

1 & 2 Timothy

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(1982 Study with Excerpts from 1999 Study)

The following notes on 1 & 2 Timothy were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1982 with excerpts included from a 1999 study. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “**Question**”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original studies did not follow a prepared text but were extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1982 with excerpts from a 1999 study)

1 Tim. 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;

Paul's credentials were that he was "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God." He was writing to Timothy, whom he had left behind in Ephesus, where there were conflicting doctrinal ideas and teachings. When Paul was previously in Ephesus, he had daily disputations in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9). Certainly if Paul had this experience, the same spirit, or disposition, still existed, and Timothy would have to contend with the same doctrinal issues.

God is our Savior in the highest sense, and Jesus is the means of that salvation. Similarly, God is the Great Shepherd, and Jesus is the "[Good] Shepherd and Bishop" of our souls (1 Pet. 2:25).

Paul probably wrote the first epistle from Rome either just before or just after his first release from imprisonment (house arrest) there. This writing took place near the end of his life, around AD 64. His Second Epistle to Timothy was written in AD 66, during his second confinement in Rome, this time in a dungeon.

On Paul's first missionary tour, the brethren had prayed and laid their hands on him and company as they departed from Antioch, indicating sympathy with the missionary effort. However, had Paul not frequently called attention to the fact that he was commissioned by God, the brethren might have gotten a wrong impression—namely, that he was teaching according to *their* commission—and the authority of his ministry might have been curtailed. Paul always kept in mind the vision that he had on the way to Damascus, when God commissioned him, as a chosen vessel, to preach before "Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Therefore, Paul called attention to his apostleship, lest when doctrinal differences occurred, the brethren would think that they could disregard his teaching and that he was exceeding his authority. And that is exactly what happened in Corinth, when false apostles tried to undercut his ministry.

Here in verse 1, Paul said that the commission was not just from Jesus but also from God. While Jesus chose the apostles after praying and surnamed them and sent them out, it was God who did the original appointing. When the Twelve are called the apostles of Jesus Christ, it is in the sense that he particularly gave a commission to them in the beginning and to Paul later—but *subordinate* to the selection and authority of God. By making the statement in verse 1, Paul was implying that his apostleship was according to the will of both God and Jesus.

Comment: John 6:44 helps to show the relationship of God and Jesus to the Christian. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

What did Paul mean when he said that the "Lord Jesus Christ ... is our hope"? He was saying that Jesus is our "hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

Comment: *Reprint* No. 2165 has interesting comments, some of which are based on tradition. Timothy consecrated around the age of 16, and he was probably about 40 years old when Paul wrote this epistle to him. Thus he was middle-aged and definitely not a babe at this point, having had many experiences. Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus for a particular purpose some years earlier, and he was still there when Paul wrote this epistle. The name Timothy means "honored of God." He represents the entire gospel Church, including the feet members, as

indicated by certain verses in the epistle that are especially pertinent at the end of the age.

1 Tim. 1:2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

The *Emphatic Diaglott* calls Timothy “a genuine [or true] child in faith.” The Scriptures tell us to call no man father, for there is only the one Heavenly Father, yet Paul likened Timothy to his son, or child (Matt. 23:9). How would we explain and harmonize Paul’s salutation to Timothy? (1) The pronoun “my,” used in the King James, is spurious. (2) Paul was speaking in a paternal sense, not a religious sense. The Apostle John also used a paternal address as a term of endearment: “little children” (1 John 2:1,12,13,18,28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21). (3) Age was a factor, for Timothy was quite a bit younger than Paul (1 Tim. 4:12). Paul wrote this epistle around AD 64, and he died in AD 66 or 67, so he was in his senior years at this time. (4) Timothy had now been consecrated for a number of years, but when he first accepted Jesus, he was considerably younger. Over the years Paul continued to think of Timothy as his child, or son, even though the latter was now middle-aged. Thus in any or all of these senses, Paul thought of Timothy as his son.

Comment: At the end of the chapter, Paul pointed out by name Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom he had to remand over to Satan for their evil motives and intentions. In contrast, he certified Timothy as a genuine child of faith.

Reply: When Timothy received this favorable epistle with admonitions regarding his responsibilities, the letter gave him some prestige. The endorsement was helpful, for Timothy was not as successful with the Corinthian church as Titus was. Timothy had a little problem with his ministry, and Paul was trying to help him out so that he would be a more useful servant. If Timothy got into a dispute with some who questioned or discounted his counsel, the letter would show that he had the respect of the Apostle Paul.

“Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord” was Paul’s usual opening greeting or closing benediction. Paul was writing to Timothy, an individual, yet he greeted him the same way he greeted an ecclesia, a large group. Therefore, the greeting indicates that Timothy was an important personage in Paul’s estimation.

Verses 1 and 2 both distinguish between the Father and the Son. Deference is given first to the Heavenly Father and then to Jesus. In spite of Paul’s personal affection for Timothy in the faith, he wanted to emphasize that God came first. Then, secondarily, Paul was saying to Timothy, “You are important in the sight of God and Jesus, and I feel the same way.”

The substance of the two epistles is that Timothy was being advised, admonished, encouraged, and instructed with the responsibility he had in view of the accumulation of knowledge he had received in accompanying Paul. In fact, because of their travels together, Timothy knew Paul better than almost anyone else. Paul repeatedly encouraged Timothy to continue the good work.

1 Tim. 1:3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

On one of Paul’s journeys, Timothy accompanied him to Ephesus. Paul then left Timothy behind and went on to Macedonia in obedience to a vision that directed him and the gospel westward, to Europe, instead of to the East or to South Africa. Timothy had wanted to continue with Paul, but the apostle persuaded him of the need to stay behind in Ephesus where he would be more useful in finishing a work already begun.

Paul had to beseech Timothy “to abide still at Ephesus ... [to] *charge* some that they teach no other doctrine.” Thus the purpose of Timothy’s stay in Ephesus was to instruct certain individuals who were teaching contrary doctrine. This kind of instruction could not be done delicately but required *strong and specific reasoning* as to why the other doctrines should not be taught. Paul was now coming to Timothy’s aid, giving detailed advice on how to handle the situation. The very fact Paul had to write this epistle shows that Timothy was having quite an experience and thus needed additional counsel.

In fact, to “charge” those who were leading spirits not to teach any other doctrine required admonition and a rebuke. In spite of what others might think of Timothy, Paul felt that he was a mature, rounded-out, well-founded Christian who was in a position to stand firm for the faith. Even if others had big reputations, were older, and were more eloquent in their delivery, Timothy had the Father, the Son, and the Apostle Paul in back of him. As has been said, Paul assumed a paternal aspect with Timothy. When leaving him in Ephesus, Paul had said in effect, “You know how I feel on different issues. Continue the work I have been doing.”

Paul’s experience in Ephesus is described in Acts 19:8-10. “And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” Timothy was now contending similarly with doctrine, defending the faith.

1 Tim. 1:4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

The problem with these individuals was that they were teaching other doctrines (verse 3) plus giving heed to fables and searching out endless genealogies. Since this epistle was written before the Diaspora of AD 69-70, when the records were lost, the false teachers were probably trying to trace their genealogies back to the Levitical priesthood to show they were sons of Aaron. This preaching was a waste of time and without authorization, for Jesus himself was not a Levite. Another possibility is that the false teachers were trying to show they were of the tribe of Judah, but that effort was also a waste of time, for Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin.

“Fables” included heathen teachings and philosophies. Although some of the teachings and writings were ancient, they were not divinely inspired. Incidentally, the Talmud quite frequently uses fables to teach certain principles. While fables, which are made-up illustrations, can be helpful at times, only the Bible should be used as an authority.

At times, Jesus spoke in parables, which were not realities but were based on realities. Some of his parables were partial specific truths, and some were allegories—but he was the Lord and thus had certain liberties. The apostles, too, had certain liberties but not the rest of the Church.

Timothy was instructed to tell the brethren not to give heed to fables and endless genealogies because these do not result in “godly edifying ... in faith.” Why did Paul add “in faith”? Fables and genealogies are not of God—they are not divinely inspired—and Christians should want knowledge *from God*, and not secular or historical knowledge except in a modified or restrained sense. Some erroneously felt that any knowledge proved godliness and that the more knowledge one gained, the closer he was to God, but there are grave dangers in such thinking. *True learning and knowledge result in godly edification and development in faith.* When some got the truth in the early Church, they properly burned their books on magic (Acts 19:18,19).

Incidentally, there may be an occasion when it is necessary to give a long genealogy, but lineage should not be harped on as a continuing theme. For example, the Gospels of Matthew and Luke each provide a helpful, long genealogy of Jesus. However, when genealogy becomes too absorbing as a study, it is not profitable. Paul was cautioning against specializing in *endless* genealogies, not an infrequent consideration. Some err by specializing in very narrow spectrums of truth, but to concentrate on a subject such as the Tabernacle is permissible, for it covers many different fields of development.

1 Tim. 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

The ultimate object of God's commandment is *love* that comes from (1) a pure heart, (2) a good conscience, and (3) a sincere faith. Stated another way, the end of the commandment is Godlikeness, Christlikeness, and love. This kind of love is not emotional but is a disciplined and educated development of the heart. We can only love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength if we are obedient to His Word by having a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.

The adjectives "pure," "good," and "unfeigned" are important, for all of these qualities can be falsified. In other words, there is a false, deceiving love, and a conscience not properly educated is false. A "pure heart" is honest and has no ulterior motives. The opposite is hypocrisy, which is a form of dishonesty. If we are honest, we know our own deficiencies and weaknesses and must keep them in mind and govern our life accordingly, striving toward perfection and educating and regulating our conscience by God's Word. The Pastor said our conscience is like a clock. The mechanism may be functioning correctly as far as keeping time, but unless we set the dial to the correct time, it is deceiving us. We should obey conscience, but that conscience needs to be regulated and ordered, yet kept tender in harmony with the principles of God.

A feigned faith is hypocritical and insincere. Words are cheap, so our actions may not match them. As with our heart and conscience, we should *honestly* know about our faith. Therefore, we must be careful not to overstate our professions or make statements above the realities. We should not overpresent ourselves.

Sometimes the deceptions are very subtle. For instance, to reply quickly, "I would do this, and I would do that," might put oneself in a favorable light while denigrating another person. The other individual may have made a confession, and then we want to outdo him. Another example would be to make the noble-sounding statement "I champion the underdog" and then not follow through. Moreover, the underdog may be wrong depending on the situation.

Comment: When Judas criticized the pouring of costly perfume on Jesus' feet, saying the perfume should have been sold and the money given to the poor, not only did he cast a bad reflection on both Jesus and Mary, but he elevated himself with a noble-sounding statement (John 12:4,5).

Reply: Yes, he was trying to point out a weakness of the Master, whose feet were being anointed by Spikenard Mary. The principle of insincere faith usually operates when one makes a statement that sounds noble and grand to give himself a more favorable standing. Stated another way, a feigned faith is usually at the expense of others. It is better to keep quiet and let good deeds speak for themselves. In the final analysis, as has been said, deeds will be seen in their proper light in the day of revelation.

Judas did not realize that Jesus was about to die, even though Jesus had stated the fact multiple

times. Not only did Judas premeditate the betrayal, but also he was a thief, yet he made the statement that sounded so grand (John 12:6). What happened is almost unbelievable! Nevertheless, Jesus answered calmly, “Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always” (Mark 14:7). The Master could rightly balance values—something that is very hard to do. He knew when certain things could be done with divine backing and approval and when they could not be done.

Our ultimate objective is to reach the condition of faithfulness and strength of character where we have a tender conscience that, if possible, is completely void of offense toward God and man (Acts 24:16). If we *diligently strive* to this end and do not stifle or overrule our conscience, we will have more hope of getting the crown of life. Most Christians have mixed emotions at the end of their walk, but we can have more confidence if we have faithfully tried to have and obey a good conscience. Paul strove to have a clear conscience, and so should we.

When we first consecrated, we had love out of a pure heart. We realized our deficiency, our need for the cancellation of sin and a covering, and the fact that we were honored with adoption into God’s family. But while we obeyed out of a pure heart and consecrated, our heart was small. Our capacity was that of an infant, but as we grow and develop, our capacity increases and so does our responsibility to keep it filled. In other words, enlargement should be backed up with *character development*. As we increase in knowledge, we should not forget the necessity to become *Christlike*. No matter how long we have been consecrated, there is always much room for improvement. We must not lose sight of the original objective.

What is faith? Knowledge is an ingredient of faith—knowledge of *God’s Word* and then *believing* and *obeying* it. Credulity is sometimes improperly regarded as faith. “Faith cometh by hearing [obeying, taking to heart] ... the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

Paul said, “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Cor. 13:13). Here he was speaking of the same three objectives: a sincere faith, the hope that comes from a good conscience, and love. True hope comes near the fruition, or climax, of our Christian walk. When we first consecrate, we think we are willing to do anything for the Lord, and we are ready to die tomorrow or the next day. We do not realize how much is involved in the Christian calling. With few exceptions, such as Stephen, it is a *lifetime* experience covering many years.

In making another statement, Paul compressed the three objectives of faith, hope, and love into one: “This one thing I do ... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13,14). The Christian race is won at the *end* of our course, for we have to cross the *finish line* in order to get the reward. Thus a period of time is involved in attaining love out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith. We must keep the armor on for our entire walk. In summary, then, the “mark” is the objective, the finish line of faith, hope, and love.

1 Tim. 1:6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

The term “vain jangling” reminds us of the fascination of a baby in a crib who is attracted by the sound of bells and noises. Rattles and sounds are all right if one remains a baby, but the objective is to grow and mature. Newborn babes are to “desire the sincere milk of the word, that ... [they] may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2). Progression has to be constantly kept in mind. In comparison with the “deep things of God,” the attraction for the noise and the jangling is immature, superficial, and empty (1 Cor. 2:10).

“Vain jangling” is “foolish talking” in the *Diaglott*. Some had swerved, gone off course, from

the main objective through distractions such as endless genealogies and fables and were talking foolishly.

1 Tim. 1:7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Not only had some swerved into unprofitable and immature areas, but their motive with the “vain jangling” was to be “teachers of the law.” They wanted to be instructors of the principles of the divine mind. Paul was being sarcastic.

The Law is called the Torah, which is usually just the Pentateuch, although some use the term to mean the Tanach, that is, the entire Old Testament, which includes the prophets. But what happened to the Law of Moses in Judaism? “Fables,” the writings of the rabbis, were added. Rabbis are great storytellers to illustrate principles. Stories are entertaining and instructive, but the serious reader gets tired of that method after a while and wants to get down to the Word itself. The problem with storytelling is that it begins to deviate and invent original thoughts that are not in harmony with God’s Word. Indirect reasoning can be helpful if it leads to a scriptural principle or thought, but to be profitable, it has to be kept within the parameters of the Lord’s Word and instructions.

Comment: Telling stories often gets the audience to titter and laugh, with the result that the atmosphere loses the sense of sobriety and reverence.

The danger in teaching the Law of Moses from the standpoint of the *ceremonial* law is to overdraw types. Although the Scriptures do teach types, one must be very careful, for the human mind, with its great imaginative powers, needs to be harnessed. To keep a fertile imagination within the bounds of Scripture, we should require two or three witnesses for the teaching of a doctrine (Deut. 17:6; 2 Cor. 13:1). A doctrine must be confirmed, or corroborated, and this principle is especially true with regard to prophecy, for the harmony of pictures and types is what brings conviction.

“Understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.” Not only did these individuals not understand what they were saying, but what they taught was strongly and dogmatically presented. In other words, vain jangling was characteristic of those who strongly professed to be teachers of the Law, and they repeatedly used a “thus saith the LORD” when they did not have the understanding. The lesson is to *analyze everything* we hear from the platform, no matter who says it and how authoritatively it is said. On the one hand, the Lord’s Word encourages us to speak as a trumpet that gives a distinct sound, with our yes being yes and our no being no, where possible (1 Cor. 14:8; James 5:12). On the other hand, an exponent of error may convincingly teach in an assertive manner. To repeat: a speaker’s words need to be analyzed to see if they square with Scripture.

This was strong language from Paul. What wonderful instruction for Timothy, who was in the middle of this situation and needed a lot of encouragement and know-how!

1 Tim. 1:8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;

The statement “the law is good” refers not only to the moral law, the Decalogue, but also to the ceremonial law *if a man uses it “lawfully,”* that is, within the parameters of what it is teaching. Paul was giving very sound counsel.

Paul did not downgrade the Law but said that it had to be used properly. Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil

[magnify, go beyond, the Law]” (Matt. 5:17). Jesus came not with the motive of destroying or violating the Mosaic Law but with the motive of going to a higher law. As an illustration, the law of gravity still operates when the law of centrifugal force turns the propeller blades of a plane to lift it into the air for flight. Both laws continue to operate on a principle of nature, but the higher law supersedes the lower law.

1 Tim. 1:9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

1 Tim. 1:10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

The first part of verse 9 could be misunderstood. Why did Paul say that the Law was not made for the “righteous man”? Other Scriptures are necessary to get a balanced viewpoint of this statement. For instance, “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). If verse 9 were the only statement on the subject, we would conclude that the Law has no value for the justified Christian, but the Law contains many precepts that are most enlightening.

Comment: The “law” is for those who *know* they are not righteous. The principle was the same when Jesus said, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick” (Matt. 9:12). *All* are sinners, so *all* need a physician, but only those who *recognize* their undone condition and seek help from Jesus can be helped.

Reply: Yes. No one can boast in the Law because none are righteous.

The Law is very instructive, telling us what not to do and also what to do in many cases. As Christians, we need the *knowledge* of the Law, but the Law does not justify us. The Law reveals our shortcomings and transgressions, past and present.

Of course, for the Law and works to supersede faith, as it did with many Christians in the early Church, is a serious error. Works should be done *because of our faith*, but the works themselves are not faith. A *live* faith will produce works; a *dead* faith will not. Many Scriptures and illustrations need to be considered for a balanced understanding. Otherwise, we would think, “Why should we bother to read Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy?” If one is so absorbed in the Law that he talks only on that subject in his sermons and neglects faith, the robe of Christ’s righteousness, and justification, he is teaching contrary to “sound doctrine” because faith, hope, and love are the doctrine of the Gospel Age, not just professions and deeds.

The rich, young ruler asked Jesus, “Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 18:18). He said he had kept the commandments from his youth. That ruler might have been a very noble person by temperament, but Jesus pointed out that more was required. In spite of a kind and polite veneer and good behavior, one must love God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength. It is good that the robe of Christ’s righteousness covers our infirmities.

The higher form of “menstealers” (slave traffickers or kidnappers) is robbing a person of his reputation, destroying his good name. A “liar” is one who professes to be that which he is not, such as not fulfilling his covenant of consecration with the Lord. A person is a liar in proportion as he does not fulfill his covenant to do the Lord’s will. We see the commandment to not take God’s name in vain in a higher light, meaning to not ignore His Word and/or counsel. Of course the literal meanings of these words are also applicable: kidnappers, false speech, etc.

In addition to the long list of sins in verses 9 and 10 for which the Law was made, Paul added, “And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” *Many* other sins are contrary to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, who used the Old Testament extensively. The consecrated should become thoroughly familiar with the New Testament and its sound doctrine, and in doing so, they should see the need to study the Old Testament—in other words, God’s Word *in its entirety*.

Comment: The Ten Commandments teach that adultery is wrong. Jesus added that for a man to even look at a woman with lustful thoughts is committing adultery in his heart (Matt. 5:28).

Reply: However, the two sins are not equal in God’s sight. Jesus was showing that sin has to be attacked *right away at the root*. A lustful desire is the beginning of sin. To entertain such a thought will lead to an act, and an act leads to action (a plurality of acts). The plurality of acts leads to a habit and then to a destiny.

1 Tim. 1:11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

1 Tim. 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

1 Tim. 1:13 Who was before a blasphemers, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

1 Tim. 1:14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Paul was stressing God’s *mercy* to him because, otherwise, sinners would feel that if they had fallen into one of the categories listed in verses 9 and 10, their situation was hopeless. If individuals honestly searched their heart, they might find they had a weakness or proclivity in one of these directions, at least in the past, and had fallen short. Paul wanted them to know that *repentance* (and forgiveness) are possible through the grace of God.

Jesus criticized the scribes and the Pharisees for not really listening to and studying Moses. They failed to see that Moses pointed and led to Christ. They were stuck on Moses and the Law to such an extent that they did not recognize Jesus, the Prophet whom the Lord God raised up of the Jews like unto Moses (Deut. 18:15). Israel’s religious leaders were satisfied with Moses as the greatest prophet and did not look further. The Law leads to Christ in two ways: (1) There are many types and pictures. (2) It causes the honest- and right-hearted to feel that something is wanting, that the Law is not enough; hence they become discouraged by their sins and shortcomings. The Law is a *dead way*, whereas Christ is a *new and living way*.

Judged strictly according to the Law, all would fall short of perfection, but in Jesus, a person can have a relationship with God through the gospel of *grace*, “the glorious gospel of the blessed God.” God has provided the arrangement, through His Son, whereby He can deal with an individual on a completely different basis than strictly on deeds, that is, if a person has a change of mind, heart, disposition, and will, and thus receives the robe of Christ’s righteousness as a covering.

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me.” Paul called attention to the fact that if it were not for Jesus and the robe of righteousness, he would not have been forgiven, even though he persecuted Christians in ignorance and unbelief. The risen Christ had spoken to him, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:4). For a brief moment, Paul would have

wondered how he had persecuted this voice in heaven, which he felt was coming from God, but then he got the connection right away and realized that Jesus, the true representative of God, was speaking.

“He [Jesus] counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.” When did Jesus count Paul faithful? Paul was a dedicated, consecrated man before his conversion to Christ. A strict Pharisee of the Pharisees, he desired to do God’s will and had made that commitment prior to his enlightenment at Damascus (Acts 23:6; 26:5; Phil. 3:5). He had been serving God with all his heart but not according to knowledge. His heart condition, will, motivation, and intent toward God were perfect, even when he was persecuting Christians, but *both knowledge and a perfect heart intention* are necessary to make the Little Flock. Paul had persecuted “ignorantly in unbelief”; that is, he lacked knowledge of the role Jesus plays in God’s plan—that he is “the way, the truth, and the life” and that no man can come to the Father except through him (John 14:6). Paul’s lack of belief in Jesus and Jesus’ doctrine was the hindrance. He had been faithful up to the degree of light that he possessed, but that was not enough.

Comment: Verse 12 counteracts the reasoning of some who claim that a defect in character must have kept Paul from recognizing Jesus as the Messiah prior to the incident on the way to Damascus. God counted Paul faithful *prior* to his acknowledgment of Jesus.

Paul said that before becoming a Christian, he was a blasphemer and a persecutor. However, his disposition of fire and thunder had a value when properly channeled under God’s instruction and Holy Spirit. Generally speaking, a person who was brought up under kind and genteel conditions does not develop into as faithful a leader as one who was previously a person of thunder. The individual who is mellow and mild in all that he does is not as useful as a leader. Like Daniel, Paul was a leading spirit.

Q: Why did Paul call himself a “blasphemer”? He did not blaspheme God.

A: It is also blasphemy to vilify the *Son* of God. Evidently, Paul was referring to the stoning of Stephen, for persecuting him was like persecuting Jesus. Paul explained the situation in another epistle: “Concerning zeal, [I was] persecuting the church; [but] touching the righteousness which is in the law, [I was] blameless” (Phil. 3:6). Paul’s character is certainly not to be impugned. Prior to his conversion, his guilt and responsibility started with Stephen in connection with his being a persecutor of Christians.

Incidentally, we do not think anyone could have reasoned with Paul in regard to Jesus. He needed to be socked over the head, as it were, with a supernatural experience. Especially with his exceptional mind and logic, he would have countered with all kinds of reasons to consider the new religion heretical and contrary to the Law. An outward providence had to humble him so that he could be instructed.

When many who consecrate get a smattering of understanding of the gospel and see the history of Peter and Paul and then compare their own situation, they are encouraged by seeing God’s grace to the apostles. The aspect of forgiveness is very commendatory. Paul called this forgiveness “the grace ... which is in Christ Jesus.”

“The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant *with faith and love* which is in Christ Jesus.” Paul was speaking of the faith and love of Christ. Jesus said, “I am with you always, even unto the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Doesn’t this statement show his faith, or a measure of confidence, in the one he is calling? Of course God does the calling, but He uses Jesus, who, having all confidence in his Father’s arrangement, said, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed

them unto babes” (Matt. 11:25). As Paul went through his ministry of more than 30 years, he increasingly saw the wisdom of the Heavenly Father’s calling not the educated, the mighty, and the noble of this world but the poor and the humble—the ones who feel their need of a physician. Jesus is in such hearty agreement with God’s method of calling individuals that it can be likened to his own faith and love.

1 Tim. 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

1 Tim. 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” As the years went by and Paul continued to study the principles of the gospel—everything Jesus said and did, the parables, etc.—he could more and more say, “I am in thorough agreement that the gospel of grace, faith, and love in Jesus is a *true* statement, a *reality*.” In the final analysis, he said, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom. 8:35). The clearly implied answer is, “No one except ourselves.” No fault can be found with God, His method of calling us, or the way He deals with us. Our own lack of obedience, to a greater or lesser extent, is responsible for failures in our development of a Christlike character. Not only did Jesus endorse the Father, but Paul endorsed Jesus by saying in effect, “Based on my own experience, I can fully attest to the grace, love, and faith of Jesus.”

“I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe.” As stated earlier, the two primary examples of mercy and forgiveness were Peter and Paul. Numerically speaking, Paul’s ministry was primarily to Gentiles and secondarily to Jews outside Israel. Thus he was the first “pattern” to the Gentiles, whereas Peter’s ministry and pattern were basically to the circumcision (Jews) inside Israel.

Of the list of unworthy categories in verses 9 and 10, Paul considered himself to be one of the worst offenders because prior to his conversion, he had blasphemed Jesus and persecuted adherents of the true religion. Then he constructively reasoned, “I was converted so that I would be an encouragement to other individuals in any of these categories who might subsequently believe, for Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Simply stated, Paul was a “pattern” and an encouragement to those who would later believe, especially Gentiles. Jesus is able to save *unto the uttermost* those who come unto God by him, for “he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). The word “uttermost” becomes very significant based on the degree of depravity of the individual before he accepts Christ.

Paul showed that a person can be alienated from God from one standpoint, yet in harmony with God from another standpoint. He himself was an example of this seeming contradiction. God counted Paul faithful, yet from another perspective, the apostle reckoned himself as disobedient, as being “chief” among sinners. In another epistle, Paul said that prior to conversion, Gentiles did not know God and, therefore, were enemies without knowledge through wicked works. There is a difference between being enemies of God *with* knowledge (the Second Death class) and being enemies *without* knowledge.

1 Tim. 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Jehovah is “the only wise God.” Paul was now directing his praise even higher than Jesus—to the top, to Almighty God Himself. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and

cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

The term “the only wise God” is a sign of humility. Jesus exemplified this humility when he said, “The words that I speak are not my words but the words of my Father in heaven. He taught me what to say, and I have come to do His will, not my will” (John 4:34; 7:16; 8:28 paraphrase). Paul was talking in the same vein, following the example of Jesus. Incidentally, Christians who become popular usually become blind to the Lord’s using others in a different fashion because they are so absorbed in self.

In previous verses, Paul gave praise to Jesus, and now he went a step higher, to God, to the *Father* of Jesus. The title “King *eternal*” emphasizes that God will *always* be Emperor of the universe and the Creator—for ages and ages and ages. It is true that Jesus will come to mind, but God said, “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another [including Jesus]” (Isa. 42:8). *God* is the standard; to *Him* do we look. To *Him* “be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

1 Tim. 1:18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

Verses 5-17 are parenthetical in the *Diaglott* to show that verses 3 and 4, and then continuing with verse 18, are the “charge” Paul gave to Timothy. While Paul was discussing principles to ever be kept in mind by the followers of Jesus, he wanted Timothy to particularly take note of the advice he would now give. Paul used a term of endearment and confidence: “*son Timothy.*”

Comment: The New American Standard Bible reads, “This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight.”

God “charged,” or entrusted, the gospel ministry to the Apostle Paul. Now Paul, in turn, charged Timothy by saying in effect, “I am laying this responsibility on your shoulders because you are a creditable individual. You have been faithful, and you understand me and my teaching. My charge to you is that you be faithful in carrying on this work.” Incidentally, we should not pass on a “charge” to others today because we are not apostles. Perhaps the only exceptions would be a most unusual brother in doctrine and character or two brothers who had a very close or parental relationship, but we should not give a charge to brethren at large.

Comment: *Reprint No. 2165* explains Paul’s charge to Timothy. Timothy was to be diligent and zealous in preaching the Word of God, using *every opportunity* to declare the gospel. Declaring the gospel might include three features—reproving, rebuking, and exhorting—and doing all three with a loving and sympathetic heart. Timothy was to preach the Word of *God*, not man.

“This charge I [Paul] commit ... *according to the prophecies* [plural] which went before on thee [Timothy].” The implication is that on some occasion, Agabus and/or another brother or sister made prophetic utterances about Timothy’s usefulness in the ministry. An utterance may even have been given much earlier when Paul was going to Galatia on his first missionary journey. Also, Paul’s asking Timothy to accompany him may have been in connection with a prophecy uttered mechanically by someone else. At any rate, the word “prophecies” is in the plural. It is interesting that the Corinthian brethren appreciated Titus, not Timothy, yet the latter was the subject of prophetic utterances.

Whatever the prophecies were and whenever they were given, they indicated that Timothy was specially called. Although not an apostle, he was the next echelon below apostolic

authority. We believe that after Paul's demise, Timothy was the bishop of Ephesus for a very short time, that is, until John took his place. We know little about Timothy from then on, but we can be sure he kept his two personal letters from Paul for some time. Upon his death, the letters became public and were treasured, and they were providentially included in Holy Writ for the edification of the Church.

Paul was given a charge by Ananias, who had a vision in which the Lord said, "I have appointed Paul to do a great work" (Acts 9:10-16; 22:12-16). Nothing discouraged or deterred Paul from his ministry—neither favorable nor unfavorable experiences. He just proceeded according to the vision he had seen on the way to Damascus and the charge God had given him.

Paul committed the charge to Timothy according to earlier prophecies that "went before" him so that he might "war a good warfare." Here is another principle. In down periods, in times of discouragement when we are in need of comfort, we should review and meditate on God's various leadings on our behalf when we first consecrated and also in subsequent years. Otherwise, the Adversary will try to discourage us further with questions like "How do you know that the Lord called you?" In critical times of discouragement, Satan wants to shipwreck our faith and push us over the cliff, so a review of the Lord's leadings is a necessary stabilizing factor. In addition, we can look back at God's dealings with recalcitrant natural Israel and see that He is a God of all patience and comfort. He does not desire that any of His little ones will perish but wants them to live. In fact, to realize God had that motive in calling us will help prevent a suicidal step, which, unfortunately, some have taken.

Life is precious, and we believe the Apostle John wrote his Gospel along that very line. We are not all of the very elect, but we should hang on, for our consecration is a matter of life, even if we do not get the top grade. We must be faithful unto death to even attain a place in the Great Company.

With Christian warfare, the emphasis is on the word "good." We hope to "war a *good* warfare." In this epistle, a primary theme is goodness—practical Christianity—versus foolish talking, speculations, etc., which have no real value. The meat of the gospel is essential for warring a good warfare.

1 Tim. 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

Timothy held unfeigned faith and a good conscience, two of the qualities mentioned in verse 5 as essential to the attainment of love. When we consecrate, our faith is small, but it should *grow*. Our conscience has been tenderized to recognize our need of the Savior, but it has to be educated, corrected, and refined *by the Word* to know what *God* considers right and wrong. Failure to do this could make shipwreck of our faith. Our senses need to be faithfully exercised so that we can discern between right and wrong, good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14).

We must *desire* development and must *exercise* our mind along these lines so that the Lord will correct us as needed. We should be very interested in developing the capability to make decisions. If we give advice to others and later find that the advice was wrong, we should correct it. If someone comes to us in good faith and asks for advice, and we subsequently realize our advice was wrong, we need to make the correction with the individual and ask for forgiveness from the Lord. The advice we give may pertain to a crisis in the individual's life.

1 Tim. 1:20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Paul named two individuals as blasphemers, Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom he had delivered unto Satan. They blasphemed by contradicting Paul's message with regard to Jesus being the true Messiah, the Savior, the *only* way to salvation. Already consecrated, they were not holding to the faith and taught either pagan ideas or the concept of mandatory obedience to both Christ and the Law.

Comment: Paul also referred to Hymenaeus and Alexander in his second epistle to Timothy. He said, "But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is *Hymenaeus* and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:16-18). Later he added, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words" (2 Tim. 4:14,15). Through excommunication, Hymenaeus and Alexander were given the opportunity to learn not to blaspheme, but the situation did not look very hopeful.

Reply: Hymenaeus and Alexander believed in Christ to start with but later deflected by advocating other views, and eventually they opposed even the Apostle Paul himself. They began to teach wrong doctrine, theorizing on other subjects to the detriment of Paul, who wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians to try to correct the erroneous teaching that the resurrection was past. When Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians was misunderstood, he had to write a second letter to counteract both the slant put on his first letter and the current thinking among the brethren about the awakening of some of the sleeping saints at the time of Jesus' crucifixion, as recorded in Matthew 27:51-53. "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; ... and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection ... into the holy city [on the third day], and appeared unto many." This account actually happened. Except for the words omitted above, this text is genuine, for it appears in the Sinaitic manuscript.

Comment: The naming of Hymenaeus and Alexander gives us authority to name an individual who has been excommunicated. Following a disfellowshipping procedure by a class, the matter becomes public.

Reply: Yes. Because Hymenaeus and Alexander were *teachers* and thus *proponents* of a damaging teaching, it was necessary for the brotherhood at large to know of the matter. In regard to 1 Corinthians 5, it was not necessary to name the individual because he was not a teacher and only a *local* area was affected. Travel was not so extensive back there. Today the name of any individual would probably have to be made known.

Evidently, many in the apostles' day felt that perhaps they had erred in accepting Christ because he was of the tribe of Judah and not of the tribe of Levi. The Jewish thinking was coming back and beginning to percolate in their minds. We believe Paul wrote the Book of Hebrews because he felt the need to combat not an individual but a *widespread* situation that was developing and fermenting more and more. Thus he wrote a calm, logical, reasonable, comprehensive treatise to refute, with Scripture, the false idea that to be the Messiah, Jesus had to be of the tribe of Levi. Usually those who deflect from the truth do so in a gradual way that is not obvious until an act occurs which is more flagrant and discernible by others.

Delivering one over to Satan is something like what Jesus said to Judas at the Memorial. The Master's perfect comment was, "That thou doest, do quickly," for Judas had to make a decision *at the very moment* (John 13:27). Jesus was saying, "Do not procrastinate at this critical state. What you will do, do NOW." Jesus' words could have worked either way, but Judas reacted improperly—he left to betray Jesus and get the 30 pieces of silver. The Great Company will

also have to come to a decision at the end of the age. When that crisis comes to their life, they will not be able to procrastinate.

Apparently, the excommunication did not profit Hymenaeus and Alexander because they continued on in their sin, and we do not hear of their retrieval. The purpose of turning one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh is just as Paul said—“that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5). The hope is that the individual will make a proper decision so that the flesh might be destroyed. Prophetically speaking, at “X” date in the near future, in a very critical situation, the entire Great Company will be turned over to Satan. The purpose will be to force them to make a decision. Those who respond properly and firmly adhere to that decision will reap the salvation of the spirit. Those who do not respond properly will make shipwreck of their faith.

Q: Is it possible to see a class who are headed for the point of no return?

A: Yes. All of the consecrated are called to the high calling, but a time will come when the Church is complete and God is dealing only with the Great Company class. Of the consecrated who are left behind when the door is shut, a Judas class will be separated out. In other words, when the Great Company class are turned over to Satan, some will resist him and some will become his, ending up in a destiny of destruction.

1 Tim. 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

1 Tim. 2:2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Paul exhorted that “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men,” but who are the “all men”? When verses 1 and 2 are combined, the thought is “for all men; [even] For kings, and for all that are in authority.” The order of prayer should be (1) for faithful brethren to remain faithful; (2) for brethren who are teetering to be stabilized; (3) for the retrieval, if possible, of those who are taking a wrong course and have been remanded over to Satan, as long as they have not committed “a sin unto [Second] death” (1 John 5:16); and (4) even for the world, that is, for kings and for those in positions of authority.

Comment: Paul was laying down a pattern for Timothy to follow in taking over the ministry. In conducting his ministry, Timothy was to consider all of these classes.

This advice about *unconsecrated* earthly rulers is unusual in a sense, for we are not accustomed to thinking along these lines. As Paul exhorted Timothy, it is commendable to consider civil leaders from time to time in our prayer life. What makes the advice even more unusual is that Nero was emperor at the time, and he was one of the most despicable characters in history. When Christians of that day prayed for those in authority, this depraved individual was at the top of the list. In other words, a certain type of prayer is proper on behalf of unconsecrated earthly rulers; namely, we are to pray that “we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty,” adding “if it be thy will.” Thus it is permissible to pray for political conditions that are conducive to Christian development and growth, with the proviso always in mind, “if those conditions are in harmony with the Father’s will.” For example, freedom of assembly is a precious privilege, and to show our appreciation, we can pray for its continuance, God willing.

Q: Since we are living in the end of the Harvest period, should we still be praying for earthly rulers, especially when we expect that conditions will not be quiet and peaceable as time goes

on? What should be our prayer? God has unquestionably favored the United States as a place of religious freedom, but should we ask Him to direct earthly rulers?

A: God had a providential care over the United States as a haven for religious refugees both prior to and into the Harvest period. A proof text is Isaiah 18:1,2, “Woe [Ho] to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!” As with any prayer, we can make the petition, but that does not mean our prayer will be answered favorably. If a king or other earthly ruler acts adversely to Christian living and life, he incurs additional responsibility. Therefore, we can pray that his decisions will be for his betterment in the Kingdom Age, as well as for the benefit of the Lord’s people in their current spiritual interests. In that way, our prayers are actually a favor to the monarch, but of course we should include the phrase “according to thy [God’s] will.” If the prayers are heeded and the civil rulers act favorably, it will ultimately be to their credit.

However, since 1914, when the Gentile lease of power expired, those who are in positions of civil authority have been in a different circumstance, so we would reason as follows. Because they no longer *legally*—from the Lord’s standpoint—have the same authority, we should have a little more reservation in our prayers. Nevertheless, we are appreciative to the extent that the President or another leader makes good decisions and preserves religious freedom. Because we are living *subsequent* to 1914, Christians at the end of the Gospel Age have the legal authority from God’s Word to declare vengeance in a way that was not previously permissible.

Comment: When brethren in Poland meet in convention, they are required to ask God’s blessing upon the government.

Reply: There are several ways to use prudence in connection with such prayers, whereby the authorities would be satisfied but conscience would not be violated. To forfeit meetings by acting presumptuously or with unnecessary haste is not advisable.

Comment: The longer we are in the way of truth, the more apt we are to see our faults and to realize how unprepared we are to end our course.

Reply: Yes. At the beginning of the Christian walk, the heart is pure and willing and ready to go, but more is involved in making the Little Flock. Motives alone are not enough, for we must be qualified, and getting those qualifications requires time. When conditions are conducive to learning lessons, we should make good use of our time, for we know there will not always be sunshine.

Q: Since we are living in the end of the age, wouldn’t praying for a quiet and peaceable life be like asking for the Kingdom to hold off, for we know that persecution has to occur first?

A: But on the other hand, many who search their own heart feel there are still things to learn. They question how the Father views them and whether they have reached the mark of perfect love in His sight. Therefore, they think of every moment of additional time as a moment of opportunity to do better. The Husbandman still has long patience for the development of the precious fruit of the earth (James 5:7). However, when events happen where *we know with certainty* that the end of the age has come, we would no longer pray for earthly rulers and peace. To have the courage to go is one thing, but personally, we have never felt so confident of making the Little Flock that we could say we are ready to die. Sometimes the brethren who do not talk as much are more courageous at the time of their actual death than the ones who

have voiced a confident attitude all their Christian life.

Comment: We know the Father has a specific timetable. Therefore, as long as the intent of our prayers is to be in harmony with His will and we are in no way trying to change the final timetable, it seems that prayers for peace and earthly rulers are still in order at the present time.

Reply: In the near future, as signs become more ominous, we will be praying as a group along this line. Both individually and collectively down through the Gospel Age, periods of sunshine have alternated with periods of light rain, and then comes the extreme test—torrential downpours and earthquakes.

1 Tim. 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

1 Tim. 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

What is usually overlooked is the theme that permeates the main body of this epistle, namely, the word “good.” In addition to the frequent use of that word, other words are employed to say the same thing. Paul was saying that doctrine has its place, but it is *sound* doctrine, the *meat* of the Word, that is important. For example, as helpful as chronology is, that subject is not the “meat” of Scripture. The principal thing is one’s consecration.

Verses 3 and 4 tell why Paul gave the advice of verses 1 and 2. God’s mercy is such that *all* (including Nero and Hitler) will come to a knowledge of the truth. Paul enthusiastically preached the truth, hoping people would get the knowledge in the present age and thus have an opportunity to run the race for the high calling. The “gospel,” the good news, is that a person can repent and know and love God *now*, not in the next age, although all who do not accept Jesus in the present life will have a future opportunity.

If we understand Paul’s reasoning here, he was saying that earthly rulers either jeopardize or help their chances of getting eternal life by whatever they do in their positions of leadership. The principle is, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). Consequently, in praying for and knowing that all men will come to the knowledge of the truth, Paul realized that every good deed, act, and attitude would help retrieve them from Second Death. For instance, when Paul spoke so powerfully and eloquently, King Agrippa said, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” Paul replied, “I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds” (Acts 26:28,29). Paul took the same attitude here in 1 Timothy. If an earthly ruler was righteously inclined to the truth, Paul hoped that he would act accordingly. It is better to assume an active, aggressive role in witnessing to others and urge them to repent now than to be indifferent and encourage procrastination with the attitude, “Oh, well, they will be saved in the next age.” Paul was an evangelist at heart, and so was Peter. When Peter spoke to the multitudes following the Day of Pentecost, he said they were guilty of the death of Christ, but he realized that the people and the rulers had acted in ignorance. Then he said in effect, “Repent now so that your sins will be blotted out” (Acts 3:14,15,17-19). Peter knew that if they responded favorably, the chances of their sins being blotted out were better than if they delayed.

In what way will God “have all men to be saved”? God is determined that all will be saved from ignorance, for everyone is guaranteed a knowledge of the truth that Jesus is “the true Light, which [eventually] lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). God’s intent is that no one will go into Second Death without first having the knowledge that Jesus is the Savior. Each person will have to come to that knowledge and then make a decision favorable or unfavorable.

Comment: The *Diaglott* says that God “desires all men to be saved, and to come to an accurate knowledge of the truth.”

Reply: God’s desire will be fulfilled in that all will come to a knowledge of the truth. The “accurate knowledge” is not chronology, the covenants, etc., but that Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation. If one is to get everlasting life on God’s terms, it has to be in and through Jesus.

Comment: Jesus tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9).

Reply: To be saved from darkness and ignorance is one thought, and being *eternally* saved is a separate thought. The *opportunity* for salvation is guaranteed to all, not salvation itself.

1 Tim. 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

1 Tim. 2:6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Verses 5 and 6 refute the doctrine of the Trinity, for Jesus is inserted *between* God and men. Jesus is the *one* Mediator between the *one* God and men. Honesty and humility are essential qualities for the Christian. Those who have been teaching others a wrong doctrine such as the Trinity have a moral obligation to admit they were wrong if and/or when their eyes are opened to the truth. With some doctrines, it is just a matter of growth, and one could simply say, “I once thought such and such, but I now think otherwise.” Even great writers change their minds at times as a matter of growth. Those who stubbornly and willfully teach error do so out of pride. We admire one who confesses a fault. We also admire someone who turns from a life of degradation to repentance and consecration, for we see that the power of God is working in that individual.

Comment: The *Diaglott* has “seasons” (plural), showing there is more than one “due time.” The truth about Jesus is to be testified in “seasons.”

Reply: The apostles were not emphasizing the Kingdom with the gospel of restitution, for it is better to accept Jesus as the Savior now, in the Gospel Age, in the “day of salvation,” than to wait for the Kingdom (2 Cor. 6:2). How glorious is the opportunity of the high calling in Christ Jesus! Restitution is incidental; it is a byproduct. Therefore, the main thrust of the apostles in going out was to make converts in the present age.

Under the Law Covenant, Moses was the mediator between God and the nation of Israel. In the Kingdom Age, the vast majority of the human race will hear for the first time that Jesus is the Mediator between God and men, that he is the Messiah, the one whom God sent. Once that knowledge is believed, responsibility is incurred.

1 Tim. 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

Paul wrote this epistle around AD 64. At that time, the message was mostly a Gentile message, for the Diaspora took place just a few years later. After AD 70, very few Jews accepted Jesus down through the Gospel Age (Rom. 11:25).

Paul again presented his credentials for giving strong counsel. The implication is that some were questioning his authority to teach, but he was not taking more upon himself than he

should. Others might differ with him doctrinally, but Paul was an apostle and “a teacher of the Gentiles.” His apostleship was questioned because he had not seen Jesus during his earthly ministry, and false teachers discredited his account of what had happened to him on the way to Damascus. Had they searched into the matter and inquired of the other apostles or even of Ananias, who was the human instrument for partially restoring Paul’s eyesight, they could have verified his apostleship (Acts 9:17,18). Paul repeatedly alluded to the Damascus vision as his badge of authority in the Church. His critics should have reasoned another way too; namely, he had more gifts and did more miracles than any of the other apostles, he could speak with more tongues, and he had more knowledge and a deeper insight into the Scriptures. However, if one is not liked as an individual, that feeling of dislike can override even the best of credentials a person might have. Paul had that experience and so did Timothy, whom Paul considered a great asset. However, others had a problem in accepting Timothy as anything special.

“I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not.” Paul’s intensity of belief was much like that of Jesus, who said, “If it were not so, I would have told you” (John 14:2). Jesus was so honest that he would not teach anything he was not 100 percent in agreement with. Similarly, Paul was saying to Timothy, “I believe with all my heart, soul, and mind what I am telling you for your encouragement and benefit.”

Paul was “a teacher of the Gentiles in *faith and verity*,” whereas Peter was a teacher of the circumcision, the Jews (Gal. 2:7). Paul spoke with power and stated with certainty that he was an apostle, for he had been ordained an apostle “by the commandment of [Almighty] God” (verse 1). In addition, he was the first messenger to the Church, the church of Ephesus. Therefore, he was an apostle, a preacher, a teacher, and a prophet.

From one standpoint, there is a distinction between a “preacher” and a “teacher.” Paul was a teacher when he stayed approximately three years in Ephesus and 1 1/2 years in Corinth. In other places, he was a “preacher,” giving sermons and staying only a little while. The bulk of his ministry was spent preaching, rather than writing. If all that Paul preached during his ministry had been recorded, we would have volumes and volumes of written material—far exceeding the works of other men.

1 Tim. 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

A national characteristic of Jews is emotionalism and speaking with the hands. This was especially true in the past because there were very few words in the Hebrew vocabulary. A Jewish custom in Old Testament times was to lift up the hands in prayer, especially if the leader or director of the prayer was outdoors without the benefit of acoustics. Moses certainly followed this practice, and Psalm 141:2 reads, “Let my prayer be set forth [ascend] before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” Invocation in prayer was accompanied with uplifted hands, for “invoke” meant not only to call upon and audibly petition or implore God in prayer but also to lift up the hands. As indicated in Psalm 134:2, which says, “Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD,” hands will also be lifted up in prayer in the Kingdom. This practice had been going on ever since Eden.

