

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO 2 TIMOTHY 3

In this chapter the apostle delivers out a prophecy of the last days, showing how perilous the times will be, describing the persons that will live in them, and what will be their end; and in opposition to these men, proposes himself an example in doctrine and sufferings; and encourages Timothy to persevere, and highly commends the sacred writings. The prophecy begins (^{<STR1>}2 Timothy 3:1) the description it gives of hypocrites, formal professors, and false teachers, that should rise up in the last days, and perilous times spoken of, is in (^{<STR2>}2 Timothy 3:2-7). And these are compared to the magicians of Egypt for the corruption of their minds, the badness of their principles, and their opposition to truth, and for their exit, and the issue of things; they will be stopped in their progress, and their folly exposed, (^{<STR3>}2 Timothy 3:8,9) and as the reverse of these men, the apostle gives an account of his own doctrine, conversation, and sufferings; which he proposes to Timothy for imitation, as being well known to him, and as also the common state of all godly persons in this life, being a suffering one, (^{<STR4>}2 Timothy 3:10-12) nor can it be expected that it should be otherwise, since false teachers, who are wicked and deceitful men, grow worse and worse, (^{<STR5>}2 Timothy 3:13). And then the apostle exhorts Timothy to abide by, and continue in the doctrines of the Gospel, from the assurance he had of the truth of them, from the consideration of his having learned them of the apostle, and especially from their agreement with the holy Scriptures, which he had knowledge of from a child, (^{<STR6>}2 Timothy 3:14,15) which Scriptures are commended, partly from the useful effect of them, making men wise unto salvation; and chiefly from the author of them, being by the inspiration of God; and also from the profitableness of them, both for doctrine and manners, and especially to furnish a Gospel minister for the work he is called unto, (^{<STR7>}2 Timothy 3:15-17).

Ver. 1. *This know also*, etc.] That not only men of bad principles and practices are in the churches now, as before described in the preceding chapter, but that in succeeding ages there would be worse men, if possible, and the times would be still worse; this the apostle had, and delivered by a

spirit of prophecy, and informed Timothy, and others of it, that he and they might be prepared for such events, and fortified against them:

that in the last days perilous times shall come; “or hard” and difficult times to live in; not by reason of the outward calamities, as badness of trade, scarcity of provisions, the ravages of the sword, etc. but by reason of the wickedness of men, and that not of the profane world, but of professors of religion; for they are the persons afterwards described, who will make the times they live in difficult to others, to live soberly, righteously, and godly; the days will be evil, because of these evil men: or they will be “troublesome” times, very afflicting and distressing to pious minds; as the places and times, and men and customs of them were to Lot, David, Isaiah, and others: and also “dangerous” ones to the souls of men; who will be beguiled by their fair speeches, and specious pretences, to follow their pernicious ways, which will bring destruction upon them; their doctrines will eat as a gangrene, and their evil communications will corrupt good manners, before observed. And these times will be “in the last days” of the apostolic age, and onward to the end of the world: the Jews generally understand by this phrase, when used in the Old Testament, the days of the Messiah; and which are the last days of the world, in comparison of the times before the law, from Adam to Moses, and under the law, from thence to Christ; and even in the times of the apostles, at least towards the close of them, great numbers of men rose up under the Christian name, to whom the following characters well agree, as the Gnostics, and others; and who paved the way for the man of sin, the Romish antichrist, whose priests and votaries are here likewise described to the life: so that these last days may take in the general defection and apostasy of the church of Rome, as well as those times, which followed the apostles, and those which will usher in the second coming of Christ. The Ethiopic version renders it, “in the latter days will come an evil, or bad year”.

