

1 TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF 1 TIMOTHY

Timothy, to whom this epistle is written, was eminent for his early piety and acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures; his mother was a Jewess, and his father a Greek, which was the reason why he was not circumcised in his infancy. Mention is made in the second epistle to him of his mother Eunice, and grandmother Lois, as believers, and of his knowledge of the Scriptures from a child: this excellent person the apostle meeting with at Lystra, and having a good report of him from the brethren there, he chose him to be his companion in his travels, and to assist him in the spread of the Gospel; and knowing that it would be very disagreeable to the Jews to hear the word of God from the lips of an uncircumcised person, he took him and circumcised him, becoming all things to all, that he might gain some. This being done, he went along with him into several parts, and he made great use of him, in preaching the word, planting churches, and writing epistles; he sent him to various places with messages from him, to Corinth, Philippi, and Thessalonica; and now had left him at Ephesus, where he besought him to abide for a while; for that he was the bishop, pastor, or overseer of that church is not likely, since his residence here was not constant, and was afterwards called away from hence by the apostle, who desired his stay there, under whom, and by whose directions, he acted while there; and seeing that this church had elders, bishops, or overseers, whom the Holy Ghost had set over them, whom the apostle called to him at Miletus, and gave them some advice and instructions. The design of Timothy's continuance there was to check growing errors and heresies, and to take care of, and preserve the discipline of God's house; and to charge him with these things was the design of this epistle; in which he teaches him how to behave himself in the church of God, by taking heed to his doctrine and conversation; and gives rules relating to the qualifications of bishops and deacons, and to the care of widows, and with regard to church censures, and the becoming walk and conversation of all sorts of persons of every office, age, sex, rank, and order. This epistle is thought to be written about the year 55.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY 1

In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle having entreated Timothy to abide at Ephesus, observes, that his end was, that he might check the false teachers there, whom he describes; and then he gives an account of his apostleship, and also of his conversion, to the encouragement of sinners, and to the glory of the grace of God; and closes with an exhortation to Timothy to constancy and perseverance in his Christian warfare. The inscription and salutation are in (^{500E}1 Timothy 1:1,2) and much in the common form; and whereas, when he went into Macedonia, he desired Timothy to continue at Ephesus, his end was, to restrain the false teachers from preaching the doctrine they did, which was contrary to the Gospel, fabulous, useless, and unedifying, (^{500B}1 Timothy 1:3,4) for though these men set up for teachers of the law, they went off, and strayed from its general end, which was love with faith, through their ignorance of it, (^{500B}1 Timothy 1:5-7) not but that the law itself was good, as Gospel ministers full well knew; which is said to prevent an objection against them, as laying it aside as useless; but the abuse of it is what is complained of, it being made for some persons, and not for others who are mentioned, between which, and the sound doctrine of the Gospel, there is an agreement, (^{500B}1 Timothy 1:8-11) which leads on the apostle to observe his call to the office of a preacher of it by Christ, his qualification for it, and investiture with it, for which he gives thanks, (^{501D}1 Timothy 1:12) And in order to illustrate the grace of God in converting him first, and then making him a minister of the word, he takes notice of his state and condition before conversion, what a vile sinner he had been, and of the abundant grace God bestowed on him in it, (^{501B}1 Timothy 1:13,14) And that this case of his might not seem strange and incredible, he observes, that this is the sum of the Gospel, that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, such an one as he was, (^{501B}1 Timothy 1:15). And besides, the end of the Lord in his conversion was, by the pattern of longsuffering he showed in him, that others might be encouraged to believe in Christ also, (^{501E}1 Timothy 1:16) and then for all this grace bestowed on him, he ascribes honour and glory to God, (^{501E}1 Timothy 1:17) and renews his charge to Timothy to fight manfully against the false teachers, to which he should be

the more induced by the consideration of the prophecies that went before of him, (^{<5018>}1 Timothy 1:18) and to hold faith and good conscience, which had been dropped by some professors; of which instances are given in Hymenaeus and Philetus, (^{<5019>}1 Timothy 1:19,20).

Ver. 1. *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ*, etc.] His name was well known to Timothy, and very dear to him; and so was his office as an apostle, and which he mentions, not so much for Timothy's sake, but for the sake of others, that what he delivers in this epistle might come with its proper weight and authority, and be regarded: of this his office, as well as name, (see Gill on "^{<600>}Romans 1:1"). How he came into this office next follows, not of himself, nor by men, but

by the commandment of God; the appointment and decree of God, by which he was separated to this office, even from eternity, and is the same with the counsel or will of God, (^{<400>}Ephesians 1:1) or it may refer to the order given by the Holy Ghost to the church; to set apart him and Barnabas, to the work of the ministry, (^{<412>}Acts 13:2) though this commandment is called the commandment of God

our Saviour; by whom is meant God the Father; and this character of him is mentioned, to show that the embassy the apostle was sent on as such, and in which the discharge of his office greatly lay, was the affair of salvation, to publish and declare that to the sons of men; and also to show the concern which God the Father has in that work: he resolved upon it, and appointed his people to it, and determined upon saving them by his Son, whom he pitched upon to be his salvation; he drew the scheme of it by his infinite wisdom, and sent his Son into the world to execute it; and he sends his ministers to publish the Gospel of it, and his Spirit to reveal and apply it to the hearts of his chosen ones; and keeps them by his power unto it, and will at last put them into the full possession of it; so that this character well suits with him, to whom it is also given, (^{<500>}Titus 3:4) as well as with his Son Jesus Christ, to whom it is more commonly ascribed, and from whom he is here distinguished: for it follows,

and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; who is both the author, and the ground and foundation of the grace of hope of salvation, and eternal life; not earthly enjoyments, nor any external thing whatever; not birth privileges, carnal descent, religious education, morality and civility, obedience to the law of Moses, moral or ceremonial; nor a profession of Christ, nor a bare subjection to his ordinances, but he himself: and there is

good ground to hope for pardon through his blood, which was shed for it; and for justification by his righteousness, which is freely wrought out, and freely imputed; and for salvation by him, since it is in him, and in no other, and is completely effected by him, and that for the worst of sinners, and is wholly of free grace, and which everyone that believes in him shall enjoy; and so for eternal life, which hope is conversant with; and good reason there is for it in Christ, seeing it is in him, and in his gift; what his grace gives a meetness for, and his righteousness a title to; and which he is possessed of in the name of his people, prepares for them, and will introduce them into. The Complutensian edition reads, “of the Father, and, our Saviour Jesus Christ”; and so the Ethiopic version, “of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ”.

