

TITUS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF TITUS

Titus, to whom this epistle is inscribed, was a Greek, an uncircumcised Gentile, and so remained; nor did the apostle circumcise him, as he did Timothy, when he became his companion; nor did the apostles at Jerusalem oblige him to be circumcised, when Paul took him with Barnabas along with him thither, (~~4013~~Galatians 2:1,3). He was a man of great grace, and large gifts, and very dear to the apostle: he calls him his brother, his partner, and fellow helper, and says he walked in the same spirit, and in the same steps, (~~4023~~2 Corinthians 2:13 ~~4023~~8:23 ~~4028~~12:18). He was employed by the apostle much, and sent into various parts, on different occasions: he sent him to Corinth, to finish there the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, (~~4006~~2 Corinthians 8:6,16,17) and to Dalmatia, to know the state of the saints there, and to confirm them in the faith, (~~5040~~2 Timothy 4:10). As he was a Greek, so his name is a Greek name, yet used among the Romans, as Titus Vespasian, and others^{f1}; and among the Jews, so we read of R. Chijah bar **sj yj**, “Titus”^{f2}, and of R. Judah ben Titas^{f3}: when and where this epistle was written, is not very easy to determine; some think it was written between the first and second time the apostle was in bonds at Rome; and certain it is, that he was not in bonds when he wrote it, for he desires Titus to meet him at Nicopolis, (~~5039~~Titus 3:19) from whence some have supposed it to be written, as the subscription shows; but others think it was wrote much earlier, and when the apostle was at Ephesus, towards the close of his three years stay there, before he went into Macedonia; but it seems rather that it was written when he returned from Macedonia into Greece: he left Titus at Crete, and staying in Greece three months, he intended to have sailed to Syria, but was prevented by the Jews lying in wait for him, upon which he steered his course to Macedonia again; and as he was going there, or when there, writes this letter to Titus, to come to him at Nicopolis. The occasion of it was partly the judaizing preachers, and false teachers, that got into that island, and were corrupting the principles of the people; and partly the unbecoming conversation and practices of some professors of religion: and whereas the apostle had left Titus in Crete, to finish what he had begun, and to put the churches in

order, and see that they had proper officers, particularly pastors over them, that they might be taken care of, both with respect to doctrine and practice; the design of this epistle is to lay before Titus the several qualifications of a pastor, which might be instruction to him, and to the churches, in the choice and ordination of them; and to stir him up to zeal and diligence in refuting false teachers, and dealing with heretics; and to put him upon exhorting the saints to the discharge of their duty, in every branch of it, from the best principles, by arguments taken from the grace of God, and the doctrines of it. This epistle is supposed to be written about the year 55.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO TITUS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle, the apostle's salutation and preface to it; an account of the qualifications of an elder, or pastor of a church; a description of these teachers; and a charge to Titus to rebuke the Cretians for their errors and immoralities. The inscription and salutation are in (^{<5000>}Titus 1:1-4), in which the writer of the epistle is described by his name and office; by the faith and hope he had; and by the ministration of the Gospel, committed to him by the order of Christ: and the person to whom it is written is mentioned by name; and is described by the spiritual relation he stood in to the apostle, and to whom he wishes grace, mercy, and peace: the preface to the epistle is in (^{<5005>}Titus 1:5) which gives the reason of the apostle's leaving Titus in Crete, which was to set things in order there, and to ordain elders in all the churches; which leads him to point at the necessary qualifications of them for his direction; some of which respect their moral life and conversation, and others their doctrine, and are in (^{<5006>}Titus 1:6-9) and on occasion of the latter, and which is a reason why the elders should be sound in the faith, and hold it fast, the apostle takes notice of the false teachers that were in Crete, whom he describes by their noisy, vain, and deceitful talk; by their being pernicious and hurtful to whole families; and by their covetousness and sensuality, which is confirmed by a testimony out of one of the Cretian poets, (^{<5010>}Titus 1:10-12) wherefore he charges Titus sharply to rebuke either these false teachers, or those they had corrupted, that they regard sound doctrine, and not Jewish fables, and the commandments of erroneous men, (^{<5013>}Titus 1:13,14) and instances in things forbidden in the law of Moses as unclean, which were not now to be attended to by those who were pure in heart, and sound in faith, to whom all things were pure and lawful; and as for others that were impure, whose minds and consciences were defiled, and were unbelieving, nothing was pure to them, (^{<5015>}Titus 1:15) and who are further described as professors in words of the true knowledge of God, and yet practically were deniers of him; and as abominable in their nature and actions, disobedient to law and Gospel, and unfit for any good work whatever, (^{<5016>}Titus 1:16).

