

2 TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF 2 TIMOTHY

That this epistle was written to Timothy, while he was at Ephesus, where the apostle in his former epistle had desired him to stay, is evident from his making mention of some persons in it, who were Ephesians; as Onesiphorus, whom he commends, and Alexander the coppersmith, of whom he complains: and that this epistle was written by the apostle, when he was at Rome, is no less evident; for he expressly calls himself a prisoner, (~~SC08~~ 2 Timothy 1:8) and speaks of being then in trouble, and in bonds, (~~SC09~~ 2 Timothy 2:9,10) and the persons that send their salutations in it to Timothy were Romans, (~~SC0E~~ 2 Timothy 4:21) but at what time it was written is not so certain: it seems by (~~SC0F~~ 2 Timothy 4:7) that it was but a little time before his martyrdom; though those words may only signify, that he was now very much on the decline of life, was now grown an old man, and in continual expectation of death, and was in a constant readiness for it, come when it would; having faithfully discharged his duty, and his warfare being as good as accomplished, and his race almost run out; for he afterwards presses Timothy to come to him, and that before winter; and desires him to bring with him his cloak, books, and parchments, which one would think he would have little occasion for, if just upon his martyrdom: besides, he says he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, that by him the preaching of the Gospel might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear it; and expresses his confidence, that he should be again delivered, (~~SC0D~~ 2 Timothy 4:9,13,17,18). And it looks as if this epistle was written before the epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, since it appears that Timothy did come to him at Rome; as here desired, and is joined with the apostle in those epistles. Some, therefore, have placed this epistle in the year 58, or 59, about the fourth or fifth of Nero's reign. The design of it is to stir up Timothy to the faithful and diligent discharge of his duty, as a minister of the Gospel; to abide constantly by the truths of it, and to animate him to suffer patiently, cheerfully, and courageously for the sake of it; and to warn him against false teachers, and their errors, who were already risen, and would afterwards arise, and be followed by such who had itching ears, and could not bear sound doctrine;

but this should be no discouragement to him in the prosecution of his work; and lastly to desire his presence with him at Rome, being now destitute of his several assistants.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 TIMOTHY 1

In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle expresses his great affection for Timothy, and highly commends him; exhorts him to various things relating to his office, as a preacher of the Gospel; and concludes with taking notice of the kindness shown him by Onesiphorus. The inscription and salutation are in ([§500](#)-2 Timothy 1:1,2) and then follows the preface to the epistle, in which the apostle testifies his great love to Timothy, and commends him; by declaring his thankfulness to God, that he had reason always to remember him in his prayers; by his desire to see him again, who had shed so many tears for him, that his joy might be filled; and by taking notice of his unfeigned faith, the same with that which had dwelt in his ancestors, ([§503](#)-2 Timothy 1:3-5). And then he proceeds to exhort him to the exercise and improvement of his ministerial gift; to show a fortitude of mind, and a manly spirit in the cause of Christ; and to suffer cheerfully for the sake of it, ([§506](#)-2 Timothy 1:6-8) and in order to animate and encourage him to the same, he gives a summary of the Gospel, as containing in it the great doctrines of salvation, and eternal life, according to the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, ([§509](#)-2 Timothy 1:9,10) and observes, that he himself was appointed a preacher of it to the Gentiles, ([§511](#)-2 Timothy 1:11) and instances in himself, as suffering for it, without being ashamed; and as having a strong confidence in Christ, as able to keep him, and what he had committed to him, ([§512](#)-2 Timothy 1:12) and then returns to his exhortation to Timothy to hold fast the Gospel of Christ; to which he urges him from the consideration of the nature and value of it, being a form of sound words, and that famous good thing, and of the means and manner in which he came to the knowledge of it; and chiefly from its being committed to him by the Holy Ghost, that dwelt in him; and also because of the general defection of the Asian professors from it, ([§513](#)-2 Timothy 1:13-15) but he excepts one person, Onesiphorus by name, whom he commends for his kindness to him both at Ephesus and at Rome; and therefore entreats of the Lord mercy, both for him and his house, at the great day, ([§516](#)-2 Timothy 1:16-18).

Ver. 1. *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ*, etc.] Not of men, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ, from whom he was sent; by whom he was qualified; in whose name he came, and ministered; and whom he preached. Of his name Paul, and of his office, as an apostle, (see Gill on “~~ROM~~Romans 1:1”) into which office he came

by the will of God; not by the will of man, no, not of the best of men, of James, Cephas, or John, or any of the other apostles; nor by his own will, he did not thrust himself into this office, or take this honour upon himself; nor was it owing to any merits of his, which he always disclaims, but to the will and grace of God; it was by the secret determining will of God, that he was from all eternity separated unto the Gospel of Christ; and it was by the revealed will of God to the church, that he, with Barnabas, was set apart to the ministry of the word; (see ~~ROM~~Romans 1:1 ~~ACTS~~Acts 13:2).

