

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO 2 TIMOTHY 2

In this chapter the apostle continues his exhortations to Timothy, with respect both to his office and his conversation, and closes with the character of a minister of the Gospel. The apostle having exhorted Timothy, in the former chapter, to abide by the Gospel, notwithstanding whatsoever he might suffer for it, here points out to him that grace and strength in Christ, which he would have him have recourse unto, to enable him to discharge his duty, [2 Timothy 2:1](#) and that the Gospel might continue, he advises him to take care of a succession, and to commit the Gospel preached by him to others, whose qualifications for it are faithfulness and aptitude to teach, [2 Timothy 2:2](#) and in order to animate him to labour diligently in the Gospel, and suffer cheerfully for it, he observes to him that he was a soldier, and must endure hardships, and not indulge to the ease and pleasures of life; was a runner in a race, and therefore must strive before he received the crown; and was as an husbandman that must first labour before he partakes of the fruit: which things he would have him seriously consider; and desires that the Lord would give him understanding in them, ([2 Timothy 2:3-7](#)), and then with the same view, to encourage him to suffer for the Gospel of Christ, he puts him in mind of the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, as a summary of the Gospel, and a specimen of what he had heard of him, ([2 Timothy 2:8](#)) and instances in his own sufferings for it, the nature, use, and end of them, by way of example and imitation, ([2 Timothy 2:9,10](#)), and for the same purpose mentions several useful sayings and pithy sentences, as true and, to be depended on, ([2 Timothy 2:11-13](#)) which he would have Timothy put his hearers in mind of, and especially those to whom he committed the Gospel to preach; charging them, in a solemn manner, not to strive about words, which is not only unprofitable, but hurtful, ([2 Timothy 2:14](#)) and with respect to himself, he exhorts him to diligence and study, in interpreting and explaining the word of God, that so he might be approved unto God, and not be ashamed before men, ([2 Timothy 2:15](#)) and on the contrary, to avoid false doctrines, as being profane, empty, and mere babble; and as tending to greater impiety; and as being dangerous and

threatening, like the spreading canker; of which he gives instances in Hymenaeus and Philetus, (^{<5126>}2 Timothy 2:16,17) whose error was, that the resurrection was already past; and succeeded in the spreading of it, to the subversion of the faith of some, (^{<5128>}2 Timothy 2:18). However, for the comfort of real believers, it is observed, that notwithstanding such errors, and the success of them, the foundation stands sure; God has a certain knowledge of his own people, and will keep them; and therefore it becomes such who either call on the name, or are called by the name of Christ, to depart from such evil doctrines, (^{<5129>}2 Timothy 2:19) and that such things happening in the world, and in churches, should not be thought strange, the apostle illustrates the case by a simile of a great house, which has vessels of all sorts in it, and for different uses and purposes, (^{<5121>}2 Timothy 2:21,22). Wherefore, to conclude his exhortations to Timothy, he advises him to flee those lusts which are incident to youth; to follow things that are good, and to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, which tend to strife, (^{<5122>}2 Timothy 2:22,23) which leads him on to give the character of a servant of the Lord, or a preacher of the Gospel; that he must not strive, but be gentle, patient, and meek, in instructing adversaries; for which he should have an aptness; and is encouraged to act this part, from the consideration of success under a divine blessing; namely, bringing such persons to repentance, and to own the truth, and the recovery of them out of the snare of the devil, (^{<5124>}2 Timothy 2:24,25)

Ver. 1. *Thou therefore, my son,* etc.] The illative particle, “therefore”, shows the connection between this and the preceding chapter; the appellation, “thou, my son”, expresses the apostle's tender affection for Timothy, and is the rather used to engage his attention to the advice he was about to give him; which is, that since he had received the true grace of God, and unfeigned faith dwelt in him; and since he had such gifts, qualifying him for the work of the ministry; and since so good a thing as the glorious Gospel of the blessed God was committed to his trust; and since there were so many who had departed from it, and so few that abode by it, he would have him

be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; by which may be meant either the free favour and love of God in Christ, (^{<5139>}Romans 8:39) which is in itself always strong, immovable, and unalterable; and is the strength and security of the saints, though they have not always the same strong believing views of it; and to be strong in it, is to be rooted and grounded in it, and to have a strong sense and firm persuasion of interest in it, and that

nothing can separate from it: or else the Gospel, which is a declaration of grace, and is in Christ, and comes by him; and to be strong in it, is to preach it boldly, to defend it bravely, and courageously oppose every error and heresy, and every abettor thereof; and it also becomes every private believer to hold it fast, stand fast in it, abide by it, and earnestly contend for it; and so the phrase may stand opposed to *atywab Pyqt*, or *rbg*, “one strong in the law”, which is so often used by the Jews^{f4}: or rather by grace is meant the fulness of grace which is in Christ, for the supply of his people; for in that grace which is in him, and not in that which is in themselves, should their dependence be. It is very agreeable to be strong in grace received, in point of exercise, but not in point of contentment; so as to rest satisfied with the present measure of it, without growing in it, and going on to perfection; and much less in point of consolation, so as to derive peace and comfort from it; and still less in point of trust and confidence in it; for it is but a creature, though a very glorious one, being the workmanship of God, and very variable as to its exercise, and as yet imperfect; and not that, but the object of it, is to be trusted in: though indeed a person's enjoyment of everlasting glory and happiness may be strongly concluded from the work of grace which is begun in him; that being an immortal seed, and a well of living water springing up into eternal life; and with which glory is inseparably connected. But grace in Christ is what believers should always have recourse unto, and exercise faith on; and not only believe that there is such a fulness of grace in Christ, which they have both heard of and seen, and which they know is laid up for them, and given to them, and is sufficient for them; but they should go forth out of themselves unto it, and draw water with joy out of the full wells of salvation in Christ: and this grace is of a strengthening nature, both to ministers of the word, to enable them to fulfil their ministry, to bear reproaches, afflictions, and persecution for the Gospel, and the infirmities of weak brethren; and to private believers, to strengthen them against every corruption, temptation, and snare, to exercise every grace, and discharge every branch of duty.