Ver. 2. *For men shall be lovers of their own selves*, etc.] Not in a good sense, as men may be, and as such are who love their neighbours as themselves, and do that to others they would have done to themselves; and who take all prudent and lawful care to preserve the life and health of their bodies, and seek in a right way the salvation of their immortal souls: but in a bad sense, as such may be said to be, who only love themselves; their love to God, and Christ, and to the saints, being only in pretence, not in reality; and who do all they do in a religious way, from a principle of self-love, and to selfish and mercenary ends; either to gain glory and applause

from men, or to merit something for themselves at the hands of God, without any view to the glory of God, the honour and interest of Christ, and the good of others; and ascribe all they have and do to themselves, to their industry, diligence, power, free will, worth, and merit, and not to the grace of God: and this character may be seen in the principles and practices of the church of Rome, in their doctrines of merit and free will, in works of supererogation etc. “Coveteous”; lovers of silver, greedy of filthy lucre, doing nothing but for money; everyone looking for his gain from his quarter; making merchandise of the souls of men; and which are reckoned among the wares of Babylon, the Romish antichrist, (~~61813~~ Revelation 18:13). “No penny, no pater noster”.

Boasters; of their wealth and riches, of their honour and grandeur; I sit a queen, etc. (~~61817~~ Revelation 18:7), of their numbers, of their holiness, of the infallibility of their popes, of their having the true knowledge, and certain sense of the Scriptures, and of having all power in heaven and in earth.

Proud; as have been the popes of Rome; exalting themselves above all that is called God, above all princes, kings, and emperors of the earth; deposing one, excommunicating another, treading upon their necks, obliging them to hold their stirrups while they mounted their horses; the pride of the popes, cardinals, priests, and the whole clergy of the church of Rome, is notorious.

Blasphemers; of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ; sitting in the temple as God, as antichrist does, showing himself that he is God; assuming that to himself which belongs to God only, which is to forgive sin; calling himself Christ's vicar on earth; taking upon him to enact new laws, and to dispense with the laws of God, and Christ; and has a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies against God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, (~~5104~~ 2 Thessalonians 2:4 ~~61815~~ Revelation 13:5,6).

Disobedient to parents: as many of the votaries of the antichristian church have been; who have withdrew themselves from under the care of their parents, and their fortunes too out of their hands, when they have been in their power; and have shut themselves up in cloisters, monasteries, and nunneries, without the leave and consent, or knowledge of their parents.

Unthankful: to God, for what is enjoyed by them, ascribing all to themselves, and to their merit and good works; and to men, to the princes of the earth, by whom they were first raised to, and supported in their

dignity; as the popes of Rome were by the Roman emperors, and whom they in return tyrannized over, and dethroned at pleasure.

Unholy; notwithstanding his holiness the pope at the head of them their holy father, and holy mother church, and holy priests, and holy orders they talk of; yet are without the fear of God, or any regard to him, living most unholy lives and conversations, (²⁷¹³⁷Daniel 11:37).

Ver. 3. *Without natural affection*, etc.] To parents, or children, or wife; parents thrusting their children into religious houses, cloisters, etc. against their wills; children leaving their parents without their knowledge or consent; married bishops and priests being obliged to quit their wives, and declare their children spurious; with many other such unnatural actions.

Trucebreakers; or covenant breakers; stirring up princes to break through their treaties and covenants with one another; dissolving the allegiance of subjects to their sovereigns, and moving them to rebellion against them; loosing the marriage bond between husband and wife; making void all oaths, contracts, and agreements, among men, which stand in the way of their designs; teaching that no faith is to be kept with heretics.

False accusers; or devils, being like Satan, the accuser of the brethren, charging all that depart from their communion with schism and heresy.

Incontinent; though they pretend to the gift of continency, yet give themselves up to all lasciviousness, and work all uncleanness with greediness; or “intemperate” in eating and drinking, indulging themselves in rioting and drunkenness: “she hath lived deliciously”, (⁶⁶⁸⁷Revelation 18:7).

Fierce; like beasts of prey; such was Rome Pagan, in the times of the ten persecutions; and such has been Rome Papal, exercising the greatest cruelties and barbarities on the saints, being drunk with their blood.

Despisers of those that are good; or without love to good; both to good works, to which they are reprobate, notwithstanding all their pretensions to them, and bluster about them; and to good men, whom they hate.

Ver. 4. *Traitors*, etc.] To their princes and sovereigns, whose deaths they have contrived and compassed, and whom they have assassinated and murdered; and have been betrayers of the secrets of persons, which they have come at by auricular confession to them; and of their best and nearest friends, to preserve and secure themselves.

Heady; rash, daring, bold, and impudent, fit to say and do any thing, though ever so vile and wicked.

