which is common to all Christians, but on account of their pre — eminence, as possessing a large measure of faith. We might even translate it “*faithful men*,”^{f22} for there are few who sincerely labor to preserve and perpetuate the remembrance of the doctrine intrusted to them. Some are impelled by ambition, and that of various kinds, some by

covetousness, some by malice, and others are kept back by the fear of dangers; and therefore extraordinary faithfulness is here demanded.

By many witnesses.^{f23} He does not mean that he produced witnesses in a formal and direct manner^{f24} in the case of Timothy; but, because some might raise a controversy whether that which Timothy taught had proceeded from Paul, or had been forged by himself, he removes all doubt by this argument, that he did not speak secretly in a corner, but that there were many alive who could testify that Timothy spoke nothing which they had not formerly heard from the mouth of Paul. The doctrine of Timothy would therefore be beyond suspicion, seeing that they had many fellow-disciples, who could bear testimony to it. Hence we learn how greatly a servant of Christ should labor to maintain and defend the purity of doctrine, and not only while he lives, but as long as his care and labor can extend it.

3. *Do thou therefore endure afflictions.* Not without strong necessity has he added this second exhortation; for they who offer their obedience to Christ must be prepared for “enduring afflictions;” and thus, without patient endurance of evils, there will never be perseverance. And accordingly he adds, “as becomes a *good soldier of Jesus Christ.*” By this term he means that all who serve Christ are warriors, and that their condition as warriors consists, not in inflicting evils, but rather in patience.

These are matters on which it is highly necessary for us to meditate. We see how many there are every day, that throw away their spears, who formerly made a great show of valour. Whence does this arise? Because they cannot become inured to the cross. First, they are so effeminate that they shrink from warfare. Next, they do not know any other way of fighting than to contend haughtily and fiercely with their adversaries; and they cannot bear to learn what it is to

“possess their souls in patience.” (<422119> Luke 21:19)

4. *No man who warreth.* He continues to make use of the metaphor which he had borrowed from warfare. Yet, strictly speaking, he formerly called Timothy “a soldier of Christ” metaphorically; but now he compares profane warfare with spiritual and Christian warfare in this sense. “The condition of military discipline is such, that as soon as a soldier has enrolled himself under a general, he leaves his house and all his affairs, and

thinks of nothing but war; and in like manner, in order that we may be wholly devoted to Christ, we must be free from all the entanglements of this world.”

With the affairs of life. By “the affairs of life”, ^{f25} he means the care of governing his family, and ordinary occupations; as farmers leave their agriculture, and merchants their ships and merchandise, till they have completed the time that they agreed to serve in war. We must now apply the comparison to the present subject, that every one who wishes to fight under Christ must relinquish all the hindrances and employments of the world, and devote himself unreservedly to the warfare. In short, let us remember the old proverb, *Hoc age*, ^{f26} which means, that in the worship of God, we ought to give such earnestness of attention that nothing else should occupy our thoughts and feelings. The old translation has, “No man that fights for God,” etc. But this utterly destroys Paul’s meaning.

Here Paul speaks to the pastors of the Church in the person of Timothy. The statement is general, but is specially adapted to the ministers of the word. First, let them see what things are inconsistent within their office, that, freed from those things, they may follow Christ. Next, let them see, each for himself, what it is that draws them away from Christ; that this heavenly General may not have less authority over us than that which a mortal man claims for himself over heathen soldiers who have enrolled under him.

5. *And if any one strive.* He now speaks of perseverance, that no man may think that he has done enough when he has been engaged in one or two conflicts. He borrows a comparison from wrestlers, not one of whom obtains the prize till he has been victorious in the end. Thus he says:

“In a race all run, but one obtaineth the prize;
run so that ye may obtain.” (<460924> 1 Corinthians 9:24.)

If any man, therefore, wearied with the conflict, immediately withdraw from the arena to enjoy repose, he will be condemned for indolence instead of being crowned. Thus, because Christ wishes us to strive during our whole life, he who gives way in the middle of the course deprives himself of honor, even though he may have begun valiantly. To *strive lawfully* is to pursue the contest in such a manner and to such an extent as the law requires, that none may leave off before the time appointed.

6. *The husbandman must labor before he receive the fruits.* I am well aware that others render this passage differently; and I acknowledge that they translate, word for word, what Paul has written in Greek; but he who shall carefully examine the context will assent to my view.^{f27} Besides, the use of (κοπιῶντα) *to labor* instead of (κοπιᾷν) *to labor*, is a well-known Greek idiom; for Greek writers often make use of time participle in place of the infinitive.^{f28}

The meaning therefore, is, that husbandmen do not gather the fruit, till they have first toiled hard in the cultivation of the soil, by sowing and by other labors. And if husbandmen do not spare their toils, that one day they may obtain fruit, and if they patiently wait for the season of harvest; how much more unreasonable will it be for us to refuse the labors which Christ enjoins upon us, while he holds out so great a reward?

7. *Understand what I say.*^{f29} He added this, not on account of the obscurity of the comparisons which he has set forth, but that Timothy himself might ponder, how much more excellent is the warfare under the direction of Christ, and how much more abundant the reward; for, when we have studied it incessantly, we scarcely arrive at a full knowledge of it.

The Lord give thee understanding in all things. The prayer, which now follows, is added by way of correction. Because our minds do not easily rise to that “incorruptible crown” (<460925> 1 Corinthians 9:25) of the life to come,^{f30} Paul betakes himself to God, to “give understanding” to Timothy. And hence we infer, that not less are we taught in vain, if the Lord do not open our understandings, than the commandments would be given in vain, if he did not impart strength to perform them. For who could have taught better than Paul? And yet, in order that he may teach with any advantage, he prays that God may train his disciple.

<550208> 2 TIMOTHY 2:8-13

8. Remember that Jesus Christ, the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel:	8. Memonto Iesum Christum excitatum a mortuis, ex semine David, secundum evangelium meum,
9. Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil — doer, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound.	9. In quo laboro usque ad vincula, tanquam maleficus; sed sermo Dei non est victus.
10. Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.	10. Quamobrem omnia tolero propter electos, ut ipsi quoque salutem consequantur, quae est in Christo Iesu, cum gloria aeterna.
11. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:	11. Fidelis sermo: si enim commortui sumus, etiam simul cum ipso vivemus:
12. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:	12. Si sufferimus, etiam simul regnabimus; si negamus, ille quoque negabit nos:
13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.	13. Si increduli sumus, ille fidelis manet; negare se ipsum non potest.

8. *Remember that Jesus Christ, being raised from the dead.* He expressly mentions some part of his doctrine, which he wished to go down to posterity, entire and uncorrupted. It is probable that he glances chiefly at that part about which he was most afraid; as will also appear clearly from what follows, when he comes to speak about the error of “Hymenaeus and Philetus,” (<550217> 2 Timothy 2:17;) for they denied the resurrection, of which we have a sure pledge in this confession, when they falsely said that it was already past.

How necessary this admonition of Paul was, the ancient histories shew; for Satan put forth all his strength, in order to destroy this article of our faith. There being two parts of it, that Christ was born “of the seed of David,” and that he rose from the dead; immediately after the time of the Apostles, arose Marcion, who labored to destroy the truth of the human

nature in Christ; and afterwards he was followed by the Manichaeans; and even, in the present day, this plague is still spreading.

So far as relates to the resurrection, how many have been employed, and with what diversified schemes, in laboring to overthrow the hope of it! This attestation, therefore, means as much as if Paul had said, "Let no one corrupt or falsify my gospel by slanders; I have thus taught, I have thus preached, that Christ, Who was born a man of the seed of David, rose from the dead."

According to my gospel. He calls it "his gospel," not that he professes to be the author but the minister of it. Now, in the resurrection of Christ we all have a sure pledge of our own resurrection. Accordingly, he who acknowledges that Christ has risen affirms that the same thing will take place with us also; for Christ did not rise for himself, but for us. The head must not be separated from his members. Besides, in the resurrection of Christ is contained the fulfillment of our redemption and salvation; for it is added, *from the dead*. Thus Christ, who was dead, arose. Why? and for what purpose? Here we must come to ourselves, and here too is manifested the power and fruit of both, namely, of his resurrection and of his death; for we must always hold by this principle, that Scripture is not wont to speak of these things coldly, and as matters of history, but makes indirect reference to the fruit.

Of the seed of David. This clause not only asserts the reality of human nature in Christ, but also claims for him the honor and name of the Messiah. Heretics deny that Christ was a real man, others imagine that his human nature descended from heaven, and others think that there was in him nothing more than the appearance of a man.^{f31} Paul exclaims, on the contrary, that he was "of the seed of David;" by which he undoubtedly declares that he was a real man, the son of a human being, that is, of Mary. This testimony is so express, that the more heretics labor to get rid of it, the more do they discover their own impudence. The Jews and other enemies of Christ deny that he is the person who was formerly promised; but Paul affirms that he is the son of David, and that he is descended from that family from which the Messiah ought to descend.^{f32}

9. In which I am a sufferer. This is an anticipation, for his imprisonment lessened the credit due to his gospel in the eyes of ignorant people. He, therefore, acknowledges that, as to outward appearance, he was

imprisoned like a criminal; but adds, that his imprisonment did not hinder the gospel from having free course; and not only so, but that what he suffers is advantageous to the elect, because it tends to confirm them. Such is the unshaken courage of the martyrs of Christ, when the consciousness of being engaged in a good cause lifts them up above the world; so that, from a lofty position, they look down with contempt, not only on bodily pains and agonies, but on every kind of disgrace.

Moreover, all godly persons ought to strengthen themselves with this consideration, when they see the ministers of the gospel attacked and outraged by adversaries, that they may not, on that account, cherish less reverence for doctrine, but may give glory to God, by whose power they see it burst through all the hindrances of the world. And, indeed, if we were not excessively devoted to the flesh, this consolation alone must have been sufficient for us in the midst of persecutions, that, if we are oppressed by the cruelty of the wicked, the gospel is nevertheless extended and more widely diffused; for, whatever they may attempt, so far are they from obscuring or extinguishing the light of the gospel, that it burns the more brightly. Let us therefore bear cheerfully, or at least patiently, to have both our body and our reputation shut up in prison, provided that the truth of God breaks through those fetters, and is spread far and wide.

10. *Wherefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect.* From the elect he shews, that his imprisonment is so far from being a ground of reproach, that it is highly profitable to the elect. When he says that he endures *for the sake of the elect*,^{f33} this demonstrates how much more he cares for the edification of the Church than for himself; for he is prepared, not only to die, but even to be reckoned in the number of wicked men, that he may promote the salvation of the Church.

In this passage Paul teaches the same doctrine as in ^{<510124>}Colossians 1:24, where he says, that he

“fills up what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ, for his body,
which is the Church.”

Hence the impudence of the Papists is abundantly refuted, who infer from these words that the death of Paul was a satisfaction for our sins; as if he claimed anything else for his death, than that it would confirm the faith of

the godly, for he immediately adds an exposition, by affirming that the salvation of believers is found in Christ alone. But if any of my readers wishes to see a more extended illustration of this subject, let him consult my Commentary on the chapter which I have just now quoted — the first of the Epistle to the Colossians.

With eternal glory. This is the end of the salvation which we obtain in Christ; for our salvation is to live to God, which salvation begins with our regeneration, and is completed by our perfect deliverance, when God takes us away from the miseries of this mortal life, and gathers us into his kingdom. To this salvation is added the participation of heavenly, that is, divine glory; and, therefore, in order to magnify the grace of Christ, he gave to salvation the name of “eternal glory.”

11. A faithful saying. He makes a preface to the sentiment which he is about to utter; because nothing is more opposite to the feeling of the flesh, than that we must die in order to live, and that death is the entrance into life; for we may gather from other passages, that Paul was wont to make use of a preface of this sort, in matters of great importance, or hard to be believed.

If we die with him, we shall also live with him. The general meaning is, that we shall not be partakers of the life and glory of Christ, unless we have previously died and been humbled with him; as he says, that all the elect were

“predestinated that they might be conformed to his image.”
(^{<450829>}Romans 8:29.)

This is said both for exhorting and comforting believers. Who is not excited by this exhortation, that we ought not to be distressed on account of our afflictions, which shall have so happy a result? The same consideration abates and sweetens all that is bitter in the cross; because neither pains, nor tortures, nor reproaches, nor death ought to be received by us with horror, since in these we share with Christ; more especially seeing that all these things are the forerunners of a triumph.

By his example, therefore, Paul encourages all believers to receive joyfully, for the name of Christ, those afflictions in which they already have a taste of future glory. If this shocks our belief, and if the cross itself so overpowers and dazzles our eyes, that we do not perceive Christ in them,

let us remember to present this shield, “It is a faithful saying.” And, indeed, where Christ is present, we must acknowledge that life and happiness are there. We ought, therefore, to believe firmly, and to impress deeply on our hearts, this fellowship, that we do not die apart, but along with Christ, in order that we may afterwards have life in common with him; that we suffer with him, in order that we may be partakers of his glory. By *death* he means all that outward mortification of which he speaks in ^{<470410>}2 Corinthians 4:10. ^{f34}

12. *If we deny him, he will also deny us.* A threatening is likewise added, for the purpose of shaking off sloth; for he threatens that they who, through the dread of persecution, leave off the confession of his name, have no part or lot with Christ. How unreasonable is it, that we should esteem more highly the transitory life of this world than the holy and sacred name of the Son of God ! And why should he reckon among his people those who treacherously reject him? Here the excuse of weakness is of no value; ^{f35} for, if men did not willingly deceive themselves with vain flatteries, they would constantly resist, being endued with the spirit of strength and courage. Their base denial of Christ proceeds not only from weakness, but from unbelief; because it is in consequence of being blinded by the allurements of the world, that they do not at all perceive the life which is in the kingdom of God. But this doctrine has more need of being meditated on than of being explained; for the words of Christ are perfectly clear,

“Whoever shall deny me, him will I also deny.”

It remains that every one consider with himself, that this is no childish terror, but the judge seriously pronounces what will be found, at the appointed time, to be true.

13. *If we are unbelieving, he remaineth faithful.* The meaning is, that our base desertion takes nothing from the Son of God or from his glory; because, having everything in himself, he stands in no need of our confession. As if he had said, “Let them desert Christ who will, yet they take nothing from him; for when they perish, he remaineth unchanged.”

He cannot deny himself. This is a still stronger expression. “Christ is not like us, to swerve from his truth.” Hence it is evident, that all who deny Christ are disowned by him. And thus he drives away from wicked

apostates the flatteries with which they soothe themselves; because, being in the habit of changing their hue, according to circumstances, they would willingly imagine that Christ, in like manner, assumes various forms, and is liable to change; which Paul affirms to be impossible. Yet, at the same time, we must firmly believe what I stated briefly on a former passage, that our faith is founded on the eternal and unchangeable truth of Christ, in order that it may not waver through the unsteadfastness or apostasy of men.

<550214>2 TIMOTHY 2:14-18	
14. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.	14. Haec admone, contestans coram Domino, ne verbis disceptent, ad nullam utilitatem, ad subversionem audientium
15. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.	15. Stude to ipsum probatum exhibere Deo, operarioum non erubescensem, recte secanem sermonem veritatis.
16. But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness.	16. Caeterum profanas clamorum inanitates omitte; ad maiorem enim proficiunt impietatem.
17. And their word will eat as doth a canker; of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus;	17. Et sermo eorum, ut gangraena, passionem habebit, quorum de numero est Hymeneus et Philetus
18. Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.	18. Qui circa veritatem aberrarunt, dicentes resurrectionem jam esse factam, et subvertunt quorundam fidem.

14. *Remind them of these things.* The expression (ταῦτα) these things, is highly emphatic. It means that the summary of the gospel which he gave, and the exhortations which he added to it, are of so great importance, that a good minister ought never to be weary of exhibiting them; for they are things that deserve to be continually handled, and that cannot be too frequently repeated. “They are things (he says) which I wish you not only

to teach once, but to take great pains to impress on the hearts of men by frequent repetition.” A good teacher ought to look at nothing else than edification, and to give his whole attention to that alone.^{f36} On the contrary, he enjoins him not only to abstain from useless questions, but likewise to forbid others to follow them.^{f37}

Solemnly charging them before the Lord, not to dispute about words.