Ver. 1. *Paul, a servant of God*, etc.] So James styles himself, (~~500B~~James 1:1) and others of the apostles, as Peter and Jude, call themselves the servants of Jesus Christ; and as does the Apostle Paul also; and both seem to be esteemed by them as high characters and titles of honour, by which they chose to be described and known. Paul, before his conversion, was a servant of sin, of divers lusts and pleasures, and which he owns in this epistle, (~~500B~~Titus 3:3) but being called by grace, he became free from the vassalage of sin, and became a servant of God, and of righteousness; and henceforward, from a principle of grace, and being constrained by love, served the Lord, and yielded obedience to his commands and ordinances, with all readiness and cheerfulness: though this character belongs to him in a higher sense than it does to believers in common; and respects his ministerial service, or his serving God in the Gospel of his Son; in which he, and others, were eminently the servants of the most high God, whose business greatly lay in showing unto men the way of salvation.

And an apostle of Jesus Christ: constituted, qualified, and sent by him to preach his Gospel; and who had his mission, commission, and doctrine from him; and was an ambassador of his, who represented him, and preached him; and had a power of working miracles to confirm his mission and ministry; and so had all the signs and proofs of an apostle in him; (see Gill on "~~500B~~Romans 1:1").

And according to the faith of God's elect: which may either denote the agreement there was between the ministry of the apostle, and the faith of the choice and eminent saints of God, under the former dispensation; he saying no other things than what Moses, and the prophets did; and laying no other foundation of salvation than they did, and which is therefore called the foundation of the apostles and prophets; and directing souls to the righteousness, sacrifice, and blood of Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, to which the faith of Old Testament saints looked, and by whose grace they were justified, pardoned, and saved, as we are: or else the way and manner in which he became an apostle; it was "by, in, or through the faith of God's elect", as the Syriac version renders it; he was chosen of God, and brought as such to believe in Christ, and then called to be an apostle: or rather this may regard the end of his apostleship, and be rendered, "unto the faith of God's elect"; that is, either he was appointed an apostle, to preach the doctrine of faith, which once he destroyed, and which is but one, and is common to all the elect, and what is commonly received, and embraced by the elect of God, in all ages; or to be a means

and instrument of bringing the elect of God to that faith in Christ, which is peculiar to them; (see ~~<BIB>~~Romans 1:5 ~~<BIB>~~10:17). There are some persons who are styled the elect of God; these are not all men, some are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, ungodly men, foreordained to condemnation and given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned; nor the Jews only, nor all of them, for though, as a nation, they were chosen, above all others, to many outward privileges, yet they were not chosen to special grace, and eternal glory; only a remnant, according to the election of grace: but these are some of both, Jews and Gentiles; some of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; these were chosen in Christ from eternity, and are the peculiar objects of the affection and care of God, whom he calls, justifies, and glorifies: and there is a special “faith” that belongs to these; which is a spiritual looking to Christ, a going to him, a laying hold and leaning on him, and trusting in him for salvation; and this faith is peculiar to the elect of God; all men have it not, and those that have it, have it through the free gift of God; nor is it given to any but to the chosen ones. The reason why the Jews did not believe in Christ, was, because they were not of this number, (~~<BIB>~~John 10:26). And this faith is secured and, made sure to them by their election; they are chosen to it, and through it to salvation; they believe in consequence, and by virtue of it; and certainly obtain it in all ages, as well as righteousness, life, and salvation; and it is that by which they are known to be the elect of God: and the apostle mentions it in this form, and manner, to distinguish it from other faith; the faith of devils, and of reprobates, and the historical and temporal faith of hypocrites, and nominal professors.

And the acknowledging of the truth; by which is meant the Gospel, often called the truth, and the word of truth; in distinction from that which was shadowy, the ceremonies of the law; and in opposition to that which is false, it being from the God of truth, concerning Christ, who is the truth; and containing nothing but truth, and what is led into by the Spirit of truth. Now to preach, spread, and defend this, was the apostle constituted in his office as such; and which he did preach with all clearness and faithfulness, to bring souls to a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it, and so to an acknowledgment, a public owning and professing of it:

which is after godliness; the Gospel is a doctrine according to godliness; the truths of it have an influence, both on internal and external godliness; they direct to, and promote the worship and fear of God, and a religious, righteous, sober, and godly life and conversation.

Ver. 2. *In hope of eternal life*, etc.] Or “for the hope of eternal life”; in order to bring souls to the hope of it. This is another end of the Gospel ministry, as to bring God's elect to faith in Christ, and to the knowledge and acknowledgement of the truth, as it is in Jesus, so to the hope of eternal glory and happiness: in a state of nature, they are without the grace of hope, or any true ground and foundation of it; and though it is the gift of God's grace, and is implanted on the soul by the Spirit of God in regeneration; yet the Gospel is the means of producing it at first, as well as afterwards encouraging and increasing it; for in it, Christ the foundation of hope is proposed, and set forth before awakened and convinced sinners: the object of this hope is “eternal life”; not anything now seen and enjoyed, for that is not hope; not anything in this present life, but something future; a life of perfect bliss and happiness with Christ to all eternity; which is a hope laid up in heaven, an inheritance reserved there; a life which is secured in the hands of Christ, which he has a power to give, and does give to all his sheep, and is the gift of God through him: and of which it is further said,