Ver. 2. *Unto Timothy my own son in the faith*, etc.] Not in the flesh, or by natural descent, but in a spiritual sense, in the faith of Christ; for Timothy was not related to the apostle according to the flesh, as some have thought, but the relation was spiritual; though the apostle was not properly his spiritual father, or the instrument of his conversion; for Timothy was a converted person, and a disciple of Christ, and well reported of by the brethren, when the apostle first met with him, (~~Acts~~ Acts 16:1,2) but he calls him his son, either because of his age, being a young man; or because of his affection for him, so the Vulgate Latin version reads, “a beloved son”; or rather, because he was instructed more largely by the apostle into the doctrine of faith; and as a son, with a father, served with him in the Gospel of Christ. It may be rendered “a true or genuine son in the faith”, in distinction from nominal Christians, formal professors and hypocrites. Timothy was a real Christian, a true believer, and an hearty and upright professor and preacher of the faith of Christ, as well as truly regenerated by the Spirit of God.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord; the Arabic version reads, “and Lord Jesus Christ our Lord”. The form of salutation is the same as in all the epistles of the apostle, only that “mercy” is here inserted; and when he wishes “grace” to Timothy, he may mean a fresh discovery of the love and free favour of God unto him, and an increase of grace in him, and of the gifts of the Spirit upon him; and by “mercy” he may intend a fresh application of the pardoning mercy of God, through Christ, and all assistance, and success in his work as a minister, and all succour and support under every trial and exercise, and mercy at the last day, or the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life; and by

“peace” he may design peace of conscience through the blood of Christ, and all prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. And all this being wished for equally from Christ, as from God the Father, is a proof of the proper deity of our Lord.

Ver. 3. *As I besought thee to abide, still at Ephesus*, etc.] Where it seems he now was, being left here by the apostle, and where he was desired by him to continue:

when I went into Macedonia; not when he went his first journey there, for Timothy was then along with him, (^{<440B>}Acts 16:3,12) and so he seems to be in his journey through it, in (^{<440B>}Acts 20:3,4). It may be this may refer to a journey which Luke has given no account of:

that thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other doctrine; than the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; than what had been preached by the apostle at Ephesus, and the saints there had received; than what was agreeably to the Scriptures of truth, and was according to godliness; for all other doctrines must be divers and strange ones: nor would he have them teach in another way, in new words, but hold fast the form of sound words; for new words often produce new doctrines: the apostle perhaps by other doctrine chiefly respects the doctrine of justification by the works of the law. It seems as if there were some teachers in this place the apostle was suspicious of, or he had heard that they began to innovate in the doctrine of faith; wherefore he desires Timothy to continue a while, in order to be a check on these persons, and to charge them not to introduce any new doctrine; for it was only “some”, and not all that taught there, he was so to charge. Some refer this to hearers; and render, the words, “that they follow no other doctrine”; but it seems best to understand it of teachers; the Syriac and Arabic versions render the words as we do.

Ver. 4. *Neither give heed to fables*, etc.] Old wives' fables, (^{<500U>}1 Timothy 4:7) or Jewish fables, (^{<5014>}Titus 1:14) the traditions of the elders; anything that was not true; or if it was, yet idle, vain, trifling, and unprofitable:

and endless genealogies; not of deities, as the Theogony of the Gentiles, or the ten Sephiroth or numbers in the Cabalistic tree of the Jews, or the Aeones of the Gnostics and Valentinians, which are said to proceed from one another, as some have thought; but both the public and private genealogies of the Jews, which they kept to show of what tribe they were, or to prove themselves priests and Levites, and the like; of which there was

no end, and which often produced questions and debates. By reason of their captivities and dispersions, they were much at a loss to distinguish their tribes and families. Some care Ezra took of this matter, when the Jews returned from the Babylonish captivity. It is said ^{f1}, that **ʿysj wy hrç** [

“ten genealogies (or ten sorts of persons genealogized) came out of Babylon; priests, Levites, Israelites, profane (or unfit for the priesthood, though they sprung from priests) proselytes, freemen (servants made free), bastards, Nethinim or Gibeonites, such whose father was not known, and those that were took up in the streets.”

These Ezra brought up to Jerusalem thus distinguished, that they might be taken care of by the sanhedrim, and kept distinct; but these would often intermix and cause disputes; and sometimes these mixtures were connived at through partiality or fear ^{f2}

“Says R. Jochanan, by the temple, it is in our hands, (the gloss adds, to discover the illegitimate families of the land of Israel,) but what shall I do? for lo, the great men of this age are hid (or impure): in which he agreed with R. Isaac, who said, the family that is hid, let it be hid. Abai also saith, we have learned this by tradition, there was a family of the house of Tzeriphah, beyond Jordan, and a son of Zion, (a famous man, a man of authority,) set it at a distance, (proclaimed it illegitimate,) by his authority. And again, there was another, and he made it near (or pronounced it right) by his power. Again, there was another family, and the wise men would not discover it.”

By which we may see what management there was in these things, and what a foundation was laid for questions and debates. Of these public and private genealogies, (see Gill on ^{“4016”} Matthew 1:16”), to which may be added what R. Benjamin says ^{f3} of some Jews in his time, who were the Rechabites, and were very numerous, and had a prince over them of the house of David; and, adds he, they have a genealogical book, **twl aç twrgçmw**, “and extracts of questions”, which I should be tempted to render “clusters of questions”, which are with the head of the captivity; and this comes very near to what our apostle here says. And when it is observed, that Herod, that he might hide the meanness of his descent and birth, burnt all the genealogical writings in the public archives ^{f4}, it must be

still more difficult to fix the true account of things; and for the loss of the genealogical book, the public one, the Jews express a very great concern: for they say ^{f5}, that

“from the time the book of genealogies was hid, the strength of the wise men was weakened, and the light of their eyes grew dim. Says Mar Zutra, between Azel and Azel, (that is, between (~~1388~~ 1 Chronicles 8:38) and (~~1394~~ 1 Chronicles 9:44)) there is need of four hundred camel loads of commentaries.”

So intricate an affair, and such an endless business was this. And this affair of genealogies might be now the more the subject of inquiry among judaizing Christians, since there was, and still is, an expectation among the Jews, that in the times of the Messiah these things will be set aright. Says Maimonides ^{f6},

“in the days of the King Messiah, when his kingdom shall be settled, and all Israel shall be gathered to him, *מלך וסגן יבנה*, “they shall all of them be genealogized”, according to his word, by the Holy Ghost, as it is said, (~~398B~~ Malachi 3:3) he shall purify the sons of Levi, and say, this is a genealogized priest, and this is a genealogized Levite; and shall drive them away who are not genealogized (or related) to Israel, as it is said, (~~150B~~ Ezra 2:63). Hence you learn, that by the Holy Ghost they shall be genealogized, those that arrogate and proclaim their genealogy; and he shall not genealogize Israel but by their tribes, for he shall make known that this is of such a tribe, and this is of such a tribe; but he shall not say concerning such an one he is a bastard, and this is a servant; for so shall it be, that the family that is obscure shall be obscure.”