Ver. 2. *And the things that thou hast heard of me*, etc.] Meaning the doctrines of the Gospel, the form of sound words. The Arabic version renders it, “the secrets, or mysteries that thou hast heard of me”; the mysteries of the grace of God, which he had often heard him discourse of, unfold and explain:

among many witnesses; or by them; which some understand of the testimonies out of Moses, and the prophets, with which the apostle confirmed what he delivered; for the doctrines of justification, pardon of sin, etc. by Christ, were bore witness to by the prophets; though rather the many persons, who, with Timothy, heard the apostle preach, and were and would be sufficient witnesses for Timothy, on occasion, that what he preached and committed to others were the same he had heard and received from the Apostle Paul; unless reference should be had here to the time of imposition of hands upon him, when he received some ministerial gifts, or an increase of them; at which time the apostle might deliver to him the form of doctrine he was to preach, and that in the presence of the presbytery, who joined in the action, and so were witnesses of what was said to him:

the same commit thou to faithful men; who not only have received the grace of God, and are true believers in Christ, but are men of great uprightness and integrity; who having the word of God, will speak it out boldly, and faithfully, and keep back nothing that is profitable, but declare the whole counsel of God, without any mixture or adulteration; for the Gospel being committed to their trust, they would become stewards, and of such it is required that they be faithful; and therefore this is mentioned as a necessary and requisite qualification in them; and not only so, but they must be such

who shall be able or sufficient

to teach others also. No man is sufficient for these things, of himself, but his sufficiency is of God; it is he who makes men able ministers of the word, by giving them gifts suitable for such work; so that they have a furniture in them, a treasure in their earthen vessels, an understanding of the sacred Scriptures, a gift of explaining them, and a faculty of speaking to edification; and so are apt to teach men, to their profit and advantage, The Ethiopic version renders it, “who are fit to teach the foolish”.

Ver. 3. *Thou therefore endure hardness*, etc.] “Or afflictions”; as in (5045-2 Timothy 4:5). The same word is used there as here, and properly signifies, “suffer evil”; and means the evil of afflictions, as persecutions of every kind, loss of name and goods, scourging, imprisonment, and death itself, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel:

as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Captain of salvation, the Leader and Commander of the people, who are made a willing people in the day of his power; or when he raises his forces, and musters his armies, these are volunteers, who willingly enlist themselves into his service, and under his banners fight his battles; and such who manfully behave against sin, Satan, and the world, are his good soldiers; such are all true believers in Christ, and particularly the ministers of the word, whose ministry is a warfare, and who fight the good fight of faith; and besides the above enemies, which they have in common with other saints, have to do with teachers, who are wolves in sheep's clothing.

Ver. 4. *No man that warreth*, etc.] Who is a soldier, and gives himself up to military service, in a literal sense: the Vulgate Latin version, without any authority, adds, "to God"; as if the apostle was speaking of a spiritual warfare; whereas he is illustrating a spiritual warfare by a corporeal one; and observes, that no one, that is in a military state,

entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; with civil affairs, in distinction from military ones. The Roman soldiers might not follow any trade or business of life, or be concerned in husbandry, or merchandise of any sort, but were wholly to attend to military exercises, and to the orders of their general; for to be employed in any secular business was reckoned an entangling of them, a taking of them off from, and an hindrance to their military discipline: and by this the apostle suggests that Christ's people, his soldiers, and especially his ministers, should not be involved and implicated in worldly affairs and cares; for no man can serve two masters, God and mammon; but should wholly give up themselves to the work and service to which they are called; and be ready to part with all worldly enjoyments, and cheerfully suffer the loss of all things, when called to it, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel:

that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier; his captain, or general, who has enlisted him, enrolled and registered him among his soldiers; whom to please should be his chief concern; as it should be the principal thing attended to by a Christian soldier, or minister of the Gospel, not to please men, nor to please himself, by seeking his own ease and rest, his worldly emoluments and advantages, but to please the Lord Christ, in whose book his name is written.

Ver. 5. *And if a man also strive for masteries*, etc.] In the Olympic games, by running, wrestling, leaping, etc.

yet is he not crowned; with a corruptible, fading crown, a crown made of herbs and leaves of trees, as parsley, laurel, etc.

except he strive lawfully; according to the laws and rules fixed for those exercises; so no man that calls himself a Christian, minister, or any other, can expect the crown of life, the prize of the high calling of God, except he runs the race set before him, in the right way; looking to Christ, the mark, pressing through all difficulties, towards the prize, and holds on and out unto the end.

Ver. 6. *The husbandman that laboureth*, etc.] In manuring his ground, in ploughing, in sowing, in weeding, in reaping, etc.

must be first partaker of the fruits; of his labour, before others; and the design may be to observe that the ministers of the word ought first to be partakers of the grace of God, the fruits of the Spirit, and of the Gospel, and rightly and spiritually understand it, before they preach it to others; or that such who labour in the word and doctrine, ought in the first place to be taken care of, and have a sufficient maintenance provided for them, (~~400~~ 1 Corinthians 9:7,11) or that as they shall have in the first place some seals and fruits of their ministry, in the conversion of souls, so they shall shine in the kingdom of heaven as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. Though the words may be rendered, and which seems more agreeable to the context, and to the apostle's argument, "the husbandman must first labour before he partakes of the fruits"; so a minister of the Gospel must first labour, and endure hardships in this life, before he sits down in the kingdom of heaven, and takes his rest, and enjoys the crown of glory, which fades not away, which the chief Shepherd shall give unto him.

