

AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO

TIMOTHY

The design of the epistle appears to be, that Timothy having been left at Ephesus, St. Paul wrote to instruct him in the choice of proper officers in the church, as well as in the exercise of a regular ministry. Also, to caution against the influence of false teachers, who by subtle distinctions and endless disputes, corrupted the purity and simplicity of the gospel. He presses upon him constant regard to the greatest diligence, faithfulness, and zeal. These subjects occupy the first four chapters; the fifth chapter instructs respecting particular classes; in the latter part, controversies and disputes are condemned, the love of money blamed, and the rich exhorted to good works.

CHAPTER 1

The apostle salutes Timothy. (1-4) The design of the law as given by Moses. (5-11) Of his own conversion and call to the apostleship. (12-17) The obligation to maintain faith and a good conscience. (18-20)

~~500~~ 1 Timothy 1:1

Vs. 1-4: Jesus Christ is a Christian's hope; all our hopes of eternal life are built upon him; and Christ is in us the hope of glory. The apostle seems to have been the means of Timothy's conversion; who served with him in his ministry, as a dutiful son with a loving father. That which raises questions, is not for edifying; that which gives occasion for doubtful disputes, pulls down the church rather than builds it up. Godliness of heart and life can only be kept up and increased, by the exercise of faith in the truths and promises of God, through Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:5

Vs. 5-11: Whatever tends to weaken love to God, or love to the brethren, tends to defeat the end of the commandment. The design of the gospel is answered, when sinners, through repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ, are brought to exercise Christian love. And as believers were righteous persons in God's appointed way, the law was not against them. But unless we are made righteous by faith in Christ, really repenting and forsaking sin, we are yet under the curse of the law, even according to the gospel of the blessed God, and are unfit to share the holy happiness of heaven.

1 Timothy 1:12

Vs. 12-17: The apostle knew that he would justly have perished, if the Lord had been extreme to mark what was amiss; and also if his grace and mercy had not been abundant to him when dead in sin, working faith and love to Christ in his heart. This is a faithful saying; these are true and faithful words, which may be depended on, That the Son of God came into the world, willingly and purposely to save sinners. No man, with Paul's example before him, can question the love and power of Christ to save him, if he really desires to trust in him as the Son of God, who once died on the cross, and now reigns upon the throne of glory, to save all that come to God through him. Let us then admire and praise the grace of God our Savior; and ascribe to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons in the unity of the Godhead, the glory of all done in, by, and for us.

1 Timothy 1:18

Vs. 18-20: The ministry is a warfare against sin and Satan; carried on under the Lord Jesus, who is the Captain of our salvation. The good hopes others have had of us, should stir us up to duty. And let us be upright in our conduct in all things. The design of the highest censures in the primitive church, was, to prevent further sin, and to reclaim the sinner. May all who are tempted to put away a good conscience, and to abuse the gospel, remember that this is the way to make shipwreck of faith also.

CHAPTER 2

Prayer to be made for all persons, since the grace of the gospel makes no difference of ranks or stations. (1-7) How men and women ought to behave, both in their religious and common life. (8-15)

1 Timothy 2:1

Vs. 1-7: The disciples of Christ must be praying people; all, without distinction of nation, sect, rank, or party. Our duty as Christians, is summed up in two words; godliness, that is, the right worshipping of God; and honesty, that is, good conduct toward all men. These must go together: we are not truly honest, if we are not godly, and do not render to God his due; and we are not truly godly, if not honest. What is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, we should abound in. There is one Mediator, and that Mediator gave himself a ransom for all. And this appointment has been made for the benefit of the Jews and the Gentiles of every nation; that all who are willing may come in this way, to the mercy-seat of a pardoning God, to seek reconciliation with him. Sin had made a quarrel between us and God; Jesus Christ is the Mediator who makes peace. He is a ransom that was to be known in due time. In the Old Testament times, his sufferings, and the glory that should follow, were spoken of as things to be revealed in the last times. Those who are saved must come to the knowledge of the truth, for that is God's appointed way to save sinners: if we do not know the truth, we cannot be ruled by it.