Or else the genealogical account of their traditions may be meant, which they trace from Moses to Joshua, from Joshua to the elders, from the elders to the prophets, from the prophets to the men of the great synagogue, and from one doctor to another ^{f7}, which to pursue is endless, tedious, and tiresome:

which minister questions; as the traditions of the elders, and the genealogical account of them did; the Talmud is full of the questions, debates, contentions, and decisions of the doctors about them:

rather than godly edifying, which is in faith; and which is the principal end of preaching, hearing, and conversation; and that may be called “godly edifying, or the edification of God”, as it may be rendered, which he is the author of, and which he approves of, and is by, and according to his word; or that in which souls are built up an habitation for God, and are built up in faith and holiness, and by an increase of every grace: and this is “in faith”, not only in the grace of faith, but by the doctrine of faith, on which the saints may build one another, and by which they are edified through the faithful ministration of it by the ministers of the word; when fabulous stories and disputes, about genealogies, are useless and unedifying: not that the apostle condemns all genealogies, such as we have in the writings of the Old Testament, and in the evangelists, nor all inquiries into them, and study of them, which, rightly to settle, is in some cases of great importance and use, but the private and unprofitable ones before mentioned. Some copies read, “the dispensation of God, which is in faith”; meaning the dispensation of the mysteries of grace, which are in the doctrine of faith, which becomes a faithful steward of them, and not fables and genealogies, which issue in questions, quarrels, and contentions.

Ver. 5. *Now the end of the commandment is charity*, etc.] By the “commandment” may be meant, the order given to Timothy, or the charge committed to him; (see ^{<5018>}1 Timothy 1:18) to forbid the teaching of another doctrine, and to avoid fables and endless genealogies; the end and design of which was to cultivate peace, to maintain and secure brotherly love, which cannot long subsist, when a different doctrine is introduced and received; and to promote godly edification, which is brought about by charity or love, for charity edifies; but is greatly hindered by speculative notions, fabulous stories, and genealogical controversies and contentions: or by it may be intended the ministration of the Gospel, called the commandment, (^{<5014>}1 Timothy 6:14), because enjoined the preachers of it by Christ; the end of which is to bring persons to the obedience of faith, or to that faith which works by love, to believe in Christ, to love the Lord, his truths, ordinances, people, and ways; or rather the moral law is designed, which is often called the commandment, (^{<5008>}Romans 7:8-12) since of this the apostle treats in some following verses; the end and design, sum and substance, completion and perfection of which law are love to God, and love to one another; (see ^{<4026>}Matthew 22:36-39 ^{<5008>}Romans 13:8,9 ^{<4054>}Galatians 5:14), which charity or love, when right,

springs out of a pure heart; which no man has naturally; every man's heart is naturally impure; nor can he make it pure; by the strength of nature, or by anything that he can do: there are some that are pure in their own eyes, and in the esteem of others, and yet are not cleansed from their filthiness, and are inwardly full of all manner of impurity; though there are some that have pure hearts, and they are such, who have clean hearts created in them by the Spirit of God; who are regenerated and sanctified by him; whose hearts are purified by faith; and who have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ; and who are not double minded, speak with a heart and a heart, but whose hearts are sincere and upright, and without hypocrisy; so that charity or love, from such a heart, is love without dissimulation, which is not in tongue and words only, but in deed and in truth; it is an unfeigned love, or loving with a pure heart fervently.

And of a good conscience; there is a conscience in every man, that accuses or excuses, unless it is cauterized or seared: but this conscience is naturally evil and defiled, and does not perform its office aright; either it takes no notice of, and is not concerned about sin, and has no remorse for it, or it takes notice of little things, and lets pass greater ones, or speaks peace when destruction is at hand: a good conscience is a conscience purified by the grace of God, and purged from dead works by the blood of Christ; under the influence of which a man acts uprightly in the discharge of his duty, and exercises a conscience void of offence towards God and man; and charity, proceeding from such a conscience, is of the right kind: and of faith unfeigned; with which a man really, and from the heart, believes what he professes; so did not Simon Magus, and all other temporary believers, whose faith is a feigned faith, a dead and inactive one; whereas true faith is an operative grace, it is attended with good works, and particularly it works by love: and that charity or love, which springs from faith unfeigned, is unfeigned love also, such as answers the design, and is the substance of the commandment. These words may be considered in a gradation, or as a spiritual genealogy, in opposition to the endless ones before mentioned, thus; that charity which is the end of the commandment comes out of a pure heart, out of which proceeds a good conscience, and from thence faith unfeigned. But the other way of interpreting seems best.

Ver. 6. *From which some having swerved*, etc.] The apostle, in this verse and the next, describes the persons he suspected of teaching other doctrines, and of introducing fables and endless genealogies; they were such who departed from the above things; they erred from the

commandment, or law, notwithstanding their great pretensions to a regard unto it; at least they missed the mark, the end and design of it; they went astray from that, and instead of promoting charity or love, created feuds, contentions, and divisions in the churches; and were far from having a pure heart, being filthy dreamers, and sensual persons, destitute of the Spirit of God, and were such who put away a good conscience, and made shipwreck of faith: such were Hymenaeus, Philetus, Alexander, and others, of whom he also says, they

have turned aside to vain jangling; which he elsewhere calls empty talk, and vain babblings, (^{<501>}1 Timothy 6:20 ^{<502>}2 Timothy 2:16), from the solid doctrines of the Gospel, and a solid way of handling them, they turned to vain, idle, useless, and unprofitable subjects of discourse, and to treating upon subjects in a vain, jejune, and empty manner; entertaining their hearers with foolish and trifling questions and answers to them about the law, and with strifes about words, which were unserviceable and unedifying; they were unruly and vain talkers, (^{<503>}Titus 1:10).

Ver. 7. *Desiring to be teachers of the law*, etc.] They were very fond of being called Rabbi, Rabbi, and styled doctors of the law, and of being thought to have skill in interpreting the law, and good talents in expounding it, and preaching upon it; which was now most in vogue, and gained the greatest applause, when the preaching of the Gospel was treated with contempt, not only by the unbelieving Jews, but by judaizing Christians, and carnal professors.

Understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm: they did not understand the law, the nature and end, the purity and spirituality, and perfection of it, which they were so fond of teaching, and went into many foolish and unlearned questions about it; (see ^{<504>}2 Timothy 2:23 ^{<505>}Titus 3:9), and which they as foolishly answered: these are the ignorant and unlearned men, who, notwithstanding their vain show of learning, and pretence to skill in interpreting the law, wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction, and that of others; they were ignorant of the things they talked of, and knew not by what arguments to confirm them, and yet were very bold and confident in their assertions: and generally speaking so it is, that those who can prove least assert most, and that with the greatest assurance.