which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; eternal life is a “promise”, and so of free grace, and not by the works of the law, which is inconsistent with a promise: it is the promise of God, who is faithful to his word, and “can not lie”; being the God of truth, that can neither deceive, nor be deceived: this does not contradict his omnipotence, but argues the perfection of his nature, which cannot admit of anything that implies weakness and mutation: and this promise was made before the world was, as early as the choice of God's elect in Christ, and the gift of grace to them in him; as early as the covenant was made with him, and he was set up as the Mediator of it; who was present to receive this promise as their head and representative for them, and to whom it was made as federally considered in him, and in whom it was secured for them; (see ~~2~~ Timothy 1:1).

Ver. 3. *But hath in due times manifested his word*, etc.] Either Christ, his essential Word; or the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation; or rather his word of promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus:

through preaching; through the ministry of the word by the apostles; in which Christ is revealed in the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace, and in the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and in which the Gospel, that was ordained before the world was, and is the

fellowship of the mystery which was hid in God, is published; and in which the promise of eternal life, which lay in God's heart, in the covenant of grace, and in the hands of Christ, and which with Christ, and his Gospel, were hid under the dark types, shadows, and sacrifices of the law, is clearly made known: "in due times"; appointed by God, agreed between the Father and the Son, and suitable to the state, case, and condition of men; when the law of Moses, and the light of nature, legal sacrifices, and moral power, had been sufficiently tried, the one in the Jewish, the other in the Gentile world; and after that the Son of God was become incarnate, which was in the fulness of time; and when he had suffered for the ungodly, which was in due time; (see ^{<5016>}1 Timothy 2:6).

Which is committed unto me; that is, which preaching or ministry of the word, the Gospel, and the dispensation of it, which, as a trust, was deposited in the hands of the apostle, and of which he was a faithful steward: according to the commandment of God our Saviour; either God the Father, so called, (^{<5014>}Titus 3:4) compared with (^{<5006>}Titus 1:6) and who is the Saviour of all men in a providential way, and of all the elect in a way of special grace, by his Son Jesus Christ; and by whom the apostle was appointed and separated to the preaching of the Gospel; and by whom this was committed to his trust: or rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly and properly God, the great God, and our Saviour, (^{<5013>}Titus 2:13) and who is the only Saviour of lost sinners; and he it was that personally appeared to Paul, and made him a minister of the word, committed the Gospel to him, and gave him a commandment, and orders to preach it among the Gentiles, (^{<4915>}Acts 26:15-18).

Ver. 4. *To Titus, mine own son after the common faith*, etc.] Not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense; the apostle being the instrument of his conversion, as he was of the conversion of Onesimus, and of many of the Corinthians, and therefore is said to beget them, (^{<5010>}Philemon 1:10 ^{<4915>}1 Corinthians 4:15) and so was their spiritual father, and they his children: Titus was, in this sense, his "own son", or a true son, a legitimate one; a true convert; one really born again; a sincere believer, an Israelite indeed; and this he was "after the common faith"; either the doctrine of faith, which is but one, and is common to all the saints; or the grace of faith, which though different in degrees, yet is alike precious faith in all; the same for nature, kind, object, operation, and effects: and this phrase is used to show in what sense Titus was son to the apostle; as he was a believer, and no otherwise.

Grace, mercy, and peace, etc. which is the apostle's usual salutation; (see ^{<50B>}1 Timothy 1:2). The word “mercy” is left out in the Claromontane copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 5. *For this cause left I thee in Crete*, etc.] Not in his voyage to Rome, (^{<42B>}Acts 27:7) but rather when he came from Macedonia into Greece, (^{<41B>}Acts 20:2). Crete is an island in the Mediterranean sea, now called Candy; (see Gill on “^{<41B>}Acts 2:11”). Here Paul preached the Gospel to the conversion of many; but not having time to finish what he begun, left Titus here for that purpose:

that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting; that is, form the young converts into Gospel order, into a regular Gospel church state; settle a proper discipline among them; instruct them more largely into the doctrines of the Gospel; and correct their manners, and direct them in everything, both with respect to faith and practice:

and ordain elders in every city: for this island, though it was not above fifty miles in breadth, and two hundred and seventy in length, yet had an hundred cities in it ^{f4}; and it seems as if the Gospel had been preached in most, if not all of them, and churches were formed: however, in as many of them as there were churches, the apostle would have Titus see to it, and take care that they had proper officers fixed in them, particularly elders, pastors, or overseers, to preach the Gospel, and administer the ordinances to them, to watch over them in the Lord, and put the laws of Christ's house in execution, and keep up a strict discipline in it, according to the will of God. What Titus was to do in this affair, was to put the churches upon looking out, and choosing from among themselves proper persons for such service, and to direct, assist, and preside at the elections and ordinations of them: for we are not to suppose, that the ordination of elders was the sole act of Titus, or alone resided in him; but in like manner as Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church, by the suffrages of the people, signified by the stretching out of their hands; in which they directed, presided, and also assisted in prayer, with fasting, (^{<44B>}Acts 14:23)

