

NOTES ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

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PAUL'S LETTERS TO TIMOTHY - WHEN AND WHERE WRITTEN (W. BUNTING)

A brief consideration of the background of the sender and the recipient of these letters should help us. Saul, later called Paul, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, was a citizen of no mean city; a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee; of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; circumcised the eighth day; trained as a tent-maker; educated at the feet of the great Gamaliel; as touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless; honoured with Roman citizenship.

Timothy lived in Lystra, on the north side of the Taurus mountains. His father was a Greek. His mother, Eunice, a Jewess, and his grandmother, Lois, were women of unfeigned faith, and they sought to instruct Timothy from childhood in the sacred writings. He was uncircumcised.

What was it brought these two men with such dissimilar backgrounds together to work, with others, as a remarkable team in the spread of the message of the gospel? We know that the experience of Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road was the turning point in his life (Acts 26:12-19¹). In the case of Timothy, one wonders if this young man witnessed the scenes in Lystra during the apostle's first visit to that city. "They stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead" (Acts 14:19²). Was Timothy one of the disciples that stood around the seeming lifeless Paul, and witnessed his miraculous recovery? Years later the apostle reminded Timothy of the sufferings which befell him at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra (2 Tim.3:11³).

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2026.12-19>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.19>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.11>

It was during Paul's second visit to Lystra with Silas that he found Timothy, who was well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, and him would Paul have to go forth with him (Acts 16:2⁴,3⁵). Thus was forged a link between Paul and Timothy which became stronger as the years passed.

“My beloved and faithful child in the Lord” (1 Cor.4:17⁶); “I have no man likeminded” (Phil.2:20⁷); “My true child in faith” (1 Tim.1:2⁸); “My beloved child” (2 Tim.1:2⁹). These are but some of the apostle's references to Timothy which show the close bond that existed between them.

There is little to help us to determine when and where the first letter to Timothy was written. We learn from 1 Tim. 1:3¹⁰ that Paul exhorted Timothy to remain at Ephesus while he journeyed into Macedonia. The letter was written in the hope that he would soon return to Ephesus (1 Tim.3:14¹¹). We therefore suggest that it was written before his final visit to Miletus when he sent for the elders from Ephesus and conveyed the sad news that they would see his face no more (Acts 20:38¹²).

The letter contains guidance to the young man Timothy on a wide range of matters associated with the house of God; exhortation to prayer, qualifications to be looked for in overseers and deacons, the attitude of servants to masters and masters to servants, and much else besides.

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.2>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.3>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.4.17>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.20>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.1.2>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.2>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.%201.3>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3.14>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.38>

“I appeal unto Caesar” — these words were uttered before Festus when Paul exercised his right of appeal as a Roman citizen to the supreme tribunal of the Emperor at Rome (Acts 25:11¹³). The second letter to Timothy was written under the shadow of his appearance before the Emperor, and the possible outcome of his appeal.* That Paul was still chained to a Roman soldier is borne out by his reference to the frequent visits of Onesiphorus, “For he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but, when he was in Rome, he sought me diligently, and found me” (2 Tim.1:16¹⁴,17¹⁵).

This letter bears the stamp of a man already under the shadow or sentence of death. He writes, “I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim.4:6¹⁶,7¹⁷). We have little difficulty in deciding when and where this letter was written; its value is enhanced by the fact that it is probably the last extant letter from the apostle Paul.

It would seem that Timothy was still at Ephesus, and he must have been deeply touched upon receipt of this letter. There is a measure of urgency in the apostle’s request to him, “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me” (2 Tim.4:9¹⁸). His request is made more urgent by the words, “Do thy diligence to come before winter” (2 Tim.4:21¹⁹).

Some think that his appeal had been determined in his favour, and that his last imprisonment was under Nero consequent upon Rome’s own lat-

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2025.11>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.16>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%201.17>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.6>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.7>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.9>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.21>

er policy of persecuting Christians. 2 Tim.4:13²⁰ suggests a recent visit to Troas and arrest there, and verse 20 a recent visit to Miletus.

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.13>

COMMENTARY ON 2 TIMOTHY 1

2 Tim.1:1^{1,2}

As in 1 Cor.1:1³ and Gal.1:1⁴, Paul here again claims the divine character of his call to apostleship, and with this he links that he is an apostle “according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus.” This was the substance of the message which he preached, as he says in Rom.6:23⁵; “The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This is the same as the gospel which was preached by the other apostles, as Jn says, “The witness is this, the God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life” (1 Jn 5:11⁶,12⁷). Here is a life which is secure above all the storms and trials through which we may pass in this earthly life, and Timothy in Ephesus was passing through storm and tempest, seeking to maintain the testimony of the Lord in the face of men bent on introducing evil doctrine. How tender were the ties that bound Paul and Timothy; he calls him “my beloved child”! He called him “my true child” in his first epistle. It may be in this Paul’s last letter, and in the light of his early departure, and his leaving Timothy behind, the love of the apostle’s being finds vent in the words “My beloved child.”

2 Tim.1:3⁸,4⁹,5¹⁰

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%201.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.1>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.1>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.23>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.11>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.12>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.3>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%201.4>

“I thank God” may be rendered as some do, “I am thankful,” as also in 1 Tim.1:12¹¹: “Whom I serve (Gk. *latreuo*, a service which must be rendered to God only – Matt.4:10¹²) from my forefathers in a pure conscience”: here Paul asserts again what he did before the Jewish council in Acts 23:1¹³, “I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day.” Conscience is not in itself the standard of right and wrong. A person who has been subject to a certain form of teaching may do wrong with a perfectly good conscience. Paul evidently was one of those referred to in Jn 16:2¹⁴: “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God.”

Service here is *latreia*, the noun form of the Greek verb *latreuo* which Paul uses in verse 3: In Acts 23, the high priest, who could not understand how Paul could have a good conscience in persecuting the followers of Jesus Christ and then later preaching Jesus Christ, commanded that one should smite him on the mouth. The teaching that he received prior to his conversion was from his forefathers, but what came to him at his conversion, and later, was by revelation of the Lord. Hence he claims ever to have acted with a good and pure conscience. How unceasing was his remembrance of Timothy! and with this went those intense prayers for him, his supplications. Some render this, as in the AV/KJV, “my supplications night and day,” but others, as in the RV, “night and day longing to see thee.”

Whichever way is right, one can visualize, or at least try to, Saul in the Roman prison longing to see Timothy, longing as Jacob did of old to know about his sons, when he sent Joseph to see how it fared with them

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%201.5>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.1.12>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.4.10>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2023.1>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2016.2>

and with the flock. Any father or mother can understand this longing, which nothing can satisfy but the one for whom the longing is. “Remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy.” Here is a remarkable contrast. The tears of Timothy for the joy of Paul! Of old it was said, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy” (Ps.126:5¹⁵). Many have sowed in tears in this world and others, sometimes many others, have reaped in joy. The greatest of all joys have come from Him who sorrowed and suffered, who wept and died. Blessed Lord! Gracious Saviour! The words in between “I thank God” and “having been reminded” of verse 5 form a parenthesis. Paul was thankful as he remembered the unfeigned faith of Timothy, his strong and immovable confidence in the word of God and in the God of the word, the one thing that would enable him to steer a straight course in the tempestuous waters at Ephesus.