According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus; or “with respect unto it”; this points at the sum and substance, or subject matter, and end of his apostleship, for which this grace was given to him, which was to publish the free promise of life and salvation by Jesus Christ. By “life” here is meant, not this corporeal life, which, and a continuation of it, were promised in the covenant of works, on condition of man's obedience to it; but eternal life, the promise of which is a free promise made by God, of his own free sovereign will and pleasure, in the covenant of grace, from everlasting; and is an absolute and unconditional one, not at all depending upon the works of the law, or obedience to it; (see Romans 14,16 ~~GAL~~Galatians 3:18) and this promise is “in Christ”, in whom all the promises are yea and arisen: for it was made before the world began, (~~TITUS~~Titus 1:2) when the persons on whose account it was made were not in actual being; but Christ, their head and representative, then existed; and to him it was given, and into his hands was it put for them, where it is sure to all the seed; and not only the promise, but the life itself is in him, and which is here intended. Christ, as Mediator, asked it of his Father for all his people, and he gave it to him, where it is hid safe and secure. Christ is the Prince or author of life; he is the procuring cause of it; he was sent, and came, that his sheep might have it; he gave his flesh, his human nature for it; and by his sufferings and death removed all obstructions which sin had thrown in the way, and opened the way for their enjoyment of it; and he is the giver of it to as many as the Father has given him; nor is it to be had in any other way, or of any other; but of him; and it lies in the knowledge of him, communion with him, and conformity to him. Now it is the business, of

Gospel ministers, not to direct persons to work for life, or to seek to obtain eternal life by their own works of righteousness, but to hold forth the word of life, or to show men the way of life and salvation by Christ alone.

Ver. 2. *To Timothy, my dearly beloved son*, etc.] Not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense; and not on account of his being an instrument of his conversion, but by reason of that instruction in the doctrines of the Gospel which he gave him, it being usual to call disciples children; and he calls him so, because as a son, he, being young in years, served with him, and under him, as a father, in the Gospel of Christ; for whom he had a very great affection, on account of his having been a companion with him in his travels, and very useful to him in the ministry, and because of his singular and eminent gifts, great grace, religion, and holiness: Grace, mercy, and peace, etc. (see Gill on “~~SOME~~1 Timothy 1:2”).

Ver. 3. *I thank God*, etc.] After the inscription and salutation follows the preface to the epistle; which contains a thanksgiving to God upon Timothy's account, and has a tendency to engage his attention to what he was about to write to him in the body of the epistle. God is the object of praise and thanksgiving, both as the God of nature and providence, and as the God of all grace; for every good thing comes from him, and therefore he ought to have the glory of it; nor should any glory, as though they had not received it: and he is here described, as follows,

whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience; the apostle served God in the precepts of the law, as in the hands of Christ, and as written upon his heart by the Spirit of God, in which he delighted after the inward man, and which he served with his regenerated mind; and also in the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, in which he was very diligent and laborious, faithful and successful: and this God, whom he served, was the God of his “forefathers”, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of Benjamin, of whose tribe he was, and also of his more immediate ancestors. The Ethiopic version renders it, “from my original”; for though he preached the Gospel of Christ, and asserted the abrogation of the ceremonial law, yet he worshipped the one, true, and living God, the God of Israel, and was not an apostate from the true religion, as his enemies would insinuate: and this service of his was performed with a “pure conscience”: every man has a conscience, but the conscience of every natural man is defiled with sin; and that is only a pure one, which is sprinkled and purged with the blood of Christ; and whereby a person is only fitted to serve the living God, without

the incumbrance of dead works, and slavish fear, and with faith and cheerfulness; and such a conscience the apostle had, and with such an one he served God. For this refers not to his serving of God, and to his conscience, while a Pharisee and a persecutor; for however moral was his conduct and conversation then, and with what sincerity and uprightness soever he behaved, his conscience was not a pure one. He goes on to observe what he thanked God for,

that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; that God had laid him upon his heart, and that he had such reason to remember him at the throne of grace continually. We learn from hence, that the apostle prayed constantly night and day; and if so great a man as he stood in need of continual prayer, much more we; and that in his prayers he was not unmindful of his friends, though at a distance from him; and in both these he is to be imitated: it becomes us to pray without ceasing: to pray always, and not faint and give out, to pray every day and night; and to pray for others as well as for ourselves, for all the saints, yea, for our enemies, as well as for our friends.

Ver. 4. *Greatly desiring to see thee*, etc.] In his former epistle he had desired him to stay at Ephesus, there being some work for him to do, which made it necessary he should continue; but now having answered the apostle's purpose, and he standing in need of him at Rome, being without any assistant there, some having left him, and others were left by him in other places, and others were sent by him elsewhere; and it having been some time since he saw Timothy, he longed for a sight of him:

being mindful of thy tears; shed either at the afflictions and sufferings of the apostle, of which Timothy, being his companion, was an eyewitness, and he being of a truly Christian sympathizing spirit, wept with those that wept; or at their parting from each other, as in (~~4487~~ Acts 20:37,38)

that I may be filled with joy; at the sight of him, and not at the remembrance of his tears; for the last clause is to be read in a parenthesis, and these words stand not connected with that, but with the preceding part of the text. The apostle intimates, that a sight of his dearly beloved son Timothy would fill him with joy amidst all his troubles and afflictions he endured for the Gospel: this is an instance of hearty, sincere, and strong affection.