Λογομαχεῖν means to engage earnestly in contentious disputes, which are commonly produced by a foolish desire of being ingenious. *Solemn charging before the Lord* is intended to strike terror;^{f38} and from this severity we learn how dangerous to the Church is that knowledge which leads to debates, that is, which disregards piety, and tends to ostentation. of this nature is the whole of that speculative theology, as it is called, that is found among the Papists.

For no use, On two grounds, **λογομαχία**, or “disputing about words,” is condemned by him. It is of no advantage, and it is exceedingly hurtful, by disturbing weak minds. Although in the version I have followed Erasmus, because it did not disagree with Paul’s meaning yet I wish to inform my readers that Paul’s words may be explained in this manner, “That which is useful for nothing.” The Greek words are, **εἰς οὐδέν χρησιμον**, and I read **χρήσιμον** in the accusative case, and not in the nominative. The style will thus flow more agreeably; as if he had said, “Of what use is it, when no good comes from it, but much evil? for the faith of many is subverted.”

Let us remark, first, that, when a manner of teaching does no good, for that single reason it is justly disapproved; for God does not wish to indulge our curiosity, but to instruct us in a useful manner. Away with all speculations, therefore, which produce no edification!

But the second is much worse, when questions are raised, which are not only unprofitable, but tend *to the subversion of the hearers*. I wish that this were attended to by those who are always armed for fighting with the tongue, and who, in every question are looking for grounds of quarreling, and who go so far as to lay snares around every word or syllable. But they are carried in a wrong direction by ambition, and sometimes by an almost fatal disease; which I have experienced in some. What the Apostle says about *subverting* is shown, every day, by actual observation, to be perfectly true; for it is natural, amidst disputes, to lose sight of the truth;

and Satan avails himself of quarrels as a presence for disturbing weak persons, and overthrowing their faith.

15. *Study to shew thyself to be approved by God.* Since all disputes about doctrine arise from this source, that men are desirous to make a boast of ingenuity before the world, Paul here applies the best and most excellent remedy, when he commands Timothy to keep his eyes fixed on God; as if he had said; “Some aim at the applause of a crowded assembly, but do thou study to approve thyself and thy ministry to God.” And indeed there is nothing that tends more to check a foolish eagerness for display, than to reflect that we have to deal with God.

A workman that doth not blush. Erasmus translates ἀνεπαίσχυντον “that ought not to blush.” I do not find fault with that rendering, but prefer to explain it actively, “that doth not blush;”, both because that is the more ordinary meaning of the word as used by Greek writers, and because I consider it to agree better with the present passage. There is an implied contrast. Those who disturb the Church by contentions break out into that fierceness, because they are ashamed of being overcome, and because they reckon it disgraceful that there should be anything that they do not know. Paul, on the contrary, bids them appeal to the judgment of God.

And first, he bids them be not lazy disputants, but *workmen*. By this term he indirectly reproves the foolishness of those who so greatly torment themselves by doing nothing. Let us therefore be “workmen” in building the Church, and let us be employed in the work of God in such a manner that some fruit shall be seen then we shall have no cause to “blush;” for, although in debating we be not equal to talkative boasters, yet it will be enough that we excel them in the desire of edification, in industry, in courage, and in the efficacy of doctrine. In short, he bids Timothy labor diligently, that he may not be ashamed before God; whereas ambitious men dread only this kind of shame, to lose nothing of their reputation for acuteness or profound knowledge.

Dividing aright the word of truth. This is a beautiful metaphor, and one that skillfully expresses the chief design of teaching. “Since we ought to be satisfied with the word of God alone, what purpose is served by having sermons every day, or even the office of pastors? Has not every person an opportunity of reading the Bible?” ^{f39} But Paul assigns to teachers the duty

of dividing or cutting, ^{f40} as if a father, in giving food to his children, were dividing the bread, by cutting it into small pieces.

He advises Timothy to “cut aright,” lest, when he is employed in cutting the surface, as unskillful people are wont to do, he leave the pith and marrow untouched. Yet by this term I understand, generally, an allotment of the word which is judicious, and which is well suited to the profit of the hearers. Some mutilate it, others tear it, others torture it, others break it in pieces, others, keeping by the outside, (as we have said,) never come to the soul of doctrine. ^{f41} To all these faults he contrasts time “dividing aright,” that is, the manner of explaining which is adapted to edification; for that is the rule by which we must try all interpretation of Scripture.

16. *But avoid profane and unmeaning noises.* My opinion as to the import of these words has been stated in my commentary on the last chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy; and my readers will find it there. ^{f42}

For they will grow to greater ungodliness. That he may more effectually deter Timothy from that profane and noisy talkativeness, he states that it is a sort of labyrinth, or rather a deep whirlpool, from which they cannot go out, but into which men plunge themselves more and more.

17. *And their word will eat as a gangrene.* I have been told by Benedict Textor, a physician, that this passage is badly translated by Erasmus, who, out of two diseases quite different from each other, has made but one disease; for, instead of “gangrene,” he has used the word “cancer.” Now Galen, in many passages throughout his writings, and especially where he lays down definitions in his small work “On unnatural swellings,” distinguishes the one from the other. Paul Aegineta, too, on the authority of Galen, thus in his sixth book defines a “cancer;” that it is “an unequal swelling, with inflated extremities, loathsome to the sight, of a leaden color, and unaccompanied by pain.” Next, he enumerates two kinds, as other physicians do; for he says that some “cancers” are concealed and have no ulcer; while others, in which there is a preponderance of the black bile from which they originate, are ulcerous.

Of the “gangrene,” on the other hand, Galen, both in the small work already quoted, and in his second book to Glauco, Aetius in his fourteenth book, and the same Ægineta in his fourth book, speak to the following effect; that it proceeds from great phlegmons or inflammations, if they fall

violently on any member, so that the part which is destitute of heat and vital energy tends to destruction. If that part be quite dead, the Greek writers call the disease **σφάκελος** the Latins *sideratio*, and the common people call it St. Anthony's fire.

I find, indeed, that Cornelius Celsius draws the distinction in this manner, that "cancer" is the genus, and "gangrene" the species; but his mistake is plainly refuted from numerous passages in the works of physicians of high authority. It is possible, also, that he was led astray by the similarity between the Latin words "cancer" and "gangræna." But in the Greek words there can be no mistake of that kind; for **κάρκινος** is the name which corresponds to the Latin word "cancer," and denotes both the animal which we call a crab, and the disease; while grammarians think that **γάγγραινα** is derived **ἀπο τοῦ γράνειν** which means "to eat." We must therefore abide by the word "gangrene," which Paul uses, and which best agrees with what he says as to "eating" or "consuming."

We have now explained the etymology; but all physicians pronounce the nature of the disease to be such, that, if it be not very speedily counteracted, it spreads to the adjoining parts, and penetrates even to the bones, and does not cease to consume, till it has killed the man. Since, therefore, "gangrene" is immediately followed by (**νέκρωσις**) mortification, which rapidly infects the rest of the members till it end in the universal destruction of the body; to this mortal contagion Paul elegantly compares false doctrines; for, if you once give entrance to them, they spread till they have completed the destruction of the Church. The contagion being so destructive, we must meet it early, and not wait till it has gathered strength by progress; for there will then be no time for rendering assistance. The dreadful extinction of the gospel among the Papists arose from this cause, that, through the ignorance or slothfulness of the pastors, corruptions prevailed long and without control, in consequence of which time purity of doctrine was gradually destroyed.

Of the number of whom are Hymenæus and Philetus. He points out with the finger the plagues themselves, that all may be on their guard against them; for, if those persons who aim at the ruin of the whole Church are permitted by us to remain concealed, then to some extent we give them power to do injury. it is true that we ought to conceal the faults of brethren, but only those faults the contagion of which is not widely

spread. But where there is danger to many, our dissimulation is cruel, if we do not expose in proper time the hidden evil. And why? Is it proper, for the sake of sparing one individual, that a hundred or a thousand persons shall perish through my silence? Besides, Paul did not intend to convey this information to Timothy alone, but he intended to proclaim to all ages and to all nations the wickedness of the two men, in order to shut the door against their base and ruinous doctrine.

18. *Who, concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is already past.* After having said that they had departed from “the truth,” he specifies their error, which consisted in this, that they gave out that “the resurrection was already past.” In doing this, they undoubtedly contrived a sort of allegorical resurrection, which has also been attempted in this age by some filthy dogs. By this trick Satan overthrows that fundamental article of our faith concerning the resurrection of the flesh. Being an old and worthless dream, and being so severely condemned by Paul, it ought to give us the less uneasiness. But when we learn that, from the very beginning of the gospel, *the faith of some was subverted*, such an example ought to excite us to diligence, that we may seize an early opportunity of driving away from ourselves and others so dangerous a plague; for, in consequence of the strong inclination of men to vanity, there is no absurdity so monstrous that there shall not be some men who shall lend their ear to it.

<550219> 2 TIMOTHY 2:19-21

<p>19. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.</p>	<p>19. Firmum tamen fundamentum Dei stat, habens sigillum hoc, Novit Dominus, qui sint sui; et, Discedat ab injustitia, quicunque invocat nomen Christi.</p>
<p>20. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor.</p>	<p>20. In magna quidem domo non solum sunt vasa aurea et argentea, sed etiam lignea et fictilia, et alia quidem in honorem, alia in contumeliam.</p>
<p>21. If a men therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.</p>	<p>21. Si quis ergo expurgaverit se ipsum ab his, erit vas in honorem sanctificatum, et utile Domino ad omne opus bonum comparatum.</p>

19. *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth firm.* We know too well, by experience, how much scandal is produced by the apostasy of those who at one time professed the same faith with ourselves. This is especially the case with those who were extensively known, and who had a more brilliant reputation than others; for, if any of the common people apostatize, we are not so deeply affected by it. But they who in the ordinary opinion of men held a distinguished rank, having been formerly regarded as pillars, cannot fall in this manner, without involving others in the same ruin with themselves; at least, if their faith has no other support. This is the subject which Paul has now in hand; for he declares that there is no reason why believers should lose heart, although they see those persons fall, whom they were wont to reckon the strongest.

He makes use of this consolation, that the levity or treachery of men cannot hinder God from preserving his Church to the last. And first he reminds us of the election of God, which he metaphorically calls *a foundation*, expressing by this word the firm and enduring constancy of it. Yet all this tends to prove the certainty of our salvation, if we are of the elect of God. As if he had said, "The elect do not depend on changing

events, but rest on a solid and immovable foundation; because their salvation is in the hand of God.” For as

“every plant which the heavenly Father hath not planted
must be rooted up,” (<401513> Matthew 15:13,)

so a root, which has been fixed by his hand, is not liable to be injured by any winds or storms.

First of all, therefore, let us hold this principle, that, amidst so great weakness of our flesh,, the elect are nevertheless beyond the reach of danger, because they do not stand by their own strength, but are founded on God. And if foundations laid by the hand of men have so much firmness, how much more solid will be that which has been laid by God himself? I am aware that some refer this to doctrine, “Let no man judge of the truth of it from the unsteadfastness of men;” but it may easily be inferred from the context, that Paul speaks of the Church of God, or of the elect.

Having this seal. The word *signaculum* (which denotes either “a seal” or “the print of a seal”) having led into a mistake some people who thought that it was intended to denote a mark or impress, I have translated it *sigillum* (a seal,) which is less ambiguous. And, indeed, Paul means, that under the secret guardianship of God, as a signet, is contained the salvation of the elect, as Scripture testifies that they are

“written in the book of life.” (<196928> Psalm 69:28;
<500403> Philippians 4:3.)

The Lord knoweth who are his. This clause, together with the word *seal*, reminds us, that we must not judge, by our own opinion, whether the number of the elect is great or small; for what God hath sealed he wishes to be, in some respect, shut up from us. Besides, if it is the prerogative of God to *know who are his*, we need not wonder if a great number of them are often unknown to us, or even if we fall into mistakes in making the selection.

Yet we ought always to observe why and for what purpose he makes mention of a *seal*; that is, when we see such occurrences, let us instantly call to remembrance what we are taught by the Apostle John, that

“they who went out from us were not of us.” (<620219> 1 John 2:19.)

Hence arises a twofold advantage. First, our faith will not be shaken, as if it depended on men; nor shall we be even dismayed, as often happens, when unexpected events take place. Secondly, being convinced that the Church shall nevertheless be safe, we shall more patiently endure that the reprobate go away into their own lot, to which they were appointed; because there will remain the full number, with which God is satisfied. Therefore, whenever any sudden change happens among men, contrary to our opinion and expectation, let us immediately call to remembrance, “The Lord knoweth who are his.”

Let every one that calleth on the name of Christ depart from iniquity. As he formerly met the scandal by saying, “Let not the revolt of any man produce excessive alarm in believers;” so now, by holding out this example of hypocrites, he shews that we must not sport with God by a feigned profession of Christianity. As if he had said, “Since God thus punishes hypocrites by exposing their wickedness, let us learn to fear him with a sincere conscience, lest anything of that kind should happen to us. Whoever, therefore, calleth upon God, that is, professeth to be, and wisheth to be reckoned, one of the people of God, let him keep at a distance from all iniquity.”^{f43} For to “call on the name of Christ” means here to glory in Christ’s honorable title, and to boast of belonging to his flock; in the same manner as to have

“the name of a man called on a woman” (<230401> Isaiah 4:1)

the woman is accounted to be his lawful wife; and to have “the name of Jacob called on” all his posterity (<014816> Genesis 48:16) means that the name of the family shall be kept up in uninterrupted succession, because the race is descended from Jacob.

20. In a great house. He now goes farther, and demonstrates by a comparison, that when we see some who, for a time, made a show of distinguished piety and zeal, fall back shamefully, so far from being troubled on account of it, we ought rather to acknowledge that this arrangement is seemly and adapted to the providence of God. Who will find fault with a large house, in which there is abundance of every kind of furniture, and which accordingly contains not only those articles which are fitted for purposes of display, but likewise those which are of a meaner sort? This diversity is even ornamental, if, while the side-board and the table glitter with gold and silver, the kitchen is furnished with vessels of

wood and of earthenware. Why then should we wonder if God, the head of the family, so rich and so abundantly supplied with everything, has in this world, as in a large house, various kinds of men, as so many parts of furniture?

Commentators are not agreed, however, whether the “great house” means the Church alone, or the whole world. And, indeed, the context rather leads us to understand it as denoting the Church; for Paul is not now reasoning about strangers, but about God’s own family. Yet what he says is true generally, and in another passage the same Apostle extends it to the whole world; that is, at ^{<450921>}Romans 9:21, where he includes all the reprobate under the same word that is here used. We need not greatly dispute, therefore, if any person shall apply it simply to the world. Yet there can be no doubt that Paul’s object is to shew that we ought not to think it strange, that bad men are mixed with the good, which happens chiefly in the Church.

21. *If any man shall cleanse himself from these.* If the reprobate are “vessels for dishonor,” they have that dishonor confined to themselves, but they do not disfigure the house, or bring any disgrace on the head of the family, who, while he has a variety of articles of furniture, appropriates each vessel to its proper use. But let us learn, by their example, to apply them to better and worthier uses; for in the reprobate, as in mirrors, we perceive how detestable is the condition of man, if he do not sincerely promote the glory of God. Such examples, therefore, afford to us good ground for exhortation to devote ourselves to a holy and blameless life.

There are many who misapply this passage, for the sake of proving that what Paul elsewhere (^{<450916>}Romans 9:16) declares to belong “to God that sheweth mercy,” is actually within the power of “him that willeth and him that runneth.” This is exceedingly frivolous; for Paul does not here argue about the election of men, in order to shew what is the cause of it, as he does in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans (Romans 9); but only means that we are unlike wicked men, whom we perceive to have been born to their perdition. It is consequently foolish to draw an inference from these words, about the question whether it is in a man’s power to place himself in the number of the children of God, and to be the author of his own adoption. That is not the present question. Let this short warning

suffice against those who bid a man cause himself to be predestinated; as if Paul enjoined men to do what they must have done before they were born, and even before the foundations of the world were laid.

