

A SHORT SUMMARY
OF
First Epistle to Timothy.

THE epistles to Timothy and Titus have a peculiar character. They are not addressed to the church as such, but to individuals, whom Paul had left either at Ephesus or Crete, with delegated power in reference to the order of the church of God. Some in Ephesus were teaching Judaizing doctrine, besides giving heed to fables and endless genealogies. Timothy was besought to abide there, and given a charge in reference to these, which he was to carry out.

The two great points brought out in the first epistle are, that **FIRST**, God is revealed as a Saviour God in reference to the world: His present relations with it being established on the basis of Christ the Mediator, and His blood as a Ransom (see chap. ii. 1—6). But then, this same grace had established the Church of God, as God's house in the world, which was erected under the direct sphere of the government of the Lord, and was thus to be a witness of His order and government in the midst of it. Timothy was to know how he ought to behave himself in the house of God, which was the assembly of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (chap. iii. 15).

Consequently, after bringing out the difference of law and grace, and bringing himself forward as

the great witness of God's grace to the chief of sinners, in the first chapter; and in the second, bringing out God's present relations with the world through a Mediator and a Ransom, the apostle enlarges on the order and government of the house of God. The man and the woman are put in their proper places at the end of the second chapter. The necessary character of a bishop or elder and deacon are pressed in the third; that Timothy might know how to behave himself in the house of God. This house was to be the great pillar and support of the truth, to uphold the great mystery of godliness (see ver. 16). There would be a departure from the faith in the latter times, giving heed to doctrines of devils, denying God's rights and gifts in creation. Timothy was to uphold the rights, and stand up for the goodness of the Creator-God, who was now revealed as a Saviour (*i.e.*, Preserver of all men, specially of those that believe.)

Directions as to his own personal walk, and his dealing toward others, specially in reference to elders and widows, masters and servants, fill up the end of the 3rd and 4th chapters, and beginning of the 5th. Others were to be tested by this teaching being enforced, and if they did not obey, they were to be marked as proud and knowing nothing, and were to be withdrawn from.

Covetous practices are also spoken of: these things Timothy was to shun, and follow righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness. He was to keep this charge without spot, unrebukable till the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; before the God who gave life to all things, and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession. He alone had immortality in Himself as to its essence and source, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach

unto, which no one hath seen or can see. Charging the rich also, Timothy was to keep what was committed to his trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.

The 1st Epistle gives us the house of God in its primitive order and government, the elders and deacons are seen in their proper places, either overseeing or caring for the poor of the flock; and Timothy, delegated by the apostle, seems to have had a general oversight of all. In the 2nd Epistle all had already failed, and directions are given to Timothy consequent on this, which we shall consider when we get to that Epistle.

God, then, revealed as a Saviour God in reference to the world, on the basis of a Mediator and Ransom, and the order and governing of the house of God, are the two chief points we get in our Epistle. Godliness was the great point, practically as the result. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of this Saviour God, and this Lord Jesus Christ, whose second coming was the hope of the church of God, (*i.e.*, coming again to translate this beloved church to glory.)

This is in direct contrast to God's manner of dealing with the world before Christ. Revealed as He was then to the world, as God the Creator, the world departed from Him, and before Abraham's day was given up to judicial blindness (see Rom. i. 18 to end). The Jewish nation was then called out on the ground of promise, and made the sphere of Jehovah's direct dealing and government in the ~~in the~~ world. The law was the basis and centre of that government. But Messiah having come according to promise, and the Jewish nation having rejected Him, all was changed. Man put under probation under the most favourable circumstances,

had utterly failed to give any righteousness to God, and when the Son came into His vineyard they rejected Him. Now, therefore, the righteousness of God without the law was manifested. Christ was set forth as a mercy-seat through faith in His blood, the veil was rent from the top to the bottom, and through the work of redemption, the vilest sinner has access to the very throne of God, to find in Him a God just, and yet the justifier of every one that believed in Jesus. It was God, too, who had given His Son to accomplish this work, and the whole world was invited to come. May my reader, if he has not yet got to know this wonderful Saviour God, be brought to know Him, and consequently be at peace.

At the time of the giving of the law, there was God, Moses the mediator of the old covenant, and the law; in other words, God making His righteous demands upon man, which no man ever did fulfil, or could fulfil, being a sinner already; and this had as its direct sphere the Jewish nation only; now it was God the Saviour establishing His relations in grace with the world by a Mediator, and a Ransom, so that any poor sinner could come to Him and be saved.