as I had appointed thee; when he left him at Crete; when he gave him orders and instructions, both with respect to the persons, and their qualifications, whom he would have ordained, and with respect to the manner in which it should be done: the former of these he repeats in the following verses. From all which it clearly appears, that there were churches in Crete, and pastors placed over those churches; very probably

the Cretes, who were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, (~~401~~Acts 2:11), and heard Peter's sermon, and were converted by him, some of them returning to their own country, might first bring the Gospel to this island, and lay the foundation of a Gospel church state here. It seems by what is said in this text, that the Apostle Paul was in this island himself, and preached the Gospel, and after him Titus, whom he left behind; and if any credit is to be given to the subscription of this epistle, he was the first bishop of the church in it: and it is certain, that in the "second" century there were churches in this island, particularly at Gortyna, and other places, to whom Dionysius^{f5}, bishop of Corinth, wrote letters, in which he greatly extols Philip their bishop; and in another letter of his to the Gnosians, or to the church at Gnosus, another city in Crete, he makes mention of Pinytus as their bishop, and whom he commends for his orthodox faith, great knowledge of divine things, and care of his flock; and both these lived in the times of the Emperors Antoninus Verus and Commodus^{f6}; which churches, no doubt, continued in the "third" century, since in the "fourth" we read of bishops sent from Crete to the synod at Sardica: and in the "fifth" century, a bishop of Gortyna in Crete is reckoned among the bishops in the council of Chalcedon: and in the "sixth" century, Theodorus, bishop of the same place, subscribed in the fifth synod at Constantinople: and in the "seventh" century, Paul archbishop of Crete, Basil bishop of Gortyna, with several other bishops of churches in the island, were present at the sixth synod at Constantinople: and in the "eighth" century, as appears from the acts of the Nicene synod, Helias was bishop of Crete, Anastasius bishop of Gnosus, a city in it, and Melito, Leontins, and Galatas, bishops of other places in the same island: and in the "ninth" century, a bishop of Gortyna, in defence of the cause of Christ, became a martyr^{f7}; so far churches, and bishops, bearing the Christian name, are to be traced in this island.

Ver. 6. *If any be blameless*, etc.] In his outward life and conversation, not chargeable with any notorious crime; (see Gill on "~~54RD~~1 Timothy 3:2"),

the husband of one wife; (see Gill on "~~54RD~~1 Timothy 3:2"):

having faithful children; legitimate ones, born in lawful wedlock, in the same sense as such are called godly and holy, in (~~31PS~~Malachi 2:15) (~~4074~~1 Corinthians 7:14) for by faithful children cannot be meant converted ones, or true believers in Christ; for it is not in the power of men to make their children such; and their not being so can never be an objection to their

being elders, if otherwise qualified; at most the phrase can only intend, that they should be brought up in the faith, in the principles, doctrines, and ways of Christianity, or in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Not accused of riot; or chargeable with sins of uncleanness and intemperance, with rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness; or with such crimes as Eli's sons were guilty of, from which they were not restrained by their father, and therefore the priesthood was removed from the family: "or unruly" not subject, but disobedient to their parents; (see Gill on "~~510B~~ 1 Timothy 3:4"). (See Gill on "~~510B~~ 1 Timothy 3:5").

Ver. 7. *For a bishop must be blameless*, etc.] This shows that a bishop and an elder is the same; and the Syriac version here renders it, "an elder"; the character or qualification necessary to him is the same as before, and in like manner to be understood; unless it should more particularly refer to his faithfulness in the discharge of his office: since it follows,

as the steward of God; one appointed by God over his household and family, the church, to give to everyone their portion of meat in due season; one that dispenses the manifold grace, or various doctrines of the grace of God, and mysteries of Christ; and of such an one it is required, that he be faithful, both to his Lord and master, to the trust committed to him, and to the persons under his care.

Not selfwilled; not doing things in the worship and house of God, in the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, according to his own will, but according to the will of God, revealed in his word; otherwise what he does will come under the name of will worship: or obstinate, stubborn, and inflexible, conceited of his own sense and judgment, and resolute to have his own will and way in all things relating to the affairs of God's house. The word signifies one that is pleased with himself, has an overweening opinion of himself, is proud and haughty, and despises others:

not soon angry: but slow to wrath, which shows a man to be a man of understanding, and fit to teach others, which an angry man is not. It is a saying of R. Hillel ^{f8}, that

"neither one that is ashamed (to ask questions) learns well, nor one that is "angry" teaches well"

And the Jews say ^{f9}, that

“the law is not rightly explained but by one that is not angry.”