Ver. 8. *But we know that the law is good*, etc.] The apostle says this to prevent an objection that might be made to him, that seeing he bore so hard

on such who were fond of being teachers of the law, he was himself against the law, and the preaching and proper use of it; but this he would not have concluded, for he and his fellow labourers in the ministry, and all true believers know, from the Scriptures of truth, from the agreement of the law with the Gospel, and from their own experience, that the law is good, provided it be used in a lawful way, and to lawful purposes: and this is to be understood not of the ceremonial law, which was now disannulled, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it, so that there was no lawful use of that; but of the moral law, which must needs be good, since the author of it is God, who is only good; and nothing but good can come from him: the law, strictly moral, is a copy of his nature, transcribed out of himself, as well as with his own hands; and is a declaration of his will, and is stamped with his authority, and therefore must be good: the matter of it is good, it contains good, yea, great and excellent things; the matter of it is honestly and morally good, as to love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with God: and it is pleasantly good to a regenerate man, who loves it, and delights in it after the inner man, and serves it with his spirit; though the carnal mind cannot be subject to it, but rejects it, and rebels against it: and it is also profitably good; for though obedience to it is not profitable to God, yet it is to men; and though eternal life is not obtained hereby, nor any reward given for keeping it, yet in keeping it there is a reward; and that peace is enjoyed, which the transgressors of it are strangers to: it is good in the uses of it, both to sinners and to saints. To sinners it is useful for the knowledge of sin, to convince of it, and bring them to a sense of it, and concern for it, which is effectually done, when the Spirit of God sets in with it, or brings this commandment home to the heart; and if it has not this use, it is sometimes a means of restraining men from sin, which is the use of civil laws among men; and if it has not this, it is of use however to accuse men rightly of sin, and to pronounce justly guilty before God for it, to curse them as they deserve it, and to sentence to condemnation and death: and to believers it is of use, though they are not under it as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and are freed from its curse and condemnation, and under no obligation to seek for life and righteousness by it; to them it is of use, to point out to them what is the will of God, and what should be done, and not done; and it is a rule of walk and conversation to them, as in the hands of Christ; and is as a glass to them to behold their own deformity, the impurity of their nature, the plague of their own hearts, and the imperfection of their obedience; by which they see the insufficiency of their own righteousness, how far they

are from perfection, and what carnal creatures they are, when compared with this law: and as this serves to put them out of conceit with themselves, so it tends to make Christ and his righteousness more lovely and valuable in their esteem; who has wrought out a righteousness as broad and as long as the law is, and by which it is magnified and made honourable, and has delivered them from its curse and condemnation. And this law is good as it is holy, in its author, nature, and use; and as it is just, requiring just things, and doing that which is just, by acquitting those who are interested in Christ's righteousness, and in condemning those that have no righteousness; and as it is a spiritual and perfect law, which reaches the spirit and soul of man, and is concerned with inward thoughts and motions, as well as outward actions; and especially the end of it, the fulfilling end of it is good, which is Jesus Christ, who was made under it, came to fulfil it, and has answered all the demands of it: so that it must be good, and which cannot be denied,

if a man use it lawfully; for if it is used in order to obtain life, righteousness, and salvation by the works of it, or by obedience to it, it is used unlawfully: for the law does not give life, nor can righteousness come by it; nor are, or can men be saved by the works of it; to use the law for such purposes, is to abuse it, as the false teachers did, and make that which is good in itself, and in its proper use, to do what is evil; namely, to obscure and frustrate the grace of God, and make null and void the sufferings and death of Christ. A lawful use of the law is to obey it, as in the hands of Christ, the King of saints, and lawgiver in his church, from a principle of love to him, in the exercise of faith on him, without any mercenary selfish views, without trusting to, or depending on, what is done in obedience to it, but with a view to the glory of God, to testify our subjection to Christ, and our gratitude to him for favours received from him.

Ver. 9. *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man*, etc.] No man is naturally righteous since Adam, excepting the man Christ Jesus: some that are righteous in their own opinion, and in the esteem of others, are not truly and really so; none are righteous, or can be justified in the sight of God by the works of the law; those only are righteous men, who are made so through the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them: and such a righteous man is here intended, who believes in Christ with the heart unto righteousness, who lays hold on Christ's righteousness, and receives it by faith; in consequence of which he lives soberly, righteously, and godly,

though not without sin, since there is no such just man upon earth. Now for such a man the law was not made; which must be understood not of its original constitution and make, for it was certainly made for, and given to Adam, who was a righteous man, and was written upon his heart in a state of innocence; and who had a positive law made also for him, and given to him as a trial of his obedience to this: it was also delivered to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, who were, many of them, at least, righteous men; and besides all this, the law was made for Jesus Christ; he was the end, the mark, and scope at which it aimed, and for whose sake it was given to Israel, that he might be made under it, and fulfil it. Nor does this expression deny all use of the law to a righteous man, which has been pointed out on the preceding verse, but only removes an unlawful use, and a wrong end of the law: it never was made with any such view as to obtain righteousness by it; for, a righteous man, as Adam, in innocence, and all that are justified by Christ's righteousness, need it not for such a purpose, because they are already righteous; and sinners can never attain to righteousness by it, since it cannot give life unto them: it is made therefore not for the former with the view now mentioned, but for the latter, and that both for the restraining of sin, and punishing of sinners. The words **δικαιῶ νομὸς οὐ κεῖται**, may be rendered, "the law does not lie upon a righteous man", or against him. It does not lie as a weight or burden on him; its precept does not lie on him, as a task to be performed; nor does its penalty, the curse, lie on him as a punishment to be bore by him: it does not lie upon him, nor against him, as an accusing law, its mouth is stopped by the righteousness of Christ, by which he is denominated a righteous man; nor as a terrifying law, and bringing into bondage by its threats and menaces; nor as a rigorous law, obliging to obedience in a forcible and compulsive way; seeing there is no need of it, the righteous man delights in it, and cheerfully serves it, and the love of Christ constrains him to obey it freely. And much less does it lie on him, or against him as a cursing or condemning law, since Christ has redeemed him from the curse of it.

But for the lawless and disobedient; by the "lawless" are meant, not the Gentiles, which were without the written law, but such who have it, and despise and reject it, and live not according to it, but transgress it: and "the disobedient" design such who are not subject to it: who are sons of Belial, children without the yoke; who cast the law of the Lord behind their backs; who are not, nor can they be subject to it, without the powerful and

efficacious grace of God. Now the law lies upon, and against such persons, as an accusing, terrifying, cursing, and condemning law.

For the ungodly, and for sinners; by the “ungodly” are intended, such as are without God in the world, who neither fear God, nor regard man, who neglect and despise the worship of God, and say to him, depart from us, (^{<R214>}Job 21:14,15) and by “sinners” are designed notorious ones, who are exceeding great sinners, always sinning, making sin their constant business and employment; on and against these the law lies:

for unholy and profane: such are unholy persons, who are destitute of inward principles of truth and holiness, and who live unholy lives and conversations; and “profane” persons are those who profane the name of the Lord by cursing and swearing, and who profane his day, doctrines, and ordinances, and live dissolute and profane lives, being abandoned to all sin and wickedness; these three couples of wicked men, expressed in general terms, seem to have respect greatly to the moral part of the four precepts of the decalogue, as the following particulars do to the other six:

for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers; though there is no law that expressly mentions this, yet is beyond all doubt a breach both of the fifth and sixth commands; and if cursing parents, and disobedience to them, were punishable by the law with death, then much more the murder of them; (see ^{<R119>}Leviticus 20:9 ^{<R218>}Deuteronomy 21:18) though the words will bear to be rendered, “for strikers of fathers, and strikers of mothers”; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render them, and against this there was an express law, (^{<R215>}Exodus 21:15). According to the Pompeian law, one guilty of parricide was to be sewed up in a sack with a dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape, and cast into the sea, or into a river^{f8}:

for manslayers, guilty of the murder of any man, which was always punishable with death, and was a breach of the sixth command; (see ^{<R006>}Genesis 9:6 ^{<R213>}Exodus 20:13 21:12).