Others, who infer from these words that free-will is sufficient for preparing a man, that he may be fit and qualified for obeying God, do not at first sight appear to be so absurd as the former, yet there is no solidity in what they advance. The Apostle enjoins that men who desire to consecrate themselves to the Lord cleanse themselves from the pollution of wicked men; and throughout the Scriptures God gives the same injunction; for we find nothing here but what we have seen in many passages of Paul's writings, and especially in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians,

“Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.” ^{f44}

Beyond all controversy, we are called to holiness. But the question about the calling and duty of Christians is totally different from the question about their power or ability. We do not deny that it is demanded from believers that they purify themselves; but elsewhere the Lord declares that this is their duty, while he promises by Ezekiel that he will send

“clean waters, that we may be cleansed.”, (<263625> Ezekiel 36:25.)

Wherefore we ought to supplicate the Lord to cleanse us, instead of vainly trying our strength in this matter without his assistance.

A vessel sanctified for honor means, set apart for honorable and magnificent purposes. In like manner, what is *useful* to the head of the family is put for that which is applied to agreeable purposes. He afterwards explains the metaphor, when he adds, that we must *be prepared for every good work*. Away within the wild language of fanatics, “I will contribute to the glory of God, as Pharaoh did; for is it not all one, provided that God be glorified?” For here God explicitly states in what manner he wishes us to serve him, that is, by a religious and holy life.

<550222> 2 TIMOTHY 2:22-26

22. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that all on the Lord out of a pure heart.	22. Juvenilis cupiditates fuge; sequere autem justitiam, fidem, dilectionem, pacem cum omnibus invocantibus Dominum ex puro corde.
23. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.	23. Stultas vero et ineruditas quaestiones vita, sciens quod generant pungas.
24. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient;	24. Atqui servum Domini non oportet pugnare; sed placidum esse erga omnes, propensum ad docendum, tolerantem malorum,
25. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;	25. Cum mansuetudine erudiantem (vel, castigantem) eos qui obsistunt, si quando det illis Deus paenitentiam in agnitionem veritatis,
26. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.	26. Et excitationem (vel, reditum ad sanam mentem) a laque diaboli, a quo capti tenentur ad ipsius voluntatem.

22. *Flee youthful desires.* This is an inference from what goes before; for, after mentioning useless questions, and having been led by this circumstance to censure Hymenaeus and Philetus, whose ambition and vain curiosity had led them away from the right faith, he again exhorts Timothy to keep at a distance from so dangerous a plague kind for this purpose he advises him to avoid “youthful desires.”

By this term he does not mean either a propensity to uncleanness, or any of those licentious courses or sinful lusts in which young men frequently indulge, but any impetuous passions to which the excessive warmth of that age is prone. If some debate has arisen, young men more quickly grow warm, are more easily irritated, more frequently blunder through want of experience, and rush forward with greater confidence and rashness, than

men of riper age. With good reason, therefore, does Paul advise Timothy, being a young man, to be strictly on his guard against the vices of youth, which otherwise might easily drive him to useless disputes.

But follow righteousness. He recommends the opposite feelings, that they may restrain his mind from breaking out into any youthful excesses; as if he had said, “These are the things to which thou oughtest to give thy whole attention, and thy whole exertions.” And first he mentions *righteousness*, that is, the right way of living; and afterwards he adds *faith* and *love*, in which it principally consists. *Peace* is closely connected with the present subject; for they who delight in the questions which he forbids must be contentious and fond of debating.

With all that call on the Lord. Here, by a figure of speech, in which a part is taken for the whole, “calling on God” is taken generally for worship, if it be not thought preferable to refer it to profession. But this is the chief part of the worship of God, and for that reason “calling on God” often signifies the whole of religion or the worship of God. But when he bids him seek “peace with all that call upon the Lord,” it is doubtful whether, on the one hand, he holds out all believers as an example, as if he had said, that he ought to pursue this in common with all the true worshippers of God, or, on the other hand, he enjoins Timothy to cultivate peace with them. The latter meaning appears to be more suitable.

23. *But avoid foolish and uninformative questions.* He calls them *foolish*, because they are *uninformative*; that is, they contribute nothing to godliness, whatever show of acuteness they may hold out. When we are wise in a useful manner, then alone are we truly wise. This ought to be carefully observed; for we see what foolish admiration the world entertains for silly trifles, and how eagerly it runs after them. That an ambition to please may not urge us to seek the favor of men by such display, let us always remember this remarkable testimony of Paul, that questions, which are held in high estimation, are nevertheless foolish, because they are unprofitable.

Knowing that they beget quarrels. Next, he expresses the evil which they commonly produce. And here he says nothing else shall what we experience every day, that they give occasion for jangling and debates. And yet the greater part of men, after having received so many instructions, do not at all profit by them.

24. *But the servant of the Lord must not fight.* Paul's argument is to this effect: "The servant of God must stand aloof from contentions; but foolish questions are contentions; therefore whoever desires to be a 'servant of God,' and to be accounted such, ought to shun them." And if superfluous questions ought to be avoided on this single ground, that it is unseemly for a servant of God to fight, how impudently do they act, who have the open effrontery of claiming applause for raising incessant controversies? Let the theology of the Papists now come forth; what else will be found in it than the art of disputing and fighting? The more progress any man has made in it, the more unfit will he be for serving, Christ.

But gentle towards all, ^{f45} ***qualified for teaching.*** When he bids the servant of Christ be "gentle," he demands a virtue which is opposite to the disease of contentions. *To* the same purpose is what immediately follows, that he be **διδασκτικός**, "qualified for teaching." There will be no room for instruction, if he have not moderation and some equability of temper. What limit will be observed by a teacher, when he is warmed for fighting? The better a man is qualified for teaching, the more earnestly does he keep aloof from quarrels and disputes.

Patient to the bad. ^{f46} The importunity of some men may sometimes produce either irritation or weariness; and for that reason he adds, "bearing with them," at the same time pointing out the reason why it is necessary; namely, because a godly teacher ought even to try whether it be possible for him to bring back to the right path obstinate and rebellious persons, which cannot be done without the exercise of gentleness.

25. *If sometime God grant to them repentance.* This expression, "If sometime," or "If perhaps," points out the difficulty of the case, as being nearly desperate or beyond hope. Paul therefore means that even towards the most unworthy we must exercise *meekness*; and although at first there be no appearance of having gained advantage, still we must make the attempt. For the same reason he mentions that "God will grant it." Since the conversion of a man is in the hand of God, who knows whether they who today appear to be unteachable shall be suddenly changed by the power of God, into other men? Thus, whoever shall consider that repentance is the gift and work of God, will cherish more earnest hope, and, encouraged by this confidence, will bestow more toil and exertion for the instruction of rebels. We should view it thus, that our duty is, to be

employed in sowing and watering, and, while we do this, we must look for the increase from God. (<460306> 1 Corinthians 3:6.) Our labors and exertions are thus of no advantage in themselves; and yet, through the grace of God, they are not fruitless.

To the knowledge of the truth. We may learn from this what is the actual repentance of those who for a time were disobedient to God; for Paul declares that it begins with “the knowledge of the truth.” By this he means that the understanding of man is blinded, so long as it stands out fiercely against God and his doctrine.

26. *And deliverance from the snare of the devil.* Illumination is followed by deliverance from the bondage of the devil; for unbelievers are so intoxicated by Satan, that, being asleep, they do not perceive their distresses. On the other hand, when the Lord shines upon us by the light of his truth, he wakens us out of that deadly sleep, breaks asunder the snares by which we were bound, and, having removed all obstacles, trains us to obedience to him.

By whom they are held captive. A truly shocking condition, when the devil has so great power over us, that he drags us, as captive slaves, here and there at his pleasure. Yet such is the condition of all those whom the pride of their heart draws away from subjection to God. And this tyrannical dominion of Satan we see plainly, every day, in the reprobate; for they would not rush with such fury and with brutal violence into every kind of base and disgraceful crimes, if they were not drawn by the unseen power of Satan. That is what we saw at <490202> Ephesians 2:2, ^{f47} that, Satan exerts his energy in unbelievers.

Such examples admonish us to keep ourselves carefully under the yoke of Christ, and to yield ourselves to be governed by his Holy Spirit. And yet a captivity of this nature does not excuse wicked men, so that they do not sin, because it is by the instigation of Satan that they sin; for, although their being carried along so resistlessly to that which is evil proceeds from the dominion of Satan, yet they do nothing by constraint, but are inclined with their whole heart to that to which Satan drives them. The result is, that their captivity is voluntary.

CHAPTER 3

<550301> 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-7

1. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come:	1. Illhud autem scito, quod in extremis diebus instabunt tempora periculosa (vel. gravia)
2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,	2. Erunt enim homines sui amantes, avari, fastuosi, superbi, maledici, parentibus immorigeri, ingrati, impii,
3. Without natural affection, truce — breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,	3. Carentes affectu, nescii faederis, calumniatores, intermperantes, inmites, negligentes bonorum,
4. Traitors, heady, high — minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,	4. Proditores protervi tumidi voluptatium amatores magis quam Dei
5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.	5. Habentes speciem quidem pietatis virtutem autem eius abnegantes et hos devita
6. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts;	6. Ex iis enim sunt qui subintrant in familias, et captivas ducunt mulierculas oneratas peccatis, quae ducuntur concupiscentiis variis,
7. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.	7. Semper discentes, quum tamen numquam ad cognitionem veritatis pervenire valeant.

1. *But know this.* By this prediction he intended still more to sharpen his diligence; for, when matters go on to our wish, we become more careless; but necessity urges us keenly. Paul, therefore informs him, that the Church will be subject to terrible diseases, which will require in the pastors uncommon fidelity, diligence, watchfulness, prudence, and unwearied constancy; as if he enjoined Timothy to prepare for arduous and deeply

anxious contests which awaited him. And hence we learn, that, so far from giving way, or being terrified, on account of any difficulties whatsoever, we ought, on the contrary. to arouse our hearts for resistance.

In the last days. Under “the last days,” he includes the universal condition of the Christian Church. Nor does he compare his own age with ours, but, on the contrary, informs Timothy what will be the future condition of the kingdom of Christ; for many imagined some sort of condition that would be absolutely peaceful, and free from any annoyance.^{f48} In short, he means that there will not be, even under the gospel, such a state of perfection, that all vices shall be banished, and virtues of every kind shall flourish; and that therefore the pastors of the Christian Church will have quite as much to do with wicked and ungodly men as the prophets and godly priests had in ancient times. Hence it follows, that there is no time for idleness or for repose.

2. For men will be. It is proper to remark, first, in what he makes the hardship of those “dangerous” or “troublesome” times to consist; not in war, nor in famine, nor in diseases, nor in any calamities or inconveniences to which the body is incident, but in the wicked and depraved actions of men. And, indeed, nothing is so distressingly painful to godly men, and to those who truly fear God, as to behold such corruptions of morals; for, as there is nothing which they value more highly than the glory of God, so they cannot but suffer grievous anguish when it is attacked or despised.

Secondly, it ought to be remarked, who are the persons of whom he speaks. They whom he briefly describes are not external enemies, who openly assail the name of Christ, but domestics, who wish to be reckoned among the members of the Church; for God wishes to try his Church to such an extent as to carry within her bosom such plagues, though she abhors to entertain them. So then, if in the present day many whom we justly abhor are mingled within us, let us learn to groan patiently under that burden, when we are informed that this is the lot of the Christian Church.

Next, it is wonderful that those persons, whom Paul pronounces to be guilty of so many and so aggravated acts of wickedness, can keep up the appearance of piety, as he also declares. But daily experience shows that we ought not to regard this as so wonderful; for such is the amazing audacity and wickedness of hypocrites, that, even in excusing the grossest

crimes, they are excessively impudent, after having once learned falsely to shelter themselves under the name of God. In ancient times, how many crimes abounded in the life of the Pharisees? And yet, as if they had been pure from every stain, they enjoyed a reputation of eminent holiness.

Even in the present day, although the lewdness of the Popish clergy is such that it stinks in the nostrils of the whole world, still, in spite of their wickedness, they do not cease to arrogate proudly to themselves all the rights and titles of saints. Accordingly, when Paul says that hypocrites, though they are chargeable with the grossest vices, nevertheless deceive under a mask of piety, this ought not to appear strange, when we have examples before our eyes. And, indeed, the world deserves to be deceived by those wicked scoundrels, when it either despises or cannot endure true holiness. Besides, Paul enumerates those vices which are not visible at first sight, and which are even the ordinary attendants of pretended holiness. Is there a hypocrite who is not proud, who is not a lover of himself, who is not a despiser of others, who is not fierce and cruel, who is not treacherous? But all these are concealed from the eyes of men. ^{f49}

To spend time in explaining every word would be superfluous; for the words do not need exposition. Only let my readers observe that *φιλαυτία*, *self-love*, which is put first, may be regarded as the source from which flow all the vices that follow afterwards. He who loveth himself claims a superiority in everything, despises all others, is cruel, indulges in covetousness, treachery, anger, rebellion against parents, neglect of what is good, and such like. As it was the design of Paul to brand false prophets with such marks, that they might be seen and known by all; it is our duty to open our eyes, that we may see those who are pointed out with the finger.

5. *From those turn away.* This exhortation sufficiently shows that Paul does not speak of a distant posterity, nor foretell what would happen many ages afterwards; but that, by pointing out present evils, he applies to his own age what he had said about “the last times;” for how could Timothy “turn away” from those who were not to arise till many centuries afterwards? So then, from the very beginning of the gospel, the Church must have begun to be affected by such corruptions.

6. *Of those are they who creep into families.* You would say, that here Paul intentionally draws a lively picture of the order of monks. But without

saying a single word about monks, those marks by which Paul distinguishes false and pretended teachers are sufficiently clear; creeping into houses, snares for catching silly women, mean flattery, imposing upon people by various superstitions. These marks it is proper to observe carefully, if we wish to distinguish between useless drones and faithful ministers of Christ. These former are here marked by so black a coal, that it is of no use for them to shuffle. To “creep into families” means to enter stealthily, or to seek an entrance by cunning methods.

And lead captive silly women laden with sins. Now, he speaks of “women” rather than men, because the former are more liable to be led astray in this manner: He says that they “are led captive,” because false prophets of this sort, through various tricks, gain their ear, partly by prying curiously into all their affairs, and partly by flattery. And this is what he immediately adds, “laden with sins;” for, if they had not been bound by the chain of a bad conscience, they would not have allowed themselves to be led away, in every possible manner, at the will of others.

By various sinful desires. I consider “sinful desires” to denote generally those foolish and light desires by which women, who do not seek God sincerely, and yet wish to be reckoned religious and holy, are carried away. There is no end of the methods adopted by them, when, departing from a good conscience, they are constantly assuming new masks. Chrysostom is more disposed to refer it to disgraceful and immodest desires; but, when I examine the context, I prefer the former exposition; for it immediately follows —

7. Always learning, while yet they never can come to the knowledge of the truth. That fluctuation between various desires, of which he now speaks, is when, having nothing solid in themselves, they are tossed about in all directions. They “learn,” he says, as people do who are under the influence of curiosity, and with a restless mind, but in such a manner as never to arrive at any certainty or truth. It is ill — conducted study, and widely different from knowledge. And yet such persons think themselves prodigiously wise; but what they know is nothing, so long as they do not hold the truth, which is the foundation of all knowledge.

<550308> 2 TIMOTHY 3:8-12

8. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.	8. Quemadmodum autem Iannes et Iambres restiterunt Mosi, ita et hi resistunt veritati, homines corrupti mente, reprobi circa fidem.
9. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.	9. Sed non proficient amplius; amentia enim eorum manifesta erit omnibus, sicut et illorum fuit.
10. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long — suffering, charity, patience,	10. Tu autem assectatus es meam doctrinam institutionem, propositum, fidem, tolerantiam, dilectionem, patientiam,
11. Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.	11. Persequutiones, afflictiones, quae mihi acciderunt Antiochae, Iconii, Lystris, quas, inquam, persecutiones sustinuerim; sed ex omnibus me Dominus
12. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.	12. Et omnes, qui piè volunt in Christo Iesu, perseuutionem patientur.

8. *And as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses.* This comparison confirms what I have already said about the “last times;”, for he means that the same thing happens to us under the gospel, which the Church experienced almost from her very commencement, or at least since the law was published. In like manner the Psalmist also speaks largely about the unceasing battles of the Church.