1 Timothy 2:8

Vs. 8-15: Under the gospel, prayer is not to be confined to any one particular house of prayer, but men must pray every where. We must pray in our closets, pray in our families, pray at our meals, pray when we are on journeys, and pray in the solemn assemblies, whether more public or private. We must pray in charity; without wrath, or malice, or anger at any person. We must pray in faith, without doubting, and without disputing. Women who profess the Christian religion, must be modest in apparel, not affecting gaudiness, gaiety, or costliness. Good works are the best ornament; these are, in the sight of God, of great price. Modesty and

neatness are more to be consulted in garments than elegance and fashion. And it would be well if the professors of serious godliness were wholly free from vanity in dress. They should spend more time and money in relieving the sick and distressed, than in decorating themselves and their children. To do this in a manner unsuitable to their rank in life, and their profession of godliness, is sinful. These are not trifles, but Divine commands. The best ornaments for professors of godliness, are good works. According to St. Paul, women are not allowed to be public teachers in the church; for teaching is an office of authority. But good women may and ought to teach their children at home the principles of true religion. Also, women must not think themselves excused from learning what is necessary to salvation, though they must not usurp authority. As woman was last in the creation, which is one reason for her subjection, so she was first in the transgression. But there is a word of comfort; that those who continue in sobriety, shall be saved in child-bearing, or with child-bearing, by the Messiah, who was born of a woman. And the especial sorrow to which the female sex is subject, should cause men to exercise their authority with much gentleness, tenderness, and affection.

CHAPTER 3

The qualifications and behavior of gospel bishops. (1-7) And of deacons and their wives. (8-13) The reason of writing about these, and other church affairs. (14-16)

1 Timothy 3:1

Vs. 1-7: If a man desired the pastoral office, and from love to Christ, and the souls of men, was ready to deny himself, and undergo hardships by devoting himself to that service, he sought to be employed in a good work, and his desire should be approved, provided he was qualified for the office. A minister must give as little occasion for blame as can be, lest he bring reproach upon his office. He must be sober, temperate, moderate in all his actions, and in the use of all creature-comforts. Sobriety and watchfulness are put together in Scripture, they assist one the other. The families of ministers ought to be examples of good to all other families. We should take heed of pride; it is a sin that turned angels into devils. He must be of good repute among his neighbors, and under no reproach from his former life. To encourage all faithful ministers, we have Christ's gracious word of promise, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, ⁴⁸³Matthew 28:20. And he will fit his ministers for their work, and carry them through difficulties with comfort, and reward their faithfulness.

1 Timothy 3:8

Vs. 8-13: The deacons were at first appointed to distribute the charity of the church, and to manage its concerns, yet pastors and evangelists were among them. The deacons had a great trust reposed in them. They must be grave, serious, prudent men. It is not fit that public trusts should be lodged in the hands of any, till they are found fit for the business with which they are to be trusted. All who are related to ministers, must take great care to walk as becomes the gospel of Christ.

1 Timothy 3:14

Vs. 14-16: The church is the house of God; he dwells there. The church holds forth the Scripture and the doctrine of Christ, as a pillar holds forth

a proclamation. When a church ceases to be the pillar and ground of truth, we may and ought to forsake her; for our regard to truth should be first and greatest. The mystery of godliness is Christ. He is God, who was made flesh, and was manifest in the flesh. God was pleased to manifest himself to man, by his own Son taking the nature of man. Though reproached as a sinner, and put to death as a malefactor, Christ was raised again by the Spirit, and so was justified from all the false charges with which he was loaded. Angels ministered to him, for he is the Lord of angels. The Gentiles welcomed the gospel which the Jews rejected. Let us remember that God was manifest in the flesh, to take away our sins, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These doctrines must be shown forth by the fruits of the Spirit in our lives.