Q: The instruction of verse 8 was directed to all Christians back there, Jew and Gentile. Would one reason be that since lifting up the hands in prayer was a good custom, it should be continued in order to eliminate an unnecessary difference between Jews and Gentiles? Since many were hypercritical, there was no need to make a difference on this issue.

A: Yes, there was nothing wrong with the Jewish custom, and Paul was suggesting that it not

be abandoned. What has created an antipathy in this direction is that with all of the ritual and ceremony in the past in their religion, the gestures became hollow after a while, and the Jews did not see the need for a new way of justification. And with all the mechanics of the Jewish religion and the Law, the Gentiles developed an aversion to lifting the hands in prayer as time went on, and the practice died a natural death, so that, generally speaking, it is not done anymore. But in the days of the apostles, rather than let lifting the hands become a stigma, Paul advised Timothy, who in turn was to advise others, “Continue the practice.”

Christians were to lift up holy hands in prayer “without wrath and doubting” either toward others or toward self. In other words, there was to be no malice or ill will with regard to other brethren or to self for something done amiss or for not living up to our covenant. Nor was there to be any doubting. The Apostle James said of the Christian, “Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering” (James 1:6). Knowledge is mixed with faith, so we should make proper requests and then, in faith, without doubting, trust that the prayer will be answered. If we ask *in harmony with the Father’s will*, we can be assured that our prayers will be answered. For example, if we pray for the physical healing or the conversion of the unconsecrated, we may be asking contrary to God’s will, but we can ask without doubting for more patience, more piety, more love, etc. However, even then, we should not think these fruits will just drop in our lap, for we need to back up the prayer with studying the Word, effort, remembrance of the prayer, and the observance of providences. We should pray with fervency and constancy, for a *mechanical* prayer is soon forgotten by the petitioner, whereas a *sincere* prayer—the burden of our heart—is repeated and remembered.

A prayer of faith will move a mountain, but we would need a valid reason to pray for that to happen. In other words, faith must have *understanding*. In fact, faith should be based on a *well-structured* understanding (and not just be *our idea* of what God should do). Then the petition will be authentic and valid and will be answered one way or the other.

Notice, Paul’s desire was “that *men* pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” This instruction was directed primarily to “men,” to the leaders, to the brothers, although women were not precluded. In the different ecclesias throughout the world, the one who offered prayer, petitioning on behalf of the group, was to lift up the hands. Today we do not lift our hands in prayer, even though we might like to do so at times, for the action would have an adverse effect in our refined culture.

Comment: What has caused the problem is the fact that some Pentecostal groups raise their hands or hold hands and become emotional, putting a stigma on the practice.

Comment: In the apostles’ day, some who were greatly influenced by the Holy Spirit and moved by God’s Word lifted their hands in prayer. Even today that could be done on occasion if one were so moved, but not as a habit with all in the room joining in.

In addition to looking up to heaven, Jesus may have raised his hands when calling Lazarus forth from the tomb. If so, the action was not recorded lest it become a formality down through the Gospel Age. The New Testament could have been written in a very forceful way to attract many of the public, but God purposely had it recorded in low-key statements of simple fact. However, we can gather from those simple facts what happened.

Comment: The Apostle James wrote, “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:14). Literal oil was used in the early Church, but that is another practice not followed in our fellowship today. If done in the proper way, it would demonstrate sincerity.

1 Tim. 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

Paul now gave advice for the women in three areas: apparel, countenance, and appearance. Women are not to call attention to themselves by being either overdone or underdone in matters of dress and appearance. For example, one might think that dressing in a black sack or wearing blue jeans to a convention is a sign of modesty, but such attire just calls attention to self. A general rule is to be moderate in apparel and modest in appearance. Of course to a certain extent, dress is governed by the mode of others but with self-restraint. In other words, sometimes concessions have to be made because of the type of world we are living in but with the exercise of moderate control.

A woman who is modest in countenance is not bold, presumptuous, or bossy and does not act in a man's role. Nor does she wear distracting cosmetics. *Simplicity* is the rule. In addition, a woman is not to display wealth on her person. She should avoid elaborate hairstyles, costly jewelry, and expensive clothes. A general rule is to avoid that which is time-consuming and/or expensive.

Q: With regard to gold and pearls, is the thought that a woman should not wear these inordinately?

A: Sarah is a good example. She wore bracelets but certainly not ten bracelets. Among the Jews, there is a tendency to wear excessive and large pieces of jewelry, and Paul was saying to avoid this practice. Again the rule is not to call attention to self. Too much jewelry, such as having a ring on every finger, is distracting and can cause envy.

1 Tim. 2:10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Modesty "becometh women professing godliness." The dress, behavior, and appearance of sisters should be such that become a woman professing godliness—and should be accompanied with "good works." In other words, good actions and deeds should back up one's profession of godliness. Stated another way, outward deportment should be not only modest but *genuinely modest*. Women should be adorned with good works, and not with outward, garish, superficial things. Over and over in this first epistle, Paul emphasized godliness in the Christian's daily walk.

1 Tim. 2:11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

1 Tim. 2:12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

Does the instruction "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection" mean that a woman should not participate in meetings?

Comment: No, for if she had to remain silent under all conditions, other Scriptures would be violated. For instance, Paul also said that a woman could pray and prophesy if her head was covered (1 Cor. 11:5).

Reply: Another good Scripture is, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:6). In other words, a teacher should communicate with those he teaches. The principle is to have participation, but being the elder, the teacher, is another matter. A sister who is extremely talented, gifted, and intelligent must be on guard lest she gradually assume the teaching role. She needs to exercise a great deal of patience, restraint,

and subjection to the Lord in order to express herself in a scriptural, legitimate fashion.

Paul was saying that a woman should be modest not only in apparel and deportment but also in her participation in religious services and meetings. The Pastor suggested that this can best be done in our day by using a question form. An intelligent question can be very effective in teaching in a proper manner. Another effective method for a sister to use is to quote a Scripture.

Verse 12, which starts with the word “but,” gives a modifying factor: “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” A woman can speak, but she should not “usurp”—override or domineer—the progress of a study. When we examine pertinent Scriptures, the word “teach” usually means to *publicly* expound; that is, the woman should not be a public representative of the movement. However, there is a little more flexibility in private studies. The man has to make sure that he is not dominated, and the woman has to be sure that she is not domineering. Thus the role of men and women in the Church is a give-and-take relationship.

Comment: Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” (1 Cor. 14:34,35). The problem in Corinth was that the women were educated, and they were monopolizing the meetings. Paul was saying that women should have the right attitude by being in subjection and not usurping authority over the man.

Reply: The prohibition is against a woman teaching *in the Church*, that is, *public* teaching where authority would be usurped from a brother.

Generally speaking, a teacher instructs on a subject in several sessions in a directed continuing program. However, since the *Volumes* were organized by the Pastor to logically present various subjects, a chairman can lead the studies without necessarily teaching. Thus even a sister can chair a *Volume* study with other sisters. But to plan each program separately is another matter.

Comment: In verse 11, the *Diaglott* uses the word “quietness” rather than “silence,” which seems to be more the thought. A woman should learn with a peaceful, quiet, and tranquil spirit, rather than with absolute, abject silence. Her submission is what is important.

Reply: Yes. The principle is similar to that with dress and appearance, the general rule being modesty, as becomes a woman professing godliness, accompanied with good deeds. Sisters should hold themselves in the background with regard to teaching. The word “subjection” has the thought of “submission,” rather than blanket silence.

The Apostle Peter said that the adorning of women should “not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement” (1 Pet. 3:3-6). While Sarah recognized Abraham as her lord, she did not have to cast herself down so low that he could override her on principles and in conscience. Sisters should *weigh* matters and not get carried away with fear, or reverence, for a husband or an elder, for example, who enunciates a wrong principle or

commits a wrong deed.

Peter was speaking of a general attitude, for sisters should not be in such abject submission that they let someone walk over them like a rug. Neither Peter nor Paul was teaching that kind of humility. Peter's statement not to be "afraid with any amazement" means that sisters should be able to express themselves and should not be so cowed or browbeaten that they lose their individuality in standing up for certain principles.

Sisters should control their desire to be prominent among brothers. And since, collectively speaking, the whole Church is called a "woman," brothers should also watch lest they usurp the headship of Jesus.

1 Tim. 2:13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

1 Tim. 2:14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

The scriptural reason for Eve's being made from Adam's rib is that Adam, in one sense, represents Jesus, and Eve pictures the Church. Just as Jesus precedes the Church in all matters, so Adam preceded Eve.

Paul was making several points in verses 13 and 14: (1) On the stage of history, man appeared first. (2) "Adam was not deceived," for he sinned deliberately. (3) In talking about the place of women in the Church and their wearing modest apparel, Paul said that the woman, Eve, was deceived; that is, by nature, the woman is more liable for deception than the man. Additional characteristics implanted in her feminine nature are that she is more emotional and tender, she observes more details, and she is approbative (seeks or desires affection and recognition). These characteristics are fine in and of themselves, but they constitute an inherent danger, making the woman more vulnerable to deception when someone has evil intent.

Q: At the time of Eve's creation, were these characteristics removed from Adam and implanted in her?

A: Yes.

Comment: Adam was a whole being prior to the creation of Eve. For the two years or so that he existed alone, Satan apparently did not tempt him, but once those qualities were separated from Adam, Satan made Eve his target.

Reply: When Adam was divided, he found that something was lacking in his being, and Eve likewise felt a lack. Thus God called the name of Adam and Eve—their name—"Adam" (Gen. 5:2).

Comment: Adam was not deceived. Because of his inordinate love for Eve, he sinned willfully and knowingly, whereas Eve was deceived by the Adversary's working through the serpent.

Reply: That is true. God had spoken directly to Adam and given him a specific commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so Adam understood the terms. The question is, Why did Adam disobey God? As the Pastor reasoned, Adam so cherished Eve's companionship that when she disobeyed, he could not bear the thought of being without her.

Comment: When the Adversary wanted to tempt the first human pair, he recognized the woman as the weaker vessel and thus cleverly attacked her rather than the man. Once Satan

succeeded in deceiving Eve, he then used her as leverage to get Adam to sin.

The woman's weakness is that she is more desirous of approval and more emotional than the man. The danger is that she can be emotionally swayed, whereas judgment should be *dispassionate and based on reason*. However, if one's judgment is in harmony with the mind of God, as presented in His Word, then the emotionalism is guided. For example, both Moses and Jesus spoke out of righteous indignation because the proper judgment was made *first*. In other words, their righteous indignation was predicated upon a proper judgment. Anger is rightly exercised *if it is done according to divine principles*.

In summation, on the one hand, Paul was showing that because the woman was not formed first, she was deceived, and because she had certain inherent traits, she should not usurp authority over the man. There is a vague hint here that Adam is a type of Jesus and that the woman represents the Church. On the other hand, Paul introduced another thought, as stated in verse 15.

1 Tim. 2:15 **Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.**

“Notwithstanding [these setbacks] she shall be saved in childbearing.” Of course Paul was speaking of a woman of childbearing age, but why is a woman “saved in childbearing” if she continues “in faith and charity [love] and holiness with sobriety”? As part of her safeguard, caring for a baby and mothering a child preoccupy her attention, but she also has to continue in faith, love, and holiness with sobriety in both the Church and the home. Generally speaking, the responsibilities of bringing up a child have a salutary effect, for the woman is kept occupied and she is doing a good work. Paul was giving practical advice with a spiritual connotation.

Comment: First, Paul laid down the principle that the man should be the teacher, and the woman should be subordinate to him in that role. Now Paul gave a consoling thought to the woman. Even though the man has the leading role within the Church, if she maintains her position along with faith, love, and holiness in sobriety, she will be regarded as equally faithful through her normal duties as wife and mother.

Comment: Childbearing and child rearing are an important role, for the woman is responsible for bringing up her children in the Christian faith. Not only does the woman exercise a teaching role with her children, but children are one of the most fruitful fields for witnessing. From a spiritual standpoint, the Church engages in childbearing and child rearing by bringing new ones into the truth.

Reply: Yes, rather than usurping the authority of a man in the Church, the woman exercises a teaching role in the family in the training of her children. Paul advised younger widows to remarry and bear children as a safeguard against busyboding and gossiping (1 Tim. 5:13,14). Older widows should more advisedly remain unmarried.

Q: God said to Eve, “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16). What is the relationship of this verse to 1 Timothy 2:15?

A: The underlying general principle is that even though childbearing is painful, it is for the woman's own good. Similarly, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was for the good of the inhabitants because it cut short an unfavorable development in their character. Had their characters been allowed to go unchecked for too long, the people would have become incorrigible. Just as the infliction of punishment was a kindness to them, so the infliction of the

curse on Adam and Eve as a punishment was a kindness, if seen from the proper perspective. Without childbearing, probably fewer women would get life ultimately. In other words, their position with regard to eternal salvation might have been jeopardized somewhat, for their weaknesses would have become more and more pronounced. Incidentally, the man has experienced a different type of suffering as a result of the curse—his suffering is related to the soil.

Woman was originally created to be subject to the man, to be under his headship. In fact, the word “woman” means “out of man,” for God made Eve from one of Adam’s ribs. Without the role of wife and mother, women might have pursued the theme of women’s rights thousands of years earlier. In talking on Genesis 3:16 many years ago, Bro. Magnuson told of a man attending a women’s rights meeting with his wife. Back in those days, women’s suffrage was coming to the fore. The woman on the platform asked, “Where would a man be if it were not for a woman?” The man called out, “In Eden.”

Comment: Without the role of childbearing, it might have been harder for a Christian woman to be submissive to the headship of the man in the Church down through the Gospel Age.

Reply: From God’s standpoint, there is neither male nor female, bond nor free, etc., in the Church, but Paul was speaking of certain regulations in society, saying that Christians are not to be crusaders or champions of social or other causes which would distort the true work of preaching the gospel, for they are to *wholly* serve the Lord (Gal. 3:28). They are not to be innovators of novel or radical ideas and causes. Hence a slave was to be subservient to his master and not seek freedom (unless, of course, it was offered). A social gospel is wrong.

If a woman is enticed into being a teacher, a gossip, or a busybody, she not only might wander off the track but also might end up in Second Death. “But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith” (1 Tim. 5:11,12). Childbearing is beneficial, but it is not an end in itself, for faith, love, holiness, and sobriety must accompany the childbearing. And generally speaking, marriage is for the raising of children. Childbearing is beneficial to the mother as well as to her children and usually brings better results than pursuing another course in life. After all, the Church will “mother” the world in the Kingdom.

It is interesting that Paul commended Timothy’s mother and grandmother, showing that their child-raising imparted great faith (2 Tim. 1:5). Stated another way, the faith of the grandmother was transmitted down through two generations to Timothy himself. The godly training was manifest in him.

Q: Is there a balanced way to view childbearing, especially because of the day in which we are living, when sisters have more opportunities to serve in other areas? Whether or not to have children (and how many) is an individual matter between husband and wife, but it should be kept in mind that each child becomes an earthly mortgage.

A: Extenuating circumstances have to be considered, for health and other factors may limit the number of children a husband and wife have. Each Christian couple should consider their own circumstances in the light of Scripture.

1 Tim. 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

If a brother desires the office of a bishop, he desires “a good work.” However, the office has certain conditions and responsibilities, and behavioral conduct has to be within the parameters,

or guidelines, listed in verses 2-7.

Q: What is the distinction between a “bishop” and an “elder”? (See 1 Tim. 3:1,2; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:7; and 1 Pet. 2:25 for “bishop”; Acts 1:20 for “bishopric”; and Titus 1:5 for “elders.”)

A: The Roman Catholic Church has used various terms to justify a hierarchy of power (priest, bishop, archbishop, cardinal, and pope), and the Protestant churches have ministers. However, the Bible teaches that there are only 12 apostles and 7 messengers.

A “bishop” is not necessarily confined to one congregation but is like a pilgrim in some respects, traveling around and giving advice to other ecclesias or congregations. We feel that Paul was more or less saying to Timothy, “Keep up the good work.” When Timothy went around from place to place, brethren looked to him for counsel and advice, knowing that he had been with Paul during much of the apostle’s ministry. In his two letters, Paul gave instruction and advice that Timothy could pass along to others in his travels. Accordingly, Paul was suggesting that Timothy have a larger ministry than just the local area. Thus, in contradistinction to a brother who was more or less confined to one area, a bishop traveled from place to place, establishing the faith and giving advice. Down through the Gospel Age, there have been many bishops. For example, many of the Reformers were bishops.

Q: In Titus 1:5-7, the terms “elder” and “bishop” seem to be used interchangeably. Is that thought correct?

A: The word “bishop” means “overseer.” Although an elder is an overseer in a local ecclesia, a bishop oversees a larger area. Although the qualifications are the same for both, the New Testament does make a distinction. Both have positions of much responsibility. They should not be domineering or have peremptory authority as overseers but should be shepherds guiding the flock. Perhaps we could say that an elder is a bishop in a localized sense, and some elders are favored in a broader sense in their ministry.

The Pastor treated this subject from another standpoint. He tried to show that Timothy and Titus “ordained” elders in the sense of teaching how an elder should be elected. In other words, the local brethren were shown the advisability of having a leader, what his qualifications should be, and that the election should be determined by raising the outstretched hand. The Pastor took a lot of time to explain these points because of the prevailing thought that the clergy and the laity were two separate bodies with the laity having nothing to say. He was trying to break up the old thinking with regard to the priesthood.

Q: Did Paul write to Timothy that it was good for a man to desire the office of a bishop in order to encourage him to accept that office? Perhaps Timothy was hesitant to take on this additional responsibility (see 1 Tim. 1:18). As Paul was giving a charge, he reminded Timothy of the earlier prophecies about him so that he would “war a good warfare.”

A: Yes, Timothy could have been discouraged. When Timothy, whom Paul loved dearly, visited the church at Corinth, he was not effective because of his youth, whereas Titus had been successful (see 1 Tim. 4:12). Timothy had capabilities but needed encouragement. Since Paul would shortly be off the scene, he was preparing Timothy for future work.

1 Tim. 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Verses 2-7 give the qualifications for an elder or bishop. A list of qualifications is also given in Titus 1:6-9, and a few additional squibs are in other epistles. When all of the information is

consolidated, it describes the *ideal* elder or bishop, but we cannot always have elders who match the ideal, for most do not possess all of these qualifications. Thus there is the practical aspect, and there is the ideal aspect. For example, a class might bar a brother from eldership because they think his children are not under his control. First, brethren have different ideas of what it means to have a household under control. Second, many do not take into consideration the free moral agency, age, physical circumstances, etc., of the child. Even King David, who was loved by God, had disobedient children, so we must be reasonable in our judgment of the situation. If we view the matter too rigidly, who would qualify for eldership?

The first qualification is that an elder or bishop “must be blameless.” The thought is that one who wants the office should be able to judge *himself* as blameless. The person in that office needs to be blameless because the larger his sphere of influence, the greater the responsibility. For example, Paul was criticized and his apostleship questioned, but he knew he was blameless and had pure motives. He knew his chief aim in life was to develop Christlikeness and to serve God *fully*. Had Paul lacked the knowledge, the zeal, and the perseverance to keep going under pressure, persecution, and rejection, he would not have been received by brethren.

To be “blameless” means to be above reproach and of good character. The words “faultless” and “blameless” are not synonymous. We all have faults, but we might be blameless for a particular fault. Certainly bishops are not perfect in thought, word, and deed, but from God’s standpoint, they are blameless through the robe of Christ’s righteousness. The thought is that their heart condition and manner of life are above reproach; there is nothing special to find fault with. Those who are hypercritical may still find fault, as some did even with Jesus, so the thought is that bishops must be of good character among the brotherhood.

At the same time, we should keep in mind the statement “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,” and some of that persecution may come from brethren (2 Tim. 3:12). Since slander and evil speaking can adversely affect an elder’s ministry, we cannot say that one should be barred from eldership if another finds fault with him. Generally speaking, only those who fail to take a positive stand on any issue, never speak on prophecy (for example), and always talk on nice, innocuous topics or illustrations do not receive persecution. In fact, in large classes, such individuals usually get more votes than those who are much better qualified.

A bishop must be “the husband of one wife”; that is, monogamy is the teaching of Jesus. With regard to this stipulation, several points have to be considered. The implication is that a bishop must be the husband of one wife *at a time*. For example, if a brother is married and his wife dies, he is scripturally free to remarry and still be a bishop, for that is having one wife at a time. Another situation is that some who consecrated and came into the early Church already had more than one wife, so they were barred from becoming a bishop. We think one reason the gospel went westward instead of eastward is that the custom of having multiple wives was very prevalent, even in our Lord’s day, in the nations going eastward. Confusion, turmoil, and many perplexing situations would have resulted in distracting disputes and problems. Incidentally, in the lands where the gospel went, the practice of having more than one wife phased out very naturally and quite quickly, as did the gift of speaking in tongues when the apostles died.

Comment: If an elder divorces his wife not on scriptural grounds and remarries, he has two wives in the eyes of the Lord and should be removed from office by the ecclesia.

Reply: Yes. When a divorce occurs, the brother (or sister) should make the grounds known to the class. However, an elder cannot necessarily be held responsible for a disobedient wife. Each situation has to be considered separately and the facts weighed in view of these Scriptures.

Comment: Of course an elder does not have to be married; he can be celibate.

A bishop must be “vigilant,” that is, watchful, but in what sense? He should be concerned for the character and well-being of others as well as for himself. In addition, he should be vigilant in regard to not only prophecy but also doctrines becoming prevalent that may be pernicious or harmful to the faith of the brotherhood. In other words, a bishop should be alert enough to inform the brotherhood in both of these areas.

A bishop must also be “sober.” He should be serious-minded as a *general* trend and not given to frivolity. Although cheerfulness can be a good quality, it should not be pursued when damage would result to the subject matter at hand. The principle is that we should sympathize with those who sorrow and rejoice with those who are happy.

A bishop is to have “good behaviour,” that is, good conduct. Blamelessness is both inward and outward, with inward character being generally manifested by outward behavior. We appraise an individual by his words, his actions, and his normal habit of thought.

Comment: The term “blameless” pertains to one’s *reputation* with others, whereas “good behaviour” pertains to *actions* that are observed.

A bishop should be “given to hospitality”; that is, he should be hospitable within scriptural limits, which caution us not to tolerate spongers, for example.

Comment: Since a bishop’s goods are the Lord’s, they should be used for, or shared with, the brethren. He should want to help the brethren as opportunity affords.

Reply: In other words, being hospitable is not limited to the home. Wherever we are, we should make brethren feel welcome.

Comment: A married elder would perhaps be in a better situation to extend hospitality on a regular basis if his wife is also consecrated.

Reply: That is true, but of course one does not have to be married to become an elder. In fact, a eunuch for the Kingdom of heaven’s sake is to be highly esteemed.

Comment: Hospitality is largely going out of one’s way to help others spiritually, especially new interests but other brethren as well.

Reply: Yes, there are various ways to manifest hospitality in the circumstance in which we find ourselves. For example, the Apostle Paul did not have a home, but he was hospitable to others by being approachable. Bishops should not be so dignified and sedate that others are almost fearful to draw near to them.

A bishop must be “apt to teach.” This requirement applies to an elder, not to a deacon. Aptness to teach, which is not necessarily public speaking, is the ability to communicate doctrines and truths to others.

Comment: Being “apt to teach” is a requirement for eldership, but this ability can vary depending on the brother.

Reply: Aptness to teach is an important requirement, but how is aptness measured? Some classes make a distinction between a teaching elder and a speaking elder, although we are somewhat reluctant to make such categorizations. Sometimes a very capable individual with a

lot of knowledge and understanding is unable to transmit the information to others. Conversely, some who are less knowledgeable are better able to teach and communicate.

Q: How did the disciples “ordain” elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5)?

A: When the Pastor was still alive, if a deeply consecrated colporteur was stirring up new interest in a particular area, he instructed the colporteur to arrange for a meeting of those who expressed interest. The Pastor then suggested to certain individuals that, if convenient, they open their homes for meetings, and he recommended a particular brother to lead the meetings for four or five consecutive weeks. After that, the brother would privately say to one of the newcomers who seemed to be deeply dedicated and zealous, “If for some reason I cannot attend the meeting next week, would you take over?” Then the brother was intentionally absent in order to give the newcomer an opportunity to lead the meeting. When the brother returned to the meeting the following week to teach, he learned the reaction with regard to the previous week. This alternating procedure continued, with more frequent absences, until the ecclesia could be autonomous and function on its own. The brother taught the newcomers how to elect their leaders by the outstretched hand. Thus the brother took the initiative of starting the meetings and even participated as the leader, and then he appointed one to take over the meeting in his absence. Timothy, Paul, and others in the early Church would have done something analogous to this halfway, in-between method over a period of time and eventually would have left the new brethren on their own to provide for their teachers. This type of arrangement was necessary in virgin territory, where there were no previous classes.

The subject of the laying on of hands requires much study, for it can mean one thing in one case and another thing in another case. Moreover, we would have to study the principles in the Old Testament. However, enough examples are given in Scripture for us to understand that elders are to be elected by a vote with the outstretched hand. On Paul’s first missionary tour, the brethren at Antioch prayed and put their hands on both him and Barnabas. When Paul later referred back to that incident, he made it clear that his commission was from God, not from the brethren, who were reading into the laying on of hands more than was merited. The brethren were privileged in that they were allowed to enter sympathetically into Paul’s work. The laying on of hands in that instance implied that they would send donations and other types of assistance for Paul’s ministry. Subsequently, however, the brethren felt that Paul presumed to go above the authority they had delegated to him. Therefore, he had to set them straight by disassociating himself from the wrong significance of the laying on of hands. The point is that the circumstances have to be weighed in each instance in order to understand the procedure and the significance of the laying on of hands.

1 Tim. 3:3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

A qualification for bishop is that he be “not given to wine.” Verse 8 states that a deacon should be “not given to *much* wine.” What is the distinction? “Not given to much wine” could be having just one glass of wine with every meal, or dinner, that is, drinking wine with great moderation. However, “not given to wine” means to take wine only on a special, happy occasion, such as a wedding, and not habitually or regularly. In other words, a bishop is required to curb his lifestyle to a greater extent than a deacon.

For example, if a person has hypertension or is excitable by nature, then even *one* glass taken habitually with each meal can noticeably affect his personality. Thus there is wisdom in the requirement for a bishop versus a deacon. Wine relaxes the individual so that he lets his guard down.

Comment: Wine is associated with happiness and happy occasions. Therefore, although the wine itself may have little effect, the mental attitude of a person who takes a glass of wine every day at mealtime is kept away from the dignified decorum that is proper for the consecrated.

Reply: The very fact the Apostle Paul made a distinction between elders and deacons is significant. Wine does have some effect, especially on decision making. Incidentally, beer comes under the same category as wine.

Comment: There should be even further limitations depending on the circumstance. For instance, it is proper to curtail the drinking of a glass of wine at mealtime in *public* situations lest others think this is a regular habit. Of course a wedding could be an exception.

In the early Church, wine was often part of the way of life with meals, but it was not consumed to excess. Today this can still be true but not to the same degree. Jesus probably partook of wine at the wedding of Cana, for the Scriptures indicate he had wine on other occasions, yet his behavior was very reserved.

Incidentally, the very fact Paul advised Timothy to take a “*little wine*” medicinally for his stomach shows that the apostles did not regularly drink wine at dinner (1 Tim. 5:23). As already stated, these qualifications for elder are the ideal. Sometimes mitigating circumstances exist. Moreover, there is a difference between being a teetotaler (absolute abstinence), taking wine only on extreme and rare occasions, and regularly drinking wine.

Q: What about drinking wine in the privacy of one’s home?

A: It is advisable for the respective requirements of elders and deacons to be followed at all times lest one develop a habit. And if an elder or a deacon drank wine regularly even in his own home, his actions would be somewhat a matter of deception. The individual would be giving the impression of abstinence when such would not be the case.

Another qualification for elder is to be “no striker”; that is, he is not to be given to blows or have a violent temper. A person who is righteously indignant might think he has the liberty to exert force because he sees a matter in its proper light. If someone does not agree, he feels justified in laying down the law with a little authority.

Comment: Bad tempers are part of the fallen nature in some people. If this tendency is not overcome following consecration, such individuals may suddenly lash out. If one with this tendency partakes of wine, violence is even more apt to occur. The “striking” could be either physical or verbal. For an elder to get violent would be a serious matter indeed.

Reply: The requirement of not being a “brawler” is related to not being a “striker.” Brawling is sometimes defined as being “quarrelsome,” a tendency that must be curbed.

An elder is not to be “greedy of [for] filthy lucre [riches, wealth, money, property].” He should not be primarily seeking reward, gain, excessive property, etc. Money becomes “filthy” when it is the center of one’s love and ambition. A good example of this principle is smoking, which is a filthy habit that contaminates the air, room, clothing, etc. Similarly, if money is the topic of conversation and is an idol, even to a lesser extent, it can become very engaging and absorb a lot of time and attention.

An elder should be “patient.” Other translations have “kind,” “gentle,” and “of a forbearing disposition.” However, this quality should be considered in context. Being patient is related to

wine and money. A person who is relaxed and off his guard with wine tends to talk about topics that are not profitable for the new creature. Drinking wine is contrary to vigilance, sobriety, hospitality, and good behavior, and it leads to being a striker, greed for filthy lucre, impatience, being quarrelsome, and covetousness. In other words, “patience” is the opposite of losing one’s temper or allowing wine to alter one’s personality.

What is the difference between covetousness and greed for filthy lucre? Being “covetous” is desiring what someone else has, whereas being “greedy” is wanting more and more money, property, etc., for oneself.

Comment: “The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10).

Reply: The word “all” should be “much”—the love of money is the root of *much*, not all, evil.

1 Tim. 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

David, Samuel, and Eli all had disobedient children, but only in some cases did the Lord charge the parents with responsibility. When a doctor examines a patient to see if he is healthy or sick, he usually relies on a number of factors such as heart rate, blood pressure, and temperature for any symptoms or clues. The same principle applies when we consider a brother for eldership and look to see if he has certain qualifications. Generally speaking, an elder or bishop should be able to manage his household well, but there can be extenuating circumstances such as an unconsecrated wife who is pulling the children in an opposite direction. The point is that we should not make a decision against eldership because just one quality is lacking. However, the lack of two or more qualities would require serious consideration, based on the principle “in the mouth of two or three witnesses” is a matter established (2 Cor. 13:1).

Q: With regard to the requirement for an elder to have “his children in subjection with all gravity,” at what age does one cease to be a “child”?

A: The age would vary depending on the child and the time period in which the Christian lives. The age factor is different today because children are given a lot of knowledge at a young age. Under the Law, the age of adulthood was 25 for the Levites and 30 for the priesthood (Num. 4:3; 8:24). Today the age would be around 15 or 16—teen-age years. The schools in this country are mentally developing children to be independent of their parents, and many are greater and taller in physical stature than their parents. Also, in the past, children were weaned at a minimum age of five years, whereas now they are often weaned in a month or two.

Incidentally, the word “gravity” should be “respect” (see the RSV and the NIV). A bishop’s or elder’s children should be submissive (under control) and respectful.

1 Tim. 3:5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

Verse 5 is common sense. If a brother cannot rule his own house, how can he preside in the Church? For children to be allowed to make loud noises and run up and down in the aisle during a discourse is a reflection on the consecrated parent(s).

1 Tim. 3:6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

“Novice” is a good word, for one can be a novice regardless of his chronological age. An elder should not be a newcomer. Paul was warning against inducting a brother too quickly into office. One’s age “in the truth” is what is important. Thus, depending on the level of maturity in character and understanding, a brother does not have to be consecrated for 15 or more years in order to be considered for elder.

A bishop or an elder should not be a novice because he could be “lifted up with pride” and thus “fall into the condemnation of the devil.” The Adversary was lifted up with pride, and a novice is susceptible to that same temptation. Lacking a firm foundation, he is more vulnerable to the influence of the Adversary along various lines.

Comment: Ecclesia members who elect a novice would bear some of the responsibility should he “fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

Reply: As an illustration, it is relatively easy to legislate a law, but to abolish a law is difficult.

1 Tim. 3:7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

An elder “must have a good report of them which are without,” that is, outside the Church, in the world. This requirement does not mean that the unconsecrated will praise and think highly of a bishop or an elder, but they should know that he is not a thief, a robber, a murderer, etc.—that there is nothing against his record in that sense. Consider John Bunyan, who was a reprobate of the worst kind. When he became a Christian, the public was startled by his remarkable conversion and had to acknowledge that he had changed.

An elder is to have a good report “lest he fall into [the] reproach ... of the devil.” Some people are critical not only if an individual is overly righteous but also if they can find a flaw in his character. Therefore, the “reproach ... of the devil” means that if the Adversary can find a conspicuous flaw in a bishop’s or an elder’s character that is observed by others, he will capitalize on it. Consider how Satan dared to accuse Job, a *righteous* man, by saying to God in allegory, “Look what you have given him—lands, a house, riches, etc. No wonder Job serves you faithfully! If you remove these temporal riches, he will cease to serve you.” If Satan could find fault with a *righteous* man, accusing him of a form of hypocrisy—that is, of rendering obedience because of prosperity—what would happen if the individual had a conspicuous blemish in his character? Satan would say, “Look at him. He is doing this and that, yet he calls himself a Christian!” From his vantage point, Satan can look down and be very sarcastic. Thus the “reproach” of verse 7 would be on the Adversary’s part—he would reproach the Christian.

There is an additional aspect as well. A bishop or an elder must have a good report among the unconsecrated “lest he fall into ... the snare of the devil.” A “snare” is a hidden trap; that is, it is a *premeditated* trap that is set and concealed *in advance* by one who is devious. Accordingly, the Adversary sometimes prepares traps, and this thought would be scary if it were not for the protection of Providence. As Paul said, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood [merely], but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12). In other words, if a bishop or an elder does not have a good report among the unconsecrated, Satan will cause a reproach to fall on Christianity, on the cause of Christ.

1 Tim. 3:8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

The requirements for a deacon are similar to those for an elder, except that the guidelines are a

little less stringent. Deacons must be “grave” (serious, sober, and earnest) and “not doubletongued” (saying one thing to one person and another thing to another person). Being double-tongued is a subtle form, or the early stages, of hypocrisy. Double-mindedness is apt to go hand in hand with being double-tongued. A deacon should be stable in his conduct, thinking, speech, answers, and teaching.

A deacon should be “not given to *much* wine,” whereas an elder must be “not given to wine” (verse 3), the distinction being that the latter would take wine only on *very rare* occasions. Deacons, however, can drink wine in *moderation*, which is a less stringent qualification.

As stated earlier, Paul suggested to Timothy, “Use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake,” or infirmity (1 Tim. 5:23). Timothy was not accustomed to taking wine, but the suggestion was made in deference to the chronic condition of his stomach. Even so, only a “little” would be imbibed—and that was from a *medicinal* standpoint.

“Not given to wine” means that wine is not consumed with frequency and regularity, the exception being a medicinal reason. A person could make a qualified vow such as, “I vow never to drink wine *except* for medicinal purposes.” That would be a wise vow, for many medicines have an alcohol base. In addition, a number of foods contain alcohol, but they could be considered medicinal, since food is a “medicine” for good health. However, to drink wine in a separate decanter is another matter.

As we study the qualifications for elders and deacons, we should keep in mind that they are the *ideal* situation, for mitigating circumstances sometimes exist, such as Timothy’s taking wine for his ailing stomach.

A deacon should not be “greedy of filthy lucre [money].” Money is necessary in order to buy goods and services, but it can be contemptible in the sense that the *love* of money is the root of much evil.

1 Tim. 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

For a deacon to hold “the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” means that his conduct is consistent with his profession. Paul mentioned the thought of a pure conscience several times in his two epistles to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:5,19; 2 Tim. 1:3).

1 Tim. 3:10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

A brother should not be elected deacon right after he consecrates but should be tested for *stability* first. Several years ago a brother seemed to grasp present truth so joyously and enthusiastically that the ecclesia made him a deacon almost immediately after his consecration, but that sad mistake caused much distress and grief. Had the class waited a little while—even one year—and tested him, the unstable condition would have manifested itself.

1 Tim. 3:11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

The Revised Standard has, “The *women likewise* must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.” The Greek word *gune*, rendered “wives” in the King James Version, is more properly translated “women” in this instance. Moreover, a footnote in the New International Version has “deaconesses” as an alternate translation for “wives.” Thus this verse can be considered as referring to deaconesses, a thought that is permissible under certain circumstances. When the gifts to the Church are enumerated, they are always in the *male*

gender: apostles, teachers, etc. Nevertheless, there are exceptions in some cases, such as a sister being a deaconess.

If we consider the rendering to be “wives,” there is a problem, for the question would be, Are the wives consecrated? According to that rendering, a brother could not be a deacon if his wife was not consecrated, for then she would not be “grave, sober, and *faithful in all things.*” The implication is that whoever is meant by the Greek word *gune* would be of the same faith, that is, consecrated.

Surely a brother should not be debarred from being elected elder or deacon solely because his wife is not consecrated. Of course his family situation should be seriously taken into consideration, but even if a consecrated wife is out of order, let alone an unconsecrated one, the brother (husband) may not be responsible for her behavior (see verses 4 and 5). No matter how capable and faithful a brother is, his family may not necessarily be obedient. In other words, the conduct of the wife is not an essential qualification for elders and deacons.

Comment: Then “women” is a better translation than “wives” lest the impression be given that even when a brother is not at fault, his wife has to be faithful and obedient if he is to be elected elder or deacon.

Reply: Yes, the *Diaglott* translates the Greek word as “women.”

“In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” is again the governing principle (2 Cor. 13:1). When a Christian makes a decision on either doctrine or conduct, *two* factors, Scriptures, qualifications, etc., should be considered. If a person has two strikes against him, then he should not be elected to an office. If there is only *one* factor, there may be extenuating or mitigating circumstances.

Verses 5 and 12, which pertain to elders and deacons “ruling ... their own houses well,” include the wife. She should be in subjection to her husband and not be irresponsible and wild. However, if unconsecrated, she need not be “grave, ... sober, [and] faithful in all things,” and even if she is consecrated, she may not fulfill all of these requirements. In other words, even consecrated wives might be disobedient to their husbands, yet the husband could retain his eldership *depending on the circumstances*. Consider the case of Pastor Russell and his wife. However, a sister should definitely have these qualifications in order to be elected a deaconess.

Years ago a sister who made and displayed Tabernacle plateaus and models was criticized, but she was serious, not given to frivolous talk, and very earnest, and she simply read Scriptures when showing her exhibits. In other words, no teaching or sermonizing was done. Thus she was perfectly in order. She had great zeal, and no brother had such an interest in the Tabernacle, coupled with the time and the ability to make the exhibits.

When a person consecrates and has an unbelieving spouse, the unequally yoked marriage will have the Lord’s approval if husband and wife agree to stay together and not separate (1 Cor. 7:12-16). And perhaps at a later date, because of the consecrated individual’s manner of life, the unbelieving partner will change and consecrate. The Scriptures leave the degree of compatibility up to the consecrated individual.

Comment: “Not slanderers” is a qualification for a deaconess but is omitted in the list of qualifications for elders and deacons perhaps because sisters are more apt to be guilty of this sin.

1 Tim. 3:12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own

houses well.

In the New Testament, the family lives and situations of the apostles and the disciples are not discussed, whereas the Old Testament provides information on some of the families of the Ancient Worthies. When we combine verses 4, 5, and 12, should a brother be barred from the office of elder or deacon if his children are unruly? Are the ages of the children a factor? Some in the Old Testament who were men after God's own heart had derelict families. David, for example, did some unusually commendable deeds, such as standing up to Goliath, yet certain sons were rebellious. Therefore, a person's deeds should be weighed against any family problems. God made an allowance because of David's repentance and public confession, and we should do the same. Thus family problems are not necessarily a barrier to election as elder or deacon.

The qualifications for deacon are very much like those for elder. The missing qualification is being "apt to teach" (verse 2).

1 Tim. 3:13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The word "ministered" (meaning "administered") is in the King James margin. "For they that have *administered* the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith." In other words, if a *brother* makes his calling and election sure, that is one thing. If a *deacon* makes his calling and election sure, that is another thing. And if an *elder* makes his calling and election sure, that is still another thing. According to the *degree of responsibility assumed and faithfulness to that degree*, consecrated brothers purchase to themselves varying degrees of honor in the Kingdom. The reward will be *proportional to faithfulness in the area in which one operates*.

In what way would serving well in the office of a deacon result in "great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus"? If one seriously and diligently applies himself in whatever area opens up to him, he will ultimately be judged faithful by God. Stephen is an illustration. He had great boldness as a deacon. He spoke before the Sanhedrin yet was not an appointed elder. No doubt, however, he was recognized as an elder in God's sight. Therefore, it is possible to not be an elder in man's sight but to be one in God's sight in the final analysis. We are to comply with rules and regulations down here, but the *final* evaluation is made by God in the Kingdom. With any one of us, no matter what our experiences in the present life happen to be, if we are faithful enough to be of the Little Flock, we will look back on our experiences—whether humiliation, nonrecognition, or whatever—as nothing. Why? Because we made good in the final analysis. Our momentary experiences in the present life will be far outweighed by the new experiences and reward in the Kingdom.

1 Tim. 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

Paul had been in prison under Nero, so this statement indicates that either he had just been released or he was about to be released. Probably it was the latter situation, but in either case, the year was AD 64 or 65, and he expected to go shortly to Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3).

1 Tim. 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

1 Tim. 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in

the world, received up into glory.

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.” While Paul hoped to go to Timothy shortly, he saw the possibility or likelihood that he might be delayed in coming. Should the delay be long, or if Paul could not get there at all, he wrote this first epistle to instruct Timothy what to do in his absence. Paul wrote so that Timothy would know how to “behave” (conduct) himself in the house of God, the Church. Timothy was thus instructed how to react to others and their teaching, the degree to which he would be responsible for rebuking or admonishing, what pitfalls to avoid, how to advise various ecclesias on their government or administration, etc.

In all translations except the *Diaglott*, “the pillar and ground of the truth” is part of the same sentence, but that is not correct. Verse 15 should end with the words “the church of the living God.” “The pillar and ground of the truth” should be included in the next verse for several reasons. We can see that the Church *in glory* will be the “pillar” because of the promise in Revelation 3:12, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God,” but there is no Scripture to show that the Church *in the flesh* is the *foundation* of the truth.

Consider the Tabernacle as an illustration. Although the Tabernacle pictures the Church, the silver sockets, which are the basis or *foundation* of the Tabernacle, represent the ransom price. Redemption or atonement money was used to form the solid silver sockets. Each man had to give, or pay, half a shekel in recognition of the fact that the nation of Israel was a redeemed people. Therefore, the atonement money was synonymous with the doctrine of Christ’s Ransom and faithfulness, and *Christ is the foundation* of the Church. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). The redemption money represents recognition of that truth.

The truth is God’s Word, so instead of the Church being the foundation of the truth, the reverse is true. The Church is built upon the foundation of truth, which is God’s Word built upon the foundation of Christ.

Verse 16 should read, “The pillar and ground of the truth—and without controversy great—is the mystery of godliness.” Verse 9 mentions the “mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,” and now verse 16 adds the “mystery of godliness [piety, reverence].” These are synonymous terms. Holiness is a pervading theme of this epistle.

The thought is, “Without question, the mystery of godliness is great, and it is the pillar and ground [foundation] of the truth.” The sentence should end there, and the next sentence explains what the “mystery of godliness” is. The King James Version has, “God was manifest in the flesh,” but ancient and modern translations are worded differently; namely, “He who [‘He,’ ‘Who,’ or ‘The One’] was manifested [past tense] in the flesh.” This is a reference to *Jesus*. (We should keep in mind that nearly all of Timothy is missing in the Vatican 1209 manuscript, including this part.) *Jesus* “was manifest[ed] in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

Comment: The *Diaglott* footnote reads, “This is according to the pointing of Griesbach. Nearly all the ancient MSS., and all the versions have ‘*He who,*’ instead of ‘*God,*’ in this passage. This has been adopted. The latter reading, however, is also according to the analogy of the faith, and well supported.”

Reply: Yes, the word is *hos*, but some of the ancient Greek manuscripts put a line through the “o,” making the word “*theos*” (God), but “*theos*” is not in the original. When the Sinaitic manuscript was copied, the first scribe thought the word should be *theos*, but he did not want

to mar the manuscript, so he put a horizontal line through the “o” to make it “th.”

About AD 500, an elderly king, Anastasius I, the emperor of the eastern portion of the Roman Empire, demoted from office and banished the leading Greek patriarch of the Church for inserting that line through the “o” to change *hos* to *theos*. The king felt that the patriarch had improperly taken the liberty of correcting the Word of God. However, the pope then anathematized the king for finding fault with the change in the manuscript.

For “God was manifest in the flesh,” the usual explanation is that if God Himself were to come down here to earth, He would behave exactly as Jesus did. In this sense, Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. However, a better translation is that “Jesus was manifested in the flesh.”

Jesus was “justified in the Spirit.” The Pastor said, and the usual explanation of Bible Students is, that when Jesus was resurrected to spirit nature, his course was justified. Stated another way, Jesus’ resurrection confirmed the fact that he had lived a godly life. His resurrection and full acceptance and approval by God showed there was no fault in him. He was “justified in the Spirit” by his resurrection change. Then the explanation continues with the thought that his death and resurrection were an object lesson to the angels.

Expanding this reasoning a little, we would start by saying that Jesus “was manifest in the flesh [he was made flesh].” He was “justified in the Spirit” by being faithful unto death, and the recognition of his faithfulness was made manifest in his resurrection from the dead. Stated another way, his resurrection was a justification of his faithfulness. Jesus was “seen of angels [both the holy and the unholy angels].” In addition to preaching to the fallen “spirits in prison,” his whole life on earth was an object lesson to the angels, good and bad (1 Pet. 3:18,19). The greater part of the 40 days following his awakening from the tomb but prior to his ascension was spent preaching to the fallen angels in *tartaroo*. Probably some of the fallen angels were converted at that time. Jesus was “preached unto the Gentiles” by the Apostle Paul, “believed on [by some] in the world,” and “received up into glory.” However, there are problems with this explanation.

One problem is the *order* of the events listed. Verse 16 ends with Jesus’ being “received up into glory,” which occurred when he ascended on high. Therefore, the previous events had to occur *prior* to his ascension. When was Jesus manifested in the flesh? When was he “preached unto the Gentiles”? The preaching had to occur *before* his death and not during the 40 days following his resurrection. Jesus could be “seen of angels” both before and after his death, during the 40 days prior to his ascension, and during his death, so this event is no problem.

The difficulty lies in the word “Gentiles.” Jesus was “preached unto the Gentiles.” The word “Gentiles” is proper in at least 75 percent of the cases, as the context shows, but that is not the case here. The Greek word is *ethnos*, which can also be translated “nations,” the next most frequent use of the word. However, it can additionally be translated—and should be here—“people.” In the two cases in the New Testament where *ethnos* is rendered “people,” the context plainly rules out “Gentiles” and also “nations.” There is a third exception, for *ethnos* should be translated “people” here in 1 Timothy 3:16.