This unfeigned, unwavering faith first dwelt in his grandmother Lois, then in Eunice his mother, and then in Timothy. How often the faith of sons may be traced to their mothers or grandmothers! Was not the faith of Jochebed later seen in Moses, and the faith of Hannah in Samuel? Of old it was asked, “Who is their father?” (1 Sam.10:12¹⁶), but with as much fitness it might be asked, “Who is their mother?” Often the names of the mothers of the kings of Judah are given, perhaps to indicate the kind of kings they turned out to be. Let mothers make their sons, and the sons will make them, but remember this demands a faithful, prayerful, God-fearing life.

2 Tim.1:6¹⁷,7¹⁸

“The which cause” is the unfeigned faith which Paul was persuaded was in Timothy. Paul puts him in mind of this, so that he would stir to a

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.126.5>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.10.12>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.6>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%201.7>

flame, revive, the gift of God which was in him, which was the ministry he had received by the laying on of the apostle's hands (see 1 Tim.4:14¹⁹), for which God had eminently suited him by his upbringing and by his natural ability, which was sanctified by the gifts given by the Spirit of grace. Should "spirit," in the words "spirit of fearfulness," be "Spirit," that is, the Holy Spirit, or should it be a spirit, a disposition of mind and heart? I am of the opinion that it is the same Spirit as rested upon the Lord. "The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD" (Isa.11:2²⁰).

Though spirit in this place is printed with a small "s", both in the AV/KJV and RV, yet without doubt it is the same Spirit that is referred to in Isa.61:1²¹, which is printed with a capital "S" in the AV/KJV and with a small "s" in the RV; and why the RV should print it Spirit in the quotation of Isa.61:1^{22,23}, in Lk.4:18²⁴ requires some explaining. Spirit in 2 Tim.1:7²⁵ is the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, so it seems to me. The Holy Spirit is not a Spirit of cowardice, but of power and love and wise discretion, of power in contrast to weakness, of love, which leads to a self-sacrificing life in the service of others, and of discipline, to be of a sound mind, which will lead to the proper regulation of one's life, resulting in exhorting and instructing others. The Spirit which God has given us knows no timidity or fear of man. Those in whom He dwells who fear God need not fear men. Think of Peter's cowardice in Gal.2:11-16²⁶, when he feared them which were of the circumcision. What disastrous

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.4.14>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.11.2>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.61.1>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.61.1>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2061.2>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.4.18>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.7>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.2.11-16>

results might have ensued but for Paul's courage in dealing with the matter!

2 Tim.1:8²⁷

Paul the undaunted old general encourages Timothy, whom he charged and left at Ephesus and had exhorted him to fight the good fight of the faith (1 Tim.6:12²⁸), and not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. It is remarkable, yet how true it is, that that of which there is no reason to be ashamed, we are ever liable to be ashamed of. The testimony of the Lord is not popular and never was. The Lord well knowing this said, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mk.8:38²⁹). We cannot read these words without feeling their weight and solemnity.

The boldness of Paul rings out in his declaration to the saints in Rome, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom.1:16³⁰). Of old the testimony was the law written on the two tables of stone, which were put in the ark of the testimony, and which in turn was put into the tabernacle of the testimony. This testimony was that for which Israel stood nationally amongst the nations. Now the testimony of the Lord is to Him and His words ("Me and My words"). It was for this that Paul was a prisoner in Rome. Timothy was not to be ashamed of him as the Lord's prisoner. This is explained in Eph.4:1³¹, where he calls himself, "the prisoner in the Lord," that is, he was a prisoner in Rome according to the Lord's will.

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.8>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.6.12>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.8.38>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.16>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.1>

Again in Eph.3:1³², he calls himself, “the prisoner of Christ Jesus.” Why are we betimes ashamed of the testimony of the Lord? Is it not because we do not wish to suffer the coldness, the slighting, and the alienation of worldly companionship, and also, perchance, the loss of position and profits. Being ashamed of the testimony of the Lord is set in contrast to – “but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God.”

Are we willing to suffer for so great a cause? Then we shall let our light shine before men. If we are unwilling, we shall put our light under the bushel or the bed, to use the Lord’s words; we shall hide the light and move on with the crowd, with the Christ rejectors and neglecters. What power sustains those who speak, who preach and who suffer? The answer is, “the power of God,” “strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man” (Eph.3:16³³).

2 Tim.1:9³⁴,10³⁵,11³⁶

There is a call to sinners in the gospel prior to justification. “He called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess.2:14³⁷). “Whom He foreordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Rom.8:30³⁸). The vast panorama of divine purpose in salvation is stretched before us in these words – foreordained, called, justified, glorified. But here in this verse in 2 Timothy is a call following salvation; “Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling.” Sinners are called in the gospel to come to Christ wherever they may

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.1>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.16>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.9>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%201.10>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%201.11>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.14>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.30>

be; saints are called out from amongst unbelievers (and also from those who hold wrong doctrine – 2 Tim.2:19-20³⁹) by God, who commands, “Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (2 Cor.6:17⁴⁰).

God does not “call out” without having a “call in” in view. Hence we read, “God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the Fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor.1:9⁴¹). Then we have those who are called to special service, such as Paul and others. He describes himself as “Paul, called an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:1⁴²). God’s calling is a holy calling, not to common service, but to holy service. The call of God is like election, it is not according to works. We had no good works to offer so that God might favour us by calling us, and God’s call is not according to good works as foreseen by God, but His call is according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal. Note that it is something that is given, which precludes anything of worth on our part; His call is not a reward, it is a matter of grace and according to His own purpose. God’s purpose and grace were given us in Christ Jesus, not in times eternal, but “before times eternal,” or as one has rendered it, “before the periods of ages.”

What God’s purpose was in eternity was at length revealed in time; it “hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus.” He is the Revealer of many secrets. Two things are said to have been done by Christ Jesus through the gospel. (1) He abolished death; (2) He brought life and incorruption to light. The Greek word *katargeo* is used only in the writings of Paul, save in Lk.13:7⁴³, where it is rendered “cumbereth.” Paul uses it first in Rom.3:3⁴⁴, where it is translated “shall make

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.19-20>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.6.17>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.9>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.%201.1>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.13.7>

of none effect,” and again in verse 31, “Do we make of none effect?” He again uses it in Rom.6:6⁴⁵, where we read, “Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away” (destroyed, AV/KJV). In Heb.2:14⁴⁶ we read, “That through death He might bring to nought (destroy, AV/KJV), him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Here in this verse in 2 Timothy it is said that Christ Jesus “abolished death.” In 1 Cor.15:26⁴⁷ we read, “The last enemy that shall be abolished is death.” But this will not take place until the time of the Great White Throne (Rev.20:13⁴⁸,14⁴⁹).