“Often did they fight against me from my youth, now let Israel say. The wicked ploughed upon my back, they made long their furrows.” (<19C901> Psalm 129:1,3)

Paul reminds us, that we need not wonder if adversaries rise up against Christ to oppose his gospel, since Moses likewise had those who contended with him; for these examples drawn from a remote antiquity yield us strong consolation.

It is generally believed; that the two who are mentioned, “Jannes and Jambres,” were magicians put forward by Pharaoh. But from what source Paul learned their names is doubtful, except that it is probable, that many things relating to those histories were handed down, the memory of which God never permitted to perish. It is also possible that in Paul’s time there were commentaries on the prophets that gave more fully those narratives which Moses touches very briefly. However that may be, it is not at random that he calls them by their names. The reason why there were two of them may be conjectured to have been this, that, because the Lord had raised up for his people two leaders, Moses and Aaron, Pharaoh determined to place against them the like number of magicians.

9. *But they shall not proceed further.* He encourages Timothy for the contest, by the confident hope of victory; for, although false teachers give him annoyance, he promises that they shall be, within a short time, disgracefully ruined.^{f50} Yet the event does not agree with this promise; and the Apostle appears to make a totally different declaration, a little afterwards, when he says that they will grow worse and worse. Nor is there any force in the explanation given by Chrysostom, that they will grow worse every day, but will do no injury to any person; for he expressly adds, “deceived and deceiving;” and, indeed, the truth of this is proved by experience. It is more correct to say, that he looked at them in various aspects; for the affirmation, that they will not make progress, is not universal; but he only means, that the Lord will discover their madness to many whom they had, at first, deceived by their enchantments.

For their folly shall be manifest to all. When he says, *to all*, it is by a figure of speech, in which the whole is taken for a part. And, indeed, they who are most successful in deceiving do, at first, make great boasting, and obtain loud applause; and, in short, it appears as if nothing were beyond their power. But speedily their tricks vanish into air; for the Lord opens the eyes of many, so that they begin to see what was concealed from them for a time. Yet never is the “folly” of false prophets discovered to such an extent as to be known to all. Besides, no sooner is one error driven away than new errors continually spring up.

Both admonitions are therefore necessary. That godly teachers may not despair, as if it were in vain for them to make war against error, they must be instructed about the prosperous success which the Lord will give to his

doctrine. But that they may not think, on the other hand, that they are discharged from future service, after one or two battles, they must be reminded that there will always be new occasion for fighting. But on this second point we shall speak afterwards; at present, let it suffice us, that he holds out to Timothy the sure hope of a successful issue, that he may be time more encouraged to fight, And he confirms this by the example which he had quoted; for, as the truth of God prevailed against the tricks of the magicians, so he promises that the doctrine of the gospel shall be victorious against every kind of errors that may be invented.

10. *But thou hast followed.*^{f51} In order to urge Timothy, he employs this argument also, that he is not an ignorant and untaught soldier, because Paul carried him through a long course of training. Nor does he speak of doctrine only; for those things which he likewise enumerates add much weight, and he gives to us, in this sentence, a very lively picture of a good teacher, as one who does not, by words only, train and instruct his disciples, but, so to speak, opens his very breast to them, that they may know, that whatever he teaches, he teaches sincerely. This is what is implied in the word *purpose*. He likewise adds other proofs of sincere and unfeigned affection, such as *faith, mildness, love, patience*. Such were the early instructions which had been imparted to Timothy in the school of Paul. Yet he does not merely bring to remembrance what he had learned from him, but bears testimony to his former life, that in this manner he may urge him to perseverance; for he praises him as an imitator of his own virtues; as if he had said, “Thou hast been long accustomed to follow my instructions; I ask nothing more than that thou shouldst go on as thou hast begun.” It is his wish, however; that the example of his “faith, love, and patience” should be constantly before the eyes of Timothy; and for that reason he dwells chiefly on his persecutions, which were best known to him.

11. *But out of them all the Lord delivered me.* It is a consolation which mitigates the bitterness of afflictions, that they always have a happy and joyful end. If it be objected, that the success of which he boasts is not always visible, I acknowledge that this is true, so far as relates to the feeling of the flesh; for Paul had not yet been delivered. But when God sometimes delivers us, he testifies, in this manner, that he is present with us, and will always be present; for from the feeling, or actual knowledge, of present aid, our confidence ought to be extended to the future. The

meaning, therefore, is as if he had said, “Thou hast known by experience that God hath never forsaken me, so that thou hast no right to hesitate to follow my example.”

12. *And all who wish to live a godly life.*^{f52} Having mentioned his own persecutions, he likewise adds now, that nothing has happened to him which does not await all the godly.^{f53} And he says this, partly that believers may prepare themselves for submitting to this condition, and partly that good men may not view him with suspicion on account of the persecutions which he endures from wicked persons; as it frequently happens that the distresses to which men are subjected lead to unfavorable opinions concerning them; for he whom men regard with aversion is immediately declared by the common people to be hated by God.

By this general statement, therefore, Paul classes himself with the children of God, and, at the same time, exhorts all the children of God to prepare for enduring persecutions; for, if this condition is laid down for “all who wish to live a godly life in Christ,” they who wish to be exempt from persecutions must necessarily renounce Christ. In vain shall we endeavor to detach Christ from his cross; for it may be said to be natural that the world should hate Christ even in his members. Now hatred is attended by cruelty, and hence arise persecutions, In short, let us know that we are Christians on this condition, that we shall be liable to many tribulations and various contests.

But it is asked, Must all men be martyrs? for it is evident that there have been many godly persons who have never suffered banishment, or imprisonment, or flight, or any kind of persecution. I reply, it is not always in one way that Satan persecutes the servants of Christ. But yet it is absolutely unavoidable that all of them shall have the world for their enemy in some form or other, that their faith may be tried and their steadfastness proved; for Satan, who is the continual enemy of Christ, will never suffer any one to be at peace during his whole life; and there will always be wicked men that are thorns in our sides. Moreover, as soon as zeal for God is manifested by a believer, it kindles the rage of all ungodly men; and, although they have not a drawn sword, yet they vomit out their venom, either by murmuring, or by slander, or by raising a disturbance, or by other methods. Accordingly, although they are not exposed to the same assaults, and do not engage in the same battles, yet they have a warfare in

common, and shall never be wholly at peace and exempt from persecutions.

<550313> 2 TIMOTHY 3:13-17	
13. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.	13. Mali autem homines et impostores proficient in pejus, errantes, et in errorem.
14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;	14. Tu autem mane in iis, quae didicisti, et quae credita sunt tibi, sciens a quo didiceris;
15. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.	15. Et quòd a pueritia Sacras litteras novisti, quae to eruditum reddere ad salutem per fidem, quae est in Christo Iesu.
16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;	16. Omnis Scriptura divinitus inspirata est ac utilis ad doctrinam, ad redargutionem, ad correctionem, ad institutionem, qua est in justitia.
17. That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.	17. Ut integer sit Dei homo, ad omne opus bonum formatus.

13. *But wicked men and impostors.* This is the most bitter of all persecutions, when we see wicked men, with their sacrilegious hardihood, with their blasphemies and errors, gathering strength. Thus Paul says elsewhere, that Ishmael persecuted Isaac, not by the sword, but by mockery (<480429> Galatians 4:29.) Hence also we may conclude, that in the preceding verse, it was not merely one kind of persecution that was described, but that the Apostle spoke, in general terms, of those distresses which the children of God are compelled to endure, when they contend for the glory of their Father.

I stated, a little before, in what respect they *shall grow worse and worse*; for he foretells not only that they will make obstinate resistance, but that they will succeed in injuring and corrupting others. One worthless person

will always be more effectual in destroying, than ten faithful teachers in building, though they labor with all their might. Nor are there ever wanting the tares which Satan sows for injuring the pure corn; and even when we think that false prophets are driven away, others continually spring up in other directions.

Again, as to the power of doing injury, ^{f54} it is not because falsehood, in its own nature, is stronger than truth, or that the tricks of Satan exceed the energy of the Spirit of God; but because men, being naturally inclined to vanity and errors, embrace far more readily what agrees with their natural disposition, and also because, being blinded by a righteous vengeance of God, they are led, as captive slaves, at the will of Satan. ^{f55} And the chief reason, why the plague of wicked doctrines is so efficacious, is, that the ingratitude of men deserves that it should be so. It is highly necessary for godly teachers to be reminded of this, that they may be prepared for uninterrupted warfare, and may not be discouraged by delay, or yield to the haughtiness and insolence of adversaries.

14. *But as for thee, continue in those things which thou hast learned.*

Although wickedness prevail, and push its way forward, he advises Timothy nevertheless to stand firm. And undoubtedly this is the actual trial of faith, when we offer unwearied resistance to all the contrivances of Satan, and do not alter our course for every wind that blows, but remain steadfast on the truth of God, as on a sure anchor.

Knowing from whom thou hast learned them. This is said for the purpose of commending the certainty of the doctrine; for, if any one has been wrong instructed, he ought not to persevere in it. On the contrary, we ought to unlearn all that we have learned apart from Christ, if we wish to be his disciples; as, for example, it is the commencement of our pure instruction in the faith to reject and forget all the instruction of Popery. The Apostle therefore does not enjoin Timothy to defend indiscriminately the doctrine which has been delivered to him, but only that which he knows to be truth; by which he means, that he must make a selection. ^{f56} Besides, he does not claim this as a private individual, that what he has taught shall be reckoned to be a divine revelation; but he boldly asserts his own authority to Timothy, who, he was aware, knew that his fidelity and his calling had been proved. And if he was fully convinced that he had been

taught by an Apostle of Christ, he concluded that therefore it was not a doctrine of man, but of Christ.

This passage teaches us, that we ought to be as careful to guard against obstinacy in matters that are uncertain, (such as all the doctrines of men are,) as to hold within unshaken firmness the truth of God. Besides, we learn from it, that faith ought to be accompanied by prudence, that it may distinguish between the word of God and the word of men, so that we may not adopt at random everything that is brought forward. Nothing is more inconsistent with the nature of faith than light credulity, which allows us to embrace everything indiscriminately, whatever it may be, and from whomsoever it proceeds; because it is the chief foundation of faith, to know that it has God for its author.

And which have been intrusted to thee. ^{f57} When he adds, that the doctrine had been intrusted to Timothy, this gives (αὐξῆσιν) additional force to the exhortation; for to “commit a thing in trust” is something more than merely to deliver it. Now Timothy had not been taught as one of the common people, but in order that he might faithfully deliver into the hands of others what he had received.

15. *And that from (thy) childhood.* This was also no ordinary addition, that he had been accustomed, from his infancy, to the reading of the Scripture; for this long habit may make a man much more strongly fortified against every kind of deception. It was therefore a judicious caution observed in ancient times, that those who were intended for the ministry of the word should be instructed, from their infancy, in the solid doctrine of godliness, that, when they came to the performance of their office, they might not be untried apprentices. And it ought to be reckoned a remarkable instance of the kindness of God, if any person, from his earliest years, has thus acquired a knowledge of the Scriptures.

Which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. It is a very high commendation of the Holy Scriptures, that we must not seek anywhere else the wisdom which is sufficient for salvation; as the next verse also expresses more fully. But he states, at the same time, what we ought to seek in the Scripture; for the false prophets also make use of it as a pretext; and therefore, in order that it may be useful to us for salvation, it is necessary to understand the right use of it.

Through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. What if any one give his whole attention to curious questions? What if he adhere to the mere letter of the law, and do not seek Christ? What if he pervert the natural meaning by inventions that are foreign to it? For this reason he directs us to the faith of Christ as the design, and therefore as the sum, of the Scriptures; for on faith depends also what immediately follows.

16. *All Scripture*; or, *the whole of Scripture*; though it makes little difference as to the meaning. He follows out that commendation which he had glanced at briefly. First, he commends the Scripture on account of its authority; and secondly, on account of the utility which springs from it. In order to uphold the authority of the Scripture, he declares that *it is divinely inspired*; for, if it be so, it is beyond all controversy that men ought to receive it with reverence. This is a principle which distinguishes our religion from all others, that we know that God hath spoken to us, and are fully convinced that the prophets did not speak at their own suggestion, but that, being organs of the Holy Spirit, they only uttered what they had been commissioned from heaven to declare. Whoever then wishes to profit in the Scriptures, let him first of all, lay down this as a settled point, that the Law and the Prophets are not a doctrine delivered according to the will and pleasure of men, but dictated by the Holy Spirit.

If it be objected, “How can this be known?” I answer, both to disciples and to teachers, God is made known to be the author of it by the revelation of the same Spirit. Moses and the prophets did not utter at random what we have received from their hand, but, speaking at the suggestion of God, they boldly and fearlessly testified, what was actually true, that it was the mouth of the Lord that spake. The same Spirit, therefore, who made Moses and the prophets certain of their calling, now also testifies to our hearts, that he has employed them as his servants to instruct us.

Accordingly, we need not wonder if there are many who doubt as to the Author of the Scripture; for, although the majesty of God is displayed in it, yet none but those who have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit have eyes to perceive what ought, indeed, to have been visible to all, and yet is visible to the elect alone. This is the first clause, that we owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God; because it has proceeded from him alone, and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it.

And is profitable. Now follows the second part of the commendation, that the Scripture contains a perfect rule of a good and happy life. When he says this, he means that it is corrupted by sinful abuse, when this usefulness is not sought. And thus he indirectly censures those unprincipled men who fed the people with vain speculations, as with wind. For this reason we may in the present day, condemn all who, disregarding edification, agitate questions which, though they are ingenious, are also useless. Whenever ingenious trifles of that kind are brought forward, they must be warded off by this shield, that “Scripture is profitable.” Hence it follows, that it is unlawful to treat it in an unprofitable manner; for the Lord, when he gave us the Scriptures, did not intend either to gratify our curiosity, or to encourage ostentation, or to give occasion for chatting and talking, but to do us good; and, therefore, the right use of Scripture must always tend to what is profitable.^{f58}

For instruction. Here he enters into a detailed statement of the various and manifold advantages derived from the Scriptures. And, first of all, he mentions *instruction*, which ranks above all the rest; for it will be to no purpose that you exhort or reprove, if you have not previously instructed. But because “instruction,” taken by itself, is often of little avail, he adds *reproof* and *correction*.

It would be too long to explain what we are to learn from the Scriptures; and, in the preceding verse, he has given a brief summary of them under the word *faith*. The most valuable knowledge, therefore, is “faith in Christ.” Next follows instruction for regulating the life, to which are added the excitements of exhortations and reproofs. Thus he who knows how to use the Scriptures properly, is in want of nothing for salvation, or for a Holy life. *Reproof* and *correction* differ little from each other, except that the latter proceeds from the former; for the beginning of repentance is the knowledge of our sinfulness, and a conviction of the judgment of God. *Instruction in righteousness* means the rule of a good and holy life.

17. That the man of God may be perfect. *Perfect* means here a blameless person, one in whom there is nothing defective; for he asserts absolutely, that the Scripture is sufficient for perfection. Accordingly, he who is not satisfied with Scripture desires to be wiser than is either proper or desirable.

But here an objection arises. Seeing that Paul speaks of the Scriptures, which is the name given to the Old Testament, how does he say that it makes a man thoroughly perfect? for, if it be so, what was afterwards added by the apostles may be thought superfluous. I reply, so far as relates to the substance, nothing has been added; for the writings of the apostles contain nothing else than a simple and natural explanation of the Law and the Prophets, together with a manifestation of the things expressed in them. This eulogium, therefore, is not inappropriately bestowed on the Scriptures by Paul; and, seeing that its instruction is now rendered more full and clear by the addition of the Gospel, what can be said but that we ought assuredly to hope that the usefulness, of which Paul speaks, will be much more displayed, if we are willing to make trial and receive it?

CHAPTER 4

<550401> 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-4

1. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;	1. Obtestor igitur ego coram Deo et Iesu Christo, qui iudicaturus est vivos et mortuos et vivos et mortuos in apparitione sua et in regno suo;
2. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long — suffering and doctrine.	2. Praedica sermonem, insta tempestivè, intempestivè; argue, increpa, hortare cum omni lenitate et doctrina.
3. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;	3. Nam erit tempus, quum sanam doctrinam non sustinebunt; sed juxta concupiscentias suas coacervabunt sibi doctores, ut qui prurient auribus,
4. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.	4. Et a veritate quidem aures avertent, ad fabulas autem convertentur.