Therefore, verse 16 is saying that Jesus’ life and death were witnessed by angels—just as we are compassed about now, in the present life, with angels, who are a “cloud of witnesses” beholding what is happening down here on planet Earth (Heb. 12:1). In the time period between Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, he appeared to 500 *people* in Galilee and to other *people* in certain other places. Prior to his death, he was also “seen of angels,” and he preached unto *people*. *Ethnos* is used for the *people* of Samaria in one of the two cases where the Greek word is translated “people” (Acts 8:9). At the end of his ministry, Jesus mentioned the Greeks,

another “people.” Some Greeks spoke to one of the apostles in their attempt to reach Jesus, and when he was informed of the matter, he said, “Now is the time come that I am to be glorified” (John 12:20-23 paraphrase). In other words, he had covered his ministry to the Israelites, and now others outside the pale of Jewry were beginning to get interested. Thus Jesus was preached to “people” during his ministry: to Samaritans, Israelites, and Greeks.

Remember the two possessed men who said, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment [judge] us before the time?” (Matt. 8:28,29). Aware that Jesus was the Christ, the demons inside the individuals spoke these words. Thus our Lord’s life during his earthly ministry was witnessed by the angels, both holy and fallen. From this standpoint, Jesus’ being “justified in the Spirit” began at a particular point in time, namely, at his *baptism at Jordan*. When he was born according to the flesh, a number of signs and evidences indicated he was the Messiah, but relatively few knew it—just the shepherds, the wise men, his immediate family, and a few others. Until Jordan, Jesus lived as a perfect, obedient man. So well was his behavior manifested that when he went to be baptized, John said, “Why do you come to me? I should be baptized by you, and not you by me!” In other words, Jesus was an outstanding person even before his consecration. In fact, his life was so exemplary that under the Law, he would have had life because he obeyed perfectly. And thus he was manifested in the flesh. The Apostle John said, “We saw him, we heard him, and he acted in accordance with what he claimed to be: the Son of God. He was as the Son of God in our presence” (1 John 1:1-3 paraphrase).

From the time Jesus went to Jordan to be baptized, several things happened that were *further* justification of his Messiahship—the dove came down from heaven; the voice said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”; and he performed miracles for 3 1/2 years. Thus, after his consecration, Jesus was justified in the Holy Spirit as a new creature. He manifested *godliness* not only as a man but also as a new creature, and his changed life was a further confirmation that he was the Messiah. Jesus was “manifest[ed] in the flesh” and “justified in the Spirit” during his earthly ministry, not by his resurrection.

And Jesus was “seen of angels.” Both the holy and the fallen angels witnessed Jesus’ birth as a human, his development into manhood, his consecration, etc. Next he was “preached unto the people”—not unto the Gentiles, for Jesus had instructed his apostles, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:5,6). However, even though Jesus came only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, certain Gentiles heard him, such as the Syrophenician woman whose daughter was healed by him and the centurion whose servant was cured (Mark 7:25-30; Matt. 8:5-13). Jesus was preached to the people when he was here. Announcements and miracles called attention to his being the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus was “believed on in the [Jewish] world [at the First Advent].” This statement does not refer to the world down through the Gospel Age. Not only did Jesus preach to the nation of Israel at his First Advent, but some of the Jews in that nation believed. Finally, he was “received up into glory.” In short, verse 16 furnishes a *sequence*.

Q: Please repeat the reasoning about “the pillar and ground of the truth” in verses 15 and 16.

A: “The pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy great, is the mystery of *godliness*.” This *godliness* was manifested by the life of Jesus from beginning to end, from birth to death, *throughout* his First Advent. Jesus is the example of one approved of God. The mystery of *godliness* was manifested in Jesus’ life and ministry here on earth, and then he was received up into glory. The “mystery” is that Jesus is the Messiah and that he provided an example of the course to be followed by others.

In other words, both the pillar and the foundation of the truth are the mystery of godliness. *Godliness* is so important, so supreme—this truth is so basic—that it is the *foundation of the truth*. Paul stressed the theme of godliness throughout this epistle, and this “mystery” is exemplified in Jesus. Therefore, *godliness is the pillar and ground of the truth*. Stated in reverse, the *pillar and ground of the truth*, as far as we are concerned, is to have the *piety and reverence of Christ for his Father*. We state the principle that *justice* is the foundation of God’s throne, but we can go a step further and say that the principle of *godliness* is not only the foundation but also the superstructure of God’s throne.

To state the matter another way, Paul said he was writing this letter in case he was deferred in getting to see Timothy in person. He wanted Timothy to know what his duties were—how he should behave himself in the “house of God.” Paul gave a long list of instructions on what should be done, but throughout that list, he emphasized *purity, holiness, and godliness* time and time again. Now he came to a point where he said, “Godliness is the basic quality if you are to be a faithful Christian.” “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). Therefore, Paul was saying, “A *fundamental truth, a cardinal tenet, which you must always keep in mind, Timothy, is that godliness is the key to understanding the true mystery of God.*” The mystery of godliness is such a great and important truth that it is the pillar and the base *foundation of the truth*. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. The understanding of verses 15 and 16 is very important to the Christian.

1 Tim. 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

1 Tim. 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

1 Tim. 4:3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

Combining the Revised Standard and the King James versions, we read verse 1 as follows: “Now the [Holy] Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, [even] giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” In this context, the term “later times” refers particularly to Papacy’s heyday, and not to the end of the Gospel Age, for Papacy forbid its clergy to marry and commanded abstaining from meat on Fridays. In contradistinction, the end of the age is referred to in the next epistle—“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Tim. 3:1).

With regard to “forbidding to marry,” Roman Catholicism has taught that celibacy applies only to the clergy and not to the communicants, the congregation. That teaching is one of the “seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” Not only is it false, but *all* of the valid instructions in the New Testament apply to *all* Christians. The average person attending the nominal Church is not sufficiently knowledgeable in the Scriptures to be able to detect erroneous teaching. In addition, the false concept has been widely taught that there is a distinction between the clergy and the laity, that they are separate classes. To the contrary, the Bible teaches that marriage or abstaining from marriage is *completely voluntary* with all Christians (Heb. 13:4). If one chooses not to marry in order to devote energy and attention fully to doing God’s will with singleness of purpose, so much the better, but the requirement is not mandatory for any. Not only was Paul suggesting that after his decease, a lot of strange things would occur, but he was saying that when the doctrine would come forth forbidding one to marry, it would be a mark of identity of the Antichrist. The rule would be the product of a wrong spirit. A seducing, demoniac spirit would give this unnatural application of Scripture.

Verse 2, “Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron,” reads as follows in the RSV: “Through the pretensions of liars [false representations] whose consciences are seared.” Another translation has, “Speaking falsehoods with a straight face.” An example of a falsehood spoken in this fashion is that from the pope on down in the Roman Catholic Church, marriage of the clergy was forbidden by papal bulls.

Comment: In the book *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*, the author, Chiniquy, a former priest, showed that the clergy professed celibacy but were not celibate in practice. Also, wine and alcoholic beverages were liberally consumed, to the point of drunkenness, by many of the clergy, yet the communicants were supposed to confess such sins and do penance. Chiniquy’s conscience was very troubled by the hypocrisy of the priests who preached temperance and even total abstinence of alcohol but consumed alcohol themselves and even got inebriated.

Reply: Sometimes the priests even drank the sacramental wine, which was purchased for the purpose of Holy Communion.

The Roman Catholic Church has claimed that the office of pope is equivalent or superior to Christ and the Bible. While Jesus was on earth, his teachings and sayings were mandatory, but later on, the Catholic hierarchy felt that, as representatives of Christ, they had liberty to make changes and additions to the Bible. The pope was given titles that belong to Christ, such as “The Lion of the Tribe of Judah” (Rev. 5:5). Pope Leo XIII had this title boldly emblazoned on his papal arms, asserting that he fulfilled that office. Some titles even put the pope on a par with Almighty God. Statements made *ex cathedra*, that is, as official pronouncements, were to be equated with God’s own proclamations in Holy Writ. How presumptuous to claim such authority! If the common people had had access to the Scriptures in their own language, many would have opposed such practices and teachings, which were obnoxious in God’s sight.

Another mark of identification of the Antichrist system was the command “to abstain from meats.” For centuries, the Roman Catholic Church forbid the clergy and the communicants to eat meat on Fridays and permitted only fish, yet the Apostle Paul forewarned that this doctrine of demons would be promulgated by the false Church. In recent times, this mandate was relaxed and, to all effects, abolished by the great majority of the membership. During the First World War, the rule was eased because soldiers needed meat for strength in their survival kits. What did Paul say about eating meat? “God hath created [meat] to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”

How do those who speak lies in hypocrisy have “their conscience seared with a hot iron”? Originally, the clergy realized their statements were false, but repeatedly violating conscience led to a hardened condition. Because they allowed that thinking to continue, what was at first stated tentatively, and perhaps put forth as suggestions, progressed into adamant commands and statements of fact. The reasoning could have been along the following lines.

The clergy took Jesus’ statement where he was speaking to the apostles on a certain matter and said their decision would be binding on earth and in heaven if two of them agreed. “Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18:18,19). Even though the Scriptures say that there are only 12 apostles and that any others who claim apostleship are false, the popes have considered themselves apostles (Rev. 2:2; 12:1; 21:14; 2 Cor. 11:13). These texts negate the concept of *apostolic succession*. In fact, the doctrine of apostolic succession is damaging, for it encourages others to make ironclad rules above and in violation of what Scripture teaches.

If popes (or others) could reason that they were successors to the 12 apostles, that premise automatically put them on a par with the Twelve, and their reasoning on certain subjects was equated (in their minds) with the writings of the New Testament. Perhaps in the beginning, it was merely suggested that the teachings of the various church councils on which the majority of the membership agreed should be considered the will of God. After a while, it was concluded that the head of the church was more important than the church body, and the pope began to blasphemously assume prerogatives that were not his. Jesus, who was perfect, asked, “Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God” (Matt. 19:17). Titles and names were taken such as Innocent, Pius, and Holy Father to show how holy(?) the popes were, yet even Jesus would not accept such a statement about himself. Instead he deferred the individual’s worship to God in heaven. On one occasion, the people of Lystra likened Paul and Barnabas to gods and would have done sacrifice to them, but Paul and Barnabas made the people stop immediately, saying, “We also are men of like passions with you” (Acts 14:11-18). Nor would Peter accept worship (Acts 10:26). The Episcopal and other churches also err in advocating apostolic succession, assuming the prerogative of the 12 apostles. In his advice in verses 1-3, Paul was warning Christians what to watch out for.

The term “having their conscience seared” implies that originally such individuals suspected their actions were wrong, but through repetition, their consciences gradually got seared, or hardened, so that after a while, they began to confidently teach these untruths with a straight face. Repeatedly going contrary to and violating conscience becomes a way of life.

Two other Scriptures also speak about habitually violating conscience. Paul referred to unconsecrated Gentiles as “being past feeling [for they] have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Eph. 4:19). The same apostle said, “And even as they [the Gentiles] did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Rom. 1:28).

Comment: Another way of searing the conscience is to teach that one is never to question the authority or teaching of a superior. For example, if a priest’s conscience troubles him, he is not supposed to question his bishop. If he obeys that command, then little by little his conscience is damaged.

Reply: Except for God, Jesus, and the apostles, a chain of command is improper in religious matters. We should not blindly obey but, instead, should render obedience only if one speaks in harmony with the Word. A chain of command is proper in the business world but not in the Church. Stated another way, the worldly philosophy of having a chain of command should not be carried over into the religious realm and incorporated into the spiritual things of God. Incidentally, the Roman Catholic hierarchy is afraid to make certain changes because to do so might fracture the whole organism of the church. If one change is made, it might lead to more changes, and then the thought of being “*the church*” would be held in question.

In going into darkness along the lines of the flesh, doctrine, or another area, one who has a habit of wrong thinking eventually sears his conscience. For example, a person knows he is speaking with vulgarities or obscenities, yet he has no compunction. From another perspective, a brother should not be too hasty in making public statements, for it is difficult to retract what has been taught for years. Honest teaching, even if wrong, is one thing, but to realize there are contradictions and yet continue to teach error is dangerous. A true teacher will admit that he once taught one way but now sees the matter another way.

Even though verses 1-3 apply especially to Papacy’s long 1,260-year period of power, Paul seems to have been hinting that the end of the age would be a time of great doctrinal

seduction. Revelation 16:14 reads, “For they are the *spirits [doctrines] of devils*, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” “Seducing spirits” are false doctrines that originate with or emanate from intelligent beings, human or spirit. Jesus said, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt. 24:24). Therefore, we can think of the “latter times” as being subsequent to Paul, that is, as occurring during the remaining six stages of the Church. Based on his statement that Satan will use “all power and signs and lying wonders, ... with all deceivableness of unrighteousness” at the end of the age, we can say that the time of Satan’s greatest seduction will occur in the near future (2 Thess. 2:9,10). Satan will exhibit a great energetic operation during the Lord’s Second Presence.

Thus the Holy Spirit used wording out of Paul’s mouth and pen that not only was constructive to the Church down through the Gospel Age but also will apply to the feet members at the end of the age. In other words, God has been instructing His people throughout the Gospel Age with necessary information that is pertinent to the end times (plural).

In verse 1, Paul said that *some* would depart from the faith, yet *many* down through history have been deceived by “seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” Therefore, verse 1 seems to be hinting that at the end of the age, *some in the inner circle of the true Church* will depart from the faith.

Comment: Universal salvation is an example of a seducing doctrine. This teaching appeals to the flesh, for it asserts that there will be no failures. Doctrines of devils include hellfire, which mars the character of God.

1 Tim. 4:4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

1 Tim. 4:5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

God created animals for the purpose of food. Consequently, in the Christian dispensation, we may eat them if they are received with prayer and thanksgiving. The primary reason for prohibiting certain meats under the Law was to teach spiritual lessons; the sanitary aspect was secondary (1 Cor. 10:11). Without refrigeration and adequate preparation, many “unclean” meats can cause deadly food poisoning or diseases such as trichinosis. Today our health laws prevent many of these problems. If properly inspected and handled, pork (and other unclean meats) are highly nutritious.

Food is sanctified by (1) the Word of God and (2) prayer, but what is the distinction? The Bible gives us the *liberty* to eat meat, but God *expects* us to ask a blessing and give thanks.

Comment: Paul also said, “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean” (Rom. 14:14).

Reply: Yes, we should respect a person who abstains because of conscience. Until his conscience is educated and realigned with the New Testament teachings, it is better not to interfere with the development of that individual. However, we should not tolerate abstaining from meat as a *teaching* in the Church.

Q: Is literally “every” creature of God good for food?

A: In Scripture, the words “all” and “every” are often used in a broad sense. In verse 4, the word “every” is qualified, for we would not want to eat some things, even though they were *permitted* under the Law. What we eat depends on where we live and what we are accustomed to having in our daily diets. Verse 4 is saying that what was forbidden under the Law for food is permissible for the Christian to eat, for we are under a different arrangement.

1 Tim. 4:6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

Paul was saying that Timothy would be a good minister if he continued to give the advice in this epistle. Hence it is profitable to discuss these matters. When these subjects are neglected, *man’s* thinking creeps in and replaces *God’s* thinking.

This whole epistle pertains to sound doctrine, and conduct is frequently discussed. Containing oneself and committing more fully to the Lord brings more honor. Accordingly, the fact that Paul did not marry and was faithful will earn him a higher position. As one tries to learn more and obey more, if he is faithful unto death, he gets a greater reward.

1 Tim. 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

In this context, “profane” means “nonreligious.” As an illustration, Solomon’s Temple was built according to specific measurements, but outside the Temple structure itself was a courtyard, an area that was not, strictly speaking, considered holy. That area, which extended for a number of cubits around the Temple, was “profane,” for it was on a different level. In other words, there was to be a civil aspect and a religious aspect. To mix things that apply in worldly matters with things that pertain to religious matters can be dangerous. Any mixing has to be done very carefully in order not to violate scriptural principles. At times, the Apostle Paul properly mixed natural logic and spiritual wisdom. For example, he asked, “Doth not even nature [common sense] itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?” (1 Cor. 11:14). For the mixture to be permissible, natural logic must not conflict with God’s logic. If the two are harmonious, with no contradictions, natural and spiritual reasoning can be mixed. (Compare Ezekiel 22:26; 42:20; 44:23; 48:15.)

The term “old wives’ fables” is rendered “silly myths” in the Revised Standard. The literal Greek has the thought of “mature women’s fables.” Paul was saying, “Have nothing to do with nonreligious and silly myths and fables.” Generally speaking, the Christian is not to mix worldly thinking with spiritual thinking. Natural logic is to be used *only* if it does not contradict spiritual thinking.

Comment: There is a tendency to refer to practices or sayings followed by one’s forebears, such as those of a grandmother or a great grandmother. We should have nothing to do with sayings that are of no value.

Reply: Yes, a number of superstitious or foolish practices were followed even a century ago, especially in regard to the raising of children.

What was the problem in the Apostle Paul’s day? What were “mature women’s fables” at the time of the early Church? Paul wrote this epistle around AD 64. Many Jews had gone to Asia Minor to live, but they returned to Israel on feast days. Hence they had an opportunity to hear the sermons and teachings of Paul and other apostles and disciples or even the thinking of some of the Christian women. Paul was cautioning the hearers not to introduce *religious* gossip.

For example, “I know so-and-so, and he said such and such.” They were not to weave in *false* doctrinal teachings. Suppose Paul visited a village and gave a talk, and socializing took place afterward. The people, especially the older, more mature women, were being admonished not to mix idle social conversation with religious doctrines and thus jump to wrong conclusions that would be passed on to young people who came in subsequently. In that way, the women would be introducing doctrinal ideas that were foreign to what the Scriptures teach. Paul was saying, “Be careful with regard to what you hear and accept along these lines.” As part of their nature, the women were more inclined to talk, which was fine as long as the conversation was properly directed. However, if not careful, they were more apt to bring in fables. Paul did not want them to draw unnatural or unscriptural conclusions. For instance, just because Paul did not marry, one should not conclude that Christians were not to marry.

Paul was saying that instead of heeding ungodly rules, giving a *false show* of religiosity, the Christian is to heed *true godliness*. One should not say, for example, that celibacy or a particular diet produces godliness. Many falsely equate such rules with godliness, whereas the Lord desires true godliness, not just outward forms. For example, to not marry does not mean one is a better Christian. However, if celibacy is *sincerely* done for the Lord—if one refrains from marriage in order to wholly devote himself to doing God’s will and to be fully dedicated to Christ’s work—it is spiritually beneficial. The point is that a child of God has the liberty to marry or not to marry, to eat meat or not to eat meat. Following outward formalities very sanctimoniously is a *form* of godliness but is not *true* godliness unless it is done in sincerity, without hypocrisy, and out of a pure heart.

1 Tim. 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Notice how carefully Paul chose his words. He did not say that bodily exercise does not profit at all, for bodily exercise does profit—but *little* compared to true godliness. Godliness is helpful even in natural matters. For instance, God’s Word gives health to the flesh and to the bones, even to the marrow of the bones. “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh” (Prov. 4:20-22). “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches” (Psa. 63:5,6). To a certain extent, we would probably be less healthy both naturally and spiritually without some bodily exercise.

Q: Timothy was in an area with a large Greek influence, and the Greeks placed overmuch importance on physical exercise. Therefore, did Paul give this instruction because the brethren there were still influenced by that thinking?

A: Yes. Almost every large city in Asia Minor had a gymnasium and/or a stadium. A high priority was placed on physical prowess, especially among the Greeks. Timothy was extremely devoted to the Lord, but he had to give advice to others. Earlier Paul said, “If you keep in remembrance what I have said and teach these things to others, you will be a very worthy minister of Jesus Christ.”

Comment: The Revised Standard uses the term “bodily training” instead of “bodily exercise.”

Reply: The term “bodily exercise [or training]” includes diet and other matters that pertain to health and life, as well as actual physical exercise. It includes anything related to mental and physical health. Nevertheless, physical exercise was a besetting sin with the Greeks in some respects because of the high priority put on physical capabilities. They reasoned that a healthy

body means a healthy mind. Although there is some truth to this statement, the danger was in devoting too many hours of the day to physical exercise, to pursuing bodily exercise as a habit, that is, in an abnormal fashion. An example would be trying to build muscles for months and years. Bodily exercise with moderation is acceptable, whereas fastidious exercising that includes time, money, and thinking is a distraction for the Christian.

“Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” In the present life and in the future life, practical blessings and benefits come from following the instructions in God’s Word. In the present life, it is a blessing both to know and to endeavor to do the will of God. In the future life, the benefits will be beyond comparison (Rom. 8:18; 1 John 3:2). “Godliness” is piety, reverence, sobriety, and seriousness in doing God’s will. Thus godliness pertains to the development of the new creature.

Q: What is the meaning of the phrase “having promise” of the present life?

A: As Christians, we have made a consecration and thus are in a different position from others of the same age who are not consecrated. The fact we are in God’s family and have promises of better things to come if we are faithful involves the present life. The thought is “having [*the*] promise of the life.” People in the world do bodily exercise, follow diets, and are fanatics on various subjects to prolong their life and increase their intellect. In contrast, we should consider the development of the new creature as supreme. Therefore, having made a commitment to do God’s will, we have this “promise”—and the responsibility that goes with it.

1 Tim. 4:9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

In other words, “This saying [that godliness is profitable] is faithful and worthy of full acceptance.” The exercise of piety is a sound, profitable doctrine worthy of being accepted by all. Verse 9 sums up what Paul said *previously* and leads up to verse 10, which sums up what he was *personally* striving for—true godliness.

1 Tim. 4:10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

If a philosophy is followed that *overemphasizes* physical exercise, diet, etc., it can become *selfish* and lead to *pride* in progress and things achieved. For instance, one will see his muscles grow or his physique become more attractive. In contrast, Paul was looking for success, development, and progress to the degree that he *suffered and labored for truth and righteousness*. To suffer and labor in *spiritual* matters is far more profitable than these other ventures, which have only a *little* profit.

Why did Paul add, “because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe [the brethren]”? What about those who do not believe during the present life? God has a concern for the welfare of not only Christians but also all mankind. Contrary to the teaching of the nominal Church, He has made an arrangement whereby those who do not make a consecration now are not lost but will have a future opportunity.

But why, in connection with the instruction he was giving, did Paul bring up the fact that God loves the brethren and the world? Basically, man wants *life*, and the object of good health, physical exercise, and diet is to live a better, longer, and more joyful life. Without hope of a future life—if the present were the only life—one would want to make the most of the present life. Whether or not man exercises to try to prolong this life, God will give the opportunity of life to all in due time. “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3,4). All will

come to a knowledge of the truth and have the opportunity to get life, for God desires that all will be saved, but what each individual does with that opportunity in the future is his own personal responsibility. In other words, sooner or later everyone will get the opportunity for life, so in the final analysis, physical exercise in the present life availeth little. However, the way to *really get life*—that is, in the *abundant* sense—is to become a follower of Jesus in the *present* life and to be *faithful unto death* (Rev. 2:10).

1 Tim. 4:11 These things command and teach.

The “things” Timothy was to “command and teach” were all that Paul had discussed thus far in this epistle. He personally gave these instructions and admonitions so that Timothy could, in turn, instruct those who came under his influence.

1 Tim. 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

No one was to despise, or look down on, Timothy’s “youth.” Our curiosity is aroused as to how old Timothy was at the time this epistle was written, but the reference was not necessarily to his chronological age. By this time, he had been associated with the Apostle Paul for about 20 years, so he was probably at least in his forties. The point is that some criticized Timothy for not being on the scene as an eyewitness of Jesus “from the beginning,” that is, during his earthly ministry (John 15:27; 1 John 1:1). Others tended to think less of Timothy as an authority because they had been on hand from Pentecost, and therefore, they felt it was inappropriate for him to give them counsel. In addition, the Greeks believed that one had to be quite elderly in order to be considered a teacher. However, Paul had great confidence in Timothy and did not want him either to be intimidated by the old-timers or to become discouraged, especially after the apostle’s death. Paul not only recognized Timothy’s talents but wanted him to employ the special talent given to him by the Lord, of which we do not know the specifics.

With regard to ourselves, if older brothers speak the truth, we should be deferential and respectful because of their age, even if we have more knowledge. However, if they are cantankerous and aggressive in teaching unprofitable doctrines, they have to be met with strength according to the circumstances.

“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” What are the distinctions in these categories? Timothy was to be an example in his familiarity with and knowledge of the doctrinal teaching in the Word, in his conduct or behavior, and in his love, that is, in his interest in and concern for the spiritual welfare of the brethren. He was also to be an example “in spirit”—he was to have zeal and enthusiasm and not be perfunctory in words or deeds. In other words, he was to exercise a leadership capacity.

How would Timothy be an example “in faith”? If a severe trial came on the Church or on individual brethren, he was to be confident that somehow the situation would be overruled to work out for good for the new creature. He was to encourage the brethren to hold on and be steadfast. To look only at the gloomy side of a trial would just further depress and discourage the individual, so Paul wanted Timothy to be a constructive help to the brethren involved. Thus Timothy was to show trust and confidence that the Lord was capable and willing to help His people and that whatever the situation, it would sooner or later work out for good.

What is the difference between “in purity” and “in conduct”? Purity referred to Timothy’s *personal* life, which might not be observed by or manifested to others. He was to have personal integrity and purity in every category—in doctrinal teaching; in outward behavior; in his disposition toward and interest in others; in the zeal, enthusiasm, and power of his instruction;

in faith, having confidence and trust in the Lord's overruling in all matters; and in his inward personal life.

1 Tim. 4:13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

The clause "Till I come" shows that Paul intended to go to Timothy. Since Paul had been in prison in Rome because of his religion, either he had just been released from house arrest, or his release was imminent. According to tradition, he was subsequently apprehended a second time and finally executed by sword. (As a Roman citizen, he could not be crucified.)

Timothy was to keep "reading," that is, to continue searching the Word daily in personal study. In addition, he was to "exhort," to expound on what he learned, and he was to attend to "doctrine," or teaching. What is "doctrine"? Doctrine is based on a series of precepts, for example, the Ransom, the condition of the dead, and the resurrection. Doctrine is something on which one comes to a conclusion and wants to hold fast. A person does not keep studying a doctrine to see if it is true but has already ascertained the truthfulness of the teaching, so that it becomes a guiding structure of belief. Doctrine is usually based on a series of Scriptures that blend together to give an overall lesson on a certain subject. Incidentally, exhortations may be controversial in that some may not accept or agree with the warning. Those who are in teaching positions have more responsibility along the lines of admonition.

A further thought is included in the term "reading," as used here by the Apostle Paul. Timothy was to take a leading role and not merely be a member of the class with someone else doing the leading. The fact that there was no Bible in those days made a big difference in connection with this advice. Even so, Paul's advice to Timothy is profitable to us today, for we can draw lessons and extract principles. Paul was telling Timothy not to be so humble that he deferred to others when he really had the ability himself. The Apostle John was of that nature to start with, keeping himself in the background. But we notice that in the Book of Revelation, written at the end of his life when he was in his nineties, the apostle mentioned his name, saying, "I John" (Rev. 1:9; 21:2; 22:8). Earlier he used terminology such as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7,20). Some people by nature defer to others. Incidentally, there was a brother who made a point of always being the last person in the food line at a convention. That was an exercise of humility on his part. Such humility is to one's credit, as long as the individual does not feel superior in his mind for his conduct.

In summary, Paul was telling Timothy to give attendance to (1) doing personal study, (2) using the fruits of personal study to benefit others by instructing and warning them, and (3) teaching and holding fast to cardinal doctrines and principles of truth.

1 Tim. 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

By saying, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee," Paul was encouraging Timothy to be faithful to the prophetic utterances in regard to his ministry. The gift that was in Timothy was manifested at the time the presbytery, or the elders, laid their hands on him after praying. The occasion was when Timothy was to be sent out on a missionary tour and some of the elders wished him Godspeed. Timothy had gotten a certain gift earlier, but it was not outwardly discernible until that time. In other words, the commission that had been given to him previously came out on that occasion. Apparently also, a prophetic utterance was given by someone else in a public manner with regard to Timothy and his future.

As an illustration, when Paul was converted, the Lord instructed Ananias to go to him with the message that Paul was going to be greatly used in promulgating the truth. Just as Ananias was

given information regarding Paul, so with Timothy, a prophetic utterance came forth from an individual in the group. Knowing about the prophecy, Paul was now telling Timothy to be sure he fulfilled that role. Similarly, all his life Paul looked back to his experience on the way to Damascus as his commission to preach the gospel. Just as the motivating power in his life was to be faithful to that vision, so he was encouraging Timothy to be faithful to the prophetic utterance concerning what he would be and do.

To repeat, Timothy had a certain gift—like a commission or a charge that he would do such and such—which was not outwardly discernible. When hands were laid on him, someone uttered a prophecy about that gift. Then, as Timothy went from place to place, the prophetic utterance was repeated by others. Not only were the utterances an encouragement to him, but they should have disposed those who heard them of their responsibility to recognize Timothy as a teacher—something they had trouble doing according to their natural disposition. They felt that others were more talented, better speakers, and more dedicated than Timothy, who had been in the truth for only about 20 years. Thus they were more prone to favor the older teachers, whereas they should have realized that Timothy was recognized by the Lord in a special capacity. Prejudice could have blinded them.

Comment: For 2 Timothy 1:6, the *Diaglott* reads, “For this reason I remind thee to kindle up the free gift of God, which is in thee, through the imposition of my hands.”

Reply: On the first missionary tour, Paul went “to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple [already consecrated] was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him [Timothy] would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek” (Acts 16:1-3). Thus Timothy was already consecrated when Paul met him. Paul may have laid his hands on Timothy at that time, but Timothy had gotten the gift earlier. The fact that Paul wanted Timothy to go with him suggests he noticed something outstanding in him. Moreover, Paul was disappointed that John Mark had deserted him and Barnabas earlier, so subconsciously, Paul would have been looking for a brother to take John Mark’s place (Acts 15:36-40). Timothy was that replacement.

In other words, the original endowment to Timothy was a commission or a charge. The gift in Timothy, which revealed that he was accepted of God, was of a higher capacity than, say, speaking in an unknown tongue. When Paul laid his hands on Timothy, the latter may have gotten a supplemental gift that would help him fulfill his commission. We would like to know more about Timothy’s mysterious gift, but the Scriptures do not provide the specifics. It seems to be the gift of great teaching ability.

The word “prophecy” can have the thought of “public expounding,” but it can also be the ability to see events that are future. An example in the early Church was to foresee a famine coming. Other individuals can sense dangers, errors, and/or deflections along a certain line long before they take center stage. The ability to foresee dangers and thus try to nip them in the bud is a wonderful talent.

The apostles Jude and John were still alive at this time, which was approximately AD 64. Whether any of the others were living, we do not know except for Paul, who died in AD 66, and Peter, who deceased in AD 64 or 66.

1 Tim. 4:15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that the profiting may appear to all.

Paul was telling Timothy to meditate on the advice just given (verses 12-14). “Give thyself wholly to them; that the profiting may appear to all.” Paul was saying, “Give yourself wholly to the others so that they will recognize your development and progress.” Timothy’s gift was not immediately discernible, but to those who watched and listened, his great wisdom and understanding were apparent. Unfortunately, many are impressed by one who has a superficial understanding because of his appearance, voice, command of the language, station in life, etc., and accordingly give him more recognition than one who has tenfold more understanding and capability. Paul was urging Timothy to be a little more aggressive so that others would realize his ability and thus be benefited.

1 Tim. 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

To a certain extent, Paul was repeating what he had said to Timothy in verses 12 and 13. Now he summarized his instruction and admonitions in two categories. (1) “Take heed *to yourself* in conduct, purity, love, faith, etc.” (2) “Take heed *to the doctrine*—to the Word, to the teaching.” In doing these two things, Timothy would save both himself and those who heard, or responded, to his teaching.

1 Tim. 5:1 Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;

Chapter 5 continues the theme of practical advice for Christian living. From one standpoint, the “elder” of verse 1 can be an older brother, chronologically speaking, for “elder” (age) is contrasted with “younger” (youth). The older brothers are to be entreated as a father, and the younger men are to be entreated as brothers. In addition, the Greek word translated “elder” can refer to an elected elder of an ecclesia, who is not necessarily advanced in years. In other words, verse 1 covers *both* situations: an elderly brother and an elected elder regardless of age. For instance, Timothy, who was middle-aged but is spoken of in verse 12 as a young person (“let no man despise thy youth”), was an elected elder.

As an illustration, consider Joseph, who at age 30 became prime minister in Egypt, next to the Pharaoh in authority and position. After interpreting the Pharaoh’s dream, he advised that an individual be appointed over the nation and charged with the responsibility of storing food against the predicted famine. Because of the sober, mature advice and judgment that the young man Joseph gave, the Pharaoh regarded him as a father of Egypt and appointed him prime minister, as it were.

As a general rule, an “elder” should not be rebuked but should be entreated as a father. Does this instruction mean that *in no instance* should an elder be rebuked? No, because verses 19 and 20 give an exception; namely, an elder is to be rebuked if he commits a sin of a serious and grievous nature. Thus there are rare occasions when an elder should be rebuked.

Generally speaking, a younger person should consider the age of an older person. Perhaps the “elder” has been longer in the way, and he is older and more experienced with life’s affairs. Accordingly, he should be given some due respect. One of the Ten Commandments is to “honour thy father and thy mother” (Exod. 20:12). Likewise, we should honor those in the truth who are more fatherly or more motherly because of their age experience (verse 2).

It is wrong for young people to think so democratically that they speak disrespectfully to someone who has been, say, 50 years in the truth. For example, a brother who had been a colporteur had gnarled fingers from carrying heavy *Volumes* and books for many, many years. The Pastor had sent him out to give counsel and start classes where interest was manifested. The brother led the meetings initially and then gradually had others take over so that he could

go to other cities. It was shocking to see a young, intellectually brilliant brother who had been in the truth for only about a year speak to this older brother (and elder) on a common basis without any respect. We have seen other cases of disrespect as well. Although the instruction here is to “rebuke not an elder,” there should be common Christian courtesy even from the standpoint of general recognition. Of course that does not mean a person should be able to dominate or dictate to us just because he is older, but a certain degree of respect is in order.

What is the difference between rebuking and entreating? To rebuke is to reprove in a harsh manner such as, “No, brother, you are wrong!” In the context of verse 1, the entreating is a rebuke but done in a softer manner that appeals to the individual’s reason and tries to get him to reconsider the matter. The question form is always proper for an entreaty.

Comment: The approach is similar to the way a sister speaks to a brother.

Reply: Yes, there are tactful ways of speaking. When we see something that is definitely wrong and the party is strong in his opinion, we can say something like, “Do I understand you to say such and such?” Right away the individual has to think twice about what he just said. Another approach is, “How do you harmonize that reasoning with the statement that...?” In contrast, a rebuke is more personal; for example, “You are wrong. You do not have the right idea at all.” Hence a rebuke is blunt and more direct, whereas an entreaty is more in a question form but pointedly so. In other words, the entreaty replaces the rebuke. “Rebuke not ... but entreat.” Because a person is disturbed by something that has happened or has been said, he takes action to try to correct the matter or situation.

Paul was also saying, “Rebuke not ... younger men [but entreat them] as brethren.” With an older man, the technique is to entreat him as a father, being gentler but pointed. However, a younger man should be entreated as a brother.

Comment: In a disagreement, we could say to the younger brother, “Have you thought about such-and-such a Scripture?” We would be dealing on a *more equal basis*, realizing that both are consecrated.

Reply: Yes, we should have the thought in mind that the brother is also consecrated and not be questioning where he stands with the Lord. The insinuation, implied or verbalized, should not be that he is going out of the truth, that he is not straight in the truth, or that he is not close to the Lord. When we disagree on the interpretation of a Scripture, we should not give the impression that a person’s entire thinking is wrong, that he does not know what he is talking about, that he is immature, or that he is going out of the truth. To the contrary, the discussion should be on a brotherly basis where we feel that brother is just as consecrated as we are. Then the disagreement, even though strong, will be on a particular text or point of view. The issue of where one stands with the Lord should not be in the conversation at all.

Comment: As expressed, the thought is to deal on a more equal basis because sisters still have to remember, whether the ages are the same or the brother is younger, that in the Lord’s arrangement, a certain deference is to be given to a brother.

Reply: That is especially true in the ecclesia arrangement. Outside of the ecclesia, a sister does not have to be as careful with a younger brother and has considerably more liberty.

There is *public* rebuke, and there is also *private* rebuke. Sometimes a public rebuke is necessary because the effect of that which is being done wrong is very pervasive or because a wrong expression or deed was publicly manifested. There are cases where the meeting is a one-time occasion, so if nothing is done, we may never see the party again. In such cases, where perhaps

the brother has to catch a plane and will be leaving immediately after the meeting, the situation must be utilized right away, rather than trying to do something later on a private basis. In other words, one is forced to act right then and there because of circumstances, even though he would prefer to do so later in private. Therefore, both private and public rebuke have their place. The nature of the entreating would depend upon age and gender, although one has a little more liberty with a private rebuke. A public rebuke must be worded more carefully. Incidentally, two elderly brothers would treat each other as equals.

Along another line, a false witness, whose testimony did not jibe, was to be put to death under the Law. Sometimes accusations are made hastily or rashly, but if they are done publicly, we must consider a little more carefully what we will say or do. The calling and election of the false witness might depend on just that one deed, for the act may prove he (or she) is not fit to be of the Church class. Or even worse, such an individual might be barred from life itself because of the false witness. In any event, not only is the accused in a precarious position, but even a witness has to be careful in connection with his testimony, for if it is inaccurate, it might jeopardize the career of another brother or sister in Christ.

Although the epistle was originally addressed to Timothy, it contains good pragmatic lessons for all Christians. One lesson is that the young ones in the truth are as much in the family of God as the older ones. Those in a teaching capacity should think of a brother who recently consecrated, and thus has been in the truth for only a short time, as being just as vital a Christian and should not regard him as a babe. Even if we think the Spirit-begotten in the nominal Church are babes in understanding, who are we to judge, for we do not know all of the facts? We should consider as bona fide Christians all who take the scriptural steps of consecration. All Christians—young and old, male and female, elders and non-elders—are part of a family relationship in Christ. Age does make some difference but not family-wise.

1 Tim. 5:2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

Verse 2, with regard to the age category of sisters, expresses the same principle as verse 1. If an older sister is involved in a lot of class activities or if she has had a lot of responsibilities in the past, she may be regarded on a higher level. The thought is, “Rebuke not an elder woman but entreat her as a mother and a younger woman as a sister.” Since older sisters should have more wisdom and experience because of longevity of consecration, they should be shown deference and respect.

The same principle applies to older men, but with them is included the thought that they might be elected elders of an ecclesia. Although sisters are not elders, they might be considered in stature as having wisdom and giving good advice. If we notice, over a period of time, that a certain sister has excellent common sense, we might want to go to that party for advice on a problem or a trial more than to a brother or an elder. In such cases, we might not improperly regard that sister as almost on a par with an elder. If, in connection with their deeds, certain sisters have manifested over time that they are experienced warriors in the faith, we should appreciate their service for the Lord and their counsel.

Why is “purity” mentioned only in verse 2? Does it also apply to verse 1?

Comment: The term “with all purity” applies to all brother-sister relationships. We can consider verses 1 and 2 as one verse, for the division is arbitrary.

Comment: Too much familiarity between brothers and sisters in Christ can be dangerous. In other words, the demonstration of affection, kissing, etc., between the sexes can be overdone.

Reply: Yes, as mentioned, it helps to couple verses 1 and 2 together. The instruction applies to both brothers and sisters. For example, not merely the young brother but also the young sister should not rebuke an elder man but should entreat him as a father. The advice is not only for man with man and woman with woman but also men with women in the various age categories. Thus the expression “with all purity” applies to all relationships. Verses 1 and 2 are all embracing in that there is an interchange of thought.

Comment: Verses 1 and 2 beautifully emphasize the family relationship in Christ. We should view *all* of the consecrated as family in the Lord—brother, sister, father, or mother—with all purity, having neither excessive familiarity nor any intention of malice.

Reply: Yes, “with all purity” means there should be no impediment or impurity in the relationship of brethren with each other. That phrase, that little addendum, is significant lest some get a little too familiar. There should be decorum in conduct, for the flesh is sensitive to the lusts thereof.

Comment: In *Reprint* No. 1586, the Pastor made the comment on this verse “with no semblance of undue familiarity.”

Reply: Yes, even though verses 1 and 2 are in the context of conducting ourselves with respect and honor one for another, the thought of curbing undue familiarity is included as a safeguard, limitation, or qualifying factor.

Comment: In saying to Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth,” Paul indicated that younger brethren should not be regarded in a condescending manner by older brethren but are to be considered as brothers and sisters (1 Tim. 4:12).

Reply: It is true that Paul did not mention a condescending aspect here. Notice, however, that the Ten Commandments do not say, “Honour thy children,” although of course an elder has a responsibility for the sheep under his care and should be solicitous for the younger brethren. Earlier this epistle listed the qualifications and responsibilities of elders and deacons in the class. Their motivation should be the welfare and the salvation of the sheep. Since elders and deacons are not to assume a domineering role, they should not have a condescending, know-it-all attitude. However, even in the academic world, for example, some things are very obvious. For instance, if an experienced nuclear physicist is teaching a newcomer the basics of science, it is obvious to all that the latter is not on the level of the physicist. But in only a few years, the newcomer may be far superior to the old-time physicist. For the physicist not to recognize the development of his pupil would mean that he is very immature in his own personal thinking.

With Christians, the one who is older does not have to condescend and come down to the level of a newcomer and pretend he knows less than the questioner. However, sometimes a person develops very rapidly so that he is as sound as, or more sound than, the one teaching him and regarding him. The true situation should be obvious to onlookers.

Back to the subject of the ecclesia arrangement. An elder has to guard against becoming too confident or secure in his position or relationship. Nevertheless, there are times when a condescending attitude is good and proper. An example is the Apostle John’s saying, “My little children.” The implication was that he had been in the truth for a long time, that he had gained much experience, and that he was solicitous for the welfare of the less mature brethren. Jesus first used this condescending expression.

Comment: A wrong tendency today is to allow children to dominate a family discussion with their reasoning.

Reply: There are two extremes, neither of which is good. One extreme is where children were to be seen but not heard. An example of the other extreme is to ask serious questions that are troubling the politicians and then let young children give answers and opinions. If done for amusement, that tactic is permissible but not when done in a serious vein.

Comment: The term “babes in Christ” can imply that the older brethren feel a fondness for the younger ones and look on them as a son or a daughter.

1 Tim. 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

Now the discussion, covering verses 3-10, centers on the category of older widows. A widow “indeed” had no family or children to take care of her. Thus, upon the death of her husband, she was cut off from all means of support and was destitute and should be cared for by the Church at large under some arrangement.

Comment: Naomi is a scriptural example of a widow indeed (Ruth 1:1-5).

Reply: Yes. When both her husband and her two sons died, she left Moab and returned to Israel, where for a while she was dependent for her sustenance on Ruth, who gleaned wheat in the field of Boaz.

Unfortunately, fallen human nature being what it is, we have seen situations where individuals, because of their impoverished situation, which may have been mostly their own fault, thought they could take financial advantage of the brethren. They felt the class had a responsibility to support them. Paul was saying to Timothy, “Be careful and consider these factors before making financial arrangements with others.”

1 Tim. 5:4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

What is the meaning of children or nephews showing “piety at home”? The Revised Standard Version has “children or grandchildren,” which would apply depending on the age of the grandchildren. In apostolic days, a widow was deprived of a livelihood, but if she had a family—nephews, children, or grandchildren, particularly males, who provided the financial support for the family—it was their Christian duty to care for her. The younger ones were to support their mother or grandmother in her need as a widow. They were to show respect for the one(s) who had done much for them in times past. In other words, to see their widowed mother or grandmother in poverty and not take her into their home and care for her was an impious act. By supporting her in her need, they would be showing a kindness, and they would also be pleasing God, “for ... [this practice] is good and acceptable before God.”

Today Social Security, pensions, and welfare alleviate this problem to a great extent. Depending on the health of an individual and the circumstances of the family, a nursing home would be permissible, as, for example, in the case of incontinence or a requirement for round-the-clock nursing.

Comment: Jesus asked the Apostle John to take care of Mary, his mother, who was not even a blood relation.

The term “to requite their parents” indicates that the same requirement applied to fathers, although the problem was not as acute with a father, because his trade usually continued after his wife died. Thus he had a means of support and was not brought in as a widower. To

“requite” means to pay back or take into consideration what one’s parents had done for him.

In regard to the Law, Moses gave several examples of what to do under certain circumstances. Although not every situation was covered, the test examples were sufficient to help one know how to deal with problems in various fields. When a person had an experience, he looked to see which example most closely fit the experience. He looked for something comparable in Scripture as a clue. Likewise, Paul gave examples of how to handle certain situations, and these examples serve as guidelines for many other situations. It becomes incumbent upon us to read and meditate on the whole Word of God. The Bereans were commended for searching “the scriptures *daily*, [to see] whether those things [Paul told them] were so,” and we should do the same (Acts 17:11).

1 Tim. 5:5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

A widow had to meet several qualifications in order for the church to support her. To receive financial support, she had to be (1) a widow indeed (with no family), (2) in want, (3) trusting in God (consecrated), and (4) continuing in supplications and prayers night and day. To support a widow for the rest of her life, the brethren in the early Church could be making a long-term commitment and arrangement. If widows took advantage of this provision, the Church could get bogged down with welfare. Therefore, the brethren were to screen a widow to see if she met the qualifications for financial support. An additional qualification, as we will find out, was her age, for she had to be at least 60 years old (verse 9). Incidentally, if a widow had means at her disposal, she was to use that means and not be supported until it was depleted.

We would assume that some of the “supplications and prayers night and day” were because of the urgency of the situation in which the consecrated widow found herself. In earlier days, part of the Lord’s Prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread,” meant a lot along temporal lines, whereas in the United States, we now give it only a spiritual application. Living in a land of plenty, we do not implore for food, but Christians in some other countries still have temporal needs. Being “desolate” along this line, they pray for literal as well as spiritual daily bread.

1 Tim. 5:6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

What is the thought of verse 6? Does it refer to an unconsecrated widow or to a consecrated widow who became worldly? The thought is that an *unconsecrated* widow was not to be supported by the Church, for she had not given up the world but lived in pleasure. Thus the brethren as a whole were not responsible for her care. However, family members were responsible for their mother *whether or not* she was consecrated.

From another standpoint, verses 5 and 6 give a guiding principle or rule for ascertaining the Lord’s mind on this subject. Verse 6 is slanted to the unconsecrated, but a principle is included, based on what was previously said; namely, if a *consecrated* widow did not indicate a sincerity and depth in her consecration and manifest activity in the Lord’s service, she was not to be supported by the Church—even though she met the other qualifications and was not “dead” in the sense of verse 6.

The screening process for financially supporting widows required serious thought. Paul was thinking of the long-term burden that would be assumed and wanted it to be on the proper grounds. If the screen had too many holes, it would produce an almost intolerable situation—like the welfare system today, which is bankrupting the nation because of abuses.

Since the Great Company is overcome by the cares of this life and, to a certain extent, the spirit

of the world, the expression “she that liveth in pleasure” could cover both the consecrated and the unconsecrated, although the additional words “is dead [already]” means the main thrust of the verse is toward the *unconsecrated*. Incidentally, of those Christians who are in want, probably a greater percentage get life than of those who have temporal abundance, which breeds indolence and carelessness—characteristics that are dangerous to the new creature.

1 Tim. 5:7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

All who were involved (both supporters and those being supported) were to be informed of the qualifications so that all would be blameless. Timothy was to give Paul’s advice to classes, elders, and brethren and to any others who might inquire. He had the responsibility of giving advice to widows who were desolate indeed, as well as to those who were left with substance.