It is evident that no single word can be used to give the sense of katargeo in the contexts where it is found, hence various words are used. In the passages in Rom.6:6⁵⁰, Heb.2:14⁵¹, and 2 Tim.1:10⁵², with reference to “the body of sin,” “the devil,” and “death,” the thought is not annihilating, but rather of making of none effect, rendering them inactive or useless. The believer can sing: “O death, O grave, I do not dread your power, The ransom’s paid.” Not only is death made of none effect to the believer through the gospel, but life and incorruption are brought to light by it. The AV/KJV wrongly renders “incorruption” as “immortality.” Life is begun for the believer here and now; at the Lord’s coming the mortal body will put on immortality. The soul of the believer is not only in a state of life now, but is also in a state of incorruption. This was the good news of which Paul was appointed a herald, an apostle, and a teacher.

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.3>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.6>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.14>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.26>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.13>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2020.14>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.6>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.14>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.10>

2 Tim.1:12⁵³

In verse 8 he exhorts Timothy to “suffer hardship with the gospel.” Here he says that for this cause, that is, the gospel, he was even now suffering, yet he was not ashamed. Who is there now, who, looking back over the centuries, does not admire the man who suffered so much for the blessing of so many? He was not ashamed, for he knew whom he had believed, and he was persuaded in His ability to keep what Paul called “my deposit” against that day, the day of Christ, when He will come having His reward with Him (Rev.22:12⁵⁴). Paul’s deposit was the ministry which he had received from the Lord, as indicated in verse 11, who appointed him a herald, an apostle, and a teacher. This ministry was too much for him to guard, so he committed it back to the Lord to keep for him. The deposit was not the soul of Paul or himself, nor was it the truth of God as contained in the faith, but the ministry which He entrusted to him.

2 Tim.1:13⁵⁵,14⁵⁶

The word pattern in the Greek means a sketch or outline. Sound means healthy; the Greek word is used by Paul only in the epistles to Timothy and Titus in regard to words, doctrine and the Faith. Paul had given to Timothy an outline of sound words in which was traced the doctrine of the Lord; to this he again refers in chapter 2:2 and to this Timothy was ever to hold or hold fast. Timothy had heard the outline “in faith and love” (which describes how Timothy heard and received the words) which is in Christ Jesus. From Him this faith and love sprang. “That good thing,” “the good deposit,” similar in meaning to the deposit of Paul (verse 11), Timothy was to guard, not in his own strength, but through

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.12>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.12>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.13>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%201.14>

the Holy Spirit which dwelt in him. The deposit was the ministry which he had received from the Lord.

2 Tim.1:15⁵⁷

“Turned away from” is the translation of one word which is in the aorist tense and shows that the turning away was at a definite time. It is difficult to decide who are included in “all that are in Asia.” Timothy was in Ephesus in Asia. The turning away was from the person of Paul, but it was symptomatic of something deeper, even that turning away of their ears from the truth, of which we read in 2 Tim.4:3⁵⁸,4⁵⁹: “For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.” To turn away from Paul, the faithful teacher, was in time to lead to turning away from the truth he taught. Timothy was in Ephesus in Asia to seek to retard the spread of evil teaching.

2 Tim.1:16⁶⁰,17⁶¹,18⁶²

The actions of those of whom Phygelus and Hermogenes were specimens stand in contrast to what is said about Onesiphorus. Paul says of him that he oft refreshed him, and was not ashamed of his chain. In Rome he had been at some pains to find Paul. It seems strange that the saints in Rome could not have taken Onesiphorus to where Paul was imprisoned. Was this neglect on their part? In Ephesus Onesiphorus had often ministered succour and comfort to Paul. He writes of the house of Onesiphorus. What had happened to this dear man’s household that Paul desired

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.15>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.3>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.4>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.16>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%201.17>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%201.18>

mercy of the Lord for them? Much remains to be filled in, though Timothy was well acquainted with this kind brother's actions. It has been suggested that Onesiphorus was dead at the time of the writing of this epistle, but that is uncertain. Paul refers to Onesiphorus finding mercy of the Lord at the judgement seat of Christ, some, perhaps many, or even all, will need mercy of the Lord in that day, not mercy as sinners, but mercy as servants. It will be a day of affliction of soul for us all (Lev.16:31⁶³).

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lev.16.31>

COMMENTARY ON 2 TIMOTHY 2

2 Tim.2:1¹,2²

The grace of God is manifold (1 Pet.4:10³), that is, it is various (Gk. *poikilos*, various, of various colours, variegated). It suits all the various needs of men, electing, saving, justifying; grace to help the needy, grace to strengthen, to stand, to speak, to sing, to preach, to serve, and to suffer, and so forth. Indeed, there is grace for every need and every emergency. There is besides the throne of grace, and when time for us shall be no more, there is grace yet to be shown in the ages to come. Is grace not that love of God for us broken up in the prism of human need and experience, whereby we may see the beauty of our God, who is Love, and who is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all (1 Jn 4:9⁴; 1 Jn 1:5⁵)?

In the passage above Timothy was exhorted to be strong (“an abiding state”) in that grace which was available to him in the spiritual battle, the grace which is in Christ Jesus. Though others had forsaken Paul and were turning from the truth he taught, yet Timothy was to be strong. What he had heard from Paul, which many witnesses could attest, that he was to pass on to faithful, trustworthy men, who would faithfully teach others also. Thus there was to be a continuous stream of pure doctrine flowing in the hearts and through the mouths of the faithful. Of old the word of God was to be passed from father to son. “Give ear, O My people, to My law...Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from our children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD” (Ps.78:1-4⁶) In this day the progress of

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.4.10>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.9>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.5>

God's work is not amongst people who have a common natural birth, as in Israel, but the word of God is to be passed on by faithful men to other faithful men in a line of spiritual descent, men who hold the sacred trust of divine doctrine with that steadfastness it demands (Acts 2:42⁷), and shall teach it to others also.

2 Tim.2:3⁸,4⁹

One renders this as, "Take thy share in suffering." There is no original word for "me," but the verb implies that Timothy was to suffer hardship with other good soldiers, Paul and all the rest of the Lord's warriors. "Good" (Gk. kalos) means beautiful as well as good. Here the soldier is not retired, but on active service. It is even so now, as in the days of Rome, that soldiers on service must not be entangled, interwoven, intertwined, in the matters, doings, businesses, of this life (Bios, "the present state of existence," "not existence, but the time or course of life"). The soldier must be free to yield himself in the undivided service of him who enrolled him. In this way only can he please him.