The Mediator of the old covenant was the witness to the Jewish nation of His righteous requirements, and from the glory shining from His face we are told the whole nation shrunk away (see Ex. xxxiv. end). The law was a ministry of death and condemnation to them. But the glory on our Mediator's face is the witness of a complete payment on our behalf to God of what was our due, and a witness that every believer's sin is once and for ever put away. Besides, a place in the glory is gained for man, heaven is opened, and complete positive

righteousness, eternal life and glory, is ministered from the glorified man on high. He, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, becomes the hope of the believer, and of the church, instead of the witness of the sinner's condemnation, as Moses was.

O glorious contrast, for Timothy to take hold of and rejoice in! The apostle wishes him grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord. Mercy is added here, because an individual is addressed who is always in need of this mercy from beginning to end.

The apostle then states the object of Timothy's continued stay at Ephesus. He was to charge some, that they should teach none other doctrine, neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which ministered questions, rather than the dispensation of God, which was in faith. Thus Timothy was to be up in the present ways and dealings of God with men, so as to be able to withstand these men, who, alas, had already begun to work havoc in the Ephesian church.

The end of the charge was love out of a clean heart, and a good conscience, and faith without hypocrisy; from which some having turned aside, had begun to cavil at the truth, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed. Love out of a clean heart was the effect of grace in the Saviour God, who saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost [comp. Titus iii. 4, 5], and a good conscience and faith unfeigned was the blessed result, but from these, men were turning aside to law, without understanding its true design. The apostle therefore shews the proper place and use of the law as now applied, during the christian dispensation. It was good if a man used it lawfully. It was not given for a righteous

man, and a real christian was certainly that—he is not under the law, but under grace; but for the lawless and profane, for murderers, whoremongers, etc., and if there were any other thing contrary to sound doctrine, according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which had been committed to Paul's trust. This latter was a far higher measure of good and evil, than even the law was, good as it was; it measured everything by the glory of Christ, and man in the flesh, as well as all his deeds, was in the light of that glory found out an open enemy of God and of His Christ, not only a law-breaker: a rejected Christ was the witness of this enmity, and the Man on the throne a witness of God's acceptance of the only one who had glorified Him. All good was alone in the second man, all evil in the first; and yet grace, manifested to save him. My reader, do you understand this?

Verses 12—17 bring forward Paul as the great witness of the grace of this wonderful Saviour God. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord," he says, "who had enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was over abundant, with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." The Jews had been bad enough, they had rejected the Messiah, come on earth to fulfil the promises, and set up His kingdom. But Paul had rejected the grace offered afresh from the glory after His rejection on earth, and the witness of the Holy Ghost to a glorified Christ. He was a resister of the Holy Ghost, who had come down on the day of Pentecost, to baptize all believers into one body, and build them together on earth to be his habitation. For a time God forbore with the

Jewish nation, as we see in the first six chapters of Acts, but upon their condemnation and stoning of Stephen, it was finally set aside, whilst the rejected Son of man was revealed to Stephen on the throne of the Father as having opened heaven to man, and as receiving him (a man filled with the Holy Ghost on earth) to Paradise, when the nation would not have him. Saul was standing by consenting to his death (see Acts vii. end). Mad with rage, he went forward as the prime agent of the Jewish nation, to wipe out the very name of christianity from the earth. The Jews had got rid of Christ, he would get rid of the body of Christ, if he could. All this time he was, as he says concerning the righteousness of the law, blameless. But in the midst of his full career of enmity, Jesus met him on the road to Damascus. Wonderful meeting betwixt God's glorified man in heaven, and the greatest enemy of God amongst Adam's race on the earth! *Light* shone down from the face of God's glorified Son upon this rebel, and down he fell conscience-stricken to the earth. *Love* spoke the gentle words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "Who art thou, Lord?" said the conscience-convinced Saul of Tarsus. "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest," was the answer of Jesus of Nazareth. I am Jesus, who went to the cross to die for all thy sins! Oh, what wonderful grace, mercy, and love. Truly did he say, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with him, by grace are ye saved; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Truly did he say, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Thus having been the chief of sinners saved, he became the pattern man of the long suffering of Christ for those who should hereafter believe to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

And now, my reader, before I go on, I would ask you, how far you have entered into this wonderful grace? Can you say, like Paul, It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ hath saved me, a sinner? Can you bear witness of the grace that has saved you like Paul did? I don't mean that your conversion has been so marvellous outwardly as his was, but is it as real? Can you say, Well, once I was a law-breaker, and an enemy of God and rejecter of His Son, but now, thank God, my sins are forgiven; I have eternal life, and divine righteousness in Christ, and am saved for ever by His precious blood?