Ver. 10. *For whoremongers*, etc.] Fornicators and adulterers, who were transgressors of the seventh command, (^{<R214>}Exodus 20:14 ^{<R210>}Leviticus 20:10) these God will judge, and such shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone:

for them that defile themselves with mankind; who are guilty of sodomy; such, according to the law, were to die, (^{<R822>}Leviticus 18:22 20:13) the wrath of God was revealed from heaven in a very visible and remarkable

manner against this abomination, by raining fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and upon the cities of the plain, who defiled themselves in this way:

for men stealers; who decoyed servants or free men, and stole them away, and sold them for slaves; see the laws against this practice, and the punishment such were liable to, in (^{<Q216>}Exodus 21:16 ^{<R247>}Deuteronomy 24:7). This practice was condemned by the Flavian law among the Romans^{f9}, and was not allowed of among the Grecians^{f10}; the death with which such were punished was strangling, according to the Jews^{f11}:

for liars; who speak what is false, against their own knowledge and conscience, and with a design to deceive; who lie against their neighbours, and act falsely and deceitfully in trade and merchandise, as well as speak that which is not true; (see ^{<R162>}Leviticus 6:2)

for perjured persons; who take a false oath on any account, and bear false witness against their neighbour. Now upon, and against all, and each of these, the law lies, as an accusing, threatening, and cursing law:

and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; the law lies against it, takes notice of it, charges with it, condemns and punishes for it: by “sound doctrine” is meant the doctrine of the Gospel, which is in itself pure and incorrupt, and is the cause of soundness and health to others; it is health to the navel, and marrow to the bones; its doctrines are the wholesome words of Christ, and by them souls are nourished up unto eternal life; when the errors and heresies of men are in themselves rotten and corrupt, and also eat as do a canker. Here it may be observed, that there is an entire harmony and agreement between the Gospel and the law, rightly understood and used; what is contrary to the one, is also to the other; the Gospel no more countenances sin than the law does; and whatever is repugnant to the Gospel is liable to be punished by the law.

Ver. 11. *According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God*, etc.] For no doctrine is sound, but what is agreeable to that: this is a very great encomium of the Gospel. The doctrine preached by the apostles was not only Gospel, or good news, and glad tidings, but the Gospel of God; of which he is the author, and which relates to his glory, the glory of all his perfections; which reveals his purposes, shows his covenant, and exhibits the blessings and promises of it; and is the Gospel of the blessed God, who is blessed in himself, and is the fountain of blessedness to others; and

particularly he blesses his chosen ones with spiritual blessings, and which are set forth and declared in the Gospel; for which reason this epithet seems to be given to God here: and it is a glorious one; it discovers the glory of God, of his wisdom, grace, and love in the salvation of men; its doctrines of peace and pardon, righteousness and salvation by Jesus Christ, are glorious ones; and so are its promises, being great and precious, all yea and amen in Christ, absolute, unconditional, unchangeable, and irreversible; its ordinances also are glorious ones, being amiable and pleasant, and not grievous and burdensome to believers; and it is glorious in its effects, being the power of God unto salvation, the means of enlightening the blind, of quickening the dead, of delivering men from bondage and servitude, of turning men from sin and Satan to God, and of refreshing and comforting distressed minds, and of reviving the spirits of drooping saints, of establishing and strengthening them, and nourishing them up to eternal life. The apostle adds,

which was committed to my trust: to distinguish this Gospel from another, from that of the false teachers, which was an inglorious one, and he had nothing to do with; and to show the excellency and worth of it; it being valuable, was deserving of care and keeping, and was a depositum the person intrusted with was faithfully and carefully to keep and preserve.

Ver. 12. *And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord,* etc. | The subject matter of this thanksgiving being the apostle's call to the ministry of the word, and his furniture and fitness for it, shows, that while others were fond of being teachers, and called doctors of the law, he esteemed it an high honour and special favour bestowed upon him, that he was a preacher of the Gospel; and that all his gifts and abilities for it were not of himself, nor from men, but were owing to the free grace of God, and favour of Christ; wherefore he gloried not in them, as if he had not received them, but gives Christ the glory of them, and thanks to him for them;

who hath enabled me; who gave him all his abilities for the preaching of the Gospel, and all that strength to perform the various parts of labour and service he was called unto, and all that firmness, resolution, and fortitude of mind he was endued with, to bear and suffer what he did for the sake of Christ and his Gospel.

For that he counted me faithful; not that he was so antecedent to the grace and gifts bestowed on him by Christ, or that Christ foresaw that he would be so, and therefore chose him for his service; but he counted him faithful,

having made him so by his grace, and thus he kept him; faithfulness being a necessary requisite and qualification for a Gospel minister, he having a great trust committed to him, being made a steward of the manifold grace and mysteries of God:

putting me into the ministry. The ministry of the word, the work of the ministry, or preaching of the Gospel, the dispensation or administration of it to the sons of men; this he did not thrust himself into, nor take this honour to, and of himself; nor was he put into it by men, but was chosen to it of God, and called unto it by the Spirit, and was placed in it by Christ himself, who in person appeared to him, and made a minister of him; (see ~~<400>~~Romans 1:1 ~~<409>~~Acts 9:15) (~~<413>~~Acts 13:2 26:16). The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, “his ministry”, the ministry of Christ.

Ver. 13. *Who was before a blasphemer,* etc.] Of the name of Christ, contrary to which he thought he ought to do many things; and he not only blasphemed that name himself, calling him an impostor and a deceiver, but he compelled others to blaspheme it also, (~~<409>~~Acts 26:9,11). This, as well as what follows, is said, to illustrate the grace of God in his conversion, and call to the ministry:

and a persecutor: for not content to speak evil of Christ, of his person, people, truths, and ordinances, he acted against them; not only breathed out against the disciples threatenings and slaughter, but did many evil things to them, and destroyed them which called on the name of Christ; persecuted Christ in his members, and them beyond measure, even unto death, (~~<400>~~Acts 9:1,5,13,21 22:4 ~~<4013>~~Galatians 1:13)

And injurious; not barely using contumelious and reproachful words of Christ, and his people, which is the sense of some versions, and seems to be included in the first character; but using force and violence, and doing injury, not only to the characters, but persons and properties of the saints, making havoc of the church, haling men and women out of their houses, and committing them to prison; and now it was that Benjamin ravined as a wolf, the apostle being of that tribe; (see ~~<408>~~Acts 8:3 ~~<0427>~~Genesis 49:27).