Hence, that direction ^{f10},

“for ever let a man be meek as Hillell, and not angry as Shammai;”

who were two of their principal doctors, the heads of their schools, in the times of Christ: a man that rules his own spirit, and has the command of his temper and passions, is fit to govern in the church of God.

Not given to wine, no striker, nor given to filthy lucre; (See Gill on “^{S4RB}1 Timothy 3:3”).

Ver. 8. *But a lover of hospitality,* etc.] (See Gill on “^{S4RB}1 Timothy 3:2”)

a lover of good men, or “of good”; the Syriac version renders it, “of good things”; as prayer, preaching, reading, meditation, spiritual conversation, and every religious exercise: or “of good men”; for such an elder or bishop has chiefly to do and converse with; and if he is not a lover of them, their company will be disagreeable to him, and he will be of no advantage to them; and if he does not love the souls of men, he will not naturally care for their state, or be concerned for their good.

Sober: in body, using moderation in diet and dress; and in mind, being prudent, modest, and humble, and thinking soberly of himself, and others, as he ought.

Just; righteous in his dealings with men, giving to everyone their due; upright and sincere in his conversation with the saints; and faithful in his counsel, admonitions, and reproofs.

Holy; devout towards God, constant in all religious exercises in the closet, family, and church; and living soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.

Temperate; in eating and drinking; continent from the lusts of the flesh; and even abstaining from those things which might be lawfully used, though inexpedient, for the sake of the weak, the peace of the church, and the glory of God.

Ver. 9. *Holding fast the faithful word,* etc.] The doctrine of the Gospel, so called because it is true, and to be believed; it is the word of truth, and truth itself, and contains nothing but truth; and because it never deceived any, that gave credit to its doctrines, and its promises; and because it is pure, unmixed, and unadulterated, and is the sincere milk of the word; and

because in it is a glorious display of the faithfulness of God to his perfections, to his holiness and justice, to his law, and to his covenant, word, and oath; and of the faithfulness of Christ, to him that appointed him and to his covenant engagements, and which has appeared in the discharge of his various offices: and this is not only to be held forth by the elder, but to be held fast, and tenaciously abode by; in opposition to all wavering about it, departure from it, dropping or concealing any part of it, and pusillanimity concerning it; whatever temptations there may be to the contrary, through popular applause on the one hand, and reproaches and persecutions on the other; and though there may be many that may endeavour to wring it out of his hands; (see ~~2~~ Timothy 1:13),

as he hath been taught; or “according to doctrine”: that is, according to the doctrine of the Scriptures, Christ, and his apostles; according to the doctrine that lies in the Scriptures that was delivered by Christ, and preached by his apostles; whatever is according to that should be held fast:

[or] which is for doctrine, which tends to teach, instruct, and edify the minds of men, that ought to be constantly abode by: or as the elder himself has been taught, not by men, in a theoretical way, as logic, rhetoric, and other arts and sciences are taught; for such who are only taught the faithful word in this way, are not likely to hold it fast, in a time of temptation; but as he has been taught it experimentally by the Spirit of God; and such an one, who has not only the knowledge of it in his head, but the experience of it in his heart, will hold it, and hold it fast against all opposition:

that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers; sound doctrine is the faithful word, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, which being retained, qualify an elder to discharge the following branches of his office; to “exhort” the members of churches to their duty, according to their age, sex, state, and condition, as in chapter 2 to which the doctrines of grace influence and engage; or to comfort them, as the word also signifies, and the Alexandrian copy reads, “to comfort them in all tribulation”; and this is one considerable part of the elder's work, to comfort souls under affliction, whether of body or mind; and sound doctrines, or the doctrines of the Gospel, are wonderfully suited to such a purpose: and the other part of his work is, “to convince gainsayers”; such who resist the truth, oppose themselves to it, cavil at it, and object against it; these are to be refitted, and convinced by the Scriptures, and arguments taken from them, as the Jews were by Apollos,

(~~4183~~ Acts 18:28) and nothing is so powerful to do it as sound doctrine, and holding fast the faithful word.

Ver. 10. *For there are many unruly*, etc.] Persons who are not subject to the law of God, or Gospel of Christ; whose spirits are not subject to the prophets; and who will not submit themselves to them that have the rule over them, nor attend to the admonitions of the church, nor be brought into any regularity and order; and there were many of this sort, who were not sent forth by Christ, or his churches, but went forth of themselves, and were corrupters of the word; and therefore Christ's ministers ought to hold fast the faithful word, and convince such opposers by sound doctrine;

and vain talkers; who deliver out in their discourses empty, trifling, superficial, and frivolous things; which have no solidity and substance in them, nor do they tend to edification; only great swelling words of vanity, vain jangling and babbling about things to no profit.