Ver. 7. *Consider what I say*, etc.] The advice given by the apostle to Timothy, to be strong in the grace of Christ; to commit the doctrines of the Gospel to faithful and able men; and to endure hardness for the sake of it: as also the characters which he bore as a soldier, a runner in a race, or a wrestler, and an husbandman; and therefore must not expect ease and rest, but war, difficulties, toil, and labour; and likewise under what titles Christ was to be regarded; as his General, and Captain of salvation, that commanded him; as the righteous Judge, that held the prize and crown for which he was running; and the chief Shepherd, who would reward all his labours; and moreover, the glorious reward of grace itself, he might expect, as eternal life, when he had fought the good fight the crown of

righteousness, when he had finished his course, or run his race; and a crown of glory that fades not away, when the chief Shepherd should appear: and by putting him upon the consideration of these things, he suggests, that they were matters of moment and importance, and would be of great use to him in assisting and encouraging his faith, amidst all trials and exercises; and whereas they were expressed in figurative terms, taken from the soldier, the runner in a race, and the husbandman, they might not at first view be so easy to be understood; and therefore he would have him think of them, and meditate upon them, and weigh them in his mind; as well as he would not have him take things upon trust from him, but examine them whether they were right or not; though he doubted not but that they would be found to be agreeable to the standard of truth: wherefore he prays as follows,

and the Lord give thee understanding in all things; in all the above things, and in all others; in all the doctrines and mysteries of grace, and in all the rules of conduct in life. No man has of himself an understanding in spiritual things; this is the gift of God; and where it is given there is need of an increase of it, and always of such a prayer for it. The Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, “the Lord will give thee”, &c, and so the words are a promise, an encouragement to Timothy, to consider well of these things; for he might assure himself, that, in so doing, God would give him more understanding in them.

Ver. 8. *Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David*, etc.] This is said either as an encouragement to suffer hardness in the cause of Christ; since he, who though he was of the seed of David, of the blood royal, and heir to his crown, yet suffered and died; and whereas he rose again from the dead, those who suffer for his sake shall rise also, and live and reign with him for ever: or else as a specimen of the form of sound words, or of the things which Timothy had heard of the apostle; for this, with what follows, is a summary of them: Christ being of the seed of David, according to the flesh, or human nature, is expressive of his incarnation; shows that he was really come in the flesh, and was truly man; and that he assumed human nature with all its frailties and infirmities, excepting sin, and was, like David, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; and it includes his whole life, and his righteousness, and obedience to the law of works, and points him out as the true Messiah, who was well known to the Jews by the name of the son of David. And now the apostle puts Timothy in mind, that he

was raised from the dead; which implies that he died; and so includes all the doctrines relating to his death; as that he died to make reconciliation, atonement, and satisfaction for the sins of his people, and to procure peace for them, and the full remission of all their iniquities; and to obtain redemption for them, from sin, Satan, the law, and its curses; as well as it expresses his resurrection from the dead, for their justification: and this being his first step to glory, has connected with it his ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, intercession for the saints, and his second coming to judgment; and is therefore particularly mentioned, because it is an article so comprehensive, and is a fundamental one, and of the greatest importance to faith, and was what was struck at in those times: the apostle adds,

according to my Gospel; meaning not the Gospel of Luke, in which there is a clear account given of the resurrection of Christ, said to be written by him, at the instigation, and under the direction of the apostle, and published with his approbation, as some think; but the doctrine of the Gospel, and which he calls his, not because he was the author, or the subject of it; for in these respects it is the Gospel of God, and of Christ; but because it was committed to him, and he was intrusted with it, and fully and faithfully preached it; and in distinction from another Gospel, that of the false teachers; and agreeably to this doctrine, which the apostle everywhere taught, Christ was raised from the dead; so the Ethiopic version renders it, “as I have taught”.

Ver. 9. *Wherein I suffer trouble as an evildoer*, etc.] As a malefactor, as if guilty of some capital crime; an enemy to the law of Moses, a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition everywhere, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, (~~Acts~~ Acts 24:5). The Ethiopic version renders it, “as a thief”. The “trouble” he suffered were reproaches, persecutions, whipping, beating, stoning, imprisonment: for he adds,

even unto bonds; for he was now a prisoner, and in chains; nor was it the first time, he was in prisons frequent; and all this for the sake of the Gospel, which he preached, concerning the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ:

but the word of God is not bound; for the apostle, while a prisoner at Rome, had the liberty of dwelling by himself, in his own hired house, though held in chains, and guarded by a soldier, and of receiving his friends, and of preaching the Gospel to as many as would come to hear

him, (~~4316~~ Acts 28:16,17,23,30,31) as well as of sending letters to the churches; for several of his epistles were written by him when a prisoner, as those to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians; and this to Timothy, and also that to Philemon: so that the Gospel was not restrained, or the apostle restrained from publishing it, both by word of mouth, and by writing; which was a great support to him under his troubles. Moreover, the Gospel was the more spread through the bonds of the apostle, and met with great success; it became known in Caesar's palace, and was the means of the conversion of some of his household; and many of the brethren, through his bonds, became bolder to preach the Gospel of Christ; so that it had a free course, and was glorified: and sometimes so it is, that persecution is a means of the greater spread of the Gospel; which was an effect that followed upon the persecution raised against the church at Jerusalem, upon the death of Stephen, (~~4401~~ Acts 8:1-4). And indeed, when God opens an effectual door, none can shut it, though there be many adversaries; and when he gives the word a commission, there is no stopping it; when it comes in power, it bears down all before it; it cannot be fettered and bound by men, though men may be fettered and bound for the sake of it.