High, minded; puffed and swelled up with a vain conceit of themselves, and speaking great swelling words of vanity;

lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; lovers of sinful pleasures, or the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, and not God; serving divers lusts and pleasures, and not God; making a god of their belly; sensual idolaters, delighting themselves in their carnal lusts, and not in the service of God.

Ver. 5. *Having a form of godliness*, etc.] Either a mere external show of religion, pretending great piety and holiness, being outwardly righteous before men, having the mask and visor of godliness; or else a plan of doctrine, a form of sound words, a scheme of truths, which men may have without partaking of the grace of God; and which, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, the church of Rome has; or else the Scriptures of truth, which the members of that church have, and profess to hold to, maintain and preserve; and which contains doctrines according to godliness, and tend to a godly life and godly edification:

but denying the power thereof; though in words they profess religion and godliness, the fear of God, and the pure worship of him, yet in works they deny all; and though they may have a set of notions in their heads, yet they feel nothing of the power of them on their hearts; and are strangers to experimental religion, and powerful godliness: or though they profess the Scriptures to be the word of God, yet they deny the use, the power, and efficacy of them; they deny the use of them to the laity, and affirm that they are not a sufficient rule of faith and practice, without their unwritten traditions; and that they are not able to make men wise, or give them a true knowledge of what is to be believed and done, without them; and that the sense of them is not to be understood by private men, but depends upon the infallible judgment of the church or pope:

from such turn away; have no fellowship with them, depart from their communion, withdraw from them, and come out from among them: this passage sufficiently justifies the reformed churches in their separation from the church of Rome.

Ver. 6. *For of this sort are they which creep into houses*, etc.] Privily and unawares, in a clandestine manner, and insinuate themselves into families,

by fawning and flattering, and under specious pretences to knowledge and virtue. The Syriac version uses a word, from whence comes *adl wj* , “Chulda”, which signifies “a weasel”; suggesting, that their entrance into houses was like to the way of that creature, which is sometimes covered, and sometimes open: there was also a gate of the temple, which was called “Huldah”; whether there is any allusion in the word to that, may be inquired^{f10}.

And lead captive silly women; the coming of antichrist is after the working of Satan; as Satan attacked the woman, and not the man, and beguiled Eve and not Adam, so these his instruments and emissaries, work themselves into the affections of the weaker vessel, and into the weaker sort of women, as the diminutive word here used signifies; and gain upon them, instil their principles into them, attach them to their interests, captivate them to them, and lead them as they please:

laden with sins; covered with them, full of them, and so ready to receive any set of principles that would encourage them to continue in them; or else were pressed down with a sense of them, their consciences being awakened, and they under some concern on account of them, and so fit persons for such deceivers to gain upon, by pretending to great sanctity and religion, and by providing them with pardons and indulgences, and putting them upon penance, etc. though the former sense seems most agreeable, and is confirmed by what follows,

led away with divers lusts. The Alexandrian copy adds, “and pleasures”; that is, sinful ones; though this may be understood, not of unclean lusts, but of the itch and desire after new teachers, and new doctrines, and practices, which prevail in weak women, and by which they are governed and led away.

Ver. 7. *Ever learning*, etc.] Some new notion and practice or another: and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; partly because of the teachers, which they heap up to themselves, who are unapt to teach, are blind and ignorant guides, and know not the truth, but are enemies to it, and resist it; and partly because of themselves, the sins they are laden, and the lusts they are led away with, which hinder them from coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Ver. 8. *Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses*, etc.] These were not Jews, who rose up and opposed Moses, as Dathan and Abiram did, as

some have thought; but Egyptian magicians, the chief of those that Pharaoh sent for, when Moses and Aaron came before him, and wrought miracles; and who did in like manner by their enchantments, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 7:11) upon which place the Targum of Jonathan has these words:

“and Pharaoh called the wise men and the magicians; and Janis and Jambres, the magicians of the Egyptians, did so by the enchantments of their divinations.”