Ver. 5. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee,* etc.] This caused him to give thanks to God for it, whose gift it is and made him the more desirous of seeing one, who was a true believer, and an Israelite indeed. This is to be understood of the grace of faith, which was implanted in the heart of Timothy by the Spirit of God, and was genuine and sincere; he believed with the heart unto righteousness; his faith worked by love to God, and Christ, and to his people, and was attended with good works;

which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois: who was his grandmother, not by his father's side, who was a Greek, but by his mother's side; and so the Syriac version renders it, "thy mother's mother"; who, though she might not know that the Messiah was come in the flesh, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he, yet believed in the Messiah to come, and died in the faith of it, and in a dependence upon righteousness and salvation by him; and so her faith was of the same kind with Timothy's; and which dwelt in her, and continued with her to the last:

and thy mother Eunice: who was a Jewess, and a believer in Christ, (~~Acts~~ Acts 16:1) though her name is a Greek one, and so is her mother's name; hers signifies "good victory", and is the name of one of the Nereides, the daughters of Oceanus^{fl}; and her mother's signifies "better", or "more excellent". She lived, it seems, if her mother did not, to know that Christ was come, and that Jesus, the son of Mary, was he; and she believed in him for righteousness, life, and salvation; and in her this faith dwelt and abode to the end.

And I am persuaded that in thee also; not only that faith was in him, and that that was unfeigned, but that it also dwelt, remained, and would continue with him to the end of life; for true faith is an abiding grace, it is a gift of God, that is irrevocable, and without repentance; Christ is the author and finisher of it, and prays that it fail not, whose prayers are always heard; it is begun, carried on, and performed by the power of God, and has salvation inseparably connected with it. Now when the same faith is said to dwell, first in his grandmother, and in his mother, and in him, this is not to be understood as if this grace was conveyed from one to another by natural generation; for grace comes not that way, only sin; men are not born of blood, but of God; but the sense is, that the same like precious faith was obtained by one, as by another. This was a rich family mercy, and deserved special notice, as being a thing uncommon, and required a particular

thanksgiving; and is designed as a motive and encouragement to stir up Timothy to the exercise of that grace, and every other gift God had bestowed upon him, as in the following verse.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance*, etc.] Because of the great affection the apostle had for Timothy, and because of that confidence he had of him, that unfeigned faith dwelt in him, as well as because this had had a place in his relations before him; he therefore acts the part of a kind monitor to him, and, upon these considerations, doubts not of succeeding in his following admonition:

that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee; by “the gift” is meant his ministerial gift; for what qualifies men for the ministry, is not anything natural in them, nor acquired by them, but what is given unto them, and that of God: and this was “in” him; it continued with him; it was not lost by him, nor taken from him, as gifts may be, when they are not used; and yet it seems as if there was some decline, some backwardness and indifference as to the exercise of it: he might be too remiss, negligent, and forgetful of it; wherefore the apostle puts him in mind to “stir” it up: there is in the word used a metaphor taken from coals of fire covered with ashes, as if almost extinct, and need to be blown up into a flame, and a very apt one it is; since the gifts of the Spirit, especially his extraordinary ones, such as ministers in those times had, are compared to fire: (see ^{<40B1>}Matthew 3:11 ^{<40B2>}Acts 2:3) and these may be rekindled or increased, when they seem on the decline, by reading, meditation, prayer, and the frequent exercise of them. Agreeably to this the Arabic version renders it, “that thou kindle the fire of the gift of God which is in thee”; and the rather the apostle took this freedom with Timothy, not only because of his superior age and office, but because this gift was through his means;

by the putting on of my hands; though not alone, but with the rest of the presbytery; (see Gill on ^{<504B>}1 Timothy 4:14”).

Ver. 7. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear*, etc.] A pusillanimous, cowardly spirit, so as to be afraid of men or devils, of what they will say or do; and so as to be discouraged in, sink under, or be deterred from the work of the Lord, the preaching of the Gospel, opposing the errors of false teachers, and reprovng men for their sins, and doing other parts of the ministerial function; such a spirit is not from God, and such a fear brings a snare:

but of power, and such is the Spirit of God, who is called “power from high”; (^{<24>}Luke 24:49) by which the minds of Christ's servants are fortified against reproaches and persecutions for his sake, and are strengthened to resist Satan's temptations, to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, to quit themselves like men, in opposition to false teachers, and to do the will and work of God:

and of love; to God, and Christ, and his church, and which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit; and such who have it seek not their own ease and credit, but the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the good of souls; and having such a spirit, and fired with such love, they are not easily intimidated by the adversary;

and of a sound mind: in the principles and doctrines of the Gospel; and which shows itself in a prudent conduct and behaviour; in sobriety, moderation, temperance, purity, and honesty; all which may be signified by the word here used: and these who have such dispositions and qualities from God, will not easily give way to the enemies of religion, or decline their duty for fear of them.