And deceivers; both of themselves and others; who lie in wait to deceive, and are deceitful workers; and by their good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple; and so are dangerous persons, and of pernicious consequence:

especially they of the circumcision; or “of the Jews”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; that is, not the unbelieving Jews, but such as professed Christianity, judaizing Christians, who joined Moses and Christ and blended the law and Gospel together; who taught that circumcision, and the observance of other ceremonies of the law, were necessary to justification and salvation; and hereby did a great deal of mischief among the churches.

Ver. 11. *Whose mouths must be stopped*, etc.] Or they be silenced, by reasons and arguments fetched out of the word of God; as were the Sadducees and Pharisees by Christ, so that they durst ask him no more questions; and as the Jews at Damascus were by Saul, who confounded them, proving in the clearest and strongest manner, that Jesus was the very Christ:

who subvert whole houses; into which they creep; that is, whole families, whose principles they corrupt, whose faith they overthrow, and carry them away with their own errors; and therefore, since this was the case not of a single person, or of a few, but of whole families, it was high time to

attempt to convince them, and stop their mouths, that they might proceed no further:

teaching things which they ought not; which were not agreeable to the perfections of God, to the Scriptures of truth, to sound doctrine, and which were hurtful and pernicious to the souls of men: and that only

for filthy lucre's sake; having no regard to the glory of God, the honour and interest of Christ, or the good of immortal souls; only seeking to gain popular applause and honour from men, and to gather and increase worldly substance. Covetousness was a sin which the Cretians were remarkably guilty of^{f11}.

Ver. 12. *One of themselves, even a prophet of their own*, etc.] This was Epimenides, in whose poems stand the words here cited; the apostle rightly calls him “one of themselves”, since he was a Cretian by birth, of the city of Gnosus; it is reported of him, that being sent by his father to his sheep in the field, he by the way, at noon, turned aside into a cave, and slept fifty seven years^{f12} and he is very properly called a “prophet” of their own; for in Crete Jupiter had his prophets^{f13}, and he might be one of them: the priests among the Heathens were called prophets; so Baal's priests are called the prophets of Baal, and the prophets of the groves, (~~<1189>~~1 Kings 18:19). Besides, Epimenides was thought to be inspired by the gods: he is called by Apuleius^{f14}, a famous fortune teller; and is said by Laertius^{f15} to be very skilful in divination, and to have foretold many things which came to pass; and by the Grecians were supposed to be very dear to the gods; so Balaam, the soothsayer and diviner, is called a prophet, (~~<626>~~2 Peter 2:16). Add to this, that the passage next cited stands in a poem of this writer, entitled, “Concerning Oracles”; and it is easy to observe, that poets in common were usually called “vates”, or prophets; so that the apostle speaks here with great propriety. Now concerning the inhabitants of Crete, Epimenides, a native of the place, and a person of great character and repute among them,

said, the Cretians are always liars: living is a sin common to human nature, and appears in men as early, or earlier than any other; and all men are guilty of it, at one time or another; but all are not habitually liars, as it seems these Cretians were: lying was a governing vice among them; they were not only guilty of it in some particular instances, but always; not only for saying that Jupiter's sepulchre was with them, when it was the sepulchre of Minos his son, which they had fraudulently obliterated; and

for which ^{f16} Callimachus charges them with lying, and uses these very words of Epimenides; though he assigns a different reason from that now given, which is, that Jupiter died not, but always exists, and therefore his sepulchre could not be with them: but this single instance was not sufficient to fasten such a character upon them; it was a sin they were addicted to: some countries are distinguished by their vices; some for pride; some for levity, vanity, and inconstancy; some for boasting and bragging some for covetousness; some for idleness; some for effeminacy; some for hypocrisy and deceit; and others, as the Cretians, it seems, for lying; this was their national sin ^{f17}; and this is said by others, as well as Epimenides. Crete is, by Ovid ^{f18}, called “mendax Creta”, lying Crete. Hence, with the Grecians, to “cretize”, is proverbially used for to lie; this is a sin, than which nothing makes a man more like the devil, or more infamous among men, or more abominable to God. The Ethiopic version, instead of Cretes, or Cretians, reads “hypocrites”. Other characters of them, from the same Heathen poet, follow,

evil beasts: slow bellies; by evil beasts are meant beasts of prey, savage and mischievous ones; (see ~~(K37D)~~ Genesis 37:20,33) and are so called, to distinguish them from other beasts, as sheep, and the like, which are not so; and perhaps Crete might abound with such evil beasts; for the Cretians are said ^{f19} to excel in hunting; and to these they themselves are compared, by one of their own prophets, for their cruelty, and savage disposition: so cruel persecutors are compared to beasts, (~~(K37D)~~ 1 Corinthians 15:30) and the false teachers, the apostle has respect to in citing this passage, were cruel, if not to the bodies, yet to the souls of men, whom they poisoned and destroyed. And the Cretians are called, by the poet, slow bellies partly for their intemperance, their gluttony and drunkenness: which suited with the false teachers, whose god was their belly, and which they served, and not the Lord Jesus; and partly for their sloth and idleness, eating the bread of others without working.