1. *I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ.* It is proper to observe carefully the word *therefore*, by means of which he appropriately connects Scripture with preaching. This also refutes certain fanatics, who haughtily boast that they no longer need the aid of teachers, because the reading of scripture is abundantly sufficient. But Paul, after having spoken of the usefulness of Scripture, infers not only that all ought to read it, but that teachers ought to administer it, which is the duty enjoined on them. Accordingly, as all our wisdom is contained in the Scriptures, and neither ought we to learn, nor teachers to draw their instructions, from any other source; so he who, neglecting the assistance of the living voice, shall satisfy himself with the silent Scripture, will find how grievous an evil it is to disregard that way of learning which has been enjoined by *God* and *Christ*. Let us remember, I say, that the reading of Scripture is recommended to us in Such a manner as not to hinder, in the

smallest degree, the ministry of pastors; and, therefore, let believers endeavor to profit both in reading and in hearing; for not in vain hath God ordained both of them.

Here, as in a very weighty matter, Paul adds a solemn charge, exhibiting to Timothy God as the avenger, and Christ as the judge, if he shall cease to discharge his office of teaching. And, indeed, in like manner as God showed by an inestimable pledge, when he spared not his only — begotten Son, how great is the care which he has for the Church, so he will not suffer to remain unpunished the negligence of pastors, through whom souls, which he hath redeemed at so costly a price, perish or are exposed as a prey.

Who shall judge the living and the dead. More especially the Apostle fixes attention on the judgment of Christ; because, as we are his representatives, so he will demand a more strict account of evil administration. By “the living and the dead” are meant those whom he shall find still alive at his coming, and likewise those who shall have died. There will therefore be none that escape his judgment.

The appearance of Christ and his kingdom mean the same thing; for although he now reigns in heaven and earth, yet hitherto his reign is not clearly manifested, but, on the contrary, is obscurely hidden under the cross, and is violently assailed by enemies. His kingdom will therefore be established at that time when, having vanquished his enemies, and either removed or reduced to nothing every opposing power, he shall display his majesty.

2. Be instant in season, out of season. By these words he recommends not only constancy, but likewise earnestness, so as to overcome all hindrances and difficulties; for, being, by nature, exceedingly effeminate or slothful, we easily yield to the slightest opposition, and sometimes we gladly seek apologies for our slothfulness. Let us now consider how many arts Satan employs to stop our course, and how slow to follow, and how soon wearied are those who are called. Consequently the gospel will not long maintain its place, if pastors do not urge it earnestly.

Moreover, this earnestness must relate both to the pastor and to the people; to the pastor, that he may not devote himself to the office of teaching merely at his own times and according to his own convenience, but that, shrinking neither from toils nor from annoyances, he may exercise

his faculties to the utmost. So far as regards the people, there is constancy and earnestness, when they arouse those who are asleep, when they lay their hands on those who are hurrying in a wrong direction, and when they correct the trivial occupations of the world. To explain more fully in what respects the pastor must “be instant,” the Apostle adds —

Reprove, rebuke, exhort. By these words he means, that we have need of many excitements to urge us to advance in the right course; for if we were as teachable as we ought to be, a minister of Christ would draw us along by the slightest expression of his will. But now, not even moderate exhortations, to say nothing of sound advices, are sufficient for shaking off our sluggishness, if there be not increased vehemence of reproofs and threatenings.

With all gentleness and doctrine. A very necessary exception; for reproofs either fall through their own violence, or vanish into smoke, if they do not rest on *doctrine*. Both exhortations and reproofs are merely aids to doctrine, and, therefore, have little weight without it. We see instances of this in those who have merely a large measure of zeal and bitterness, and are not furnished with solid doctrine. Such men toil very hard, utter loud cries, make a great noise, and all to no purpose, because they build without a foundation. I speak of men who, in other respects, are good, but with little learning, and excessive warmth; for they who employ all the energy that they possess in battling against sound doctrine, are far more dangerous, and do not deserve to be mentioned here at all.

In short, Paul means that reproofs are founded on doctrine, in order that they may not be justly despised as frivolous. Secondly, he means that keenness is moderated by gentleness; for nothing is more difficult than to set a limit to our zeal, when we have once become warm. Now when we are carried away by impatience, our exertions are altogether fruitless. Our harshness not only exposes us to ridicule, but also irritates the minds of the people. Besides, keen and violent men see generally unable to endure the obstinacy of those with whom they are brought into intercourse, and cannot submit to many annoyances and insults, which nevertheless must be digested, if we are desirous to be useful. Let severity be therefore mingled with this seasoning of gentleness, that it may be known to proceed from a peaceful heart.

3. *For there will be a time.*^{f59} From the very depravity of men he shews how careful pastors ought to be; for soon shall the gospel be extinguished, and perish from the remembrance of men, if godly teachers do not labor with all their might to defend it. But he means that we must avail ourselves of the opportunity, while there is any reverence for Christ; as if one should say that, when a storm is at hand, we must not labor remissly, but must hasten with all diligence, because there will not afterwards be an equally fit season.

When they will not endure sound doctrine. This means that they will not only dislike and despise, but will even hate, sound doctrine; and he calls it “sound (or healthful) doctrine,” with reference to the effect produced, because it actually instructs to godliness. In the next verse he pronounces the same doctrine to be truth, and contrasts it with *fables*, that is, useless imaginations, by which the simplicity of the gospel is corrupted.

First, let us learn from it, that the more extraordinary the eagerness of wicked men to despise the doctrine of Christ, the more zealous should godly ministers be to defend it, and the more strenuous should be their efforts to preserve it entire; and not only so, but also by their diligence to ward off the attacks of Satan. And if ever this ought to have been done, the great ingratitude of men has now rendered it more than necessary; for they who at first receive the gospel warmly, and make a show of some kind of uncommon zeal, afterwards contract dislike, which is by and by followed by loathing; others, from the very outset, either reject it furiously, or, contemptuously lending an ear, treat it with mockery; while others, not suffering the yoke to be laid on their neck, kick at it, and, through hatred of holy discipline, are altogether estranged from Christ and, what is worse, from being friends become open enemies. So far from this being a good reason why we should be discouraged and give way, we ought to fight against such monstrous ingratitude, and even to strive with greater earnestness than if all were gladly embracing Christ offered to them.

Secondly, having been told that men will thus despise and even reject the word of God, we ought not to stand amazed as if it were a new spectacle, when we see actually accomplished that which the Holy Spirit tells us will happen. And indeed, being by nature prone to vanity, it is no new or uncommon timing, if we lend an ear more willingly to fables than to truth.

Lastly, the doctrine of the gospel, being plain and mean in its aspect, is unsatisfactory partly to our pride, and partly to our curiosity. And how few are there who are endued with spiritual taste, so as to relish newness of life and all that relates to it! Yet Paul foretells some greater impiety of one particular age, against which he bids Timothy be early on his guard.

Shall heap up to themselves teachers. It is proper to observe the expression, *heap up*, by which he means that the madness of men will be so great, that they will not be satisfied with a few deceivers, but will desire to have a vast multitude; for, as there is an unsatiable longing for those things which are unprofitable and destructive, so the world seeks, on all sides and without end, all the methods that it can contrive and imagine for destroying itself; and the devil has always at hand a sufficiently large number of such teachers as the world desires to have. There has always been a plentiful harvest of wicked men, as there is in the present day; and therefore Satan never has any lack of ministers to deceive men, as he never has any lack of the means of deceiving.

Indeed, this monstrous depravity, which almost constantly prevails among men, deserves that God, and his healthful doctrine, should be either rejected or despised by them, and that they should more gladly embrace falsehood. Accordingly, that false teachers frequently abound, and that they sometimes multiply like a nest of hornets, should be ascribed by us to the righteous vengeance of God. We deserve to be covered and choked by that kind of filth, seeing that the truth of God finds no place in us, or, if it has found entrance, is immediately driven from its possession; and since we are so much addicted to fabulous notions, that we never think that we have too great a multitude of deceivers. Thus what all abomination of Monks is there in Popery! If once godly pastor were to be supported, instead of ten Monks and as many priests, we should presently hear nothing else than complaints about the great expense.^{f60}

The disposition of the world is therefore such that, by “heaping up” with insatiable desire innumerable deceivers, it desires to banish all that belongs to God. Nor is there any other cause of so many errors than that men, of their own accord, choose to be deceived rather than to be properly instructed. And that is the reason why Paul adds the expression, *itching ears*.^{f61} When he wishes to assign a cause for so great an evil, he makes use of an elegant metaphor, by which he means, that the world will have ears

so refined, and so excessively desirous of novelty, that it will collect for itself various instructors, and will be incessantly carried away by new inventions. The only remedy for this vice is, that believers be instructed to adhere closely to the pure doctrine of the gospel.

<550405>2 TIMOTHY 4:5-8	
5. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make. full proof of thy ministry,	5. Tu verò vigila in omnibus, perfer afflictiones, opus fac Evangelistae, ministerium tuum probatum redde.
6. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.	6. Ego enim jam immolor, et tempus meae resolutionis instat.
7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:	7. Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servavi.
8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.	8. Quod superest, reposita est mihi justitiæ corona, quam reddet mihi Dominus in illa die justus judex, nec solum mihi, sed etiam omnibus, qui diligunt adventum ejus.

5. *But watch thou in all things.* He proceeds with the former exhortation, to the effect that the more grievous the diseases are, the more earnestly Timothy may labor to cure them; and that the nearer dangers are at hand, the more diligently he may keep watch. And because the ministers of Christ, when they faithfully discharge their office, are immediately called to engage in combats, he at the same time reminds Timothy to be firm and immovable in enduring adversity. ^{f62}

Do the work of an Evangelist. That is, “Do that which belongs to an evangelist.” Whether he denotes generally by this term any ministers of the gospel, or whether this was a special office, is doubtful; but I am more inclined to the second opinion, because from <490411> Ephesians 4:11 it is clearly evident that this was an intermediate class between apostles and pastors, so that the evangelists ranked as assistants next to the apostles. It

is also more probable that Timothy, whom Paul had associated with himself as his closest companion in all things, surpassed ordinary pastors in rank and dignity of office, than that he was only one of their number. Besides, to mention an honorable title of office tends not only to encourage him, but to recommend his authority to others; and Paul had in view both of these objects.

Render thy ministry approved. If we read this clause as in the old translation, “Fulfill thy ministry,” the meaning will be: “Thou canst not fully discharge the office intrusted to thee but by doing those things which I have enjoined. Wherefore see that you fail not in the middle of the course.” But because πληροφορεῖν commonly means “to render certain” or “to prove,” I prefer the following meaning, which is also most agreeable to the context, — that Timothy, by watching, and by patiently enduring afflictions, and by constant teaching, will succeed in having the truth of his ministry established, because from such marks all will acknowledge him to be a good and faithful minister of Christ.

6. *For I am now offered as a sacrifice.* He assigns the reason for the solemn protestation which he employed. As if he had said, “So long as I lived, I stretched out my hand to thee; my constant exhortations were not withheld from thee; thou hast been much aided by my advices, and much confirmed by my example; the time is now come, that thou shouldst be shine own teacher and exhorter, and shouldst begin to swim without support: beware lest any change in thee be observed at my death.”

And the time of my dissolution is at hand.^{f63} We must attend to the modes of expression by which he denotes his death. By the word *dissolution* he means that we do not altogether perish when we die; because it is only a separation of the soul from the body. Hence we infer, that death is nothing else than a departure of the soul from the body — a definition which contains a testimony of the immortality of the soul.

“Sacrifice” was a term peculiarly applicable to the death of Paul, which was inflicted on him for maintaining the truth of Christ; for, although all believers, both by their obedient life and by their death, are victims or offerings acceptable to God, yet martyrs are sacrificed in a more excellent manner, by shedding their blood for the name of Christ. Besides, the word σπένδεσθαι which Paul here employs, does not denote every kind of sacrifice, but that which serves for ratifying covenants. Accordingly, in

this passage, he means the same thing which he states more clearly when he says,

“But if I am offered on the sacrifice of your faith, I rejoice.”

(<505017> Philippians 2:17.)

For there he means that the faith of the Philippians was ratified by his death, in precisely the same manner that covenants were ratified in ancient times by sacrifices of slain beasts; not that the certainty of our faith is founded, strictly speaking, on the steadfastness of the martyrs, but because it tends greatly to confirm us. Paul has here adorned his death by a magnificent commendation, when he called it the ratification of his doctrine, that believers, instead of sinking into despondency — as frequently happens — might be more encouraged by it to persevere.

The time of dissolution. This mode of expression is also worthy of notice, because he beautifully lessens the excessive dread of death by pointing out its effect and its nature. How comes it that men are so greatly dismayed at any mention of death, but because they think that they perish utterly. When they die? On the contrary, Paul, by calling it “Dissolution,” affirms that man does not perish, but teaches that the soul is merely separated from the body. It is with the same object that he fearlessly declares that “the time is at hand,” which he could not have done unless he had despised death; for although this is a natural feeling, which can never be entirely taken away, that man dreads and shrinks from death, yet that terror must be vanquished by faith, that it may not prevent us from departing from this world in an obedient manner, whenever God shall call us.

7. I have fought the good fight. Because it is customary to form a judgment from the event, Paul’s fight might have been condemned on the ground that it did not end happily. He therefore boasts that it is excellent, whatever may be the light in which it is regarded by the world. This declaration is a testimony of eminent faith; for not only was Paul accounted wretched in the opinion of all, but his death also was to be ignominious. Who then would not have said that he fought without success? But he does not rely on the corrupt judgments of men. On the contrary, by magnanimous courage he rises above every calamity, so that nothing opposes his happiness and glory; and therefore he declares “the fight which he fought” to be good and honorable.

I have finished my course. He even congratulates himself on his death, because it may be regarded as the goal or termination of his course. We know that they who run a race have gained their wish when they have reached the goal. In this manner also he affirms that to Christ's combatants death is desirable, because it puts an end to their labors; and, on the other hand, he likewise declares that we ought never to rest in this life, because it is of no advantage to have run well and constantly from the beginning to the middle of the course, if we do not reach the goal.

I have kept the faith. ^{f64} This may have a twofold meaning, either that to the last he was a faithful soldier to his captain, or that he continued in the right doctrine. Both meanings will be highly appropriate; and indeed he could not make his fidelity acceptable to the Lord in any other way than by constantly professing, the pure doctrine of the gospel. Yet I have no doubt that he alludes to the solemn oath taken by soldiers; as if he had said that he was a good and faithful soldier to his captain.

8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.* Having boasted of having fought his fight and finished his course, and kept the faith, he now affirms that he has not labored in vain. Now it is possible to put forth strenuous exertion, and yet to be defrauded of the reward which is due. But Paul says that his reward is sure. This certainty arises from turning his eyes to the day of the resurrection, and this is what we also ought to do; for all around we see nothing but death, and therefore we ought not to keep our eye fixed on the outward appearance of the world, but, on the contrary, to hold out to our minds the coming of Christ. The consequences will be, that nothing can detract from our happiness.

Which the Lord the righteous Judge will render to me. Because he mentions "the crown of righteousness" and "the righteous Judge," and employs the word "render," the Papists endeavor, by means of this passage, to build up the merits of works in opposition to the grace of God. But their reasoning is absurd. Justification by free grace, which is bestowed on us through faith, is not at variance within the rewarding of works, but, on the contrary, those two statements perfectly agree, that a man is justified freely through the grace of Christ, and yet that God will render to him the reward of works; for as soon as God has received us into favor, he likewise accepts our works, so as even to deign to give them a reward, though it is not due to them.