Ver. 8. *Be not then therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord*, etc.] Either that testimony which Christ bore personally by his doctrine and miracles, and by his sufferings and death; or rather the Gospel so called, because it comes from Christ, and because it is a testimony concerning him; concerning his person, his offices, his righteousness, blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction; concerning his obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand, intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; and concerning life and salvation by him: and which no preacher or professor of Christ has reason to be ashamed of, it being so true in itself, so great, so glorious, and so useful; and whoever is, Christ will be ashamed of him another day:

nor of me his prisoner; for Paul was now a prisoner at Rome, but not for any capital crime, or for any immorality, but for the sake of Christ, and for preaching his Gospel; wherefore none of his friends had any reason to be ashamed of him; he was suffering in a glorious cause, and setting a noble example to others; it looks as if Timothy was somewhat blameworthy in this respect.

But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel; the Gospel is here represented as a person suffering afflictions, and the apostle would have

Timothy suffer them as that did, and along with it; he means those afflictions which come upon men for preaching and professing the Gospel; for though the Gospel is a Gospel of peace, yet, through the corruption and depravity of men, it brings a sword, division, and trouble. Tribulation arises on account of it; and this should be endured patiently, and constantly, for the sake of it:

according to the power of God; which is only sufficient to enable persons to bear them; and is mentioned for the encouragement of Timothy and others, to endure them cheerfully.

Ver. 9. *Who hath saved us, and called us*, etc.] And therefore should not be ashamed of his Gospel, but should readily partake of the afflictions of it, depending on his power to support under them. There is a salvation previous to calling: there is a temporal salvation; a special providence attends the elect of God, as soon as born; God's visitation in a very special manner preserves their spirits; they are kept from many imminent dangers, and some of them from the grosser immoralities of life; and there is a chain of providences, as the fixing of their habitations, bringing to such a place, and under such a ministry, with various other things, ways and methods, which lead on to the effectual calling: and there is a preservation of them in Christ Jesus, antecedent to calling, (~~GENESIS~~ Jude 1:1). God had a mind to save some; he pitched on his own Son to be the Saviour of them; he put those persons into his hands, where they are safely preserved; so as not to be damned, and everlastingly perish, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, their original corruption, and actual transgressions, until called by grace: yea, that spiritual and eternal salvation, which is by Jesus Christ, is before calling; this was resolved upon from eternity; a council of peace was formed; a covenant of grace was made; a promise of life given; persons were fixed upon to be saved; a Saviour was appointed, and blessings of grace were put into his hands; and all according to an eternal purpose. Salvation was not only resolved upon, but the scheme of it was contrived from eternity, in a way agreeable to all the divine perfections, in which Satan is most mortified, the creature abased, and the elect effectually saved; nay, salvation is obtained before calling, Christ being called to this work, and having undertook it, was in the fulness of time sent to effect it, and is become the author of it: the thing is done, and all that remain are the application of it, which is in the effectual calling, and the full possession of it, which will be in heaven. The calling here spoken of is not to an office, nor a mere call by the external ministry of the word, but a call by special

grace, to special privileges, to grace and glory; and is an high and heavenly one, and is here called holy, for it follows,

with an holy calling. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “with his holy calling”: the author of it is holy; it is a call to holiness, and the means of it are holy; and in it persons have principles of grace and holiness implanted in them; and are influenced to live holy lives and conversations:

not according to our works; neither salvation nor calling are according to the works of men: not salvation; works are not the moving cause of it, but the free love and favour of God; nor the procuring cause of it, but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor the adjuvant or helping cause of it, for his own arm brought salvation alone: nor calling; which must be either according to works before, or after; not according to works before calling, for such are not properly good works, being destitute of faith in Christ, and proceeding neither from a right principle, nor to a right end; not according to works after calling, as they are after it they are the fruits of calling grace, and cannot be the cause, or rule, and measure at it:

but according to his own purpose and grace; salvation is according to both: it is according to the purpose of God; God resolved upon the salvation of some; in pursuance of this resolution, he set up Christ as the Mediator; and it being necessary that he should be man, this was agreed to, and a body was prepared him; the time of his coming was fixed, called the fulness of time; and his sufferings and death, with all the circumstances of them, were determined by God. And it is according to grace; the resolution for it, and the contrivance of it, are owing to the grace of God; and which also appears in the making of a covenant; in setting up Christ as the Mediator of it; in the mission of him into this world; and in all the parts and branches of salvation: in the choice of persons to it; in the redemption of them by Christ; in their justification by his righteousness; in the pardon of their sins through his blood; in their adoption, regeneration, sanctification, and eternal glory; and the end of it is the glory of the grace of God.