2 Tim.2:5¹⁰,6¹¹

There are no words in the original for "in the games," but the Greek word athle shows that the contending or striving is that of an athlete, consequently, "in the games" is implied. There are the days of preparation for the athlete; then comes the time of the contest. The athlete was not crowned with the laurel wreath of victory, even though he should be the victor, unless he contended according to the rules laid down. If he failed to observe these he was disqualified. It is so still. Here is a needful lesson

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.78.1-4>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.42>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.3>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.4>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.5>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.6>

for Christian runners in the race that leads to the heavenly goal; the rules for the runners are clearly laid down in the Scriptures. Let us each see that we hold to the course. Then the labouring husbandman is the first to partake of the fruit of his labours. Many may partake later of the harvest of his work, but he is the first.

2 Tim.2:7¹²

The Greek word *noeo* means more than consider, it means also to “perceive,” “understand.” As the result of perception of the figures of speech used by Paul regarding the soldier’s freedom from the things of this life which engaged the attention of others, the athlete who had to equip himself and contend according to the rules of the game, and the husbandman, that he must labour before he can be the first to partake of the fruit of his toil, the Lord would give to Timothy understanding in all things.

2 Tim.2:8¹³,9¹⁴

What does Paul wish Timothy to remember? It is that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. He has been raised from (Gk. *ek*, out of) dead (persons). Some translators leave out the comma in the RV after Jesus Christ; this is helpful, as it is not remember Jesus Christ, but remember Him raised from the dead. Jesus Christ is also of the seed of David; thus, according to the gospel which Paul preached, He is the Messiah who was promised in the Holy Scriptures. This is vital. In this gospel, that is, in the preaching of it, Paul suffered unto chains or fetters. See chapter 1:16, where he writes of “my chain.” It is touching to one’s heart to think of this beloved servant of God as he wrote line upon line of this epistle, while his chain clanked its mournful dirge. How much suffering Satan has caused God’s faithful saints through perverted men! “As a malefactor”!

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.7>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.8>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.9>

It reminds one of Calvary, where the Lord was numbered with the transgressors: "There they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left" (Lk.23:33¹⁵). In contrast to the Lord and His saints whom they bound and imprisoned, the word of God is not bound; it cannot be fettered. As in this epistle, it went out from beloved Paul, who was bound, imprisoned and closely guarded in the Praetorium, to fly to all lands with its words of grace and glory. Sometimes where least expected it alights, like the dove of old upon the ark, bringing to hearts which welcome it the heavenly olive leaf of life and hope.

2 Tim.2:10¹⁶

This verse contemplates, so it seems to me, the elect who have not yet been reached by the gospel; this seems clearly to be implied in the words, "that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus." Many of the elect had obtained salvation; "that they also" shows that they are persons in addition to others. Paul's words show that divine election and human effort and endurance are welded together. It is mere fatalism for a sinner to suppose that if he is to be saved he will be saved, and it is fatalism on the part of believers to assume that the elect will be saved whether they endure in the preaching of the gospel or not. Fatalism and divine election are as wide apart as the poles; the one is satanic and the other divine. Paul well says in Roman 10:14,15: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? Even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!" How beautiful indeed are those feet which are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace! (Eph.6:15¹⁷).

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.23.33>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.10>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.15>

“Preparation” means readiness, inclination, promptness of mind, alacrity; it shows a person ready at any time to speak the word of the gospel, in public or private, to speak a word in season to bear fruit in due time. Salvation is joined with eternal glory – present salvation, future glory. Could any work be greater or more important than this, to lend a hand to others that they may share what we have?

2 Tim.2:11¹⁸,12¹⁹,13²⁰

Here is another of Paul’s faithful sayings (1 Tim.1:15²¹; 1 Tim.3:1²²; 1 Tim.4:9²³; Tit.3:8²⁴). If we died, points the believer back to the time when he was quickened (Eph.2:5²⁵), at which time he died. “Ye died with Christ.” “For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col.2:20²⁶; Col.3:3²⁷); see also Rom.6:8²⁸: Having died with Him our living with Him is assured. Reigning with Christ is conditional upon “if we endure.” “Died” in verse 11 is the aorist tense, pointing back to what happened in the past, but “endure” in verse 12 is present tense, showing that it is to be a continuous present experience. “Shall reign” like “shall live” is future. “If we endure” is linked with the words of verse 10, “I endure all things for the elect’s sake.” Note that while the reigning here is conditional upon our enduring with Him, it should be noted that reigning with Christ as here spoken of is different from what is said in

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.11>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.12>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.13>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.1.15>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3.1>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.4.9>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.8>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.5>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.2.20>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.3>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.8>

Rom.5:17²⁹, where it says that those that receive the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through the One, even Jesus Christ. This “reigning in life” will be the portion of all who are justified by faith through grace. “If we shall deny Him, He also will deny us.”

We learn from the Lord’s words in Matt.10:32³⁰,33³¹, that denying the Lord is the opposite of confessing Him. He said, “Every one therefore who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.” It is possible to deny Him by our works as well as by our words. Paul said, “They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny Him” (Tit.1:16³²). How sadly Peter failed in his thrice denial of the Lord! But would we have done better if we had been there that night? He denied Him to the extent of saying with an oath, “I know not the Man.” Later in denying the Lord he began “to curse and to swear.” Poor Peter! (Matt.26:70³³,74³⁴). Happily he repented and was converted and nobly confessed the Lord later. “If we are faithless, He abideth faithful.” He will not deny His promises and His purposes. If we fail Him, He neither can nor will fail (Ps.77:7-9³⁵). He cannot deny Himself.

If we confess Him, we must deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him. We must ever deny our old wicked, sinful selves and all the self-love of the old man. We have died to ourselves and sin. We must also die to the world and all the corruptions thereof, as well also to its politics and

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.17>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.10.32>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2010.33>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.16>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.26.70>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2026.74>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.77.7-9>

plans for human betterment. God's one hope for mankind is the gospel. If this be rejected He has nothing else to offer.

2 Tim.2:14³⁶

These things are the things of the previous verses. Timothy was to cause the saints to remember, testifying earnestly to them before the Lord, not to dispute about words that are without profit, to the subverting, ruin, overthrow (Gk. katastrophe, from which the English word catastrophe is derived) of them that hear. How often Paul warns against the vain use of empty words and their harmful effect!

2 Tim.2:15³⁷

Timothy was to endeavour earnestly, or to strive, to present himself approved unto God, one who had been proved and consequently was approved, because he had stood the test; a workman not ashamed, handling aright, cutting straight, and consequently rightly dividing, the word of truth. How often in expository works on the Scriptures lines are drawn where there should be none, dividing what should be kept together, and in other cases things are joined together which are different! Such is the work of bad workmen.