Ver. 13. *This witness is true*, etc.] The apostle confirms what the poet had said; he knew it to be fact from his own experience, and by the observation he had made when in the island: he does not say, that all that Epimenides had said, in the poem referred to, was true; but this character, which he had given of the Cretians, and which he cites, and uses to a good purpose; from whence it may be observed, that the writings of the Heathen poets may be read with profit, and be used to advantage, if carefully and prudently

attended to; for what is truth, let it come from whom, or by what means it will, ought to be received.

Wherefore rebuke them sharply: not merely upon the testimony of the poet, but upon the confirmation of it by the apostle; and not because of these general and national characters, but because these things personally and particularly belonged to the persons before described; whom the apostle would have rebuked, both for their bad principles, teaching things that they ought not; and for their immoralities, their lying and deceit, their intemperance, luxury, and idleness, things very unbecoming the Christian name; and therefore since their offences were of an heinous nature, and they lived in them, and were hardened and obstinate, and were like to have a bad influence on others, they must be rebuked “sharply”: rebukes ought to be given according to the nature of offences, and the circumstances of them, and the offenders; some are to be given privately, others publicly; some should be reprov'd with gentleness and meekness, and be used in a tender and compassionate way; others more roughly, though never in a wrathful and passionate manner, yet with some degree of severity, at least with great plainness and faithfulness; laying open the nature of the evils guilty of in all their aggravated circumstances, without sparing them in the least; doing, as surgeons do by wounds, though they take the knife, and use it gently, yet cut deep, to the quick, and go to the bottom of the wound, and lay it open: and so the phrase may be rendered here, “rebuke them cuttingly”; cut them to the quick, and spare them not; deal not with them as Eli with his sons, (~~4923~~ 1 Samuel 2:23) but speak out, and expose their crimes, severely reprove them, that others may fear: and

that they may be sound in the faith; that they may be recovered from their errors, to the acknowledgment of the truth; that they may receive the sound doctrine of faith, the wholesome words of Christ, and speak the things which become them, and use sound speech, which cannot be condemned; and that they may be turned from their evil practices, and appear to be sound, as in the doctrine, so in the grace of faith; or that that by their works may appear to be genuine, true, and unfeigned; and that they may be strong and robust, hale and healthful, and not weak and sickly in the profession of their faith. Rebukes being to persons infected with bad principles and practices, like physic to sickly constitutions, a means of removing the causes of disorder; and in rebukes, admonitions, and censures, this always ought to be the end proposed, the good of the persons rebuked, admonished, and censured.

Ver. 14. *Not giving heed to Jewish fables*, etc.] Concerning God himself, the angels, and the creation of man; concerning the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; concerning the Messiah and his earthly kingdom, and the feast that will be made for the righteous in his days, which will consist of flesh, fish, and fowl, Behemoth, Leviathan, and Zuz, and of wine kept in the grape from the foundation of the world; and concerning the rolling of the dead through the caverns of the earth at the resurrection, with a multitude of other things which were traditionally received.

And commandments of men: the traditions of the elders, which the Jews charged the disciples of Christ with the transgression of; and he, on the other hand, very justly reproached them with breaking the commands of God, by attending to them, (^{<4030>}Matthew 15:1-39). These were the laws and traditions of the fathers, which the Apostle Paul was brought up in, and was zealous of, before his conversion, (^{<427B>}Acts 22:3 ^{<4014>}Galatians 1:14) and which these judaizing preachers and professors, he here has respect to, were fond of, though they were made by men,

that turn from the truth; or “hate it”, as the Syriac version renders it; who were enemies unto it, as Hillell and Shammai, the heads of the traditional doctors, and as the Jews, and their Rabbins in general were; and therefore their commandments, of all men, should not be given heed to, by those that bear the Christian name.

Ver. 15. *Unto the pure all things are pure*, etc.] The apostle having made mention of Jewish fables, and the traditions of the elders, takes notice of some darling notions, that these judaizing Christians had imbibed or retained; that there were some things, which being touched, or handled, or tasted, occasioned uncleanness, and which the apostle denies to them that are “pure”; by whom are meant, not such who are so in their own eyes, who yet may not be cleansed from their filthiness; nor do any become pure through ceremonial, moral, or evangelical performances, done by them; they are only pure, who are justified from all sin by Christ's righteousness, and are clean through the word or sentence of absolution spoken by him; and who are washed from their sins in his blood, and have that sprinkled upon their consciences, by which they are purged and cleansed from all sin; and who have the clean water of sanctifying grace sprinkled upon them, and have clean hearts, and right spirits created in them; and whose hearts are purified by faith, and have true principles of grace and holiness formed in them; whose graces are pure and genuine, their faith is unfeigned, their

love is without dissimulation, and their hope without hypocrisy; and who, in consequence of all this, love pureness of heart, speak the pure language of Canaan, hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and follow after purity of life and conversation: to these “all things are pure”; whatever they touch, or handle, or eat, nothing can defile them; for it is not what enters into man that can pollute him; nor is any creature unclean of itself, but good, and to be received with thanksgiving; (see ^{<4051>}Matthew 15:11 ^{<5144>}Romans 14:14 ^{<5048>}1 Timothy 4:3-5).