1 Tim. 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

What is the distinction between providing “not for his own” and providing not “for those of his own house”? Providing “for his own” is an *ecclesia* responsibility. Providing “for those of his own house” is a *family* responsibility. Thus there is a *double* responsibility. If an individual shirks family and ecclesia responsibilities, he is “worse than an infidel [an unbeliever, one who does not have faith and fidelity].”

1 Tim. 5:9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

To be “taken into the number”—that is, to receive financial support from the Church—a widow had to be (1) at least 60 years of age and (2) “the wife of one man.”

Q: Was a widow permitted to remarry?

A: Yes, because Paul advised younger widows to remarry (see verse 14), but here in verse 9, he was discussing older widows. However, more was involved. Some of the men who consecrated in the days of the early Church already had more than one wife. If a brother had, say, three wives, he was not to divorce them but was to continue to support them. However, he could not become an elder. In other words, a brother could not use Christianity as an excuse to unburden his responsibility as a husband—and especially he could not do this in order to be the husband of one wife and thus be eligible for eldership. Because the brother showed the proclivity for multiple wives before consecration and thus had the additional responsibility of their upkeep, these factors would detract from his service as an elder, even if he were wholly sincere and got rid of the weakness. In other words, his ministry would be impaired. Incidentally, it was not the custom for one woman to have several husbands simultaneously, but it was the custom for a husband to have several wives.

What does the expression “having been the wife of one man” mean? Suppose a young married sister was faithful, and her husband died. Paul’s advice was for her to remarry. But if, as the years went by and she got older, her second husband died, leaving her a widow indeed and destitute with no means of support, was she to be barred from financial support? No, only the *older* widows who remarried could not receive support.

Also, if the older widows had scripturally married two or more times in the past, they were more likely to have a means of support because now at least two family relationships were involved, resulting in children and/or stepchildren. We can see how carefully the screening process had to be done—from the standpoint of not just the currently deceased husband but

also the previous family relationship. However, if the widow was destitute and had two or more husbands in her earlier life and under the proper contingencies, she would be just as qualified for receiving support as the widow who had only one husband.

Sometimes older widows showed wantonness, not just the younger ones. Paul wanted to screen out this category, as well as those who might have family support from several marriages. Paul stated the rules so pithily and concisely that we use them as guiding principles, even though they were slanted more particularly to one category. In other words, from that category, we can draw certain lessons and thus discern what the Lord's mind might be in another matter.

Paul gave this advice to help an ecclesia determine bona fide widows who should be supported by a family or an ecclesia. He was concerned lest an unwarranted, undue long-range financial burden be placed on the brethren as a whole. Therefore, he drew the lines of responsibility for the class and for the family. From these guidelines, we have to judge the in-between matters that are not specifically stated.

The Word of God is as silver refined seven times, so we can read many of these verses from different perspectives and gain a lot of lessons. In fact, it seems almost impossible to fully cover the subject in one reading or one study.

1 Tim. 5:10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Verse 10 concludes the category of older widows by giving an additional qualification for receiving financial assistance; namely, she had to be "well reported of for good works." There follows a partial listing of examples of good works, which serve as practical guidelines on how to properly judge the situation. Perhaps someone "washed the saints' feet," that being her only capability. In other words, she assisted brethren in various ways. Of course back there people wore sandals, and their feet needed washing at the end of the day, so a sign of hospitality was to literally wash the feet of guests.

The point is that to receive support, a widow was to have shown her *willingness to work*, even though she might not have fulfilled every qualification. Paul stated the principle that if a man would not work, he should not eat (2 Thess. 3:10). The guiding principle is that we should not encourage brethren in wrongdoing. Unfortunately, there are people who sponge on and take advantage of others. We do not please the Lord by catering to such individuals—the generosity is misplaced.

A woman who brings up children has other responsibilities. She cannot be as active in the Lord's work, for her earthly mortgages tie her down and consume her time. We should not take in an older widow or agree to support her unless we can judge the situation and see that it merits support. For example, a consecrated widow may have been lazy with her free time. The question is, What did she do with her free time? If she did nothing, she does not deserve financial support. However, if when afforded an opportunity of service, she was alert to help, allowing for her family mortgages, she should be supported, all things being equal.

Another qualifying example is that a woman has "lodged strangers." That terminology is another way of saying she has provided hospitality. Past good works can also include relieving the afflicted. In short, she was to have "diligently followed every good work."

Paul's counsel is excellent. We do not see how it could have been given any better in such a

condensed form. If we had to give the same advice in our own words, it would probably require many pages instead of a few verses.

1 Tim. 5:11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

1 Tim. 5:12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

Now Paul showed the danger of taking younger widows—that is, those under 60—“into the number.” His advice was to refuse to give them ecclesia financial assistance on a regular basis. He was not condemning younger widows and saying they would all begin to “wax wanton against Christ.” Rather, he was condemning the practice of *subsidizing* them. Apparently, the early ecclesias supported younger widows indiscriminately. The brethren gladly gave support without making a distinction between older and younger widows, but that practice had inherent dangers. Now Paul, toward the end of his life, was trying to correct the situation that had been unfavorable in the past.

The problem with younger widows is that the flesh is still active and has desires. If the brotherhood agreed to support them, they could afterwards wax wanton against Christ when they had these other desires. It was found that when young widows were joined to this compensation, many of them subsequently married, at which time they were cut off from financial support. For example, a sister who lost her husband at age 40 might not remarry for a while, but after a few years, she changed her mind and did remarry. All of a sudden, she found someone she was compatible with and married him, but in the meantime, she had received financial assistance. Paul likened allowing oneself to be subsidized in this fashion to entering into an unwritten contract or covenant. Therefore, to leave that sort of dependency was like breaking a contract. As a result, the younger widow incurred an increment of judgment. In other words, the younger widow should not have gotten into that situation in the first place.

Q: Since the younger widow did not know she would eventually meet someone, was it fair to deprive her of support in a time of need just because of her age? Why was she sinning against Christ if she found someone for a remarriage?

A: Paul’s point was not to accept the younger widows into a permanent endowment situation. He said, “Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old.” In other words, widows were not to be supported unless they were at least 60 years old. For that reason, Paul advised younger widows to remarry (verse 14).

Comment: If a younger widow was financially destitute, she could be given a little lump sum to sustain her through, perhaps, a six-month period of grief until she could get on her feet and earn some money.

Reply: Yes, if financially destitute, a young widow could be given a *temporary*, conditional allotment until she could get a job and support herself and/or remarry eventually. However, for a young widow to accept a contractual *permanent* financial arrangement, saying she would just serve the Lord and not remarry, and then marry later, would be waxing “wanton against Christ” and casting off her “first faith.” We have to read into Paul’s advice the situation that made it necessary in the first place. Evidently, several young widows had been supported in this fashion and later left the arrangement. The advice given here does not conflict with Paul’s other advice telling young widows to remarry.

Comment: It seems the young widows would have had the understanding before accepting permanent financial assistance that they would not remarry because of wanting to serve the

Lord more fully. Then, subsequently, they did remarry.

Reply: That would certainly make Paul's advice more meaningful in the sense that they had broken the contract, of which we do not know the specifics.

“Having damnation [condemnation], because they [the young widows] have cast off their first faith [by remarrying].” The Revised Standard Version reads, “And so they incur condemnation for having violated their first pledge.” Condemnation resulted from breaking the contractual arrangement of receiving financial support for the rest of their life with the understanding they would not remarry but would devote themselves wholly to the things of the Lord. Their “first faith” was the expression or manifestation of their intentions. To break that contract was like breaking a vow. To avoid this situation, Paul advised the brethren not to *permanently* support young widows and to set the age barrier at 60. Stated another way, marriage is for the flesh, so it was for those under age 60. When young widows entered the contractual agreement, they fully intended to remain single for the remainder of their life, but the reality was otherwise. To circumvent that problem, Paul's advice was to refuse permanent financial support for young widows. However, lest they be ignored utterly in their destitute state, a temporary arrangement could be made. Of course Paul's thumbnail description of how to handle the question of financial support for widows could have slight variables in different directions.

1 Tim. 5:13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

To accept younger widows into this permanent endowment arrangement led to their learning to be “idle, wandering about from house to house,” and to their being “tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.” In other words, it led to condemnation for leaving their “first pledge” (RSV). By not working and then having so much free time and money, the younger widows visited others and gossiped, spoke evil, and were busybodies. A “tattler” tells tales about others and their affairs; the individual is a tale bearer. To “busybody” in this context was for the young widows to butt into the affairs of those they were visiting. “Speaking things which they ought not” means they gave unwanted or improper advice.

Comment: The implication is that if the brotherhood relieved the younger widows of financial burdens, thus giving them more free time, their fallen nature would lead them into these wrong avenues.

Reply: Based on what Paul observed happening, he found it necessary to give this advice.

1 Tim. 5:14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

1 Tim. 5:15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

Paul advised younger consecrated widows to remarry, bear children, guide the house, and give Satan no occasion to revile them. If the advice applied to younger “women,” rather than being restricted to “widows,” it would contradict what Paul said elsewhere to, if possible, “let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called” (1 Cor. 7:20). The general advice is to remain in whatever situation one finds himself in when called. It is good to be in the single state if one can contain himself. However, although those who do not marry do better, marriage is honorable in all (1 Cor. 7:38; Heb. 13:4). To state the general rule succinctly, it is preferable for young women not to marry, but younger (middle-aged) widows were advised to remarry and bear children. Incidentally, the women were probably more rugged back there, for they had a lot to do, including manual labor.

Notice how Paul brought “the adversary” into verses 14 and 15. How might Satan “speak reproachfully”? If a young widow turned aside by being an idler, a tattler, and a busybody, she was really following Satan’s leadings by getting into this trap, yet he railed against her through other people who knew she was doing wrong. Onlookers would say, “What kind of Christian is she?” The world watches the Christian closely. If they think a Christian’s actions are not compatible with the profession, they say, “And you call yourself a Christian?” In addition, Satan and the fallen angels gloat on the sidelines, for they try to cause trouble for the consecrated. Not wanting to see the Church develop, they feel a Satanic glee and amusement when they can cause problems.

Incidentally, those who “turned aside after Satan” probably did not think they were doing so, but they were going off on a dangerous and strange path. It is interesting that Paul had some knowledge of and experience with what was going on in the brotherhood in various locations.

Comment: On page 557 of *Volume 6*, the Pastor applied verse 14 to unconsecrated women. He wrote, “We have already noted the apostolic injunction to the New Creatures, that those who marry do well, but those who marry not do better. This advice, however, is not applicable to their unconsecrated children. Concerning the latter the apostle writes, ‘I will [advise], therefore, that the younger women [of the congregation but not of the Church—believers but not consecrated or sanctified] marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the Adversary to speak reproachfully.’ 1 Tim. 5:14.” The comment does not seem to make sense because it is in the context that refers to consecrated younger widows.

Reply: Yes, the context applies to consecrated widows. Even when husband and wife are unequally yoked, the advice is always given to the consecrated individual, not to the unconsecrated person.

1 Tim. 5:16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

If any of the consecrated had a widow in their own family and in the Church, the family (and not the Church) was to support her. The responsibility of the Church was to relieve “widows indeed,” that is, widows who had no family or children to take care of them, were age 60 or older, had washed the saints’ feet, etc.

1 Tim. 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

The term “elders” in the context of verse 17 is restricted to elected elders of an ecclesia—to those who “rule well ... especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” All class elders should be respected, but those who perform well in word and doctrine should get special respect. Just because one is elected elder does not mean he is properly performing as an elder, but because he is in that position, he is not to be despised or disregarded but is to be respected. However, those who are elected and perform the office well by laboring in word and doctrine are to get “double honour”; that is, they are to be respected in a more personalized sense.

Comment: Today elders are appointed in many ecclesias, but I cannot conscientiously regard all of them as doing well in their understanding of God’s Word, even though they may have nice personalities and speak on “love.”

Reply: There is a difference between an appointed elder and a faithful elder, who is properly discharging his responsibilities, whatever they might be.

1 Tim. 5:18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

Paul quoted the Law with regard to animals and applied it to persons, which is really the intent of the Law. In other words, the facets of the Law in regard to clean and unclean food, leprosy, etc., are all to be spiritualized in their primary sense. Deuteronomy 25:4 reads, “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.” The “ox” represents those who labor in word and in doctrine, and the “corn” pictures the wheat, that is, the truth, the Word of God. “The labourer is worthy of his reward.”

The principle of the Law is not to muzzle the ox while it is working. When oxen are pulling the plow or working in the field, they should be allowed to reach out and grab a bite of grass, for example. Of course this liberty should not be permitted to the extent that the oxen neglect their work. The point is that they should be left unmuzzled so that they get some compensation for their work. Spiritually speaking, if an elder is faithful in word and doctrine, it is not wrong for him to receive some earthly reward or compensation.

Q: Is this verse used to support the thought of a paid ministry?

A: Yes, but verse 18 is not referring to weekly salaries with support throughout the year. The other extreme is to reason that an elder should have no earthly compensation, since he has dedicated everything to the Lord. Paul was saying that temporal compensation of a dinner, travel expenses, or something along these lines is not out of order when given from time to time. It is not inappropriate to reward an elder who is dealing in spiritual matters with a gift or some compensation along an earthly line, but permanent, regular support, such as is given in paid ministries, is not authorized.

Incidentally, even though William Miller preached to thousands of people in various churches in different states, he was never compensated despite the great amounts contributed to the church collection plates when he spoke. For example, in one little church, 10,000 people came from miles around to hear him preach. He experienced a lot of hardship in going from place to place but was not helped temporally.

1 Tim. 5:19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

1 Tim. 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

What is the thought of verse 19? Who should not receive, or accept, an accusation against an elder unless there are two or three witnesses? How would an accusation not be accepted? To understand verse 19, we must couple it with verse 20. The accusation pertains to a sin of a more serious nature—either doctrinal or moral—that would affect the ministry of the elder.

Why are two or three witnesses required? Let us assume, hypothetically, that the accusation is made by one individual. The problem is that most accusations are word-of-mouth innuendos which are not searched out and given specific definition. We can assume that, to be elected, the elder was previously received and accepted. Now a new circumstance arises whereby an accusation is made against him. We are not to receive that accusation unless it can be authenticated by more than the accuser, who is only *one* witness. A second or third witness—that is, one or two more individuals—has to confirm the accusation before it can be accepted.

However, the matter does not end there, for two or three people might think along the same line and thus make a wrong accusation. Nevertheless, the two or three witnesses at least

confirm the accusation. The accusation should be substantiated either by talking to the elder in person or by hearing his reasoning on tape or seeing it in a printed sermon, but even though it is authenticated, the judgment on that issue might be incorrect, for the accusation might be false or not worthy of class action. But for a class to even receive an accusation, two or three witnesses are needed. In other words, if the matter is serious enough, it should be procedurally followed through and not left vague, nebulous, and indefinite. As to whether the accusation is viable as a proper basis for fellowship or disfellowship is a separate matter.

Verse 20 says, “Them that sin rebuke before all,” but who does the rebuking? The class would be responsible for doing the rebuking, but Timothy, as an elder, was responsible for teaching the proper perspective in regard to any of the matters enumerated in this epistle. Now we can see why Paul said to Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth,” for the latter was being instructed to act with *scriptural* authority (1 Tim. 4:12).

Q: Does the pronoun “them” in verse 20 refer just to elders or to anyone? Is the sin of a grievous nature?

A: The sin must be of a serious nature in order to demand such a rebuke. Although the sin could involve another brother or sister in the class, it is more weighty when pertaining to an elder, for if the accusation is true, it would adversely affect his ministry. Elders have more responsibility.

Comment: Jesus gave the same advice in Matthew 18:15-17, but here Paul was showing that elders are not excluded from that procedure.

Comment: The duty of those who hear an accusatory or evil remark about another is that they should go to the accused one and ask if it is true.

Just as the elder who serves well is worthy of *double* honor, so one should give *double* consideration to making sure a charge or accusation against an elder is true. Because the individual was elected to the office of elder, the accuser should tread even more carefully to be sure the charge is valid and not a rumor or a false charge put forth by one who has an ax to grind. When a rebuke is necessary, it has to be done by a leading spirit in the class. Then the class should support the rebuke.

Comment: The purpose of the rebuke is so that others in the class will “fear” and not do likewise. If the sin is not rebuked, then the brethren in the class under that elder’s tutelage might be emboldened to commit the same sin.

Under the Law, any who gave a false witness suffered the same fate as the guilty party. From a scriptural standpoint, the same is true in principle in the Gospel Age. By faith, we can say that it is just as dangerous and serious today to give a false testimony or witness against another.

1 Tim. 5:21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

Paul charged Timothy (and inferentially the Church) before God, Jesus, and the “elect angels” (elected elders) to observe and obey these instructions without partiality with regard to personalities. In other words, we should not allow personalities to influence our judgment but should obey, as far as possible, the advice given in the Word. We should judge matters by the simple facts, for sin is sin whether committed by an elder or someone else in the brotherhood.

Of course elders are the elected servants or messengers of God, but in addition, when we reason on many Scriptures in the New Testament, we can see that others who have been long consecrated and are known for true piety—even though not elected—could be considered “angels,” man or woman. As far as possible, all of the consecrated have a responsibility for keeping the brotherhood in line with the holy calling and making sure it does not degenerate into a social club. All kinds of promiscuity are winked at in the nominal Church, but such false love is the last thing we would want to happen in the brotherhood itself.

1 Tim. 5:22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.

Timothy (and secondarily the Church) was not to “lay hands suddenly” on another. How was the laying on of hands practiced back there? What did it signify? Responsibility was incurred by the laying on of hands, for it showed endorsement, sympathy, and/or support for the individual and the ministry he performed. If the Lord’s blessing was being wished on the Apostle Paul, for example, the laying on of hands would properly show appreciation for his work and ministry. However, if the individual did not have God’s favor, those who laid hands on him incurred responsibility. Likewise, to elect someone to an office who is unqualified from God’s standpoint also incurs responsibility. However, to support someone God favors brings a proportionate blessing. The point is not to lay hands on someone too quickly or prematurely.

The matter should be prayerfully and unemotionally considered first. Then if one endorses a brother and the brother subsequently is unfaithful or strays, the party does not incur responsibility, for he *tried* to do what was right and followed the manner the Lord suggests in Scripture by not acting hastily.

In effect, Paul “laid hands” on a sister named Phebe by endorsing her. He said, “I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cencrea; That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also” (Rom. 16:1,2).

Comment: The Apostle John cautioned against hastily or improperly bidding someone “God speed.” “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 10,11).

Comment: One can also become a “partaker” of another man’s sins by not rebuking him when such action is scripturally required.

1 Tim. 5:23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.

Paul gave Timothy this personal advice. All need liquid but not necessarily water. Wine could replace the water in this case because of Timothy’s stomach and other infirmities. He could probably still consume water in soup, for example, so when Paul said, “Do not drink water any longer,” he meant, “Do not drink water as water, but drink wine in its stead.” But rather than drink a full glass of wine, Timothy could drink a *little* wine at each meal or whenever he felt the need of liquid; that is, he could drink wine in moderation.

Q: This advice about Timothy’s health seems out of place. Why did Paul insert it here?

A: Actually, the advice was not out of place, for Paul had been personally giving Timothy advice so that he could, in turn, advise others under similar circumstances. The apostle first

instructed Timothy so that if Timothy got the gist of the Lord's mind and will on all these subjects, he could likewise impart that knowledge to others. However, verse 23 was restricted to Timothy, for he had *chronic* dyspepsia, and wine was a *medicinal* remedy. In addition, Timothy could, of course, advise other brethren who had distressing stomach problems. Since his conscience had been relieved in this matter of his health, he could then advise others who had a similar ailment.

1 Tim. 5:24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

1 Tim. 5:25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

Why did Paul say in verse 24 that "some men's sins are open beforehand [before they die], going before to judgment; and [with] some men they follow after," and then in the next verse say the opposite—that some men's "good works ... are manifest beforehand," for "good deeds ... cannot remain hidden" (see RSV)? Some sins are secret, yet they might be revealed beforehand and receive judgment. Other sins are openly manifest but will not be judged until the Kingdom. The same is true of good works. But why did Paul make these statements at the conclusion of this particular chapter?

Comment: Paul had just said, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (verse 22). The point is that it takes *time* for a person's character to become apparent, good or bad. Time is a revealer either at the present time or in the future. For example, if someone new comes in, we should wait a while before endorsing him.

Comment: Paul had been writing for several chapters and obviously knew that if Timothy obeyed the counsel as well as he could, he would be misunderstood, have mixed experiences, and receive persecution. Therefore, what Paul said in verses 24 and 25 was consolation for Timothy (or for any faithful Christian). In other words, we are not to worry in the present life, for in due time all deeds, good or bad, will be viewed properly. Sooner or later all willful disobedience will receive judgment, and all good deeds will be manifested.

Reply: Both comments are applicable. Time and patience would reveal either Timothy's sound judgment or the advisability of not laying hands suddenly on another individual. If time is not a revealer in the present life, it will be in the future life.

Of the sins that are not revealed beforehand, some are revealed after the person's death, and others will be revealed when the person is raised from the tomb in the Kingdom. With regard to the consecrated in the future, there will be happy surprises for some who are honored by God and unhappy surprises for others who do not attain the Little Flock or even life in the Great Company, but the explanation of why a particular judgment was received will become "open." According to the Apostle John, a negative judgment is sometimes open beforehand, for we are not to pray for a brother who sins "a sin unto death" (1 John 5:16).

1 Tim. 6:1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

1 Tim. 6:2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

What is the difference between verses 1 and 2? Verse 1 pertained to Christian servants who

had unbelieving masters, and verse 2 applied to Christian servants who were underneath believing masters. In both cases, the masters were to be counted worthy of all honor, and if the master was a believer, a double importance was attached to Paul's advice. Incidentally, unless freed, these servants, including their children, were bound for life to their master.

If the brotherhood were left to their own feelings and judgment on the subject, the normal thinking, or expectation, would be that the master should free the servant. However, Paul's *wholesome* counsel was to the contrary. The Christian was not to seek to be free except under legitimate circumstances. In other words, he was not to feel that being a servant was a form of slavery and injustice. To show disrespect would dishonor the cause of Christianity, for the unbelieving master would blame the religion. Today, generally speaking, Christians feel that the social gospel is of greater importance, and the gospel of explicit instructions is of lesser importance. "Just do what you think is best" is the attitude.

"Let ... servants ... count their own masters worthy of all honour." To follow this principle means to abide by the circumstances of the age in which one is living. In Romans 13:7, Paul said, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." Even though some individuals are not worthy of their title, the Christian is to give deference to the office, being respectful and submissive—except in matters of conscience.

The circumstance of verse 2, where both servant and master are consecrated, is more difficult. On the one hand, a servant should not try to embarrass or shame his Christian master into granting him freedom, using reasoning such as, "If you are a real Christian, you should not hold me in bondage but should give me liberty." On the other hand, the laws of the land can be used to the advantage of the servant, where possible.

Servants were not to despise their believing masters "because they [the masters] are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." Thus another reason for a consecrated master and a consecrated servant to be especially careful is that they were *both* called of God.

Paul told Timothy, "These things *teach* [even if they are hard instructions] and *exhort* [use a little authority]." Paul knew that Timothy would be regarded as too severe, as not loving, but these instructions were the mind of the Lord.

Slavery does not exist in our country today, but where it occurs in other nations, Paul's advice still applies. For us, his advice can be adapted to the employer-employee relationship. At any rate, the Christian should not get distracted by a social gospel, the promotion of civil rights, etc. To join such causes and dwell on such themes would be disruptive, contentious, and divisive. To the contrary, wholesome words encourage the pursuit of the gospel and obedience to the words and instructions of Jesus and the apostles. Human reasoning and emotionalism are not to be put in the forefront. One should first go to the Word to see if what one is advocating is according "to the law and to the testimony" (Isa. 8:20). If not, there is no light in that individual, even if he is recognized as being a light-bearer by others.

The Christian employee has to be careful not to bring blame on the truth. For example, to habitually take extra coffee breaks or long lunches to witness to the truth would be using company time and defrauding the employer by interrupting the general flow of business.

1 Tim. 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

1 Tim. 6:4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words,

whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

Those who teach otherwise are “*proud, knowing nothing,*” even though they *appear* noble, magnanimous, and humble. They may even have an encyclopedic mind on certain subjects, but the subjects they dwell on should be *wholesome*. For example, endless genealogies are to be avoided. The word “endless” implies that the topic is a habit of thought, not just a one-time discussion. As an illustration, chronology, whether true or misunderstood, is not a wholesome theme when discussed day after day after day.

On one occasion, which was an exception to the general rule, Paul wrote a special letter to Philemon, a Christian master, requesting him to free a Christian slave, but that circumstance was not incongruous to his advice here because the servant was rendering a higher form of service to Paul. Since the slave had been invaluable to Paul, he asked Philemon to grant the liberty of a leave of absence so that the service could continue. Other servants used the same reasoning, “If I am free, I will be able to serve better,” but they were talkers, not actual doers.

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Jesus made several statements in harmony with the principle of verses 1 and 2. What are some of them?

Comment: “For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always” (Matt. 26:11). In the present age, these inequalities exist.

Comment: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21).

There is another way of reasoning too, for Jesus’ statements, made prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, were not as explicit as Paul’s on certain subjects. In every situation, the Christian is to look to Jesus first. The very fact that Jesus was silent—that he did not say, “Servants, break your yokes”—indicates Christians have to tread softly and carefully in this area. Some right in Caesar’s household and Herod’s court became believers. The lesson is that the Christian can serve the Lord where he is—in the situation in which he is called (1 Cor. 7:20).

When Jesus called his apostles, he was training teachers. Except for specific individuals, he did not ask his disciples to leave their businesses and walk all around with him, for some of them had obligations, including marital responsibilities. It is true that he said, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.... And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me,” but his purpose was to show the principle that we should not let external relationships jeopardize our relationship of following him (Matt. 10:37,38). Jesus demonstrated these truths in some literal cases in order to underscore the principle involved; namely, we are to respect father, mother, etc., but we are to love him more. Little by little, we are to imbibe the principles that Jesus enunciated in his earthly ministry. His life, ministry, and words inculcated *wholesome principles* that we are to emulate.

“If any man teach otherwise, ... he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings.” There could be a discussion on this subject, but the answer is *simple and firm*. After Paul died, it was logical for other Christians to question Timothy on what the apostle taught. Timothy would have replied, “I would be glad to answer your question, for Paul explicitly wrote and told me the advice I will now give you.” Accordingly, Paul wrote in advance, “Teach and exhort these things” (verse 2). With this letter of authority from Paul, Timothy could speak *with strength* on the various subjects.

With regard to doctrinal strife, we have to do a lot of soul searching to make sure that the motive is truly to contend for the faith and not to show preeminence in debate above another person or to manifest a loving, magnanimous attitude so that others will like us. A subtle vainglory can enter our teaching, personal words, and conduct if we are not careful. Of course it is proper to dispute on wholesome topics, on matters of fundamental value and worth, but all should be done to the glory of God. Even though a question can be important along certain lines, it is sometimes wiser to refrain from debate unless the issue is fundamental.

Comment: Also, Paul wrote in his second epistle, “Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.... But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes” (2 Tim. 2:14,23).

1 Tim. 6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

Continuing the thoughts of verses 3 and 4 about disputings, Paul used strong language, calling them “perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness.” He likened the disputings to having a *carnal* (instead of a spiritual) attitude. In verses 4 and 5, Paul put the nouns in the plural—questions, strifes of words, railings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings—showing that he was talking about other matters that were damaging to the truth, in addition to the servant-master relationship. Not only were exponents of such teachings carnal-minded and “destitute of the truth,” but they imagined that their desire for “gain” in winning an argument was godliness. If one’s main goal was to contend for and win the argument, he might think he had gained godliness, whereas the opposite was true. Generally speaking, piety is calm, peaceable, and easy to be entreated, not raucous or disputatious. The time to dispute is the exception, not the general rule.

Notice how Paul concluded verse 5: “From such withdraw thyself.” He was saying to avoid close fellowship with such individuals. If Timothy withdrew himself, certainly those whom he advised were to do likewise if they wanted to obey the wholesome words and counsel of the Master through the Apostle Paul. The lesson for us is that there is a time when we should set an example by our behavior. By condoning and empathizing with a wrong situation, we become culpable to a certain extent.

Just winning an argument in itself is not necessarily gain. Sometimes every dispute is viewed as a part of defending the truth, but much depends on what is being discussed. The importance of the subject matter has to be weighed. With important, fundamental doctrines, we should contend for the faith, and certainly we can help to clarify an issue in connection with Christian service, but we should not argue for the sake of an argument. Contending for the faith is not trying to impose our line of thinking on others. Instead we should try to answer questions that are posed. We should not attempt to make everyone toe the line as we see it, in essence making a credo of faith above what is taught in Scripture and establishing a list of criteria, doctrinal and otherwise, for being a proper Christian. We can be strong on a lot of points, but we should not judge another Christian on whether or not he accepts those points. For example, subjects such as the smiting of the image, the reign, and the binding of Satan are all important, but they should not be the basis of our fellowship in Christ and our relationship as new creatures. Rather, they are developments of understanding of the Lord’s Word. All truths are important and do have a bearing on our lives, so we have to consider each case as it comes to us. Certainly we can have reasonings as to why we believe a particular doctrine or teaching, for a Christian is to be armed with understanding and be able to give a reason for his faith and beliefs, as well as the details of that faith.

Q: How would one withdraw himself from those who are argumentative or from those who are disputatious and quarrelsome by nature?

A: Such an atmosphere is not conducive to spirituality and godliness. Therefore, when someone manifests a disputatious spirit or disposition, it may be better to seek fellowship elsewhere than to remain in an atmosphere of continual suspicion, rivalry, and evil surmisings. If a physical separation is embarrassing or difficult, we could at least frown or shake our head in dissent. Just as we may nod our head or indicate approval with our face in certain situations, so we can indicate disapproval and thus not be counted in with the general thinking of something that is not conducive to godliness or wholesome words.

Q: Should we still shake the party's hand and be congenial?

A: We should show *reserve* as a form of rebuke, and others should be able to see this reserve. Back there the reserve was more meaningful in that there was more of a backing with several brethren believing the same way. As we get nearer and nearer the end of the age, those in the Lord's family who are of the Little Flock will become less and less numerous, for the Little Flock in the flesh is decreasing. Thus, as time goes on, it will become more difficult to inflict a meaningful rebuke from the practical standpoint of its having a visual benefit that can be seen by others, yet we still have to obey that counsel because of the principle which is involved. Paul simply said, "From such withdraw thyself," so we should manifest a reserve toward such. Teachers, who are influential in these matters, incur the greater responsibility because they are the exponents of these disputings. Those who are in their fellowship through marriage or other circumstances and thus are hearing the disputings may not be quite as responsible, but they should withdraw as best they can in their situation. To duel back and forth with the Word of God is a wrong spirit.

1 Tim. 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

Of course verse 6 is profitable when isolated and considered separately, but the context in which the statement was made is interesting, namely, the withdrawal from a situation that is perverse and not conducive to spirituality. There are times when we have to show disapproval, and to do so correctly—that is, to know what God likes and what He frowns on—we have to be familiar with His Word. To be able to discern between good and evil is a mark of maturity (Heb. 5:14). The bottom line of success is to make our calling and election sure. Few find the narrow way, and even fewer end up as part of the Bride class.

Verse 6 applies to the servant-master relationship, as well as to other situations, for one is to be content in his circumstance as long as it does not violate conscience. Stated another way, one who is engaged in menial or lowly service should be content with his circumstance because he can serve the Lord equally well whether he is a servant or a master. To realize this contentment keeps one from a fretful spirit in an employment situation or other circumstance of life. "Great gain" is being relieved of anxieties along these lines, for the cares of this life can be a snare.

Q: Instead of "contentment," the *Diaglott* has "competency"—"But piety with a *competency* is great gain." What is the signification of that translation?

A: "Maturity" is indicated. "Godliness *with maturity* is great gain." Such individuals are competent and skilled. Not only can they give a reason for their faith, but they know the Lord's thinking on these matters. A Christian should pursue the quest for Godlikeness. The more intense the hunger and the desire of one's heart in this direction, the more competent he becomes. In contrast, those who are carnal-minded win the argument but lose the crown.

If given a wrong twist, the reasoning of verse 6 can be counterproductive. For instance, some will say, “Jesus is mine, and I am quite satisfied.” They are satisfied with what they have already attained and do not want to progress in understanding. That type of contentment is not “great gain.” We should not reach a point where we feel very comfortable with our sphere of development, for we are pilgrims and strangers journeying toward the goal of the heavenly Promised Land.

Thus there are two extremes: (1) being disputatious and argumentative and (2) having a false love that permits no serious disputing and study on deep subjects. Those who go to the latter extreme tend to ignore subjects like prophecy and chronology because they regard them as conjectural and disruptive, saying that everyone has his own view.

1 Tim. 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

Certainly verse 7 is tied in to some extent with verse 6. Godliness with contentment being great gain can be considered in a twofold manner. The preceding verses emphasize wholesome doctrine, but there is also a relationship to practical living. As already shown, the winning of arguments is not to be considered great gain, but we can apply this principle to other areas as well—to the winning, or accumulation, of money, wealth, goods, fame, property, popularity, knowledge, and power. To gain such things in the present evil world, one must compromise, so we should not join the crowd, get too involved in business, pursue unnecessary education, etc. Our main goal is Christ, the hope of our calling.

The teaching that if one is a good Christian, he will prosper is wrong. The Apostle James reproved the practice of always giving the best seat to a rich person who came into the ecclesia. In fact, if a poorer person was already sitting in that seat, he was asked to move to the back of the room. Thus not only was honor shown to the wealthy, but they were being given more and more honor. This wrong practice, which occurred even in apostolic days, has occurred throughout the history of the Church. A natural inclination, which must be fought, is to regard with more respect one who comes into the truth having a position of honor, academic degrees, and/or a title. In God’s sight, a person without worldly honors may be far more noble.

From another standpoint, if we understand the matter correctly, Paul could see that a Nicolaitan spirit would develop more and more after his decease (Rev. 2:6,15). Teachers who were hard-liners in certain areas were being rewarded with great numbers of fellowship and increasing honor, distinction, and recognition, so that not too long afterwards the doctrine of Papacy developed. The seeds of Papacy started when prominent elders in cities such as Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem received honor in proportion as they championed certain wrong doctrines. Probably many of those doctrines were seemingly correct. For example, the elders could champion the doctrine of freedom for slaves. Many brethren wanted to work for and support those elders because the doctrines would benefit them personally. The suggestion is that such elders were getting followers and money. For that reason, Paul said, “Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you” (1 Cor. 4:8).

1 Tim. 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

The thought of godliness with contentment is brought up again in verse 8. Having food and clothing, we are to be content as regards the *natural* man, but we should not be content with our *spiritual* development. To win the spiritual race requires time, effort, thought, and energy. Christians should not aspire to positions of leadership and affluence in the world or in a worldly church, a church that has a carnal attitude. We are to be content with our daily bread and the necessities of life and not aspire for further gain, influence, power, and wealth. Those

who have earthly mortgages (dependents) and responsibilities are to provide things decent, needful, and honest in the sight of men (2 Cor. 8:21).

1 Tim. 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

1 Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Tim. 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Christians should acquire the fruits of the Holy Spirit, not worldly gain. The acquisition of a Christlike character, and not a position in the affairs of either the world or the Church, should be sought. It is permissible for a brother to aspire to the office of a bishop or elder, but he should realize that the office incurs great responsibility. Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these *least* commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the *least* in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19). If a more important commandment is broken and taught to others, the individual will not even get into the Kingdom of heaven. The Lord is watching to see how carefully we consider doctrine and how much studying we do. Being imperfect, all elders will make mistakes, but the Lord appreciates those who prayerfully, carefully, and earnestly try to understand His Word and then try to speak from that standpoint. Those who are careless in speaking from the platform about what the Scriptures teach and its principles and manufacture ideas and theories not originating in the Word will pay a penalty. If breaking and teaching the *least* of God's commandments brings one down to the bottom of the ladder in the Little Flock, then breaking and teaching anything more important will eliminate one from the Little Flock.

Paul was saying that those who championed the practice of disputings, railings, doting about certain questions, etc., might be rapidly advanced to a condition of honor in the Church, for they would be considered stalwarts of the truth. However, the question should be asked, What truth are they stalwarts of? It takes a lifetime to know how to rightly divide some truths lest we be misguided.

"But they that will be rich fall into ... many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil." The *desire* to be rich and influential is not just a matter of not making one's calling and election sure, for it may result in Second Death. Paul said plainly that those who are immersed in the pursuit of wealth and influence will drown in "destruction and perdition." In other words, they will not even be part of the Great Company class.

We can empathize with the fact that a lot of pressure is brought to bear on those in the truth who are wealthy. Some brethren have considerable means, and we should esteem those who are faithful in trying to concentrate their thinking and energies on helping to forward the truth. Since it is hard for people of means to gain the Kingdom, we should appreciate such individuals who spend time, effort, energy, and money in connection with the truth. All of the consecrated have to make decisions in life, but usually those who have a lot of money become more absorbed in business and income. Knowing the many temptations that they encounter through the uniqueness of their position, we should appreciate their efforts and not judge them too harshly as long as we see them going in the right direction. Of the consecrated who are wealthy, more will end up in Second Death, proportionately speaking. Therefore, we should be sympathetic if we see that they are trying to do the right thing.

Comment: The Pastor added the comment that those who desire to be rich will lose life—whether or not they succeed. The heart attitude is what matters.

Reply: Yes, the *Diaglott* indicates that it is the *hunger* for riches rather than the attainment. The *love of money*, and not necessarily its acquisition, is the root of *much* evil. Such individuals are *seduced* from the truth so that they go into destruction and perdition. “Which while some coveted after, they have erred [been seduced—KJV margin] from the faith.” One can be poor yet fall into this snare by aspiring to be rich.

How could some be seduced from the truth? They might think, “If I make more money, I will be able to do more for the truth.” However, that is not what happens. In getting immersed in worldly ideas and the acquisition of riches, the person wants more and more and more—until he dies in his worldly pursuits.

Those who are retrieved from the pursuit of riches have “pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” The pathway back from such a condition is thorny and difficult. For example, a family that is accustomed to high living may resist. To buck the stream may also involve employees. Taking a radical stand usually causes others to suffer as well. Thus it is very hard to go against the current, but Paul’s advice is, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.” These qualities are far more valuable, for striving for wealth and influence can lead to death and oblivion, whereas all kinds of meaningful prizes and blessings await the faithful Christian. The blessings, which lay up treasures in heaven, include “righteousness, godliness [Godlikeness], faith, love, patience, [and] meekness.” Being with Jesus is the *true* riches.

Paul said to withdraw ourselves from a group atmosphere of contentions and disputings. In addition, we are to flee from the love of money because the gain of material things is such a seductive type of attraction. Even the person who is very consecrated initially can be seduced.

1 Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

1 Tim. 6:13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

While this epistle is of benefit to all Christians, when it was originally written toward the end of the Apostle Paul’s life, it was directed to Timothy for his instruction. With the words “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,” Paul was saying that the promises of the future are far more important than gain down here. He also pointed out that Timothy was to profess “a good profession before *many* witnesses” and compared it to Jesus’ “good confession” before Pontius Pilate.

Why did Paul call attention to Timothy’s profession before many witnesses? What bearing does that profession have on fighting the good fight of faith? Many Christians are influenced by “leaders” in the faith—that is, by those they recognize as being especially led of the Lord—and they look to those leaders for instruction and help. If the leaders should falter, it would have some bearing on brethren underneath their influence. For several years, Timothy had been an example to many, not only when he was with Paul but also when Paul left him behind to help various ecclesias in their walk and with instruction. Therefore, it was appropriate for Paul to admonish Timothy to continue the good fight and to keep up the good work, for many were aware of his words and deeds. Not only did Timothy have a responsibility with regard to his own personal walk, but he influenced the walk of others by his behavior. Thus Paul was saying, “On behalf of yourself and on behalf of others, keep up the good fight of faith.”

Why did Paul now strictly charge, or commission, Timothy (1) “in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things,” and (2) “before Christ Jesus”? On behalf of the Father, the Son, and Paul himself, who was a representative of both, Timothy was solemnly charged with the responsibility to fight the good fight of faith and be an example of the believer to the believer. Paul thus faithfully discharged his responsibility. Of course when he and Timothy were together, Paul, as an apostle, had more responsibility and took a more aggressive or leading role, but now, with his departure only a few years off, he was encouraging Timothy as well as charging him with this responsibility.

Q: Does the statement “God ... quickeneth all things” mean that He is the One who makes the decision as to whether or not a person gets life?

A: Yes. God occupies the unique position of being both the Creator and the Separator of those who do not get life.

Why did Paul call attention to the fact that he commissioned Timothy in the sight of God and Jesus Christ and then allude to Jesus’ witnessing a good confession before Pilate? What does Jesus’ confrontation with Pilate have to do with fighting the good fight of faith?

When before Pilate, Jesus spoke relatively little. He was quiet in connection with the charges that were laid against him and did not try to defend himself. In his confession before Pilate, we usually think of his simple reply, “Thou sayest [Yes],” to the question “Are you the King of the Jews?” However, before we try to analyze verse 13, we will review Jesus’ conversation before Pilate, noting what Jesus did and did not say.

From the Gospel of Matthew:

“And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

“And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

“Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

“And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

“Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

“And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

“Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

“For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

“When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

“But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

“The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto

you? They said, Barabbas.

“Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

“And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

“When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

“Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

“Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.” (Matt. 27:11-26)

Jesus admitted that he was the King of the Jews but *nothing* else, even though Pilate asked questions and made observations. Pilate brought up the annual custom of a prisoner release, and although the people wanted Barabbas, Pilate repeatedly tried to persuade them to ask for Jesus, for he saw that they were predisposed to request Barabbas. Pilate wanted to get Jesus freed from at least the extreme penalty of crucifixion, but the people were persistent. Meanwhile, Pilate observed that with all the accusations, Jesus was silent as far as defending himself against the false charges. His silence was in fulfillment of prophecy: “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Isa. 53:7).

From the Gospel of Mark:

“And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

“And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it.

“And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

“And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

“But Jesus yet answered nothing: so that Pilate marvelled.

“Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

“And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

“And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

“But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

“For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

“But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

“And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?

“And they cried out again, Crucify him.

“Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

“And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.” (Mark 15:1-15)

The Mark account shows that Pilate even tried to prod Jesus to respond to the false charges, asking, “Answerest thou nothing?” but Jesus was silent. Barabbas was one of a group of insurrectionists, perhaps the ringleader. The rest of the account is similar to Matthew. About three times Pilate tried to get Jesus released. Jesus witnessed very little audibly.

From the Gospel of Luke:

“And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

“And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

“And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.

“Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

“And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

“When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean.

“And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

“And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

“Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

“And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

“And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

“And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

“Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

“No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

“I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

“(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

“And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:

“(Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

“Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

“But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

“And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

“And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

“And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

“And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.” (Luke 23:1-25)

As recorded in Luke, Jesus said no more than he did in Matthew and Mark, admitting only that he was the King of the Jews. However, a little more information is provided about Pilate. Not only did Pilate send Jesus to Herod, but the chief priests and their guards went along with Jesus, as shown by Pilate’s statement “I sent you to him.” Pilate really put forth an effort to free Jesus from their intent to put him to death, but the chief priests vociferously replied in effect, “No! He is guilty and should die.” Luke states that Barabbas was a seditionist, meaning he was trying to overthrow the Roman yoke—the very charge Jesus was *falsely* accused of. Jesus was charged with being a troublemaker and jeopardizing the Roman authority. What hypocrisy for the chief priests to lay such a false charge against Jesus when Barabbas, who was released, was notorious for his insurrectionist activities! Luke adds the fact that Barabbas was a murderer.

From the Gospel of John:

“Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

“Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

“They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

“Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

“That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

“Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

“Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

“Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

“Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

“Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

“But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

“Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

“Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

“And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

“And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

“Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

“When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.

“The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

“And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

“Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

“Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

“And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

“And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

“But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

“Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.” (John 18:28–19:16)

The Gospel of John provides a lot more detail, showing even more emphatically that Pilate made a *strenuous* effort to release Jesus. Also, more of his conversation with Jesus is revealed. When Pilate asked, “Art thou a king then?” Jesus replied, “Thou sayest that I am a king.” In other words, Jesus did not merely say, “Yes, I am,” but made a very strong statement, saying “yes” three times: “[1] Thou sayest [2] that I am [3] a king.” John’s Gospel brings out Jesus’ *boldness* and *unwavering* statement, which was more than just an admission, as might be assumed from the accounts in the other Gospels. Jesus answered simply but *emphatically*.

Jesus had two experiences with Pilate. In the first experience, Pilate asked Jesus, “Art thou the King of the Jews?” and Jesus answered, “Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?” Jesus was saying, “Are you *personally* asking me, or are you just *repeating* the charges laid against me that I am *falsely* claiming to be the King of the Jews? What is your motivation? Is your question *personal*, or are you asking in a *perfunctory* manner to try to extract a statement from me with regard to the charges?” By responding with the words “Am I a Jew?” Pilate probably had the desire to satisfy his own curiosity with regard to what he had heard about Jesus, but he evaded Jesus’ question, not wanting to get involved in the details of Jewish arguments on religion. Jesus was pressing home *Pilate’s responsibility* as an individual so that in the final analysis, when the historical facts surrounding the Crucifixion are brought to light in the Kingdom Age, he will have no excuse. It is true that Pilate was pressured by the chief priests, but in connection with this question, Jesus gave him *opportunity* to entirely refuse permission for the Crucifixion.

In addition to saying, “Am I a Jew?” Pilate added, “Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?” He answered a question with a question—how shrewd! He did not want to answer Jesus’ question, and seeing he was on the defensive, he tried to change the defensive to the offensive and thus take the leading role. Pilate said in effect, “Your own nation and the *chief priests* have brought a charge against you. What have you done? Why are you here?” He gave Jesus an opportunity to explain the situation privately.

Jesus replied in effect that his Kingdom was spiritual, not earthly. “My Kingdom is not of this world [arrangement, Greek *kosmos*]. I have followers and could have instructed them to fight, but I did not because my Kingdom is spiritual. If I had wanted earthly power, I would not have been delivered to you.” Thus Jesus answered the charge by saying he had no desire to be an insurrectionist and overthrow the government. And like himself, his followers believed in a spiritual Kingdom. He then added, “Now is my kingdom not from hence.” In other words, while Jesus’ Kingdom is spiritual, it will *eventually* be an earthly Kingdom in the sense of exercising prerogatives of authority down here—but not at the time of his First Advent.

Not understanding about this type of Kingdom, Pilate asked Jesus a second time, “Art thou a King then?” Jesus answered, “Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born [that is, to be a King], and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” In this private discussion with Pilate, Jesus was saying that he had no desire to interfere with Roman authority and that the charges against him were false. Thus Jesus was giving Pilate a personal opportunity to believe and to resist the Jewish religious leaders. He expressed the same principle with Judas, “That thou doest, do quickly” (John 13:27). In other words, “Whatever you are going to do, make that

decision now.”