2 Tim.2:16³⁸,17³⁹,18⁴⁰

Timothy was to shun the empty babblings to which some were giving themselves in the church in Ephesus. He was to stand aloof from these, to avoid them, for the course of these babblers would lead to further ungodliness. Their word, wherever it lighted, would have a killing effect on the soul, it would spread and pasture, devour, like gangrene. Of such people

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.14>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.15>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.16>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.17>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.18>

were Hymenaeus and Philetus. Their particular error was that they said that the resurrection was past already. On what they based their teaching is not revealed. It might be on the rising of the bodies of saints at the Lord's death, and their coming forth out of the tombs after His resurrection (Matt.27:52⁴¹). It is vain to conjecture what we are not told. The sad thing was that their false teaching was overthrowing the faith of some.

2 Tim.2:19⁴²

What is the firm (steadfast or strong) foundation of God? Of old it was said, "His foundation is in the holy mountains. The LORD loveth the gates of Zion" (Ps.87:1⁴³,2⁴⁴). Here was the ark of the covenant (which was also the ark of the testimony and the law). This formed the foundation on which the mercy-seat rested, which was the place of God's throne in Israel. In the day to come, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law" (instruction or doctrine). From thence will issue the standard of truth by which the lives and conduct of mankind will be regulated. It is said, "Many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths" (Isa.2:3⁴⁵). What is the issue in which verse 19 of 2 Tim.2⁴⁶ is found regarding "the firm foundation of God"? The issue plainly is that of truth and error.

Timothy was to be a workman handling aright the word of truth, whilst Hymenaeus and Philetus and others had erred concerning the truth. There could be no knowledge of the truth unless there was some unchanging standard of measurement, some firm foundation on which men

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.27.52>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.19>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.87.1>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2087.2>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.2.3>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2>

can stand and not be moved by the vagaries of error. How were men to know about the resurrection? Only by God's firm foundation, His word of truth. We judge the firm foundation of God to be the established, and unchanging truth of God. By it we can look back to Hymenaeus and his friends and see the seriousness of their error, for if the resurrection is past, what of the Lord's coming and all that is connected therewith? The firm foundation of God has this seal, (1) "the Lord knoweth them that are His," and (2) "let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."

The seal has two sides, (1) divine knowledge, and (2) human responsibility.

In early days, in times of persecution, it was not difficult to know who belonged to the Lord, but when times were more easy-going, grievous wolves entered amongst overseers (Acts 20:29⁴⁷), as well as the flock, and in 2 Peter and Jude it can be seen that a serious state of things existed. Men could be deceived in the profession of certain, but the Lord knew His own. Those that named the name of the Lord were to withdraw or stand aloof from unrighteousness. In this way it would be manifestly seen who were the Lord's.

2 Tim.2:20⁴⁸,21⁴⁹

In verse 20 we have the illustration of a great house used by Paul to force home the application of what he says in verse 21: The great house is neither the house of God, nor yet is it Christendom, it is simply a simile. In a great house (note the force of the adjective "great," such vessels as of gold and silver are not usually found in the houses of common people) there are different kinds of vessels made of different materials, some unto honourable use and some unto dishonour; some, indeed many, ves-

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.29>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.20>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.21>

sels would never be placed on the dining table of the master. Then Paul says, “If a man therefore purge himself from these (people, such as Hymenaeus, etc.) he shall be a vessel unto honour.” Purge (Gk. ekkathairo) means “purge out” and is strengthened by Gk. apo “from”, so that the passage literally means, “If a man purges himself out and away from these.”

The verb being in the aorist shows that the act being done once does not need to be repeated. In 1 Cor.5⁵⁰ the church of God in Corinth is told to purge out the old leaven (that is, the man who had been guilty of fornication), which was done, but here in Timothy evil doctrine had gained such a footing in the church in Ephesus that it was no longer able to deal with the teachers of evil, so that if saints were going to be able to hold the sound doctrine and to follow the Lord, they had to come out from the teachers of evil doctrine and their followers. The man who purged himself out would be a vessel unto honour, sanctified (set apart) and serviceable to the Master (Gk. despotes, a master of slaves). It is too our responsibility to be in a state in which we are prepared and ready to be used by the Lord, whether He chooses to use us or not.

2 Tim.2:22⁵¹,23⁵²

It is not “fight” youthful lusts, but “flee” them. This is aptly illustrated by the conduct of Joseph towards the lustful and infatuated wife of Potiphar. After days of attempted seduction, one day she caught him by the garment, and it says, “He left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out” (Gen.39⁵³). She lied to her husband to cover her sin; the consequence was that Joseph was cast into prison. Better to be in prison with honour, than to be in sin and ease with dishonour! Through the prison was the way to the palace and the throne. “Flee youthful lusts” and

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.5>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.22>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.23>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.39>

“pursue righteousness” are correlated ideas. Failing in the former there is no hope of the latter. Timothy and all who purged out themselves were to pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with (Meta, which denotes companionship) such as called on the Lord with a pure heart.

Much is said throughout the Scriptures, from the time that Seth’s son Enosh was born, about calling on the name of the Lord. It is said in that distant day, “Then began men to call upon the name of the LORD” (Gen.4:26⁵⁴). Many were no doubt professedly calling on the Lord, perhaps even among those who had erred from the truth, so that Paul adds “out of a pure heart,” a description which shows those who called upon the Lord sincerely. Here again in verse 23 Paul warns Timothy about foolish and undisciplined questionings, of such as followed a course of self-choosing and self-will. Strifes were the product of such minds.

2 Tim.2:24⁵⁵,25⁵⁶,26⁵⁷

The Lord’s servant must not (it is imperative) strive; he must not be found amongst those who contended in the foolish and undisciplined questionings of verse 23: He must be gentle (mild, placid) towards all, apt, ready to teach such as were teachable, forbearing, that is, “patient under evils or injuries”, in meekness correcting or disciplining such as oppose themselves, persons of an opposite opinion or who are decidedly adverse. This course was to be followed by Timothy toward such as had been taken in the devil’s snare, which had been set for their feet, by Hymenaeus and Philetus, and perhaps for others of like sort.

There is a difference between those that set snares and such as are caught in them. Timothy’s work of correction was in the light of the possibility that God will grant such persons repentance. See the following places

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.4.26>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.24>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.25>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.26>

where the knowledge of the truth is mentioned, 1 Tim.2:4⁵⁸; 2 Tim.2:25⁵⁹; 2 Tim.3:7⁶⁰; Tit.1:1⁶¹; Heb.10:26⁶². Heb.10:26⁶³ shows how serious is the case of wilful sin against the knowledge of the truth. If God granted repentance, those who had been ensnared could recover themselves, that is, “awake up,” out of the snare of the devil unto the will of God. See RV marg., which, I judge, gives the correct thought. It seems to me that what Paul is saying is, that they may awake up out of the snare of the devil, unto the will of God, having been taken captive by the devil.