Paul now resumes his direct charge to Timothy, which he had mentioned in verses 3 and 5. He had committed the charge to him according to the prophecies that had gone before as regarded him, that by them he might war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience, which some having turned aside from, concerning faith had made shipwreck, of whom was Hymenæus and Alexander, whom Paul, by his apostolic power, had delivered over to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme.

How important, then, to hold faith and a good conscience; a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. This is something more than a purged one, which last ever remains through the eternal efficacy of the blood of Jesus once applied to it; whereas the former can be made bad

by the slightest fault and sin. Hymenæus and Philetus were sad instances of allowing the conscience to get bad, and faith to fail. Apostolic power could put such men out of the assembly, and leave them to Satan, who ruled the world outside; such power is not given to anyone else, though the assembly of God has power to put away the evil person from amongst them (comp. 1 Cor. v. end).

CHAPTER II.

THUS the law-teachers were not to be listened to, who would narrow the christians down to the exclusive privileges of the Jewish nation; the apostle exhorted on the contrary, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks were to be made for all men; for kings, and for all that were in authority, that the christians might lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. This was now good and acceptable in the sight of the Saviour God, who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. It was not His will any longer that the Jewish Nation should have the exclusive privileges. He now revealed Himself as the one Saviour God in relation to the world through a Mediator and a Ransom. There was one God, and one Mediator between God and man, a man Christ Jesus, who had given Himself a Ransom for all to be testified in due time. What blessed news for a sin-weary world, if it would only have listened to it! No wonder has Satan tried to darken this clear sunny atmosphere, making his great tool the very law of God, to belie God's character, and to make Him appear as a dark tyrant without mercy. He still tries to make

out God hid behind a dark veil, making demands upon men, whom no one can approach except through dark robed priests, and newly-fashioned altars. Jesus Christ even is pictured as pushing back poor sinners into hell, and the Virgin Mary put into His place as the more efficacious mediatrix. How the simple faith of the poor idiot (who went to hear the learned clergyman preach seven discourses about the Trinity, and at the end came out none the wiser) puts to shame the follies of these darkened men. When asked to describe the Trinity, he said,—

Three in One,
and
One in Three ;
and
The Man in the middle
He died for me :
And the Man in the middle
Is the Man for me !

One God, one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom for all, is God's present basis of dealing with a world of sinners. How these verses, too, put to shame those who would narrow down the Saviour God to an elect few, and all the rest outside the pale of mercy! who would also judge of the love of that Saviour God to them also by the measure of their own wretched frames and feelings, instead of by the clear ringing testimony of the word of God. Whilst the office of the priest truly, and advocate, is only in reference to the believer, God has established His relations with the *world* by a Mediator, as His witness of unconditional grace, and by a ransom paid in the blood of His Son, on the basis of which freedom is proclaimed to every poor captive of Satan, to be appropriated to faith.

God's order now in reference to the house of God is taken up from verse 8, first, in reference to the man and woman in chap. ii., and then in regard to the official orders in the church of God, such as the bishops and deacons in chap. iii.

The apostle willed that the men should pray everywhere lifting up holy hands without wrath or disputation. The woman in like manner he would have adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but which becometh women professing godliness, with good works. She was likewise to learn in quietness with all subjection. He did not suffer a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in quietness. There was a double reason for this; 1st, Adam was first formed, then Eve; 2nd, Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she should be saved in child-bearing, if husband and wife continued in faith and love, and holiness with sobriety.

CHAPTER III.

WE come now to the direct local order and government in the church of God, which is here figured by a house. As has been often said before, the assembly is figured by two things in scripture, a body and a house. What is the church? It is the body of Christ. What is the church? It is the house of God. Both things are true, and both began on the day of Pentecost. Before that time God was displaying His government in a nation called out of the nations of the earth. Messiah came in accordance with the promises, and presented Himself to the Jewish nation, as the Son of

David, for acceptance and was rejected; He took in consequence a new place at the right hand of God, as the glorified man, made Lord and Christ, and the Holy Ghost came down baptizing all believers into one body, and building them together to be God's habitation through the Spirit.