Ver. 10. *Therefore I endure all things for the elects' sakes*, etc.] There is a certain number of persons whom God has chosen in Christ from everlasting unto salvation, who shall certainly be saved; for these Jesus Christ suffered and died; and on their account is the Gospel sent, preached, and published to the world; for their sakes are ministers fitted and qualified for their work, and have their mission and commission to perform it, and suffer what they do in the execution of it; and since it was for the sake of such, whom God had loved and chosen, that the apostle endured all his reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, he was the more cheerful under them; and the consideration of it was a support unto him:

that they may also obtain; as well as himself, and other chosen vessels of salvation, who were called by grace already; for the apostle is speaking of such of the elect, who were, as yet, in a state of nature:

the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory; salvation is only by Christ Jesus, and in him; and this is only for the elect of God; and it is published in the Gospel, that they might obtain it; and in all ages they do obtain it, or enjoy it: the thing itself is obtained by Christ for them, through his obedience, sufferings, and death; and it is published in the everlasting

Gospel, that they might come to the knowledge of it; and in the effectual calling it is brought near by the Spirit of God, and applied unto them; and they have now both a meetness for it, and a right unto it, and shall fully enjoy it in heaven; for it has “eternal glory”, or “heavenly glory”, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “annexed to it”; or rather the full enjoyment of it will consist in an eternal and heavenly glory, which will be put upon the saints, both in soul and body, and remain to all eternity.

Ver. 11. *It is a faithful saying*, etc.] This may refer either to what goes before, that all things, all reproaches and sufferings, through the ministration of the Gospel, are endured for the elects' sake; and that shall certainly obtain salvation in Christ, and eternal glory, to which they are predestinated: or to what follows, which being of moment and importance, and difficult to be believed, as that death led to life, and sufferings were the way to the kingdom; the apostle prefaces it in this manner, affirming the truth of it, that it was sure and certain, and to be believed, and depended on as such.

For if we be dead with him; with Christ, as all his people are, by virtue of union to him; they are dead with him, he and they being one, in a legal sense; when he died, they died with him; being crucified with him, as their head and representative, their old man, their sins, were also crucified with him, being imputed to him, and laid upon him; and through the efficacy of his death, they became dead to sin, both to its damning and governing power, and so are planted together in the likeness of his death; so that as he died unto sin once, and lives again to die no more, they die unto sin, and are alive to God, and shall live for ever. Moreover, this, agreeably to what follows, may be understood of the saints dying for Christ's sake, and the Gospel, whereby they are conformed unto him, and feel the fellowship of his sufferings, and so may be said to be dead with him: and such may assure themselves of the truth of what follows,

we shall also live with him; as many as were crucified with Christ, and buried with him, rose with him from the dead, and were justified in him, as their head and representative; the free gift came on them to justification of life; and they that are dead to sin, through the efficacy of his death, live a life of sanctification, which they have from him, and is maintained and supported by him, and is to his glory; and they live a life of communion with him, in whose favour is life; and though they die, and for his sake, they shall rise again; and because he lives, they shall live also, even a life of

glory, happiness, and endless pleasure. And this is part of the faithful saying, and to be believed, and is believed by the saints: (see ~~<B17>~~Romans 6:8). Moreover, since the word “him” is not in the original text, and the elect are spoken of in the preceding verse, what if the sense should be this, this is true doctrine, and a certain matter of fact, if we and the elect of God die together in the same cause, and for the sake of Christ, and the Gospel, we shall live together in everlasting bliss and glory?

Ver. 12. *If we suffer*, etc.] With him, with Christ, as in (~~<B17>~~Romans 8:17) all the elect suffered with Christ when he suffered; they suffered in him the whole penalty of the law, all the righteousness, strictness, and severity of it; and they are partakers of the benefits of his sufferings, as peace, pardon, righteousness, redemption, and everlasting salvation. And such being called by grace, and having made a profession of Christ, they suffer shame and reproach, loss of credit and reputation, and sometimes loss of goods, and corporeal punishment, and even death itself: but though they do, and if they should, they may be satisfied of the truth of this,

we shall also reign with him; they reign with him now in the kingdom of grace; grace reigns in their hearts, where Christ, the King of glory, has entered, and has set up his throne, and where he dwells by faith, they being made kings and priests unto God by him; and they shall reign with him in his kingdom here on earth, for the space of a thousand years; and they shall reign with him in glory to all eternity: this is certain, for this kingdom is prepared for them, it is given to them, they are called unto it, and have both a right unto, and meetness for it; (see ~~<B17>~~Romans 8:17),

if we deny him, he also will deny us: there is a denying of Christ in words; so it is denied by the Jews that Christ is come in the flesh, and that Jesus is the Messiah; and some that have bore the Christian name, though very unworthily, have denied his true deity, his real humanity, proper sonship, and the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for pardon, justification, and atonement: and there is a denying of him in works; so some that profess to know him, and do own him in his person and offices, yet in works deny him; their conversation is not becoming their profession of him; they have the form of godliness, but deny the power of it: there is a secret and silent denying of him, when men are ashamed of him, and do not confess him; and there is an open denying of him, by such who set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh throughout the earth; there is a partial denying of Christ, which was Peter's case, though his faith

in him, and love to him, were not lost; and there is a total denying of him, a thorough apostasy, and from which there is no recovery; and if there be any such apostates among those who have named the name of Christ, he will deny them, he will not own them for his another day; he will set them at his left hand; he will declare he knows them not, and will banish them from his presence for evermore. This is another branch of the faithful saying; this will certainly be the case; Christ himself has said it, (~~408B~~ Matthew 10:33).