It is more favorable for a person to make a decision right away when he is emotionally moved to see a matter in its proper light, whereas to delay just diffuses the clarity and sharp distinction of the principle. Jesus was giving Pilate the opportunity to see the matter clearly, and there was a momentary effect, for Pilate asked, “What is truth?” but then he broke off the conversation, for it was getting a little too personal for him. The conversation was somewhat over his head, but he sensed that Jesus really was innocent. Jesus’ sincerity and definiteness of purpose (“for this cause came I into the world”) did not conflict with Pilate’s role as governor of Judea. However, he was afraid to get too involved in this spiritual matter for fear he would be moved to make a decision that could jeopardize his political role. Recognizing that a decision would *cost him something*, Pilate ended the discussion.

Nevertheless, being even more convinced of Jesus’ innocence after their personal discussion, Pilate went out to the Jews again and said, “I find in him no fault at all.” Then he said, “But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?” Notice that Pilate did not give the Jews a choice of who to release, for Barabbas was not even mentioned. However, the rabble chanted in unison, “Not this man, but Barabbas.” They were determined to have Barabbas released and Jesus crucified.

Pilate had Jesus scourged and then returned to present him before the multitude, saying, “Behold the man!” Even after the terrible scourging and having a crown of thorns thrust on his head, Jesus had such great nobility of bearing and serenity of appearance that Pilate was moved to utter that expression. In fact, he marveled that despite the hatred, enmity, and jealousy of his enemies, Jesus kept his composure and had complete control of his emotions. Godliness, patience, and meekness, plus his natural genteelness, were traits that Pilate noticed. If Jesus were a King, certainly his bearing would match that title.

Pilate tried again to have Jesus released, hoping that the bloodletting and the shameful public treatment would soften the multitude—but instead they were hardened and even more determined that he should be crucified. Their reply was, “We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”

Earlier the religious leaders had said, “It is not lawful for us to put any man to death,” but that statement was not true (John 18:31). What they meant was that at the time of the Feast of Passover, they did not want to defile themselves by directly handling the guilty(?) party. In fact, they would not even enter the Judgment Hall proper for that reason, and the dialogue with Pilate was done from a distance with loud voices and shouting back and forth. For Pilate to say, “Behold the man!” he had to go out and lean over a balustrade from an upper chamber and address the multitude below.

When Pilate heard the Jews say that Jesus “made himself the Son of God,” he was “the more afraid.” The statement “the Son of God” might not in itself have affected Pilate that way because, after all, it was a religious claim. However, he could see where this conversation might lead because the emperor, the Caesar, was supposed to be the son of God. Just as in Egypt, Ra was the spiritual god, so the Caesar was considered the son of God and, in fact, had that title. Pilate was frightened because if Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, his claim conflicted with that of the Caesar. Short as it was, Jesus’ previous conversation had such an effect that Pilate went against his political instinct for a while.

Now Pilate went again into the Judgment Hall and asked Jesus, “Whence art thou?” Jesus did not answer. Then Pilate said, “Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?” Jesus replied, “Thou couldest have no power

at all against me, except it were given thee from above [that is, except God's providence permitted my death]." Although his words were strong, Jesus was not publicly defending himself against the false charges but was simply stating a fact. Privately he said enough for Pilate to see through the charges, but before the multitude, he did not try to persuade the Jews or the priests of his innocence. Jesus could have remained quiet, but to tell Pilate, the Gentile governor, that he could have no power unless God permitted it showed Jesus' strength of character.

Notice how Jesus finished his statement: "Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." In other words, "Pilate, you are not exonerated, but the Jewish religious leaders have more guilt than you do." Jesus spoke with such strength and intensity of mind and purpose that Pilate was thoroughly convinced he was no ordinary Jew.

"And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him." Pilate tried harder and harder to free Jesus, but the multitude became more and more adamant in their demands for crucifixion. The matter was coming to a head, as both sides were very intractable.

Then the Jews cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." What strong words! Earlier Pilate had sensed that the Jews were leading up to this reasoning, and now he was really frightened. What *hypocrisy* for the Jews to say this when the Roman yoke was so galling to them!

Then Pilate "brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement," and said, "Behold your King!" Evidently, he was still hoping the people would have a change of heart, but what did they do? They shouted, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him." Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your King?" and the chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified, and Jesus was led away.

Pilate had no way out but to render a decision to override the Jewish religious leaders—and that was a decision he would not make. With regard to his own personal responsibility, he should have ended the matter by saying, "No, Jesus is not going to be crucified." Instead he did everything but say no because he did not want to risk his political future. Of course Divine Providence foresaw that the multitude, the nation, and the chief priests would override Pilate's personal feelings. Pilate was not willing to risk his political future by pronouncing a judgment that favored Jesus. However, we believe that he subsequently suffered retribution that will help alleviate, to a large extent, his judgment in the Kingdom Age. Very shortly after the Crucifixion, he was sent into exile—the very disapproval he had wanted to avoid.

Comment: When Pilate comes out of the grave in the Kingdom Age, he will be a powerful witness to the Jews, especially to those of that era.

Reply: Yes. The centurion who said, "Truly this was the Son of God," will also be a strong witness, as well as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and the Apostle John (Matt. 27:54). How marvelous it will be to see films of what actually happened at the time of the Crucifixion—with all the attendant circumstances and private conversations, let alone the words and conduct of Jesus! In the future, when men are created perfect on other planets, they will not have to experience what Adam and his race went through. Reading about what one should and should not do is not nearly as powerful as seeing history as it occurred—the *real thing*.

Now we return to verse 13, to Paul's charge to Timothy: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." As we have just seen, Jesus' "good confession" before Pilate was *remarkable*. In verse 12, Paul told Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith, [and] lay hold on eternal life,

whereunto thou ... hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” If we combine verses 12-14, Paul was instructing Timothy as follows: “You should realize that you have a responsibility of faithfulness because of your past profession, and now you should witness a good confession such as Jesus did before Pontius Pilate. Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul was telling Timothy to be like Jesus, who was faithful to the *end* of his course.

But in what sense did Jesus witness “a good confession” to Pilate? By using this illustration, Paul fully realized Timothy’s role in the Church. He was not that well liked by the brethren at large, for he did not have the personality or background they desired. However, Paul both liked and appreciated Timothy, whom he felt had all the qualities that were necessary. Paul was telling Timothy to think of Jesus in the situation before Pilate. He fearlessly professed to be a King when *all of the others* said his claim was false. Through the chief priests, the *nation* brought Jesus before Pilate for trial and execution, so everything seemed to give the lie to Jesus. If he truly was a King, as he professed to be, would he have allowed himself to submit to such an experience where he would be tried, humiliated, and crucified? Wouldn’t he have had enough spunk to get up and defend himself instead of being negative, not answering the charges, and meekly submitting? He told Pilate *privately*, “My Kingdom is not of this world. Otherwise, my servants would fight. My Kingdom is spiritual, and my followers are spiritual.” *Outwardly*, however, it appeared that the ground was cut underneath Jesus. All of his statements about being the Son of God and the King of Israel seemed to be false, and his basis for making such assertions appeared weak. He had no friends, no supporters—he was alone—yet he had to take a stand before the nation of Israel, the priests, and Pilate. From this *weak* base and being all alone, he took a *strong* stand and did not waver because of his *faith*. Jesus said to Pilate, “You could not have any power at all except it were given to you from above.” He mentioned, “To this end was I born.” He had a purpose and fulfilled it, and he did not waver. Even though he meekly submitted and did not try to answer the false charges, *he was positive in his inner convictions*.

Timothy was not well received by the brethren because of his personality and humble disposition. The Greeks liked showmanship, oratory, and education, as well as composure and dignity. Evidently, Timothy did not have that type of disposition. Paul was saying to Timothy, “Just as Jesus meekly submitted to all the abuses against his person, so you should do the same and unwaveringly do the work that I set out in the Church.” Paul was summing up all of his advice in this epistle: “Do not worry about what others are saying about you. Avoid myths that are not based on God’s Word. Others delight in such things, but do not enter into the wranglings and misunderstandings. Follow godliness, righteousness, and truth, and defend the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Be positive and do not waver!”

Now we understand why Paul told Timothy to witness a good confession as Jesus did before Pilate. Paul slanted the illustration to Timothy in a very personalized way.

1 Tim. 6:14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1 Tim. 6:15 Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

1 Tim. 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

To “keep this commandment without spot”—to be blameless—is the hard part. Timothy was to keep the commandment without spot or rebuke until the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ,

who will show that *God* is “the blessed and *only* Potentate, *the* King of kings,” the *only* One who has immortality. In God’s due time, Jesus will demonstrate who is the only Potentate. The glory and honor will be given to *God*, “who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.” To Almighty God “be honour and power everlasting.” Amen!

We recognize that the Pastor is usually quoted as applying verse 16 to Jesus, the thought being that Jesus has immortality and the Father is excepted. However, that is not what verse 16 is saying. In some places, the Pastor applied verse 16 to God.

What are some reasons why verse 16 refers to God?

1. The title “*the* King of kings” applies to the Heavenly Father, whereas Jesus is “[a] King of kings” (Rev. 17:14; 19:16). God is “*the* King of kings, and Lord of lords” in the highest sense.
2. God dwells “in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen [at any time], nor can see” (compare John 1:18). Verse 16 suggests not a new condition of dwelling in that light but One whose *home* is that light. God Himself is the Father of the light that no man can approach unto, and He has been dwelling there for eternity. *Only God* has the capability and the prerogative of transmitting immortality to any other being. While immortality is given to Jesus and the Church, they cannot, in turn, give immortality to anyone else. God alone has that role; He is the Author of life, particularly of immortality.

Comment: Verse 13 helps to show that God is the subject in verses 14-16. Paul said, “I give thee [Timothy] charge in the sight of God, who *quickeneth* all things....” God quickens, or *makes alive*, and “immortality” is making alive in the *highest sense*.

Comment: Another reason why God is the “only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality” is that it seems unlikely Jesus would call such attention to himself. Since he characteristically honored the Father, he would give the highest honor to the Father here too.

Reply: Yes, it would seem that the glory and honor of verses 15 and 16 pertain to the Father’s own personal prerogative of immortality. Only the Father has this particular honor and position. Even though others will partake of immortality, He alone can transmit it.

If Jesus does not have immortality at this time, the question would be, When will he receive it? We believe the Father will give immortality to Jesus as a wedding present. God will give immortality to both Jesus and the Church at that time. Immortality will make all the difference in the world between this particular house of sons and other sons of God. The Church will be kings and priests in the highest sense of the word, with Jesus being a “King of kings,” whereas God is *the* King eternal.

To further show the emphasis, we will review some of the vocabulary Paul used. However, rather than explain certain statements about power, glory, and dominion, we will show where those terms are used in a reverential sense as a sort of salutation or prayer of praise directed to God. The language then becomes very careful, whereas in other places it has several different meanings, both holy and unholy.

The following Scriptures will be considered more or less in sequential order. The selected texts give ultimate praise, and we will see the focus of attention.

Romans 4:20 - “He [Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was

strong in faith, giving glory to God.” Notice, Abraham gave the glory. He was not talking about having the glory himself but was submitting to the glory *of God*.

Romans 11:36 - “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.” Since verses 32-35 show the context to be like a hymn of praise about *God’s* character, the word “Amen” clearly applies to God. We will try to show that whenever Paul said “Amen,” he applied the term exclusively to Jehovah. However, in the King James Version, “Amen” was arbitrarily inserted or supplied improperly by the translators in almost as many instances as it was actually used in the ancient manuscripts. In such cases, the supplied “Amen” appears in brackets. We will not consider those verses at this time, for why should we investigate that which is not valid?

Romans 16:27 - “To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.” The focus of praise is *God*. “Amen” is like a double seal of approval. Paul’s expressions of “Amen” (“So be it”) manifest his thinking very deeply.

Notice Paul’s use of the word “only.” Others are wise, but Paul was showing that when we pray, we should go to *God*, the *highest* authority, the *source* of every good and perfect gift. Paul was giving the ultimate praise: “To God [the] *only* wise.... Amen.” Of course, to offer acceptable praise to God, we have to pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Head.

In all the texts that we will read, we believe “Amen” applies to God, not to Jesus. And when Paul used the word “glory” as praise, it also applied to God.

Galatians 1:5 - “To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Some might dispute the thought that this verse applies to God, but the context seems to indicate that application. “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal. 1:3,4); that is, “According to the will of *God*, even our *Father*: *To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*” The words “for ever and ever” and “Amen” frequently apply to God.

Ephesians 3:21 - “Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” Notice the word “glory.” If the glory is “by” (or through) Christ Jesus, the pronoun “him” has to refer to the *Father*, attention being focused upon God Himself. The terms “throughout all ages” and “world without end” are like saying “for ever and ever,” and again “Amen” is used. Paul’s writing gives us a certain mood, or feeling. The word “glory” rarely applies to Jesus in the reverential sense, and when it does, it is not in the context of the highest scale of thinking.

Philippians 1:11 - “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” The glory and praise are *unto God*.

Philippians 2:11 - “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” The glory is *to God*. Paul was not talking *about* glory, which is quite a different slant of thinking. Verse 11 expresses reverential awe for God.

Philippians 4:20 - “Now unto God and [even] our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Repetitive terms are used, with the focus of attention on *God* and a double “Amen” emphasis.

Hebrews 13:21 - “Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Notice the terms “glory,” “for ever and ever,” and “Amen.” The context, verse 20, proves that *God* is the subject. Moreover, we are *God’s* “workmanship” (Eph. 2:10).

1 Timothy 1:17 - “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” The terms repeat: “glory,” “for ever and ever,” and “Amen.” In addition, the words in the beginning of the verse are characteristically used by Paul for the Heavenly Father; namely, “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory.”

Many, especially in the nominal system, think verse 17 applies to Jesus. However, we should not fear to attribute this verse to God. In studying the Bible, we should give honest applications, for in the final analysis, who cares what anyone else thinks? We want to do all we can to make our calling and election sure.

Comment: There is also a fear in recognizing God as the sole Creator. Many insist on giving Jesus a role in creation.

Reply: That is true. Because of certain prejudices, we are forced to speak out. *God alone* is the Creator. And at the time Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, which was around AD 64, *only God* had immortality.

1 Timothy 6:15,16 - “Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” We will work backwards. The words “Amen,” “everlasting [comparable to ‘for ever and ever’],” “honour and power,” and “whom no man hath seen, nor can see” are terms that apply to *God*. Both Jesus and God dwell in the light, but the context refers to Jehovah, who is the Light of the world in the *fullest* sense, for He is the Creator, the Originator. The word “only,” used twice, is also significant. To apply these verses to Jesus would diminish the meaning of what is being said, for “only” means “*only*.”

Q: If Jesus did not have immortality in the year AD 64, then is the thought that he still does not have immortality?

A: Yes, that is what we have been saying. He has glory, he looks like the Father, he is of the same substance as the Father, etc., but he does not yet have immortality.

Q: Are divine nature and immortality the same?

A: No, not necessarily. When Adam was created, he was perfect and had human nature, but he did not possess immortality. God could have given Adam immortality, but instead He intentionally made Adam’s life conditional, saying, “You have life, but never eat of this tree, for in the day that you disobey and eat of the fruit, dying thou shalt die.” Immortal life is not conditional but is a possession once one has it. The angels and God have spirit nature—“God is a Spirit” (John 4:24)—but at the time of this writing, He alone had immortality. We can extrapolate beyond Paul’s day to our time and say that Jesus still does not have immortality.

2 Timothy 4:18 - “And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” As we have seen, other texts that use the word “Lord” unmistakably refer to Jehovah. Since the terms “for ever and ever” and “Amen” are used here, we can see that verse 18 is talking about God Himself, who will preserve us until His heavenly Kingdom, to which we have been called.

Of the texts we have mentioned, only two or three leave a faint possibility that the reference could be to Jesus. But we can say with certainty that the other references with “for ever and

ever,” “Amen,” “glory,” etc., are to *Jehovah*. One might cite Revelation 5:12 to say that “glory” is associated with Jesus as well: “Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” However, that text is a declaration *by others* about Jesus’ worthiness. Talking about glory or stating glory as a fact is a lot different than mentioning “glory” in a prayer, a summary addendum, or the presentation of a thought in the middle of a chapter.

And there is another point. Acts 3:21 says of Jesus, “Whom the heaven must receive [retain] until the times of restitution of all things,” but in regard to this retention, Paul said, “For the Lord [Jesus] himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel” (1 Thess. 4:16). If Jesus already has immortality, isn’t it strange that he is called an “archangel”? The term “archangel” signifies one who is over other angels. We have tried to show that at one time, the Logos and Lucifer were the morning stars and that as the two archangels, they had a glory above the other angels; that is, they were higher, or above, the other angels. When Jesus ascended up to heaven after his resurrection, the account tells us that he “ascended up far above all heavens,” meaning merely that the gulf of distinction and honor between Jesus as the Logos, which was a very honored position, is now much wider (Eph. 4:10). However, for the time being, Jesus is still an archangel in regard to personal authority—and he is to sit on the right hand of the Father until God brings things under his feet at the time of the Kingdom (Acts 2:34,35; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12,13; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22). At that time, Jesus will be authorized and permitted to go ahead and establish the Kingdom with power and force, as is so perfectly illustrated by the picture of Joseph. Like Pharaoh with Joseph, God will give His glory to none other—forever (Isa. 42:8). And thank God!—for we need some guarantee from the Emperor of the universe that He is a real Rock of Gibraltar, as it were. Everything hinges on His power and authority. Therefore, Jesus now has the divine nature but not immortality, which he will be granted as a wedding gift at the marriage. As explained earlier, to have divine nature does not necessarily mean one has immortality.

Comment: An earthly illustration can be used. We elect a President in November, but he does not take office until January of the next year. A period of time elapses before the new President is inaugurated into office with power.

Reply: Yes, there is a difference between the election and the transfer of power and even the official inauguration.

As further proof of Jesus’ role or status now, he is called an “angel”—that is, a *messenger*—more than 15 times in the Book of Revelation, and the time period is the Gospel Age. For example, “And I saw another *mighty angel* come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth” (Rev. 10:1,2). In contrast, God is called a “Spirit,” but never an angel (John 4:24). The idea of being a messenger is quite different from being a King in power and exercising that power. There are other ways of reasoning as well, which we will present on another occasion.

Q: In verse 16, is the clause “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto” a reference to the Shekinah light in the Tabernacle?

A: Yes, the clause can be considered that way. The picture of the cherubim with the Shekinah light can be viewed from two perspectives. With regard to God’s four attributes, the light represents Wisdom, the two cherubim are Love and Power, and the lid (or Mercy Seat) of the Ark of the Covenant is the “propitiation” (Greek *hilasmos*), or Justice (1 John 2:2). Below God is the Mercy Seat, which represents Christ Jesus. Just as Justice is reflected in God’s sending His

Son to pay the penalty for man's sin, so from one perspective, the cover of the rectangular box, the propitiatory lid, represents Jesus as the Head, and the box underneath pictures the Church. In addition, the Tabernacle itself was a box with an open top. Curtains covered the Tabernacle underneath, which pictured the Church. The second curtain from the top, the covering of rams' skins dyed red, covered the whole Tabernacle structure, and the cherubim curtain underneath represents the Church underneath Christ.

Q: Does the term "Father of lights" in James 1:17 pertain to the "light which no man can approach unto"?

A: Yes, because "Father" means "Life-giver"; hence God is the "Life-giver of lights," the *source* of all light. While the name Pleiades refers to the constellation, and the seven stars represent the Church, etc., the Pleiades gives us the *direction* of God, who is in the north. Just as a mariner on the sea may look for the North Star to lead him to land or to a destination, for he can extrapolate his location to a certain extent by his angle from that star, so the North Star is used as a guide. The North Star is very pragmatic to those down here on earth, whereas other guides have to be used outside the celestial system. True north is affected by the direction of the Pleiades, but there is a difference between true north and magnetic north.

1 Tim. 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

1 Tim. 6:18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

1 Tim. 6:19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Here Paul was telling Timothy to charge all Christians who were "rich" not to be high-minded or trust in "uncertain riches." Instead they were to trust in God, do good, be rich in good works, distribute liberally, and be willing to communicate so that they would lay up treasures in heaven (Matt. 19:21). In other words, everything should be done with regard to making one's own calling and election sure or to helping others do the same. If one has riches, those goods should be distributed for the benefit of the Church and not for self-aggrandizement. Those who were rich were to lay up *heavenly* treasures and to distribute their *earthly* treasures, not holding on to them with miserliness. They were not to seek to acquire more and more and to build themselves up higher and higher. Rather, everything should be sacrificed in connection with the development of the spiritual priesthood. Those who had little of this world's goods read these admonitions from the standpoint that although they were poor according to the flesh, they could become rich in spiritual things.

Intellect, knowledge, wealth, power, reputation, etc., do not mean anything unless they are harnessed by obedience to God's instruction. Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Comment: To "communicate" means to be ready to hear and fellowship with others.

Earlier Paul said that the love of money, being the root of much evil, was causing some to drown (verses 9 and 10). Evidently, there was a struggle in the Church for attainment politically and in the eyes of the brethren. The acquisition of a lot of goods and riches was regarded as God's favor. As Jews under the Law, they had been taught that material prosperity was an evidence of faithfulness, but it was wrong to apply this philosophy to the Christian walk, for some were reigning before the due time. When Timothy went about giving the

proper instruction, he met opposition along these lines. The thought that temporal prosperity indicated God's favor was quite pervasive at the time Paul wrote this epistle, which was roughly AD 64. Quite a change had taken place in the Church in 30 years, and that attitude had to be counteracted, for some tended to look on trials and poverty as disfavor from God.

1 Tim. 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

1 Tim. 6:21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

Earlier Paul admonished Timothy to avoid "profane and old wives' fables" (1 Tim. 4:7). Now he said to avoid "profane [worldly, nonspiritual] and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called." Those who professed either of these "erred concerning the faith." The "oppositions of science falsely so called" refer to a disturbing doctrine that came into the early Church about this time, when Paul was phasing out. Subsequently, the Apostle John had to deal with and refute this doctrine. Timothy's ministry took place more or less between the ministries of Paul and John. After Peter and Paul died, Jude and John were the only apostles left, with John being the last apostle on the scene.

Comment: The word translated "science" is the Greek *gnosis*, meaning "knowledge."

Reply: That belief, called Gnosticism, made a halo out of knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge were especially revered and idolized by the Greeks.

Paul ended his first letter to Timothy like a prayer with the word "Amen."

SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1982 with excerpts from a 1999 study)

2 Tim. 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

Paul very pointedly reminded Timothy that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ by the *will of God*. The Father is the Author, the Director, of the plan. God chooses the Bride for the Son. *He* does the calling, and *He* decides who is faithful.

Why did Paul add the words “according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus”? Not only did Paul call attention to his authority as an apostle, but the message he brought, which pertained to the *high calling* of being associates with Jesus in the Kingdom of blessing, was equally authentic. Paul was saying, “The promise of life is God’s message, and I am God’s spokesman in this matter.”

2 Tim. 1:2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Timothy was Paul’s “dearly beloved son.” What tender words! God had said of Jesus, “This is my beloved Son,” and here Paul was giving a very favorable commendation to Timothy. For Paul, who had an intimate relationship with God and Jesus, to write to Timothy in such endearing terms would have been an encouragement.

“Grace, mercy, and peace” from God, the Father, and Christ Jesus, the Son, was a characteristic greeting of Paul in his epistles. We sometimes think of God as being aloof and very high in His thinking, but this affection shows that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). We stand in awe of all His creative works and acts, yet “his tender mercies are over all his works” (Psa. 145:9).

2 Tim. 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

Paul served God from his “forefathers” with a pure conscience; that is, he served God as the patriarchs and faithful, noble ones of the past had served the Almighty. After mentioning his personal sincerity and pure conscience, Paul declared that he remembered Timothy in his prayers “without ceasing ... night and day”—probably when he closed and opened each day in prayer. In other words, Paul had such concern for Timothy that he remembered him daily with *regularity*. A day did not go by without his bringing to remembrance in prayer his concern for Timothy, and this was especially true with regard to his nighttime prayers.

Here Paul mentioned his “pure conscience.” He also said, “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a *good conscience*, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim. 1:5). And he said, “Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a *conscience void of offence* toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). We should strive to have such a conscience.

2 Tim. 1:4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus. Timothy had wanted to accompany Paul, but there was a purpose in his staying behind. Nevertheless, Timothy had shed tears at Paul’s departure, probably realizing that the apostle’s days were numbered. Paul was saying in effect, “You may

have cried and been very sorrowful when we parted, but I feel the same way and would be filled with joy if we could be reunited.” They shared a close bond of fellowship in the Lord.

The church in Ephesus was the most influential of all the churches in Asia Minor. Timothy had been in Ephesus for quite a long time—through the writing of both epistles. Ephesus was Timothy’s base of operations, and Paul was in Rome at this time. Incidentally, the Apostle John, the second messenger to the Church, went to Ephesus later, probably after Paul died and following the persecution in Jerusalem in AD 69, which resulted in the dispersal of brethren into Egypt, India, Asia Minor, and other places. At that time, John moved to Ephesus, making it his base, and took Mary, Jesus’ mother, with him.

2 Tim. 1:5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

Paul credited Timothy’s faith to his mother Eunice and to his grandmother Lois. Paul was persuaded that Timothy had the same sincere faith as these two outstanding women, who had probably finished their course by this time. The implication is that they either knew Jesus personally or knew about him. In the Kingdom, it will be interesting to learn more about their backgrounds—especially how they came into the truth and how they finished their course.

Q: What is the reason for saying that Eunice and Lois were dead at this point?

A: Paul was confident of their faith. Since, theoretically, one can deflect right up to his dying breath, the commendation of their faithfulness indicates they had died. In contradistinction, Timothy was still alive and active. Also, Timothy was now about 45 years old, so it is likely that his mother and grandmother had died.

Timothy was considered young, but he was actually middle-aged. The criticism of his “youth” is that he had not known or seen Jesus (1 Tim. 4:12). This factor alone barred him from eldership in the eyes of some brethren. Paul was similarly criticized for not seeing Jesus during the First Advent, but he repeatedly testified that he had seen Jesus since his resurrection—as “one born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:8).

Timothy had an “unfeigned faith.” A “feigned” faith is a profession of faith that is not really valid. A genuine, sincere faith is more than just an expression of words; it is backed up by deeds.

Timothy loved and recognized Paul as a true disciple. Considering the apostle exemplary, he wanted to follow after Paul as Paul followed after Christ. Paul knew that was the reason Timothy loved him, and he loved Timothy for his unfeigned faith. Timothy’s faith in God and Christ must have been exhibited on certain occasions we do not know about where Paul could see into Timothy’s heart for a moment. No matter what the relationship was between Paul and Timothy, faith in the Heavenly Father and His Son was the superior relationship. Neither embellishment nor braggadocio characterized such a faith.

2 Tim. 1:6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

Feeling that Timothy was very qualified, Paul wanted to give this humble brother a little push so that others would benefit from his talent. Paul urged Timothy to “stir up the gift” that had come from God through the laying on of the apostle’s hands. He was saying to Timothy, “Do not waste the gift that you received.” We can only guess as to what that gift was, but apparently, it was a charge or commission regarding his ministry. The gift may have been a

profound understanding of Scripture for a relatively young and perhaps unschooled man. To the contrary, Paul was schooled. Not only did he have natural superior wisdom, but he was trained like Moses and Jesus Christ himself for their respective offices on different levels. Paul saw good qualities in Timothy and wanted him to be a little more outspoken. Not only was Timothy to shun the “vain babblings,” etc., that were beginning to be characteristic in some ecclesias, but he was to rebuke and admonish (1 Tim. 6:20). He was to exercise his office so that more brethren would profit from his ministry. Based on history and the New Testament, we think that as elder, Timothy served as an interim leader of the church in Ephesus for a few years, that is, until the Apostle John came after the demise of both Peter and Paul. John then became the stalwart, the exemplary apostle, of the Church. This Second Epistle to Timothy gives us little insights into what was happening in Asia Minor.

Q: Please explain the laying on of hands.

A: In the early Church, when the apostles were on the scene, a mechanical gift was given to every consecrated believer because no Bible existed at that time, just the Old Testament. When a gift was given, something miraculous happened to the individual that was manifested in a remarkable way. Examples of gifts were the ability to remember, quote Scriptures verbatim, interpret the significance of Scriptures, and speak in a foreign language. The gift lasted until the individual’s death. Although there were exceptions such as Ananias, who laid his hands on Paul, the custom was for an apostle to do the laying on of hands. As soon as that took place, a gift was immediately received as an evidence of the person’s acceptance, and for the rest of his life, he looked back to that moment with assurance that God had called him. To a certain extent, we can do that even today because bona fide Christians have gifts, although they are less discernible. For that reason, Paul said, “Let each esteem [or consider] other[s] better than themselves” (Phil. 2:3). In other words, in each Christian, no matter how simple he may feel he is, there is something that other Christians appreciate and find helpful. Thus the individual is performing a ministry he may not be fully cognizant of.

Generally speaking, if a person was by himself, he did not have the benefit of his gift. Therefore, going to meetings became that much more important, for understanding came through assemblage. The need for meetings and fellowship was felt very keenly in the early Church; in fact, it was a necessity.

2 Tim. 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Paul was contrasting the “spirit of fear” with the “[spirit] of power,” the “[spirit] of love,” and the “[spirit] of a sound mind.” These qualities were not exactly opposites, for bravery, or courage, is the opposite of fear. However, the thought of bravery is a little too empty because people in the world, who do not have the spirit of Christ, can be brave and courageous. Therefore, to have the Holy Spirit “of power, and of love, and of a sound mind [soundness of thought]” is quite different. *Christian* courage includes these other qualities. In what sense, then, does a Christian have the spirit “of power”? He is bold and fearless.

Incidentally, with the spirit of a sound mind, Timothy could see through sophistries and vain babblings. Not being an apostle, he could not thunder against them with authority, but he could see the dangers of certain types of doctrine and behavior.

Comment: There is much “power” in knowing the outcome for humanity. We do not have the fears of the unconsecrated, for we trust in the Lord and know that His plan is true.

Reply: The realization that we have God’s backing is a great offset to fear.

What element of love counteracts the spirit of fear? These verses can be taken two ways. Most heathen religions use fear to prompt the obedience of its subjects. A false fear in the Christian religion is the fear of hell and eternal torment. Evangelists sometimes use a scare tactic to get the attention of the public, and fear becomes the main thrust of their message. The Holy Spirit has the effect of power, love, and a sound mind on both the one who is doing the testifying and the one who is listening. The very boldness of the preaching of Peter and John on the Day of Pentecost, let alone their speaking in different languages, convinced 3,000 to 5,000 people in one day with one sermon to repent. Only a thumbnail description of the sermon is given in the Book of Acts, but it was stated boldly and convincingly that the Jews had crucified the Lord Jesus, the true Lord.

The term “the spirit of” means “a measure of,” not a fullness but the spirit of love, power, and a sound mind. For example, a measure of strength, or power, accompanies or is associated with the message. The truth gives us the spirit of a sound mind, but that does not mean we are sound in all of our judgments and thoughts. Nevertheless, there is a spirit that is different from one who is not a believer or not an informed believer.

Comment: Paul called to remembrance the unfeigned faith that was in Timothy and reminded him to stir up the gift that had been given to him. Then Paul added that God has not given the spirit of timidity or fear, and in the previous epistle, he told Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth,” so apparently, Timothy had a strong streak of humility and tended to put himself in the background.

Reply: Yes, the two epistles were a personal message to Timothy, but we draw secondary lessons that are very helpful to us.

Comment: Proverbs 29:25 reads, “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.”

Reply: In the context of verse 7, the word “fear” does not mean “reverence” but is “timidity.” Fear of man in some texts has the slant of catering to the whims of men in order to please them, and one who follows this policy compromises principle. When a speaker uses flattery or excessive humor in a talk, he is catering to the audience and is, in effect, minimizing the gospel. The speaker may think he is winning friends, but a loss or a penalty is associated with that type of approach. The admonition is, “Be not ashamed or timid, but be strong and courageous.” The spirit of power is strength.

How wonderful it is that the measure of truth we have received in giving our heart to the Lord is so reasonable! In fact, that is why the truth appealed to us. Therefore, we should try to make the truth appeal to others the same way. If we convincingly present the truth, then others can be persuaded. Even King Agrippa said to Paul, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28).

Paul was urging Timothy to use the gift he had been given and thus fulfill the miraculous commission that had been prophesied concerning him. Timothy would have treasured the two epistles from Paul, and he needed all the encouragement he could get, just as some of us do. In his loneliness, trials from the world, and opposition from brethren, Timothy no doubt read and reread Paul’s letters for comfort, for the letters evoked fresh memories of their relationship.

2 Tim. 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

Timothy was not to be ashamed of (1) Paul as a prisoner of Jesus or (2) the testimony of Jesus. Paul was both an apostle and a prisoner of Jesus in literal bonds. People are influenced by a person's stature or position in life. If one is wealthy, influential, and/or educated, he is usually more easily recognized. Conversely, if one is in prison and/or receiving maltreatment, that circumstance tends to discredit his testimony and advice. What a strong character Paul was! He had a tremendous driving force to be able to go through so many sufferings and persecutions for Christ over and over again. As a spiritual pugilist of the highest order, nothing could stop or deter him, yet he had emotions and low periods. The advice to Timothy was not to be ashamed of sufferings for Christ. The suggestion was that his boldness would incur opposition and real affliction, making him a partaker with Jesus and with Paul in the sufferings and the "afflictions of the gospel," which are the natural concomitants of faithfulness.

Comment: Paul was saying, "Do not be adversely affected by the circumstances, but be courageous and zealous for the Lord and for the truth. Do not let rejection by another brother deter you. God's approval is what counts."

Notice the phrase "according to the power of God." If we try to do things in our own strength and might, we can get very discouraged and be overwhelmed by our experiences. However, even if we are delicate by nature, we can faithfully and steadfastly endure suffering experiences in the "power of God"—including experiences that would crush a hard, resolute, strong man who did not have the power of God. Some Christians have strengths they are not aware of, but if they truly rely on the Lord when the tests come, the trials will sort out the men and women of God from those who are weaker in faith.

"Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel" means that witnessing for Christ back there—identifying oneself with Paul's ministry—cost something. That cost is accredited to partaking "of the afflictions of the gospel." An appropriate saying is, "No cross, no crown." Jesus promised, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

2 Tim. 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

God has saved us and called us with a *holy* calling. Many people have an ideal or a goal in life such as to be a lawyer or a doctor, which is an *earthly* profession, or calling, but Paul was called to be "a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher" of the gospel to the Gentiles (2 Tim. 1:11).

We are called "not according to our works [or our deeds], but according to his [God's] own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." God purposed or predestinated to have a class of 144,000 individuals who would be conformed to the likeness of Jesus. "According as he [God] hath chosen us in him [Jesus] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:4,5). God is looking for a certain pattern or lifestyle in this class, who are to be conformed to the image of Christ. The calling of each individual has nothing to do with how great he was in the past, prior to consecration, or to how great his deeds were or how holy or right-principled he was. Rather, God is looking for certain predetermined types of individuals who, through obedience and by His grace, can be made into the likeness of Christ. However, a prerequisite for all of the individuals God has called is that they previously had a gift of *faith*; that is, they had to be rich in *natural faith* to begin with. "But without [natural] faith it is impossible to please him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). God can use natural faith and divinely instruct and develop it according to His purpose and grace. Incidentally, *spiritual* faith,

as opposed to *natural* faith, is a development, a fruit of the Spirit (1 Cor. 13:13).

It is important not to attach credits to ourselves as a reason for our being called. We should not think, “Somehow I am above the level of general humanity.” The flesh might wrongly surmise, “Perhaps I excel along intellectual or emotional lines, such as being tender-hearted or noble-minded.” Paul said, “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called [but the poor in spirit, the humble]” (1 Cor. 1:26). To keep us humble, we should remember that we just happened to be living in the right age to be eligible for the high calling; that is, we are living in the interim time period subsequent to Christ’s dying for man’s sins and prior to the establishment of the Kingdom on earth.

Although Abraham was called in a prior age, his faith is a good illustration of the type of individual God is looking for in the Gospel Age. Abraham was called to uproot himself from an affluent position in Ur of the Chaldees and take his goods and possessions out into the unknown, where there were predators and robbers, and go to a land he did not know. His decision to go was a very decisive first step. He obeyed subsequently, all along the line, and of course the highest step of obedience was when God asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Having that type of faith, Abraham is considered the father of the faithful.

The Gospel Age calling is to be kings and priests. Those predestinated offices, which actually exist in God’s mind, will be filled. As Paul said in Romans 11:5, “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the *election of grace*.” The exceedingly high calling is based not on works but on grace. The word “election” indicates that there are offices, and God will fill the vacancies of the 144,000 with a predestinated class who are conformed to the likeness of his Son. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:29,30).

Nothing untoward can happen that would in any way thwart God’s will. He is not only the Creator but also the Emperor, the King, of the universe. While God could do a lot of things, there are some things He does not like to think about. For instance, He does not think our thoughts, for He does not want our filth in His mind. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD” (Isa. 55:8). He knows the thoughts of our heart, but does He dwell on these things? No. He looks at our intent, our will.

We want to be sensitive to evil. Since we were born in sin and “shapen in iniquity,” getting this sensitivity is a lifetime work that will be with us until our dying day (Psa. 51:5). We need to be obstinate for good. We can be dogmatic, but whatever we are dogmatic on has to be based on a proper understanding of what God’s will is.

God works within certain parameters, and one of the parameters is that He does not call those who do not have natural faith (Heb. 11:6). Right away that factor eliminates a whole multitude of people. Of those who are called, certain qualifications are necessary, and we are informed of those qualifications as time goes on.

We were called according to God’s “grace.” He forgave our sins and shortcomings because we repented, believed in Christ, and gave Him our heart. By grace, God took us—little nobodies—and gave us the hope of an extremely high calling.

We are called according to God’s “own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began [before the times of the ages began].” For the last clause, some other translations have “before ancient times” or “before the ages,” but when did “the ages” start?

They began with the creation of Adam, as shown on the Chart of the Ages, which is God's plan. On that chart are the world that was, the world that now is, and the "world to come" (Matt. 12:32; 2 Pet. 3:6,7). No subdivisions are shown within the "world that was" because we do not have enough information about conditions before the Flood, and most of the records pertain to genealogy. As a time clock, God's plan started with Adam, and the Creative Days were the beginning of a particular plan for tiny planet Earth. In addition, God has billions of other plans that He has not yet started.

Here in verse 9, Paul was saying that the start of this predestinated class was before the creation of Adam. Things were going on in heaven that we do not know about, for we have only very fragmentary information. First, we have to be quite familiar with the Lord's Word, and then we have to be extremely careful not to interpolate fanciful theories from the little strands of suggestion that are contained therein.

Before Adam's creation, God saw Jesus as "the Lamb slain from [before] the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Such information is necessary to show that God was never caught unawares. His foreknowledge, His omniscience, is so pervasive that nothing can surprise Him. That degree of intuitive knowledge is the difference between Him and every other sentient being, and it is His possession as the Creator. How thankful we can be that such is the case, for there are all kinds of surprises in our individual lives! And from the standpoint of the human race, history shows all kinds of surprises—mechanical failures, diseases, natural disasters, etc. With His omniscience, God foresaw that Lucifer would sin. God took an eternity to prepare the other planets, and because He has a plan, He calls them all by name—His own names, not the pagan names of Jupiter, Venus, and so forth. Of course He called our planet "Earth," and perhaps the Sun is spelled "Son," but the other names are unknown to us at present. God has made a universe for future intelligent beings to dwell in.

To repeat: Without interfering, God could foresee that it was just a matter of time until Lucifer, who was created perfect, would fall. Some who dwell on that fact become infidels and lose faith. They believe there is a Superior Power but think that He has lapses of attention and lacks love and consideration for us as individuals. They consider Him too great and too preoccupied with other matters to deal with the little beings down here. Thus it is dangerous to theorize too much along these lines, whereas Jesus, who died for us, said, "The Father himself [also] loveth you" (John 16:27). God is very cognizant of those who give their heart to Him in this age of disbelief.

Comment: Those who are called need to develop all of the required qualities in order to meet with the Lord's approval, but the grander purpose is that He knows the characteristics, temperament, and makeup of each of His little ones and where each would fit best into His arrangement for the future Kingdom.

2 Tim. 1:10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

2 Tim. 1:11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

The high calling "is now made manifest by the appearing [or coming] of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished [the hold of] death, and hath brought [everlasting] life and immortality to light through the gospel." Paul was referring to the two callings: (1) the calling in the present age to glory, honor, and immortality, and (2) the calling in the Kingdom Age to everlasting life here on earth. The two callings are shown in the Great Pyramid; namely, the high calling to immortality is shown in the King's Chamber, and the earthly calling to

everlasting life is shown in the Queen's Chamber. Those of the consecrated who fail to make the Little Flock but are of the Great Company class will get everlasting life on the *spirit* plane. Everlasting life, which is based upon obedience, is a sustained life whether spiritual or earthly, and this conditional life will be spiritual for the Great Company. At the end of the Kingdom Age, the Ancient Worthies will also get a conditional spiritual life. There is more to the term "life" than just restitution on earth, for it includes the spirit life the Great Company and the Ancient Worthies will receive.

The high calling was made manifest because Jesus had the capability as a teacher to provide information about what has occurred. Although chosen by God as a particular servant of enlightenment, Jesus himself was a "light" who came into the world and said many very profound things (John 1:9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46).

God also promised eternal life before the world (or ages) began (Titus 1:2). The mystery of "Christ in you, the hope of glory," which has "been hid from ages and from generations," has now been "made manifest to his saints" (Col. 1:25-27). Paul could speak confidently along this line because he was involved in bringing "to light" this understanding to the Gentiles. He was very careful in his wording lest he humiliate Jesus, who brought and is the Light, but he came only to his people, the Jews. He was sent "unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). Paul extrapolated the same theme that Jesus brought and explained the message to the Gentiles, who needed some historical background. The Gentiles were not present when Jesus came at the First Advent and preached the Sermon on the Mount, so Paul could now boldly declare that he himself was being used as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Jesus *brought the light*, and now Paul *was being used as a light* unto the Gentiles as far as the gospel was concerned.

Titus 1:2 raises a question: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." To whom did God promise "eternal life" before the ages began? God made a promise to *Jesus*; that is, God discussed the matter *in its entirety* with Jesus before the Son's coming down here. This prior information flooded Jesus' mind at his baptism, when "the heavens were opened unto him" (Matt. 3:16). As a babe, Jesus did not recall his preexistence, but he grew in "wisdom and stature" and eventually "found [himself] in fashion as a man" (Luke 2:52; Phil. 2:8). In other words, his preexistent understanding was withheld from him until his consecration at Jordan, but he had a full understanding as the Logos. To suddenly have this information brought back to his mind when he was baptized was so mind-boggling that his new mind drove him into the wilderness for 40 days. As the Logos, however, he absorbed, understood, and assented to what his Father told him, and probably of his own initiative, he responded like Isaiah, saying, "Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8). Isaiah was so enthused by a vision of God that, knowing a message had to be given, he said, "Send me!" We think Jesus reacted along the same lines. Of his own volition—and understanding the cost—he volunteered to be the one to redeem Adam and the human race. We can interpolate details in Scripture but have to be very careful because we are responsible for our statements before God and Jesus.

In coming to earth, Jesus was changed from the Logos to a seed in Mary's womb. He was transferred—there was no cessation of life. Now we can see that God has the ability to make a literal camel go through the eye of a needle (Matt. 19:24-26; Mark 10:25-27). We underestimate many Scriptures if we try to reason with the public, whereas with God, nothing is impossible. By just reversing the mechanism, He can make a camel change form and retrogress instead of progress into adulthood. Man is now trying to make computers go backward because all the steps of a computer are lost. The final result is obtained, but the intermediate steps are gone. However, God's "computer" will go forward or backward, so He can reduce a camel to practically nothing, to the size of a molecule, which can easily go through the eye of a needle. The same was true with Jesus, and when he was transferred, some of the angels would have wondered, "Where is the Logos?" He was "found" as a man. Certain holy angels knew about

the birth, for Gabriel announced it to the shepherds, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger [a stone feeding box, or trough, in a cave]” (Luke 2:11,12). The shepherds then hastened off to see where the Messiah was. But at age 30, when the astounding knowledge of his preexistence came and Jesus found himself as a man, he was impelled—almost pushed—into the desert because he had to sort out this matter.

Jesus “abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” Here we can see Paul’s faith. Death was not yet abolished, but he knew that Christ had paid the ransom price and was risen, so it was just a matter of time until all things would be accomplished, with death, man’s last enemy, being destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26). How confidently Paul wrote! He was extremely blessed with understanding.

Jesus “hath brought life and immortality to light.” In other words, he is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Of course Paul was interested in the hope of the high calling, which promises immortality to the faithful Church of this age. Paul and Peter were the two apostles who had a clear understanding of this promise. Peter, who was the leading apostle until Paul came, said, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4). When Paul came, Peter stayed with the Jews, whereas Paul, relatively speaking, preached to Gentiles and Jews in Gentile lands.

The Holy Spirit may have stated “life” first and “immortality” second because immortality is the apex of the highest condition of life. The Pastor introduced very unusual reasoning—that when we consecrate, we sacrifice our earthly rights to life. This future earthly inheritance would be ours if we waited for the Kingdom Age and then were faithful, but by our faith in Christ, God takes that inheritance as a basis for what we give up. When this right to life is under the blood, under the covering of Christ’s righteousness, it is acceptable to God. We can then lay down this privileged life and, if faithful, inherit immortality—life on the highest plane.

The “holy [high] calling ... is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.” The main thrust or purpose of the gospel is to find the Lord’s jewels, the Bride of Christ, the Little Flock. Secondly, the purpose is to give a witness to others and to do a preparation work on behalf of others.

Why did Paul use the following sequence? He was “appointed [1] a preacher, and [2] an apostle, and [3] a teacher of the Gentiles.” All of the consecrated are called to preach, but only 12 were called to be apostles (Isa. 61:1). And of the Twelve, only Paul was called to be a teacher (or apostle) to the Gentiles. The other apostles preached mainly to the Jews, with Peter having a higher commission. As a “preacher,” Paul went from home to home, visiting people in a lesser capacity, as opposed to speaking in the public forum or the synagogue. As an “apostle,” he made public pronouncements. As a “teacher of the Gentiles,” he went to Gentile lands, where he spoke publicly and made converts.

2 Tim. 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Being a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles brought repercussions and suffering. As a result, Paul was in dreadful bonds in a dungeon in Rome at this time, yet he was not ashamed, and he wrote with great strength under those dire conditions. His previous imprisonment, when he was under house arrest, was quite different. Evidently, Paul was able to procure house arrest through an inheritance he had gotten from his family. If a Roman

citizen had means, he could obtain that privilege for a certain sum of money.

“For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” What had Paul committed unto God and Christ? He had committed his life in consecration, and verse 12 is a statement of his faith and trust in God and Jesus. As long as he kept up the good work, protection would be provided “against that day,” the day of his death.

What happened in between Paul’s two epistles to Timothy is a big mystery, but tradition says that he went to Spain and England before being arrested again and executed. In the first letter, Paul wrote that he intended to visit Timothy, but we have no record of what he did when he was released from house arrest. Now, in the second letter, Paul again wrote how much he wanted to see Timothy, but there is no evidence that he actually did (2 Tim. 1:4). Incidentally, Paul was beheaded, for in addition to having a fair trial, a Roman citizen could not be crucified. As a Jew, Peter was crucified.

We do not know who delivered this second letter from Paul to Timothy, and written in the dungeon, it may even have arrived after his decease. If so, not only was the letter like a will coming from the dead, but its arrival would have been a very moving experience for Timothy, especially since writing methods required so much effort in those days. Considering the distance to travel and the shortness of Paul’s second imprisonment, that may have been the case. It is touching that Paul wrote, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand” (2 Tim. 4:6).