The King of the Jews being rejected, the kingdom was put off, as an established thing in power set up on earth. The rejected King is in heaven till His enemies are made His footstool. The Jewish nation is judged, and God is now revealed as the Saviour God to the world, and the church as the house of God is in its midst, where the Holy Ghost dwells as the place where His order and government is to be seen. The only way the kingdom of heaven goes on now is in mystery, and is composed of all those who own the rejected King in baptism.

Now in connection with the church of God there are two forms of ministry since its beginning, viz., gift and office. Christ as the ascended Head as we read gave gifts to men, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers (Eph. iv.); these acted in the unity of the body, and wherever it was gathered or a member of Christ was, these gifts were. The evangelist (as Philip) carried the gospel to Samaria, others to Antioch where many Gentiles turned to the Lord (see Acts viii. 5; xi. 19, 20); his ministry was to the world; other teachers then taught the converts and built them up. Paul and Barnabas, and Silas and Timothy likewise, as well as others, carried the gospel to various places planting assemblies; Apollos, etc., watered them, and so on. But very early in the history of the assembly at Jerusalem the local need of the church wanted another order of men, as we read of in Acts vi., who looked after the temporal necessities of the poor saints in

the place; these the assembly chose, and the apostles laid hands on them, the only qualification these required being that they were honest men bearing a good witness before others. Later on, after Paul and Barnabas had planted assemblies at Antioch, Lystra, and Iconium, we read, they returned there and ordained elders in each assembly, (see Acts xiv. 23). We do not read of any appointed at Corinth, but in regard to Ephesus, we read, that Paul sent for the elders of the assembly, and he styles them overseers or bishops, thus identifying the two offices together as one and the same (Acts xx. 27, 28). The Philippian assembly is addressed with its bishops and deacons (Phil. i. 1).

Thus there were several bishops or elders in each local assembly, as well as several deacons; the former generally had the oversight of the flock, the latter looked after the monetary affairs, but it was an entirely local office. An elder at Jerusalem was not necessarily an elder at Antioch. Philip, when he went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them, gave up the deacon's office at Jerusalem, the church being scattered and driven away.

The great thing pressed here, in the matter of bishops and deacons, is certain qualifications which were necessary in order to hold the office; no one was owned as either bishop or deacon unless he held these qualifications. Timothy, in the charge given him, was to lay hands suddenly on no man, but to mark the qualifications, and only set apart to the office those who were thus qualified; he was given this charge by the apostle Paul, and Titus likewise, as we see in that epistle, but no one else that we read of in scripture has this power. The church claims apostolic succession, but where is it seen now, except in the fallen churches of Greece, Rome, and her daughter the Angelican Church, and

these all out of order if you compare their ecclesiastic government with that of scripture.

What we have got to do amidst the ruin of everything is to confess the common sin, return to the truth, as to Christ and the scriptural view of the church as united to Him, and if any brother returns with the qualifications marked in the chapter, own him as one of God's elders, or deacons, but not unless. To set about appointing men with no qualifications would be to disown the order of God's house, and to be disobedient to the word which gives us no authority for such appointments, for who has authority to lay hands on them? Nevertheless, as the apostle says, he that desireth the office of a bishop desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, watchful, and of a sound mind, orderly, a lover of strangers (hospitable), able to teach; not drinking much, no striker, but patient, not quarrelsome, not covetous; ruling well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. If he could not rule his own house, how could he take care of the church of God? He must not be newly converted, lest being lifted up with pride, he should come under the act of judgment of the devil. He got lifted up, it is said, (Ezek. xxviii. 17), because of his beauty, and it was the secret of his fall; so Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 16—20). Moreover he must have a good report of those from without, lest he fall into reproach, and some snare the devil might lay for him. Such were the necessary qualifications for the bishop or elder who had the oversight jointly with the others of the flock.

Likewise the deacons must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not covetous, holding the mystery of the faith [its scope] in a pure conscience; these likewise had need of being

first proved, then being found blameless they were to use their office. There were directions, too, for the wife, as having jointly with him to care for the poor of the flock. The deacons' wives must be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things; the deacons were to be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their houses well. They that had used the office of a deacon well, purchased to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Stephen was such an one, as we read in Acts vi., and he exercised his gift as an evangelist, besides having the deacon's office.