Vocation is also according to both the purpose and grace of God: it is according to his purpose; the persons called are fixed upon by him; whom he predestinates he calls; none are called, but whom God purposed to call; and for their calling no other reason can be assigned but the sovereign will of God, nor can any other reason be given why others are not called; the time of their calling is fixed in the decrees of God; and the place where, and means whereby, and occasion whereof, all are predetermined by him: and

this is also according to grace; the author of it is the God of all grace; and in it is made the first discovery of grace to sinners; nothing out of God could move him to do it, and so it is sovereign grace; it is of some men, and not all, and so is distinguishing grace; it is of sinners, and so is free grace; and it is both to grace and glory, and so is rich grace: and it is according to grace

which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; it is a gift, and a free gift, not at all depending upon any conditions in the creature, and entirely proceeding from the sovereign will of God; and it was a gift from eternity; there was not only a purpose of grace in God's heart, and a promise of it so early, but there was a real donation of it in eternity: and though those to whom it was given did not then personally exist, yet Christ did, and he existed as a covenant head and representative of his people; and they were in him, as members of him, as represented by him, being united to him; and this grace was given to him for them, and to them in him; in whom they were chosen, and in whom they were blessed with all spiritual blessings. The Ethiopic version reads, "in Christ Jesus, who before the world [was]"; but without any foundation.

Ver. 10. *But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ*, etc.] The grace according to which the elect of God are saved and called; though it was given to them in Christ, before the world was, yet lay hid in the heart of God; in his thoughts, council and covenant; and in Jesus Christ; and in the types, shadows, sacrifices, prophecies, and promises of the Old Testament; but is now made manifest in the clearness, freeness, and abundance of it by the appearance of Christ, as a Saviour in human nature; who is come full of grace and truth, and through whom there is a plentiful exhibition of it to the sons of men:

who hath abolished death; the law of sin and death, which is the cause of death; and has destroyed him which has the power of it, the devil; he has abolished corporeal death with regard to his people, as a penal evil, he has took away its sting, and removed its curse, and made it a blessing to them; and he has utterly, with respect to them, abolished the second death, so as that it shall have no power over them, or they ever be hurt by it; all which he did by dying, and rising again: for though he died, yet he continued not under the power of death; but rose again and triumphed over it, as having got the victory of it; and the keys of it are in his hand:

and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Christ was the first that rose again from the dead to an immortal life; the path of life was first shown to him, and brought to light by him; and though the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was known by the Old Testament saints, yet not so clearly as it is now revealed in the Gospel; and in which is so fully attested the resurrection of Christ, and of many of the saints with him, as well as the general resurrection at the last day: and besides, eternal life, which is the free gift of God, lay hid in his purpose, promise, and covenant, and in his Son Jesus Christ, into whose hands it was put; and which he has brought to light in a more clear manner than ever it was before; by his appearance in human nature, by his personal ministry, by his death and resurrection from the dead, and through the Gospel, as preached by his ministers; which gives an account of the nature of it, shows the way unto it, and points out and describes the persons that shall enjoy it.

Ver. 11. *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher,* etc.] Both from eternity, in the counsel and purpose of God, (⁴⁹⁵Acts 9:15) and in time, by the church at Antioch, and the prophets in it, according to the express order of the Holy Ghost, (⁴³²Acts 13:2). And if ever there was a preacher of the Gospel, Paul was one; he preached purely, powerfully, publicly, constantly, boldly, and with all faithfulness and integrity:

and an apostle; that is, of the Gentiles, as follows, and as he elsewhere styles himself, (⁵¹³Romans 11:13) for it does not run so smooth and easy to connect this with the word Gospel. In (⁵⁰⁰2 Timothy 1:1), he is called the apostle of Jesus Christ, because he was sent by him; and here the apostle of the Gentiles, because, he was sent to them; and this by the same appointment, by which he became a preacher:

and a teacher of the Gentiles; though all the apostles, by their commission, were sent to teach all nations, or the Gentiles in the several parts of the world, as well as Jews; yet the apostle was eminently a teacher of them; his work chiefly lay among them; the Gospel of the uncircumcision, or the ministration of the Gospel to the uncircumcised Gentiles, was committed to him; and he was a teacher of them in faith and verity, as in (⁵¹⁷1 Timothy 2:7). The Alexandrian copy only reads, “and a teacher”.

Ver. 12. *For the which cause I also suffer these things,* etc.] The present imprisonment and bonds in which he now was; these, with all the indignities, reproaches, distresses, and persecutions, came upon him, for the sake of his being a preacher of the Gospel; and particularly for his being

a teacher of the Gentiles: the Jews hated him, and persecuted him, because he preached the Gospel, and the more because he preached it to the Gentiles, that they might be saved; and the unbelieving Gentiles were stirred up against him, for introducing a new religion among them, to the destruction of their idolatry and superstition; and the sufferings which he endured were many; and he was appointed to them, as well as to the Gospel, which he preached.