Here two blunders are committed by the Papists; first, in arguing that we deserve something from God, because we do well by virtue of our freewill; and secondly, in holding that God is bound to us, as if our salvation proceeded from anything else than from his grace. But it does not follow that God owes anything to us, because he renders righteously what he renders; for he is righteous even in those acts of kindness which are of free grace. And he “renders the reward” which he has promised, not because we take the lead by any act of obedience, but because, in the same course of liberality in which he has begun to act toward us, he follows up his former gifts by those which are afterwards bestowed. In vain, therefore, and to no purpose, do the Papists labor to prove from this, that good works proceed from the power of freewill; because there is no absurdity in saying that God crowns in us his own gifts. Not less absurdly and foolishly do they endeavor, by means of this passage, to destroy the righteousness of faith; since the goodness of God — by which he graciously embraces a man, not imputing to him his sins — is not inconsistent with that rewarding of works which he will render by the same kindness with which he made the promise. ^{f65}

And not to me only. That all the rest of the believers might fight courageously along with him, he invites them to a participation of the crown; for his unshaken steadfastness could not have served for an example to *us*, if the same hope of obtaining the crown had not been held out to us.

To all who love his coming. ^{f66} This is a singular mark which he employs in describing believers. And, indeed, wherever faith is strong, it will not permit their minds to fall asleep in this world, but will elevate them to the hope of the last resurrection. His meaning therefore is, that all who are so much devoted to the world, and who love so much this fleeting life, as not to care about the coming of Christ, and not to be moved by any desire of it, deprive themselves of immortal glory. Woe to our stupidity, therefore, which exercises such power over us, that we never think seriously about the coming of Christ, to which we ought to give our whole attention. Besides, he excludes from the number of believers those in whom the coming of Christ produces terror and alarm; for it cannot be loved unless it be regarded as pleasant and delightful.

<550409> 2 TIMOTHY 4:9-13

9. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:	9. Da operam, ut ad me venias cito.
10. For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.	10. Demas enim me reliquit, amplexus hoc saeculum, et profectus est Thessalonicam, Crescens in Galliam, Titus in Dalmatiam.
11. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.	11. Lucas est solus mecum. Marcum assume, ut tecum adducas; est enim mihi utilis in ministerium.
12. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.	12. Tychicum autem misi Ephesum.
13. The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.	13. Paenulam, quam Troade reliqui apud Carpum, quum veniens, affer, et libros et membranas.

9. *Make haste, to come to me quickly.* As he knew that the time of his death was at hand, there were many subjects — I doubt not — on which he wished to have a personal interview with Timothy for the good of the Church; and therefore he does not hesitate to desire him to come from a country beyond the sea. Undoubtedly there must have been no trivial reason why he called him away from a church over which he presided, and at so great a distance. Hence we may infer how highly important are conferences between such persons; for what Timothy had learned in a short space of time would be profitable, for a long period, to all the churches; so that the loss of half a year, or even of a whole year, was trivial compared with the compensation gained. And yet it appears from what follows, that Paul called Timothy with a view to his own individual benefit likewise; although his own personal matters were not preferred by him to the advantage of the Church, but it was because it involved the cause of the gospel, which was common to all believers; for as he defended it from a prison, so he needed the labors of others to aid in that defense.

10. *Having embraced this world.* It was truly base in such a man to prefer the love of this world to Christ. And yet we must not suppose that he altogether denied Christ or gave himself up either to ungodliness or to the allurements of the world; but he merely preferred his private convenience, or his safety, to the life of Paul. He could not have assisted Paul without many troubles and vexations, attended by imminent risk of his life; he was exposed to many reproaches, and must have submitted to many insults, and been constrained to leave off the care of his own affairs; and, therefore being overcome by his dislike of the cross, he resolved to consult his own interests. Nor can it be doubted, that he enjoyed a propitious gale from the world. That he was one of the leading men may be conjectured on this ground, that Paul mentions him amidst a very few at (<510414> Colossians 4:14,) and likewise in the Epistle to Philemon, (<570124> Philemon 1:24,) where also he is ranked among Paul's assistants; and, therefore, we need not wonder if he censures him so sharply on this occasion, for having cared more about himself than about Christ.

Others, whom he afterwards mentions, had not gone away from him but for good reasons, and with his own consent. Hence it is evident that he did not study his own advantage, so as to deprive churches of their pastors, but only to obtain from them some relief. Undoubtedly he was always careful to invite to come to him, or to keep along with him, those whose absence would not be injurious to other churches. For this reason he had sent *Titus to Dalmatia*, and some to one place and some to another, when he invited Timothy to come to him. Not only so, but in order that the church at Ephesus may not be left destitute or forlorn during Timothy's absence, he sends *Tychicus* thither, and mentions this circumstance to Timothy, that he may know that that church will not be in want of one to fill his place during his absence.

Bring the cloak which I left at Troas. As to the meaning of the word *φελόνη*,^{f67} commentators are not agreed; for some think that it is a chest or box for containing books, and others that it is a garment used by travelers, and fitted for defending against cold and rain. Whether the one interpretation or the other be adopted, how comes it that Paul should give orders to have either a garment or a chest brought to him from a place so distant, as if there were not workmen, or as if there were not abundance both of cloth and timber? If it be said, that it was a chest filled with books, or manuscripts, or epistles, the difficulty will be solved; for such materials

could not have been procured at any price. But, because many will not admit the conjecture, I willingly translate it by the word *cloak*. Nor is there any absurdity in saying that Paul desired to have it brought from so great a distance, because that garment, through long use, would be more comfortable for him, and he wished to avoid expense. ^{f68}

Yet (to own the truth) I give the preference to the former interpretation; more especially because Paul immediately afterwards mentions *books and parchments*. It is evident from this, that the Apostle had not given over reading, though he was already preparing for death. Where are those who think that they have made so great progress that they do not need any more exercise? Which of them will dare to compare himself with Paul? Still more does this expression refute the madness of those men who — despising books, and condemning all reading — boast of nothing but their own *ἐνθουσιασμοὺς* divine inspirations. ^{f69} But let us know that this passage gives to all believers ^{f70} a recommendation of constant reading, that they may profit by it. ^{f71}

Here some one will ask, “What does Paul mean by asking for a robe or cloak, if he perceived that his death was at hand?” This difficulty also induces me to interpret the word as denoting a chest, though there might have been some use of the “cloak” which is unknown in the present day; and therefore I give myself little trouble about these matters.

<550414> 2 TIMOTHY 4:14-22

14. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil, the Lord reward him according to his works:

14. Alexander faber aerarius multis me malis affecit: reddat illi Dominus juxta facta ipsius.

15. Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

15. Quem et tu cave; vehementer enim restitit verbis nostris.

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

16. In prima defensione nemo mihi affuit, sed omnes me deseruerunt: ne illis imputetur.

17. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

17. Sed dominus mihi affit, et corroboravit me, ut per me praeconium confirmaretur, et quidirent omnes Gentes.

18. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

18. Et ereptus fui ex ore leonis, et eripiet me Dominus ex omni facto (vel, opere) malo, servabitque in regnum suum caeleste, cui gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

19. Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

19. Saluta Priscam et Aquilam et familiam Onesiphori.

20. Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

20. Erastus mansit Corinthi: Trophimum autem reliqui in Mileti languentem.

21. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

21. Da operam, ut ante hyemem venias. Salutat te Eubulus et Pudens et Linus et Claudia et fratres omnes.

22. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

22 Dominus Iesus Christus cum spiritu tuo. Gratia vobiscum. Amen.

The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.

Scripta e Roma secunda ad Timotheum, qui primus Ephesi ordinatus fuit Episcopus, quum, Paulus iterum sisteretur Caesari Neroni.

14. *Alexander the coppersmith.* In this man was exhibited a shocking instance of apostasy. He had made profession of some zeal in advancing the reign of Christ, against which he afterwards carried on open war. No class of enemies is more dangerous or more envenomed than this. But from the beginning, the Lord determined that his Church should not be exempted from this evil, lest our courage should fail when we are tried by any of the same kind.

Hath done me many evil things It is proper to observe, what are the “many evils” which Paul complains that Alexander brought upon him. They consisted in this, that he opposed his doctrine. Alexander was an artificer, not prepared by the learning of the schools for being a great disputer; but domestic enemies have always been abundantly able to do injury. And the wickedness of such men always obtains credit in the world, so that malicious and impudent ignorance sometimes creates trouble and difficulty greater than the highest abilities accompanied by learning. Besides, when the Lord brings his servants into contest with persons of this low and base class, he purposely withdraws them from the view of the world, that they may not indulge in ostentatious display.

From Paul’s words, (<540415> 1 Timothy 4:15,) *for he vehemently opposed our discourses*, we may infer that he had committed no greater offense than an attack on sound doctrine; for if Alexander had wounded his person, or committed an assault on him, he would have endured it patiently; but when the truth of God is assailed, his holy breast burns with indignation, because, in all the members of Christ that saying must hold good,

“The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.” (<196909> Psalm 69:9.)

And this is also the reason of the stern imprecation into which he breaks out, that *the Lord may reward him according to his works*. A little afterwards, when he complains that *all had forsaken him*, (<196916> Psalm 69:16,) still he does not call down the vengeance of God on them, but, on the contrary, appears as their intercessor, pleading that they may obtain pardon. So mild and so merciful to all others, how comes it that he shows himself so harsh and inexorable towards this individual? The reason is this. Because some had fallen through fear and weakness, he desires that the Lord would forgive them; for in this manner we ought to have compassion on the weakness of brethren. But because this man rose against God with

malice and sacrilegious hardihood, and openly attacked known truth, such impiety had no claim to compassion.

We must not imagine, therefore, that Paul was moved by excessive warmth of temper, when he broke out into this imprecation; for it was from the Spirit of God, and through a well regulated zeal, that he wished eternal perdition to Alexander, and mercy to the others. Seeing that it is by the guidance of the Spirit that Paul pronounces a heavenly judgment from on high, we may infer from this passage, how dear to God is his truth, for attacking which he punishes so severely. Especially it ought to be observed how detestable a crime it is, to fight with deliberate malice against the true religion

But lest any person, by falsely imitating the Apostle, should rashly utter similar imprecations, there are three things here that deserve notice. First, let us not avenge the injuries done to ourselves, lest self-love and a regard to our private advantage should move us violently, as frequently happens. Secondly, while we maintain the glory of God, let us not mingle with it our own passions, which always disturb good order. Thirdly, let us not pronounce sentence against every person without discrimination, but only against reprobates, who, by their impiety, give evidence that such is their true character; and thus our wishes will agree with God's own judgment otherwise there is ground to fear that the same reply may be made to us that Christ made to the disciples who thundered indiscriminately against all who did not comply with their views,

“Ye know not of what spirit ye are.” (^{<420955>}Luke 9:55.)

They thought that they had Elijah as their supporter, (^{<120110>}2 Kings 1:10,) who prayed to the Lord in the same manner; but because they differed widely from the spirit of Elijah, the imitation was absurd. It is therefore necessary, that the Lord should reveal his judgment before we burst forth into such imprecations; and wish that by his Spirit he should restrain and guide our zeal. And whenever we call to our remembrance the vehemence of Paul against a single individual, let us also recollect his amazing meekness towards those who had so basely forsaken him, that we may learn, by his example, to have compassion on the weakness of our brethren.

Here I wish to put a question to those who pretend that Peter presided over the church at Rome. Where was he at that time? According to their opinion, he was not dead; for they tell us, that exactly a year intervened between his death and that of Paul. Besides, they extend his pontificate to seven years. Here Paul mentions his first defense: his second appearance before the court would not be quite so soon. In order that Peter may not lose the title of Pope, must he endure to be charged with the guilt of so shameful a revolt? Certainly, when the whole matter has been duly examined, we shall find that everything that has been believed about his Popedom is fabulous.

17. *But the Lord assisted me.* He adds this, in order to remove the scandal which he saw might arise from that base desertion of his cause.^{f72} Though the church at Rome had failed to perform its duty, he affirms that the gospel had suffered no loss by it, because, leaning on heavenly power, he was himself fully able to bear the whole burden, and was so far from being discouraged by the influence of that fear which seized on all, that it became only the more evident that the grace of God has no need of receiving aid from any other quarter. He does not boast of his courage, but gives thanks to the Lord; that, when reduced to extremities, he did not give way nor lose heart under so dangerous a temptation. He therefore acknowledges that he was supported by the arm of the Lord, and is satisfied with this, that the inward grace of God served for a shield to defend him against every assault. He assigns the reason —

That the proclamation might be confirmed. The word “proclamation” is employed by him to denote the office of publishing the gospel among the Gentiles, which was especially assigned to him;^{f73} for the preaching of others did not so much resemble a proclamation, in consequence of being confined to the Jews. And with good reason does he make use of this word in many passages. It was no small confirmation of his ministry, that, when the whole world foamed with madness against him, and on the other hand, all human assistance failed him, still he remained unshaken. Thus he gave practical demonstration that his apostleship was from Christ.

He now describes the manner of the confirmation, ***that all the Gentiles might hear*** that the Lord had so powerfully assisted him; for from this event they might infer that both their own calling and that of Paul were from the Lord.

And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. By the word “lion,” many suppose that he means Nero. For my part, I rather think that he makes use of this expression to denote danger in general; as if he had said, “out of a blazing fire,” or “out of the jaws of death.” He means that it was not without wonderful assistance from God, that he escaped, the danger being so great that but for this he must have been immediately swallowed up.

18. *And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work.* He declares, that he hopes the same for the future; not that he will escape death, but that he will not be vanquished by Satan, or turn aside from the right course. This is what we ought chiefly to desire, not that the interests of the body may be promoted, but that we may rise superior to every temptation, and may be ready to suffer a hundred deaths rather than that it should come into our mind to pollute ourselves by any “evil work.” Yet I am well aware, that there are some who take the expression *evil work* in a passive sense, as denoting the violence of wicked men, as if Paul had said, “The Lord will not suffer wicked men to do me any injury.” But the other meaning is far more appropriate, that he will preserve him pure and unblemished from every wicked action; for he immediately adds, to *his heavenly kingdom*, by which he means that that alone is true salvation, when the Lord — either by life or by death — conducts us into his kingdom.

This is a remarkable passage for maintaining the uninterrupted communication of the grace of God, in opposition to the Papists. After having confessed that the beginning of salvation is from God, they ascribe the continuation of it to freewill; so that in this way perseverance is not a heavenly gift, but a virtue of man. And Paul, by ascribing to God this work of “preserving us to his kingdom,” openly affirms that we are guided by his hand during the whole course of our life, till, having discharged the whole of our warfare, we obtain the victory. And we have a memorable instance of this in Demas, whom he mentioned a little before, because, from being a noble champion of Christ, he had become a base deserter. All that follows has been seen by us formerly, and therefore does not need additional exposition.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

A TRANSLATION OF CALVIN'S VERSION

OF THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

CHAPTER 1

- 1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus,
- 2** To Timothy, my beloved son, ^{f74} grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father, and from Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 3** I give thanks to God, whom I worship from my ancestors, in a pure conscience, as I make continual mention of thee in my prayers night and day,
- 4** Desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;
- 5** Calling to remembrance that unfeigned faith which is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that (it dwelleth) in thee also. ^{f75}
- 6** For which cause I advise thee to stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the laying on of my hands;
- 7** For God hath not given to us a spirit of cowardice, but of power, and of love, and of soberness.
- 8** Be not ashamed, therefore, of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, who am his prisoner; but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God;

- 9** Who hath saved us and hath called us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before eternal ages,
- 10** But hath now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath indeed destroyed death, and hath brought to light life and immortality by the gospel.
- 11** To which I have been appointed a herald, and an apostle, and a teacher of the gentiles;
- 12** For which cause also I suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have intrusted to him till that day.
- 13** Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.
- 14** Guard the excellent thing to thee by the Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in us.
- 15** Thou knowest this, that all that are in Asia have forsaken me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.
- 16** May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus; for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain,
- 17** But when he was in Rome, he sought me out diligently, and found me.
- 18** May the Lord grant to him that he may find mercy with the Lord on that day; and how many things he ministered to me at Ephesus, thou knowest well. ¹⁷⁶

CHAPTER 2

- 1** Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.
- 2** And what things thou hast heard from me by many witnesses, these commit thou to believing men, who shall be able to teach others also.