Such were the qualifications necessary for the bishop or elder, and the deacon's office. Paul wrote these things to Timothy hoping to come to him shortly; but if he tarried long, that Timothy might know how to behave himself in the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and (lit.) the support of the truth. And without controversy great was the mystery of godliness; Christ was its centre; God manifest in flesh, justified (*i.e.*, accepted as righteous) in spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into the glory. This was the glorious truth in its central point, that the assembly held up; the assembly was its pillar and support, and godliness was its manifestation in the world. Thus here we have a third great point that characterizes this epistle besides God revealed as a Saviour God to the world, and the house of God as the place where his order and government is owned, viz., that godliness, piety, was what was to characterize the house. Christ is seen as the centre of this here, and it is shown in practice in the following chapters.

CHAPTER IV.

This chapter speaks of departure from the faith in the latter times, and the denial of the rights of God as Creator, which rights Timothy was to assert, as the correction of the evil. The Spirit spoke expressly that in the latter times some should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and the doctrines of devils ; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron ; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God had created to be received with thanksgiving, of them which believed and knew the truth. For every creature of God was good, and nothing to be refused if it were received with thanksgiving, for it was set apart by the word of God and by prayer. Such departure has been seen for long in the errors of Romanism and priestcraft, and now more lately in Spiritualism, but everything that would forbid the child of God from enjoying that which the Creator has given him, whether in marrying or eating and drinking, denies the rights of the Creator who gives all things richly to enjoy. Everything created came forth from His mouth, and by His word (I speak not of those things that were the fruit of His judgment after the fall—thorns, thistles, poisonous plants, and the like), and on the ground of redemption are thankfully to be received by those that believe and know the truth.

If Timothy put the brethren in remembrance of these things, he should be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto he had attained, but he was to refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise himself to godliness. Bodily exercise profited little, but godliness (note, not temperance as

men say) that owned too the rights of the Creator God, was profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore the apostles both laboured and suffered reproach, because they trusted the living God, who was the Saviour, *i.e.*, Preserver of all men, specially of those that believed. These things Timothy was to command and exhort.

How important then to know what this practical godliness is, that hath such a promise, and to understand too our relation to God the Creator, the Saviour of every man's life, but in a double and real sense of those that believed. He was the living God, the source of their lives.

Timothy was comparatively a young man to have such a charge, but he was to let no man despise him, but to be an example to every believer, in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith and purity. Till Paul came, he would have him give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. He was not to neglect the gift that was in him, which was given him by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. But to meditate on these things, to give himself wholly to them, that his profiting might appear to all. Thus Timothy had a special gift conferred on him, by the laying on of the hands of the apostle, which was accompanied with those of the presbytery. There was in that day, as we have seen, a regular eldership in each assembly.* What the special gift was we are not told, nor as to the prophecy. But Timothy was to take heed to himself and to the doctrine, to continue in them; for in doing this he should both save himself and those that heard him.

* An exception seems to have been made at Corinth, where we hear nothing of elders.

CHAPTER V.

Regulations as to elders and widows chiefly fill up this chapter. Timothy was not to rebuke* an elder, but to exhort him as a father, owning his age; the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters with all purity.

The widow was a special object of the care of God. Special regulations were given as to them under the law, and together with the strangers and fatherless, were the special objects of the Lord's preservation and relieving hand. See Deut. x. 18; xiv. 29; xxiv. 19-21; Psalm cxlvi. 9. It was a widow that took care of Elijah during the famine, thus showing how those specially dependent, are made the means of helping others. Timothy was to honour widows that were widows indeed. The church was to care for such, but if any widow had children, or nephews, these latter were to learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that was good and acceptable to God. The character of a widow indeed, is thus described; as a desolate one, she trusted in God, and continued in supplications, and prayers, night and day. But she that lived in pleasure was dead while she lived. These things, Timothy was to give in charge that they might be blameless. But if any did not provide for his own, and specially for his own house, he had denied the faith, and was worse than an infidel. Thus the children or nephews were to take care of the widows as a rule, as we see below ver. 16.

But in other cases they were to be under the care of the assembly, providing the necessary qualifications as given below were seen. A widow was not to be taken into the number, under threescore years' old, having been the wife of one man, well

* The word signifies to inflict blows upon.

reported of for good works, if she had brought up children, if she had lodged strangers, if she had washed the saints' feet, if she had relieved the afflicted, if she had diligently followed every good work.

The younger widows were to be refused: for when they had begun to wax wanton against Christ, they would marry, having judgment, because they had cast off their first faith; and withal they learnt to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but busy-bodies, speaking things which they should not. Solemn word for young women! and one cause of trouble in the church of God, if such disorderly walk is allowed. (Comp. 2 Thess. iii.) For the younger widows to be received into the number of those whom the church was to help was to encourage such disorderly walk! The apostle would therefore that the younger widows should marry, bear children, guide the house, and give none occasion for the adversary to speak reproachfully, for some had already turned aside after Satan. If any man or woman that believed had widows, they were to relieve them; the church was not to be charged with such; it had the care of those that were *widows indeed*.