And the same paraphrase on (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 1:15) calls them by the same names; and this shows from whence the apostle had these names, which are not mentioned in any place in the Old Testament; namely, from the traditions and records of the Jews, with which he was well acquainted: there is no need to say he had this account by divine revelation, for some of the Heathens had knowledge of this story some such way. Numenius; the philosopher, speaks of Jannes and Jambres as Egyptian scribes, and famous for their skill in the magic art; and who opposed themselves to Moses when the Jews were driven out of Egypt^{f11}. Pliny also makes mention of Janne and Jotape as magicians; though he wrongly calls them Jews, and places Moses with them^{f12}, as Jannes likewise is by Apuleius^{f13}. It is commonly said by the Jews^{f14}, that these were the two sons of Balaam, and they are said to be the chief of the magicians of Egypt^{f15}; the latter of these is called in the Vulgate Latin version Mambres; and in some Jewish writers his name is Mamre^{f16} by whom also the former is called Jochane or John; and indeed Joannes, Jannes, and John, are the same name; and R. Gedaliah^{f17} says, that their names in other languages are John and Ambrose, which is not unlikely. Mention is made of the sons of Jambri in the Apocrypha:

“But the children of Jambri came out of Medaba, and took John, and all that he had, and went their way with it.” (1 Maccabees 9:36)

these things are not to be depended on: however, certain it is, that they withstood Moses by their enchantments, and hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that, for a while, he would not let the children of Israel go. Now between these magicians, and the Papists before described, there is a very great agreement; as these men were Egyptians, so the Papists may be called, since Rome is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, (~~Revelation~~ Revelation 11:8) as the one were, so the other are idolaters, who worshipped devils, idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, (~~Revelation~~ Revelation 9:20) and both sorcerers, using the magic art; (~~Revelation~~ Revelation 9:21) and they both pretended to miracles; though what they did were no other than lying

wonders, (^{s010}2 Thessalonians 2:9 ^{f013}Revelation 13:13,14) and both agreed to keep the people of God in bondage, as much, and as long as they could: and particularly, as the magicians of Egypt withstood Moses, whom Josephus ^{f18} calls the sons of Amaraeus. These are said to be the persons that told Pharaoh, that a child should be born among the Israelites, by whom the whole land of Egypt should be destroyed, and which was the reason of Pharaoh's giving such a charge to the Hebrew midwives ^{f19}; also the making of the golden calf is ascribed to them ^{f20}; for, according to the Jews, they afterwards became proselytes; but

so do these also resist the truth; the truth of one God, by their worshipping of images; and of one Mediator, by making use of angels, and saints departed, to intercede with God for them; and of justification by the righteousness of Christ, by introducing the doctrine of works, of merit, and supererogation; and of pardon and cleansing by the blood of Christ, and atonement by his sacrifice, by their pardons, indulgences, penance, purgatory, and the sacrifice of the Mass; yea, they resist the Scriptures of truth, not allowing them to be a sufficient rule without their unwritten traditions, and even Christ, who is truth itself, in all his offices, prophetic, priestly, and kingly.

Men of corrupt minds, of bad principles, holding antichristian tenets, derogatory to the grace of God, and glory of Christ; giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; like Jannes and Jambres, who were given to magic arts, and were under the influence of Satan:

reprobate concerning the faith; men of no judgment in the doctrine of faith; who have not their senses exercised to discern good and evil, to try things that differ, and approve the more excellent, but call good evil, and evil good: or as those who are disobedient and wicked in their lives, are said to be to every good work reprobate, (^{s016}Titus 1:16) so these are said to be reprobate to the faith; that is, to have no liking of it, or value for it, but despise it, hate it, and reject it; and upon that account, as they are like reprobate silver, whom God has rejected, they ought to be rejected by men.

Ver. 9. *But they shall proceed no further*, etc.] They may proceed to more ungodliness, and wax worse and worse in error; but they shall proceed no further than the magicians of Egypt, who did lying wonders, hardened Pharaoh's heart, and deceived him and the Egyptians; but could not destroy the Israelites, nor hinder their departure out of Egypt, when their time was come: so these wicked men do false miracles, harden the popes of Rome,

and deceive the nations subject to them; but they cannot deceive the elect of God, nor destroy the church of God, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; nor could they hinder the reformation, or the departure of the Lord's people out of Babylon.