CHAPTER 4

*Of departures from the faith that began already to appear. (1-5)
Several directions, with motives for due discharge of duties. (6-16)*

1 Timothy 4:1

Vs. 1-5: The Holy Spirit, both in the Old and the New Testament, spoke of a general turning from the faith of Christ, and the pure worship of God. This should come during the Christian dispensation, for those are called the latter days. False teachers forbid as evil what God has allowed, and command as a duty what he has left indifferent. We find exercise for watchfulness and self-denial, in attending to the requirements of God's law, without being tasked to imaginary duties, which reject what he has allowed. But nothing justifies an intemperate or improper use of things; and nothing will be good to us, unless we seek by prayer for the Lord's blessing upon it.

1 Timothy 4:6

Vs. 6-10: Outward acts of self-denial profit little. What will it avail us to mortify the body, if we do not mortify sin? No diligence in mere outward things could be of much use. The gain of godliness lies much in the promise; and the promises to godly people relate partly to the life that now is, but especially to the life which is to come: though we lose for Christ, we shall not lose by him. If Christ be thus the Savior of all men, then much more will he be the Rewarder of those who seek and serve him; he will provide well for those whom he has made new creatures.

1 Timothy 4:11

Vs. 11-16: Men's youth will not be despised, if they keep from vanities and follies. Those who teach by their doctrine, must teach by their life. Their discourse must be edifying; their conversation must be holy; they must be examples of love to God and all good men, examples of spiritual-mindedness. Ministers must mind these things as their principal work and business. By this means their profiting will appear in all things, as well as to all persons; this is the way to profit in knowledge and grace,

and also to profit others. The doctrine of a minister of Christ must be scriptural, clear, evangelical, and practical; well stated, explained, defended, and applied. But these duties leave no leisure for worldly pleasures, trifling visits, or idle conversation, and but little for what is mere amusement, and only ornamental. May every believer be enabled to let his profiting appear unto all men; seeking to experience the power of the gospel in his own soul, and to bring forth its fruits in his life.

CHAPTER 5

Directions as to the elder and younger men and women. (1, 2) And as to poor widows. (3-8) Concerning widows. (9-16) The respect to be paid to elders. Timothy is to take care in rebuking offenders, in ordaining ministers, and as to his own health. (17-25)

1 Timothy 5:1

Vs. 1, 2: Respect must be paid to the dignity of years and place. The younger, if faulty, must be rebuked, not as desirous to find fault with them, but as willing to make the best of them. There is need of much meekness and care in reproving those who deserve reproof.

1 Timothy 5:3

Vs. 3-8: Honor widows that are widows indeed, relieve them, and maintain them. It is the duty of children, if their parents are in need, and they are able to relieve them, to do it to the utmost of their power. Widowhood is a desolate state; but let widows trust in the Lord, and continue in prayer. All who live in pleasure, are dead while they live, spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins. Alas, what numbers there are of this description among nominal Christians, even to the latest period of life! If any men or women do not maintain their poor relations, they in effect deny the faith. If they spend upon their lusts and pleasures, what should maintain their families, they have denied the faith, and are worse than infidels. If professors of the gospel give way to any corrupt principle or conduct, they are worse than those who do not profess to believe the doctrines of grace.

1 Timothy 5:9

Vs. 9-16: Every one brought into any office in the church, should be free from just censure; and many are proper objects of charity, yet ought not to be employed in public services. Those who would find mercy when they are in distress, must show mercy when they are in prosperity; and those who show most readiness for every good work, are most likely to be faithful in whatever is trusted to them. Those who are idle, very seldom

are only idle, they make mischief among neighbors, and sow discord among brethren. All believers are required to relieve those belonging to their families who are destitute, that the church may not be prevented from relieving such as are entirely destitute and friendless.

1 Timothy 5:17

Vs. 17-25: Care must be taken that ministers are maintained. And those who are laborious in this work are worthy of double honor and esteem. It is their just due, as much as the reward of the laborer. The apostle charges Timothy solemnly to guard against partiality. We have great need to watch at all times, that we do not partake of other men's sins. Keep thyself pure, not only from doing the like thyself, but from countenancing it, or any way helping to it in others. The apostle also charges Timothy to take care of his health. As we are not to make our bodies masters, so neither slaves; but to use them so that they may be most helpful to us in the service of God. There are secret, and there are open sins: some men's sins are open before-hand, and going before unto judgment; some they follow after. God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make known the counsels of all hearts. Looking forward to the judgment-day, let us all attend to our proper offices, whether in higher or lower stations, studying that the name and doctrine of God may never be blasphemed on our account.