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.2.4>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.25>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.7>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.1>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.26>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.26>

COMMENTARY ON 2 TIMOTHY 3

2 Tim.3:1¹

Sad and dark as were the days of Timothy and the closing days of Paul, as the apostasy of those days rolled on dark and foreboding, the last days which were future to those times were to be more terrible still. It may well be that we are merging upon the last days of this verse. They were to be grievous times, that is, fierce, savage, atrocious times, times of great peril and danger. Let it be noted that it is not the heathen world that is in view here, as in Rom.1:18-32², but it is the state of things amongst such as have a form of godliness, but have denied the power thereof. Here is a state of things religious in which, no doubt, many professing children of God will be found.

2 Tim.3:2³,3⁴,4⁵,5⁶

How could days be other than full of peril for godly people in the light of such a catalogue of evils? The list begins with that which is ever the characteristic of fallen, human nature, namely, self-love, which amounts to selfishness. In the gratification of self follows, “lovers of money.” Paul had already said that the love of money is “a root of all kinds of evil,” religious, political, economic, social evils, and all the others where the greedy hand of covetousness is stretched out to grab the possessions of others. Self is written on the different faces of the characters that Paul passes in review – empty boasters, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, profane, without natural affection, implacable (such as will

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.18-32>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.2>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.3>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.4>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.5>

make no truce), slanderers, incontinent (of unsubdued passions), inhuman, no lovers of good, traitors, headlong (rash), puffed up, and then emerges self life-size, “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”

Here stands the flesh in all its native ugliness. Its breath is deadly to all that fear God, and to all spirituality. But over such is cast a form of godliness, but it is but a dead formality, for the power of godliness is denied. Timothy is exhorted, “From these also turn away.” “Also” shows these to be additional to the people from whom he and others were to purge themselves out, as in 2 Tim.2:21⁷.

2 Tim.3:6⁸,7⁹,8¹⁰,9¹¹

These, mentioned in the former verses, are they that sneak into houses on their proselytizing work and lead captive silly (little women, that is, trifling, weak, silly) women laden with sins, led away with various lusts; no doubt coming under the description of those of whom Peter writes, “Promising them liberty, while they themselves are bondservants of corruption” (2 Pet.2:19¹²). How different was Paul’s vigorous public work, and his visiting the homes of those who had been made disciples! (Acts 16:15¹³,34¹⁴); and of his work in Ephesus, he said, “teaching you publicly, and from house to house” (Acts 20:20¹⁵). These evil workers were “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.21>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.6>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.7>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.8>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.9>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.2.19>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.15>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.34>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.20>

It could not be said of unregenerate persons that they were “ever learning,” and not coming to the knowledge of the truth. This is possible for saved persons only (1 Tim.2:4¹⁶). Those contemplated are professing believers of the apostasy of the last days. The description is true of many believers in these days, that they are “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Evangelism is the one thing that fills the minds of many. Regeneration is but the beginning of the life of a child of God; the whole truth and will of God lie before him. How great hinderers such people who go in for the gospel and little more can be to a child of God who sets out to learn the will of God and to do it! Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt, are held up as an example, men who sought to hinder the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt.

They could do wonders as Moses did. They cast down their rods and they became serpents like Aaron’s rod (Ex.7:12¹⁷). They turned water into blood like Moses (Ex.7:20-22¹⁸). But in the plague of lice the magicians failed and they said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God” (Ex.8:18¹⁹,19²⁰). In due time the folly of such as withstand the truth will be seen, as was the folly of Jannes and Jambres in the past, but how many may be deceived before the folly is manifest to all! It is our privilege to come to the knowledge of the truth, for only by the truth shall we escape from the devil’s lies, snares and pitfalls.

2 Tim.3:10²¹,11²²,12²³

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.2.4>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.7.12>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.7.20-22>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.8.18>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%208.19>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.10>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.11>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.12>

Timothy had closely followed Paul's teaching. There could be no doubt that Timothy followed Paul as Paul followed Christ. Paul was his spiritual father and pattern. He had carefully noted all that went to make up the wonderful life of the apostle, his teaching, conduct, purpose, longsuffering, and so forth; he knew it all by heart, not as of a hero long dead, but as of one alive whose life cast its shadow over the younger man. He had not descended to the same measure of suffering as Paul (few men have), but he had shared his part, as he was fitted to bear it.

As Paul looked back over life's journey with its sufferings and persecutions he seemed to heave a sigh of relief, even though he was yet a prisoner, and said, "Out of them all the Lord delivered me." By divine power he had won through all the past stages of the journey home. Then he said, "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It is not all who are godly, but whose wish is to live godly; this is their aim in life, and to them the word comes, that they "shall suffer persecution." They must not think that some strange thing happened to them (1 Pet.4:12²⁴); it follows as a consequence of living in such a world as we do.

2 Tim.3:13²⁵,14²⁶,15²⁷

Evil men (Gk. *poneroi*, bad, the same word is used of the "evil one," which describes one who is wholly gone over to badness) and impostors (jugglers, magicians, like the magicians mentioned in verse 8: there are various breeds of them today who seek to perform magical bodily cures and to speak with tongues) were to advance and become worse and worse, deceiving others whilst they themselves were deceived. What systems of evil! What chaos! But Timothy, in contrast to the juggling im-

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.4.12>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.13>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.14>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.15>

postors, was to continue in the things that he had learned and been convinced of, knowing the kind of persons they were who had taught him, his grandmother and his mother, and later, the apostle Paul. Good doctrine, when acted upon, produces good living, as it had done in those people.

From a babe Timothy had known the sacred letters. (This description is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. The use of Gk. *gramma* here, which literally means a letter, a character of the alphabet, though it is also used in a secondary sense of a writing, book, an epistle or letter, an account or bill, appears to me to indicate that it was the alphabetical characters that Timothy was acquainted with from babyhood.) It may be that, as his grandmother or mother read the Scriptures, Timothy when very young learned the sacred characters, whether these were the letters of the Hebrew or Greek Old Testament it may be impossible to say.

Others may think that *gramma* is the equivalent of Gk. *grapho*, Scripture, of verse 16: I simply state my opinion on the matter. Here in Timothy's case is a pattern for Christian mothers, if they would see their sons in front-rank places in the things of God. An intimate and accurate knowledge of the Scriptures is a prime necessity. No time is wasted that is spent over the word of God. Here is the only means whereby men are made wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Spiritual poverty comes through neglect of the Scriptures.