For their folly should be manifest unto all [men], as theirs also was; as the folly of Jannes and Jambres was, when Aaron's rod devoured theirs; and when they could not produce lice, but was obliged to own to Pharaoh, that that plague was the finger of God; and when they could not stand before Moses, because of the boils that were upon them, (⁽¹⁷¹²⁾Exodus 7:12 8:18,19 9:11). And so the Arabic version renders it, “as is manifest the folly, or madness of these two”; and it is notorious in how many instances the frauds, impostures, tricks, and villanies of the church of Rome, and its votaries, have been detected and exposed; which have been the means of hindering them from proceeding any further than they have. The Alexandrian copy reads, “their understanding”; that which they pretended to have of divine things.

Ver. 10. *But thou hast fully known my doctrine,* etc.] This, with what follows, is said in opposition to the characters, principles, and practices of the above wicked men, and for the imitation and encouragement of Timothy, and of others, whether ministers or private believers: the apostle calls the doctrine he delivered, “my doctrine”: not because he was the author of it, or that it was a scheme of principles formed and contrived by him; but because it was the doctrine which he had received from God, which was given him to preach, and which he did preach purely and faithfully; otherwise it was the doctrine of Christ, and the same with that which was preached by the rest of the apostles; and which was the doctrine of the Scriptures, and was according to godliness; and as preached by him, was all of a piece, and without any adulteration, or mixture, and was open and manifest, and well known to Timothy, and others; for he used no hidden things of dishonesty, nor did he conceal his principles, or keep back anything that was profitable. And as well known was his

manner of life; both his civil life, how he spent his time, not in ease and idleness, but oftentimes in labour with his own hands; nor did he live in a sensual and voluptuous manner, but frequently was in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness; and likewise his religious life, and conversation, not only in the church, which was spent in the ministry of the word, and ordinances; but in the world, which, by the grace of God, was in simplicity and godly

sincerity, in a very just, holy, and unblamable manner: his life was agreeable to his doctrine, and ornamental to his profession: and even the secrets of his mind, his views, his aims and ends in all he did, which are signified by his

purpose, were open and manifest; and which were not to obtain glory and applause from men, nor to gather wealth and riches for himself; but that God might be glorified in the salvation of men; that Christ might be magnified both in his life and death; that his Gospel might be spread, his kingdom be enlarged, and that many souls might be converted and brought to the knowledge of him; and hence he became all things to all, that he might gain some. And as the doctrine of

faith, embraced, professed, and preached by him, was well known, so no less conspicuous was the grace of faith in him, with respect to his interest in God's everlasting love, in salvation by Jesus Christ, and in eternal glory and happiness; of which he had a full assurance, and which remained constant and firm in him to the end. Unless rather his faithfulness in the discharge of his ministerial work should be here designed, for which he was very remarkable; as also for his

longsuffering both towards those that were without, the open enemies and persecutors of the Gospel, and towards them that were within, the brethren, whose infirmities he bore; and also for the success of the Gospel as the husbandman has long patience, and waits long for the former and latter rain to which is added

charity; which suffers long, and is kind; and may include his love to God, to Christ, and to the souls of men; which was very great, and particularly to his countrymen, the Jews, and also to the Gentiles; and especially to the churches he was more immediately concerned with, and even to all the saints: this is left out in the Alexandrian copy: it follows,

patience; in bearing all indignities, reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; by which he was not in the least moved, but persevered with, great courage and constancy to the end.

Ver. 11. *Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch*, etc.] In Pisidia; where the Jews that contradicted and blasphemed his doctrine, and envied his success, stirred up the chief of the city, both men and women, against him, and Barnabas; who persecuted them and expelled them out, of their coasts, (^{<4135>}Acts 13:45,50) and also at Iconium; where both Jews and

Gentiles made an assault upon them, to use them ill, and stone them, (^{<4445>}Acts 14:5) and likewise at Lystra; where the apostle was stoned, and drawn out of the city, and left for dead, (^{<4449>}Acts 14:19). And these instances are the rather mentioned because they were done in those parts, where Timothy had lived, (^{<4401>}Acts 16:1) and so knew the truth of these things, not only from the apostle's mouth, but from the testimonies of others; and perhaps he might have been a witness to some of them himself;

what persecutions I endured: not only in the above places, but elsewhere; see a detail of them in (^{<47123>}2 Corinthians 11:23-28),

but out of them all the Lord delivered me; (see ^{<4010>}2 Corinthians 1:10) (^{<5047>}2 Timothy 4:17,18), this he says to the glory of the grace and power of God, to whom he ascribes all his deliverances; and for the encouragement of Timothy, and other saints, under sufferings, who may hope and believe that the Lord will deliver them in his own time and way, (^{<3349>}Psalms 34:19).