Ver. 13. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful*, etc.] The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, “if we believe not him”. This may be understood, either of such who are altogether destitute of faith, who do not believe in Christ at all; and particularly do not believe what was just now said concerning his denying such that deny him, but mock and scoff at his coming, and at a future judgment: this unbelief of theirs will not make void his faith or faithfulness; (see ~~418B~~ Romans 3:3), he will abide faithful to his word of threatening; and what he says in (~~4166~~ Mark 16:16) will be found to be an everlasting truth: or it may be understood of true believers, whose faith sometimes is very low, as to its exercise on Christ, and with reference to their future glory and happiness; but Christ is faithful to all his, covenant engagements for them, to bring them to glory, and to every word of promise concerning their happiness, and to every branch of the faithful saying above mentioned; and he is ever the same in his love to them, and in the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and his salvation is an everlasting and unchangeable one; nor do the saints' interest in it, and security by it, depend upon their acts of believing, or their frames, but upon the firmness and unchangeableness of Christ, the object of faith.

He cannot deny himself; he cannot go contrary to his word; that would be to act contrary to his nature and perfections, and would be a denying of himself, which is not possible; wherefore his faithfulness will never fail, even though, the faith of his people does, as to the exercise of it.

Ver. 14. *Of these things put them in remembrance*, etc.] Meaning either his hearers, or those to whom he was to commit the things he had heard of the apostle, and who must expect to suffer afflictions, and endure hardships, for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; wherefore to remind them of the above sayings might be of use and comfort to them. This clause is wanting in the Arabic version.

Charging them before the Lord; the omniscient God, as in his sight, as they will answer it to him another day; (see ^{<S1E2>}1 Timothy 5:21 6:13),

that they strive not about words; it became them to strive and contend for the form of sound words, for the wholesome words or doctrines of our Lord Jesus, but not about mere words, and especially such as were

to no profit; to no advantage to truth, nor to themselves nor others; were not to edification, to spiritual edification, to godly edifying, which is in faith:

but to the subverting of the hearers; the confounding of their minds, misleading their judgments, and overthrowing their faith; and therefore were not only unprofitable, but hurtful and pernicious, and by all means to be avoided.

Ver. 15. *Study to show thyself approved unto God*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy reads, “to Christ”; (see ^{<S1E0>}Romans 16:10). Not unto men, as pleasing them; for such who study to please men, are not the servants of Christ; and sometimes those that are approved to and by men, are disapproved of by God and Christ: but unto God, showing all fidelity and uprightness; speaking out the Gospel openly, and freely, with all sincerity, as in the sight of God; commending themselves to him, and to every man's conscience, by manifestation of the truth; and such will hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant” another day.

A workman that needeth not to be ashamed; the ministry of the word is a work, and it is a good work; and those that perform it aright are worthy of honour and esteem; and it requires industry, diligence, and application, and for which no man is sufficient without the grace of God; and those who are employed in it are workmen, workers together with God, and labourers in his vineyard: and such who are faithful and diligent ones, “need not to be ashamed”; such do not cause shame, neither in themselves nor in others, as false teachers do, who foam out their own shame, and as negligent ministers of the word, and such whose lives are not agreeable to the doctrines they preach; nor have they any reason to be ashamed, neither of the Gospel, which they preach, nor of their sufferings, which they endure for the sake of it, nor of their upright ministrations of the word; and as they are not afraid to suffer shame for the sake of Christ now, they will not be ashamed before him at his coming.

rightly dividing, or “cutting”

the word of truth; that is, the Scriptures of truth, (^{2710b}Daniel 10:21) which come from the God of truth, are concerning Christ, who is the truth, and are dictated and led into by the spirit of truth, and contain in them nothing but truth: to divide the word, is not merely to divide the text into its proper parts, though care should be taken that this be done aright; and some think that the allusion is to the verses of the Hebrew Bible, which are called **μyqws̄p**, “divisions”, sections, or cuttings, from the word **qsp**, “to cut” or “divide”, being cut or divided one from another; hence those that were employed in the law, and were conversant with the sacred writings, and exercised therein, were called **trwtb μyqws̄p**, “cutters”, or “dividers of the law”^{f5}; and so **qws̄p l [b** is one that is well versed in the Bible, and knows every part of it, and readily uses it, in speaking or writing; and such an one was Timothy, (²⁸¹⁵⁻²Timothy 3:15) though I rather think the apostle refers to a wrong way of dividing the Scriptures by the Jews, to which he opposes the right dividing of them. They had used not only to take away a letter out of one word, and add it to another, and so expound the text, but to remove words in it, and make that which went before to go behind, and that which was behind to go before; and this they call a sharp knife, which **bwtkh qyspmw Ætwj**, “cuts and divides the Scriptures”^{f6}: but this way, which his countrymen used, the apostle would not have Timothy, and other Gospel ministers, make use of; for this is not rightly to divide, but to mangle and tear in pieces the word of truth. Moreover, to divide the word of truth, or to cut it, is to cut it open, and dissect its several parts, and search and look into the inside and bottom of it, for to find out every truth contained in it, and lay them open to others; and may be, as some have thought, an allusion to the cutting open the sacrifices, and laying the parts of them aright, and in a decent manner: to which may be added, that since ministers of the Gospel are stewards, and who, when wise and faithful, give to everyone of the household their portion of meat in due season; the metaphor may be taken from such, and from masters and governors of families, who cut up the food, and distribute it to each, according to their age and appetite; and so the ministers of the Gospel are to distribute the spiritual food of the word to babes in Christ, and to grown Christians, according to their capacities, and suitable to their cases and circumstances, dividing to everyone what is proper for him: in short, one that divides the word of truth rightly, is, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, one that “rightly handles”; or, as the Syriac version, that “rightly preaches the word of truth”; who gives the true sense of Scripture, does not pervert and wrest

it, and take from it, or add to it; who points out the truth in it, and shows unto men the way of salvation, and plainly and faithfully preaches the Gospel contained in it, without keeping back anything that is profitable, but declares the whole counsel of God. This same Greek word is used by the Septuagint in (²¹⁸⁶Proverbs 3:6 11:5) where it answers to the Hebrew word רָצָה, which signifies to direct the way, and make it plain; and may here design a plain and open interpretation of the word of God: and to answer these several characters in the text should be the studious concern of every Gospel minister; and study is necessary thereunto; it requires great care that a man take heed to himself, and to his doctrine; and great industry, diligence, and application, and much reading, meditation, and prayer.