2 Tim.3:16²⁸,17²⁹

There being no verb "to be" in verse 16, scholars have differed on where "is" should be placed to give the sense of the original. We judge the RV marginal reading to be better than the text of the R. V.: "Every scripture is inspired of God, and profitable." What is true regarding the inspiration of the Old Testament from Gen.to Malachi, is true also of the

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.16>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.17>

New, but not of the Apocrypha. The latter is not in the canon of Scriptures, though Rome holds it to be. The Jews to whom the Old Testament Scriptures were committed do not place the Apocrypha among the Holy Scriptures. Pet. classes Paul's writing among the Scriptures (2 Pet.3:16³⁰). Paul claims that what he wrote was the commandment of the Lord (1 Cor.14:37³¹). The change made in the Levitical law by the Lord in Mk.7:18³²,19³³, and repeated in Acts 10, is said to be the word of God (1 Tim.4:5³⁴).

The New Testament must not be added to or taken from (Rev.22:18³⁵,19³⁶) equally with the Old Testament (Deut.4:2³⁷; Deut.12:32³⁸; Prov.30:5³⁹,6⁴⁰). Because every Scripture (Gk. grapho, writing, is never found in the New Testament for any other writing than Holy Scripture) is God-breathed, it is therefore profitable for teaching. The persons who read and meditate in the inspired Scriptures will be taught by them; they will also convict the reader of wrong done, and they will correct, that is, put straight, and bring back to a pristine state. They will also instruct or discipline in righteousness: all this with a view to fit or make perfect the man of God, so that he may be one who is completely furnished, fitted or prepared to every good work. Besides the individual reading the Scriptures and applying its teaching to his life, there is great profit to be derived from the public reading, exhortation and teaching of

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.3.16>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.14.37>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.7.18>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mk%207.19>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.4.5>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.18>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2022.19>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.4.2>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.12.32>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.30.5>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2030.6>

the word (1 Tim. 4:13⁴¹), especially by such as are gifted of God for such work.

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.%204.13>

COMMENTARY ON 2 TIMOTHY 4

2 Tim.4:1¹,2²

Paul charged (earnestly testified) Timothy before God and Christ Jesus to preach the word. Christ Jesus is about to judge the living and the dead. It is difficult to decide between the AV/KJV “at His appearing,” and the RV “by His appearing.” This is one of the places where there is a difference in the Greek text. It seems that His appearing and kingdom are connected with the judgement of the quick and the dead. This appearing is when the Lord comes as Son of Man to the earth. How vitally necessary it is that those who have the word of God committed to them should preach it in the light of that day of judgement! If men do not preach the word privately and publicly, the blood of other men, not only of sinners, but also that of erring saints, may lie at their door. Timothy was to proclaim the word, to be urgent in season, out of season, to convict, rebuke, exhort, in all long-suffering and teaching. The cause for this urgency is shown in what follows.

2 Tim.4:3³,4⁴

The process of apostasy is here clearly indicated. Men simply would not have the sound, healthful teaching. They wanted to listen, not to the sober truth of God, but, having itching ears, that is, a longing desire or appetite for something fanciful, they heaped up teachers suited to their lusts. Is not this very thing manifest in this and in all lands? These are the fewest in number who have any desire for the plain truth. Those who gain the ears of the masses must, generally speaking, coat their message with the entertainment of song. It is all so very different from what took

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.4>

place in the house of Cornelius, in which Cornelius said of those whom he had gathered together to hear the word of the Lord; “Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord” (Acts 10:33⁵).

The speaker, in this case Peter, not only proclaimed the gospel of faith in Christ, but he also commanded them when they had believed to be baptized (Acts 10:43⁶,47⁷,48⁸). There was no such course followed by Pet.as that of simply preaching salvation by faith in Christ, and hiding all that the Lord had commanded about baptism and all else (Matt.28:18-20⁹). Many preachers do not even preach salvation by faith alone; to proclaim, “Ye must be born again,” would mean the end of their stipend, and they know it. For filthy lucre’s sake they are unfaithful to the Lord and His truth, and so the mischief goes on apace. Even so it was in the past, They “will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.”

2 Tim.4:5¹⁰

Paul’s work was that of the pioneer to cut his way and make roads through the forest of men and to bring the gospel and the truth to them. Timothy’s work was to endeavour to keep the roads good so that there might be the free flow of the divine message. Both things were vigorously opposed by Satan. By persecutions and sufferings he sought to hinder the hardy pioneer, and through false teachers he sought to fill the highway with boulders and debris of all kinds. It mattered little what it was, so long as the road was blocked and the work of God hindered. Timo-

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.33>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.43>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.47>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.48>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.28.18-20>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.5>

thy's work was difficult, but he was to suffer hardship, to evangelize, and to fulfil his ministry.

2 Tim.4:6¹¹,7¹²,8¹³

The Lord said, "The night cometh, when no man can work" (Jn 9:4¹⁴). The day of Paul's service was drawing swiftly to a close; the shadows of night were gathering round the valiant and scarred warrior. Soon that hand to which we are indebted for so much of divine truth would no longer hold the pen which had traced the sacred letters upon the papyrus. Can we picture Timothy, as the news, with a sledgehammer blow, smites his affectionate heart, that Paul's end is drawing near? His spiritual father and the friend and companion of youth and through life's wanderings will soon sail for the harbour in the land of fadeless glory. One thinks one hears the falling of the great salt tears upon Paul's letter and sees the bodily frame of Timothy shiver and shake. Paul gone! The world for Timothy would be an empty place!

As one thinks of Paul, the words of the hymn keep ringing in one's mind:

I've wrestled on toward heaven,
'Gainst storm and wind and tide;
Now, like a weary traveller,
That leaneth on his guide,
Amid the shades of evening,
While sinks life's lingering sand,

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.6>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.7>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.8>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%209.4>

I hail the glory dawning
From Immanuel's land.
Deep waters crossed life's pathway;
The hedge of thorns was sharp;
Now these lie all behind me:
Oh for a well-tuned harp!
Oh to join Hallelujah
With yon triumphant band,
Who sing, where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land!

Paul says, "I am already being poured out as a drink-offering" (RV Marg.). He had written to the Philippians earlier, "Yea, and if I am poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all" (Phil.2:17¹⁵, RV Marg.). This was the spirit in which he had lived since the Lord revealed Himself to him on the Damascus road: pouring himself out in the service of others. Was his life misspent in so doing? No! it was sure to reap the greatest reward. "The time of my departure is come," he says. He also wrote to the Philippians, "But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ: for it is very far better" (Phil.1:23¹⁶). Now that earnest desire is about to be granted. He writes, striking a note of triumph, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." His task was completed and his reward sure.

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.17>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.1.23>

He says, “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Jud.ge, shall give to me at that day.” This is “the day of Christ” (Phil.1: 10¹⁷), the day of His coming to the air (1 Thess.4:16¹⁸,17¹⁹), when the judgement seat of Christ will be set up, before which saints of this dispensation of grace will be made manifest (2 Cor.5:10²⁰). Few men, if any others there have been, have known on this earth that theirs would be a crown of reward. There are three crowns mentioned in the New Testament which are rewards for faithfulness, (1) the crown of righteousness, for such as love the Lord’s appearing, (2) the crown of life, for such as endure temptation, whether from their own flesh (Jas.1:12-15²¹), or from tribulation (Rev.2:9²²,10²³), and (3) the crown for the faithful shepherds of the flock (1 Pet.5:1-4²⁴).