But I obtained mercy: the Vulgate Latin version reads, “the mercy of God”; God had mercy on him, unasked and unsought for, as well as unmerited; God had mercy on him when he was in the career of his sin, and stopped him; and of his abundant mercy begat him again to a lively hope of forgiveness and eternal life; and through his great love quickened him,

when dead in trespasses and sins; and according to the multitude of his tender mercies, forgave and blotted out all his iniquities; and put him openly among his children, his family and household; and to all this added the grace of apostleship: he put him into the ministry, and, of a blaspheming and injurious persecutor, made him a laborious, faithful, and useful preacher of the Gospel.

Because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. This is said, not as an extenuation of this sin, or as an excuse for himself; for this was not the apostle's method, since in the next verse he calls himself the chief of sinners; besides, ignorance is not an excuse but an aggravation of sin, especially when there are means of knowledge, and these are not attended to; and when persons are not open to conviction, and reject the fullest evidence, which was the case here: nor can unbelief be pleaded in such a man's favour, who heard what Stephen had to say; and though he could not resist his wisdom, received not the truth spoken by him, but consented to his death; moreover, all sins spring from ignorance, and are aggravated by unbelief: but this phrase describes the apostle's state and condition; he was a poor, blind, ignorant bigot, an unbelieving and hardened creature, and so an object of mercy, pity, and compassion; and he who has compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, had compassion on him. He indeed did not know that Jesus was the Christ, or that his followers were the true church of God; he really thought he ought to do what he did, and that, in doing it, he did God good service; he had a zeal, but not according to knowledge; and therefore did not sin wilfully and maliciously against light, and knowledge, and conscience, and so not the sin against the Holy Ghost; as some of the Pharisees did, and therefore died without mercy, and were not capable subjects of mercy, and proper objects of it; nor is it ever extended to such: but this not being the case of the apostle, mercy was of sovereign good will and pleasure vouchsafed to him; his ignorance and unbelief were not a reason or cause of his obtaining mercy, which is always shown in a sovereign way; but a reason, showing, that that was mercy that was vouchsafed to him, since he was such an ignorant and unbelieving creature. It is a good note of Beza's on the place, “en merita preparationis quae profert apostolus”; “what works, merits, previous qualifications and preparations were there in the apostle, fitting him for the grace and mercy of God”, seeing in the midst of his sins, and in the full pursuit of them, the grace of God laid hold upon him, and mercy was shown him? there is

nothing between his being a blasphemer, a persecutor, an injurious person, an ignorant unbeliever, and his obtaining mercy.

Ver. 14. *And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*, etc.] That is, the love of Jehovah the Father; so the Ethiopic version reads, “the grace of God”; of God the Father, since he is distinguished in the text from Jesus Christ. God is abundant in grace and goodness; he is rich and plenteous in mercy; there is an overflow of love in his heart to his chosen people, and in conversion it flows out, and abounds and superabounds; (see ~~4:10~~ Romans 5:20)

with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; these are the effects of the love and favour of God displayed in conversion, or which the grace of God brings along with it, and implants in the soul at that time, as it did in the apostle; for by “faith” is not meant the faithfulness of God to his Son, and to his covenant, oath, and promise, which now began visibly to be made good; nor the faith of the Gospel committed to the apostle's trust, which was an high favour; but the grace of faith, which is a pure gift of God, and a distinguishing instance of his grace; for all men have it not, only his elect; and is a most precious and excellent grace, and of great use and importance: it receives every blessing from Christ, and gives him all the glory; through it much peace, joy, and comfort are enjoyed here, and with it is connected eternal life and salvation hereafter: and by “love” also is meant, not the love with which God loves his people, for that is designed by the grace of our Lord, though there is a very great display of that in conversion, which is a time of love; but the internal grace of love, even love to God, to Christ, and to his people, which the apostle was before destitute of; but now instead of unbelief he had faith, and instead of rage and madness against Christ, and the saints, his soul was filled with love to both. The Arabic version reads, “with my faith, and my love”. The phrase, “which is in Christ Jesus”, denotes either that the spring of these graces is in Christ, and that they come from him, in whom all fulness dwells; or that he is the object of them, in which they centre, and on whom they are exercised, and particularly that love to the saints was shown for his sake.

Ver. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation*, etc.] This is said, lest it should be thought strange, or scarcely credible, that so great a sinner should be saved; as well as to give a summary of the glorious Gospel the apostle was intrusted with; and in opposition to fables, endless genealogies, and vain jangling, and contentions about the law. The doctrine

of Christ's coming into the world, and of salvation by him, as it is the sum and substance of the Gospel, so it is a “faithful saying”; in which the faithfulness of God is displayed to himself, and the perfections of his nature, his holiness, justice, love, grace, and mercy; to his law, which is magnified, and made honourable; to his word of promise hereby fulfilled; and to his Son in carrying him through the work: and the faithfulness of Christ is discovered herein, both to his Father with whom, and to his friends for whom, he engaged to obtain salvation; and the faithfulness of ministers is shown in preaching it, and of other saints in professing it, and abiding by it: it is a true saying, and not to be disputed or doubted of, but to be believed most firmly; it is certain that God the Father sent his Son into the world for this purpose; and Christ himself assures us, that he came for this end; his carriage to sinners, and his actions, testified the same; his works and miracles confirm it; and the numberless instances of sinners saved by him evince the truth of it: and it is “worthy of all acceptation”; or to be received by all sorts of persons, learned, or unlearned, rich or poor, greater or lesser sinners; and to be received in all ways, and in the best manner, as the word of God, and not man; with heartiness and readiness, and with love, joy, and gladness, and with meekness, faith, and fear, and by all means; for it is entirely true, absolutely necessary, and suitable to the case of all, and is to be highly valued and esteemed by those who do approve and accept of it. It is the Christian Cabala, or the evangelical tradition, delivered by the Father to Christ, by him to his apostles, and by them to the saints, by whom it is cordially received. The apostle seems to allude to the Cabala of the Jews, their oral law, which they say^{f12} was delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, and by him to Joshua; and by Joshua to the elders; and by the elders to the prophets; and so from one to another to his times: but here he suggests, that if they would have a Cabala, here is one, that is firm, and true, and certain, and worthy to be received, whereas the Jewish one was precarious, yea, false and untrue. Indeed, sometimes the words of the prophets are so called by them; so that passage in (²⁰²³Joel 2:13) is called **hl bq**, “Cabala”^{f13}, some thing delivered and received; upon which one of their commentators^{f14} has these words,

“whatever a prophet commands the Israelites, makes known unto them, or exhorts them to, is a Cabala.”