CHAPTER 6

The duty of Christians towards believing, as well as other masters. (1-5) The advantage of godliness with contentment. (6-10) A solemn charge to Timothy to be faithful. (11-16) The apostle repeats his warning to the rich, and closes with a blessing. (17-21)

1 Timothy 6:1

Vs. 1-5: Christians were not to suppose that religious knowledge, or Christian privileges, gave them any right to despise heathen masters, or to disobey lawful commands, or to expose their faults to others. And such as enjoyed the privilege of living with believing masters, were not to withhold due respect and reverence, because they were equal in respect to religious privileges, but were to serve with double diligence and cheerfulness, because of their faith in Christ, and as partakers of his free salvation. We are not to consent to any words as wholesome, except the words of our Lord Jesus Christ; to these we must give unfeigned consent. Commonly those are most proud who know least; for they do not know themselves. Hence come envy, strife, railings, evil-surmisings, disputes that are all subtlety, and of no solidity, between men of corrupt and carnal minds, ignorant of the truth and its sanctifying power, and seeking their worldly advantage.

1 Timothy 6:6

Vs. 6-10: Those that make a trade of Christianity to serve their turn for this world, will be disappointed; but those who mind it as their calling, will find it has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. He that is godly, is sure to be happy in another world; and if contented with his condition in this world, he has enough; and all truly godly people are content. When brought into the greatest straits, we cannot be poorer than when we came into this world; a shroud, a coffin, and a grave, are all that the richest man in the world can have from all his wealth. If nature should be content with a little, grace should be content with less. The necessities of life bound a true Christian's desires, and with these he will endeavor to be content. We see here the evil of covetousness. It is not said, they that are rich, but they will be rich; who place their

happiness in wealth, and are eager and determined in the pursuit. Those that are such, give to Satan the opportunity of tempting them, leading them to use dishonest means, and other bad practices, to add to their gains. Also, leading into so many employments, and such a hurry of business, as leave no time or inclination for spiritual religion; leading to connections that draw into sin and folly. What sins will not men be drawn into by the love of money! People may have money, and yet not love it; but if they love it, this will push them on to all evil. Every sort of wickedness and vice, in one way or another, grows from the love of money. We cannot look around without perceiving many proofs of this, especially in a day of outward prosperity, great expenses, and loose profession.

1 Timothy 6:11

Vs. 11-16: It ill becomes any men, but especially men of God, to set their hearts upon the things of this world; men of God should be taken up with the things of God. There must be a conflict with corruption, and temptations, and the powers of darkness. Eternal life is the crown proposed for our encouragement. We are called to lay hold thereon. To the rich must especially be pointed out their dangers and duties, as to the proper use of wealth. But who can give such a charge, that is not himself above the love of things that wealth can buy? The appearing of Christ is certain, but it is not for us to know the time. Mortal eyes cannot bear the brightness of the Divine glory. None can approach him except as he is made known unto sinners in and by Christ. The Godhead is here adored without distinction of Persons, as all these things are properly spoken, whether of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost. God is revealed to us, only in and through the human nature of Christ, as the only begotten Son of the Father.

1 Timothy 6:17

Vs. 17-21: Being rich in this world is wholly different from being rich towards God. Nothing is more uncertain than worldly wealth. Those who are rich, must see that God gives them their riches; and he only can give to enjoy them richly; for many have riches, but enjoy them poorly, not having a heart to use them. What is the best estate worth, more than as it gives opportunity of doing the more good? Showing faith in Christ by fruits of love, let us lay hold on eternal life, when the self-indulgent,

covetous, and ungodly around, lift up their eyes in torment. That learning which opposes the truth of the gospel, is not true science, or real knowledge, or it would approve the gospel, and consent to it. Those who advance reason above faith, are in danger of leaving faith. Grace includes all that is good, and grace is an earnest, a beginning of glory; wherever God gives grace, he will give glory.