The elders that ruled well were to be counted worthy of double honour, especially them that laboured in the word and doctrine, for the scripture said, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn;" and again, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." What marked the elder was overseeing, he might have a gift as well, then he was to be honoured doubly, as a labourer worthy of his hire.

Against an elder Timothy was not to receive an accusation excepting before two or three witnesses. Those that sinned he was to rebuke before all, that

others also might fear. The apostle charged him before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels who were looking on at the order of the house of God, that he was to observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. He was to lay hands suddenly on no man. Setting apart any one as a bishop or deacon by the laying on of hands lightly might make him a partaker of other men's sins; he would become in a way responsible for their failure. He was to keep himself pure.

The care of the apostle for Timothy's weakness of body now comes out; "Drink no more water, but a little wine, for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.

The sins of some men were manifest and public beforehand, going before, as it were, to judgment, with other men they followed after. So with good works; some were openly manifested beforehand, and if otherwise they could not be hid.

CHAPTER VI.

The slaves kept under the yoke Timothy was to exhort, to count their masters worthy of all honour, heathen though they might be, and in most cases were, that the Name of God and His doctrine might not be blasphemed. In case they had believing masters who had become christians, they were not to despise them, because they were brethren (alas, for the sad tendency of lawless flesh!) but rather do them service because they were faithful and beloved; partakers of the benefit. These things Timothy was to teach and exhort.

In all these things we see stress laid on practical piety, and the order of the house of God. If any taught otherwise, and consented not to wholesome words, even the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which was according to godliness (comp. chaps. iii. 16 ; iv. 7, 8, etc.), he was proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof came envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, supposing that gain was godliness. Timothy was to withdraw himself from such.

Godliness with contentment, on the other hand, were great gain. We have brought nothing into the world, we can carry nothing out of it. Having food and raiment therefore let us be therewith content. They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, which drown men in perdition and destruction. The love of money was a root of all evil, which whilst some coveted after, they have erred from the truth and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Alas! one fears many so-called teachers in the church of God have gone astray in this way, and brought sorrow not only on themselves, but on the assembly of God. See connections between exhortations against covetousness, and the importance of a single eye, in Matt. vi. 19—23.

Timothy as a man of God was to flee such things; and to follow righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. He is exhorted to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life, as the hope at the end, whereunto also he was called, and had professed a good confession before many witnesses. The whole charge then is summed up as it were in the words, I charge thee, in the sight of God, who gives life to all things, and before the Lord Jesus Christ, who before

Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, which confession in due time He would shew forth, and own, who was the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only as to His essence had immortality, dwelling in the light unapproachable, whom no men have seen, nor can see; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. This gives no colour to the false doctrine which denies the immortality of the soul. As to the source and essence, God alone has immortality, But He has created immortal creatures, not only men, but angels. Who maketh His angels spirits! Psalm civ. 4. What are spirits but immortal! Who formed the spirit of man which is in him? Zechariah xii. 1.

Timothy was to charge the rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who gave all things richly to enjoy. They were to be exhorted to do good, to be rich in good works, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they might lay hold on that which was really life; life in another world in the Son of God. A man's life consisted not in the abundance of things which he possessed, the Lord said. Thus the rich were responsible as stewards, each to hold their money for God; riches were not their own, they were His. We see that the energy which was manifested at first in all being laid down at the apostle's feet was not continued. Each one was individually to act for God who had means, using it as good stewards of the grace of God for the good of others, who had also given them all things richly to enjoy.

Timothy is earnestly exhorted to keep the charge

that was committed to his trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called. This seems a dart levelled at the Knostics, who were already mixing up christianity with oriental philosophy, and boasted of superior knowledge; some professing this, had erred from the faith. Grace be unto thee. Amen.

It would be well for us, my reader, to consider more than we have done, the doctrine of godliness, which is upheld in this epistle, so that we may walk according to God in a scene of disorder and ruin, though without presumption, taking upon in ourselves authority to order things or set them in order in the church, without having such authority from God. It is well also to note that this commandment (1 Tim. vi. 14), alluding to the charge that the apostle had given Timothy (1 Tim. i. 5), was to be kept without spot, unrebukeable until the appearing of the Lord.