And if a prophetic command or admonition, then surely: such an evangelical doctrine, as follows, is entitled to this character,

that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; Christ came into the world, being sent by his Father, but not against his will, but with his free consent: he came voluntarily in the fulness of time into this sinful world, where he was ill treated; and this was not by local motion, or change of place, but by assumption of nature; and the end of it was, that he might be the Saviour of lost sinners, as all men are, both by Adam's sin, and their own transgressions; though he came not to save all, for then all would be saved, whereas they are not; and if he came to save them, he must have then so far lost his end; but he came to save sinners, of all sorts, even notorious sinners, the worst and chief of sinners: and the apostle instances in himself,

of whom I am chief; or "first"; not that he was the first in time; Adam was the first man that sinned, though Eve was before him in the transgression: it is a most stupid notion, that some gave into from this passage, as if the soul of Adam passed from one body to another, till it came to Paul, and therefore he calls himself the first of sinners: but his meaning is, that he was the first in quality, or the greatest and chiefest of sinners, not only of those that are saved, but of all men, Jews or Gentiles; and this he said not hyperbolically, nor out of modesty, but from a real sense or apprehension he had of himself, and his sins, which were made exceeding sinful to him; or he was the chief of sinners, and exceeded all others in his way of sinning, in blaspheming the name of Christ, and persecuting his saints, otherwise his conversation was externally moral, and in his own, and in the opinion of others, blameless: he was no fornicator, adulterer, thief, extortioner, etc. but in the above things he went beyond all others, and was a ringleader in them; and the remembrance of these sins abode with him, and kept him humble all his days; he was always ready to acknowledge them, and express his vileness and unworthiness on account of them: hence he here says, not "of whom I was", but "of whom I am chief". Now such sinners, and all sorts of sinners, Christ came to save from all their sins, original and actual; from the law, its curse and condemnation; from the bondage of Satan, the evil of the world, and wrath to come, and from every enemy; and that, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, by fulfilling the law, bearing its penalty, offering himself a sacrifice for sin, thereby finishing it, making reconciliation for it, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness: and a great Saviour he is, and an only one; a full, suitable, able, and willing Saviour; a Saviour of the soul, as well as of the body, and of both with an everlasting salvation.

Ver. 16. *Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy,* etc.] Though so great a sinner, and even the chief of sinners:

that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering; not that the apostle was the first that was converted upon Christ's coming to save sinners; for there were many converted before him, and very great sinners too, and he speaks of himself as one born out of due time; unless it can be thought that he was the first of the persecutors of the church, upon the death of Stephen, that was converted: but the word "first" is not an "adverb" of time, but a "noun" expressing the character of the apostle, as before; and the sense is, that in him, the first or chief of sinners, Jesus Christ exhibited an instance of his abundant longsuffering exercised towards his elect for their salvation; he waiting in the midst of all their sins and rebellions to be gracious to them; and of this, here was a full proof in the Apostle Paul: what longsuffering and patience were showed, while he held the clothes of them that stoned Stephen, when he made havoc and haled men and women to prison, and persecuted them to death? and this was done,

for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting; either to those of his fellow persecutors, or of others in that age, who should be made sensible of their sins, and by this instance and example of grace be encouraged to believe in Christ for life and salvation; or to all awakened and convinced sinners then, and in every age, who from hence may conceive hope of salvation in Christ for themselves, though ever so great sinners; since such patience and longsuffering were exercised towards, and such grace bestowed upon, one that had been a sinner of the first rank and size, yea, the chief of sinners: in him was delineated the grace of God, and in his conversion it was painted in its most lively colours; and a just representation is given of it, for the encouragement of the faith and hope of others in Christ. Christ is here represented as the object of faith; and true faith regards him, looks unto him, and deals with him for eternal life and salvation. Our countryman, Mr. Mede, thinks that the sense is, that the conversion of the Apostle Paul was a pattern of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day; and his thought seems to be a very good one: the apostle's conversion is a pledge and earnest of theirs, and showed that God had not cast away all that people; and carries in it some likeness and agreement with theirs: as his, theirs will be in the midst of all their blindness and unbelief; and when they have filled up the measure of their sins; and they will be a nation born at once, suddenly, and by the immediate power

and grace of God, without the ministry of the word, which they will not hear: thus they will be converted as he was, and become as hearty lovers and friends of the Gentile churches.

Ver. 17. *Now unto the King eternal*, etc.] This doxology, or ascription of glory to God, on account of the grace bestowed upon the apostle, may be considered, either as referring to all the three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the one and only God; and to whom all the attributes of wisdom, power, eternity, immortality, or incorruptibleness, and invisibility, belong; and who are jointly concerned in the grace bestowed upon any of the sons of men. Or else to God the Father, in agreement with a parallel place in (^{<4567>}Romans 16:27) who is the only true God, in opposition to nominal and fictitious deities, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and to whom the several epithets here used may be unquestionably given: he has shown his wisdom in the works of creation, providence, and grace; he is the everlasting King, or the King of ages, or of worlds; he is Maker of the worlds, and the Governor of them throughout all ages and generations; he only has immortality, and is the incorruptible God, and who is invisible, whose shape has never been seen, nor his voice heard: or else this may be thought to belong to Jesus Christ, since it is to him the apostle gives thanks for putting him into the ministry; and from him he obtained mercy, and received abundant grace; and he it was who came into the world to save sinners, and who showed forth all longsuffering in him, (see ^{<4012>}1 Timothy 1:12-16), upon which the apostle breaks out into this attribution of glory and honour, and which agrees with (^{<6025>}Jude 1:25). And everything here said is applicable to him; he is the eternal King, whose is the kingdom of nature, providence, and grace; his throne is for ever and ever, and of his kingdom and government there is no end; he is the “King of ages”, as the phrase may be rendered, and so his kingdom is called $\mu\upsilon\mu\iota\ \omega[\ \iota\ \kappa\ \tau\omega\kappa\iota\ \mu$, “the kingdom of all ages”, (^{<4513>}Psalm 145:13) and which endures throughout all generations; and this distinguishes him from all other kings. Scarce any king ever reigned an age, but Christ has reigned, and will reign throughout all ages. No regard is here had, as some have thought, to the Aeones of the Gnostics and Valentinians; but rather the apostle adopts a phrase into his doxology, frequently used by the Jews in their prayers, many of which begin after this manner;

“blessed art thou, O Lord our God, $\mu\iota\ \omega[\ \eta\ \text{Æ}\iota\ \mu$ “the king of the age, or world”, etc.”

and $\mu\gamma\mu\lambda\ \omega[\text{h l k } \hat{\omega}\text{br}$, “Lord of all ages, or worlds”, etc.^{f15}. Other attributes and epithets follow, as

immortal or “incorruptible”. Christ is the living God, and the living Redeemer; and though he died as man, he will die no more, but ever lives to make intercession for his people, and to reign over them, and protect them: who also may be said to be “invisible”, who was so in his divine nature, till manifest in the flesh; and now in his human nature he is taken out of the sight of men, and is not to be beheld with bodily eyes by men on earth: and he is

the only wise God; he is “the only God”, so the Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, read; not to the exclusion of the Father or Spirit, but in opposition to all false deities, or those who are not by nature God: and he is the only wise God; who is wisdom itself, and of himself; and is the fountain of wisdom, both natural and spiritual, unto others; wherefore to him be

honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen. Christ is crowned with honour and glory, and he is worthy of it; and it becomes all men to honour the Son, as they do the Father: he is the brightness of his glory, and equal to him; and the glory of deity, of all the divine perfections, and works, and also worship, should be given him; as well as the glory of salvation, and of all the grace the sons of men partake of; and that not only now, but to all eternity.