2 Tim. 1:13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Timothy had heard “sound words” from Paul in two ways. (1) When he accompanied Paul on journeys, he learned about the apostle and his doctrine and behavior. (2) In the first letter, Paul laid out the importance of faith and love in Christ Jesus.

Q: Does the term “the form of sound words” refer to basic instruction?

A: In the first epistle, Paul spoke a lot about “sound words” in one way or another. The term refers to the more essential aspects of doctrine. For instance, Paul said that the Christian was to avoid “fables and endless genealogies” and should not desire to be rich (1 Tim. 1:4; 6:9).

Comment: The *Diaglott* reads, “Retain an outline of wholesome words, which thou didst hear from me.”

Reply: Timothy could read again and again the two letters from Paul. The Christian calling is a holy calling; it is character development, and not just a mere mental acquisition of facts. With the heart, one can believe unto righteousness, but “with the mouth confession is made *unto salvation*” (Rom. 10:10). In other words, if one keeps secret in his heart the wonderful news of the gospel and becomes an iconoclast or shuns to declare the gospel, he risks losing life.

Comment: Another translation renders verse 13 as follows: “What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching for the faith and love in Christ Jesus.”

Reply: Yes, the “form” to follow was more of a pattern or format. Paul went into a lot of detail in the first epistle, instructing Timothy what to do. For example, he was told to rebuke. On the one hand, Timothy was to be peace-loving, speaking that which was wholesome, yet on the other hand, there would come times when it was necessary to speak out. He was to promote

peace but not by compromising on vital issues. Paul discussed trivia—babblings, etc.—in the first epistle, but the important things are piety, reverence, holiness, and witnessing to others. Paul gave a format. The Book of Habakkuk shows that the Pastor, the seventh messenger, was to make “the vision ... plain upon tables” (Hab. 2:2). William Miller started diagramming the ages, and the Pastor came along later and made some important corrections, especially in the 1,260 days, and fastened down the significance of other dates in the Book of Daniel. He had the ability to rightly divide the Word of truth and to make the Divine Plan plain on tables.

2 Tim. 1:14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

The “good thing” that was committed unto Timothy, which he was told to keep by the power of the Holy Spirit, was the dormant gift he had received earlier when the Apostle Paul laid hands on him when they first met in Timothy’s hometown in Asia Minor. Paul was now encouraging Timothy to make use of that capability in a realistic way. In addition, Timothy was to act on what was committed to him in both the first epistle and this second epistle. Paul gave Timothy guidelines in both letters, and the gift Timothy had would wonderfully assist him in promulgating the instruction to others in the household of faith.

2 Tim. 1:15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

When Paul commenced his missionary tour throughout Asia Minor, he began in the underbelly and then worked his way to Ephesus, which became the site of a major church. Both Greeks and Jews were in the cities he visited. As a mercantile people, the Jews seemed to congregate more in the larger metropolises. Paul “continued [in Ephesus] by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10). The term “Greeks” took on a broader meaning to indicate those who were non-Jews, that is, Gentiles. Thus there was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles in the congregations.

Generally speaking, with few exceptions, all of the brethren in Asia Minor had now turned away from Paul. A large disaffection had set in, but why? One reason pertained to his sufferings and imprisonment. Many are psychologically moved by appearances, and the brethren felt that since Paul was an emissary of the gospel, his being a prisoner cast a reflection on the Christian religion. They reasoned, “If he is the Apostle Paul, what is he doing in prison?” They did not stop to think about Jesus’ being on the Cross. The second reason for turning away from Paul, at least subconsciously, was fear of persecution. The brethren did not want to be imprisoned themselves. A third reason was that Paul spoke directly and boldly about matters which were wrong in the ecclesias. Brethren did not like his plain speech, his hard-hitting words—both his manner of delivery and his message. A fourth reason was the doctrine being introduced by Phygellus and Hermogenes, who evidently were gifted speakers. They influenced many of the disciples, causing disaffection for Paul’s method and ministry. The disciples did not necessarily go out of the truth, but they no longer recognized Paul as an apostle, as an authority, as one sent out by the Lord Jesus to be a teacher of the highest rank.

Thus several factors were involved in “all they which are in Asia [Minor]” being turned away from Paul. When the reasons are considered together, the cumulative effect was that the brethren forgot him. Earlier they all sent their love, as well as contributions, but now they were turned off, forgetting that we are *called to suffer*.

Why did Paul name these two individuals? Phygellus and Hermogenes were *leaders* in drawing others away. They actively hastened the disaffection from Paul, questioning and discrediting his role as an apostle, even though he had testified of his miraculous vision and experience on

the way to Damascus. Paul was personally given a commission by Jesus to be an apostle to the Gentiles. The Twelve were originally given new names on one of the mountains in upper Galilee and commissioned to be apostles by Jesus under the guidance of the Heavenly Father. They were told to start in Israel, then to go to the Samaritans, and finally to fan out into the world, preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. There is no mention of Paul in the Gospel accounts, for the focus of attention was on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. However, after Judas betrayed Jesus, Paul was selected by divine authority to be the replacement and given an even better apostolic commission by the *risen* Lord.

Others should have recognized that Paul did more miracles than any of the other apostles, and they could see his zeal. His life, works, logic, scriptural understanding, and willingness to die for Christ all testified to the genuineness of his apostleship. Of those who had seen Jesus during his earthly ministry, a number discredited Paul, and although many had already died, their influence remained.

It is important to note that verse 15 does not say, “All they which are in Asia went out of the truth.” The point is that all in Asia Minor now more or less no longer regarded the Apostle Paul with the same former degree of respect, primarily because of these two named individuals, who were deceitful in their methods. And there were other factors too. For instance, many people have the false thought that if we live a godly life, we will not suffer persecution. In the Old Testament, those who obeyed God had better health, lived longer, defeated their enemies, and prospered temporally, but the calling of the Gospel Age is different. With this cultural background, as well as Paul’s persecutions and imprisonment, there were negative factors and different influences, but the bottom line is that he was not as popular and as highly regarded as previously.

Phygellus and Hermogenes went astray doctrinally and influenced many, damaging their faith. The exceptions were those who listened to Timothy, and Paul was telling Timothy to look into this matter and to try to straighten it out. He exhorted Timothy to exercise more strength in his ministry, saying in effect, “You are qualified. You have a gift—use it. Do not let people think that you are too young.” An earlier instruction of Paul was, “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim. 5:20).

2 Tim. 1:16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

2 Tim. 1:17 But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

2 Tim. 1:18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

In contrast to the words and actions of Phygellus and Hermogenes, Onesiphorus went to great lengths and effort to search out Paul in Rome and comfort him and was not ashamed of his “chain.” Notice the term “*the house* of Onesiphorus.” It is possible that Onesiphorus had died by this time, so the request for mercy went to his “house.” A similar term is used at the end of the epistle: “*the household* of Onesiphorus” (2 Tim. 4:19). The terminology suggests that he was married and had children. Paul added, “The Lord grant unto him [Onesiphorus] that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day [at the time of his future reward].”

Onesimus and Onesiphorus may have been the same individual (Philem. 10; Col. 4:9). Both names have the same basic meaning in Greek, namely, “profitable” and “bringing profit,” and both individuals certainly brought spiritual “profit” and refreshment to Paul. Not only was his original contact with Onesimus in Rome, but Paul was now in Rome when he mentioned

Onesiphorus, who had helped him in Ephesus earlier. Onesimus was a slave, and Paul sent him back to his master, Philemon, with a letter of high recommendation. Philemon was a believer and an influential brother who had meetings in his home. The fact he had servants indicates that he was probably a man of means. If Philemon did free Onesimus, the former slave may have taken the new name of Onesiphorus. (Since the two epistles to Timothy were written at the end of Paul's life, the name Onesiphorus was a later name.)

Incidentally, Paul's impersonal letter to the Hebrews as a people was also written at the end of his life. To write that epistle, with its scope and breadth of thought, required tremendous effort and concentration, especially considering the lack of light in the dungeon and Paul's poor eyesight.

Another possibility is that the ringleaders Phygellus and Hermogenes, in addition to turning whole ecclesias and their elders against Paul in his imprisonment, were also causing disaffection in the household of Onesiphorus. If so, Paul was asking God to have mercy on that household because of what Onesiphorus had done for him. Having searched diligently for Paul in the dungeon in Rome, Onesiphorus often refreshed him and was not ashamed of the apostle's "chain." In the search for Paul, there was always the possibility that Onesiphorus himself would be imprisoned.

In the Mideast, the Far East, and parts of Europe, the family and one's posterity were very meaningful. If Onesiphorus had died and his household had turned away, Paul would be very reluctant to think unfavorably of them, in spite of their disaffection. Because of the faithfulness of Onesiphorus, Paul prayed that his household would not come under special condemnation.

Now we can understand the atmosphere of disaffection for Paul that surrounded Timothy. If "all" had turned against Paul in Asia Minor, we can appreciate the charge and burden the apostle put on Timothy to uphold the Word and the banner of truth. Providentially, the Lord shifted the Apostle John, a son of "thunder," to that area (Mark 3:17).

Paul said, "*The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus.*" If a sin is committed against another person, we cannot grant the perpetrator carte blanche forgiveness, for the matter is between the one who did the injury and the injured party. If someone sins against God, we cannot forgive the individual unless he first makes the matter right before God. Part of the Lord's Prayer is, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Forgiveness operates between us and others, but we cannot interfere with affairs that involve others. It is true that we can make recommendations—but very carefully, for we are often given one-sided information. When two people have a dispute, we usually listen more to a friend and how he colors the matter, but both may be partially responsible. Or the other party may be innocent, and the one we think is telling the truth is withholding information. Thus it is very hard to be a judge in the present life. In the final analysis, the Lord is the judge.

When Stephen was stoned, he pleaded for mercy on behalf of those who were guilty. His request was permissible because they were stoning *him*. Thus God could recognize Stephen's request on that basis. Some brethren are very forgiving of the sins of others when they have no right to grant forgiveness. It is easy to be loving and kind when there is no cost to us personally.

2 Tim. 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

"My son" was an expression of endearment and confidence in Timothy (1 Tim. 1:2,18). Paul told him to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Timothy was to be confident in giving Paul's instruction to others. However, while he was to act with strength, that strength

could lead to a condition of self-confidence and attaching too much importance to self *unless* he always kept in mind that he was an object of *grace*. He was ministering to others, teaching and helping them, but as an instructor, he was as much in need of grace, mercy, and forgiveness in Christ as those to whom he spoke. In proportion as Timothy was bold and strong, he was always to remember that it was only *in Christ and by grace* that he was saved.

It is known that under strange circumstances, some people who have an inferiority complex can become the most savage and brutal of creatures in later life. This phenomenon, which seems to be a contradiction of fact, is evidently also true in the spiritual realm. A person may start out not having confidence in himself, but then, through certain providences and leadership experiences that are thrust on him, he changes character completely and goes to the other extreme. However, remembering the *grace* that is in Christ Jesus will keep one humble. He who teaches and he who is taught are both brothers in the Lord on the same plane.

Comment: Simply stated, we should always remember that by grace we are saved.

Brethren in the early Church began to go out with a chip on their shoulder. In criticizing the emperor, idol worship, etc., they precipitated persecutions unnecessarily, thinking that was suffering affliction for Christ, but they were producing the suffering by foolish reasoning. Some were even put to death for castigating rulers at a public ceremony. However, that is not the type of suffering the Lord is looking for in His people. The suffering is by grace and must be received with a humble attitude at all times.

2 Tim. 2:2 **And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.**

Paul realized that his earthly career was coming to an end, so he was writing to Timothy as a faithful son. He instructed Timothy to keep up the good work, to continue to espouse the true doctrine, and not to feel browbeaten by his fellow contemporaries. Since, with few exceptions, all in Asia Minor had forsaken Paul, Timothy would have to be careful in his ministry with regard to giving approval or commendation to others. Just as Paul had exercised considerable thought and prayer in addressing his epistle to Timothy, so Timothy had to be careful in selecting other individuals.

Incidentally, these “faithful men” were not all ecclesia-appointed individuals. As an illustration, when we witness to others, very often those whom we think are noble prove to be weak in later life. Thus appearances are deceiving.

Paul was saying it was better to wait awhile before commending one to a leadership role. In other words, Timothy was to allow time for character development and not fill leadership roles too quickly. If, for example, he was preaching in a particular town and certain individuals were attracted to the message of truth, a newly formed ecclesia should not elect officers. Having recently consecrated, the brethren would be inexperienced and unlearned in certain areas. The best Timothy could do would be to try to see which one of the brothers showed the most promise and had some background of experience. Paul was saying, “When you commit approval to an individual, make sure you can see justification for doing so.” If Timothy too hastily endorsed one as a teacher, he would be responsible, to a certain extent, for conditions that subsequently arose. Of course all are fallible, including Timothy, but this was the principle on which to operate. How could Timothy know a person was faithful unless he allowed a period of time for him to manifest faithfulness? The implication is that the person had to be active on behalf of the Lord.

Not only was Paul’s decease soon to come, but we think he felt that Timothy did not have a

long time to live either. Timothy's stomach affliction is one clue (1 Tim. 5:23). In the meantime, when Paul passed off the scene, Timothy was to be his advocate, for although he had certain limitations in not being an eloquent, fluent speaker like Titus, he was very alert doctrinally. Paul was hinting that Timothy should prepare for his own demise and meanwhile get as many others as possible indoctrinated with the truth so that they would be emissaries of the gospel in the proper light with the proper emphasis. Timothy was to talk on constructive subjects that built up the brethren as soldiers in Christ and defenders of the faith.

2 Tim. 2:3 **Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.**

Paul told Timothy to “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” In other words, “Timothy, if you obey my instructions and try to straighten out this matter, you will get a lot of flack, but do not let the opposition deter or discourage you. You have a responsibility to carry on, and a soldier is expected to experience fatigue, hardship, and wounds.” Thus Timothy was to prepare himself to defend the truth and to teach the better way to other Christians.

We are in an *endurance* race, a *marathon* battle, not in just one climactic round or struggle. We are engaged in a *lifelong* fight of faith. A soldier sometimes has pleasure, joys, and periods of relaxation, but he must expect and be prepared for times when duty calls or danger. A good soldier endures hardness. At times there will be no bed to sleep on, little food to eat, inclement weather, etc.

Comment: A good soldier cannot run from the battle but must stand his ground and fight.

Reply: Yes, he may have hard experiences, but he keeps fighting and perseveres and endures.

2 Tim. 2:4 **No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.**

This principle is true, for the more one entangles himself with the affairs of this life, the less he can be a warrior of the gospel. Paul was not saying that those who were married should leave their spouses to preach the gospel to other nations. Rather, each Christian was to soberly consider his present status and *not further* entangle himself in the affairs of this life. Attention was to be focused on the Christian warfare.

A Christian should not entangle himself with the affairs of this life so “that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” The head soldier is Christ himself—the beginner and the finisher of the race (Heb. 12:2). The Author of the race is God Himself.

Comment: The Revised Standard is good for verse 4: “No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him.”

Reply: A danger for the Christian today is getting involved in politics or in a social gospel of helping the poor, the afflicted, and the distressed.

Comment: Verse 4 in the *Diaglott* has “occupations of life” instead of “affairs of life.”

Reply: Yes, that is a good term to use. For example, if we become a convert to Christ by realizing we are a sinner, reforming our ways, asking forgiveness of God, and dedicating our life to Him, will we go to college for four years to get a degree? After making a sincere commitment to serve God for the rest of our life, we should see such an action as incongruous, for we would be pursuing the “affairs of life” and running in a different direction. Thus the affairs of life can be any number of occupations. Paul properly evaluated his consecration by

saying, “This one thing I do ... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13,14). We are to bend every effort but, at the same time, do things decently and honestly in the sight of all men (Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21). Perhaps a marriage contract was entered into prior to consecration, or there may be another type of responsibility. Sometimes mortgages on one’s time and efforts have to be considered, but we certainly do not want to get further entangled than the situation at the time of our commitment to serve Christ.

2 Tim. 2:5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

Why did Paul say that a person is not crowned unless he strives lawfully? For mastery and a crown, the *rules* of the Word must be followed. The RSV reads, “An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.” Striving lawfully means that the Christian walks in harmony with and obeys the counsel and teaching of the Scriptures, not worldly philosophy.

Paul was using the principle of a race where lanes are marked out. In some track events, a contender has to stay in the lane allotted to him, lest he inhibit or trip another runner. In the type of race indicated here, a reward was given to the winner, and rules had to be observed. The lesson for the Christian is that in running for the high calling, one has to keep within the boundaries—the rules and regulations of Scripture. God’s Word tells us what to do and what not to do. If we successfully strive in that fashion and are successful, we will get the Lord’s approval.

False gospels masquerade as ministries of Christ. When examined, they have very little substance. One of the most damaging doctrines is “once saved, always saved.” To follow that teaching is to put off the armor. We cannot just say a prayer of faith and be saved, for we must believe *into* Christ and follow his instructions. Hear Jesus’ words: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [lawlessness]” (Matt. 7:22,23). The ones who do these “wonderful works” really think they are serving God. True, they are using the Lord’s name, but they are not following his teachings. The gospel is a lifetime work.

Comment: Paul clearly refuted the thought of “once in grace, always in grace” when he said, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27).

Reply: With all the remarkable things Paul did and his tremendous witness work, he did not feel confident until he was an older man and had been imprisoned the second time and knew his life was ebbing. Only then could he say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7). At that point, God’s providence had shut the door, and he knew the next step was the grave. He could then rest and just faithfully submit.

Comment: We cannot gain an incorruptible crown if we are involved in this world’s affairs.

Reply: Paul said, “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Cor. 9:24). We are to run with our utmost efforts. If we run according to our abilities and keep that up, we will get the crown, but we need to have that drive. Those who excel in any field in the world devote time and energy and make sacrifices, and the same principles apply to the heavenly race. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

Comment: To ignore the sound doctrine of these two epistles to Timothy would be an example

of following one's own will, not the Lord's rules.

2 Tim. 2:6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

The “husbandman,” the farmer, labors long and hard to obtain crops. He must break, till, seed, and weed the ground, and when the produce matures and ripens, he must harvest it. Just as each crop requires considerable attention, so Paul was emphasizing that continued activity in the Lord's service results in a crown. The RSV has, “It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.” Accordingly, the Christian who *continues in faithful service* gets the crown. Just as the farmer who works faithfully and properly is the first to benefit from the crop, so the Christian who runs well enough according to the rules will get the crown. A farmer toils hard in the sun—from sunrise through the heat of the day to sunset. The results, or benefits, do not come right away, but at the end, at the harvest. Similarly, Christians who are more-than-overcomers get the benefit in the first resurrection.

Comment: The hard-working farmer who labors to produce must be the first to partake of the fruits.

Reply: Yes, and of course Paul was referring to a laborer in spiritual things.

Verse 6 is a terse statement of a broad subject that can be interpreted in different ways. From one slant, the laborer is worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7). The “husbandman,” or farmer, can also be the owner of the property, which provides another perspective.

Comment: What excellent analogies! The Christian is compared to a soldier, an athletic contender, and a farmer.

2 Tim. 2:7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

Paul was saying, “Take note of what I have said. Pause and reflect on the instruction and pray about it—and may God give you understanding in all these matters.” In other words, he gave instruction as to what to do on certain occasions, but when Timothy would go out, he might meet slightly different circumstances, even though the principles would be the same. The Holy Spirit would help Timothy to discern what precept to follow in his experiences.

The same is true with us. We study the principles in God's Word, but since many of our experiences do not exactly fit a case in Scripture, we need the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Through prayer, we ask God to help us select the appropriate principle for each circumstance. Stated another way, to be able to select the correct precept for a particular situation is a God-given quality. Our problems in life are usually a mixture of circumstances, some of which are very perplexing. We ask the Lord for guidance when we do not know how to meet a problem, and the selectivity of precepts and principles comes from the Holy Spirit. On matters that occur again and again, Paul gave very explicit instructions, and we can clearly see the principle right away.

After Paul's departure, Timothy was to teach others to be teachers. Therefore, Paul was saying, “You have observed me for many years. When you accompanied me on tours, you heard me speak and saw my actions. Make use of this background information in teaching others so that more teachers will go out and the gospel will prosper.” Timothy's responsibility to teach others in the truth would require time and effort. Of course he needed an income, but to concentrate on teaching others, he could not be employed full-time. Thus Paul said, “The Lord give thee understanding in all things”; that is, “The Lord will supply your needs. Do not be embarrassed about giving full-time attention to the Lord's service, for a laborer is worthy of his hire. God

will make sure that you get the necessities of life.” This advice was vaguely along the lines of, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). Timothy was to redeem the time (Eph. 5:16). If he used the time left to him after Paul’s departure to try to make as many teachers as possible, the Lord would take care of him. With Timothy apparently being single, he did not have the mortgage of a wife. Down through the Gospel Age, single brethren have gone out preaching the gospel, not knowing where the next meal would come from. Having no other temporal responsibilities, they took 100 percent responsibility for preaching the Word and trusted in the Lord and in the prayer “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11).

2 Tim. 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

2 Tim. 2:9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

Why did Paul bring in here that “Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel”? The RSV reads, “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as preached in my gospel, the gospel for which I am suffering and wearing fetters like a criminal. But the word of God is not fettered.” In preaching the gospel, Jesus received opposition because he was not of the Aaronic priesthood. However, he inherited the regal promise in David, who received the “sure mercies” of the house of Judah (Isa. 55:3). This inheritance—the scepter, the right to rule—will be apparent in the Kingdom Age, when the Church will share that blessing with him. Incidentally, we would not be surprised if one day it is seen that Jesus had a relationship with the Aaronic priesthood through Mary, his mother. The Aaronic order will be dissolved or superseded by the Melchisedec priesthood in the Kingdom.

David’s suffering and rejection as a warrior before he ascended to the throne picture the suffering and trials of The Christ in the present life, and his being enthroned pictures the honor and glory of The Christ in the Kingdom Age and beyond. (We usually contrast David and Solomon as picturing the present life and the future reign of peace, respectively, but the two phases of David’s life can also have that representation.)

Thus Jesus’ humanity—his being of the seed of David—is emphasized in verse 8. The lessons of David’s life, including the kingship aspect, are also inherent in that analogy. For Jesus’ suffering and faithfulness unto death, he was rewarded with a resurrection to spirit nature. If we are faithful, that will be our experience also.

Paul seemed to be telling Timothy, “Whenever you have problems, try to think back on your association with me, as well as on the Word of God.” Sometimes we are so overwhelmed with the circumstances of an experience that we momentarily forget even to pray. Instead we try to proceed in our own strength and wisdom, using human rationale. After a while, we remember to pray for the Lord’s guidance, to seek instruction from His Word, and to ask brethren for counsel. To always keep in mind that Jesus was raised from the dead is an inspirational or motivating factor, for we are worshipping not merely a crucified Savior but a *risen and living* Savior. Jesus said, “I am he that ... was dead; and ... [now] I am alive for evermore” (Rev. 1:18).

Comment: Paul was trying to say that Jesus is the perfect pattern. The very things Paul did and Timothy was to emulate were according to the pattern set by Jesus in his earthly ministry. Jesus first had to suffer on the human plane; then he was raised and exalted.

Reply: Paul’s suffering for Christ was not too favorably viewed by those who forsook him in

Asia. Therefore, he reminded Timothy of the example of Jesus, the beginner and finisher of the faith.

At this time, which was near the end of Paul's life, Gnostic teachings were coming into the Church. Gnostics tried to show that the Messiah was not the man Christ Jesus, that what was seen was not a reality but a vision with spirit beings. Because Gnostics were falsely teaching another way of life, a sort of mystic gospel, Paul wanted to emphasize Jesus' words, namely, that no man can come unto the Father except by the Son, and that he is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). To refute the error of the Gnostics, Paul found it necessary to go back to what Jesus taught, to what the apostles said, and to Old Testament promises. The great Messiah was to come from the lineage of David, he was the "seed" of woman promised in Genesis 3:15, he was born of an earthly family, etc. God's Word is the basis of our understanding, and the Old Testament testified that Messiah would come from the royal lineage of David. Stated another way, David was the progenitor of one who would come on the human plane, and Jesus came down and was made flesh of the seed of David. Paul brought the matter down from the field of fantasy and speculation that was rampant at that time. Phygellus and Hermogenes were leading others astray with their harmful doctrinal teachings, and Paul, wanting to nip Gnosticism in the bud, gave Timothy advice accordingly (2 Tim. 1:15).

People like to imagine things, for they feel that new teachings are exciting. However, the false teachings of the Gnostics were dangerously diversionary, for they deviated, or got away, from the Cross, the gospel of Christ. Evidently, false teachers were weaning believers away into other teachings, and Timothy's role was to combat that trend. We believe he was successful until the Apostle John came and faced up to the problem of the Gnostics in his three epistles. The spirit of antichrist was already working, saying that Jesus had not come in the flesh, that he was an appearance, not a reality (1 John 4:3).

Paul said, "Jesus Christ ... was raised from the dead according to *my* gospel [the gospel I am preaching]." In other words, "This is the *truth*—Jesus *really* was raised from the dead." This theme has to be constantly kept in remembrance. All other themes are supplementary.

"Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound." A prevalent Gnostic teaching was that one should not visit Christian Jews who were in prison, the reason purportedly being that to suffer persecution, they must have done something wrong. Thus imprisonment was considered their own fault, and there was no empathy for the suffering. Gnostics saw *weakness* instead of *strength* in those who were persecuted. Paul directly confronted this thinking by saying, "I suffer bonds and am not ashamed." If an elder manifests shame when persecuted, right away those underneath his teaching reason, "We should pursue a path of prudence and wisdom and not stick our necks out."

Wisdom (Greek *sophia*) became prized, but there are two kinds of wisdom: spiritual wisdom, which comes down from above, and worldly or carnal wisdom, which is earthly. Some did things in exactly the wrong way in the name of Christ.

2 Tim. 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

While we struggle to make our own calling and election sure, we should also be very much interested in helping others make their calling and election sure—to the extent that we experience a certain amount of deprivation, hardship, and inconvenience. We should expect to suffer in various ways in trying to help others and should consider the suffering a privilege. Paul certainly endured "all [kinds of] things for the elect's sakes" (2 Cor. 11:24-28). Our individual desire should be to fill up the afflictions that are left behind of Christ. It is a privilege

to fill that cup of woe (Col. 1:24).

Comment: Verse 10 expresses a Christlike quality in Paul. It was in his heart to suffer for the brethren, for the sake of the elect.

We have observed over the years that many who minister the truth think it is most prudent to purposely teach doctrine that is not too deep. As an illustration, one elder boasted in his talk that whenever the class finished the *First Volume* on Sundays, the brethren voted to start it all over again. The rationale was that they should do this for the new interests who came to their meetings. However, this policy compromised the teaching of doctrine. The desire should be for all of the brethren to mature in the truth. To repeat the same study indefinitely keeps the class from increasing in understanding. The substance of the teaching for the consecrated should not be mostly restitution and the coming *earthly* Kingdom. The subject of restitution is part of the present-truth message, but the real focus of the gospel is the *heavenly* call. Thus Paul said he endured all things “for *the elect’s* sakes.” In other words, the standard has to be kept up high—on the one hope of the calling (Eph. 4:4).

To preach restitution encourages an earthly hope and the attitude “What is the use of consecrating now? The Kingdom on earth will be so wonderful that I will be satisfied.” Paul wanted others to be like him, that is, to inherit the heavenly promises, to get a crown, to “obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus [to live and reign with him] with eternal glory.” There have even been talks that discourage thinking too much about the glory of the divine nature and urge, instead, thinking about what we can do for others. The social gospel has a very touching, tender, emotional appeal on the human heart, but Paul said to endure all things for the sake of *the elect*. Accordingly, he shunned not to declare the whole gospel (Acts 20:27).

2 Tim. 2:11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

2 Tim. 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.” Over and over in his epistles, Paul stressed being faithful. He was in chains in the dungeon at this time, but he said, “The word of God is not bound” (verse 9). Although he was fettered, his confidence that the truth would prevail made him even stronger. In other words, if we think confidently and faithfully, we are uplifted.

On the one hand, many Christians have strong confidence that God will accomplish all of His purposes but do not equate that power in their own lives. They need to *personally* feel strong in the Lord. As Paul said, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of *his* might” (Eph. 6:10). On the other hand, some Christians feel strong in the Lord but are not as strong as they think because their supposed strength is based on bravado and self-confidence, whereas the relationship to Christ exists by grace. They exude a confidence that may not be properly warranted. Neither extreme is good. We should not be so confident that we put off our armor, nor should we be so doubtful and wavering that we are not strong in the Lord.

To a certain extent, Paul got his confidence by the things that he suffered *lawfully* (not rashly) in the Lord’s service. Striving lawfully over a period of time and fighting in obedience to the regulations of Scripture developed strength of character in him. Paul expressed the degrees of development by saying we glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation works patience, patience works experience, experience works hope, and hope makes us not ashamed (Rom. 5:3-5). Faithfulness in obeying the Word of God over a period of time bears fruitage in giving us a measure of confidence and boldness that is proper. True faith, hope, and love are not emotional, for these qualities must be established in the instruction of the Word of God.

In spite of whatever limitations Paul might have had in speech and in being a little man, the fervency and the spirit with which he sermonized came through. He was not an Apollos—he was not given to flowery language but concentrated on the real meat of any situation. Therefore, he would have put a lot of emphasis on the clause “*It is a faithful saying,*” for he *believed* what he was talking about. Right down into the gut of his being, he believed that if we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with him. Such zeal and fervor were contagious. Those who were a bit on the timid side were encouraged that maybe they could consecrate and be faithful. Jesus committed to Paul the ability to teach others.

Paul continued, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.” Verse 11 referred to the suffering aspect, but what about the thought of denial? There are two ways of denying Jesus. (1) An indirect quiescent denial is to bury the truth, to not talk on the truth, to not let our light shine. (2) A direct denial can easily be seen. Both types of denial are negative, and they will bring consequences.

Comment: The Diaglott has, “True is the word” and “If we endure patiently,” instead of “It is a faithful saying” and “If we suffer.”

Reply: Paul was speaking of long-suffering, as opposed to cheerful endurance.

Comment: Jude 4, which reads, “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ,” shows that denial among a teaching element at the end of the age can also include presuming on God’s mercy and forgiveness by not sufficiently heeding the authority of God, the Scriptures, and Jesus.

2 Tim. 2:13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

If we do not believe the “faithful saying” of verses 11 and 12, Jesus is still faithful. Consecration is like a contract in which two parties sign an agreement. If we fulfill the conditions, we will receive the reward of that contract. If we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with him. If we do not see the need for being disciplined to receive the reward, the Lord is not lacking in his part of the contract. We will not reign with Jesus unless he thinks we have met the conditions.

Jesus “abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” What is the thought here? In a marriage contract, for example, two parties enter into an agreement. If one party commits adultery, the innocent one is free to enter into another contract with someone else. Accordingly, if we believe not or deny Jesus, if we fail to suffer with him, we will lose out on the prize for the high calling. In other words, there comes a time when one can lose out on the high calling. The next issue would be whether the individual is even worthy to receive life. Depending on the nature of the unfaithfulness, retrieval is possible with proper repentance. There is a *Great Company* but only a *Little Flock*. *Many* run, but only *one* wins the prize, relatively speaking. Jesus does not shirk his commitment to the contract, but if we do not fulfill our part, he is not bound hand and foot from doing other things.

Jesus cannot deny himself in the sense that when he makes a contract, it is bona fide. He will not forget. *If* we do our part, we *will get* a crown, for Jesus’ words are binding. He is faithful to his words and cannot deny himself. Otherwise, he would be going back on a fundamental principle of his character. However, he can deal with someone else *if* we are unfaithful. In verses 11 and 12, Paul was speaking of the terms of the *Little Flock*, not the terms for life.

Comment: “God ... cannot lie” (Titus 1:2). Neither God nor Jesus can or will renege on a

promise.

As long as a person's hopes are raised to realize that if he is faithful, he will attain a crown, the door to the high calling is still open. In other words, since the Adversary has blinded the minds of men lest they see the glorious light of the gospel, God would not engender the hope of the high calling in a person if the door were closed (2 Cor. 4:4). Stated another way, no one will hear the call once the door is closed, for the calling will have ceased.

The call to the high calling is miraculous in nature. The *Reprints* speak of one who, after having *great light*, went into *great darkness* in just a year or so because of unfaithfulness. "The wages of sin is [second] death [that is, *continual, eternal, everlasting death, annihilation*]" (Rom. 6:23).

Paul said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... [Who] shall be able to separate us from the love of God[?]" (Rom. 8:35,39). *Nothing* because "the Father himself loveth us" (John 16:27). Here in verse 13, Paul was saying the same thing in a condensed fashion. Jesus abides by the promises he has made. If we are faithless and do not take action on the promises, that is *our* problem, but he is still faithful, for "he cannot deny himself." His faithfulness becomes operative toward us only when we are in the receptive mood. Jesus recognizes those whom the Father sends to him and will *in no wise* cast them out (John 6:37). He stands faithful, but if we disobey the warnings and exhortations of Scripture, we will inherit the penalty. There are two kinds, or different degrees, of disobedience: direct disobedience and the lack of obedience, the former being more serious.

Who does the casting out, should it be necessary? The Father does the pruning, Jesus is the vine, and his followers are the branches. As the "husbandman," God cuts off the branches that do not bear fruit (John 15:1,2,5). The matter of life and death is in His hands, especially in regard to the serious decision of Second Death. After all, God did the calling in the first place.

2 Tim. 2:14 **Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.**

While Paul's instruction was meant for every child of God, the force of verse 14 is that Timothy was to help those who were influential put the proper emphasis on the gospel. He was to appoint "faithful men," that is, leaders and teachers (2 Tim. 2:2). Just as Paul, who was about to leave the scene in his old age, was preparing Timothy, so Timothy was to prepare other teachers by giving them sound advice. Then when Timothy got old and died, a sufficiency of doctrine and instruction would be left behind for others to know how to serve the flock. By observing stability and constancy of character in individuals, as well as faithfulness and loyalty, Timothy was to discern those who were more likely to be faithful. To such, he would commit a trust.

Paul said to avoid striving about words "to no profit." However, depending on the situation, there are times when disputing about words can be profitable. One way to determine the difference is to think, before getting involved in a heated and animated discussion, "Is this topic worth the striving, or would it be better to leave the subject on the shelf and go on to something else?" For the proper balance, Jude said we are to earnestly "*contend for the faith*," that is, for important doctrines (Jude 3).

Romans 16:17 is pertinent: "Mark them which cause divisions and offences *contrary to the doctrine* which ye have learned; and avoid them." Many quote just the first part, "Mark them which cause divisions," but that statement is qualified. The Reformers all caused *honorable* divisions and separations, and generally speaking, they were on the right side of the issue.

When faced with a division, we should analyze the situation and ask, “Is the division proper? Is it worthwhile? Is it based on God’s Word? Is the doctrine important?” We should question almost every step along the way in learning or hearing the Word of God. The quicker we question, the better it will be for us, for then we will not get deeply into a situation that is not of much value. For example, if we see that tempers and problems arise, then it is not worthwhile to pursue the issue unless the doctrine is very important.

In verse 14, the word “but” is supplied and should be deleted. The verse should read: “Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, to the subverting of the hearers.” Paul was saying, “Do not strive if there is no profit and if the hearers would be harmed.” Idle talk and discussions on relatively superficial subjects not only are a waste of time but can be harmful.

Comment: We (and especially teachers) are to build one another up in the most holy faith and contend only if the matter is important to be properly understood.

Reply: If the discussion is on a serious issue, it should be earnestly considered and not be allowed to pass by as the easy way out. In that case, we should strive and not mince words, for misunderstanding or having the wrong thought on the issue would be destructive. To the contrary, Paul was saying to avoid discussions that are not profitable—discussions that are not of constructive value to the Christian.

Comment: If the elders of an ecclesia continually strive and contend over unnecessary and nonconstructive issues, the spirituality of the class is adversely affected, and the hearers go home discouraged.

Reply: An atmosphere where contention is *practiced* can lead to ruination, as suggested in the RSV, but not one discussion on one occasion. With some individuals, arguments and contention are a way of life. They like to stir up controversy because they think it is exciting, but controversy can be destructive.

Actually, all of us are probably guilty of being argumentative on occasion, but that attitude should not be practiced, for it can lead to the overthrow of the hearers. Of course the one or ones who cause the discussion are more responsible. It is one thing to raise a question, for sometimes a matter should be aired and given serious consideration, but the matter should not be continually aired. However, a wrong question or comment, such as a joke, can destroy the holy atmosphere of a meeting.

When Paul used the expression “to the subverting of the hearers,” he was referring to a topic or issue that was in the direction of a catastrophe but was not catastrophic in and of itself. In other words, the strife about words was harmful, damaging, and evil and, if persisted in, would lead to ruination.

Comment: Individuals who delight in stirring up controversy should not be chosen as leaders. Paul was telling Timothy how to encourage and choose those who were most apt to teach.

Reply: We recall an occasion when a joke was told that destroyed the holy atmosphere of the meeting. Being incensed, we let the party know with a look that we were thoroughly displeased with such an intrusion at a most inappropriate time.

In both epistles to Timothy, Paul harped on the admonition to “strive not about words to no profit,” using terms like “vain babblings” and “endless genealogies.” As listeners to teachers, we can discern the profitability, or substantive value, of their thinking. Entertainment and

storytelling pass the time and make discussions interesting, but they are not wholesome words. Paul kept reminding Timothy to stick to the fundamentals, the real truth, and not to get into mythological subjects. Words “to no profit” subvert, topple, and undercut the hearers. Incidentally, the word “babblings” is close to the word “Babylon”—meaning *confusion*.

Comment: Teachers who tell jokes and make light of very serious matters may be trying to cover up their own embarrassment in their lack of understanding.

2 Tim. 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

One translation has, “Concentrate on showing yourselves approved of the Lord.” The workman is to show himself approved unto God. In other words, we should *earnestly desire* to have God’s approval of what we are doing. Trying to please and be faithful to God and to Jesus should be our primary concern. Secondly, we should try to help and be beneficial to others—but not if doing so conflicts with obeying God. Stated another way, sometimes we have to displease others in order to please God.

We should try to be “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,” but not ashamed of what? We do not want to be ashamed as regards God or not standing up for the truth. For instance, if a subject comes up and the spokesman is weak and not qualified to address it, he can be shamed by one who has diligently studied the subject. We need to study the Word so that in a debate, we can defend the right principle and not be ashamed of our lack of understanding. As God’s representatives, we desire His approval and do not want to be ashamed, nor do we want to be shamed before others for our inadequacy. We should learn the “word of truth” so that we can rightly divide it. It is nice to show God that we understand what He is teaching us, that we are putting the right emphasis in the right place.

Paul was telling Timothy (and us indirectly) to study to show himself approved unto God. He was to be “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.” Verse 6 uses the illustration of a farmer, a “workman,” showing that he is entitled to partake of the fruits before he sells them to others. Although from another perspective we are God’s “workmanship,” we have to participate by being active in the Lord’s service in some capacity, using our individual judgment according to our situation (Eph. 2:10). In other words, we should not be stereotyped, cajoled, or frightened into a particular avenue of service.

The workman is to rightly divide the word of truth. One application is that we should apply statements of Scripture to their proper dispensation according to the Divine Plan and not take verses out of context. For example, the nominal Church teaches that “now is the [only] day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). To the contrary, Jesus said, “Sit down and soberly count the cost before you consecrate” (Luke 14:28 paraphrase). Another way to rightly divide the word of truth is doctrinally, line upon line, precept upon precept, that is, to compare Scripture with Scripture (Isa. 28:10).

Comment: Instead of “rightly dividing the word of truth,” the *Diaglott* interlinear has “cutting straight the word of the truth.”

There are different ways to study. For example, we may meditate on what we previously heard about a particular Scripture. As we think about the Word of God, we try to come to a judgment, and that mental exercise is a form of study. Timothy could reflect on Paul’s life, and he heard firsthand much of the New Testament through Paul’s writings. In addition, Paul said to Timothy, “Remember how you were brought up in your youth by your grandmother and your mother.” Timothy’s lifetime experience with truth served as guidelines or parameters for

his ministry. We can also study our own manner of life and moral deportment.

2 Tim. 2:16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

2 Tim. 2:17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

2 Tim. 2:18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Although we should avoid “profane and vain babblings” (godless and idle chatter and gossip), the context here is *deeper*. Paul was referring to certain types of religious discussions that “increase unto more ungodliness.” Then he named two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who were engaged in such discussions, specifically, “that the resurrection is past already.” Just as was stated earlier in the warning to “strive not about words to no profit,” we must analyze a subject to see whether it is profitable to the new creature (verse 14). Some translations give the thought to avoid philosophical reasonings that are of no value because they result in “more ungodliness.” Verse 17 gives the weight of such talking; namely, “their word will eat as doth a canker.” Again Paul was primarily addressing those who were teaching—not necessarily formal teachers but those who were espousing certain doctrines. For example, sometimes one who is not the elder, leader, or chairman dominates a study and promotes his thinking.

A disease in the blood, a “canker” is a putrefying or running sore, a slow spreading of infection like gangrene. In the later stages, it is usually painful. Fluid from an open, inflamed sore spreads contagion. “Canker” is probably the old-fashioned word for “cancer.” Any sore that persists for a long period of time, and thus pertains to the bloodstream, almost invariably turns into cancer. Philetus and Hymenaeus taught or promoted thoughts that ate like a canker; that is, “their word [teachings]” spread, damaging and subverting the hearers. Hymenaeus overthrew the faith of some by blaspheming God’s Word (1 Tim. 1:20).

Q: What were some of the dangerous teachings of Hymenaeus and Philetus?

A: We will consider what was so damaging back there in order to help us reexamine certain peculiar doctrines now, at the end of the age.

Hymenaeus and Philetus erred in teaching the Gnosticism doctrine that the resurrection was past. This damaging doctrine was stated in two different ways, as follows.

1. “There is no resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor. 15:12). Advocates of this teaching felt that the Christian should eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow he would die. Paul responded that if there is no resurrection, then Christ is not raised, and not only did he die in vain, but also one’s faith is in vain. This teaching was very damaging. Paul reasoned, “If there is no resurrection, then we, of all men, are the most miserable of creatures. Why should we suffer for righteousness’ sake?”
2. “The resurrection is in the past; it has already occurred.” This thinking was the beginning of the teaching in the early Church that the Kingdom was already here and that Christ was invisibly present. Because the bodies of many sleeping saints arose at the time of the earthquake in connection with Jesus’ crucifixion, some concluded that Jesus had returned, the resurrection was past, and they would not die henceforth (Matt. 27:51-53). After three days, those saints went into Jerusalem and appeared to many. (Incidentally, the omission of seven spurious words—“and the graves were opened” plus “and went”—does not change the meaning, for the rest of the account is intact and authentic, as proven by its inclusion in the

Sinaitic and all of the other ancient manuscripts.) In addition, a common teaching was that the Apostle John would tarry and not die until the Kingdom was here. The awakening of those sleeping saints from their graves was a resuscitation like that of Lazarus. Since these individuals had been disciples prior to the Crucifixion, the conclusion was that the resurrection had already taken place and that Jesus was present. The damaging part of this teaching was that Christians no longer had to suffer and die for Christ.

Paul wrote a letter to the Thessalonians about the need to watch and wait because Jesus' return would be invisible like the coming of a thief. That doctrine was understood correctly in the early Church, but Paul had to add that Jesus' return could not occur until, first, the man of sin, the Antichrist, appeared. The brethren back there had the correct understanding of a *secret, invisible* presence. Otherwise, they would have said, "If Jesus is here, where is he? We do not see him." However, although they had the correct view of the secret presence, they had a wrong view of the time. Today we believe the sleeping saints were raised in 1878, and it is important for each of us to prove and be sure of this doctrine, for if incorrect, it would be damaging and would subvert hearers and overthrow our faith. Certain things must be considered lest one hastily (and erroneously) conclude that this doctrine is wrong. How do we know that we are not deceived with regard to the doctrine of 1878? Since the Antichrist has already come, it is now *possible* for the resurrection to occur, but what would be so damaging about believing that the resurrection is past? There is an important distinction; namely, we believe not that *the resurrection is past* but that *the resurrection of the sleeping saints is past*, which is a *qualified* statement.

The danger in the early Church in thinking the resurrection was past was that Christians still in the flesh believed they had already proved faithful and thus did not have to die. Moreover, while still in the flesh in the present life, they felt they were reigning as kings. Paul said on another occasion, "You have reigned as kings without us, and I would to God that you did reign so that I might reign with you" (1 Cor. 4:8 paraphrase). If not corrected, that erroneous understanding would have adversely affected their consecrations and overthrown their faith, for they no longer felt they had to suffer and be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

To believe the sleeping saints were raised in 1878 does not adversely affect our faith because we know the raising pertains only to saints of the past. We are not confident we have proved faithful, for we know the general resurrection and our own resurrection, if faithful *unto death*, are *yet future*. But in the early Church, the damaging doctrine that the *whole* resurrection was past ate, or spread, like "a canker." The teaching was that they, being alive, would continue (supposedly like the Apostle John) right on into the Kingdom. This doctrine was the start of the teaching "once saved, always saved."

Jesus' statement in Luke 9:27, shortly before the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration, was also misunderstood: "But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." Because some brethren in the early Church were *powerfully* misusing Scripture to teach error—and because the doctrine was spreading and was shipwrecking the faith of believers—Paul wrote to Timothy about Hymenaeus and Philetus, telling how damaging this false doctrine was and showing the responsibility to try to clarify the teaching and to see that it did not prosper.

An evil disposition is always looking for flaws in brethren, doctrinal or otherwise. However, if a discussion comes up, it is proper to say certain things or to ask certain questions if we know that the thoughts being introduced could be predicated upon a wrong doctrine. Then our comments would be pertinent to the reasoning at hand. We should not be spiritual policemen, but we are responsible for what we hear others teach or for what we teach ourselves.

Q: We can see how, based on the resuscitation of sleeping saints at the time of Jesus' crucifixion, some could have gotten this wrong thought about the resurrection, but Hymenaeus was turned over to Satan to learn not to blaspheme. Is the implication that Paul and/or others tried to correct him, but he stubbornly resisted and continued to promote the wrong doctrine? In what sense was he blaspheming?

A: Paul wrote in his *first* epistle to Timothy that he had delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan "that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20). His *second* epistle to Timothy was written only about two years later, so the two epistles were relatively contemporaneous. The point is that Hymenaeus had already done the damage. Paul had seen that the doctrine was pernicious, and now he was referring back to the damage, even though he had previously exposed Hymenaeus. The ideas were still being promoted and embraced by others. Just as Paul told Timothy to study so that he would have God's approval and not be ashamed before God or others, "rightly dividing the word of truth," so Timothy had the responsibility of teaching others who would be study leaders to be careful and not give room to damaging doctrines (2 Tim. 2:15).

Incidentally, harmful teachings are sometimes promulgated on the side during idle periods. For instance, fellowship periods at a convention may be golden opportunities to spread beautiful ideas, and it is good to share sound and constructive thoughts. However, some may use such opportunities to spread pernicious and damaging doctrines. Those individuals may think they are enlightening and broadening the scope and understanding of others, whereas what they are doing is actually harmful. Those in positions of responsibility should teach brethren to examine what they hear, to "try [analyze] the spirits whether they are of God" lest they embrace strange ideas (1 John 4:1). Before one spreads new thoughts and ideas, he should try to analyze them to see if they are profitable.