- 3** Do thou therefore endure afflictions, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
- 4** No man who warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of life, that he may please his general.
- 5** And if any one also strive, he is not crowned, unless he strive lawfully.
- 6** The husbandman must labor before he receive the fruits.
- 7** Understand what I say; and may the Lord give thee understanding in all things!
- 8** Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, hath been raised from the dead, according to my gospel;
- 9** In which I am a sufferer, as an evil — doer, even to bonds, but the word of God is not bound.
- 10** Wherefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.
- 11** It is a faithful saying; for if we die with him, we shall also live with him;
- 12** If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; ^{f77} if we deny him, ^{f78} he will also deny us;
- 13** If we are unbelieving, he remaineth faithful; he cannot deny himself.
- 14** Remind them of these things, solemnly charging them before the Lord not to dispute about words, for no use, (but) for the subversion of the hearers.
- 15** Study to shew thyself to be approved by God, a workman that doth not blush, dividing aright the word of truth.
- 16** But avoid profane and unmeaning noises; for they will grow to greater ungodliness.

- 17 And their word will eat as a gangrene; of the number of whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus,
- 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is already past, and subvert the faith of some.
- 19 Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth firm, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his, and, Let every one that calleth on the name of Christ depart from iniquity.
- 20 Now, in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor and some to dishonor
- 21 If any one, therefore, shall cleanse himself from these, he shall be a vessel sanctified for honor, and useful for the Lord, being prepared for every good work.
- 22 Flee youthful desires; but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with all that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
- 23 But avoid foolish and uninformative questions, knowing that they beget quarrels.
- 24 But the servant of the Lord must not fight, but must be gentle towards all, qualified for teaching, patient to the bad,
- 25 Instructing (*or, chastising*) those who resist, if some time God give to them repentance for the acknowledgment of the truth,
- 26 And deliverance (*or, return to a sound mind*) from the snare of the devil, by whom they are held captive at his will.

CHAPTER 3

- 1 But know this, that in the last days there will arise dangerous (*or, troublesome*) times.
- 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, covetous, proud, slanderers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy;

- 3** Without natural affection, ^{f79} covenant breakers, false accusers, intemperate, fierce, despisers of those that are good;
- 4** Traitors, rash, haughty, lovers of pleasures rather than of God;
- 5** Having a form of godliness, while they deny the power of it.
- 6** Turn away from those persons; for of those are they who creep into families, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, who are led away by various sinful desires;
- 7** Always learning, while yet they never can come to the knowledge of the truth.
- 8** And as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men corrupted in understanding, reprobate concerning the faith.
- 9** But they shall not proceed further; for the madness of the latter shall be manifest to all, as was also that of time former.
- 10** But thou hast closely followed my doctrine, instruction, ^{f80} purpose, faith, meekness, love, patience;
- 11** Persecutions, afflictions, which befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me.
- 12** And all who wish to live a godly life in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.
- 13** But wicked men and impostors will grow worse and worse, going astray, and leading others astray.
- 14** But as for thee, continue in those things which thou hast learned, and which have been intrusted to thee, knowing from whom thou hast learned them;
- 15** And that from (thy) childhood thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise to salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

- 16** All scripture (*or, the whole of scripture*) is divinely inspired, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness;
- 17** That the man of God may be perfect, being made ready for every good work.

CHAPTER 4

- 1** I adjure thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom.
- 2** Preach the word; apply thyself in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all gentleness and doctrine.
- 3** For there will be a time, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, shall heap up to themselves according to their sinful desires;
- 4** And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables.
- 5** But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, render thy ministry approved.
- 6** For I am now offered as a sacrifice, and the time of my dissolution is at hand.
- 7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.
- 8** Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will render to me on that day, and not to me only, but likewise to all who love his coming.
- 9** Make haste to come to me quickly.
- 10** For Demas hath forsaken me, having embraced this world, and is gone away to Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

- 11** Luke alone is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry.
- 12** And I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus.
- 13** When thou shalt come, bring the cloak which I left at Carpus, and the books, and the parchments.
- 14** Alexander the coppersmith hath done me many evil things; may the Lord reward him according to his works!
- 15** Of whom beware thou also; for he vehemently opposed our discourses.
- 16** At my first defense no man assisted me, but all forsook me; may it not be laid to their charge!
- 17** But the Lord assisted and strengthened me, that through me the proclamation might be confirmed, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.
- 18** And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever! Amen.
- 19** Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the family of Onesiphorus.
- 20** Erastus remained at Corinth; but I left Trophimus at Miletum sick.
- 21** Make haste to come before winter. Eubulus saluteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.
- 22** The Lord Jesus Christ (be) with thy spirit. Grace be with thee. Amen

This Second (Epistle) was written from Rome to Timothy, who was the first bishop ordained at Ephesus, when Paul was brought the second time before Caesar Nero.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 1

^{ft1} “Although, in all that Paul has left us in writing, we must consider that it is God who speaks to us by the mouth of a mortal man, and that all his doctrine ought to be received with such authority and reverence as if God visibly appeared from heaven, yet still there is in this epistle a special object to be kept in view, that Paul, being in prison and perceiving his death to be at hand, wished to ratify his faith, as if he had sealed it with his blood. So then, as often as we read this epistle, let the condition in which Paul was at that time come before our eyes, namely, that he was looking for nothing but to die for the testimony of the gospel (which he actually did) as its standard-bearer, in order to give us stronger assurance of his doctrine, and that will affect us in a more lively manner. Indeed, if we read this epistle carefully, we shall find that the Spirit of God has expressed himself in it in such a manner, with such majesty and power, that we are constrained to be captivated and overwhelmed. For my own part, I know that this epistle has been more profitable to me than any other book of Scripture, and still is profitable to me every day; and if any person shall examine it carefully, there can be no doubt that he will experience the same effect. And if we desire to have a testimony of the truth of God, which pierces our heart, we may well fix on this epistle; for a man must be in a profound sleep, and remarkably stupid, if God do not work in his soul, when he hears the doctrine that shall be drawn from it.”-*Fr. Ser.*

^{ft2} “Oui par acquit.”

^{ft3} “Comme en celuy qui pent a bon droict estre nomme son fils.”

^{ft4} “Car le mot Grec se prend plus souvent pour Comme.” “For the Greek word generally signifies *as*.”

^{ft5} “Quand il se laschoit la bride a convoiter, comme si la chose n’eust point illicite.” “When he gave loose reins to lust, as if it had not been an unlawful thing.”

ft6 “Le mot d’ *Esprit* est yci pries pout les dons qui en procedent, suy. vent la figure nommee Metonymie.” “The word *Spirit* is here taken for the gifts which proceed from him, agreeably to the figure called Metonymy.”

ft7 “He shews, in the first place, that the gospel cannot be without afflictions. Not that God does not call all men to unity in the faith, and the doctrine of the gospel is the message of reconciliation; but yet, on the one hand, there are those who are drawn by the power of his Holy Spirit, while unbelievers remain in their hardness; and, on the other hand, there is the fire that is kindled, as, when thunders are generated in the air, there must be great troubles, so is it when the gospel is preached. And now, if the gospel brings afflictions, and if our Lord Jesus Christ wishes that what he endured in his person shall be fulfilled in his members, and that every day he shall be, as it were, crucified, is it lawful for us to withdraw from that condition? since, therefore, all our hope lies in the gospel, and since we ought to lean upon it, let us ponder what Paul says, that we must lend support to our brethren, when we see that they are assailed, that men trample them under their feet, spit in their face, and insult them, let us choose to be their companions for enduring the reproaches and base conduct of the world, rather than to be honored, to be in good reputation and credit, and yet to be estranged from those who suffer for the cause which we have in common with them.”-*Fr. Ser.*

ft8 “La certitude de salut.” The certainty of salvation.”

ft9 A figure of speech, by which the parts of a proposition seem to be interchanged, ὑπαλλαγή compounded of ὑπό and ἀλλάσσω ‘I change.’-*Ed.*

ft10 See CALVIN’S Commentaries on Galatians and Ephesians, pp, 197-201. --*Ed.*

ft11 τῆς ἐπιφανείας. “This Theodoret well explains by ἐνανθρωπήσεως, the expression being one especially used by the ancient writers, of the appearance of the gods on earth. So Joseph. Ant. 18. 3. 4, we have τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν ἐχδιηγείται τοῦ Ανούβιδος [she relates the appearing of (the god) Anubis.] Επιφάνεια here denotes Christ’s first appearance in the flesh though elsewhere the term always means his second appearance to judge the world.” --*Bloomfield.*

ft12 “Des Docteurs ou Pasteurs fideles.” “Of faithful Teachers or Pastors.”

ft13 “Si nostre salut dependoit de nous, et qu’il fust en nostre garde” “If our salvation depended on us, and were under our protection.”

ft14 “He was not barely to assert the words of Scripture, but he was to hold fast the summary, or system of the truths he had heard from his spiritual father, and, in a way of dependence on Christ, to show his fidelity and love to his Redeemer. This system of doctrine he was to keep, as a pledge committed to his trust, by the help of the Holy Spirit. Ministers are to hold fast every truth, but, above all, those particular truths which are the peculiar butt of the devil’s opposition, and meet with rough treatment in the times in which they live; so doing, they comply with the command which their exalted Master laid upon the pastor of the Church at Philadelphia, and then they may hope for the blessing he promised. (<660308> Revelation 3:8,10,11.)’- *Abraham Taylor*.

ft15 “Le mot Grec duquel il use, que nous traduisons bon.” “The Greek word, which he employs, which we translate good.”

ft16 “Seeing that God hath taken up his abode in us, and wishes that we may be his temples, and dwells in those temples by his Holy Spirit, are we afraid that he will not give us power to persevere till the end, that he will not keep us in certain possession of the benefits which we have received from his hand? True, the devil will labor to deprive us of it, but, as our souls will not be a prey to him, because our Lord Jesus Christ has taken them under his protection, having been committed to him by God the Father; so nothing that God has appointed for our salvation will be a prey to Satan. And why? Because we have the Spirit to defend us against all his efforts. And where is that Spirit? We must not go to seek him above the clouds. It is true that he fills the whole earth, and that his majesty dwells above the heavens; but if we feel that he dwells in us, since he has been pleased to exercise his power on such poor creatures as we are, let us know that that power will be sufficient for defending us against the assaults of Satan; that is, provided that we, on our part, are not negligent. For we must not flatter ourselves in our sins, so as to be careless, but must pray to God, committing everything to him, and hoping that he will always strengthen us more and more. And because he has begun to make us ministers of his grace, let us know that he will continue, and in such a

way that our salvation and that of our neighbor's shall always be carried forward more and more to his glory."-*Fr. Ser.*

fi17 "Car c'est la coustume des apostats, et de ceux qui Laissent la vocation de Christ." "For it is customary with apostates, and with those who forsake the calling of Christ."

fi18 "Pource qu'on les en depose a cause de leur mesehancete et vie scandaleuse." "Because they are deposed on account of their wickedness and scandalous life."

fi19 "Tous les blasphemes et accusations qu'ils peuvent." "All the blasphemies and accusations that they can."

fi20 See CALVIN on Genesis, where that remarkable expression is copiously explained. — Ed.

fi21 "No Christian can read this passage without being powerfully affected by it; for we see that Paul was, as it were, transported, when he spoke of that coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the final resurrection. He does not say, "May the Lord grant that he may find favor at his coming, on the day of our redemption, when he shall appear again to judge the world!" But he says, "On that day;" as if he presented the Lord Jesus visibly, with his angels. Paul did not speak those things coldly, or like a man, but he rose above all men, that he might be able to exclaim, "That day, that day!" And where is it? True, none of those who wish to be wise in themselves will take any pains to find it; for that saying must be fulfilled,—"Eye hath not seen, ears have not heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love him." (<236404> Isaiah 64:4.) Let men task their powers to the utmost to know it, it will be to them a dark and mysterious thing, and they will not be able to approach to it. But when we shall embrace the promise which he hath given to us, and after having known that Christ, being risen from the dead, displayed his power, not for his own sake, but to gather together all his members, and to unite them to himself, then shall we be able truly to say, *That day.*"-*Fr. Ser.*

CHAPTER 2

fi22 "Loyaux et digne auxquels on se fie." "Faithful and trustworthy."

ft23 “Entre plusieurs tenmoins, ou, en presence de plusieurs temoins.”

“Among many witnesses, or, in presence of many witnesses.”

ft24 “Il ne vent pas dire qu’il ait appelle des tesmoins, comme c’est la coustume es contrats et autres actes solennels.” “He does not mean that he called witnesses, as is customary in contracts and other solemn acts.”

ft25 “By τοῦ βίου πραγματείας is meant the business of life in general, the plural being used with allusion to the various kinds thereof, as agriculture, trade, manufactures, etc. Now, by the Roman law, soldiers were excluded from *all* such. See Grotius.” — Bloomfield.

ft26 “Brief, qu’il nous souviene du proverbe ancien duquel les Latins ont use en faisant leurs sacrifices, *Hoc age*, c’est a dire, Fay ceci, ou, Pense a ceci, ascavoir que tu as entre mains, lequel signifie, que quand il est question du service de Dieu, il s’y faut tellement employer, que nous ne soyons ententifs ni affectionnez ailleurs.” “In short, let us remember the old proverb which the Latins used in offering their sacrifices, *Hoc age*, that is to say, ‘Do this,’ or, ‘Think of this,’ ‘Do (or think of) what thou hast in hand,’ which means, that when the worship of God is the matter in question, we must be employed in it in such a manner that we shall not give our attention or our heart to anything else.”

ft27 “Je scay bien que les autres ont tradoit ce passage autrement: Il faut que le laboureur travaillaut (ou, qui travaille) prene premier des fruits.” “I am well aware that others translate this passage differently: The husbandman laboring (or, who laboreth) must first partake of the fruits.”

ft28 “The agonistic metaphor now passes into an agricultural one, (such as we find at <460910> 1 Corinthians 9:10; <590507> James 5:7.) The sense, however, will depend upon what πρῶτον is to be referred to. It is most naturally connected with μεταλαμβάνειν, and such is the construction adopted by the generality of Expositors, ancient and modern. The sense, however, thus arising, either involves what is inconsistent with facts, or (even when helped out by the harsh ellipsis of ἵνα κοπιᾷ, ‘in order that he may be enabled to labor,’) contains a truth here inapposite; and the *spiritual* application thence deduced is forced and frigid. It is not, however, necessary, with some, to resort to conjecture. We have only to suppose, what is common in his writings, a somewhat harsh transposition, and (with many of the best

Expositors) to join **πρῶτον** with **κοπιῶντα**, as is required by the course of the argument; the true construction being this: — **δεῖ τὸν γεωργὸν πρῶτον κοπιῶντα τῶν καρπῶν μεταλαμβάνειν**, where **κοπιῶντα** is the participle imperfect, and the literal sense is, — — It is necessary that the husbandmen should first labor, and then enjoy the fruits (of his labor.)” — *Bloomfield*.

^{ft29} “Enten ce que je di, of, Considere.” “Understand what I say, or, Consider what I say.

^{ft30} “De la vie eternelle.” “Of eternal life.”

^{ft31} “Que seulement il y avoit en luy une apparence d’homme, et non pas une vraye nature humaine.” “That there was in him only an appearance of man, and not a real human nature.”