Nevertheless I am not ashamed; neither of the Gospel, and the truths and ordinances of it, for which he suffered; but he continued to own and confess it constantly, and to preach it boldly; none of these things moved him from it: nor of the sufferings he endured, for the sake of it; since they were not for murder, or theft, or sedition, or any enormity whatever, but in a good cause; wherefore he was so far from being ashamed of them, that he took pleasure in them, and gloried of them. Nor was he ashamed of Christ, whose Gospel he preached, and for whom he suffered; nor of his faith and hope in him. For it follows,

for I know whom I have believed. A spiritual knowledge of Christ is necessary to faith in him: an unknown Christ cannot be the object of faith, though an unseen Christ, as to bodily sight, may be, and is. Knowledge and faith go together: they that truly know Christ, believe in him, and the more they know him, the more strongly do they believe in him: such who spiritually and savingly know Christ, have seen the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace; and they approve of him, as their Saviour, being every way suitable to them, and disapprove of all others; they love him above all others, and with all their hearts; and they put their trust in him, and trust him with all they have; and they know whom they trust, what an able, willing, suitable, and complete Saviour he is. This knowledge which they have of him, is not from themselves, but from the Father, who reveals him to them, and in them; and from himself, who gives them an understanding that they may know him; and from the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: and be it more or less, it is practical, and leads to the discharge of duty, from a principle of love to Christ; and is of a soul humbling nature, and appropriates Christ to a man's self; and has always some degree of certainty in it; and though it is imperfect, it is progressive; and the least measure of it is saving, and has eternal life connected with it: and that faith which accompanies it, and terminates on the object known, is the grace, by which a man sees Christ in the riches of his grace; goes to him in a sense of need of him; lays hold upon him as a

Saviour; receives and embraces him; commits its all unto him; trusts him with all; leans and lives upon him, and walks on in him till it receives the end of faith, even eternal salvation.

And I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. By that which he had committed to him is meant, not the great treasure of his labours and sufferings for Christ, as if he had deposited these in Christ's hands, in order to be brought forth at the great day of account to his advantage; for though his labours and sufferings were many, yet he always ascribed the strength by which he endured them to the grace of God; and he knew they were not worthy to be compared, nor made mention of, with the glory that was to be revealed in him. Rather this may be understood of the souls of those he had been instrumental in the converting of, whom he had commended to Christ, hoping to meet them as his joy and crown of rejoicing another day; though it seems best of all to interpret it either of his natural life, the care of which he had committed to Christ, and which he knew he was able to preserve, and would preserve for usefulness until the day appointed for his death; or rather his precious and immortal soul, and the eternal welfare and salvation of it: and the act of committing it to Christ, designs his giving himself to him, leaving himself with him, trusting in him for eternal life and salvation, believing he was able to save him to the uttermost; even unto the day of death, when he hoped to be with him, which is far better than to be in this world; and unto the day of the resurrection, when both soul and body will be glorified with him; and to the day of judgment, when the crown of righteousness will be received from his hands. And what might induce the apostle, and so any other believer, to conclude the ability of Christ to keep the souls of those that are committed to him, are, his proper deity, he having all the fulness of the Godhead, or the perfections of deity dwelling in him; his being the Creator and upholder of all things; his having accomplished the great work of redemption and salvation, by his own arm; his mediatorial fulness of grace and power; and his being trusted by his Father with all the persons, grace, and glory of the elect, to whom he has been faithful. And now the consideration of all this, as it was a support to the apostle, under all his afflictions, and sufferings for the Gospel, and in a view of death itself, so it may be, as it often has been, a relief to believers, under all the sorrows of this life, and in a prospect of death and eternity. Philo the Jew^{f2} speaks in like manner as the apostle here of *παρακαταψηκη θυξης*, “the depositum of the soul”: though he knew not

where to commit it for safety, as the apostle did, and every true believer does.

Ver. 13. *Hold fast the form of sound words*, etc.] By “words” are meant, not mere words, but doctrines; for the servants of the Lord should not strive about words, to no profit, or be too tenacious of them. Indeed when words have long obtained, and have been very useful to convey just ideas of truth to the mind, they are not to be easily parted with, though they are not syllabically expressed in Scripture, unless other and better words can be substituted in their room; and especially they are to be tenaciously abode by, when the apparent design by dropping or changing them is to set aside the truths signified by them; such as trinity, unity, essence, person, imputed righteousness, satisfaction, etc. But here words design doctrines, the words of faith and good doctrine, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ; and which are said to be “sound”, in opposition to the words and doctrines of false teachers, which are corrupt and unsound, and are pernicious, and eat as do a canker; and because they are so in themselves; they are not only sweet and pleasant, but salutary and nourishing; they are milk for babes, and meat for strong men; they are food for faith, and nourish up to eternal life. The “form” of them either intends the manner of teaching them, which should be it, apt and acceptable words, plain and easy to be understood, and not with the enticing words of men's wisdom; or a brief summary, a compendium of Gospel truth. It was usual with both Jews and Christians to reduce the principles of their religion into a narrow compass, into a short form or breviary. The Jew had his “form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law”, (⁴¹²Romans 2:20), which was a rule to himself, and an instruction to others; and such a form, or Jewish creed, may be seen in (³⁰¹Hebrews 6:1,2). The Apostle Paul gives a summary of the Gospel, which he preached, and which he reduces to two heads; repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, (⁴⁰⁰Acts 20:20) and an excellent compendium and abridgment of the Gospel, and a glorious form of sound words, we have in (⁴¹²Romans 8:29,30) and such an one Timothy had heard and received from the apostle, as a “pattern” for him hereafter to preach by, as this word signifies; and as it is rendered in (⁵⁰¹⁶1 Timothy 1:16). There seems to be an allusion to painters, who first make their outlines, and take a rough draught before they lay on their colours and beautiful strokes; and which rough draught and first lines are the rule and pattern of their after work; and which they never exceed, but keep within the compass of: so there is a set of Gospel