Gnostics liked the thought of the inner man. It is true that we have a new creature, an inner creature, for we have our treasure, the new mind, in an earthen vessel, the old man (2 Cor. 4:7). However, Gnostics built up a whole theology of a mysterious type of life based on the new creature, and they considered indulging the old creature in lust and other sins as being a beneficial experience. They falsely reasoned that such experience would help the Christian know how to properly judge the world in the next age. To the contrary, it is our *fighting against* and *overcoming* the sins of the flesh that will enable us to have empathy for and to assist others in the Kingdom. The Gnostics liked Paul, but they quoted only those parts of his teachings that were convenient to support their line of reasoning.

When the Apostle John came on the scene, he rescued many from Gnosticism. His type of thinking and approach was perceptive and very different from that of the other apostles. He was the right man for the job at that time, and for that reason, we believe he was the "angel" to the church of Smyrna, which began after the demise of Peter and Paul (Rev. 2:8).

Paul spoke strongly: "*Shun* profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness." In teaching, the Scriptures use a lot of helpful repetition, whereas Jesus advised us to avoid *vain* repetition—repetition that has no value, such as a prayer wheel (Matt. 6:7). The prayer itself may be very reverent, but a prayer from the heart is more substantive.

The word "profane" can have the thought of "worldly." There are pleasures and studies in the world that are not sinful, but for the Christian, they can be a waste of time. For example, some scientific studies are very interesting, but they should not be our general pursuit. If we stay in the gray in-between area, we will gravitate toward the world and worldly thinking. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

The implication is that Hymenaeus and Philetus once had the truth, but when they consecrated, they brought a mixture of wrong doctrines and habits with them. When we come into present truth, we have to cut off what we cultivated previously and not carry false thinking into our life as new creatures. We must sever the past and henceforth live wholly for God until death. For example, teachings of pagan philosophy lasted with some, so that they became Christianized pagans. To be acceptable, one has to be *in* Christ, to believe *into* him. Just as there are different Catholic churches—Roman, Anglican, Armenian, Coptic, Russian Orthodox, and Greek Orthodox—so there were variations in Gnosticism.

2 Tim. 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

How is verse 19 related to what Paul was just saying? It is as if Paul were talking to the Little Flock. Those who are recognized of God, desiring to make their calling and election sure and bending every energy in that direction, will heed the instruction given and be alert to do certain things. Although the majority may flounder on some issues, either momentarily or longer, adversely affecting their destiny, God will make known those who are truly Christ's. They shall be taught of God and not be in darkness in regard to certain issues. They may not all be brilliant scholars, but they will be faithful, almost intuitively, as they see circumstances arise. If zealously faithful to their covenant, they will be led in the proper direction.

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure,” and faithful more-than-overcoming Christians have “this seal [or inscription], The Lord knoweth them that are his.” What was Paul saying? He was talking about conditions down here in the present life. First, he said that the foundation of God is sure, and then he gave the reason why—because “The Lord knoweth them that are his.” In other words, those who will make the Little Flock are known by God *prior to death*. A Christian does not know if he has attained a crown, but God knows where one stands in regard to not only the future but also the present. He knows those who will be faithful and make their calling and election sure, no matter how many years they still have in the flesh, and He is very solicitous of these individuals. When some false steps are taken, the individual can be recovered to become a member of the Little Flock, but suppose a false step is taken that makes one irretrievable as far as making the Little Flock but not irretrievable for getting life. God deals with each class and provides providences accordingly, watching those who will attain the Little Flock *most carefully* and the latter class from the standpoint that they might not go into death. Stated another way, since God wants those who will make the Little Flock to get the chief crown, He is especially solicitous of those who are faithful, prayerful, and obedient up to the present. Therefore, if a subverting of hearers occurs and some are falling by the wayside, God stands near to make sure that the faithful ones get the proper instruction. Of course some who are given the opportunity for instruction do not heed it, but the class with the proper heart attitude will get the instruction and obey it and be successful.

Many translations use the word “stone” instead of “foundation.” On this stone, or monument, are inscribed two principles that are important for the Christian. These guideposts, or signposts, call attention to the Christian who is trying to make his calling and election sure. They are (1) “The Lord knoweth them that are his,” and (2) “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” In other words, God knows those who are His, and those who are His obey Him in departing from iniquity. But what “iniquity” do they depart from? A general principle is that if we *obey* God, we will be His in the full sense. *Obedience* is the cardinal doctrine of the Bible. Jesus taught in effect, “He who loves me knows and keeps my word, and my Father and I will dwell in that individual. Our home is resident in the one who knows and obeys my commandments.” Down through the Gospel Age, the chief weapon of the Adversary has been the flesh.

Paul was saying that these two principles applied in connection with this second letter to Timothy. Of course they are not confined to this epistle, but they applied in the sense that if we see things that are damaging to our faith, we should avoid them. We are not to cater to and spend time on things that are not profitable to the new creature because we want to make our calling and election sure. We should *shun* what is not profitable and *cling* to what helps us. God knows those who are His, and those who are His know God in the sense of wanting to obey Him. They flee from anything that has a potential for injuring them spiritually.

Comment: In running for the prize, those who will make the Little Flock go past things that do not apply and concentrate on what is more important.

Reply: Of course a lot of other side doctrines are helpful in giving us a better perspective. Instruction is of the utmost importance, and we need to *analyze* every single step. To have to question everything seems almost fatiguing, but we do so with generosity, not suspicion. We must be careful with regard to what we learn and understand, for we have to make our *own* calling and election sure—no one else can do that for us.

Comment: Verse 19 is the assurance that God knows who will be faithful as a more-than-conqueror in the Gospel Age. That the same was true with the Ancient Worthies is shown by God's statement to Abraham, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do [to Sodom and Gomorrah]; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:17-19). God knows exactly how and when the 144,000 crowns will be apportioned, so He will close the door at precisely the right moment.

Reply: Yes. We should not be discouraged if that which is unprofitable to us as new creatures prospers, for if our faith is such that God is leading us, the rest does not matter. We should be determined to make our calling and election sure, and we will be blessed if that is our *one* goal in life. The secret of the Lord will be given to the class who diligently apply themselves. It is nice to have the fellowship of the many, but as *individuals*, we have to work out our *own* salvation.

No one who is impure in heart will see God. Without holiness shall no man see God. Of course we are in the flesh, so there are certain problems, but holiness is the goal or standard that all must meet to the extent of their ability. We have the robe of Christ's righteousness, and we hope we do not commit the unpardonable sin. As David said, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (Psa. 19:13).

2 Tim. 2:20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

In a great house, there are vessels of gold and silver (the first couplet) and vessels of wood and earth (the second couplet). Gold and silver are both vessels of honor. Clearly, the gold vessels refer to the Little Flock, but what Paul was referring to with the silver is debatable. The gold and the silver could refer to distinctions of honor in the Church, or the silver could represent the Great Company. If both metals refer to the Little Flock, as we are inclined to think, the gold represents *special* honor in the divine nature, above the silver, as star differs from star in glory (1 Cor. 15:41).

Combustible wood and fragile earth (clay) are vessels of dishonor, or less honor, as some translations state. Another thought is that the gold and silver vessels are of special value, and the wood and earth vessels are of ordinary use. The question is, What is of ordinary use? We normally associate wood with useful, practical furniture but certainly not with a vessel of honor. Clay suggests the possibility of destruction, and both wood and clay suggest *mortality*, in which death is a possibility, the wood being more durable of the two. Of the vessels of less honor, some will be discarded, and some will be kept for ordinary use. At any rate, Paul seems to have been saying that of the consecrated, some will make Little Flock, and others will serve an ignoble or ordinary purpose.

Q: Does the “great house” represent spiritual conditions?

A: Yes. Many are called to this “banqueting house,” over which is a banner of love (Song 2:4). Of the many, some fail utterly, and some fail to attain the priesthood and thus get lesser service as Levites.

The emphasis is on the Little Flock, and if we want to be a vessel of honor, we have to apply ourselves to the instruction. Of those who are schooled down here, some will attain the divine nature (gold or silver) and some will get ordinary use and less honor as Great Company. Although we are not dogmatic with the definitions, it is hard to see the Great Company as vessels of honor.

As stated in the first epistle, Hymenaeus, a destructive troublemaker in the Church, was turned over to Satan. Now, in the second epistle, he not only had not changed his ways but was described as overthrowing the faith of some, so it is likely that he did not get life. Alexander the coppersmith was also mentioned unfavorably in both epistles (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:14). Therefore, the clay vessels may picture those who go into Second Death.

2 Tim. 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.

“If a man therefore purge himself from these [unprofitable and often destructive doctrines—and from the fellowship and pernicious influence of those who spread such doctrines], he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified [set apart], and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work [as gold and silver vessels].”

From an idealistic standpoint, when we consecrate, we set ourselves apart from our former life and endeavor to be fit for the Master’s use. The Lord is looking for useful, obedient servants who are trying to please Him in all matters of life. To be a vessel sanctified and set apart for the Master’s use means that one is concentrating as much time as possible on serving the Lord, His cause, and His people.

Paul also said, “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:12-15). In that context, the gold, silver, and precious stones are gradations of the Little Flock. The combustible materials—wood, hay, and stubble—will be saved after being burned and hence are gradations of the Great Company. Even though their superstructure is desolated, as long as these individuals hold onto Christ, the foundation, they will get life.

2 Tim. 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with

them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Paul told Timothy to follow righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Of course we cannot judge the heart, but we should notice those who call on the name of the Lord with more depth and evident sincerity. In other words, we can observe humility and depth of desire without wrongly judging, and we are looking for those who give evidence of depth of dedication. If we have the opportunity to fellowship with different groups and can make a choice, we should seek out the situation that is most beneficial and practical to us as a new creature.

Comment: Criteria for selecting fellowship include the degree of spirituality in conversation apart from meetings, how leisure time is used, whether the Lord is addressed in a spirit of reverence, and even habits of dress.

Reply: Yes, Paul was indicating that it is possible to discern those who “call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” There will be some evidence upon which we can make some discrimination.

“Flee also youthful lusts.” Earlier Paul told Timothy to purge himself from myths, profane and vain babblings, endless genealogies, and oppositions of science falsely so called, and now he added “youthful lusts” (plural). Paul was not especially referring to sexual passions here, for such desires can afflict those of middle age as well and thus are not necessarily peculiar to youth. Rather, the thought is to flee unprofitable desires such as ambitions to be a doctor or a professor, to pursue sports excessively, etc. One prepares for his life’s work in his youth, and if he wants to be proficient in a particular field, he has to devote considerable time, study, and attention to attaining that goal. Normally, the older one gets, the less interested he is in pursuing a college degree because he can see more clearly the impropriety of doing so. Also, his vitality for excelling in sports decreases.

Comment: If one does not flee “youthful lusts,” he will end up with the opposite of the four qualities of righteousness, faith, love, and peace. He will gravitate toward unrighteousness, less faith, love based more on emotion than on scriptural principle, and a lack of inner peace. Earlier in this same chapter, Paul compared a Christian to a soldier, saying that once he enlists, he concentrates on *spiritual* warfare, not on *civilian* pursuits.

Reply: All are susceptible to these dangers but especially idealistic youth. As we get older, we are in a different situation, whereas younger people are faced with multiple attractions. In contrast, for example, the instruction to avoid profane and vain babblings applies to all ages.

Paul was telling Timothy to discriminate between what is profitable and what is unprofitable for the Christian. Two other translations of verse 22 are as follows:

1. “Instead of giving in to your impulses like a young man, *fasten* your attention on holiness, faith, love, and peace in union with all those who call on the Lord with pure minds” (Jerusalem Bible). Those who are governed by impulses in late life show that they have not progressed. Still in the infant stage, they have not learned the propriety of judgment in certain matters. The principle is stated in Hebrews 5:14, “Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both [or between] good and evil.” The continual *exercise* of discrimination as to what is and is not good has to do with development.

2. “Turn from the wayward impulses of youth, and pursue justice, integrity, love, and peace with all who invoke the Lord in singleness of mind” (New English Bible).

To “follow righteousness, faith, charity, [and] peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” is to do good as we have opportunity, especially unto the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). After consecration, our fellowship is more with one another than with former friends.

2 Tim. 2:23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

Chapter after chapter, Paul kept harping on the necessity to avoid what was unprofitable for the new creature. We are to avoid “foolish and unlearned questions” by *analyzing* each situation. The reason for avoiding what is unprofitable is that it engenders, or produces, strife. We should ask, Where will the situation lead? Will it be helpful? If not in any way specially beneficial, it should be avoided. For example, instead of just engaging in chitchat, we should look for more relevant topics and more constructive thinking. There is a time for rest and relaxation, but that time has to be carefully watched. The more we think about the Lord Jesus and our Heavenly Father, the more profitable it is for us as new creatures.

A Christian must consider these puzzling questions at all times. If practiced and pursued as a course of life, foolish questions bring strife about words that is to no profit and that subverts the hearers, leading to the ruin, or destruction, of Christian character. Doctrine is important to discuss, but we should *weigh* the matter according to the circumstances. The question to ask is, Would a discussion at this time be profitable or damaging? Is it worth the time and the trouble to settle this issue? What is the overall value? Some things in God’s Word are vital, and others are not, although they are interesting and helpful. We should weigh a situation before plunging in. Yes, we are to avoid vain babblings, but there are other discussions we should not avoid because the understanding is important to us and to others. To put such matters under a rug would be compromising. Some think the study of prophecy or difficult parts of Scripture is unprofitable because it brings friction. Thus they advocate staying with the simple and more wholesome subjects, whereas both are needed, including the principles in God’s Word. Of course we are to avoid human theories and speculations and invalid cliché statements.

Sometimes sober questions engender strife. For example, we are told to contend for the faith, even though that proper attitude might cause strife (Jude 3). However, we need to stay as calm as possible. On the one hand, we are to guard the faith on questions that involve principles of character and important doctrines, and on the other hand, we are to avoid foolish and unlearned questions that bring strife. It is wrong to create creeds and sects. To shun those who are dogmatic about nonfundamental beliefs may mean division, for we must protect the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free (Gal. 5:1). Accordingly, we have to think upon and judge our experiences in life—in the workplace, in the home, in school, in the ecclesia, etc.—and try to sort out and avoid that which is foolish.

Paul gave some illustrations of injuring the faith of others. For example, he warned against immediately bringing up our difference(s) with one who walks into the room. If a Christian esteems one day above another and another Christian considers all days alike, we should let every man be convinced in his own conscience (Rom. 14:5). It is important for a person to obey his conscience. Of course the conscience needs to be educated, but we cannot be dogmatic except where serious principles are involved.

The Church was so fractious and disputatious in Paul’s day that it was necessary for Timothy to foster the doctrine of peace. The brethren needed to straighten out their priorities. However, Paul did not say to avoid *important* subjects that “gender strifes.”

2 Tim. 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

2 Tim. 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

2 Tim. 2:26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Verse 24 is talking about *general* habits and the personality of the teacher. He must not be *given* to strife and contention, lest there be a strained atmosphere. Of course there is a time for strife, but the *usual* temperament of the teacher should be one of patience, the avoidance of unnecessary contention, and gentleness.

Here Paul was speaking about a *habit*, for as *isolated* situations arise, we are to be strong with the strong, and weak with the weak. The *general* attitude is to weep with those who weep, and to be joyous with those who are rejoicing, but under certain circumstances, that deportment would be improper and exactly the wrong reaction. Paul was instructing Timothy how to be helpful in teaching others; that is, Timothy was to be “patient,” forbearing, and long-suffering.

Verse 25 pertains to *doctrinal* disagreement. The King James wording is not clear, for it gives the thought of those who oppose themselves. Paul was saying that we should try, with meekness, to help those who contradict and do not follow his advice. The Revised Standard is good for verses 24 and 25: “And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth.”

Q: Was Paul referring to consecrated opponents, or was he witnessing to some in the world?

A: He was speaking primarily about the consecrated. In order to help them, we should be gentle and not impugn their motives. Some brethren are offended just because we differ with them, no matter how we do it. It is hard enough for a brother with the wrong thought to receive correction, but the one who makes the correction should put his own personality out of the picture as far as possible and just use pure reasoning—dispassionately, if possible, so that we are not implying the other party does not know the Lord or is not developed. We should reason on the facts alone with the thought that the other person might later repent. In other words, we should not slam the door by exhibiting a wrong attitude but should leave the door of access open to us for the possibility of their repentance.

We are speaking of instances of doctrinal disagreement, whereas other situations may require different actions. For example, a person may not be our doctrinal opponent but may instead be doing something in Christian walk and practice that is damaging to the faith and thus needs to be rebuked. To rebuke a person is to *strongly* admonish him. To the contrary, Paul was talking about unprofitable discussions or damaging doctrines where, to reach a person, we try not to interject personality but to discuss the issue with patience and forbearance. An example of a rebuke is where Jesus disputed strongly with Satan about the body of Moses but did “not bring against him a railing accusation” and said firmly, “The Lord [will] rebuke thee” (Jude 9). Jesus left the vengeance aspect, the pronouncement of the judgment, to the Father. Thus there are some cases where we should be patient and other cases where we must be firm and resolved. With regard to doctrines that may be inimical to the truth, we have to reason dispassionately, without emotion, on the bare principles, the purpose being that the opponent might be recovered “out of the snare of the devil.”

If we have the proper understanding of a subject, it can be difficult to deal with someone who does not have that understanding. Patience toward the individual does not necessarily apply during the discussion, but it would apply over a period of time—if perchance the person might

be retrieved. Patience does have limits, but it must be exercised before those limits are reached.

Q: Does the phrase “apt to teach” indicate that verse 24 applies especially to elders, who are to have that qualification (1 Tim. 3:2)?

A: Yes, it was directed specifically to Timothy and then to all elders. In addition, the principle applies on a lower plane to all of the consecrated, but from a practical standpoint, the danger is particularly with those who are doing the instructing. Trying to help someone else should be done dispassionately, as far as possible, in order not to create obstacles to reconciliation.

Verse 26 suggests that the Adversary is silently watching and interjecting thoughts to cause problems. For example, when Peter said to Jesus, “Do not go up to Jerusalem, for the religious leaders are waiting there to kill you,” the Master replied, “Get thee behind me, Satan” (Matt. 16:22,23 paraphrase). He realized that Satan had put the suggestion in Peter’s mind, and in expressing the thought, Peter was momentarily influenced by the Adversary. Therefore, in connection with doctrine, the suggestion is that wherever possible, Satan tries to interject thoughts that can be damaging. To a greater or lesser extent, Hymenaeus, Philetus, and others were overcome in that fashion, being ensnared by the Adversary or, as verse 26 states, being “taken captive by him at his will.”

“If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” The motive should be the retrieval of a person from the error of his way. The unnatural, unholy Adamic desires of the old man want to go in the opposite direction; that is, the thoughts are not so much on repentance and the retrieval of the individual as they are on punishment and correction. It is almost like wanting the destruction of the person and his influence in one way or another.

If the desire of our heart is to see the retrieval of those who err in the truth, that attitude helps us to be patient and long-suffering. Jesus said, “Love your enemies” (Matt. 5:44). The opposite of long-suffering is to be impatient, rash, hasty, and judgmental and to lose our temper. In other words, the one teaching should have a general deportment of control and not ill will toward others. The exception would be when one is definitely seen as an enemy of the truth, and in some instances, there are real enemies. Incidentally, a very happy situation is when one recognizes the sin, repents, and is retrieved, being recovered “out of the snare of the devil.”

Q: Were Hymenaeus and Philetus examples of enemies?

A: Yes. In verses 16-18, Paul was identifying the enemy: “Shun profane and vain babblings ... [which] will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.” Paul was advising Timothy, an elder, that there is a time to identify individuals as enemies. With rare exceptions, we cannot judge a person to Second Death. However, we are to judge between that which is good and that which is evil, between that which is profitable and that which is unprofitable, etc.

People are privileged to have their own thinking, but if we find that the thinking is injurious to us as Christians, we should absent ourselves from such. A difference in thinking can become more of a problem if it occurs in the group where we are. If the uprising and contention pertain to a dangerous and serious error that is being introduced within the class, the duty of the elder is to warn the sheep in no uncertain terms. But when the dangerous thinking occurs in another class, we can only set an example and speak the truth wherever we are in the hope that our conduct and life will be helpful. Paul was telling Timothy to forget his youth and to speak, warn, and expostulate as a mature person.

If a group becomes too unruly or there is a personality conflict or two different thoughts are continually dividing the class, why not divide the class in good faith? Someone could say, “With two such strong opinions, we cannot make headway in this climate, so I would suggest that the class be divided.”

Comment: The Apostle John encouraged a division.

Reply: Yes, he mentioned an individual by name—Diotrephes—who was forbidding John and those sympathetic to him to speak and was casting them out of the ecclesia (3 John 9-11). Sometimes the teachers themselves have to withdraw because in the atmosphere that prevails when another element comes in, they do not have the proper control, and their ministry is not that profitable.

Q: How much time elapsed between the writing of the two epistles to Timothy?

A: At the most, there was a two-year time gap.

Comment: Then in two years, Hymenaeus had not changed his thinking. Since Paul now felt that he would be off the scene shortly, he was warning Timothy to beware of this individual.

Reply: Yes. The wording of verse 26, “that they *may recover* themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will,” indicates that Hymenaeus had not repented.

Comment: When it is necessary to expose and disfellowship a brother for unrepented-of grievous sin, many brethren feel the procedure is wrong. They have little understanding along this line and do not see the seriousness of such sin in one who bears the Lord’s name.

2 Tim. 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 Tim. 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

2 Tim. 3:3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

2 Tim. 3:4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

2 Tim. 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Verses 1-5 are a unit of thought. Paul was describing the prevailing condition of the world “in the last days” and warning that this influence and these traits would have some bearing on the lives of Christians living at that time. In other words, these unfavorable characteristics, which should not be named among Christians, would creep into the true Church if brethren were not careful.

To go into the Greek with each word is not necessary, for the English translation is comparable in about 90 percent of the terminology. With more than a dozen characteristics, the English touches on almost every avenue, in one form or another, of what not to do. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times [dangerous times, a severe testing period] shall come.” The Epistle to Jude indicates that a very bad condition would develop in the true Church at the end of the Gospel Age. The question with regard to Paul’s letter to Timothy would be, Have the “perilous times,” prophesied to come “in the last days,” already begun to occur, or are they

future? We would say these conditions have begun, even though they are stated in the extreme, for they will increase in intensity. The expression “last days” (plural) indicates these conditions would have to take place at the end of the age in the Harvest period, and we have seen many developments in the last decade or two that are peculiar to our generation. Some of these characteristics have been a trial throughout the Gospel Age, but others are different in some respects. The accounts in 2 Peter 2 and Jude carry the situation forward to a climactic conclusion, telling what will happen in the true Church. The conditions described here in verses 1-5 will lead up to that final experience, and generally speaking, what makes us think they are connected with the Harvest period is the fact that verse 8 names Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses.

For the most part, these traits are self-explanatory. In reading various translations, we find that some of the thoughts are switched, but as a composite whole, they are more or less the same. For example, the word “arrogant” may be used instead of “proud.” The language is strong. Certainly the people in the world are “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,” and this is also true of the vast majority in the professed nominal Church. However, this danger can also come into the true Church, so Christians have to be on constant guard lest such things happen to them. The description “men shall be lovers of their own selves” implies conceit, which is a form of pride. In their conceit, Christians think, in principle, that they have made their calling and election sure. “Covetous” is being envious of another’s goods, and “boasters” are braggarts. These conditions in the world can creep into, or infiltrate, the true Church.

Comment: Not only is it dangerous to think that God loves all people just as they are, but such thinking demeans God’s character. “Blasphemers” do violence to God’s Word.

Comment: Regarding the end of the age, the Apostle Peter wrote, “There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Pet. 2:1).

Reply: Yes, Peter and Jude spoke about the same conditions, with Peter giving a little more elaboration and Jude being more condensed. The Pastor defined “blasphemy” as accepting honors, emoluments, adulation, and praise that are due the Creator.

The schools today encourage being “disobedient to parents.” The increasing tendency is to be “unthankful,” first to the Creator, the Giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). If we do not have a thankful heart, we forget to thank Him for some of the wonderful gifts He has given us. To be unthankful also implies discontent, a familiar Scripture being “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). Being “unholy” and “without natural affection” would embrace homosexuality and lesbianism.

Without resisting, people can easily fall into the category of “trucebreakers.” A more serious manifestation of this trait would be a “vow breaker,” especially a consecration vow to the Lord. This trait starts with smaller infractions that can lead to a habit.

Comment: A truce breaker’s word cannot be trusted.

Reply: We are to let our yea be yea, and our nay be nay (Matt. 5:37). It is better not to say anything than to make a promise and break it. Promises are often broken in such little ways that the person scarcely realizes what is happening. In prior days, a handshake was a valid contract, but there is so much dishonesty today that a contract has to be in writing and the signature(s) notarized.

“Despisers of those that are good” cannot be moved. Hating good and wholesome words, they are disagreeable and lack tenderness. Because there is no flexibility, one cannot reason with such individuals. An example in the New Testament is speaking evil of “dignities” (2 Pet. 2:10; Jude 8).

In the Old Testament, “false accusers” got the same penalty that their accusation, if true, would bring. “Incontinent” means to be without self-control. Since a “continent” is a well-defined and controlled body of land with boundaries and borders, an incontinent person has no rules or regulations. He is not guided by principles but does what he feels like doing.

A “fierce” person is scary; because he is a terror, others fear what he might do to them personally. On another level, this trait would include terrorist activities against a government. Because of the media the public feeds on, conditions are leading to anarchy, for people are beginning to despise government.

Again we will say that these conditions are in the world, but the danger is that they will come into the Church. “Traitors” include enemies of the truth, as well as the Judas class at the end of the age. An individual who previously had present truth is now a fierce advocate of the Trinity and hellfire, wreaking ill feelings on the brotherhood. For one to return to baby teachings after understanding present-truth doctrines shows that if the light in a person becomes darkness, “how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6:23).

Another characteristic is being “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” Pleasures in themselves may not be sinful, but to be “lovers of pleasures” is dangerous for the new creature. Not only are there all kinds of illicit pleasures, but the Christian should not spend inordinate time on pleasures.

Comment: A danger with being “heady” is not holding Christ as one’s head (Col. 2:19), and being “highminded” is thinking too much of self.

Notice Paul’s advice as this influence comes into the true Church; namely, “from such turn away.” In other words, in proportion as we see a person fitting any of these damaging categories, we should curtail fellowship, for the tendency can rub off on us. Thus Paul was showing the possibility that these traits can come into the true Church. For example, if we fraternize too much with an unconsecrated friend—perhaps a kind neighbor—there can be an adverse effect. And if some of these traits are in the Church, the danger is far greater because of having the same hopes and aims.

A *progression* is indicated. While these conditions start in the world, the Epistle of Jude shows the same spirit will gradually infiltrate the true Church so that eventually, at the very end of the age, being faithful may require standing alone with the Lord’s help.

Paul used the expression “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” Those in the nominal Church have a form of godliness, for they profess to be Christians, but we also profess Christianity. The implication, shown by verse 6, is that a condition of *superficial* godliness will eventually enter the true Church, having a pernicious influence on some of the consecrated. Accordingly, the days at the very end of the age will be quite decisive with regard to one’s consecration. The treatise of Jude suggests that the infiltration will occur in two ways, as follows:

1. Over a period of time, some already in present truth—that is, some *from within*—will have a form of godliness but will really be using natural thinking.

2. Some unconsecrated outsiders—that is, some *from without*—will come into our midst, bringing in natural, unconsecrated thinking. Their fellowship with brethren will eventually influence ecclesia policies. At first, their influence will be indirect, but in time they will have a direct adverse influence, lowering the standards.

Comment: Paul’s warning in the early Church to the elders of Ephesus was similar: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29,30).

Certainly those who have “a form of godliness” but deny “the power thereof” will not be performing the *scriptural* form of godliness. For example, those in the nominal Church who go to Mass frequently and regularly have the appearance of godliness but know little or practically nothing of Scripture. They merely go through motions that, from the public standpoint, seem to manifest a very reverential attitude.

Comment: By Paul’s adding, “From such turn away,” this text is another way of saying there should be a separation between the consecrated and the unconsecrated.

Reply: Yes, this type of superficial godliness should be rather easily observed, whereas other external forms of godliness are probably much more difficult to discern because we cannot know what is in one’s heart. However, where individuals go through certain motions but have many contradictions in their life, their conduct negates their supposed godliness.

Q: Could we say that superficial godliness is manifested by those who are more magnanimous and loving than God?

A: Yes. Evidently, based on verse 6, Paul was zeroing in on *teachers* who lead “silly women” captive. Family-oriented charismatic emotionalism is also a form of godliness. Notice that the trait of “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” is near the end of the list. Paul started with the more flagrant and conspicuous traits such as “blasphemers” and being “covetous,” and then in verse 5, he got into a gray area where the difference is not so stark. In that gray area would be those who are more loving than God. People with itching ears like such teachers, and in turn, the preachers have tickling tongues for filthy lucre, popularity, and other honors (2 Tim. 4:3). Whatever their motive(s), the nature of what they are saying is a form of godliness that really denies the power and teaching of Scripture. In other words, their rather flattering and nice-sounding message—the type of love and character they are teaching—does not square with the Word of God but appeals to *human* reasoning.

In addition, there are very learned teachers who, instead of appealing to the emotional aspect, speak intellectually without the bottom line of godly Christian living. Generally speaking, most so-called Christians in society are polarized in either one direction or the other. And the great mass in between the two extremes is indifferent and does not care.

Q: With regard to “having a form of godliness,” what is “denying the power thereof”?

A: “Denying the power” can take several forms, so there is no one pat definition. Some people like excitement, some like sociability, some like music, some like science, etc., but the question is, Do these forms of godliness harmonize with God’s Word? All of these forms can be profitable *if* they are based on Scripture and *if* a Christian’s life harmonizes with his profession.

Comment: In the type, Eli’s sons had a form of godliness but denied the power thereof.

Reply: We do not know too much about Eli's sons except that when the people came to worship, Hophni and Phinehas flagrantly seduced the women even in the Tabernacle precincts and took consensual liberties. And when the people brought meat offerings, the two sons used forks to spear out for themselves the choice parts that were supposed to go to God. The antitype would be preachers who have mansions, luxury cars, servants, etc., by appropriating the people's donations for themselves. Incidentally, Eli was very responsible, for he failed to act when the people brought his sons' sins to his attention.

Comment: Another example in the antitype would be priests who take sexual advantage of children or others in their parishes.

Comment: Outwardly many have a religious form, being identified with some denomination, but their lives as a whole deny the power of the gospel to control their hearts and guide their conduct. In recent years, we have seen a proliferation in the nominal Church of women teachers and a toleration of immoral lifestyles, including openly professing homosexuality from the pulpit. The people should flee away from such denominations, but the majority stay under that leadership.

Reply: Yes. The *sophia* (wisdom) movement is particularly bad, yet it is tolerated.

The spirit of the world, which has many manifestations, is subtly infiltrating the true Church. Certainly we should turn away from the obvious manifestations, but we cannot openly point out what is less obvious. The more we study the Scriptures, the more we come to instructions that touch on these matters, both obvious and subtle. But we have to search the *whole* Word of God and not be selective, for the old creature can unconsciously (or even consciously to some extent) pick out portions of Scripture that do not touch on one's weak points.

2 Tim. 3:6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

2 Tim. 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The phrase "of this sort" refers to verses 1-5, especially at the end of the age. What is the thought of verse 6: "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins"? The context applies to the consecrated, to the household of faith. At the present time, certain peculiarities exist with regard to the Truth movement. For one thing, most weeknight meetings are held in private homes. The character description of those who "creep into houses" shows that they are basically *teachers* of the Scriptures. The problem is that the influence, or effect, of their teachings causes damage. Another peculiarity is that, generally speaking, not only down through the Gospel Age but especially now, at the end of the age, mostly women have been attracted to the truth.

Comment: Verses 6 and 7 read as follows in the Revised Standard: "For among them are those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth."

Q: What is the thought of the word "houses"? Speaking of "unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision," Titus 1:11 states, "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." Could "houses" in both Scriptures refer to ecclesias instead of to personal homes?

A: In the early Church, like today, many of the meetings were held in private homes, so the

thought can be interpreted either way. “Houses” can refer to *households* where ecclesia meetings are held or to *ecclesias* themselves. For example, Paul’s statement “For it hath been declared unto me ... by them which are of the *house of Chloe*” indicates that ecclesia meetings were held there (1 Cor. 1:11). Therefore, even if meetings took place in a private home, the reference was to an ecclesia.

In addition, certain nationalities and large families seem to have an affinity for present truth. Sometimes, therefore, ecclesias are woven, to a large extent, around either a nationality or a family or both. Under those circumstances, the most influential member of a family or a nationality—whether man or woman—can greatly influence the meetings. Moreover, the implication seems to be that Paul was referring to smaller meetings, to those of a more limited scope.

As we get down nearer and nearer to the end of the age, an infiltration of teaching will be encouraged and accepted by the brethren, affecting particularly the women. As already stated, the majority of the called have been women, especially in the Harvest period. If they are not stable in the truth, they can be easily swayed by emotion, whereas those who analyze and reason on what they accept are more apt to hold to principle. Clearly, verse 6 indicates that many sisters will be involved.

“Silly women” are sisters who lack depth of understanding and are not grounded in the principles of Scripture. Thus Paul was speaking of classes who not only lack a deep understanding of God’s Word but also are not interested in obtaining that understanding. Yes, the brethren attend meetings, for they are “ever learning,” but they are “never able to come to the [deep] knowledge of the truth.” They are somewhat diligent in attendance, but they do not perceive or study in-depth—qualities that are essential, particularly at the end of the age.

The temptation is mostly along the lines of the flesh. And that very fact indicates that the message of the teachers will encourage promiscuity, a looseness of conduct. Brethren need to compare the second chapter of 2 Peter, the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians, Jude, and pertinent Scriptures in 2 Timothy. Paul wrote, “Even him [Jesus], whose coming [presence—Greek *parousia*] is after [during] the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thess. 2:9,10). Notice, Paul prophesied that *a class who receive the truth will perish*. They receive the truth but not “the love of the truth” because they merely *nominally* accept it.

All four books need to be collated and studied in order to understand the dangers to the consecrated at the end of the age. Jude emphasized sins along the lines of the flesh. In addition, he gave a characterization of this class, saying that they “despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities” (Jude 8). Because of the language used, the King James seems to be saying that those of this class are brawling and fighting—with fists almost—but that is not the correct thought. To all appearances, they are of good breeding. They are somewhat orderly and well behaved, but they are disorderly with regard to obeying the instruction of God’s Word. They despise dominion, or government, in the sense that they are disobedient, and they place too much credence upon the opinion of men.

Jude prophesied that the teaching element at the end of the Gospel Age would encourage looseness and promiscuity, as opposed to holiness in life and character in obeying the principles of Scripture. Of course it would not be a deception if the leadership said *blatantly*, “Do what you want.” Instead Jude was saying that the doctrine, or teaching, of the leadership would emphasize *love and forgiveness*. Paul’s words were strong: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid” (Rom. 6:1,2). By lacking a definiteness of

decision in opposing unrighteousness, this class teaches and encourages looseness of behavior.

The Apostle Peter made a startling statement: “If the righteous *scarcely be saved*, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Pet. 4:18). The plan of God is so wonderful with its merciful provision for all to have an opportunity for life that we overlook the more sober Scriptures, such as this one, if we are not careful. Indeed this teaching is lacking in our midst. There is much instruction with regard to being patient and kind and showing brotherly love, etc., but little emphasis is put on holy living, the attitude being, “We do not need such instruction, for we all know that. Doctrines such as the presence are more important.” However, the epistles teach to the contrary, saying that the lack of holy Christian living will cause many to fall at the end of the Gospel Age. Jude 16 prophesies that an ungodly class in the true Church will be “murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.” The world teaches promiscuity and immorality in daily living, and this attitude is infiltrating the Church.

Of this ungodly class, Jude 12 states, “These are spots in your feasts of charity [love feasts], when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.” Although not necessarily formally elected teachers, they teach by participating quite actively in study groups. Jude 4 is also strong, saying that these ungodly men turn “the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” In other words, not only do they teach that God is loving, merciful, and forgiving, but they emphasize those qualities to such a degree that the result is the promotion of libertine behavior and lasciviousness. By not obeying the instruction of God or His Son, they are “denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” and disregarding dominion.

Let us read verses 6 and 7 again so that the wording is fastened in our minds. “For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” In Paul’s day, the reference was to itinerant speakers, who went out like the apostles and then stayed as guests in the homes of different brethren. Yes, they were doing the Lord’s work, but sometimes the teachers found it very convenient to receive food and lodging and not work. Meanwhile, the teacher was in the home with a woman, a sister in Christ. After a while, their talk became idle and unprofitable and even dangerous from a doctrinal standpoint.

These male teachers, who were doing the Lord’s work, would “creep into houses,” and the sisters were told they were doing the Lord’s work by providing hospitality. The length of the stay kept getting extended—one day, one week, two weeks, a month, two months, etc. The Apostle Paul did not agree with that policy, but regardless of the length of the stay, the teachers had the ear of the sisters who hosted them. In both epistles, Paul instructed Timothy to be a good teacher of other teachers, and he warned Timothy against the false teachers and their practices. As we read the instructions and warnings, we find that what is good for the teacher is good for the true follower of Jesus, male or female. Paul followed his own advice, an example being when Lydia had to beg him (and his companion) to stay at her house (Acts 16:14,15). Paul would have continued on, but she implored him.

Q: What is the thought of “silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts”?

A: Paul was not speaking of just one kind of sin but of “divers lusts”—doctrinal errors, idle talk, gossip, sexual sin, etc. By nature, women like to talk, and “silly women” were not too astute in living a holy life according to scriptural standards. Particularly the teachers were “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,” but that description included the “silly women.” As they talked, secondhand gossip entered the conversation.

The term “silly women” may also indicate those who are innocent and naive—and thus are in a

dangerous situation. While Christians are to be harmless as doves and ready and humble listeners, if they are naive and not informed about existing dangers, one who is wily can take advantage of them.

With regard to being “laden with sins,” sometimes those who are converted had many sins in their past. While the Christian walks a new life, the past can follow him and has to be continually fought. Many who come into the truth were formerly laden with sins. In fact, they came to Christ for forgiveness. Therefore, we should be discreet and cautious. Just because one is a brother or a sister in Christ does not mean the individual has overcome the sins of the past.

Q: Does the word “creep” indicate a premeditated act?

A: Yes. Paul was warning Timothy, a teacher himself, to watch out for teachers with ulterior motives. The reason to watch out for, rebuke, and warn them was that their influence on others was dangerous.

Comment: The doctrine of false love is a problem today. If we believe what we want to hear and do not have God’s love, we will not come to a deep knowledge of the truth. If we follow the doctrine of false love and do not learn to rebuke the consecrated for grievous sins and behavior, we will never learn the real truth.

Reply: That is true. Paul gave a brief summary, a thumbnail description, of what to watch out for. We believe the doctrine of love is the test at the end of the age, and it will deceive all except the very elect (Matt. 24:24). False love is a very appealing doctrine to people of all degrees and stations of life, from top to bottom, and it is very appealing to the old nature, which we must keep fighting.

The terminology “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” applies *primarily* to the teachers, although those who are taught should also heed the admonition. No matter what category we are in as a Christian, the instructions of the Word are profitable to us.

2 Tim. 3:8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Jannes and Jambres were the magicians who withstood Moses, a type of Christ, by duplicating a sign and two plagues at the time of the Exodus (Exod. 7:8-12,17-22; 8:5-7). In the antitype, Jannes and Jambres represent those who “resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.” In short, they represent those who disregard the counsel of Scripture. Just as the two magicians duplicated miracles in an effort to minimize the authority of Moses, who was sent by God to give instruction, so in the antitype at the end of the Gospel Age, false teachers use God’s Word to teach a false message. Instead of opposing present-truth *doctrines* such as Jesus’ Second Presence, the covenants, and chronology, they oppose the *holy counsel* in God’s Word by their false teachings on love. Moses gave holy counsel to the Israelites regarding their deliverance, and Jesus does the same for the Christian.

If we think of Moses and his message as representing Jesus and the message of the Bible, the two magicians who duplicated the plagues used the same type of power. Since Jannes and Jambres duplicated what Moses had done, they were saying in effect, “Thus saith the LORD,” just as Moses had done earlier. Hence there were two types of instruction—the instruction of Moses and the instruction of those who opposed Moses. Now, at the end of the Gospel Age, both the false teachers and the true teachers use the Bible and “thus saith the LORD” for their respective message, but the ungodly element promotes a false message of mercy and forgiveness. It is true that love, mercy, and forgiveness are taught in God’s Word, but what is

improper is the inordinate use and application of these teachings. Unauthorized exceptions favor the wrongdoer, the one who should be corrected. Similarly, the criminal in the world is molycoddled, and little regard is given to the victim.

“So do these also resist the truth.” The truth is more than a doctrinal code of certain understanding. These false teachers are “men of corrupt minds, reprobate [of no judgment—see King James margin] concerning the faith.” The problem is that they *do not analyze* the teaching of Scripture. They are ever learning, but they do not grasp the *real meaning* of truth, for they do not have a *discerning* judgment.

A Christian should be learning *throughout* his life and walk. He does not attain a certain level of knowledge and then rest on his laurels, no longer studying, meditating, or trying to understand better what God’s will is for him. The faithful Christian will always be a Bible student, that is, until he graduates at the end of his earthly course. If we understand the matter correctly, the others are pursuing a *superficial* knowledge of truth. They parrot truth *without analyzing* its requirements and standards. The more we study the truth, the more we see our own faults.

Comment: 2 Timothy 4:3 reads, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” Instead of analyzing and obeying the counsel of Scripture, the false teachers speak what is most pleasing to the hearers.

Conditions in the true Church will get progressively worse the closer we get to the end of the age. The situation will eventually be revealed, but then it will be too late for those who have deflected to make their calling and election sure. Jude spoke of this class when he said that some will have to be snatched “out of the fire” just to get life in the Great Company (Jude 23). In contradistinction, the Little Flock will heed the counsel *in advance*.

Jude prophesied that anyone who tries to espouse the *true* teaching of Scripture on love and forgiveness will not be held in esteem at the end of the age. As Jude 8 states, the false teachers will “despise dominion” (the counsel of God and of Jesus Christ), and they will “speak evil of dignities” (of those who espouse that counsel).

Q: Could Jannes and Jambres also apply to specific personalities in the nominal Church?

A: In the beginning of the Harvest, two individuals, Patton and Barbour, had significant influence, but both subsequently went out of the truth, taking others with them. Whether there will be one or more such individuals in the future, at the end of the Harvest, we do not know, but their character will be similar in nature to that of Jannes and Jambres. And just as Patton and Barbour were revealed back there, so corresponding individuals at the end of the age will be revealed.

It is interesting that Jannes and Jambres, *two* personages, withstood Moses at the beginning, or introduction, of the literal plagues, and Patton and Barbour, *two* personages, were active opposers at the beginning of the antitypical plagues. Whoever the individuals are and whatever their number at the end of the Harvest, they will be similarly revealed.

Jannes and Jambres could not duplicate the third to the tenth plagues. Although they imitated three instances, what Moses did was much larger in extent. Not only did his rod swallow the magicians’ serpents, but the magicians turned water to blood on a much smaller scale, whereas Moses turned the river Nile to blood. Likewise with the frogs—the magicians brought frogs on the land, but not the same way as Moses, nor could they remove the plagues. Therefore,

whatever Moses did was greater, even though the magicians imitated him. Basically speaking, what was the lesson back there? The natural man should have realized that whatever power Moses represented was superior to that of the magicians, even though they could imitate the power. Common sense would show the superiority. Without going into the reasoning, Paul was saying that spiritually speaking, the false teachers were very much like the two magicians at the time of the Exodus. Just as Jannes and Jambres in a *natural* setting with *natural* phenomena did things to withstand Moses, so these teachers used false *spiritual* counsel to withstand the true counsel in God's Holy Word. Moreover, they spoke with *eloquent, flowery* language, whereas Paul used *plain* speech.

There was a counterpart to Jannes and Jambres at the beginning of the Gospel Age, and there will be a counterpart at the end of the age. Paul said, "Now [in my day] ... these [like Jannes and Jambres in the past] also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." Before discussing the end time, we want to know what happened in Paul's day.

1. The false teachers tried to make themselves apostles, that is, equal or superior to Paul, and Jannes and Jambres duplicated whatever Moses did, although on a smaller scale. Accordingly, the false teachers, who thought of themselves as apostles, discrediting and minimizing Paul and magnifying themselves, were little in comparison to Paul. Paul could give a whole history of what he had accomplished, the miracles he had done and could do, the gifts he possessed, etc. The very fact that in two different epistles, Paul had to defend himself with the proofs of his apostleship should have convinced any thinking person, for the qualifications of his critics paled by comparison. The false teachers resisted the truth, but Paul was greater. Paul did not see Jesus by the Sea of Galilee, but he saw the *risen* Lord, which none of the others could say.

2. There was a false teaching that the resurrection was past. At first, this doctrine appeared plausible because of what happened when Jesus died on the Cross. As the earthquake occurred, many believers who had deceased before Jesus' resurrection and were asleep in their graves were awakened, or resuscitated, so that they would have an opportunity to run for the high calling (Matt. 27:51-53). In other words, the false teachers pointed back to a fact, a reality, to teach erroneous doctrine. Paul told Timothy that these false teachers, who were resisting the truth, were "men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith," and he used simple logic to refute them. They did not have proper judgment.

3. Just as in the type, Jannes and Jambres wanted to keep the Israelites in bondage, so in the antitype at the beginning of the Gospel Age, false Jewish Christian teachers wanted Christians to be under the Law. The magicians were underneath Pharaoh in Egypt, and some have likened the Law to a "furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10).

Comment: Paul was the messenger to the Ephesus period, and in the message to that church, Jesus said, "I know ... how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and *thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars*" (Rev. 2:2).

Comment: One motivation of the false teachers was to contradict and outdo the Apostle Paul.

Reply: Yes, trying to belittle Paul was part of their reprobate mind.

2 Tim. 3:9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

Paul indicated that the time would come when this dangerous condition would be exposed: "But they [men who resist the truth, men of corrupt minds] shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men [as was the folly of Jannes and Jambres]." We do not know

the final fate of the false apostles, but their “folly” will eventually be revealed—what their end was and how their folly was exposed. The Parable of the Wedding Garment shows that the ungodly class at the end of the age will also be revealed (Matt. 22:10-13).

Hear Paul’s words again: “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:9-12). Paul was saying that the class referred to will go into Second Death. They accept the truth but *not the love of the principles* that the truth inculcates. God will send strong delusion at the hand of Satan—“all power and signs and lying wonders” and “all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” So great will the deceptions be that all will be deceived except the very elect (Matt. 24:24). Whoever this element is, both they and those who are deceived will be made manifest in due time—and evidently, on this side of the veil. The lesson is that *we must love the principles of the truth* in order not to be deceived by the lying wonders in the near future.

Q: What does the last clause “as theirs also was” refer to?

A: “As theirs [Jannes and Jambres’ folly] also was [made manifest].” With their lesser powers, they had minimized, undercut, and vitiated Moses’ influence and authority by duplicating what he did, but when the time came that they could no longer duplicate the plagues, the difference between the power he represented and their power became apparent. The *revelment* of their lack showed that they could not promote deception beyond a certain point. In antitype, evil teachers (plural) are deceived, as well as those who follow their teaching.