Ver. 16. *But shun profane and vain babblings*, etc.] The ministry of false teachers is mere babbling; a voice, and nothing else, as the man said of his nightingale; a sound of words, but no solid matter in them; great swelling words of vanity, like large bubbles of water, look big, and make a great noise, but have nothing in them; contain nothing but vain, empty, idle, and trifling stuff; what is unprofitable and unedifying, yea, what is profane, contrary to the nature and perfections of God, and not agreeable to the doctrine which is according to godliness; and being palmed upon the Holy Scriptures, is a profanation of them. And all such wicked and empty prate, and babbling, is to be shunned, avoided, and discouraged, refused, and rejected; and, as much as can be, a stop should be put to it, both by ministers and hearers of the word.

For they will increase unto more ungodliness meaning either that such babblings, if used and encouraged, will grow more and more profane and wicked; or the persons that use them, the unruly and vain talkers, will grow more daring, bold; and impudent, will wax worse and worse, and from one error will proceed to another, for such seldom stop; and having abused one passage of Scripture, will go on to attack another, and will not cease, till they have wrested the whole Scripture to their own destruction, and that of others.

Ver. 17. *And their word will eat as doth a cancer*, etc.] Or “gangrene”, which gnaws and feeds upon the flesh, inflames and mortifies as it goes, and spreads swiftly, and endangers the whole body; and is therefore to be speedily taken notice of, and stopped. It is better rendered “gangrene”, as in the marginal reading, than “cancer”.

“The word “gangrene” is Greek ^{f7}, and is derived by some authors from the Paphlagonian “gangra”, a goat; it being the character of a goat to browse the grass all around without shifting. It is more correct, perhaps, to derive it from the Greek word γρᾶω, γρᾶινω, “manduco”, “consumo”, I eat, I consume. The “gangrene” is a disease in the flesh of the part which it corrupts, consumes, and turns black, spreading and seizing itself of the adjoining parts, and is rarely cured without amputation. By the microscope, a gangrene has been discovered to contain an infinite number of little worms engendered in the morbid flesh; and which continually producing new broods, they swarm, and overrun the adjacent parts: if the gangrene proceed to an utter sphacelation (or mortification), and be seated in any of the limbs, or extreme parts, recourse must be had to the operation of amputation”

And so the errors and heresies of false teachers worm and spread, and feed upon the souls of men, and eat up the vitals of religion, or what seemed to be such, and even destroy the very form of godliness; and bring destruction and death, wherever they come; and when they get into Christian churches, threaten the ruin of them; and therefore are to be opposed in time, and those infected with them to be cut off.

Of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; these were some of the principal among the false teachers, the chief authors and spreaders of error and heresy: the former of these is mentioned before in (⁵⁰¹1 Timothy 1:20) along with Alexander, as guilty of blasphemy, and as delivered up to Satan for it. Philetus is a Greek name as well as the other, though it is sometimes found in Roman inscriptions ^{f8}: it is very likely that these were both in Asia, and probably in Ephesus, or near to it, since the apostle mentions them by name to Timothy, that he might beware of them.

Ver. 18. *Who concerning the truth have erred*, etc.] That is, the two persons just mentioned; they fell from the truth, wandered and departed from it; they did not keep to the Scriptures of truth, but deviated from them; they missed that mark, and went astray into gross errors and mistakes; rejected the Gospel, the word of truth, in general, and particularly in

saying, that the resurrection is past already; and no other is to be expected; or that there was no future resurrection of the dead: their error was, as some think, that there is no other resurrection than that of parents

in their children, who, though they die, live in their posterity; or than the resurrection of Christ, and of the saints, that rose at the same time; or rather, that there is no other resurrection than the spiritual one, or regeneration, which is a quickening of dead sinners, or the resurrection of them from the death of sin, to a life of grace; which seems to be the truest account of their principle, seeing this is what has been received and propagated by others since; though some have thought that they gave into the Palingenesia of the Pythagoreans, who supposed that when men die, their souls go into other bodies; and that these men imagined, that this is all the resurrection that will be: and others have been of opinion, that their notion was, that whereas the deliverance of the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity is signified by a resurrection of them, in (~~2300~~ Ezekiel 37:1-28) that this is the resurrection they meant was past, and no other to be looked for; but that which has been fixed upon seems to be the truest account:

and overthrow the faith of some; the Ethiopic version reads, “of many”; that is, of nominal professors of religion; not of true believers, for true faith cannot be overthrown. Hence it follows,