truths, which may be called the analogy or proportion of faith, which are a rule and pattern, as for hearers to judge by, so for ministers to preach according to, (^{SAH8}1 Timothy 6:3 ^{ROO8}Galatians 1:8,9 ^{GOO2}John 1:9,10) And such a form or pattern was the apostle's doctrine to Timothy, and which he full well knew: and this form includes the doctrines concerning the trinity of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the proper deity and distinct personality of each of them; concerning the everlasting love of the three Persons to the elect, the covenant of grace, and the transactions in it relating to them; their personal and eternal election in Christ, and his suretyship engagements for them; the state and condition of men by the fall, and through, sin, as that Adam's sin is imputed to all his posterity, and a corrupt nature propagated from him, and that man is altogether impure, and entirely impotent all that is spiritually good; as also such doctrines as concern particular redemption by Christ, satisfaction for sin by his sacrifice, free and full pardon by his blood, and justification by his imputed righteousness: regeneration and sanctification by the powerful and efficacious grace of the Spirit of God; and the final perseverance of the saints to eternal glory, as the free gift of God. And this is a form never to departed from, but to be held fast, as Timothy is exhorted; which supposes that he had it, as he had, not only in his head, but in his heart; and that there was danger of dropping it through the temptations that surrounded him, the reproach and persecution the Gospel lay under, and through the sleight of false teachers, who lay in wait to deceive, and to take every opportunity of wringing it out of his hands; and therefore it became him, as he had it, not only to hold it forth, and publish it, but to hold it fast, in opposition to any wavering about it, or cowardice in it, or departure from it in any degree. And the argument to hold it fast follows,

which thou hast heard of me; both in private conversation, and in the public ministry of the word; and which the apostle had not from men, but by the revelation of Christ; and therefore was to be depended upon, and to be abode by, or held fast, in the manner next directed to:

in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; in the exercise of faith, and from a principle of love; which two graces always go together, and have Christ, as here, for their object: though this clause, may be connected with the word "heard", and the sense be, either that Timothy had heard Paul preach these sound doctrines with great faith and faithfulness, and with much fervency and affection to Christ, and the souls of men; or Timothy had heard them himself, and embraced and mixed them with faith, and received

them in love: or it may be read in connection with “the form of sound words”; the sum of which is faith in Christ, and love to him; the Gospel is the doctrine of faith; and it puts men on discharging their duty from love to Christ.

Ver. 14. *That good thing which was committed to thee*, etc.] By which he means either his ministerial work and office, which is a good work, the dispensation of which was committed to him, and which it became him so to observe, as that the ministry might not be blamed; or else the good and excellent gifts of the Spirit, which qualified him for the discharge of that work, and which were not to be neglected, but to be stirred up, exercised, and improved, lest they should be lost, or took away; or rather the Gospel, which was committed to his trust, to preach: and this may be called a good thing, from the author of it, who is good, whence it is named the Gospel of God, and the Gospel of Christ; and from the matter of it, it consists of good things come by Christ, the High priest, and which it publishes, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal salvation by him; and from the end and use of it, it being both for the glory of God, the magnifying the riches of his grace, and the exaltation of Christ; and also is the power of God in regeneration and sanctification unto salvation to everyone that believes. And it being said to be “committed to” Timothy, denotes the excellency of it; that it is a treasure, as indeed it is a rich one, it contains the riches of grace, even the unsearchable riches of Christ, is more valuable than thousands of gold and silver: and that it is a trust, and requires faithfulness in ministers, who are the stewards of it; and that it is to be accounted for. Wherefore great care should be had in dispensing and keeping it:

keep by the Holy Ghost. It should be kept pure and incorrupt, free from all the adulterations and mixtures of men; and safe and sound, that it be not snatched away from the churches by false teachers. And whereas the apostle knew, that neither Timothy, nor any other, were sufficient of themselves, for these things, he directs to the keeping of it by the Holy Ghost; who makes men overseers of churches, bestows gifts upon them, to fit them for their work, and leads them into all the truths of the Gospel; and under his influence and teachings, and by the assistance of his grace, are they enabled to discharge their trust, abide by the Gospel, and persevere in the ministration of it to the end.

Which dwelleth in us; in all believers, who are the temples of the Holy Ghost; and in all the churches, which are built up by him, an habitation for God; and in all the ministers of the word, to direct, instruct, support, and uphold them; and who dwells with them, and continues in them, and that for ever, (~~646~~John 14:16,17).