Ver. 12. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus,* etc.] All that live according to the will of God revealed in his word; and to the glory of God, as the end of all their actions; and which the grace of God in the Gospel, and in their own hearts, teaches them; and who have the principles of a godly life from Christ, and derive the fresh supplies of grace and life from him, to maintain it; in whom their life is hid, and who live by faith upon him; all such that live, and that will live so, are desirous of living after this manner; in whom God has wrought in them both to will and to do, and are concerned when it is otherwise with them: these

shall suffer persecution; it is the will of God, and the appointment of heaven; Christ has foretold it, that so it shall be; and he the head has suffered it himself, and it is necessary that his members should, that they may be conformed unto him; it is the way Christ himself went to glory, and through many tribulations his people must enter the kingdom; and this is the common lot and certain case of all the saints, in one shape or another; for though all do not suffer confiscation of goods, beating, scourging, imprisonment, or a violent death; yet all are more or less afflicted and distressed by wicked men, and are subject to their reproaches and revilings, which are a branch of persecution; and that for professing Christ, and living a godly life in him and under his influence: and since such suffer as Christians, and not as evildoers; and this is the common condition of the people of God, in this world, it should not be thought strange, but be

cheerfully endured; to encourage to which is the apostle's view in this passage.

Ver. 13. *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse*, etc.] By “evil men” are meant, not sinful men in common, as all are by nature and practice; nor only open profane sinners but rather wicked men under a form of godliness, as before; and who are full of wickedness and malice against truly godly persons, even as the devil himself, of whom the same word is used, when he is called the wicked one; and this is a reason why true professors of religion must expect persecution, seeing as there ever were, so there ever will be such sort of men, who will not grow better, but worse and worse. The word for “seducers”, signifies sorcerers, enchanters, a sort of jugglers; and as the other, it well suits with the ecclesiastics of the church of Rome, who pretend to miracles, and do lying wonders, and by their sorceries deceive all nations, (~~1823~~ Revelation 18:23) and these “shall wax worse and worse”; in principle and in practice, in ungodliness, and in error, in wickedness and malice against the saints, and in the arts of deceiving; so the church of Rome is never to be expected to be better, but worse; at the time of the fall of Babylon she will be an habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird, (~~1822~~ Revelation 18:2)

deceiving: not God, but themselves and others even all nations, excepting the elect of God; which they do by their good words and fair speeches, and by their show of devotion and religion, and by their pretended miracles and lying wonders:

and deceived by the old serpent, the devil, under whose power and influence they are, in whose snare they are taken, and by whom they are led captive, and will at last share the same fate with himself, and be cast into the same lake of fire and brimstone.

Ver. 14. *But continue thou in the things*, etc.] That is, in the doctrines of the Gospel, and not be moved away from them, either through the malice or persecutions, or the cunning sleight of men that lie in wait to deceive; and which is an exhortation suitable to the godly in all ages: and what follow are so many reasons enforcing it:

which thou hast learned: not merely in a theoretical way, as arts and sciences are learned, but in a spiritual and experimental manner; a comfortable knowledge and experience of which he had attained unto; and

were not like those in (~~scrip~~2 Timothy 3:7), who had been ever learning, and yet could not come to the knowledge of the truth: and since therefore he had learned the truths of the Gospel, and had attained to a good understanding of them, it was his duty, as it is the duty of all such, to abide by them:

and hast been assured of: the doctrines of the Gospel are certain things; they are truths without controversy; there is a full assurance of understanding of them, which men may arrive unto, and which ministers should, since they are to affirm them with certainty. Scepticism is very unbecoming one that calls himself a minister of the Gospel; and when a man is assured of the truth and reality of Gospel doctrines, it would be shameful in him to drop them, or depart from them:

knowing of whom thou hast learned them. The apostle means himself, though he modestly forbears the mention of himself: and it is another argument why Timothy should continue steadfastly in the doctrines of the Gospel, seeing he had learned them of so great an apostle of Christ; whose mission, as such, was abundantly confirmed by miracles and success, and who had received these doctrines by immediate revelation from Christ; so that it was all one as if Timothy had learned them from Christ himself. The Alexandrian copy reads the word “whom”, in the plural number, as if the apostle referred to more teachers of Timothy than himself; however, he doubtless was the principal one.