Ver. 19. *Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure*, etc.] That faith, which is the faith of God's elect, is of the operation of God, and is the gift of his grace, and of which Christ is the author and finisher, is firm and immovable as a foundation; it is solid and substantial; it is the substance of things hoped for; and it is permanent and abiding; it stands sure, being supported by the power of God, and prevalent mediation of Jesus Christ; and so cannot be overthrown by false teachers, when an historical faith, or the faith of temporary believers may: or the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is here meant, which was said to be past by the above false teachers; which is a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, without which the preaching of it is vain, and faith is vain; and which is a doctrine of God, of pure revelation; and this will be effected by his power: this stands sure upon the testimony of the patriarchs, prophets, and of Christ, and his apostles; upon the sure word and writings both of the Old and New Testament; and will stand its ground against all opposition, and will have its certain effect; for the Lord Jesus knows who are his distinctly and perfectly; nor will he lose them, nor anything that belongs to them; not their bodies, any more than their souls, nor any dust of theirs, but will raise it up at the last day. Or else the doctrine of eternal election may be here designed; which is the foundation of all spiritual blessings, of faith and of holiness, of joy and comfort here, and happiness hereafter, and even of

complete and everlasting salvation; and is of God's laying, and is owing to his sovereign pleasure and free rich grace; and stands sure, not on the foot of works, but upon the unchangeable and unfrustrable will of God; and this secures from a final and total deception by false teachers: and also into the account may be taken the persons of God's elect themselves; who are of God's founding, and are as immovable as the firmest foundation whatever, even as rocks and mountains, and stand sure upon the rock of ages, Christ Jesus, and shall never perish; nor can they be deceived by false Christs and false prophets, but will remain safe and sound, when the faith of ever so many is subverted by them.

Having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his: faith is sealed and insured to God's elect, by his foreknowledge and predestination of them; so that they certainly have it, and shall never lose it: and their election is according to God's foreknowledge of them; which designs not a foresight of their faith, holiness, and good works, as the motives of his choosing them; nor a bare prescience of their persons; but such a foreknowledge as includes special love to them, which is distinguishing, unchangeable, and everlasting; and this being a seal affixed to all the elect, shows the distinguishing grace of God in their election, the secrecy of it, and its firmness and irrevocableness, and also the safety of the chosen ones; things being sealed, to distinguish one thing from another, and to keep things secret, or to render them firm and authentic. So, among the Jews, seals were used in buying and selling, that it might be known what was bought, and to confirm the purchase¹⁹. The inference from this comfortable doctrine is,

and let everyone that nameth the name of Christ; “or of the Lord”, as the Alexandrian copy, and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read; that is, whoever either are called by the name of Christ, or Christians, or whoever call upon his name: let them

depart from iniquity; both from doctrinal iniquity, the errors and heresies of the above false teachers, which increased to ungodliness, and ate as a gangrene, and were the subversion of the faith of some; and from all practical iniquity, which those men, and their followers, especially the Gnostics, were guilty of; and, generally speaking, when men make shipwreck of faith, they put away a good conscience: and the apostle may also mean, that all such should depart from iniquitous men, from men

whether of bad principles or practices, or both, and have no fellowship with them, it being unworthy of the name by which they were called. Some reference seems to be had to (⁻⁰⁴⁶⁵Numbers 16:5,26) and so the false teachers, and their followers, may be compared to Korah, and his company, and the elect of God to Moses, and the Lord's people, who were bid to depart from the tents of those wicked men; and who stood firm, sure, and safe, when the earth opened, and swallowed up the others.

Ver. 20. *But in a great house,* etc.] This simile the apostle makes use of, to show that it need not seem strange, nor should it be distressing to anyone's mind, to hear that men of such wicked principles and practices should be in the church of God, who are before mentioned; since in every great house or palace, the house of a nobleman, or palace of a king, there is a variety of vessels of different matter, and for different uses, and some are mean, despicable, and dishonourable; and so it is in the church of God: for by this great house, in the application of the simile, is not meant the world, as some think; for though that is a house built by God, who built all things; and is a very large one, and full of inhabitants, comparable to vessels; and there are in it both good and bad, as always have been; yet it is no startling thing to any man, that there should be bad men in it; rather the wonder is, that there should be any good; but by this house is meant the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth, (⁻⁵⁴⁸⁵1 Timothy 3:15 (see Gill on "⁻⁵⁴⁸⁵1 Timothy 3:15"))).

There are not only vessels of gold and of silver; persons who are members of the visible church, who are comparable to gold and silver, for their worth and value, and preciousness in the sight of Christ, who accounts them his jewels, and peculiar treasure; and for their excellency and usefulness in the church, by reason of those differing gifts bestowed upon them; and for their lustre and purity, both of doctrine and of life; and for their solidity and duration:

but also of wood, and of earth: there are others in a visible church state, who are like to dry wood, destitute of the grace of God, and are fit matter for Satan to work upon, and by them raise and increase the flames of contention and division, and will be fit fuel for everlasting burnings; and there are others who are sensual, and carnal, and worldly, who mind earth, and earthly things, and have no spirituality, nor spiritual mindedness in them:

and some to honour; who are designed for honourable service, and behave honourably, and are worthy of honour in the church; are honourable officers, or members in it; and are to the honour of Christ, and the Gospel; and shall at last enjoy honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life.

And some to dishonour; who are to the disreputation of the church, the dishonour of religion, and scandal of the Gospel; by them God is dishonoured, his ways evil spoken of, his doctrines blasphemed, and his name reproached; and who are themselves dishonourable among men now, and will be covered with shame and everlasting contempt hereafter.

Ver. 21. *If a man therefore purge himself from these*, etc.] That is, if a man clears himself, and keeps himself clear from such men as Hymenaeus and Philetus, who are comparable to wooden and earthen vessels, and are dishonourable ones; if he shuns their defiling company, and polluting principles; if he keeps clear of their heresies, and is not carried away with the errors of these wicked men, and is not drawn aside by them into immoral practices, but stands fast in the faith, and departs from iniquity:

he shall be a vessel unto honour; he will be made manifest, and appear to be a vessel chosen to honour; and will be an honourable member of the church here, and will be honoured by Christ hereafter:

sanctified: he will appear to be one that is set apart by God the Father, and whose sins are purged away by the blood of Christ, and who is sanctified internally by the Spirit of God; for external holiness springs from internal holiness, and is, an evidence of it:

and meet for the master's use: the use and service of Christ, who is the master of the house; either for the ministry of the word, the administration of ordinances, or for some service or another, which he calls him to, and employs him in.