Ver. 15. *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia*, etc.] Either those that followed the apostle from Asia to Rome; or who came from thence thither, upon business, and were upon the spot when the apostle was in his greatest troubles, and yet all forsook him and no man stood by him; or else the churches and ministers in Asia, that is, a great number of them; for it cannot be said of every minister and church, and of all the members of churches there, what follows,

be turned away from me; were ashamed of him, because of his chain, and despised him under his afflictions, and had him in abhorrence and contempt, and revolted from his doctrine; though the defection was very general, and the apostle appeals to Timothy for the truth of it, as a fact well known to him: “this thou knowest”; Timothy being at Ephesus, which was in Asia; and since there was so great an apostasy in the country where he was, the above exhortations were very seasonable, to hold fast the form of sound words, and keep the good thing committed to him; seeing so many were falling off from the truth of the Gospel:

of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes: who very likely were ministers of the word, and who had shone for a while, but were now stars fallen from heaven, had erred from the faith, and were become apostates, and proved men of corrupt minds, and deceivers of the people; and it may be that these were more open and infamous than some others, or might be more known to Timothy, and therefore are particularly mentioned. They are both of them said to have been of the seventy disciples; (see Gill on “~~200~~Luke 10:1”) and afterwards followers of Simon Magus. The name of the first of these signifies a “fugitive”, and such was he from the cause of Christ. Pliny ^{f3} makes mention of a town in Asia, called Phygella, from the fugitives which built it; and the latter signifies born of Mercury; there was one of the name in Tertullian's time, against whom he wrote.

Ver. 16. *The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus*, etc.] Who seems to have been one of Asia, and of Ephesus, and is an exception from the general apostasy, or from those that turned away from the apostle; and therefore he prays that the Lord would show mercy to his family; that he

would give regenerating grace and mercy to such of them as were without it, or pardoning grace and mercy, or the great mercy of eternal life and salvation by Christ; and this doubtless was a prayer in faith, upon the promises of God, and upon instances and examples, in which God has remarkably shown mercy to the families of good men, who have faithfully served him, and abode in his interest in times of trouble; thus the house of Obed Edom was blessed for the sake of the ark, that was taken care of by them; the reasons of this prayer and good wishes follow:

for he oft refreshed me; both with his Christian visits, and spiritual conversation, which to the apostle, in the heat of his affliction and persecution, were like a fan in hot weather, cooling and reviving, as the word signifies; and also by supplying him with the necessaries of life, as food and raiment, or money to purchase them with. He answered to his name, which signifies, “one that brings profit”: he is said to be one of the seventy disciples; (see Gill on “~~200~~Luke 10:1”) and afterwards to be bishop of Corone:

and was not ashamed of my chain; the Syriac version adds, “with which I am bound”; in which he lay, or by which he was held, and led by a soldier; (see ~~436~~Acts 28:16,20). Onesiphorus was not ashamed of the apostle, though he was bound with a chain; nor was he ashamed of the cause for which he suffered: and the apostle proposes him to Timothy, as an example worthy of imitation, in those times of defection. (see ~~508~~2 Timothy 1:8).

Ver. 17. *But when he was in Rome*, etc.] Upon some business or another, where the apostle was a prisoner:

he sought me out very diligently, and found me; as there might be many prisons in Rome, he went from one to another, till he found him; and was one of those to whom Christ will say hereafter, “I was in prison and ye came unto me”, (~~425~~Matthew 25:36) or the reason of his going from place to place in quest of him was this; the apostle was not in any particular place of confinement, but had a lodging where he was kept by a soldier, and which with some difficulty Onesiphorus found out: the manner of his bonds was this; he had a long chain fastened at one end to his right arm, and at the other to the left arm of the soldier that kept him, who constantly attended him in this form, wherever he went; and it is possible that in this way he might have liberty to go about and visit his friends; and this might still make it more difficult for Onesiphorus to find him.

Ver. 18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day;* etc.] In return for his diligent seeking till he found the apostle. By “mercy”, he means the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life; or that crown of righteousness and everlasting glory and happiness, which will be a grant from the Lord, or a free gift through Jesus Christ; the effect of pure grace and mercy, and not of merit. The apostle does not propose to requite him himself; he knew it was out of his power; but he had an interest in the Lord, and at the throne of grace; and he makes use of that in his favour, and prays the Lord that he might find mercy of him: and the meaning is either, that he prayed to God, that he might find mercy of him; or he prayed particularly to the Lord Jesus Christ to act the part of a Mediator for him with his Father, that he might enjoy eternal life through him; or he prayed to God the Father, that he would grant that he might find mercy at the hands of Jesus Christ his Son, the Judge of quick and dead, who, at the great and last day, will give the crown of righteousness to all that love him, and his appearance:

and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well: or “better”. Timothy being at Ephesus, of which city Onesiphorus seems to have been, and that when the apostle was there, he very freely communicated to him, as Timothy, who was with him there, knew very well: the apostle does not forget, but remembers former kindnesses, as well as takes notice of present favours, and which shows a grateful mind. The phrase, “unto me”, is not in the Greek copies, though it is in the Vulgate Latin and in all the Oriental versions; wherefore the words may be understood of the things which Onesiphorus had ministered to Timothy, and to the church at Ephesus, and to the poor saints there; which Timothy was “better” acquainted with than the apostle could be, he being on the spot: and now since there were so many fallen off, and so few that remained hearty and faithful, but one Onesiphorus to all them that were in Asia; the apostle exhorts to firmness and constancy, in a dependence on the Spirit and grace of God, as follows.