Ver. 18. *This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy*, etc.] After a digression the apostle had made concerning himself, his conversion, and call to the ministry, he returns to his former subject, and original design, and renews the charge he gave to Timothy; and which was not only an order to charge others to teach no other doctrine than that of the Gospel; but includes the charge of preaching it himself, and intends the glorious Gospel of the blessed God committed to his trust, and the whole form of sound words he had heard of him, and which he had charged him to keep pure and incorrupt: and this was done,

according to the prophecies which went before on thee; by which are meant, not the prophecies of the Old Testament, though of these Timothy had a considerable share of knowledge from a child, and was hereby greatly qualified to have such a charge committed to him; but then these were not prophecies concerning him, but the Messiah, his person, office,

kingdom, and grace: nor are any particular revelations made unto the Apostle Paul concerning Timothy intended, of which there is no account; the revelations and visions he had, related not to men, and their characters, but to doctrines; rather the testimonies of the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, and the good reports they made of him to the apostle, which promised and foreboded future usefulness, are designed; though it seems best of all to understand these prophecies of such as were delivered out by the prophets in the church, for such there were in those times; who, when Timothy was a child, or a youth, foretold that he would have great gifts bestowed upon him, and would be a very useful, diligent, laborious, and successful preacher of the Gospel; and therefore the apostle mentions these to stimulate him the more to the discharge of his work, that he might answer the prophecies concerning him: for he adds,

that thou by them mightest war a good warfare: that is, that in consideration of the charge committed to him, and the prophecies that went before of him, might be the more industrious to fulfil his ministry, is signified by a warfare, in allusion to the service of the Levites, which is so called, (^{<OR3>}Numbers 8:24) with zeal and courage, faithfulness and integrity: for not that warfare is intended, which is common to all believers; who being enlisted as volunteers under Christ, the Captain of their salvation, and having on the whole armour of God, fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and are more than conquerors through him that has loved them: but that warfare, which is peculiar to the ministers of the word; whose business it is more especially to fight the good fight of faith, and as good soldiers of Christ, to endure hardness for the sake of him, and his Gospel; and who, besides the other enemies, have to do with false teachers; and their warfare lies in publishing and defending the Gospel of Christ, and in contending for it, and in the weakening of Satan's kingdom, and enlarging the kingdom of Christ; and for which the weapons of their warfare are peculiarly made, and are eminently succeeded; and when they are used to such good purposes, by the ministers of the Gospel, they war a good warfare.

Ver. 19. *Holding faith, and a good conscience.* etc.] By “faith” is meant, not the grace of faith, but the doctrine of faith, a sense in which it is often used in this epistle; (see ^{<SAB>}1 Timothy 3:9 4:1 5:8) and the “holding” of it does not intend a mere profession of it, and a retaining of that without wavering, which is to be done by all believers; but a holding it forth in the ministry of the word, in opposition to a concealing or dropping it, or any

part of it; and a holding it fast, without wavering, and in opposition to a departure from it or any cowardice about it and against all posers: to which must be added, a good conscience; the conscience is not naturally good, but is defiled by sin; and that is only good, which is sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and thereby purged from dead works; the effect of which is an holy, upright, and becoming conversation; and which seems to be chiefly intended here, and particularly the upright conduct and behaviour of the ministers of the Gospel, in the faithful discharge of their work and office: (see ~~<4012>~~2 Corinthians 1:12 ~~<58338>~~Hebrews 13:18 ~~<548D>~~1 Timothy 3:9).

Which some having put away; that is, a good conscience; and which does not suppose that they once had one, since that may be put away which was never had: the Jews, who blasphemed and contradicted, and never received the word of God, are said to put it from them, (~~<4436>~~Acts 13:46) where the same word is used as here; and signifies to refuse or reject anything with detestation and contempt: these men always had an abhorrence to a good conscience among men, and to a good life and conversation, the evidence of it; and at length threw off the mask, and dropped the faith they professed, as being contrary to their evil conscience: though admitting it does suppose they once had a good conscience, it must be understood not of a conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ, but of a good conscience in external show only, or in comparison of what they afterwards appeared to have: and, besides, some men, destitute of the grace of God, may have a good conscience in some sense, or with respect to some particular facts, or to their general conduct and behaviour among men, as the Apostle Paul had while unregenerate, (~~<4231>~~Acts 23:1) and which being acted against, or lost, is no instance of falling from the true grace of God, which this passage is sometimes produced in proof of:

concerning faith have made shipwreck; which designs not the grace, but the doctrine of faith, as before observed, which men may profess, and fall off from, and entirely drop and lose. Though supposing faith as a grace is meant, the phrase, “have made shipwreck of it”, is not strong enough to prove the total and final falling away of true believers, could such be thought to be here meant; since persons may be shipwrecked, and not lost, the Apostle Paul was thrice shipwrecked, and each time saved; besides, as there is a true and unfeigned, so there is a feigned and counterfeit faith, which may be in persons who have no true grace, and may be shipwrecked, so as to be lost.

Ver. 20. *Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander*, etc.] The former of these is mentioned in (^{<3827>}2 Timothy 2:17,18) and that part of faith he made shipwreck of, or erred in, was the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, whereby the faith of some nominal believers was overthrown; and this was attended with the putting away of a good conscience, he seemingly before had; for his profane and vain babblings increased to more ungodliness: the latter seems to be the same with Alexander the coppersmith, who did the apostle much evil, (^{<3944>}2 Timothy 4:14) and it may be is the same with him who was at Ephesus when the apostle was, there, (^{<4453>}Acts 19:33,34) and where he might be now with Hymenaeus, with whom he might agree in his erroneous opinions, and therefore are particularly mentioned, Ephesus being the place where Timothy now was. It seems by their names that they were both Greeks; Alexander is a known name among the Greeks, since the times of Alexander the great, and even became common among the Jews; (see Gill on "^{<4016>}Acts 4:6"), and Hymenaeus was a name among the Grecians, from Hymen, the Heathen god of marriage: one of this name is mentioned among those said to be raised from the dead by Aesculapius ^{f16}; there was also a bishop of Jerusalem of this name ^{f17}.

Whom I have delivered to Satan; not by excommunication, which is the act of a church, and not of a single person; but by an apostolical power he had of delivering the bodies of men into the hands of Satan, by him to be tortured and afflicted, in order to bring them to a sense of their sins, and as a chastisement and correction for them, and a token of God's displeasure at them; (see Gill on "^{<4055>}1 Corinthians 5:5").

That they may learn not to blaspheme; or "that being chastised", corrected, or disciplined, "they might not blaspheme", as they had before done; either by words, contradicting, reviling, and scoffing at the doctrine of the resurrection; or by their unbecoming lives and conversations, giving themselves great liberty in sinning, supposing there was no truth in that doctrine; whereby they not only blasphemed the Christian religion themselves, but caused it to be evil spoken of by others.