2 Tim.4:9²⁵,10²⁶,11²⁷,12²⁸

Demas who is mentioned with Lk.in Col.4:14²⁹, who was with Paul in Rome, had gone by the time of writing of 2 Timothy. He forsook Paul. Perhaps he saw Paul’s end approaching and thought only of himself and the present life – he “loved this present age” – and he went off to Thessalonica. He has left a black mark against his name in Holy Writ. Others

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.1.%2010>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.16>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.17>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.10>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.1.12-15>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2.9>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%202.10>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.5.1-4>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.9>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.10>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.11>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.12>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.14>

went off in the Lord's work under the Spirit's guidance, Crescens to Galatia, Tit. to Dalmatia, and Tychicus went to Ephesus, perhaps to relieve Timothy whom Paul wished to come to Rome. Mark was to be brought with Timothy. He is mentioned in Col.4:10³⁰, 11³¹ as being among Paul's fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God.

Though he was restored from his act of departing from the Lord's work earlier, he must have looked back on that episode in his life with considerable heart-burning; it was the cause of the cleavage between such great men as Paul and Barnabas. How careful the servants of the Lord need to be that their acts do not make wounds, which, though they may be healed, may for ever leave their mark! Let us each humble ourselves and learn. The brief facts, as given here, afford us an insight into the movements of the Lord's servants of those days. Paul touchingly says, "Only Lk. is with me," his faithful medical attendant, the beloved physician (Col.4:14³²). Paul who healed others did not heal himself.

2 Tim.4:13³³

Some who have argued against the inspiration of the Scriptures have inveighed against a statement about a cloak as being too insignificant a matter to be regarded as inspired. There are things of much lesser importance than that, which form part of the Holy Scriptures. This verse reminds me of the similarity to what is contained in a letter written by that noble martyr, William Tyndale, to whom the English speaking races owe a great debt. The letter was written, shortly before his martyrdom, from the castle of Vilvorde in Belgium. "If I am to remain here during winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession, a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.10>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%204.11>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.14>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.13>

from the cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in the cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings; my overcoat is also worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He has a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thick cloth for putting on above: he also has warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also to have a candle in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit in the dark.

But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with the study.” Paul’s request to Timothy is briefer regarding his cloak, books and parchments, but it is of the same nature as William Tyndale’s.

It is easy enough for the comfortable infidel, who can toast his toes at the fire on a cold winter’s night and then retire to a warm and comfortable bed, to criticize men and their writings and the divine character of the Scriptures, men who suffered so much to bring untold blessing to untold multitudes. We can write over the memory of such men – “of whom the world was not worthy.” All honour, we say, to these illustrious, yet suffering, servants of God! They shall yet shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.

2 Tim.4:14³⁴,15³⁵

Alexander is perhaps the same as in 1 Tim.1:20³⁶, and if so, he was still at his former evil work of opposition to the work of Paul, who says, “He did me much evil.” He withstood the apostle exceedingly. We have also an Alexander, a Jew, mentioned in Acts 19:33³⁷: Timothy was warned

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.14>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.15>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.1.20>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.33>

against Alexander. He will, like all else, be rewarded according to his works, possibly here, and certainly hereafter.

2 Tim.4:16³⁸,17³⁹,18⁴⁰

At Paul's first defence before a court (it cannot be dogmatically held that this was before Nero) all his friends deserted him, but, says, he, "May it not be laid to their account," or reckoned to them. If forsaken by men, the Lord did not forsake His worthy servant; He stood by him and empowered him. What a comfort the Lord's presence must have been to Paul! Paul set forth his case before his judge or judges, that the gospel might be fully proclaimed and that all the Gentiles might hear. The news of what Paul said in his defence would stream out throughout the Empire. Paul said that he was delivered from the lion's mouth. Ancient writers understood the lion to be Nero. It is thought that Paul being a Roman citizen would be exempted from being thrown to literal lions. It may well be left, that what Paul means is that he was delivered at that time from a martyr's death. He was confident in the delivering power of the Lord Jesus from every evil work, who would also preserve him unto His heavenly kingdom. This was his consolation, and is that of us all. To the blessed Lord be glory unto the ages of the ages!

2 Tim.4:19⁴¹,20⁴²,21⁴³,22⁴⁴

Prisca and Aquila are better known to us than many saints who are now alive. How much Paul owed to them! (Rom.16:3⁴⁵,4⁴⁶). See reference

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.16>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.17>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.18>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.19>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.20>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.21>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%204.22>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.3>

to the house of Onesiphorus in 2 Tim.1:16⁴⁷. Erastus: an Erastus the treasurer of Corinth sent greetings to Rome (Rom. 16:23⁴⁸); these may be the same, or he may be the Erastus who went to Macedonia with Timothy (Acts 19:22⁴⁹). We may know better about this in due time. Trophimus was an Ephesian (Acts 21:29-36⁵⁰), whose presence with Paul in Jerusalem caused Jewish rioting. He is mentioned with Tychicus in Acts 20:4⁵¹, one of that party of great men who accompanied Paul from Macedonia to Asia, and who broke bread on the first day of the week with the church of God in Troas. Paul did not heal all sick people he came across, nor yet did he heal all the sick among the servants of Christ, if he healed any, for he left Trophimus at Miletus sick, and Timothy suffered often, yet Paul did not heal him.

Nowhere else in the new Testament do we read of these Roman saints, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus and Claudia, who with all the brethren saluted Timothy. Timothy was to endeavour to reach Paul before the winter, bringing Paul's cloak, books and parchments, and accompanied by Mark. Then Paul ends this his epistle and his inspired letters, for this is his last, and, as seems fitting, is written to his beloved child, Timothy. He closes with – "The Lord be with thy spirit. Grace be with you."

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.4>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.16>

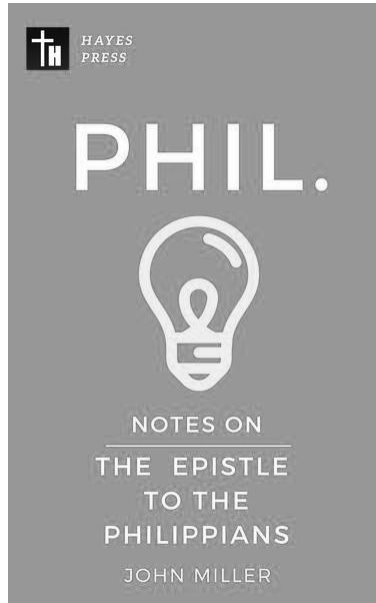
48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.%2016.23>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.22>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2021.29-36>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.4>

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