Ver. 15. *And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures,* etc.] And therefore must know that the doctrines he had learned were agreeable to them; and so is another reason why he should continue in them. The Jews very early learned their children the holy Scripture. Philo the Jew says ^{f21}, *ἐκ πρώτης ηλικίας* “from their very infancy”; a phrase pretty much the same with this here used. It is a maxim with the Jews ^{f22}, that when a child was five years of age, it was proper to teach him the Scriptures. Timothy's mother being a Jewess, trained him up early in the knowledge of these writings, with which he became very conversant, and under divine influence and assistance, arrived to a large understanding of them; and it is a practice that highly becomes Christian parents; it is one part of the nurture and admonition of the Lord they should bring up their children in: the wise man's advice in (~~scrip~~Proverbs 22:6) is very good. From hence the apostle takes occasion to enter into a commendation of the sacred writings; and here, from the nature and character of them, calls them the

holy Scriptures; to distinguish them from profane writings; and that because the author of them is the Holy Spirit of God; and even the amanuenses of him, and the penmen of them, were holy men of God; the matter of them is holy, both law and Gospel; and the end of writing them is to promote holiness; the precepts, promises, and doctrines contained in them are calculated for that purpose; and even the account they give of the sins and failings of others, are for the admonition of men: and next these Scriptures are commended from the efficacy of them:

which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. Men are not wise of themselves; they are naturally without an understanding of spiritual things; and the things of the Spirit of God cannot be known by natural men, because they are spiritually discerned; particularly they are not wise in the business of salvation, of which either they are insensible themselves, and negligent; or foolishly build their hopes of it upon their civility, morality, legal righteousness, or an outward profession of religion: but the Scriptures are able to make men wise and knowing in this respect; for the Gospel is one part of the Scriptures, which is the Gospel of salvation, and shows unto men the way of salvation. The Scriptures testify largely of Christ, the Saviour; and give an ample account both of him, who is the able, willing, suitable, complete, and only Saviour, and of the salvation which is wrought by him; and describe the persons who do, and shall enjoy it: not that the bare reading of the Scriptures, or the hearing of them expounded, are able to make men wise in this way; but these, when accompanied with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, are; when he who ended the Scriptures removes the veil from their eyes, opens their understandings, and gives them light and knowledge in them: and then may persons be said to be wise unto salvation, when they not only have a scheme of it in their heads, but are in their hearts sensible of their need of it, and know that there is salvation in no other but in Christ; and when they look to him for it, to his righteousness for justification, to his blood for peace, pardon, and cleansing, to his sacrifice for atonement, and to his fulness of grace for a continual supply, and to him for eternal life and glory; when they rejoice in him and his salvation, and give him all the glory of it: the apostle adds,

through faith which is in Christ Jesus: wisdom to salvation lies not in the knowledge of the law the Jew boasted of; nor in the works of it, at least not in a trust and confidence in them for salvation; for by them there is no justification before God, nor acceptance with him, nor salvation: but true

wisdom to salvation lies in faith, which is a spiritual knowledge of Christ, and a holy confidence in him; and that salvation which the Scriptures make men wise unto, is received and enjoyed through that faith, which has Christ for its author and object; which comes from him, and centres in him, and is a looking to him for eternal life.