What Jannes and Jambres did (producing serpents and duplicating the first two plagues) took only a few minutes, but the antitype in our day may take years. For a while, the false apostles were successful, but then Paul pointed them out and tried to counteract their authority with his own authority from the Lord. No doubt his words had a stinging effect upon those in the right heart condition.

Although Paul did not say so, he was like Moses in that both were specially sent, Paul to the Gentiles and Moses to the Israelites. Paul performed mighty miracles and had more gifts than any of the other apostles. Therefore, those who were in the right heart condition could see, in witnessing Paul’s ministry, that his message was accompanied with power when he chose to use it. He was telling Timothy, “Keep up the good work that you observe me doing. Pursue the same doctrine.”

One of the problems in the early Church which Paul had to refute was the false doctrine that the resurrection was already past. Down through the Gospel Age, this doctrine has also been a teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. Many evangelical Christians believe in a future fulfillment, whereas the Catholic Church has not been particularly anxious for the Second Coming of Christ. The folly of that system was revealed at the time of the Reformation and again at the time of the French Revolution.

There is also an antitypical application for Moses and Aaron in our day. As Paul said, the things that happened to natural Israel were especially written for those upon whom the ends of the age come—first the end of the Jewish Age and the opening of the Gospel Age, and then the ending of the Gospel Age and the opening of the Kingdom Age (1 Cor. 10:11). The Pastor was certainly in the picture in the beginning of the Harvest period. Just as Moses used Aaron as his mouthpiece, so Jesus at his Second Presence used Pastor Russell as his mouthpiece.

But we are particularly interested in the antitypical fulfillment at the end of the Gospel Age, in the Harvest period. Right away certain questions arise. Who are the enemies with corrupt minds? What are their characteristics? What doctrine in a subtle way was the first seed in our day of the false doctrine that the resurrection is past? (A dangerous seed should be nipped in the bud before it grows and develops into a tree.) Two examples are the Laymen's Home Missionary and the Johnsonites, who teach that the high calling is closed. Another example is the Jehovah's Witnesses, who err in emphasizing an earthly calling and works. In fact, works have been emphasized to such an extent that those who did not sell a sufficient number of books and literature were embarrassed in front of others. The "folly" of the erroneous doctrine of these groups is manifest unto "all men," that is, to the brotherhood, to the truly consecrated in present truth in our day. Not only has the revealing of folly been progressive down through the Gospel Age, but it will continue to the very end of the age. We see the danger in putting the first resurrection, the hope of the high calling, in the past. The hope of the high calling—the belief that the door is still open and we are running for the prize—helps to stifle the other type of seed from prospering.

We are concerned with the little seed that develops into false thinking, for if not stopped before it is outwardly manifest, the seed will grow and eventually influence many. We would say that one such seed, not openly manifest at the present time but in a cultivating bed, is not having an interest in prophecy. Those teachers who are not interested in prophecy and just give talks on one subject are not preaching the whole counsel of God.

Another subtle and dangerous teaching is that instead of looking in the Bible, we should look only in the writings of the Pastor. Jesus said that man should "not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). If we conscientiously look up Scripture references in the *Berean Manual* or in the index to the *Reprints*, we will find that at least one third of the Bible is not even discussed. Moreover, even though the *Berean Manual* is profitable, it contains a number of wrong applications. The bottom line is that one should make sure whether the comment is true. The Laodicean attitude of feeling full and satisfied can be harmful in the sense of straying from a concentration on proper and necessary things.

Comment: Another troublesome doctrine is the thought that there is no Spirit begetting in the nominal system.

Reply: The Pastor taught that at the end of the age, the Great Company class will come from Babylon. Such doctrines have an effect on our hopes, aims, character, and witnessing efforts.

Comment: In speaking with brethren who believe there is no Spirit begetting today in the nominal Church, we asked the question "What day or year did it stop?" Their response was, "We do not know." We replied, "Then how do you know it has ceased?"

Reply: Sometimes a pragmatic approach using natural wisdom—"Doth not even nature [or common sense] itself teach you...?"—is more effective in stopping the tongues of others than going into a spiritual defense (1 Cor. 11:14).

Q: Jannes and Jambres tried to make themselves equal with Moses. Would an antitype at this end of the age be those who discard the Pastor's teachings after having accepted and proven present truth?

A: That kind of denial is a dangerous condition. It is one thing for the consecrated to have never seen a doctrine, for we all start as babies, but it is another matter to prove and accept a true doctrine and then reject it subsequently. One who does so is slipping backward, and if the slide is not stopped, it can lead to Second Death. However, we should keep in mind that it is not

until death that one cannot repent. No matter what course a person takes, if he truly repents and changes his way, there is hope of retrieval, but the path is dangerous. Of those who deflect, very few have come to their senses, repented, changed their course, and thus turned around.

It is possible for one to become associated with present truth but not prove the doctrines for himself. Since nobody knows the *degree* of understanding a person has who falls away, an extenuating factor may lessen his degree of responsibility. Nevertheless, the saying “Ignorance is bliss” is a fallacy. We live in a land where Bibles, concordances, the *Volumes*, etc., are readily available, as well as fellowship with others who have considerable knowledge in present truth. But the Lord may be calling people in other countries where plentiful study helps are not available. We have said that there could be some with very little understanding who make their calling and election sure—if they are in an environment with limited accessibility to materials to help them grow as Christians. In the Dark Ages, some who believed in Jesus as their Savior but possessed only a few pages of the Bible—and thus had little understanding—made their calling and election sure. And there are others whose minds are somewhat retarded so that they are not capable of developing beyond a certain point. However, such individuals are the exception and should not be considered role models. Brethren in this country today are very responsible, generally speaking. Stated plainly and simply, a man is judged according to what he “hath” (Matt. 25:29; Luke 19:26). The Pastor added the word “used”—“hath used”—which is a favorable supplemental thought, but basically speaking, the word “hath” covers those in less favorable circumstances, for whom allowances are made.

We have to be very careful in judging others, for we do not know an individual’s heart or capability. The exception would be one who does something obviously way out of line, such as Judas. There was a Judas class in Jesus’ day at the time of his crucifixion, and there will be a Judas class at the end of the age at the time of the feet members’ persecution. Traitors in the truth will become very manifest at that time—just as Judas was in Jesus’ day.

In summary, down through the Gospel Age and in the Harvest period, there have been manifestations similar to the seed thoughts taking place here in Paul’s second letter to Timothy. At the very end of the age, a stark and startling Judas class will betray the feet members.

In antitype, Jannes and Jambres did miracles in the beginning of the Harvest period in connection with the plagues. People like the Judge, Patton, and Barbour outstandingly differed with the Pastor and his teachings. Similar oppositions have occurred throughout the Harvest period and will continue, but the Judas class is another type of picture. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were traitors during the wilderness wanderings by directly challenging the leadership of Moses, have antitypical fulfillments during the Harvest. As Christians living in the end of the age, we should particularly observe the types of doctrines that could lead one astray.

2 Tim. 3:10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

2 Tim. 3:11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

Verses 10-14 continue the theme of evil men and seducers. Paul proved by his sufferings and persecutions for Christ that he was a real Christian and apostle. He was saying, “You know about my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, and afflictions, which came on me at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra.” (See Acts 13:14,44-51 and 14:1-15,19.) What is common with Paul’s experiences in all three cities is that the Jews were instrumental in getting the people to persecute him. From a Christian perspective, these were false Jews, for true Jews accepted Christ. Paul endured the persecutions, crediting the Lord with

delivering him. “Out of them all the Lord delivered me.”

At Antioch, brethren were seated at a table with converted Gentiles (Gal. 2:11-16). When other disciples came into the room, right away the brethren, including Peter, dissembled. The Apostle Paul rebuked Peter to his face, and Peter rightly received the correction by publicly confessing. Peter acceded to Paul’s greater wisdom and judgment in this matter.

2 Tim. 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Paul summed up his experiences by saying, “All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” In delivering his message, he was the object of persecution. He suffered for his faithfulness, meeting great opposition. Similarly, all who are faithful will suffer persecution.

2 Tim. 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Comment: Paul was saying there would be *progressive* deterioration.

Reply: Yes, “evil men and seducers” (that is, deceivers *plural*) would get worse and worse. The “seducers” were teachers, both elected and not elected, who promoted damaging doctrines.

Writing near his demise, Paul was saying that subsequent to his ministry, professing Christians would begin to outnumber true Christians. Eventually the nominal Church developed. In the Pergamos or third period of the Church, the manifestation was outward. However, the seeds of the Nicolaitan attitude existed even in the early Church. Jesus, Paul, and John all pointed out the danger and prophesied of the development of the nominal Church.

John the Baptist, who represents the true Church in the flesh at the end of the age during the period of the Lord’s presence, made the statement “He [the Church beyond the veil] must increase, but I [the Church in the flesh] must decrease” (John 3:30). The Great Company left behind will recognize when the Church is complete beyond the veil. Of those who fail to make their calling and election sure, some were once of Little Flock caliber but then fell back a little. However, the great majority do not mature to that level.

2 Tim. 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

Verse 14 is often given an application that does not fit the context. The first point is that Paul was talking to Timothy: “But continue, Timothy, in the things which you have learned [from your grandmother, your mother, and me] and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them.” The fact that Paul commended Timothy’s grandmother and mother by name seems to indicate they had already died and probably both made their calling and election sure (2 Tim. 1:5). Timothy had also learned from Paul, *an apostle*, who was now saying, “You have seen me and my manner of life, and you have heard me speak innumerable times. Now continue the work.”

The second point is that many of the consecrated have had the experience where the one(s) used by God to bring them into the truth have since left the truth. If that is our experience, are we then to continue with the instruction and beliefs of the individual(s) who went astray? No! No matter how dear such brethren were when we initially got the truth, we are to follow *Jesus*, not individuals. Therefore, it is important to realize that Paul was talking to Timothy in this epistle, and some of the advice, including verse 14, was *personal*.

We must *analyze* Scripture, even though studying can be fatiguing. Sometimes it is hard to read the Bible daily because we are so tired, and trying to remember when we are fatigued is even more difficult. Nevertheless, the Lord likes to see our desire and intent, even if we fall asleep. The point is that “knowing of whom thou hast learned” does not apply indefinitely and without qualification.

2 Tim. 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim. 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

2 Tim. 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

What was Paul saying in verses 13-17? Why did he say that Timothy knew the holy Scriptures from his childhood upward, that he had been brought up and taught the precepts of God’s Word from his youth, and then add that the Scriptures are able to thoroughly furnish the “man of God” who properly responds to that instruction? And why did verses 13-17 follow the admonitions previously given?

Comment: The Scriptures Timothy knew from his childhood were the Old Testament, which contained clear-cut instructions as to what was right and what was wrong in the Lord’s sight. In addition, he learned New Testament admonitions and instructions from Paul. Therefore, he had the correct principles and was to stay with them and not, like “silly women,” be seduced by “evil men” (2 Tim. 3:6).

Reply: Yes. The instructional value is in the Scriptures themselves, and of course Timothy knew about Jesus and the gospel message from his mother and grandmother. The Apostle Paul was used to alert him to the coming dangers that would take place at the end of the age—the dangers of falling away. Paul was saying, “You have seen me as an example of suffering for espousing the truth. When you teach these same truths to others, you will have similar experiences. Do not expect to be popular in obeying the Word of God and its true instruction. Like me you will receive persecution and get repercussions, but there are also joys, for those who are properly exercised respond gladly.”

“The holy scriptures ... are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Next verse 16 says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” but is *all* Scripture “given by inspiration of God”?

Comment: No. For example, parts of the Bible are the reports of evil men or statements of the Adversary. Also, the *Diaglott* shows that the first “is” was supplied by the translators.

Reply: That is correct. In addition, the Bible contains a lot of truthful history, and certainly Satan’s words and teachings were not inspired by God. Everything in the Bible is helpful and true, however. Of course Scripture that is given by direct inspiration of God—His Law, counsel, and precepts—is more valuable than just the historic aspect. Both are needed, but we should put a different emphasis on a “thus saith the LORD” than on what is written *about* others.

And there is another point. Over the centuries, some have made unauthorized additions and subtractions to the Bible, so that at present, no perfect manuscript exists (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18,19). The earliest manuscripts tend to be more reliable than later ones because glosses entered in.

All Scripture is profitable for “doctrine,” “reproof,” “correction,” and “instruction in righteousness.” What is the difference in the meaning of these terms? Other translations have the following: “All scripture ...

“... is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”

“... is for teaching the faith, correcting error, resetting the direction of a man’s life, and training him in good living.”

“... can be profitably used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people’s lives, and teaching them to be holy.”

“... is for teaching truth, refuting error, for reformation of manners, and discipline in right living.”

“... is for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training.”

“... is for teaching the truth, for rebuking error, correcting faults, giving instruction for right living.”

“... is to teach what is true, to make us realize what is wrong in our lives, to straighten us out, and help us do that which is right.”

“Doctrine” is the *general* teaching of truth, such as the plan of salvation, Jesus’ role in dying for man’s sins, and his being the way, the truth and the life. Doctrine is a knowledge of the *overall* message of the Bible and the hope of being made heirs with Christ.

“Reproof” is the reproving and rebuking of opponents of truth or advocates of error with a statement of truth from the Bible. The *Diaglott* uses the word “conviction,” meaning the reproving or convincing of gainsayers in the presence of others. When the foolishness of an opponent’s reasoning is exposed, he should respond by acknowledging his error—and will do so if his heart attitude is right. Convicting someone is the same as reproving him.

With regard to “correction” and “instruction in righteousness,” which are coupled together in several translations, the Word of God does the correcting by *exposing* a wrong thought, deed, or fault. Someone may not be an opponent of truth but just have a wrong thought or perception and be teaching it. The Scriptures correct by telling a person that the thought he is entertaining is wrong, whereas instruction in righteousness is more of an upbuilding in righteousness than the erasure of a prior habit or doctrine. It is one thing to correct a person in a statement, and it is another thing to instruct him in righteousness, in his conduct.

In summary, “doctrine” is the teaching of a generalized understanding of the main thrust and design of Scripture. “Reproof” is the refuting or opposing of a false concept of Scripture. “Correction” and “instruction in righteousness” are character building. All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instructing others and self in righteousness. The Bible is a two-edged sword that cuts both ways.

“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Paul repeatedly emphasized good works and wholesome doctrine in his letters to Timothy—in other words, character building. Examples are “shun profane and vain babblings,” “hold fast the form of sound words,” “foolish and unlearned questions avoid,” “godly edifying which is in faith,” “contrary to sound doctrine,” “holding faith, and a good conscience,” “lifting up holy

hands,” “which becometh women professing godliness,” “holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,” “great is the mystery of godliness [Godlikeness],” “exercise thyself rather unto godliness,” “be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation [conduct], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,” “proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words,” “godliness with contentment is great gain,” “follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness,” etc. Thus the main thrust of both epistles to Timothy is lessons in character development rather than doctrines such as the presence, which are covered in other epistles.

Q: Does the term “man of God” refer to the individual Christian?

A: Just as Paul instructed Timothy to do these things in connection with his teaching, so those who might desire the office of an elder must themselves first be instructed in righteousness before they can instruct others. A “man of God,” therefore, is anyone who wants to be a teacher of God’s Word—and thus must first be instructed himself.

Comment: According to Young’s *Analytical Concordance*, the thought is, “That the man of God may be fitted ... unto all good works.”

Reply: Yes, “fitted for office.” “Mature in character” or “complete” is the thought. Perfection of character will not be attained in the present life, although we are to strive to that end. Even the most faithful saint needs Christ’s robe of righteousness right up to his death. And even Jesus had to be fitted for office; he was tried as a High Priest so that he would be sympathetic to the people with whom he would deal. The experience of being down here thoroughly qualified him to be most considerate of the human race and its frailties.

Comment: A marginal reference is 2 Timothy 2:21, “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” As a balancing statement, 1 John 1:8 states, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

2 Tim. 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Paul charged Timothy before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, “who shall judge the quick and the dead.” The “quick” are the fallen angels, who were never under the death penalty, even though they are in *tartaroo*. The “dead” embrace both the living dead and the dead dead of the human race. Jesus will judge the quick and the dead “at his appearing [bright shining—Greek *epiphania*] and his kingdom,” that is, when God delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble, the Ancient Worthies are resurrected, and the Kingdom is inaugurated. The *epiphania* refers to a revealing to the world, whereas the initial part of the *parousia* is a secret presence known only to the Church in the Harvest period of the Gospel Age. Stated another way, the *epiphania* is the dawn of the Kingdom Age. Both the *parousia* and the *epiphania* are a period of time, but each has an initial start at a definitive point in time. The *epiphania*, which starts at dawn, occurs within the *parousia*, which started at midnight. Technically speaking, our day begins at midnight.

In conjunction with verse 2, why did Paul mention the judgment of the *future* Kingdom in connection with his charge to Timothy to “preach the word,” etc., in the *present* age? Paul expected to depart the scene shortly, so he charged Timothy with the responsibility to more or less take his place in continuing the role of instruction and teaching. Paul was turning over the reins of teaching to Timothy.

Comment: The *Diaglott* interlinear adds the word “solemnly.” Paul *solemnly* charged Timothy.

Instructors are responsible to God in the role they occupy, for they influence the lives of those under their tutelage. If a professed minister of the gospel of Christ does not satisfactorily perform the office he occupies, if he does not give wholesome and uplifting instruction, what he teaches could have a damaging effect upon the hearers. God and Jesus will judge the people in the Kingdom in the future, and the lives of many will be in the balance because of damaging and harmful instruction they received in the present life. To get life, they will have to undo and retrace that which they had performed unsatisfactorily. Consequently, their very lives may be in jeopardy, for what a man sows in the present life has an effect on the next life. The more improperly one sows, the more unlikely it is that, even if given another chance, he will make it. The point is that what a person does in the present life does have a bearing on his ultimate destiny—*whether or not that individual is consecrated*. In either case, the character developed in the present life has an effect on the future life.

With regard to consecration, Jesus said to sit down and count the cost (Luke 14:28). Many who hear the gospel do not go on to consecrate, but why not? Perhaps they do not want to give up what they now have, they may be fearful, or they may not have been properly encouraged to take the step of consecration. However, the failure to obey wholesome, sound doctrine in the present life will have a bearing on a person’s future.

Timothy had an important role as instructor, and Paul was laying on him the seriousness of this responsibility. If Timothy was faithful to his charge, he would get a greater reward.

2 Tim. 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

“Preach the word”—the instruction of Jesus and the apostles and the “gospel,” which is the good news of the opportunity to live and reign with Christ. That is even better news than restitution. When we read about our Lord’s life and listen to his sermons, scarcely anything is said about restitution. The subject matter was overwhelmingly about the future for the believer who consecrates now. The exceeding good news is the high calling. Of course many of us counted the cost prior to consecration, realizing that following Jesus would entail sacrifice, but the love of Christ constrained us. It helped us to take the “giant step” of consecration, as shown in the 36-inch-high stone at the top of the Grand Gallery in the Great Pyramid. We knew we were inherently weak as far as doing the mighty things spoken of in the New Testament, but the Lord promised his strength. Faith was a big factor, for without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). The very fact that we consecrated means we had faith. All who are called have faith, they are justified by faith if they consecrate, and they should henceforth *live* by faith (Rom. 1:17). Faith should increase more and more.

Therefore, down through the age, the duty of the Christian has been to “preach the word,” that is, not to keep it to oneself but to proclaim it to others. Of course restitution is a part of the gospel, but basically speaking, the promise to Abraham was, “In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 28:14). We should not put the cart before the horse, for the call is an invitation to be members of the multitudinous seed that will bless all the families of the earth. It is an invitation to be of the Bride of Christ.

“Be instant in season, out of season.” Why did Paul insert this thought here? How should the instruction be qualified in this context? The literal rendition is not a problem, for we know we should be ready to preach the truth whether in season to ourselves or out of season. But what does this instruction not say? If any discomfort is involved, we have to make sure it is to ourselves and not to the other party. If the time is convenient to the other individual, then we

can witness, but if the time is not propitious to that person, we are to refrain from witnessing at that particular time.

Comment: The Apostle Peter said, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15).

Reply: Yes, we should always be ready to preach the truth that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9). When we preach, we are looking for another grain of wheat, and those grains are getting scarcer and scarcer.

From another standpoint, to speak “in season” means that we should speak properly and gravely to one who is in great sorrow, not lightly and frivolously. To those who are happy and rejoicing, we can speak similarly. However, to be very joyful with someone who is mournful would be speaking “out of season.” Paul expressed this principle in several places in Scripture. “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Rom. 12:15). “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Cor. 12:26). “And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law [the Gentiles], as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:20-22). In other words, Paul adapted himself to the situation of the other individual. This principle is also stated in Proverbs 25:11, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

Timothy was to “reprove, rebuke, [and] exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” Notice that the first three—“reprove, rebuke, exhort”—are to be accompanied with long-suffering and doctrine. A rebuke is a little stronger form of correction than a reproof. The responsibility of a teacher is to speak truth and not to agree if a wrong thought is presented. At times, a teacher has to reprove, rebuke, or exhort another Christian, although that responsibility may not be pleasing to him. Paul was showing the difference between a true teacher and a false teacher. The implication is that the rebuke of a true teacher may not be well received.

Comment: In the first epistle, Paul said, “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim. 5:20).

Reply: Whether a rebuke is private or public depends on the nature of the sin. If a sin is committed openly and would have a harmful influence on others, there is a necessity for the correction to be issued publicly. As an illustration, when Peter, who was an outstanding leader, was sitting at the table with Gentiles, he dissembled by getting up when James, who was very strong for the Law, came into the room. Paul had to rebuke Peter before all of the others lest his action have an adverse influence on them. If Paul had not acted before they returned to their respective homes, the opportunity for correction—and for nipping the matter in the bud—would have been forever lost.

“With all long-suffering” means “with much patience.” The one doing the exhorting, for example, is not to be too hasty but is to use discretion, patience, and sound doctrine. He should employ either sanctified common sense or Scripture to encourage someone who perhaps is discouraged or depressed. “He [God] knoweth our frame” would be a good Scripture to use (Psa. 103:14). Another reason for exhortation is to encourage someone who has a great talent but is not using it because he is humble and not recognized. Barnabas stirred up Paul by showing he was needed (Acts 9:27). Thus exhortation is done under different circumstances.

“Long-suffering” is patience. A true teacher sometimes has to take guff or opposition, and if he bears it well, his patience may help reclaim the one(s) in error; that is, patience may help him to be more successful in reclaiming the souls of those who are in jeopardy. Thus it is to the benefit of those the teacher is trying to instruct that he exercise patience, even if he is misunderstood.

“Doctrine,” what the Word of God teaches on a subject, is the *faithful* representation of the *true* teaching of Scripture. If we reprove or rebuke someone, we must have a basis, or *standard*, for doing so and tell the individual *how* he is wrong. The approach would be, “You are wrong because the Scriptures teach such and such, and you are saying otherwise.” Chapter 3 shows that in the perilous times at the end of the age, some in a teaching role would have a damaging effect upon the Church. Both the teachers and those under their instruction would be deceived. What is the best course to follow? Paul told Timothy, “Continue in the things which you have learned, knowing of whom you have learned them” (2 Tim. 3:14 paraphrase). Of course Timothy had learned from the Apostle Paul. Thus a Christian is to go back and learn the instruction as previously received. But even there, we, like Timothy, have to be careful, for the Word of God is the *real* standard. Timothy had known the Scriptures from his youth upward, and the Scriptures alone were sufficient to thoroughly furnish the “man of God” unto every good work. Therefore, the real basis of instruction in the perilous times at the end of the age is the Word of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

At consecration, we gave our heart to God through Jesus, but we can be weaned away if we start to lean too heavily on a human teacher. Moses, who represents Jesus, was sent of God a second time to deliver Israel out of Egypt. Just as Jannes and Jambres were imitators of Moses, so there are imitators of Jesus. We must heed the Word of God very closely and carefully. Therefore, Paul was saying to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine, that is, with the Word of God.

For verse 2, the Revised Standard has, “Convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching.” Another translation ends by saying, “With great patience and careful instruction.” Still another translation shows that the patience entails being repetitive in the instruction of God’s Word. In other words, a teacher should not get discouraged and give up too easily. Rather, he should be patient from the standpoint of not merely suffering the abuse of others but also *continuing* to offer the advice and instruction of the Word. In trying to faithfully teach, he should *persist* in the proper instruction, *patiently teaching repetitively*. Teaching involves sacrifice.

Comment: With Paul telling Timothy to patiently persist in teaching, the implication is that the trend would be away from sound, wholesome instruction. Timothy would be bucking the majority, but he was to persist.

Reply: Yes, there are many nuances in the thought of long-suffering. Paul was urging Timothy to “preach the word” while he could, while he was physically able, along all these lines.

2 Tim. 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

Generally speaking, the pronoun “they” refers to professing Christians, but here the reference is to the truly consecrated. Also, the Greek word translated “endure” has the thought of “tolerate.” In other words, the time will come when true Christians will not tolerate sound or wholesome doctrine (teaching). Paul was saying that perilous times would come in the *true* Church primarily at the end of the age. The implication is that certain troublesome conditions would arise in which faithful teachers of truth would be opposed by false teachers. The statement “they will not endure [tolerate] sound doctrine” suggests that true teachers will be in

the minority. Not only will false teachers outnumber those who are teaching sound doctrine, but their being largely successful in stopping the sound doctrine is what causes the problem.

“After their own lusts shall they [the congregation] heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” Generally speaking, the brethren will not be interested in hearing the teachers who instruct in sound doctrine. Hence the false teachers will be better received. The thought, then, is that *both* the teachers and the hearers will have “itching ears,” but what will be the nature of the itching ears?

Comment: For the term “their own lusts,” another translation has “inordinate desires,” indicating that true Christians who have desires along the lines of the flesh will appreciate unsound teachings because they will not want to sacrifice and obey what the Word inculcates.

Reply: That is true. We are living in an age of divorce and promiscuity. Chapter 3 mentions “silly women” who are burdened with a consciousness of sin, etc., so the espousing of a libertine gospel is pleasing to them because it salves their conscience. Chapter 4 follows along the same line, for it has to do with inordinate desires and lusts. Not only will the false teachers outnumber the true teachers, but the majority of the congregation will be more amenable to the wrong course. Only a minority will faithfully follow God’s instruction.

With their unsound doctrine and libertine thoughts, the false teachers will cater to inordinate desires, to the lusts of the flesh. The majority of brethren will want such teachers, who do not reprove their fleshly and inordinate desires. However, as shown in the previous chapter, the distinction between sound and unsound teachers will *eventually* be seen. In the type, Jannes and Jambres, the two magicians, repeated three of the miracles but were exposed as not being of God when they could not duplicate the next plague (Exod. 7:8–8:7).

Comment: “Itching ears” need to be scratched and thus made *comfortable* to the *flesh*.

Reply: Yes, false counsel can be very comforting to the flesh. When something itches, the person wants relief to mind and body from the distraction. Here the itching member of the body is the “ear,” which pertains to instruction, to the hearing of doctrine.

What is happening in the world slowly and insidiously filters into the Church unless the consecrated are alert and watchful. The gradual transfer of thinking, the subtle infiltration, the gray area of behavior, will be almost imperceptible until certain conditions at the very end of the age make the change obvious.

2 Tim. 4:4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

As a result, many will turn away from truths in God’s Word and embrace other philosophies and counterfeit truths, rendered “fables” here (Greek *muthos*). This class will be turned to thoughts that are purportedly scriptural but that, in reality, are not taught in God’s Word. Two opposing types of instructors and two opposing types of individuals in the congregation will each claim to have the truth. One group will have sound, wholesome doctrine, or truth; the others will have counterfeit truth with misguided ideas not backed up by Scripture.

How can we distinguish a “fable”? Not a reality, a fable is a made-up story with a moral lesson. Sometimes a fable has value, but it must be recognized as a fable from which a certain lesson is drawn to bring forth a principle. A fable can be very dangerous if it is thought of as truth.

Some preachers characteristically love to tell little stories, but that technique can be dangerous,

for it requires instant judgment from the hearer. To be faithful, one has to ask, “I am hearing these words for the first time—are they sound?” A story told with discretion can be very helpful, but habitual storytelling is another matter. For example, if a difficult Scripture is used and then properly explained with an illustration, the hearer benefits.

Comment: Paul was implying that some already in the truth would turn back. In the early Church, many turned away from him, so he was well aware of what could happen (2 Tim. 1:15).

Comment: Along another line, Papacy gradually brought in pagan ideas to gain control of the people.

Reply: Yes, Papacy obtained numbers by sanctifying pagan idols, thoughts, and doctrines. For example, the Trinity is a pagan doctrine. Alexander Hislop and others have wonderfully shown how this teaching existed before Papacy. The concept of a triune god started in Babylon and was incorporated into the papal church system as a cardinal belief.

The implication is that the majority ruling down through the Gospel Age would be tares, merely professing Christians. Having the numbers, Papacy dominated the so-called Christian world. Then came the Reformation with a splitting up into sects. In the different sects, the same principle operated, although to a lesser degree from a historical standpoint.

2 Tim. 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

“But watch thou in all things.” Paul was now giving generalized instruction to Timothy, telling him to be careful and watchful.

Comment: The Diaglott says, “But be thou sober in all things.”

Reply: One who is sober, as opposed to one who is drunk, has his eyes open and is alert.

Comment: We should watch *ourselves* “in all things,” for we are on display.

Reply: Yes, we are to watch both ourselves and others.

Paul was an outstanding example of the admonition to “endure afflictions.” It is one thing to get an affliction and another thing to *endure* it and not throw in the sponge.

Comment: The Amplified has, “Suffer unflinchingly every hardship.”

Reply: A good soldier suffers every hardship “unflinchingly.” He does not necessarily know when he is getting his next meal, whether he will have a bed to sleep in, etc. Soldiers who endure are “veterans” in the true sense of the word. Thus enduring afflictions makes the Christian grow strong like a tree with greater roots. Buffeting winds result in deeper roots that, where possible, entwine themselves around steady objects for firmer bracing.

“Do the work of an evangelist.” Here the emphasis is on preaching to and exhorting the public. For a proper balance, not only is the Christian to do a work in himself and in the ecclesia, but he should do witnessing outside the ecclesia. There needs to be a balance between working on our own characters, edifying the body members, and witnessing.

“Make full proof of thy ministry.” The *Diaglott* has, “Fully accomplish [perform] thy service.”

One's ministry should include both public witnessing and feeding the brethren. Stated another way, not only is public evangelizing important, but the brotherhood itself should be fed with deeper truths.

2 Tim. 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

Having spent his ministry being poured out, Paul was now "ready to be offered." He had repeatedly proven his zeal. Perhaps he even knew his execution date in advance. Elsewhere Paul cautioned against being puffed up and taking off the armor, but if we were in prison and execution was imminent, there would not be much room for our going out of the faith.

Comment: Since Paul was in prison for the second time and had escaped death the first time through the Lord's overruling providence, he was resigned to his fate. He was summing up his ministry and trying to make sure that Timothy would continue where he left off.

Reply: Yes, he was thinking about what help he could give Timothy, whom he had likened to his "son" (1 Tim. 1:2,18; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1). Paul felt a responsibility for the brotherhood and could see that he was performing a work no one else was doing.

Since Paul said he was "ready to be offered," for his time was at hand, why does his Epistle to Titus follow this Second Epistle to Timothy? Titus was written in between the two letters to Timothy, but the latter were collated together in Scripture for convenience' sake. Moreover, Hebrews, a generalized epistle of instruction to the Jews, was composed over a relatively long period of time and was finished when Paul was in prison at the end of his life.

2 Tim. 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Paul felt that he had "fought a good fight" and had finished his course and "kept the faith." The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, a conscience void of offense, and a sincere faith (1 Tim. 1:5; Acts 24:16). That was Paul's experience, and he was ready for his departure.

Q: Does verse 7 indicate that those who make the Little Flock will get some kind of assurance at the end of their life of their having attained a crown?

A: Yes and no. As with Jesus, there will be vacillations. They will feel sure one minute and not the next.

2 Tim. 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Paul knew that he would not have an instantaneous resurrection. Henceforth a "crown of righteousness" was laid up for him, to be given "at *that day* [in the future]" and "unto all them also that love his [Jesus'] appearing." Those who are truly and honestly looking forward to the appearing of the Lord in connection with his Kingdom, those who are true in conscience and spirit, will probably be especially those of the Little Flock class.

John used the same reasoning in 1 John 3:3, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Those who really look forward to seeing Jesus will purify themselves. Paul described this attitude, the hope of seeing Jesus, as those who "love his appearing."

"The Lord, the righteous judge," gives the crown of righteousness. The crowns come from the

Father but are given by Jesus, who said, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). The Father gives the crowns to Jesus, who then gives them *personally* to each member of the Little Flock. We do not believe that Jesus gives the crown at the time he says, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21). As the 144,000 each come from the tomb, they go to the Lord Jesus Christ in the air (1 Thess. 4:17). However, when the complete Church goes to the Father, both the Father and the Son will be there.

Q: Are the crowns literal?

A: We are inclined to think they are literal *spiritual* crowns. There is nothing wrong with an emblem of authority to indicate a person who is different from the ordinary, even among the angelic host.

Comment: Day after day, ministers in the nominal Church give sermons at funerals, falsely putting the deceased in heaven, even the unconsecrated. Here Paul, who was so faithful and exemplary, said he had to wait. The Scriptures state the matter in plain language, but the Adversary’s blinding influence is powerful.

Reply: Yes, Paul had fought a good fight and knew he had been victorious, but he had to wait. Paul had astounding insight. He legally had the crown, but the crowning ceremony would not take place in a formal sense until much later.

Q: Is there a difference between the “crown of righteousness” and the “crown of life” (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10)?

A: Yes. The “crown of life” refers to immortality. The Father will give the crown, but the crown will be handed out by Jesus.

Q: Based on the Parable of the Talents, is Jesus now giving the rewards of five talents, two talents, etc., as each member of the Little Flock goes beyond the veil?

A: Yes, we think so. The risen saints are given their role, or chain of command, and their jurisdiction, but they have to be acquainted with the subjects, the individuals. Each saint is now studying the past history of those of mankind who will be under his jurisdiction. Not only has the life of every individual who has ever lived been recorded, but the acts, decisions, etc., needful to know about a person in order to provide a proper judgment in the Kingdom Age are being reviewed by the saints in earth’s atmosphere. In other words, orientation classes are going on with the risen saints with condensed records of meaningful acts and deeds of the lives of individuals they will judge. Of course Jesus is the Teacher.

At present, the risen saints are not doing Kingdom work down here. The Kingdom work will not start until the Church is complete and glorified. However, the risen saints are being oriented to become familiar with the Kingdom work of the future. Jesus and the holy angels have done a very good job all down the Gospel Age, and for the few remaining saints still down here, the help of the risen saints is not needed.

“At that day,” the Lord, “the righteous judge,” will give a crown of righteousness to Paul and to all who *love* his appearing. In a rather late *Reprint* article, the Pastor mentioned his startling observation that in the brotherhood, there was more of a happy intellectual satisfaction than a *personal* love for Jesus Christ. Intellectual understanding of truth is not wrong, but not enough attention was being given to the *love* of Jesus’ appearing. When we read Paul’s epistles, we can see that his yearning was to live and die *for Christ*. Christ was everything to him. Therefore, as we mature, we have to sort out what is most meaningful. We are not to fear but to *yearn for*

and truly love his appearing. When Paul pointed out faith, hope, and love, love was both a development of the heart and a love *for Christ*—a desire to be in his fellowship and to be with him in the Kingdom.

2 Tim. 4:9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

Paul wanted Timothy to visit him as soon as possible. Timothy probably got there to bring the parchments so that Paul could keep writing and also be comforted.

2 Tim. 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Paul mentioned certain brethren who were no longer with him. “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.” Was Paul implying that Crescens, who departed to Galatia, and Titus, who went to Dalmatia, had also forsaken him? If the Epistle to Titus was written between 1 and 2 Timothy, this Titus could have been the same individual. Thus the three—Demas, Crescens, and Titus—seem to be linked together as having forsaken Paul. There seems to be little hope of retrieval for Demas, although it is possible he repented subsequently to become part of the Great Company. (We cannot judge destiny, unless the situation is very obvious.) However, Paul indicated that for those of the consecrated who backslide, the tendency, percentage-wise, is to continue and not stop (Heb. 2:1-3). His point was that the condition is unfavorable and generally does not result in retrieval.

While love is the desired end of the commandment, the final test is patient endurance. Several Scriptures indicate that one can lose patience and give in quickly. A person can snap, spiritually speaking. Evidently, Demas, Crescens, and Titus had been very faithful and useful to Paul, but now a radical change had taken place, especially in Demas (Col. 4:14; Philem. 24).

2 Tim. 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

The implication is that Demas, Crescens, and Titus had forsaken Paul, and only Luke was still with him in the sense of not forsaking him. However, others were also with Paul, for several in Rome sent their love to Timothy and the other brethren in Ephesus (verse 21).

Luke, who wrote the Book of Acts and the Gospel bearing his name on behalf of the Apostle Paul, was charged by the brethren to accompany Paul, whom he served as stenographer. Although Luke frequently accompanied Paul, his name is seldom mentioned (Col. 4:14). It is our thought that after Paul’s decease, Luke was instrumental in collecting all of the manuscripts and collating them into a scriptural canon. Evidently, Luke lived quite long, to around AD 86, although not as long as the Apostle John, who died in AD 96. Not only was Luke a physician, but in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, he gave credit to Theophilus, who financially backed him (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1; Philem. 24).

It is interesting to see that some forsook Paul and others stayed with him. We are happy that Mark had now been reinstated to favor. Earlier Paul was so upset with Mark that he parted company with Barnabas, who wanted his nephew to accompany them on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-40). Now Paul was telling Timothy to pick up Mark along the way and bring him to Rome. Mark was somewhere west of Ephesus, and Paul wanted to see him. He had been accompanying Peter, but Peter was executed by Nero at almost the same time as Paul. As a Roman citizen, Paul could not be crucified and was beheaded instead. However, Peter, being a Jew and not a Roman citizen, was crucified. Their deaths were probably within six months of each other, and we assume that Peter died slightly before Paul.

Now Paul wanted Mark to see him because just as he had charged Timothy before God and Christ to carry on the ministry and not worry about opposition, so he wanted to assure Mark of his reinstatement to favor and to encourage him to continue on with the work. Mark subsequently wrote the Gospel bearing his name on behalf of the Apostle Peter. In other words, Paul may have encouraged both Mark and Luke to write their Gospels.

The fact that Mark was “profitable” to Paul in the ministry shows that Paul had a definite purpose in mind for him. We believe that just before his death, Paul was successful in seeing Timothy and Mark. What a joyful yet serious reunion that would have been with Paul telling them not to worry about him, for he was resigned to his death!

Incidentally, Mark’s reinstatement to favor is encouraging to those who want to make amends for past mistakes. His experiences demonstrate the possibility of retrieval.

2 Tim. 4:12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus—presumably to deliver this letter to Timothy. Then Tychicus would have stayed in Ephesus to help in the ministry. In Paul’s estimation, it would have been profitable for Tychicus to settle there, for Timothy had to leave his work to go to see Paul. Timothy’s trip to Rome and back would have taken at least six months.

2 Tim. 4:13 The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

Paul had left his cloak at Troas (a seaport town in Troy, Asia Minor) with a party named Carpus. Paul also asked for “the books” (the Hebrew Scriptures) and especially for blank parchments to write on. He wanted to continue writing the Book of Hebrews. Not only was the content of that book comprehensive, well thought out, and thus written over a period of time, but it was a memorial to his race, to the Jews, whom he earnestly wished had accepted Christ.

Verse 13 also tells the route Timothy would take to Rome. There were two ways of traveling, and the northern route went through Troas up toward Constantinople and then through Philippi, Thessalonica, etc., following a semicircle along the Aegean coast, and finally down into Corinth and on to Rome.

2 Tim. 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

2 Tim. 4:15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

Q: In 1 Timothy 1:20, Alexander was remanded over to Satan so that he would learn not to blaspheme. Wouldn’t the fact that his name is now mentioned in the second epistle signify his case was hopeless? Apparently, he did not repent, and Paul was no longer praying for him but left his “reward” up to God.

A: Yes. Although we cannot be dogmatic because Alexander was a common Greek name, this was probably the same Alexander in Ephesus, who was engaged in the lucrative business of making statuary either of the goddess Diana herself or for the Temple bearing her name (Acts 19:30-34). The implication is that to preserve his business and profits, he preached the gospel softly. He caused a lot of problems for Paul—in fact, so much so that without the Lord’s overruling and using the brethren to rescue Paul, the situation could have led to the apostle’s death in the arena.

Because there was no change, Paul properly did not forgive Alexander but said, “The Lord reward him according to his works.” Part of the Lord’s Prayer is, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us” (Matt. 6:12). In other words, as we ask God for forgiveness, so those who trespass against us should ask for our forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness. Alexander’s being turned over to the Adversary had not resulted in repentance, for “he hath greatly withstood our [particularly Paul’s] words.” In speaking publicly, he would have raised his voice in order to be heard over the tumult.

Comment: Paul’s saying of Alexander, “The Lord reward him according to his [evil] works,” is similar to Michael’s words to Satan with regard to the dispute over Moses’ body: “The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9).

Reply: Alexander’s “works” were an affront to the *ministry* of Paul. His example and influence were detrimental to the faith, to say the least.

Paul warned Timothy to beware of Alexander, for the coppersmith had strongly opposed the apostle’s teaching and discourses. What made the withstanding so injurious is that Alexander was in the brotherhood. When someone in the brotherhood opposes one whom the Lord is specially dealing with, that individual is more accountable. Paul wrote in the first epistle that he had turned Alexander over to Satan. To write unfavorably about him in the second epistle indicates he was continuing in the wrong course despite the disfellowshipping. Incidentally, some who go out of the truth in our day linger a long time with the brethren, trying to take others with them.

The very fact Timothy was being warned shows Paul saw that Alexander would persist in his evil course. The point was to try to rescue those under his influence. Alexander had reached the point of no return, but the hope was that those he was influencing could be pulled “out of the fire” (Jude 23).

Comment: Knowing he would soon be put to death, Paul considered it necessary to give Timothy this strong warning about Alexander.

Reply: Yes, and that was especially true because Timothy would return to Ephesus and be Paul’s successor there, reassuming the duties of elder. Since Alexander was not obeying the terms of excommunication, he would probably be the source of a continuing problem. Moreover, Paul had said that “all” (meaning the preponderance of the *leadership*) in Asia had forsaken him (2 Tim. 1:15). Timothy needed encouragement and a backbone so that he could withstand what he would experience on his return to Ephesus. For him to have these instructions of Paul in writing would be of great help, for Alexander was a man of means and influence and a public speaker. Paul told Timothy to use his talent to rebuke and warn as and where necessary. Timothy was a man of real character but was not as outgoing as, say, Titus.

Comment: After two epistles in which Paul had stressed sound doctrine and wholesome and holy living, it is startling that he listed so many in each epistle who forsook the truth in one way or another. More such individuals are named in 1 and 2 Timothy than in any other epistle.

2 Tim. 4:16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

Not enough detail is given to know which of several situations Paul was referring to. One possibility is when he was brought up for a court hearing at Ephesus, and several brethren forsook him momentarily. He prayed that their action might not “be laid to their charge.” The

incident shows that people sometimes change their mind, but whether or not God forgives a Christian for a misstep is what is important. If a brother slights one of God's true children, the offended individual might forgive him, but the blot may stand against him from the Lord's standpoint and thus prevent him from making his calling and election sure. The important questions are, What is the final outcome? What does God think? Does God forgive him?

Comment: The Amplified has, "At my first trial no one acted in my defense (as my advocate) or took my part or [even] stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the (Gospel) message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was delivered out of the jaws of the lion."

Reply: Like the Amplified, many early writers applied verses 16 and 17 to Ephesus.

Comment: Paul was talking about a sin of *omission* when he said, "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." With Alexander, who was guilty of a sin of *commission*, Paul said, "The Lord reward him according to his works" (verse 14).

Reply: Yes. For brethren not to speak up when they should is a sin of omission, for silence gives consent to opposition.

Comment: Similarly, no man stood with Jesus at the time of his apprehension. The apostles fled.

Comment: Many times brethren know right from wrong, but they do not want to create hard feelings. They like the individual whom they would have to speak out against, so they remain silent.

Reply: There is a time to keep quiet and a time to talk. We have to depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us in each situation. We should not respond too quickly from an emotional standpoint unless the wrong is blatant, as in the example of Moses with the golden calf. When he descended Mount Sinai and saw the Israelites worshipping the golden calf, he manifested righteous indignation by smashing the two tablets with the Ten Commandments and making the people drink the powdered gold in water. The point is that we should speak up for one who is defending the truth.

We are not dogmatic about the occasion Paul was referring to, for instead of Ephesus, it could have been his trial in Rome before Nero. However, we are dogmatic about the principle of speaking up for and supporting a brother who is defending important truth, especially when that individual is in an environment of opposition.

2 Tim. 4:17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Paul's statement "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" is usually considered to be figurative. However, Ephesus did have a stadium, and there was a place where lions were kept. If he had received an unfavorable judgment from the court, he could have been found guilty of treason and been literally fed to the lions. The usual explanation is that Paul was delivered from the vicious, forceful, and powerful attack of Satan and his human instruments. Although we are inclined to go along with that thought, we would not rule out the literal possibility.

2 Tim. 4:18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Evidently, Alexander the coppersmith was a strong and powerful personality. His reasoning faculties or perhaps his manner could have had a very damaging effect on Paul's ministry, but the Lord overruled the situation.

"The Lord ... will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." Paul was quite familiar with the Bible truth that death is a sleep. He knew that God would be with him in "every evil work" including his execution, which he felt was imminent. He was ready to die, if need be.

2 Tim. 4:19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

Priscilla and Aquila were to be greeted. "Prisca" could be an affectionate name for Priscilla. Evidently, Onesiphorus had died, but his family was still alive. Paul wanted to encourage that household in memory of what Onesiphorus had previously done.

2 Tim. 4:20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

Paul included this information so that on the journey to Rome, Timothy could contact Erastus in Corinth and Trophimus on the isle of Miletus. At the end of this second epistle, Paul warned about the dangers of some who had forsaken him. Paul also told of the whereabouts of faithful brethren so that Timothy could visit them. Those brethren had tarried behind because of either an illness or Paul's specific instruction.

2 Tim. 4:21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

Paul's urging Timothy, "Do thy diligence to come before winter," gives us an insight into the conditions in the dungeon. In the warm months, Paul was already cold and missed his cloak. He was not complaining, but he would like to have the cloak as an extra comfort and would certainly need it by winter and before his execution. Paul also wanted the parchment, for he may have wanted to complete manuscripts and turn them over to Luke, the compiler. He was planning his departure.

Comment: What faith Paul manifested! In the darkness of the dungeon, he trusted that God would provide a sufficiency of candles and light for him to finish the work.

Other Christians living in Rome—Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren—sent greetings to those in Ephesus. Thus when Paul said earlier that Demas, Crescens, and Titus had forsaken him, and that only Luke was with him, he was talking about their having forsaken the truth (verse 10). The brethren named in verse 21 were trying to serve faithfully—at least at that time.

Comment: The fact that specific individuals are named in these two epistles to Timothy is very sobering. We are reminded of the text "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). No matter how much progress is made, one has to keep pressing on.

Comment: Paul acknowledged the importance of Christian fellowship by characteristically mentioning the names of brethren at the end of his letters.

2 Tim. 4:22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.