But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; all mankind are defiled with sin; they are altogether become filthy; there is none good, no, not one; and all of them, or that belong to them, are unclean; the members of their body, and the powers and faculties of their soul, their mind and conscience, understanding, will, and affections; there is no place clean: they are originally so, from their first conception and birth; and they are actually defiled by their own evil thoughts, words, and doings: some are openly impure, like the dog and the swine, who wallow in their impieties, such are the profane part of the world; others are more secretly so, as those of a pharisaical complexion, nominal Christians, and formal professors; and such the apostle has here in view: and who, notwithstanding their profession of the Christian religion, were “unbelieving”; they had not true faith in Christ, though they professed it; they were not indeed unbelieving, as the Jews, who rejected Jesus as the Messiah: yet they did not purely and cordially embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, nor yield a spiritual and cheerful subjection to the ordinances of it; but were for mixing the ceremonies of the law with the institutions of Christ: and to these were “nothing pure”; right and lawful to be done, or not done, even in the case supposed, about eating things forbidden by the ceremonial law; to eat them would be to eat with offence, to their own consciences, on their principles, and so be evil, (^{<5141>}Romans 14:20) and to abstain from them on account of laws not in force, would be superstition and will worship, and so criminal, (^{<5121>}Colossians 2:21-23). There is nothing that defiled persons can do, but what is unclean; as are their persons, so are their offerings and works, (^{<3714>}Haggai 2:14), and being destitute of true faith, whatever they do is sin, and not anything they do can be acceptable and well pleasing to God, (^{<5143>}Romans 14:23 ^{<5816>}Hebrews 11:6). There were some things among the Jews, which were prohibited to them that were defiled, and were free to them that were pure: thus, for instance ^{f20},

“the flesh of the most holy things, and the flesh of those which are lightly holy, boiled with flesh of delight, (or common flesh,) are forbidden **ϣyamj l** , “to the defiled”, but are free **ϣyrwhj l** , “to the pure”.”

Which one of their commentators ^{f21} thus explains;

“the flesh of the most holy things is forbidden to strangers, though pure; the flesh of things lightly holy is free to strangers that are pure, but forbidden to them that are defiled.”

Whether there may be any allusion to this, may be considered: however, the reason the apostle gives why nothing is pure to the impure, is, because of the pollution of the superior powers and faculties of their soul:

but even their mind and conscience is defiled; there is nothing in them, or that belongs to them, that is pure; their mind or understanding, which conceives and judges of things, and forms notions of them; and the conscience, which draws conclusions from them, are both defiled with sin; and what then must the thoughts, the words and actions of such persons be? it matters not what they do, or abstain from, what they touch, taste, or handle, or if they do not, they sin in all they do.

Ver. 16. *They profess that they know God*, etc.] That there is a God; that there is but one, only, true, and living God, the God of Israel, as professed by the Jews; and that this God is Father, Son, and Spirit, as believed by the Christians: for the persons the apostle speaks of were judaizing Christians. Yet this knowledge was but notional; it lay in theory and profession only; they had not a spiritual experimental knowledge of God in Christ, which only has eternal life connected with it:

but in works they deny him. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, “in their own works”; they were not professed, but practical atheists; they owned there was a God, and boasted of their knowledge of him; but their lives and conversations showed that they had no true knowledge of him, and that the fear of him was not before their eyes; these gave the lie to their profession; they practically denied that faith they professed to hold, and the power of godliness, of which they had the form.

Being abominable; in the sight of God, however esteemed by men; and notwithstanding the vizard and mask of sanctity and religion they put on, which could not screen them from the omniscience of God, who will one

day declare he knows them not, and will bid them depart from him, being workers of iniquity.

And disobedient; to God; to his law, and Gospel; to his ministers and churches; and even to parents and civil magistrates; for of this cast were the false teachers, and their followers, as maybe learned from many passages.

And unto every good work reprobate: or “unaccustomed”, unused to them, as the Arabic version renders it; or rather “without judgment”, and understanding, concerning them; there was no good in them, nor was it in them to do good; to do good they had no knowledge, nor any inclination; they were unfit for it, and had not a capacity to perform it; they were not good themselves, and therefore could not do good; the tree must first be made good, ere its fruit will be good; they were without Christ, and without his Spirit, and grace, without which no man can do anything that is spiritually good; they had no true faith, and therefore what they did was sinful; they had neither right principles, from which, nor right ends to which they acted, and therefore were not qualified for the performance of good works; which require that men should be good men, created in Christ Jesus, be believers in him, and have principles of truth and love, and views to the glory of God.