Ver. 16. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, etc.] That is, all holy Scripture; for of that only the apostle is speaking; and he means the whole of it; not only the books of the Old Testament, but of the New, the greatest part of which was now written; for this second epistle to Timothy is by some thought to be the last of Paul's epistles; and this also will hold good of what was to be written; for all is inspired by God, or breathed by him: the Scriptures are the breath of God, the word of God and not men; they are "written by the Spirit", as the Syriac version renders it; or "by the Spirit of God", as the Ethiopic version. The Scriptures are here commended, from the divine authority of them; and which is attested and confirmed by various arguments; as the majesty and loftiness of their style, which in many places is inimitable by men; the sublimity of the matter contained in them, which transcends all human understanding and capacity ever to have attained unto and discovered; as the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the incarnation of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, etc. The purity and holiness of them before observed, show them to be the word of him that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; as also their harmony and agreement, though wrote by different persons, in different places, and ages, and at sundry times, and in divers manners; what seeming inconsistencies are observed in them may, with labour and industry, by divine assistance, be reconciled. The predictions of future events in them, as particularly concerning Josiah and Cyrus, by name, long before they were born, and especially concerning Jesus Christ, and which have had their accomplishment, and many others in the New Testament both by Christ and his apostles, are a proof that they could not be the writings of men, but must have the omniscient God for their author; the impartiality of the writers of them, in not concealing the mean extract of some of them, the sins of others before conversion, and even their sins and failings afterwards, as well as those of their nearest relations and dearest friends, strengthens the proof of their divine authority; to which may be added, the wonderful preservation of them, through all the changes and declensions of the Jewish church and state, to whom the books of the Old Testament were committed; and notwithstanding the violence and malice of Heathen

persecutors, particularly Dioclesian, who sought to destroy every copy of the Scriptures, and published an edict for that purpose, and notwithstanding the numbers of heretics, and who have been in power, as also the apostasy of the church of Rome; and yet these writings have been preserved, and kept pure and incorrupt, which is not the case of other writings; nor are there any of such antiquity as the oldest of these: to which may be subjoined the testimony of God himself; his outward testimony by miracles, wrought by Moses and the prophets, concerned in the writings of the Old Testament, and by the apostles in the New; and his internal testimony, which is the efficacy of these Scriptures on the hearts of men; the reading and hearing of which, having been owned for the conversion, comfort and edification of thousands and thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand: and

is profitable for doctrine; for the discovering, illustrating, and confirming any doctrine concerning God, the being, persons, and perfections of God; concerning the creation and fall of man; concerning the person and offices of Christ, redemption by him, justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, reconciliation and atonement by his sacrifice, and eternal life through him, with many others. The Scripture is profitable for ministers to fetch doctrine from, and establish it by; and for hearers to try and prove it by:

for reproof; of errors and heresies; this is the sword of the Spirit, which cuts all down. There never was, nor is, nor can be any error or heresy broached in the world, but there is a sufficient refutation of it in the Scriptures; which may be profitably used for that purpose, as it often has been by Christ and his apostles, and others since in all ages:

for correction; of vice; there being no sin, but the evil nature of it is shown, its wicked tendency is exposed, and the sad effects and consequences of it are pointed out in these writings: for instruction in righteousness; in every branch of duty incumbent upon men; whether with respect to God, or one another; for there is no duty men are obliged unto, but the nature, use, and excellency of it, are here shown: the Scriptures are a perfect rule of faith and practice; and thus they are commended from the usefulness and profitableness of them.

Ver. 17. *That the man of God may be perfect*, etc.] By the man of God may be meant everyone that in a special relation belongs to God; who is chosen by God the Father, redeemed by the Son, and called by the Spirit;

but more especially a minister of the Gospel; for as it was usual to call a prophet under the Old Testament by this name, it seems to be transferred from thence to a minister of the New Testament, (see ^{<small>1 Tim</small>}1 Timothy 6:11) and the design of the Scriptures and the end of writing them are, that both preachers of the word, and hearers of it, might have a perfect knowledge of the will of God; that the former might be a complete minister of the Gospel, and that nothing might be wanting for the information of the latter:

thoroughly furnished unto all good works, or “every good work”; particularly to the work of the ministry, which is a good one; and to every part and branch of it, a thorough furniture for which lies in the holy Scriptures; from whence, as scribes well instructed in the kingdom of heaven, do Gospel ministers bring forth things new and old, both for delight and profit: though this may be also applied to all good works in common, which the Scriptures point unto, give directions about, as well as show where strength is to be had to perform them.