And prepared unto every good work; which an unregenerate man is not; he is to every good work reprobate; he is not capable of performing good works; he is not prepared for them, nor ready at them; but a true believer, one that is regenerated, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, he is created in Christ Jesus unto good works; and has in the performing of them right principles, aims, and ends, as well as a supply of grace, by which he is enabled to do them.

Ver. 22. *Flee also youthful lusts*, etc.] Meaning not lusts of uncleanness, lasciviousness, and filthiness; nor any of those follies and vanities which the youthful age usually lusts and desires after, to which Timothy was not inclined; but such lusts as are apt to prevail with young ministers of the Gospel, such as vain glory, popular applause, seeking to have the pre-eminence, contentions with, and contempt of others, and the like.

But follow righteousness; the righteousness of Christ; or doing that which is just between man and man, and as one man would choose another should do to him; or rather integrity and faithfulness, in the ministry of the word, without seeking honour from men:

faith; both as a doctrine and grace; or veracity and truth in preaching the Gospel, striving for that, and not through ambition, and for the pre-eminence:

charity; or love, to God and Christ, and to his people; without which all gifts and works are of no avail; and which will engage a man to bear much, and to hope and believe all things:

peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart; peace is to be pursued and followed after with all men, as much as possible, but especially with the saints, the true worshippers of God; who draw nigh to him with true hearts, and call upon him in the sincerity of their souls: great care should be taken that peace be maintained with them; for they have great interest at the throne of grace; and God is nigh unto them, and hears their prayers. The Alexandrian copy reads, “with all that love the Lord”.

Ver. 23. *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid*, etc.] Such as have no solid wisdom in them, and are foreign from the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, and are not useful and unedifying; such ought to be avoided, publicly and privately; they should not be started in the public ministry, nor attended to in private conversation; as being unworthy of the notice of a minister of the Gospel wise and learned, and useless to the church, and to his hearers.

Knowing that they do gender strife; about words, and contentions, which break the peace of churches, and hinder the profit of souls, and the progress of the Gospel.

Ver. 24. *And the servant of the Lord must not strive*, etc.] By “the servant of the Lord” is not meant any believer in common, but a minister of the

word, as Timothy was; such an one ought not to strive about words to no profit, about mere words, and in a litigious, quarrelsome manner, and for mastery and not truth; though he may, and ought to strive for the faith of the Gospel; this is praiseworthy in him:

but be gentle unto all men; not only to troubled minds, and wounded consciences, by supplying them with the precious promises and truths of the Gospel; and to backsliders, by restoring them in a spirit of meekness; but even to those who contradict the truth, and themselves, by mild and kind instructions.

Apt to teach, showing a willingness to instruct the ignorant and obstinate, and making use of abilities given for that purpose, notwithstanding all discouragements; for it follows,

patient, or “bearing evil”; not only the infirmities of weak brethren in the church, and the reproaches and persecutions of profane men in the world; but also the contradictions and oppositions of the adversaries of truth, so as not to be irritated and provoked, or to be discouraged, and desist from the defence of the Gospel.

Ver. 25. *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves*, etc.] To the truth; resist it and deny it; or contradict some other tenets and principles of theirs, or the Scriptures, which they themselves allowed to be the word of God, and the rule of faith and practice, and so are self-convinced and self-condemned. These are to be instructed, being ignorant, and in a tender and gentle manner, though very perverse and obstinate.

If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth: repentance here designs a repentance of errors in principle, a change of mind upon conviction, and such as issues in a free and ingenuous confession, and acknowledgment of the truth before opposed; and such a repentance is the gift of God: it is he that opens the eyes of the understanding, and works conviction in the mind, and leads into all truth, as it is in Jesus; and induces men to repent of their errors, confess their mistakes, and own the truth; even as repentance of evil practices is not owing to the power of men, nor to the bare influence of means, but to the efficacious grace of God, it being a grant from him. And though this is not certain, that God will give repentance to such contradictors and blasphemers of his Gospel; yet as it is his will, that all his chosen ones should come to repentance, and that some of all sorts should be saved, and

come to the knowledge of the truth; and seeing these things have been brought about under and by the ministry of the word, it is an encouragement to the ministers of the Gospel to continue their instructions in the manner here directed.

Ver. 26. *And that they may recover themselves*, etc.] Or “awake”, and come to themselves, and appear to be sober, and in their right mind: the metaphor is taken from drunken men, who are overcharged, and are not in their senses, and being stupified fall asleep; and like these are persons intoxicated with errors and heresies, who when their minds are enlightened, and they are convinced of their evil tenets, repent of them, come to themselves, and acknowledge the truth, and so escape

out of the snare of the devil; for as carnal lusts and pleasures are the snares and nets, in which Satan, who may be compared to a fowler, catches some; so errors and heresies are those with which he ensnares others: “who are taken captive”, or “alive”,

by him at his will; such are taken in his nets and snares, as creatures are taken alive, by fowlers, and huntsmen; and they are held fast, and become his captives, and his slaves, and do his will, being led by him to whatsoever he pleases; he works powerfully in them, and they readily comply with him, and obey his lusts. Though some understand this, not of the will of the devil, but of the will of God; and that the sense is, that such persons are held captive by Satan, as long as it is the pleasure of God, and no longer; when the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive is delivered; and so it is an encouragement to the ministers of the word to go on in instructing, hoping this may be the case. Others connect this phrase, “to his will” or “according to his will”, as they differently render it, with the word, “recover”: and then the meaning is, that such, repenting of their errors, might escape out of the snare of Satan, in which they were taken alive; that so they might do the will of God, by professing and holding fast his truths; or that their repentance, recovery, and escape out of Satan's snare and captivity, are according to the will of God, and his sovereign good pleasure.