^{ft32} “If we wish to be victorious over all the temptations of Satan, we must have great steadfastness, and must know that it is not at random that we believe in Jesus Christ, that this is not a doubtful matter, but that he came to us from God to be our Redeemer. And for this reason Paul here points out that he is of the lineage of David, and of his seed, for we know the promises that are contained in the Holy Scriptures, namely, that the whole world should be blessed in the seed of Abraham. Now, God confirmed this to David, by shewing that from him the Redeemer should proceed, that is, from the tribe of Judah, and from the house of David. Thus, the reason why Paul claims for him this title is, that, having the promises which God had formerly made to the fathers, concerning that Redeemer who hath been given to us, we may not doubt that we ought to receive him with full conviction, and have no reason to doubt whether he is, or is not, the Messiah. Why? He is descended from the house of David; and, although at that time, it had no royal dignity, yet that defect could not lessen the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, but, on the contrary, was fitted to confirm more fully our belief that it was he who should be sent. And why? The Prophet Isaiah did not say that he would be born in a palace, or that he would be brought up in great splendor; but he said, that he would grow as a small twig (^{<231101>} Isaiah 11:1) from the root of Jesse; as if he had said, that, although Jesus Christ was of royal lineage, nevertheless his parents were poor, and were held of no account in worldly matters, having no rank or grandeur.” — *Fr. Ser.*

ft33 “It might be replied, that it is superfluous that Paul should ‘endure for the elect.’ ‘Cannot God save those whom he elected and adopted before the creation of the world, without the assistance of men? Has the immutable decree of God any need of human help, or of creatures? Why then does Paul say that he endures on account of the elect?’ Now, it is true that God will conduct his people to the inheritance which is prepared for them but yet he is pleased to make use of the labor of men. Not that he is under a necessity of borrowing anything from us, but he confers on us this honor by his undeserved goodness, and wishes that we should be instruments of his power. Thus Paul does not boast that the salvation of the children of God depends on his steadfastness or on the afflictions which he had to endure; but he only means that God wishes to conduct his people by means of the word, and that he employs men whom he has chosen for that purpose, as for his own work, and makes them instruments of the power of his Holy Spirit.” — *Fr. Ser.*

ft34 The reader will do well to consider the author’s Commentary on that remarkable passage. — *Ed.*

ft35 “On ne gagne rien yci de se defendre et excuser, en alleguant son infirmité.” “Here nothing is gained by defending and excusing ourselves on the ground of our weakness.”

ft36 “When any person comes to the sermon, let it not be to hear something that tickles the ears, or that gives pleasure; but let it be to make progress in the fear of God, and in humility, and to excite to prayer, and to confirm him in patience. If we have heard an exhortation to — day, and if to — morrow it is repeated to us, let us not think that this is superfluous, let us not be annoyed at it; for every person who carefully examines this subject will find it to be highly necessary for him to be reminded of the lesson which he had learned, that he may practice it well. If, therefore, God refreshes our memory with it, he has conferred on us a great favor. That is what we have to remark on this passage, when Paul says, ‘Remind them of these things.’ For undoubtedly he intended to prevent what we frequently meet with, when it is said, ‘We have heard this before. Is not that a very common remark? Where is the little child that does not know it?’ Such things are said by those who would wish to be fed with useless questions. But here the Holy Spirit desires that what is useful should be brought

forward every day, because we have not sufficiently understood it, and because it must be put in practice.” — *Fr. Ser.*

- ft37 “Mais de defendre aussi aux autres qu’ils ne s’y amusent point.” “But likewise to forbid others to entertain themselves with them.”
- ft38 “Est pour donner crainte a ceux qui voudroyent faire autrement.” “Is intended to strike terror into those who would wish to act differently.”
- ft39 “We shall find fanatics who think that it is a loss of time to come to the church to be taught. ‘What? Is not all the doctrine of God contained in the Bible? What more can be said on the subject?’ It is making them little children (they will say) to come here to be taught; but grown people may dispense with it. What? Must there be all this preaching? There are but two points in Scripture, that we ought to love God and to love our neighbor. We have not heard these things merely from those who come to relate them; but the most distinguished scholars of those who vomited out these blasphemies have themselves declared them to us. I could name the day when it was said, and the houses, and the hour, and the people who were present, and how wicked men poured out their venom and their passion against God, to overthrow and destroy all religion, if it were possible; that is but too well known. On the contrary, Paul shews us here, that if we have only the Holy Scripture, it is not enough that each of us read it in private, but the doctrine drawn from it must be preached to us in order that we may be well informed “ — *Fr. Ser.*
- ft40 “De couper et tailler.” “Of cutting and carving.”
- ft41 “A l’ame de la doctrine.”
- ft43 “Let us not therefore be distressed by all the scandals that may arise. And yet let us study to walk in fear, not abusing the goodness of our God but knowing that, since he hath separated us from the rest of the world we must live as being in his house and as being his, in the same manner as he hath given to us the onward mark of baptism, that we may also have the signature of his holy Spirit, for he is “the earnest,” as Paul calls him, of our election, he is the pledge which we possess that we are called to the heavenly inheritance. Let us therefore pray to God that he may sign and seal in our hearts his gracious election, by his holy Spirit, and, at the same time, that he may keep us sealed and as shut up under the shadow of his wings; and if poor reprobates go

astray and are lost, and if the devil drives them along, and if they do not rise again when they fall, but are cast down and ruined, let us, on our part, pray to God to keep us under his protection, that we may know what it is to obey his will, and to be supported by him. Though the world strive to shake us, let us lean on this foundation, that the Lord knoweth who are his; and let us never be drawn aside from this, but let us persevere and profit more and more, till God withdraw us from the present state into his kingdom, which is not liable to change.” — *Fr. Ser.*

ft44 This quotation is taken from #<235311> Isaiah 53:11, but the passage to which our author, quoting from memory, makes reference, is <470617> 2 Corinthians 6:17, where the words of Isaiah have undergone considerable variation See Calvin on “<470617> 2 Corinthians 6:17”. — *Ed.*

ft45 “When he says, that we must be “gentle towards all, “he means that we ought to be easy and affable in receiving all who come to be taught in the gospel, for if we do not give them access it is like shutting the door against them, so that they shall never have it in their power to approach to God. We must, therefore, have that mildness and humanity dwelling in us, so as to be ready to receive all who wish to be instructed. And therefore, he adds, that we must be ‘qualified for teaching,’ as if he had said, that those things are connected with each other, gentleness and skill in teaching. The reason is, if a man be fierce and inaccessible, it will never be possible for us to receive instruction from him. He who wishes to be a good teacher must conduct himself with civility, and must have some way of drawing those who come to him, so as to gain their affections; and that cannot be, unless he have that ‘gentleness’ of which Paul speaks. Thus we see how he intended to confirm what he had briefly stated, that a man who is quarrelsome, and addicted to disputes and contentions, is in no degree a servant of God. And why? As servants of God, must we not labor to gain poor ignorant persons? And that cannot be, unless we are mild, unless we hear patiently what they say, unless we bear with their weakness, until by little and little they are edified. If we have not that, it is like casting them off.” — *Fr. Ser.*

ft46 “Portant patiemment les mauvais.” “Patiently bearing with the bad”

ft47 See Calvin on “<490202> Ephesians 2:2”. — *Ed.*

CHAPTER 3

^{ft48} “Why does the holy Apostle, both here and elsewhere, speak of the ‘last days,’ when he forewarns believers that they must prepare themselves, and make provision for many troubles and annoyances? It is because this fancy was so common, that matters would go much better than before; because, formerly, the prophets, when speaking of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, said that everything would be astonishingly reformed, that the world would obey God, that his majesty would be adored by the high and the low, that every mouth would sing his praise, and every knee would bow before him. In short, when we hear such promises, we think that we must be in a state of angelical holiness, now that Christ has appeared. Many concluded, in their mistaken fancy, that, since the coming of the Redeemer, nothing but the most correct virtue and modesty would ever be seen, and that everything would be so thoroughly regulated, that there would be no more vices in the world.” — — *Fr. Ser.*

^{ft49} “Mais ce sont tous vices cachez, et qui n’apparoissent pas devant les yeux des hommes.” “But all these are concealed vices, and do not show themselves before the eyes of men.”

^{ft50} Thus we see, that the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of Paul, holds out two reasons to fortify us. When we see that Satan opposes, and that the truth of God is not received by all, but that there are bad men who labor to pervert everything, and who slander and falsify the truth, here are consolations provided for us. In the first place, that our Lord treats us in the same manner as he has treated the Church in all ages, that those who lived before us were not better situated in this respect; for God tried them by sending false pastors, or rather by giving free scope to Satan for sending them. Let us know what has happened since the law was published. Here is Moses, who was before the other prophets. Yet already the war was begun, and that evil has never ceased. If we must now endure the like, let us bear it with patience; for it is not reasonable to expect that our condition shall be better or easier than that of Moses, and of others who followed him. That is one argument. The second is that the result shall be prosperous and successful. Although we dislike fighting, and though it appears as if the truth of God were about to perish utterly, let us wait till God come

forth in defense of it, for he will cause wicked men to be completely disgraced. After they have triumphed, God will, undoubtedly, discover their baseness, and we shall see how God takes care to support his cause, though that may not be evident for a time.” — *Fr. Ser.*

ft51 “Having spoken of time troubles which were to befall the Church, and having exhorted Timothy to be firm, so as not to shrink from them, the Apostle adds, that now, for a long time, he must have been prepared for all this, because he had been taught in a good school. ‘Thou hast known intimately,’ like one who had followed him step by step; for such is the import of the word which Paul uses: ‘Thou hast known well the course which I have pursued.’” — — *Fr. Ser.*

ft52 “Et tous ceux aussi qui veulent vivre en la crainte de Dieu.” “And all those also who wish to live in the fear of God.”

ft53 “Que rien ne luy est advenu que tous fideles ne doyvent aussi attendre.” “That nothing has happened to him which all believers must not also look for.”

ft54 “Si on demande d’ou vient ceste puissance et facilite de nuire?” “If it be asked, Whence comes this power and facility of doing injury?”

ft55 “Satan les tire, d’un coste et d’autre, a son plaisir.” “Satan leads them, on one side or another, at his pleasure.”

ft56 “Par lequel mot il signifie qu’il est requis d’user de jugement et discretion en cest endroit.” “By this word, he means that it is necessary to use judgment and discretion in that matter.”

ft57 “Et qui to vent commises ou desquelles plene assurance t’a este donnee.” “And which have been intrusted to thee, or of which full assurance hath been given to thee.”

ft58 “Who is it that by nature will not desire his happiness and his salvation? And where could we find it but in the Holy Scripture, by which it is communicated to us? Woe to us if we will not listen to God when he speaks to us, seeing that he asks nothing but our advantage. He does not seek his own profit, for what need has he of it? We are likewise reminded not to read the Holy Scripture so as to gratify our fancies, or to draw from it useless questions. Why? Because it is profitable for salvation, says Paul. Thus, when I expound the Holy Scripture, I must be guided by this consideration, that those who hear me may receive profit from the doctrine which I teach, that they may

be edified for salvation. If I have not that desire, and do not aim at the edification of those who hear me, I am a sacrilegious person, profaning the word of God. On the other hand, they who read the Scripture, or who come to the sermon to listen, if they are in search of some foolish speculation, if they come here to take their amusement, are guilty of having profaned a thing so holy.” — *Fr. Ser.*

CHAPTER 4

^{ft59} “Car un temps viendra.” “For a time will come.”

^{ft60} “Incontinent on n’orroit autre chose que plaintes de la trop grande despense.”

^{ft61} “The greater part cannot endure corrections, or threatenings, or even simple doctrine. When we denounce vices, though we do not employ violent language, they think that all is lost. Never was the world so obstinately wicked as it now is, and those who have made a profession of the gospel appear to endeavor, as far as they can, to destroy the grace of God. For we are not speaking about Papists only, who fight furiously against us, but of those who adhere to the Protestant Reformation of the Gospel. We see that they would wish to be like unbridled calves. (They care not about a yoke, or government, or anything of that sort.) Let them be allowed to do what they please, let blasphemies and all licentious conduct be permitted; it is all one, provided that they have no form of ceremony, and that they despise the Pope and idolaters. This is the way in which many who make a profession of the gospel would wish to be governed, but the reason is, that they have “itching ears.”” — *Fr. Ser.*

^{ft62} “When the devil has raised his standard, and when scandals and disturbances abound everywhere, we cannot be sufficiently attentive to guard against them, unless we are fortified by patience, and are not discouraged by the adversity which we must endure. If this warning ever was advantageous, how exceedingly necessary is it at the present day! Has not the world arrived at the highest pitch of iniquity? We see that the majority furiously reject the gospel. As to others who pretend to welcome the gospel, what sort of obedience do they render to it? There is so much contempt and so much pride, that, as soon as vices are reprov'd, or more sharpness is used than suits the taste of those

who would wish to have full permission to act wickedly, and whose sole aim is to destroy everything, they are filled with spite. Although Papists will permit their preaching Friars to cry out and storm against them, and at the same time do nothing but steep themselves in lies to their destruction, they who openly declare that they wish the reformation of the gospel cannot endure to be reproved when it is necessary, but gnash their teeth against God, and fulfill what Paul says to the Corinthians, that if deceivers came to impose upon them, they would bear with all tyranny, and would be quiet when they were buffeted; but if we teach them faithfully in the name of God and for their salvation, they are so fastidious that a single word will provoke them to rebellion; and if we persevere in doing our duty, war will be immediately declared. Would to God that these things were not so visible amongst us as they are!” — *Fr. Ser.*

^{ft63} “Car de moy je m’en vay maintenant estre sacrifie.” “For, for my part, I am going to be now sacrificed.”

^{ft64} “This word ‘Faith’ may indeed be taken for Fidelity; as if he had said that he was loyal to our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he never flinched, that he always performed what belonged to his office. But we may also take this word faith in its ordinary meaning, that Paul did not turn aside from the pure simplicity of the gospel, and even that he relied on the promises of salvation which had been given to him, and, having preached to others, shewed that he was in earnest in what he spoke. For, indeed, all the loyalty which God demands from us proceeds from our adhering firmly to his word, and being founded on it in such a manner that we shall not be moved by any storm or tempest that may arise.” — *Fr. Ser.*

^{ft65} “The Papists themselves ought to observe carefully what was said by one of those whom they call their Doctors. ‘How would God render the crown as a righteous Judge, if he had not first given grace as a merciful Father? And how would there have been righteousness in us, had it not been preceded by the grace which justifies us? And how would that crown have been rendered as due, had not all that we have — been given when it was not due?’ These are the words of Augustin; and although the Papists do not choose to keep by the Holy Scripture, they ought at least not to be so base as to renounce that which they pretend to hold. But even this is not all. It is true that it is a doctrine

which well deserves to be embraced, that God cannot be a righteous Judge to save us, unless he have been previously declared to be in the highest degree a merciful Father; that there will be no righteousness in us but that which he has placed there; and that he cannot reward us but by crowning his gifts. But it is also true, that, though God has given us grace to serve him, though we have laboriously done, according to our ability, all that was possible for us, though we have done so well that God accepts of it all; still there will be much to censure in all the best works that we have done, and the greatest virtue that can be perceived in us will be vicious.” — *Fr. Ser.*

ft66 “Son apparition.” “His appearing.”

ft67 “Quant au mot Grec, lequel on traduit manteline.” “As to the Greek word which is translated mantle or cloak.”

ft68 “Et aussi qu’il vouloit eviter la despense d’en achever une autre.” “And also because he wished to avoid the expense of buying another.”

ft69 “De leurs inspirations Divines.”

ft70 “Above all, let those whose office it is to instruct others look well to themselves; for however able they may be, they are very far from approaching Paul. This being the case, let them resolve to commit themselves to God, that he may give them grace to have still more ample knowledge of his will, to communicate to others what they have received. And when they have faithfully taught during their whole life, and when they are at the point of death, let them still desire to profit, in order to impart to their neighbors what they know; and let great and small, doctors and the common people, philosophers and idiots, rich and poor, old and young, — let all be exhorted by what is here taught them, to profit during their whole life, in such a manner that they shall never slacken their exertions, till they no longer see in part or in a mirror, but behold the glory of God face to face. — *Fr. Ser.*

ft71 “Comme un moyen ordonne de Dieu pour profiter.” “As a method appointed by God for profiting.”

ft72 “De ce que plusieurs L’avoyent ainsi lachement abandonne en la defense de sa cause.” “From many having so basely deserted them in the defense of his cause.”

ft73 “Le mot Grec signifie proprement une publication et proclamation qui se fait solennellement et comme a son de trompe.” “The Greek word

properly denotes a publication or proclamation which is made solemnly, and, as it were, with the sound of a trumpet.”

TRANSLATION

^{ft74} “Mon tres — cher fils.” “My dearly — beloved son.”

^{ft75} “Et suis certain qu’en toy aussi.” “And am certain that in thee also. “

^{ft76} “Et tout ce en quoy il m’a servi en Ephese tu le cognois tres — bien.”
“And all that in which he served me at Ephesus thou knowest very well.”

^{ft77} “Avec luy.”

^{ft78} “Si nous le renions.”

^{ft79} “Sans affection naturelle.”

^{ft80} “Mon institution, ou, ma conduite, ou, ma maniere de faire.” “My instruction, or, my conduct, or, my manner of acting.”